

DELIRIUM AWARE

AGED RESIDENTIAL CARE: WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?



1

Delirium affects falls

Delirium increases the risk of falls. Difficulty focusing attention? That's going to be a hazard in the early hours of the morning when a resident is trying to find the toilet. What's more, falls and delirium share many of the same risk factors. Research shows that when teams successfully reduce delirium, they also reduce falls.



3

Delirium affects futures

People living with dementia who develop delirium are more likely to need help walking, to be admitted into hospital, or to die within the next year.

Delirium is a worse than usual state of mental confusion that develops quickly. The way that Mrs Jones gets more confused when she has a urinary tract infection? That's probably delirium. The key symptom is a difficulty paying attention that usually fluctuates. People may act and think differently. They may be unusually quiet, or agitated, or a mix of both.

Delirium affects care

We know that 'resistance' to care is more common when a person doesn't understand what is going on and when they are agitated. Delirium can make these sticky situations more likely. While there isn't a lot of research yet, one study found that a third of residents who were distressed about help with cares had signs of delirium.



2

Delirium affects cognition

Delirium is all over in a few days, right? Sadly not always. Some residents living with dementia will not return to their previous level of cognitive functioning after having delirium, and delirium can speed up their cognitive decline. For residents without dementia, delirium can increase the risk of dementia in the future.



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