Is delirium different when it occurs in dementia? A study using the delirium rating scale
Delirium superimposed on dementia has phenomenological differences compared to delirium in the absence of dementia. There are no significant differences in the severity of hallucinations, delusions, psychomotor behavior, or sleep–wake cycle disturbances. However, level of disturbance in consciousness (arousal and awareness) and impairments in multiple cognitive domains are significantly more severe in patients with delirium superimposed on dementia. Seizures may occur in delirium, particularly among patients with alcohol or sedative-hypnotic withdrawal, cocaine intoxication, head trauma, hypoglycemia, strokes, or extensive burns. Delirium in the medically ill is also associated with an increased mortality rate. Elderly patients who develop delirium during a hospitalization have been estimated to have a 22%–76% chance of dying during that hospitalization. Patients who develop delirium during a hospitalization also have a very high rate of death during the months following discharge. When these are present they may help confirm the relationship between delirium and the general medical condition. General medical conditions commonly causing delirium are shown in Table 1.

Delirium vs. Dementia - how can these illnesses be different from each other? Learn about their distinctive points through this article today. The most important distinction that needs to be made is that delirium is something that occurs suddenly whereas dementia progresses over time. Delirium is an acute disease whereas dementia is a progressive one. Sometimes a patient can develop symptoms of delirium while suffering from dementia at the same time. Another early sign is when your problem-solving skills start to suffer. If you used to be able to follow things closely and formulate plans, but now you're having difficulties, it may be an indication for concern. Sometimes people have trouble following television programs or movies when they are in the early stages of dementia.