Hypoactive delirium can be more difficult to recognise than hyperactive delirium, and is associated with worse outcomes. This infographic summarises the main differences between the two forms of delirium.

Delirium

According to the DSM-5* classification, to be diagnosed with delirium a patient must display all of the following:

- **Disturbance in attention**
  - Ask patient to name the months of the year backwards

- **Disturbance in awareness**
  - Ask patient their age, date of birth, place and current year

- **An additional disturbance**
  - Such as defect in: memory, visuospatial ability, language, perception

- **Acute change**
  - Develops over a short period of time
  - Sudden change from baseline
  - Fluctuates during the course of a day
  - May require information from other staff, carers, or case notes

- **No better explanation**
  - These disturbances are not better explained by a pre-existing, established or evolving neurocognitive disorder or coma state

Evidence of cause

Evidence that disturbance is a consequence of one or more of:

- Another medical condition
- Substance intoxication
- Substance withdrawal
- Exposure to a toxin

Hyperactive delirium

- Predominantly restless and agitated
- Increased motor activity
- Loss of control of activity
- Restlessness
- Wandering

Mixed motor type

- Evidence of both subtypes in the previous 24 hours

Hypoactive delirium

- Predominantly drowsy and inactive
- Decreased activity
- Decreased action speed
- Decreased speed of speech
- Decreased amount of speech
- Reduced awareness of surroundings
- Listlessness
- Withdrawal

Adverse consequences

All types of delirium

- Reduced functional ability
- Onset of dementia
- Increased mortality
- Admission to long term care
- Distress
- Increased length of stay
- Hospital acquired complications
- Pressure sores
- Incontinence
- Falls

Hypoactive delirium

- + Greater mortality
- Less reversibility
- + Greater length of stay
- Worse quality of life
- + Greater frequency of falls

* DSM-5 = Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (fifth edition)