

The Worried Sailor

Anxiety Case

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Presentation

- 84-year-old Navy veteran with long history of dementia
- About a week ago began pacing, ringing his hands, looks distressed, cannot focus on any conversation
- When asked what's wrong says "I don't know"
- Family visits help some in reducing anxiety

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Medical History

- Lung disease
- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Left knee replacement
- Arthritis
- Enlarged prostate
- History of skin cancer
- Constipation
- Urinary incontinence

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Medications

- Oxygen
- Atrovent
- Metoprolol
- Acetaminophen
- Ultram
- Flomax
- Aricept
- Namenda
- Colace
- Senna

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Recent Changes

- No environmental changes
- Same roommate
- Staff the same
- Family visits regularly and when called
- No health downturns noted
- No ER or hospital visits
- No new medications or treatments

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Medical Assessment

- Examination unchanged
 - Lung function
 - Oxygen saturation stable
 - Laboratory
 - All tests are normal
 - No falls
 - Pain scale scores are fine
 - No depression

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Medical Management

- Lung medications
 - May cause some anxiety, unfortunately
- Worry about use of benzodiazepines in lung disease (alprazolam, lorazepam, clonazepam)
 - May slow breathing
 - Could cause confusion, falls
 - Use very low dose
- Buspirone may be added
 - No falls, sedation, confusion or breathing problems
 - Takes weeks to work, however

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Nursing Management

- Patient routinely exercised by walking with staff every two hours when awake
- Sleep chart kept overnight to assess for insomnia
- Patient encouraged to be involved in activities that he enjoys, such as recalling his days in the navy
- Staff involve the resident in calm, repetitive activities like folding towels and shining silverware

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Nursing Management

- Use brief simple relaxation exercises or muscle relaxation
- Have patient avoid stimulants, especially caffeine
- Reassess environmental stimuli
 - Dining area, large groups
 - Too isolated
- Evaluate for delusions that cause fear
 - Food is poisoned, family all died

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Outcome

- Only as needed anxiety reducing medication added
- Exercise, activity with staff helped
 - Enjoyed dusting furniture in the day room.
- Having more trouble remembering family visits
- He feels they have abandoned him
 - Put sign in sheet in room
 - Family happy to call to calm him down
- Anxiety greatly reduced

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