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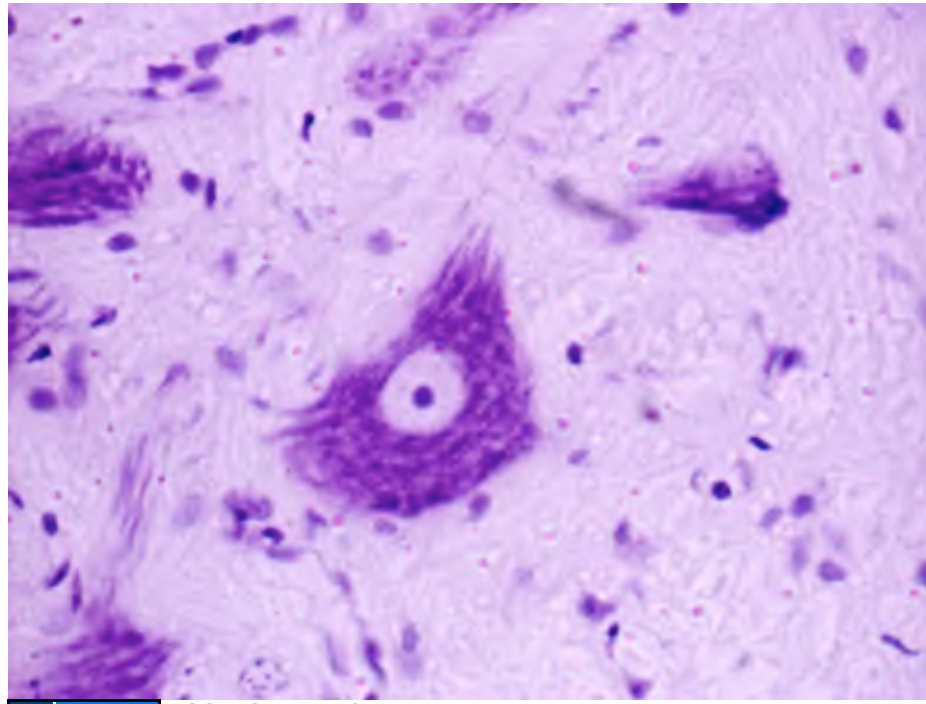


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Spinal Cord and Spinal Nerves



PD-1MCL [UCSF, School of Medicine](#)

M1 CNS Head and Neck
March 3, 2009

Lecture Outline

- Spinal Cord Function
- Development
- Gross Anatomy
 - Regions Cervical, Thoracic, Lumbar, Sacral
 - Meninges
- Spinal Nerves
- Gray Matter
- White Matter
- Reflexes
- Blood Supply

Important Terms

- Dermatome
- Motor Unit
- Receptive Field
- Column
- Fasciculus
- Lower Motor Neuron
- Rootlets (Dorsal and Ventral)
- Roots (Dorsal and Ventral)
- Somatic
- Visceral
- Lamina of Rexed
- White Rami Communicantes
- Gray Rami Communicantes
- Afferent
- Efferent
- Dorsal Horn
- Ventral Horn
- Dorsal Root Ganglia
- Sympathetic Ganglia

Spinal Cord Essential Functions

- Receives sensory input
 - Somatic and Visceral
- Contains motor neurons
- Direct (local) connections of motor and sensory information: Reflexes
- Carries motor information from brain to muscles
 - Somatic and Visceral

REMINDER

- **Afferent Arrives**

- Information arriving to the CNS in general, a nucleus within the CNS or a neuron

- **Efferent Exits**

- Information leaving the CNS in general a, a nucleus within the CNS or neuron

The Nervous System consists of:

