**Highlights**

* Mental health impairment is common in COVID-19 convalescents
* Changes in kynurenine and catecholamine pathwaysmight be the pathophysiological link
* Data from two cohorts were analyzed using multi-parameter linear modeling
* Kynurenine/tryptophan was affected independently by inflammation, SARS-CoV-2 infection, age, and mental stress Inflammation was associated with lower serotonin and dopamine sulfate levels