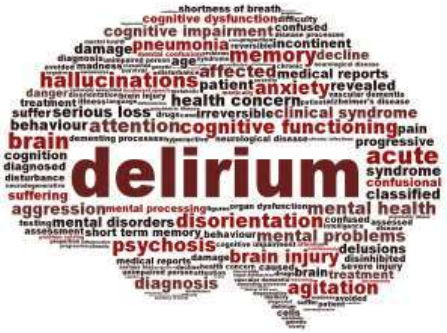
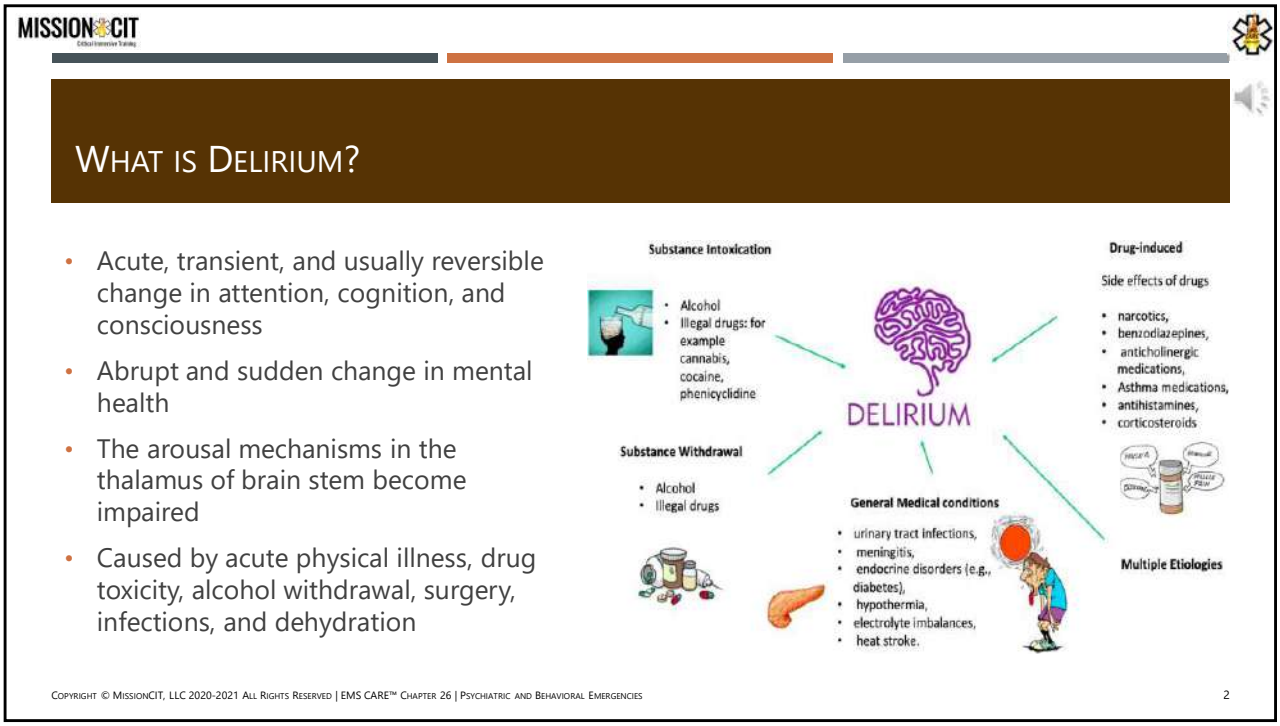




DELIRIUM

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Welcome to this lesson about delirium, its symptoms, and what is the best prehospital care you can give in such situations.
So, let's get started!

