

## **Transcript of Sean Cross on Long Term Conditions**

Hello, my name is Sean Cross. I'm Consultant Liaison Psychiatrist and Clinical Director of The Mind & Body Programme at King's Health Partners, which is based at Guy's and St Thomas', King's College Hospital, South London & Maudsley and our university partner in Kings' College London.

The programme exists to improve the way in which mental and physical healthcare are offered in a better integrated way for the advantage of all patients. We know a fair amount about the increased risk factors associated with developing a severe variant of COVID-19 or even death associated with this new disease. Undoubtedly, increasing age, the presence of a long-term condition, obesity and being a member of a black or minority ethnic group, all convey significant disadvantage.

The way in which each of these many interplay with one another is still only just being understood and it is important that we direct significant research to understanding this better. There are very obvious reasons why the presence of a long-term condition particularly a respiratory or cardiovascular one, such as COPD, heart failure or diabetes, would convey that disadvantage.

When we're struggling with a major outbreak of a respiratory infectious disease if you have problems underlying with your lungs or with your cardiovascular system, then you are going to struggle even more if you catch coronavirus and develop COVID. However, there are other disadvantages associated as well. We know that all those who struggle with a long-term condition are likely to be less healthy in a range of different ways, than those who have no long-term condition.

This can be associated with being unable to do exercise or even the side effects of the medication that doctors prescribe to keep their long-term condition at bay. The psychological impact of the presence a long-term condition has been known about for many years. We know that if you have a long-term condition up to 30% of people also struggle with anxiety and depression, and there's no doubt at all that in the last few weeks and months this anxiety rate has increased significantly, from the fear of developing the disorder itself, through to the struggles that people who are less healthy would have in coping with things like quarantine through to the extreme, in particular those who have multiple long term conditions who have been advised that they're part of a 'shielded group' who will need to stay in self isolation for significantly longer than the rest of us.

All together the presence of a long term condition therefore conveys significant disadvantage in a whole variety of different ways and if you have friends or any family members who struggle with a long term condition, reaching out to them and talking to them about this is very much encouraged, and if you are experiencing any anxiety or depressive symptoms associated with managing your own long term condition, then definitely please, reach out to the team who look after you normally, let them know what you're going through and make sure that they are there to offer you extra help during this time. Thank you