



GERIATRIC EDUCATION SERIES DELIRIUM

DELIRIUM CASE STUDY – MR. SMITH

Mr. Smith is an 80-year-old man who lives alone. His wife passed three months ago unexpectedly due to a stroke. He has three children who live out of town and are very involved with him on a regular basis. He is active on a regular basis with swimming 3 mornings a week and he manages to keep up with the housekeeping and home renovations. He is independent with his ADLs and IADLs. Mr. Smith lives in a two-story home with laundry in the basement. Over the last six months, he has been more forgetful of recent conversations, misplacing bills and leaving food items out that require refrigeration.

One morning, as he went out to clean the driveway, he sustained a fall. His neighbors, who were outside, came to assist him. As he was unable to get up, they called an ambulance. In the Emergency Department, Mr. Smith was diagnosed with a significant vertebral fracture that required surgical intervention by the orthopedic/spine team. He was admitted to hospital for a week where he started to recover from his surgery and receive physiotherapy. As part of his treatment plan, he was required to wear a thoracic brace for three months. His children did not come to town; however, they called him daily and spoke with his care team.

Mr. Smith's was discharged to a Retirement Home (RH) as he would not be able to manage his personal care or home responsibilities. A follow-up appointment with the surgeon was booked for 6 weeks post-op. A referral to homecare for physiotherapy was initiated prior to his discharge.

During his stay at the RH, Mr. Smith received assistance for his bathing and meal set-up. The RH also dispensed his medications. At the end of the second week, his daughter came to visit him from Calgary. She arrived to his room and he quickly recognized her and seemed happy to see her. He was sitting up in a chair having his lunch. While she was putting away her coat, she looked over and **he had fallen asleep**. She went to wake him, and he woke easily. He seemed **"off", slow to respond and a little confused**. She asked the nurse to come see him. Mr. Smith's daughter was told that **he had been like this for the last two weeks**, since he arrived from hospital. His vital signs were all within normal limits.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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| IDENTIFY | 1. What is going on? |
| SCREEN | 2. What are Mr. Smith's risk factors for delirium? |
| ASSESS | 3. How would you assess for delirium? |
| INTERVENE | 4. What strategies and interventions would you recommend? |
| APPLY | 5. How would you apply this to your work context? |