

Confusion Assessment Method (CAM) Algorithm

Note: The diagnosis of delirium requires a present or abnormal rating for criteria 1, 2, and 3 or 4.

1. Acute onset and fluctuating Course

Indicated by positive responses to the following questions:

- Is there evidence of an acute change in mental status from the patient's baseline?

And

- Did this behavior fluctuate during the past day-that is tend to come and go or increase and decrease in severity?

2. Inattention

Indicated by a positive response to the following question:

- Does the patient have difficulty focusing attention –for example, being easily distractible or having difficulty keeping track of what is being said?

3. Disorganized thinking

Indicated by a positive response to the following question:

- Is the patient's speech disorganized or incoherent, with rambling or irrelevant conversation, unclear or illogical flow of ideas, or unpredictable switching from subject to subject?

4. Altered level of consciousness

Indicated by any response other than alert (normal) to the following question:

- Overall, how would you rate this patient's level of consciousness?
 - Alert (normal)
 - Vigilant (hyperalert)
 - Lethargic (drowsy, easily aroused)
 - Stupor (difficult to arouse)
 - Coma (unarousable)

Adapted from Inouye SK, van Dyck CH, Alessi CA, et al: Clarifying Confusion: the Confusion Assessment Method: A New Method for Detection of Delirium. *Ann Intern Med* 113:941-948,1990