The American Journal of Medicine and American Journal of Medicine Open present a joint special issue titled "Long COVID Mechanisms, Risk Factors, and Recovery: From Cells to Society." This issue contributes to the expanding field of long COVID research, a complex condition affecting millions globally. Persistent COVID-19 symptoms, or post-acute sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 infection (PASC), impact multiple physiological systems—such as respiratory, cardiovascular, and neurological—producing a diverse range of symptoms that can endure for months or even years. With current estimates suggesting that over 100 million people worldwide experience long COVID, understanding and addressing this condition is a significant public health priority.

This special issue, guest edited by Dr Lawrence Hayes, provides a multidisciplinary exploration of long COVID, covering cellular mechanisms, risk factors, and recovery pathways. By examining molecular and cellular pathways, immune responses, and inflammation mechanisms, research in this issue seeks to shed light on the biological underpinnings of long COVID, identifying potential biomarkers and treatment targets. In addition to biomedical insights, this issue addresses the broader social and psychological impacts of long COVID. Studies investigate how socioeconomic status, preexisting conditions, age, and other factors contribute to vulnerability. Contributors also explore the mental health and economic toll of long COVID, particularly for disadvantaged populations who may face additional barriers to care. By addressing long COVID from the cellular level to societal impacts, this special issue offers a holistic view of the challenges and needs associated with long COVID care. The issue emphasizes the importance of sustained research and cross-disciplinary collaboration to better understand, treat, and ultimately prevent long COVID, supporting the millions of individuals navigating its long-term consequences.