1. Central Nervous System (CNS)
2. Peripheral Nervous System (PNS)

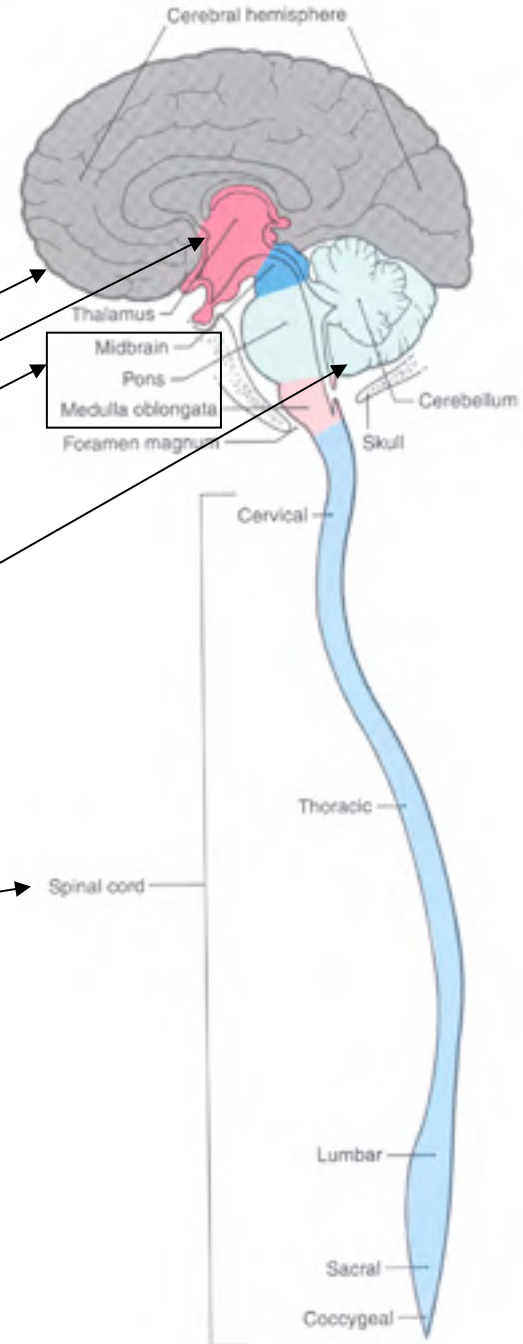
CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM (CNS)

BRAIN:

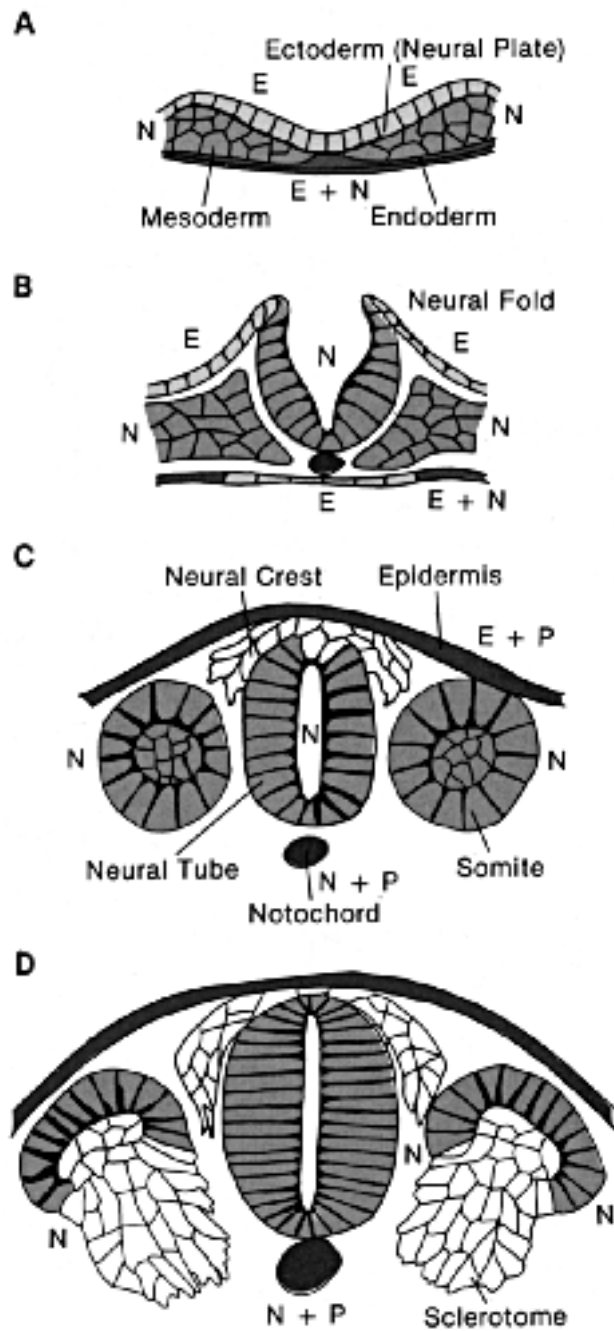
- Forebrain
 - Telencephalon
 - Diencephalon
- Brain Stem
 - Midbrain
 - Pons
 - Medulla
- Cerebellum

