

Delirium is common in older gastrointestinal surgery patients

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A new analysis indicates that delirium commonly develops in the older patients who have undergone gastrointestinal surgery. Among 11 studies analyzed, the incidence of postoperative delirium ranged from 8.2 to 54.4 percent.

Risk factors for delirium in these patients include advanced age, poor physical status, low [body mass index](#), low blood levels of albumin, hypotension, the need for a blood transfusion, and history of alcohol excess. Patients with [postoperative delirium](#) tended to stay in the hospital longer and die earlier than patients without delirium.

"The importance of delirium in critical care and older adult patients is well recognized. We have demonstrated that delirium is not exclusive to 'medical' healthcare settings; our review summarizes the available evidence in general surgery and highlights a number of areas where more research is urgently needed," said Dr. Anna Scholz, lead author of the *British Journal of Surgery* review and meta-analysis.

The analysis is part of a special issue dedicated to the subject of surgical care for elderly patients. Topics include individualizing surgery for [elderly patients](#) with cancer, making the elderly fit for surgery, and tailoring emergency general surgery for geriatric patients.

More information: A. F. M. Scholz et al. Systematic review and meta-analysis of risk factors for postoperative delirium among older patients undergoing gastrointestinal surgery, *British Journal of Surgery* (2016). [DOI: 10.1002/bjs.10062](https://doi.org/10.1002/bjs.10062)

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