**CONFUSION, ANXIETY AND TERMINAL RESTLESSNESS**

What about the terminology? What do these words mean to us and to our patients? Are we speaking the same language?

**CONFUSION / DELIRIUM**

Manifest as restlessness and agitation

Fluctuation

Disorientation

Memory impairment

Disorganised thinking

Reduced attention

Altered arousal

Increased or decreased psychomotor activity

Disturbance of sleep

Altered affect

Altered perception (hallucinations etc)

Motor signs (tremor etc)

**Causes**

Direct CNS causes – RICP - cerebral metastatic disease

Indirect – drug toxicity

Metabolic encephalopathy

Electrolyte / biochemical upset

Treatment side effects

Infection

Haematological

Nutritional

Constipation / urinary retention

Changed environment / night

Unfamiliar excessive stimuli

Depression / anxiety

Fatigue

**Assessment**

History

Examination

Investigation – appropriate to condition, life expectancy etc

**Interventions**

Correct the correctable

Treat the treatable (if possible / appropriate)

Regular contact / familiar faces

**Drug treatments**

Haloperidol

Levomepromazine

Midazolam

**ANXIETY**

‘Ask not what disease the person has but rather what person the disease has’.

William Osler

Huge concerns around the ‘future narrative’ – unknown / uncertainty / absence

How the person is will reflect their personality, past history, situation, socio-economic status, culture etc

Place on illness / disease trajectory

Titrate information to needs

Options – no single ‘right way’

Distress – prevalence 21-79%!

**Causes**

Organic – brain tumour

Symptoms – related to disease / Rx / other conditions

Drugs (including drug withdrawal)

Psychiatric problems

Impaired role performance

Illness related fears

Psycho social anxieties

For others – spouse / children

Financial

‘Bad news’ (is bad news!)

Existential angst

Fear of loneliness

Lack of meaning

Fear of death

Illusion of freedom of choice

**Coping mechanisms**

Good and bad copers!

Optimistic / self-confident / pragmatic

Self pity!!

Acceptance

Humour

Denial

**Assessment**

Need to look for it!

Past history / symptoms / drug history

Open ended – general overall enquiry into where concerns might lie

Asking about what patient wants and is fearful of not getting

Vaguer questions

Whats been your major problem?

How is your morale considering what has happened?

Any advice for others starting out in the same situation?

**Interventions**

Regular contact

Listen – don’t reassure too soon or falsely

Correct any misconceptions

Realistic but maintain hope(?)

Treat physical symptoms

Allow patients own coping strategies – anger, denial, regression etc

Remember the family and professional carers!

Issues of ‘control’

**Drug treatments**

Benzodiazepines

Midazolam

Lorazepam

Neuroleptics

Haloperidol

Methotrimeprazine

Antihistamine

Hydroxyzine

Panic

**TERMINAL RESTLESSNESS**

Quite common - a third to two fifths?

Frightening and distressing

**Causes**

Physical discomfort

Bladder or bowel distension

Breathlessness

Anoxia

Nicotine / alcohol / ‘drug’ withdrawal

Infection

Drugs

Dehydration

Cerebral oedema

Heart failure

Brain tumour

CVA

Biochemical imbalance

Hepatorenal failure

Unresolved ‘issues’

**Treatment**

Midazolam

Haloperidol

Levomepromazine