SPINAL CORD (5 regions):

- Cervical
- Thoracic
- Lumbar
- Sacral
- Coccygeal

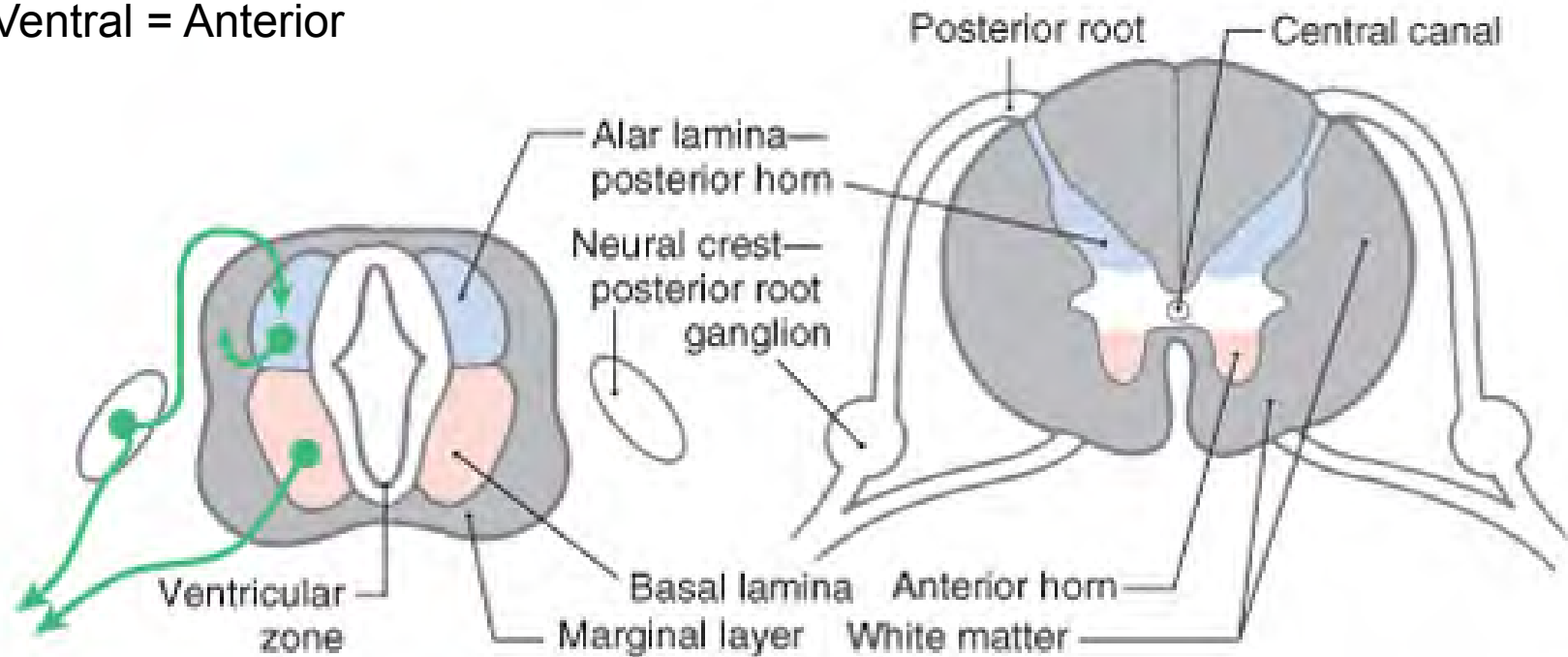


Spinal Cord Development



