
Marietta Sperry  
*Providence St. Joseph Health*, marietta.sperry@providence.org

Kimberly Kohlieber  
*Providence St. Joseph Health*, kimberly.kohlieber@providence.org

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PSJH SoCal Regional Nursing Research Day
September 17, 2020

Marietta Sperry, MSN, RNC-MNN, CLC (DNP Student)
Kimberly Kohlieber, RN (BSN Student)
SARS-CoV-2 viron is the cause of COVID-19 infections
Declared a “Pandemic” March 2020 with total number-US deaths >188,000

- COVID-19 symptoms are diverse
- Strong relationship exists between COVID-19 infection and anosmia & ageusia

§ Symptom is an early indicator of disease onset = effective COVID-19 screening tool.
§ Sensation returns in most patients once recovered.
• 36-y.o. male, Emergency Room RN, no comorbidities
• Inserted PICC line in known Covid+ patient
• Patient coughed in RN’s face during procedure
• RN was wearing PPE
• Patient had **not** been masked during the procedure
• 11 Days after exposure, RN experienced symptoms of
  • Cough
  • Fever
  • Tested positive for Covid-19
• 12 days after exposure lost sense of smell/taste
• Fatigue, shortness of breath
Literature Review

- **Anosmia** - Loss of sense of smell
- **Ageusia** - Loss of sense of taste
- **Hyposmia** - Reduced ability to smell
- **Hypogeusia** - Reduced ability to taste sweet, sour, bitter, or salty

Aims

- To describe one person’s experience of onset of symptoms with Covid-19
- To understand the degree of sensation loss across the taste spectrum.
Methods

- Interviews with subject
- Taste testing done blindfolded
- Transcribed video recording
- Video recordings data validated by two nurse researchers

Image: https://www.rev.com/blog/how-to-conduct-interviews-in-qualitative-research
Results

SPICES
Curry- “Is it flour? Tastes like ashes in my mouth
Cajun- “It burns, is it black pepper“
Cumin- Could not distinguish anything
Chili powder- could feel texture, could not taste, but noted “my nose is watering”
Cayenne- “I don’t taste anything, it just burns.”
Chipotle- “Is it citrusy? My tongue is screaming…”

WATER FLAVORINGS
Piña Colada- “Is it berry? It tastes like berries
Strawberry Watermelon- “Is it a lemonade?”
Blackberry Lemonade- “Watermelon strawberry, or.. melons?”
Results

LIQUIDS

Flavored oils—“Water”
Worcestershire Sauce—”Is it Vinegar?”
Dijon Mustard— “Soy sauce, jelly, texture is horrible
Catalina salad dressing—”It’s just disgusting, but I don’t know”
Fish sauce— “Awful, is it vinegar
Soy Sauce— “Tastes salty”
Rice Vinegar—”Is it like pickles?”
Tabasco— “Taking my breath away, like a hot sauce?
FRESH FRUITS—14 DIFFERENT TYPES
Was not able to “taste” any flavors, but identified 99% by texture & water content
Outcomes

- Case study made full recovery after 3 weeks of illness and onset of symptoms.
- He has returned work as a nurse.
- Taste and smell sensation returned along with the resolution of other COVID-19 symptoms.
- He denies any lingering effects of the illness.
Limitations

This was a single case study

Future studies:

- Use a validated method of taste testing
- Cleansing the palate: coffee beans for olfactory odors; water crackers or lemon juice sorbet for gustatory tastes.
- Food consistency: fruits were identified by texture
- Explore impact on ability to smell and taste
- Explore correlation of odors/tastes impacted, i.e. mostly salty, sweet, or umami
- Explore commonality of misinterpretation of taste/odor: sour vs bitter
Conclusions/Implications

- Case study was able to detect some salty properties.
- Was able to detect fresh fruit by its texture.
- Loss of sense of taste or smell should be recognized as an early indicator to reduce spread of SARS CoV-2.
- Nurses should continue to practice recommended use of PPE.
- Severity of symptoms varies from person to person.
- Loss of sense of taste and smell was noted to be one of the most common symptoms in quasi experimental studies.
Marietta Sperry, MSN, RNC, MNN, DNP Student (April 2021)

- Cedar Sinai Providence Tarzana/Mother/Baby Unit
- BSN-Providence University, MSN from Indiana State University
- Tarzana for over 30 years, is passionate about EBP/QI/Research.
- Currently pursuing a doctorate; conducting QI project on nursing leadership’s knowledge & support of nursing research
- Work (818) 609 2200

Kimberly Kohlieber, RN BSN student (Dec 2019)

- Cedar Sinai Providence Tarzana/Mother/Baby Unit, L&D, Med/Surg
- Member of Clinical Ladder & Patient Care Committees
- 12 years previously in Health Care industry as SNF Operations Consultant & Certified Software Trainer
- Trained EMT
- Earning BSN from Brigham Young University-Idaho
- Work (818) 609 2200
References