

Onset	Vague, insidious onset, symptoms progress slowly	Sudden onset over hours and days with fluctuations
Symptoms	Symptoms may go unnoticed for years; may attempt to hide cognitive problems or may be unaware of them; often disoriented to time, place, and person; impaired short-term memory and information processing; confusion is often worse in the evening (referred to as “sundowning”)	Often disoriented to time, place, and person; impaired short-term memory loss and information processing; confusion is often worse in the evening
Consciousness	Normal	Impaired attention/alertness
Mental state	Possibly labile mood, consistently decreased cognitive performance	Emotional lability with anxiety, fear, depression, aggression, variable cognitive performance
Delusions/hallucinations	Common	Common
Psychomotor disturbance	Psychomotor disturbance in later stages	Psychomotor disturbance present—hyperactive, purposeless, or apathetic

Table 14.4 Comparison of Dementia and Delirium