

# 'In a Mist' – What is Brain Fog?

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## Background & Rationale

- 'Brain Fog' is a term widely used on social media and by patients to describe their symptoms
- There is not, however, any concrete definition of this term<sup>1</sup>

## Method

We used popular social media platform Reddit to gather information about the experiences of people who have 'Brain Fog'

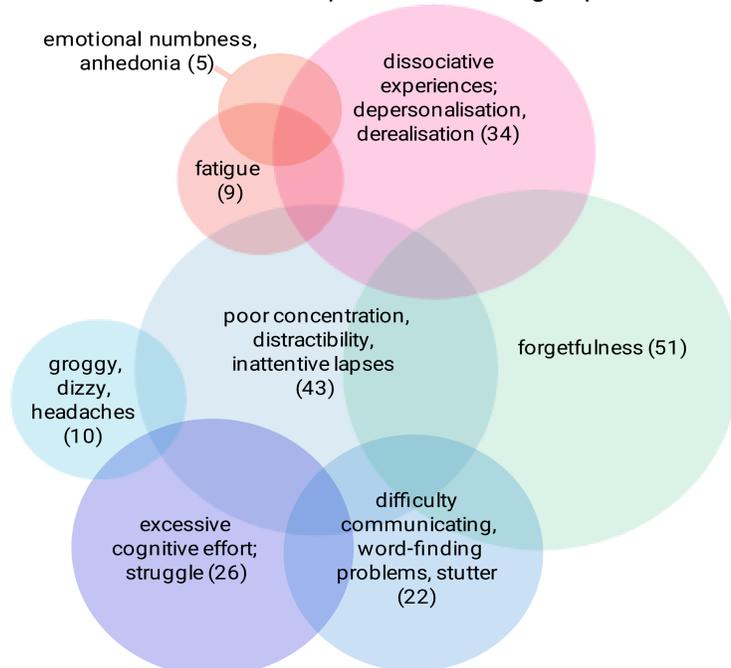
Data were gathered over a period of one week in October 2021

A thematic analysis of containing subreddits, causal attributions and discrete brain fog experiences was undertaken.

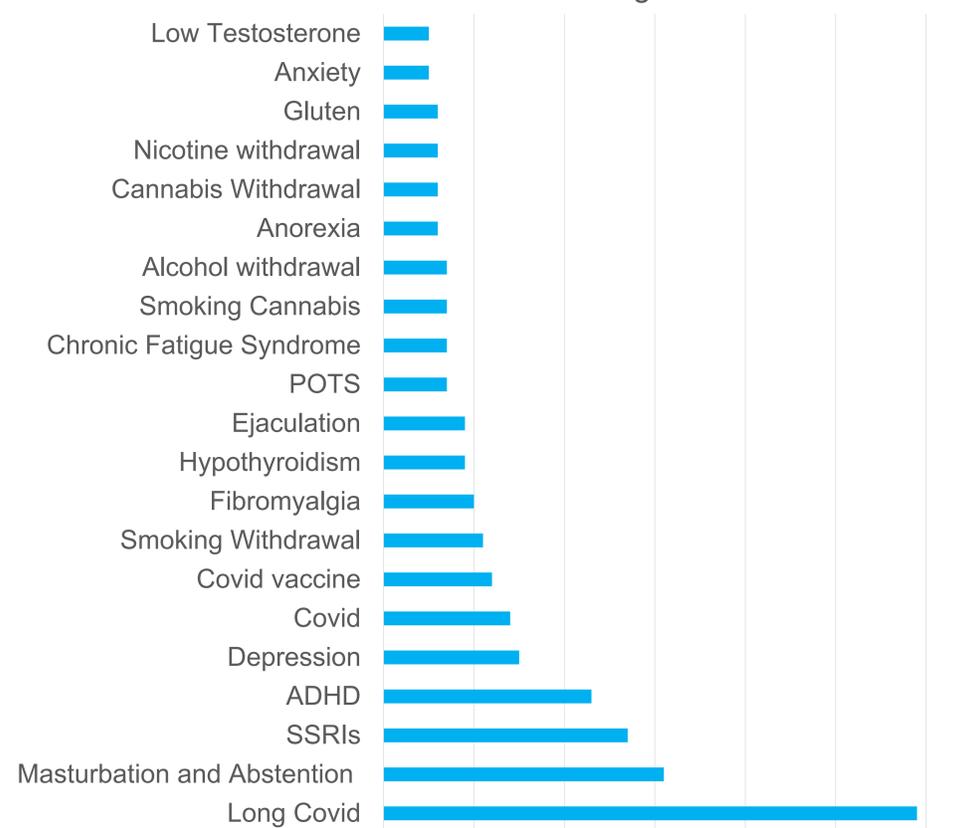
## Results

- 'Brain fog' was discussed in 717 different posts during the one week period, in over 200 different subreddits
- 141 people described first person experiences of 'brain fog'
- 570 posts described a perceived cause of their brain fog, with long covid being the most common cause

Distribution and overlap of 141 brain fog experiences



Attributions of Brain Fog



## Conclusions & Future plans

- 'Brain Fog' is used to describe many different experiences, which do not map in a straightforward way to the domains enquired about during a 'cognitive' clinical examination
- It is used to describe experiences of dissociation, fatigue, and excessive cognitive effort
- Encouraging detailed descriptions of subjective experiences may open new routes into understanding cognitive difficulties in health and disease

## References

1) Krishnan, K., Lin, Y., Prewitt, K. M., & Potter, D. A. (2022). Multidisciplinary Approach to Brain Fog and Related Persisting Symptoms Post COVID-19. *Journal of health service psychology*, 1–8. Advance online publication.