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Delirium in palliative medicine: A review

Delirium is a neuropsychiatric diagnosis that is very common in general medical and surgical populations but of particular importance in palliative medicine. The incidence in this population ranges from 28-88% depending on the stage of illness with the higher number occurring at end-of-life. It is a clinical syndrome with myriad presentations often divided in to motoric subtypes-hypoactive, hyperactive and mixed. It is underdiagnosed particularly the hypoactive subgroup which may be more common in the palliative medicine population. The presence of delirium is a predictor of increased morbidity and mortality, longer hospitalization and more likely discharge to a nursing facility. This presentation will review the pathophysiology, etiology, diagnosis and treatment of delirium in the palliative medicine population.

Biography

Susan B LeGrand is a Medical Oncologist and Specialist in Palliative Medicine. She is in active practice of both fields. Her residency training was at the University of Texas, Houston and the University of Arizona Cancer Center. She has published numerous articles and spoke widely on palliative medicine topics.

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