

DELIRIUM, DEPRESSION & DEMENTIA

RECORD / REPORT / ACTION

DELIRIUM—Onset sudden—fluctuates over 24 hours and is reversible

Definition: A medical illness that can be treated with the expectation that the patient will recover.

Symptoms:

- Change in behaviour
- Confusion
- Anger
- Anxiety
- Aggression
- Disorientation
- Restlessness
- Hallucinations
- Sleep disruption

Causes of Delirium

- Infection: urinary tract, chest, skin or other infection
- Low blood sugar levels
- Dehydration
- Constipation
- Pain
- Tiredness
- Change of environment
- Stroke or other diseases of the brain
- Medication—side effects
- Medical illness

What to do:

- Take temperature, pulse, respirations, blood pressure
- Check blood sugar levels
- Test urine
- Check bowel record
- Encourage fluids and record
- Quiet environment
- Calm and reassure resident
- Ensure safety—prevent falls
- Note any signs of pain

DEPRESSION—Onset gradual—duration up to 2 years

Definition: A common mental condition that presents with depressed mood, loss of interest or pleasure.

Symptoms:

- Irritable
- Crying
- Loss of interest
- Tiredness
- Poor concentration
- Hopelessness
- Not speaking
- Fearful
- Anxious
- Sad
- Withdrawn
- Suicidal thoughts
- Weight loss or gain
- Sleep changes

Causes of Depression

Depression can have many causes:

- Genetic / family history
- Psychological
- Social
- Physical illness
- Loss of independence
- Grief

What to do:

- Monitor and record food and fluid intake
- Listen
- Encourage resident to talk
- Spend time with the resident
- Report urgently if patient has suicidal thoughts or is self harming
- If resident unwell see 'Delirium'

DEMENTIA—Deterioration over months or years—ongoing

Definition: A disease of the brain which is progressive and affects memory and thinking.

Symptoms:

- Memory loss
- Disorientation to time, place, or person
- Forgetting to eat and drink
- Forgetting how to wash or dress
- Difficulty performing familiar tasks:
 - > using the toilet
 - > washing and dressing
 - > using fork and knife
- Changes in mood and behaviour
- Changes in personality
- Language problems:
 - > using the wrong words
 - > not able to speak
 - > unable to understand

Causes of Dementia

- Alzheimer's disease
- Stroke
- Parkinson's disease
- Lewy body dementia
- Alcoholic dementia
- Vascular dementia
- Frontal lobe dementia

What to do:

- Respect and know individual needs
- Call the resident by name and approach in clear view
- Orientate to time, date and place
- Consistent daily routines
- Keep the environment calm and quiet
- Use simple instructions
- Repeat requests in a clear and simple manner
- Do not argue
- Stay calm if resident becomes agitated or aggressive
- Monitor food and fluid intake
- Follow management plan for behavioural problems
- Ensure safety/security of resident

PROMPTS

- Have I recorded all behavioural changes or problems
- Have I reported the family's concerns
- What is the care giver follow up plan after reporting this to the RN
- Have the family been notified
- Have I completed all forms and notes and reported concerns to the RN