Common Masquerades

Brain Tumors
- headache, seizure, excessive drowsiness or shifts in consciousness
- two psychiatric syndromes: 1) depression, apathy, emotional flatness, indifference
  2) euphoric, light-hearted, criminal behavior, similar to manic reactions
- strong emotional discharges, disturbances in instinctual behavior (eating, sex, aggression), shifts in consciousness, aphasia (mistaken for psychotic speech)

Epilepsy
- unprovoked, episodic behavior change, trance-like appearance, shifts in consciousness, stereotypical movements of face and neck
- unprovoked spells of violence associated with an altered state of consciousness

Hypoglycemia
- low blood sugar results in response from the nervous system that is expressed as perspiration, nervousness, nausea, increased heart rate, anxiety, irritability
- if it persists, symptoms such as confusion, bizarre behavior, irrational fears, delusions, hallucinations
- often mistaken for schizophrenia, depression, anxiety, or dementia

Hypothyroidism
- thyroid deficiency, symptoms with slow onset characterized by gradual loss of energy, weight gain, women experience change in menstrual cycle
- complain of inability to concentrate or solve simple problems - mistaken for depressive episode
- if it persists, psychological changes can reach psychotic proportions, paranoid delusions, intellectual decline

Hyperthyroidism
- metabolic rate is increased, frequently preceded by a severe emotional stress
- excessive perspiration, overly sensitive to heat, increased heart rate, hand tremors, flushed skin, weight loss despite strong appetite, insomnia
- anxiety, irritability, emotional fragility (crying or laughing without provocation), energized fatigue
- cognitive changes from mild distractibility to paranoid delusions
- occasionally mistaken for bipolar disorder, if it persists then looks like depression

AIDS
- initial symptoms of night sweats, unexplained weight loss and fatigue, fever, unusual infections
- degree of cognitive impairment from poor concentration, mild memory problems to symptoms of brain
- AIDS dementia complex: mix of cognitive, motor, and affective disturbances and results in confusion, disorientation, delusional thinking, and hallucinations
- apathy, withdrawal, decline in sex drive, emotional blunting
- progressive decline mistaken for schizophreniform, paranoia, manic, or depressive disorders

Mononucleosis
- syndrome often identical to a major depressive disorder

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
- symptomatic overlap with dysthymia and major depression

Drug Induced Disorders
- psychiatric prescription medications: neuroleptics, antidepressants and lithium, minor tranquilizers
- general prescription medications: antihypertensives and cardiac meds, anti-inflammatory
- street drugs: "uppers," "downers," hallucinogens
- drug withdrawal: agitation, physiological changes, cognitive and perceptual disruption, seizures