

Wernicke syndrome and Korsakoff syndrome are related disorders that often occur due to a deficiency of thiamine (vitamin B1). Wernicke's syndrome, also known as Wernicke encephalopathy, is a neurological disease characterized by the clinical triad of confusion, the inability to coordinate voluntary movement (ataxia), and eye (ocular) abnormalities.

Korsakoff's syndrome is a mental disorder characterized by disproportionate memory loss in relation to other mental aspects. When these two disorders occur together, the term Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome is used. In the United States, most cases occur in alcoholics. Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome occurs in 1-2 percent of the general population in the United States. The disorder affects slightly more males than females and is evenly distributed between ages 30-70.