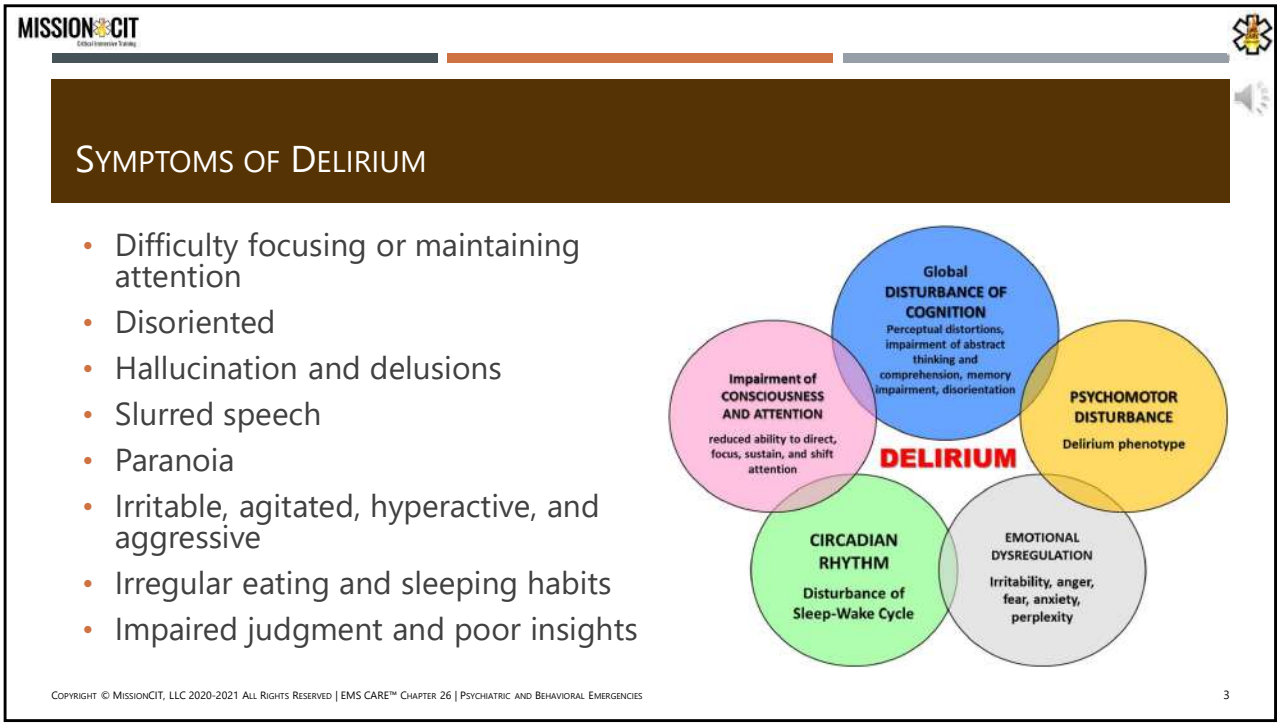


According to the MSD Manual, delirium is an acute, transient, usually reversible, fluctuating disturbance in attention, cognition, and consciousness levels. This is more an abrupt and sudden change in a person's mental state that causes mental confusion, and sometimes, even emotional disruptions.

It can occur at any age, but is more likely among older people. It can also be caused by acute physical illness, drug toxicity, alcohol withdrawal, surgery, infections, and even dehydration.

From a pathophysiological standpoint, the arousal

mechanisms present in the thalamus and brain stem become impaired.

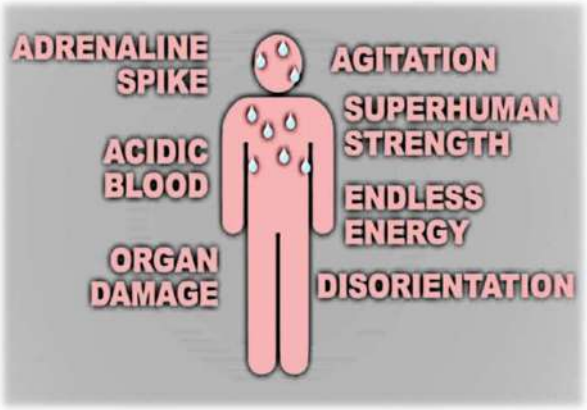


One of the key symptoms of delirium is difficulty focusing or maintaining attention. Sometimes, the consciousness of patients also fluctuates, as they can become disoriented with respect to time, place, or person. Hallucinations, delusions, slurred speech, and paranoia are also common among such patients. Sometimes, patients may also become irritable, agitated, hyperactive, and aggressive. Old people with delirium, on the other hand, can become quiet and withdrawn. Other prominent signs include irregular eating and sleeping habits, impaired judgment, and poor insights.