Spinal Cord Development

Dorsal = Posterior
Ventral = Anterior

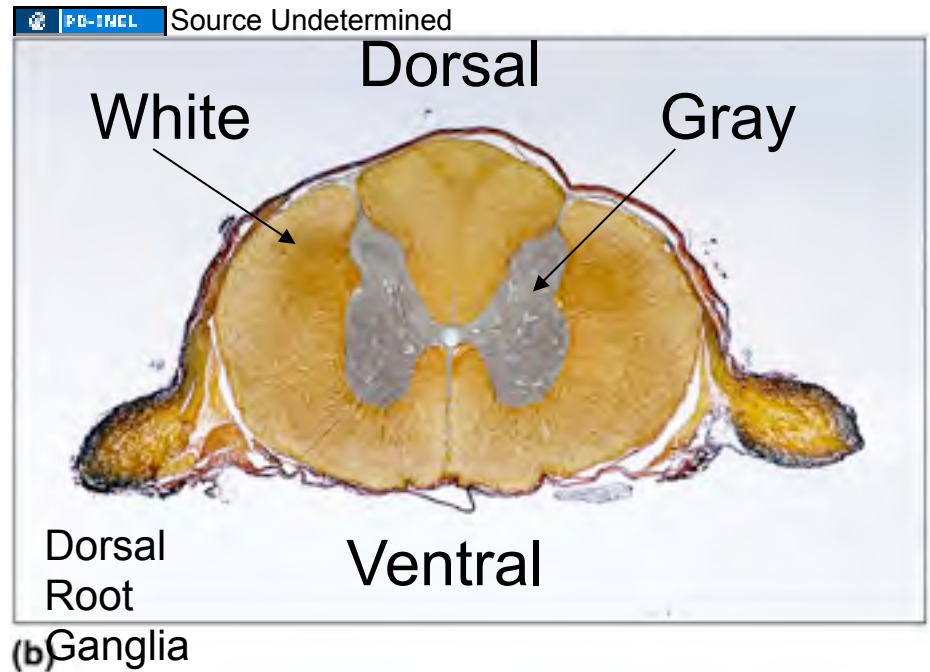
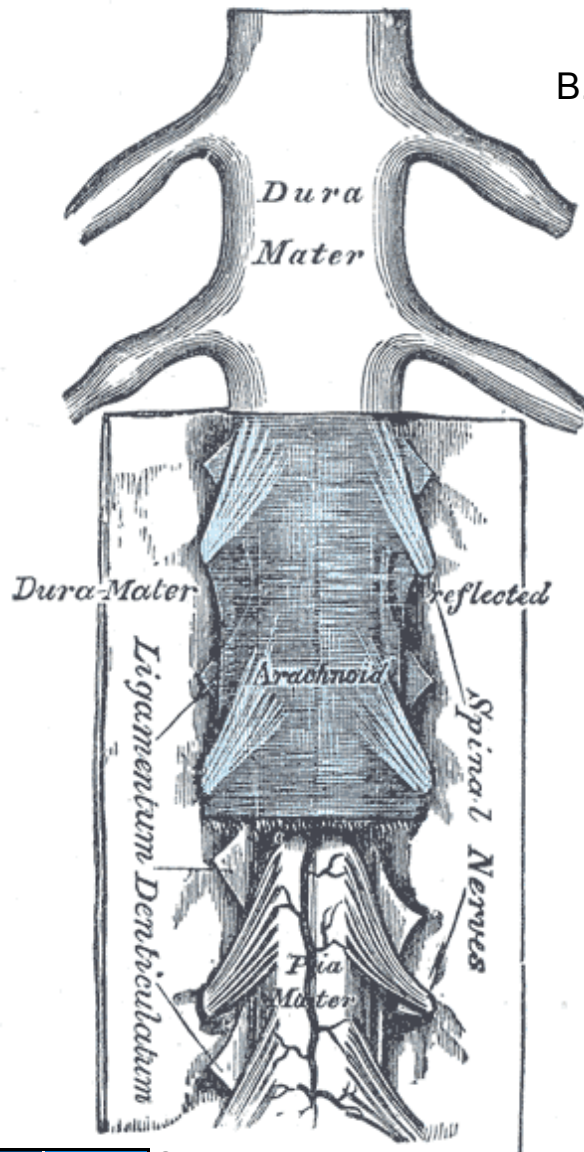


