Introduction:
ICU survivors are discharged from hospital with varying degrees of frailty. The impact of ICU length of stay on the development of post-ICU Syndrome symptoms is still controversial. Through a follow-up study after hospital discharge, we assessed the impact of critical care on the psychological symptoms, functional outcomes and quality of life of patients.

Methods:
We conducted a prospective cohort in 16 Brazilian hospitals including 1616 survivors of an ICU stay > 72h. We compared chronic critically ill patients (ICU stay> 10 days) and the other patients. We performed psychological and functional presentational assessment in patients within 48 hours of ICU discharge and by telephone at 3 and 6 months.

Results:
The prevalence of chronic critically ill patients was 26%. Regarding outcomes, chronic critically ill patients had a higher incidence of depressive symptoms than other patients in the immediate post-ICU discharge (p = 0.004), as well as a higher incidence of muscle weakness (p <0.001). However, in subsequent evaluations, we found no difference between groups regarding psychological symptoms - depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress. Higher functional dependence was observed in critically ill patients, but without difference in the quality of life score, both in the physical (p = 0.87) and mental (p = 0.84) domains.

Conclusion:
Chronic critically ill patients, when compared to patients with stay> 72h, have a higher incidence of depressive symptoms at ICU discharge. This difference disappears in the follow up. Chronic critically ill patients present higher levels of functional dependence but without repercussions on quality of life scores.

References: