Delirium is a cognitive disorder characterized by acute onset, fluctuating course, and reversible symptoms. It is common in hospitalized patients, especially those aged 70 or older. Delirium affects 15 to 50% of hospitalized people aged 70 or older. It is more common among elderly people who are admitted to hospital.

Causes and risk factors of delirium include:
1. **Medications**, especially anticholinergic medications, and **multiple medications**
2. **Dehydration**
3. **Vision impairment**
4. **Neurological conditions**
5. **Infections**
6. **Cognitive decline**
7. **Dementia**
8. **Anxiety**
9. **Fatigue**
10. **Malnutrition**
11. **Pain**
12. **Injury**
13. **Inadequate communication**
14. **Environmental factors**
15. **Psychological factors**
16. **Social isolation**
17. **Personal history of cognitive impairment**
18. **Advanced age**
19. **Chronic medical conditions**
20. **Psychological distress**
21. **Functional limitations**
22. **Sleep disturbances**
23. **Cognitive impairments**
24. **Depression**
25. **Obesity**

Symptoms of delirium include:
- **Confusion**
- **Hallucinations**
- **Irritability**
- **Agitation**
- **Disorientation**
- **Changes in level of consciousness**
- **Disorganized thinking**
- **Poor attention**
- **Poor memory**
- **Difficulty with communication**
- **Changes in behavior**
- **Changes in sleep patterns**
- **Changes in appetite**
- **Changes in cognitive function**
- **Changes in mood**

Delirium is associated with significant morbidity and mortality. It is a reversible condition that can be prevented, detected, and managed. Early identification and intervention can improve outcomes, reduce hospital stays, and decrease the risk of cognitive decline and dementia.

Management strategies for delirium are focused on prevention and symptom management. This includes:
- **Identifying and treating underlying causes**
- **Providing adequate hydration and nutrition**
- **Avoiding medications that contribute to delirium**
- **Promoting adequate sleep**
- **Improving communication and social contact**
- **Managing pain and agitation**
- **Providing psychological support**
- **Implementing physical restraints and positioning**
- **Promoting cognitive exercises**
- **Providing patient and family education**

Delirium costs $143 billion to $163 billion per year in the United States. It can cost each elderly patient an extra $60,000 to $64,000 per hospital stay. Post-hospital treatment for delirium also incurs additional costs.

Preventing delirium in elderly patients admitted to a district general hospital can lead to significant cost savings. Implementing evidence-based practices such as the Delirium Reduction Programme can help reduce the incidence of delirium in elderly patients.

In conclusion, delirium is a serious and treatable condition that requires a multidisciplinary approach to management. Recognizing the risk factors and symptoms of delirium is crucial for early intervention and preventing adverse outcomes.