MISSION CIT

EXCITED DELIRIUM

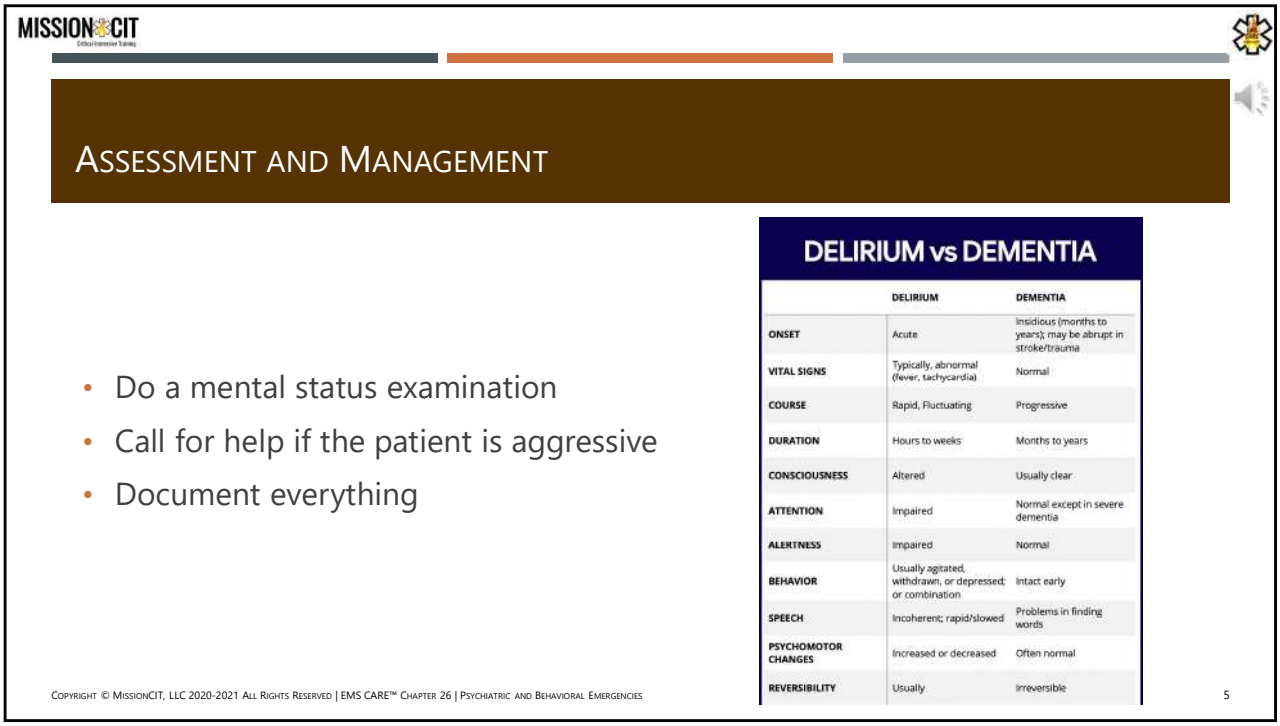
- Sudden condition characterized by agitation, aggression, and distress
- May cause sudden death
- Likely due to changes to the dopamine hormone
- Panic, extreme hyperactivity, and violent behavior
- Avoid restraints
- Can pose danger to self and others



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Excited delirium or agitated delirium is a sudden condition characterized by agitation, aggression, acute distress, and even sudden death. All of this can happen in a prehospital setting, so as soon as you identify it, call for advanced life support immediately. It is typically associated with the use of certain drugs that alter the dopamine levels of an individual. When this hormone is altered, the individual is aggressive, exhibits signs of panic, shouts, engages in violent behavior, and is extremely hyperactive. All this hyperactivity leads to sudden respiratory arrest and eventually death. Since

the pathophysiology of delirium is not fully understood, restraining the person suddenly increases the chances of death. So, use restraints sparingly, and only when you need it the most. Be aware of the possibility of sudden death when you restrain that individual. At the same time, the patient can pose serious harm to self and others too. And worse, the patient may not be in a position for any verbal de-escalation situation. Honestly, this is a difficult situation for prehospital care, so your actions will depend on the level of delirium, age of the patient, the riskiness posed, and other pertinent factors. Just keep in mind that excited delirium can cause death when restrained suddenly, and the patient can be dangerous.



Even if the signs of delirium are obvious, it still makes sense to do a mental status examination to get a comprehensive diagnosis. Examining the patient's history and talking to family members and caregivers can give insights into the patient's mental condition. When a patient exhibits all the symptoms of delirium, call for help right away. If the patient seems aggressive and violent, never hesitate to reach out to law enforcement. Remember, your safety is the highest priority. As always, document everything you see, all conversations with patients, caregivers, and family members, anything you

see in the place such as pills and syringes, actions taken by you and others, and every small information, so it can help hospital staff to provide the most appropriate care. With this, we come to the end of this lesson on delirium, and in the next one, Justin will take you through handling suicides.