

# Italian intersociety consensus on prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of delirium in hospitalized older persons.

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## **Abstract**

Delirium is a severe neuropsychiatric syndrome characterized by inattention and global cognitive dysfunction in the setting of an acute medical illness, medical complication, drug intoxication, or drug withdrawal. The most important risk factors are advanced age and dementia, whereas pain, dehydration, infections, stroke, metabolic disturbances, and surgery are the most common triggering factors. Although delirium is a common clinical syndrome in different settings of care (acute care hospitals, inpatient rehabilitation facilities, nursing homes, and hospices), it often remains under-recognized, poorly understood, and inadequately managed. There exists a clear need for improved understanding to overcome cultural stereotypes, and for the development and dissemination of a comprehensive model of implementation of general good practice points. A network of Italian national scientific societies was thus convened (1) to develop a collaborative multidisciplinary initiative report on delirium in elderly hospitalized patients, (2) to focus the attention of health care personnel on prevention, diagnosis, and therapy of patients suffering from delirium, and (3) to make the health services research community and policy-makers more aware of the potential risks of this condition providing a reference for training activities and data collection.

**KEYWORDS:** Clinical management; Cognitive decline; Consensus; Delirium

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