Delirium is an acute disturbance of consciousness, attention and cognition that tends to fluctuate during the course of the day. Patients with delirium are at a greater risk of harm. We can improve hospital care of patients with delirium.

**Delirium is common in hospital**
- 10% of patients aged 70 and over have delirium on admission to hospital
- Up to 80% of patients aged 70 and over in intensive care have delirium
- Patients with dementia are 6x more likely to develop delirium

**Patients with delirium are at a greater risk of harm**
- 30-40% Delirium is easier to prevent than to treat. 30-40% of cases are preventable
- 50% of the time delirium is misdiagnosed, not detected or not identified in hospital
- Not recognising delirium is a safety and quality issue
- Patients with delirium have more falls, pressure injuries, functional decline and ongoing cognitive difficulties
- Patients with delirium are more likely to die
- 45% of delirium in older patients is unresolved on discharge from hospital
- Patients with delirium are 2x more likely to go into residential care prematurely after discharge

**We can improve hospital care of patients with delirium**
- Be alert to delirium and the risk of harm for patients
- Recognise and respond to patients with delirium
- Provide safe and high-quality care tailored to the needs of patients with delirium

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AUSTRALIAN COMMISSION ON SAFETY AND QUALITY IN HEALTH CARE