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The nervous system is our body's telecommunications network. The billions of neurons that make up it come together to create a highway through which information flows in the form of electrical impulses throughout the body. Absolutely all messages, orders and perceptions of average travel through these nerves, which are usually born in the spinal cord and from there, branched out as a result of peripheral nerves that end up reaching all organs and tissues of the body. One way or another, there are special nerves that are not born from this spinal cord, but come directly from the brain, which is part of the central nervous system formed by the brain, cerebellum and spinal cord. These nerves, which form a set of 12 pairs, are called cranial nerves and are involved in the main functions inside the nervous system, from the transmission of sensory impulses to the control of the facial musculature, through the regulation of various glands of the body and other actions that we will analyze in today's article. What are cranial nerves? Cranial nerves are a set of 12 pairs of nerves that are born directly from the brain, but what is a nerve? Why is something special born out of cephalic? Let's see. The nerve, broadly speaking, is a set of interconnected neurons forming a kind of highway through which, through a process known as synapses, they can transmit between them an electrical impulse in which a particular message is encoded. Thus, it is through these nerves that the brain sends orders to any organ or tissue in the body, but also, in reverse order, that the senses (which allow the senses of vision, hearing, touch, taste and smell) send to the brain information about what is going on in the external environment in order to process the message and act on it. to send to some part of the body, or to the heart to tell him to continue to beat or arm muscles so we can lift the object, the message passes through the brain and leaves it in the direction of the spinal cord, from which it will exit through the peripheral nerves until it reaches its destination. This is what happens in most cases as the brain does not usually function as a place of neural output. The brain is the command center that creates information. The transmission of electrical impulses and branching into the nerves is usually the task of the spinal cord. But we usually talk because, as always, there are exceptions. And that's where cranial nerves come in. Nerves that are born from the brain itself and will communicate with other peripheral areas without having to pass through the spinal cord in the first place. We recommend reading: How does the brain transmit information? At the base of the skull there are various holes that allow these nerves to reach different areas of the head, although some may extend to areas further away, such as the neck and even the abdomen. Each of these 12 nerves (it should be noted that there are a total of 24, two of each) performs a certain function. Some are related to feelings, others to muscle control, and others to regulating the activity of different glands. What are cranial nerves and what functions do they have? Each cranial nerve is born in a specific area of the brain and communicates with another area. In turn, each of them specializes in the transmission of specific information. In any case, the function of all of them is very important, because disorders in cranial nerves are associated with vision loss, facial paralysis, hearing problems, dizziness... Next we will see each of the 12 cranial nerves that are numbered (1 to 12) and with the correct name. We'll also see what features each of them is involved in. 1. The olfactory nerve (Par 1) The olfactory is the afferent nerve, which means that it transmits nerve impulses from some sensory organs to the central nervous system. In this case, as the name suggests, the olfactory nerve collects the electrical impulses generated in the nasal cavity (sense of smell) and causes them to reach directly to the brain, which will process information to achieve a true smell experience. We recommend reading: How do our feelings work? 2. Optic nerve (Par 2) Optic is another afferent nerve, meaning it serves to enter information into the brain rather than to get out of it. In this case, the optic nerve collects electrical impulses generated by the photoreceptor neurons in the retina of the eye and transmits these nerve signals to the brain. Once there, the brain turns this electrical information into a projection of images, and at that point we really see. We recommend reading: 18 parts of the human eye (and its function) 3. Oculomotor nerve (Par 3) oculomotor is an efferent nerve that differs from the previous two in the sense that it serves for the brain to issue orders, not to capture information from the environment. In this sense, the oculomotor nerve sends messages from the brain to the eye muscles to control the pupil infestation or involuntarily expands depending on how much light is in the environment. It is also a nerve that allows (and lowers) the eyelid and the ability to voluntarily move the eyes up and down. 4. Trochlear nerve (Par 4) Trochlear remains an efferent nerve, which means that it serves to transmit information generated in the brain to another peripheral region. In this case, the trochlear is supplemented by an oculomotor to allow the eyes to move downwards, but also inside. 5. Trigeminal nerve (Par 5) is a trigeminal nerve that acts as efferent and afferent. It is involved in chewing (efferent action) and facial sensitivity (afferent action). This nerve transmits orders generated in the brain to the jaw muscles, allowing it to move and make it chew. Similarly, it is the nerve that allows the sensitivity of the face, that is, transmits information about the feeling of touch from the skin to the brain. When there is a problem with this nerve, there is a loss of sensitivity in the face. 6. Nerve Thief (Par 6) Nerve Thief is another efferent nerve that is complemented by an oculomotor and trochlear to good eye movements. In this case, the nerve thief is responsible for transmitting electrical impulses to allow the eyes to come out. 7. Facial nerve (Par 7) Face is a very important efferent nerve, as it transmits signals allowing facial movements, i.e. all expressions. Smiling, frowning, opening his mouth, grimacing... Anything related to the movement of facial muscles is possible due to this nerve. The facial nerve also regulates the activity of salivary glands and tears. In this sense, it is this nerve that determines how many tears we generate in the eyes and how much saliva we produce in the mouth. We recommend reading: What is tears and crying? It also plays an important role in conveying a sense of taste messages and in controlling some ear muscles. 8. Vestibuloclear nerve (Par 8) Vestibuloclear nerve plays a very important role in hearing and balance. In addition to participating in the transmission of auditory information from the ears to the brain, it is this nerve that controls the sense of balance. Therefore, when there are problems with this nerve, a person is usually dizzy or dizzy with problems. Recommended to read: 6 differences between dizziness and dizziness 9. Nerve gloophus (Par 9) The glazlot nerve plays a very important role in the action of swallowing and talking and in the reflection of vomiting. This nerve regulates the movement of the tongue, increases the production of saliva when eating, sends orders neck to swallow and transmit information to the brain when, for various reasons, the contents of the stomach, i.e. vomiting, should be excluded. In this sense, the nerve glosopharyngeal gets to control the movements of the abdomen, as contractions of this area when vomiting is possible thanks to it. 10. The vagus nerve (par 10) of the vagus nerve complements the action of glosophinga, so they are usually studied together. This nerve is also involved in swallowing, speech and vomiting reflex. 11. Accessory nerve (Par 11) Accessory nerve, also known as the spinal cord, is another efferent nerve that, in this case, spreads to the neck. Its function is to move the neck, but not the internal muscles, as glosopharyngeal and boom did, but the external musculature. The nerve accessory is the one that allows us to turn the neck to the side and shrug. 12. Hypoglycive nerve (Par 12) Hypoglycive nerve is another efferent nerve that transfers commands from the brain to the tongue, allowing us to perform all kinds of movements with it. Therefore, the hypoglycive nerve has an important effect on speech and swallowing. Bibliographic references by Calle Escobar, M.L., Casado Naranjo, I. (2011) Study of Cranial Nerves. A reminder of semiology. Palmieri, R.L. (2010) Pair Assessment. Nursing. 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