Mad As A Hatter...Red as a Beet...

A CASE PRESENTATION
EMS Radio reports:

- 34 year old male
- Found by his girlfriend to be confused, delirious
- Possible ETOH/Drug withdrawal
- Blood Sugar = 176
Pt arrives in the ED:

- Alert
- Answering questions with incomprehensible sentences
- Confused
- Intermittently follows simple commands
- Anxious
- Able to move self from EMS stretcher to ED stretcher

Per EMS:
- Girlfriend hasn’t seen him in 5 days
- Found him today to be confused
- Girlfriend says he has been trying to quit drinking ETOH
- EMS noted cold medication scattered around the house
Initial assessment:

- Neuro assessment:
  - Alert
  - Disoriented to person, place, time, and event
  - Equal strength in all extremities, but “weaker than expected”
  - Extremities were shaky
  - Pupils were very dilated
  - Complains of Headache

- GI:
  - nauseated
Assessment continued...

- **Cardiac:**
  - Normal sinus rhythm
  - Rate in the 80’s
  - BP =138/89
- **Blood sugar 156**
- **Pain:**
  - Headache
  - Back pain
Girlfriend arrive at ED...

- Has been attempting to stop drinking
- + withdrawal symptoms
- Fell and struck his head

Continued patient assessment:
- Becoming more restless
- Picking
- Confused
- Continues to c/o severe headache
- CIWA protocol started
Alcohol Withdrawal vs Head Trauma

- Alcohol Withdrawal
  - Confusion
  - Anxiety/restlessness
  - Nausea
  - Tremors
  - Headache

- Head Trauma
  - Recent fall this am
  - Headache
  - CT of head ordered
  - CT results = NORMAL
Patient spikes a fever of 103.8
Tachycardia 110-130 bpm
Skin is flushed...Face is bright red!
Hot to the touch
Dry mucous membranes

Continued patient assessment:
Now having visual hallucinations as well
Tremors improved
HA improving
Changing gears... interventions

- IVF
- Additional labs (lactate, blood culture)
- Isolation
- Lumbar puncture
  - Ketamine 300mg IVP
  - Lorazepam 4mg IVP
  - Unsuccessful
- Unable to urinate
  - Straight cathed for dark orange urine
- Sitter at bedside for continued restlessness
Eureka!!

- A new idea
- EMS observation
- Could it be anticholinergic overdose?
It Fits the Bill

- Face and trunk of body are bright red... "Red as a beet"
- Dry mucous membranes and skin... "Dry as a bone"
- Febrile, hot to the touch... "Hot as a hare"
- Dilated pupils... "Blind as a bat"
- Delirium, hallucinations, restlessness... "Mad as a hatter"
- Urinary retention... "Full as a flask"