

Review of: "Stellate ganglion block for anosmia and taste disturbance due to Long-COVID"

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Potential competing interests: The author(s) declared that no potential competing interests exist.

This publication represents a case report of a singular patient in a hospital outpatient clinic in Pittsburgh, PA, United States affiliated with a major medical center. The report reviews chronic loss smell (anosmia) and taste disturbance seen with COVID-19 and the successful treatment of this patient with bilateral ultrasound guided stellate ganglion blocks. The principal take away from this case report is the possible use of this therapy, stellate ganglion blocks, for nonconventional use in this population with long COVID symptoms.

The use of stellate ganglion blocks for long COVID symptoms is not necessarily novel as shown in this case series published in the Journal of Neuroimmunology in January 2022 (doi: 10.1016/j.jneuroim.2021.577784). This case series highlighted that two patients who had significant reduction in their long COVID symptoms, including loss of smell and taste disruption. This publication also references a three other reports of patients who receive stellate ganglion blocks which helped with her taste and smell dysfunction, although not COVID-related.

Case reports remain low on the research hierarchy, thus, generalizability of this article is limited. In addition, there is intrinsic selection bias in case reports with only reporting positive outcomes with the audience not knowing the treatment failures. This bias has been well documented prior, as only 5% of case reports and 10% of case series reported treatment failures. The audience here does not know the treatment failures that have occurred with prior patients, if any, treated with stellate ganglion blockade for the specific long COVID symptoms. The reviewer wishes images of the procedure were available for review to help the readers understand the actual technical placement of the block.

Overall, this article is an interesting review of the central mechanisms of some of the effects documented with still a ganglion blockade and postviral symptoms that occur.