

Delirium differential diagnosis

Dementia

[Delirium](#) vs. [dementia](#) (critical distinction). Delirium AKA [acute confusional state](#). Distinct from [dementia](#); however, patients with dementia are at increased risk of developing delirium.

A primary disorder of attention that subsequently affects all other aspects of cognition.

Often represents life-threatening illness, e.g. [hypoxia](#), [sepsis](#), [uremic encephalopathy](#), [electrolyte](#) abnormality, drug intoxication, MI. 50% of patients die within 2 yrs of this diagnosis.

Unlike dementia, delirium has an acute onset, motor signs ([tremor](#), [myoclonus](#), [asterixis](#)), slurred speech, altered [consciousness](#) (hyperalert/agitated or lethargic, or fluctuations), [hallucinations](#) may be florid.

[EEG](#) shows pronounced diffuse slowing.

Status epilepticus

[Status epilepticus](#).

Alcohol withdrawal seizures

see [Alcohol withdrawal seizures](#).

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