Lecture Topic: Altered Mental Status in Older ED Patients

1. An 80 year old woman is brought to the ER by her daughter because the patient was noted to be confused when the daughter was visiting her after work. Patient lives alone and has a past medical history of spinal stenosis, osteoporosis, falls, and mild cognitive impairment. She has fallen multiple times in the past 6 months, but has had no fractures. She visited her PCP two days ago, complaining about severe back pain and difficulty sleeping at night. She was prescribed cyclobenzaprine, low-dose amitriptyline, and PRN oxycodone. Physical examination, including a neurological exam, is unrevealing. Which of the following is the most likely diagnosis?
   A. Opiate overdose due to excessive use of oxycodone
   B. Subdural hematoma
   C. Medication-induced delirium
   D. Alcohol intoxication
   E. Dementia-related sundown phenomenon

   **Answer:** C

2. An 82 year old patient is brought to the ER with acute change in mental status. You utilize Confusion Assessment Method (CAM) to screen for the presence of delirium. Which of the following meets the CAM criteria for delirium?
   A. Acute onset, altered level of consciousness, and memory impairment.
   B. Acute onset, disorganized thinking, and inattention.
   C. Acute onset, altered level of consciousness, and executive dysfunction.
   D. Acute onset, inattention, and hallucinations.
   E. Acute onset, hypervigilant, and disorganized thinking.

   **Answer:** B

3. A 78 year old patient is brought to the ER with altered mental status and is diagnosed with delirium. Which of the following diagnostic tests is not appropriate for initial evaluation of the patient?
   A. CBC.
   B. Electrolytes.
   C. Blood sugar.
   D. Urine analysis.
   E. CT of the head.

   **Answer:** E