



**Case 35 (November 13 2008):** [N Engl J Med. 359\(20\):2155-2164](#)

**Demographic:** Male, 65 yrs, America North, General speciality

**Clinical features extracted from the case and entered into the query box:**

confusion  
memory loss  
decreased energy  
change in mood  
word-finding difficulty  
intermittent agitation  
amnesia

**Synonyms used by Isabel for the above query:**

memory loss  
amnesia  
change in mood  
confusion

**STOP !**

**Before you read further you might want to construct your own:**

- Complete differential diagnosis
- Final diagnosis

**In the following section you will find:**

- The differential diagnosis constructed by the MGH panel
- The final diagnosis of the case
- Which of the MGH panel differential diagnoses did Isabel contain
- Did Isabel suggest the Final diagnosis

**Differential Diagnoses considered by the MGH panel:**

Herpes Simplex Virus Encephalitis  
Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome  
Traumatic Brain Injury

**Final Diagnosis of the case according to NEJM:**

Paraneoplastic Limbic Encephalitis.

**Differential Diagnoses of the case as given by Isabel:**

Herpes Simplex Virus Encephalitis – under Infectious diseases heading  
Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome – under Nutritional disorders heading  
Traumatic Brain Injury – under Trauma injuries heading

**Was the final diagnosis given by Isabel:**

Yes, Paraneoplastic Limbic Encephalitis – under Infectious diseases heading

**Isabel Differential:**

+ NERVOUS SYSTEM DISORDERS << click to expand	- INFECTIOUS DISEASES >> click to collapse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Transient Ischemic Attack</a> ? RD</li> <li><a href="#">CVA / Stroke</a> ? RD</li> <li><a href="#">Frontotemporal Dementia</a> ? RD</li> <li><a href="#">Alzheimer's Disease</a> ? RD</li> <li><a href="#">Vascular Dementia</a> ? RD</li> <li><a href="#">Human Prion Diseases</a> ? RD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Measles Infection</a> ? RD</li> <li><a href="#">Viral Meningoencephalitis</a> ? RD</li> <li><a href="#">Arboviral Infections / Encephalitides</a> ? RD</li> <li><a href="#">Fungal Meningitis</a> ? RD</li> <li><a href="#">Lyme Disease</a> ? RD</li> <li><a href="#">Limbic Encephalitis</a> ○ RD</li> </ul>
+ PSYCHOLOGIC DISORDERS << click to expand	<p>Why did this diagnosis come up ?</p> <p>We matched the terms: memory loss   confusion   loc   agit   agitation</p> <hr/> <p>Degree of match between query entered and isabel database (Not clinical probability): 50%</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Depression</a> ? RD</li> </ul>	+ RHEUMATIC DISEASES << click to expand
+ RESPIRATORY DISORDERS << click to expand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Giant Cell Arteritis</a> ? RD</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Atypical Pneumonia</a> ? RD</li> </ul>	+ TOXICOLOGY << click to expand
+ ENDOCRINE SYSTEM << click to expand	+ GASTROINTESTINAL DISORDERS << click to expand
+ DERMATOLOGY << click to expand	+ LIVER DISORDERS << click to expand
+ DISORDERS OF THE EAR << click to expand	- NUTRITIONAL DISORDERS >> click to collapse
- TRAUMA INJURIES >> click to collapse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Thiamine Deficiency</a> ? RD</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Head Injury</a> ? RD</li> </ul>	