

## **SIGN 157**

# **Diagnosis and management of delirium**

## A national clinical guideline

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### **Background**

The SIGN guideline on the diagnosis and management of delirium will be published on 13 March 2019.

This is a new evidence-based guideline which builds on the TIME bundle and delirium management pathway developed by the Scottish Delirium Association and Healthcare Improvement Scotland.

### **Why we need the guideline**

Delirium is among the most common of medical emergencies. Prevalence is around 20% in adult acute general medical patients, and higher in particular clinical groups, such as patients in intensive care units. It affects up to 50% of those who have hip fracture and up to 75% in intensive care. Despite that, it is underdiagnosed and the treatment of patients with established delirium is variable. Preventative measures can reduce the incidence of delirium, yet few clinical units in Scotland have a formal delirium risk-reduction programme.

### **Remit**

This guideline provides recommendations for best practice for adults with, or at risk of, delirium, across all settings (home, long-term care, hospital, and hospice). It includes:

- detection
- non-pharmacological and pharmacological risk reduction
- non-pharmacological and pharmacological management
- follow up.

The guideline excludes delirium secondary to alcohol and illicit substances use, and paediatric delirium.

### **Target users of the guideline**

This guideline will be of interest to primary and secondary healthcare professionals, community and care home staff involved in the care of patients at risk of, or experiencing, delirium, as well as patients and carers.

### **The challenge for healthcare professionals**

All healthcare staff having contact with acutely unwell patients need to assume responsibility for detecting and treating delirium, as well as aiming to reduce the risk of it occurring. Those working in the long-term care environment should be able to recognise delirium, reduce risk, and monitor those in their care to resolve delirium.

### **Implementing the guideline**

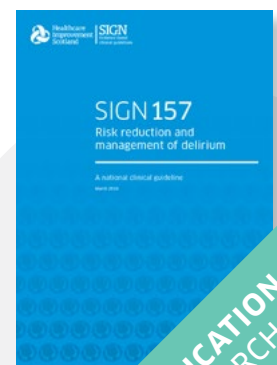
The implementation strategy for this guideline encompasses:

- guideline, quick reference guide and supporting materials available for download from the SIGN website
- identification of the key recommendations that should be prioritised for implementation
- description of recommendations likely to have significant resource implications
- key points for audit
- electronic dissemination of the full guideline to all NHS boards
- patient versions of the guideline for: adults; parents and carers; and children
- iPhone, iPad and Android apps.

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