

Transcript of Ruth Cairns on More on Older Adults

In the acute hospital setting we're seeing complex grief reactions in older people who have lost a spouse unexpectedly and often at a point that they've been unwell themselves with coronavirus. This has brought unforeseen challenges with it because they haven't been able to spend time with their loved one while they were dying or at the time of death, and they then have been unable to have support from other family members due to the restrictions on hospital visiting during the pandemic. We've also seen some really significant adjustment disorders with severe depressive and anxiety symptoms in response to the uncertainty around the current situation and, as I've already talked about, social isolation which is a common experience for people in this group.

So unfortunately – so these are experiences that lots of people are having but they are particularly marked in those who are vulnerable to anxiety and depression with past histories of these symptoms or disorders. Unfortunately, we've also seen some very serious suicide attempts in older adults over the last few weeks and again social isolation, loss of normal routines, structures, support networks, and in some cases, difficulties in accessing healthcare, have been contributing factors.

The other seen thing that we've seen a lot of in the acute hospital setting is complex presentations of delirium in people with COVID and we're seeing this as taking a long time to resolve in some cases and so the longer-term consequences of this are unknown at present.