

# The Role of Central Nervous System and its Function

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## DESCRIPTION

The nervous system is a complex and intricate network of cells, tissues, and organs that plays a vital role in controlling and coordinating the functions of the human body. This aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the nervous system, its components, functions, and significance in human physiology. The central nervous system comprises the brain and spinal cord. The brain is the controlling center of the nervous system and is responsible for processing information, making decisions, and controlling body functions. It is divided into various regions, each with specialized functions, such as the cerebrum for higher cognitive functions, the cerebellum for coordination and balance, and the brainstem for basic life-sustaining functions. The spinal cord, extending from the brainstem down the vertebral column, serves as a relay between the brain and the peripheral nervous system. It also plays a critical role in reflex actions, which are rapid, involuntary responses to stimuli. The peripheral nervous system includes all nerve tissues outside the Central Nervous System (CNS). It is further divided into the somatic nervous system and the autonomic nervous system. The somatic nervous system controls voluntary muscle movements and receives sensory input from the external environment. Motor neurons transmit signals from the Central Nervous System (CNS) to muscles, allowing conscious control of movements, such as walking or reaching. Sensory neurons relay information from the body's sensory receptors, such as the skin, to the Central Nervous System (CNS), providing input about touch, temperature, and pain. The autonomic nervous system regulates involuntary bodily functions, including heartbeat, digestion, respiration, and glandular secretions. It is further subdivided into the sympathetic and parasympathetic divisions, which often have opposing effects on physiological processes. The sympathetic division prepares the body for "fight or flight" responses by increasing heart rate, dilating pupils, and redirecting blood flow

to essential organs. In contrast, the parasympathetic division promotes "rest and digest" activities by slowing heart rate, constricting pupils, and enhancing digestion. Neurons, also known as nerve cells, are the fundamental units of the nervous system. They are specialized for transmitting electrical and chemical signals. The cell body contains the nucleus and other organelles and is responsible for maintaining the cell's metabolic functions. Dendrites are branched extensions that receive incoming signals from other neurons or sensory receptors. The axon is a long, slender projection that carries electrical impulses away from the cell body and toward other neurons, muscles, or glands. Some axons are covered in a myelin sheath, which speeds up signal transmission. Synapses are specialized junctions where neurons communicate with each other. They consist of a presynaptic terminal, a synaptic cleft, and a postsynaptic membrane. Neurotransmitters released from the presynaptic terminal transmit signals across the synaptic cleft to the postsynaptic membrane. Neuronal communication involves a series of electrochemical events. When a neuron receives a signal at its dendrites, it generates an electrical impulse called an action potential. This action potential travels down the axon and reaches the synaptic terminals. At the synapse, neurotransmitters are released into the synaptic cleft, binding to receptors on the postsynaptic membrane and transmitting the signal to the next neuron. Sensory receptors throughout the body detect stimuli, such as temperature, pressure, light, and chemicals. These receptors convert physical or chemical signals into electrical signals that can be transmitted to the Central Nervous System (CNS). In the Central Nervous System (CNS), information from various sensory receptors is processed and integrated. This involves comparing incoming signals to existing information and determining an appropriate response. The Central Nervous System (CNS) generates motor commands in response to sensory input and sends them to effector organs, such as muscles or glands. Motor neurons transmit these commands, initiating specific actions or physiological responses.

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