Spinal Cord

A. OUTER LAYER = White Matter ; (tracts of axons & their myelin)

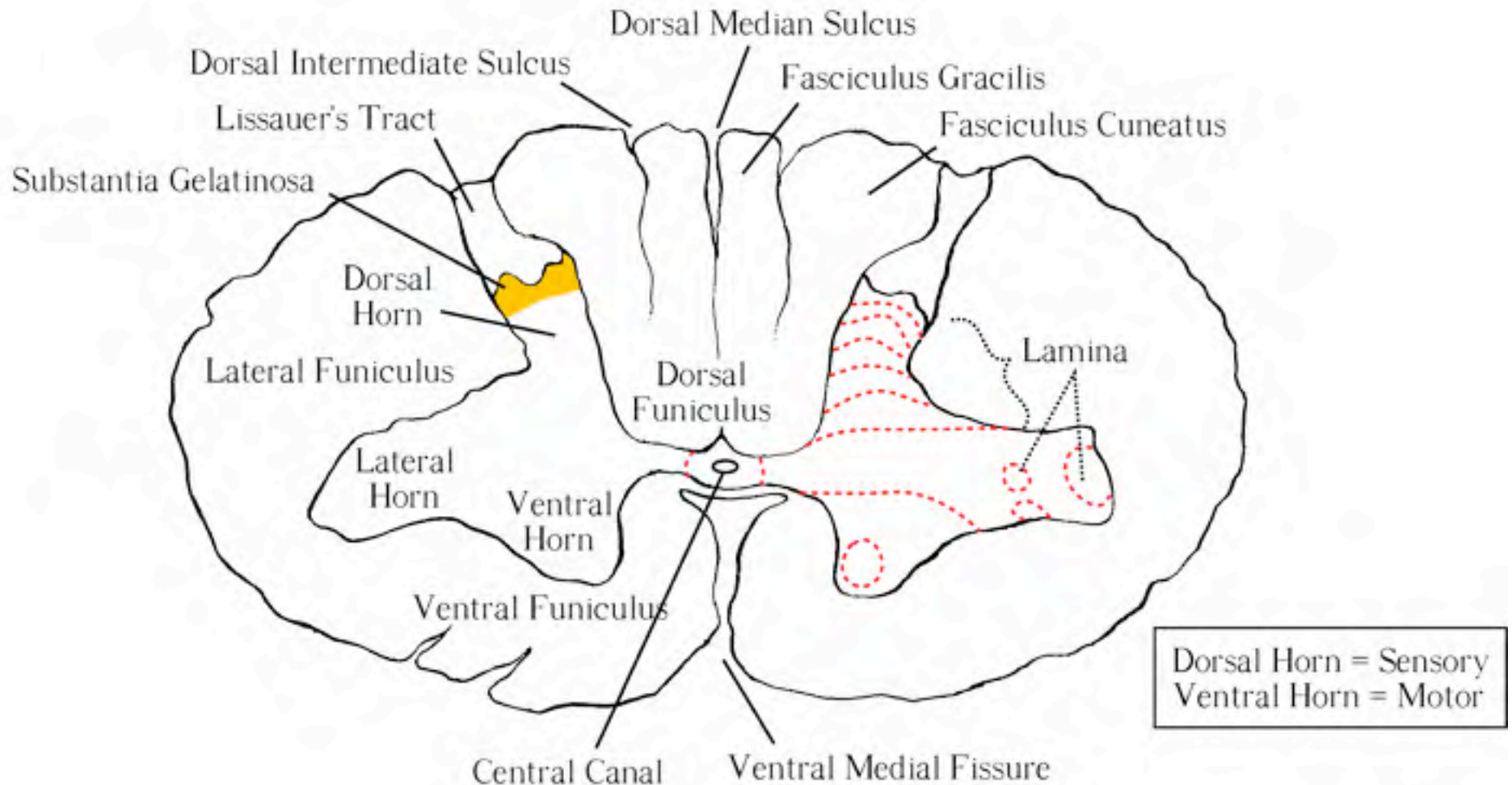
1. Ascending Sensory (Afferent) Tracts
2. Descending Motor (Efferent) Tracts

B. Inner Layer - Gray Matter, rich in neuronal cell bodies and dendrites

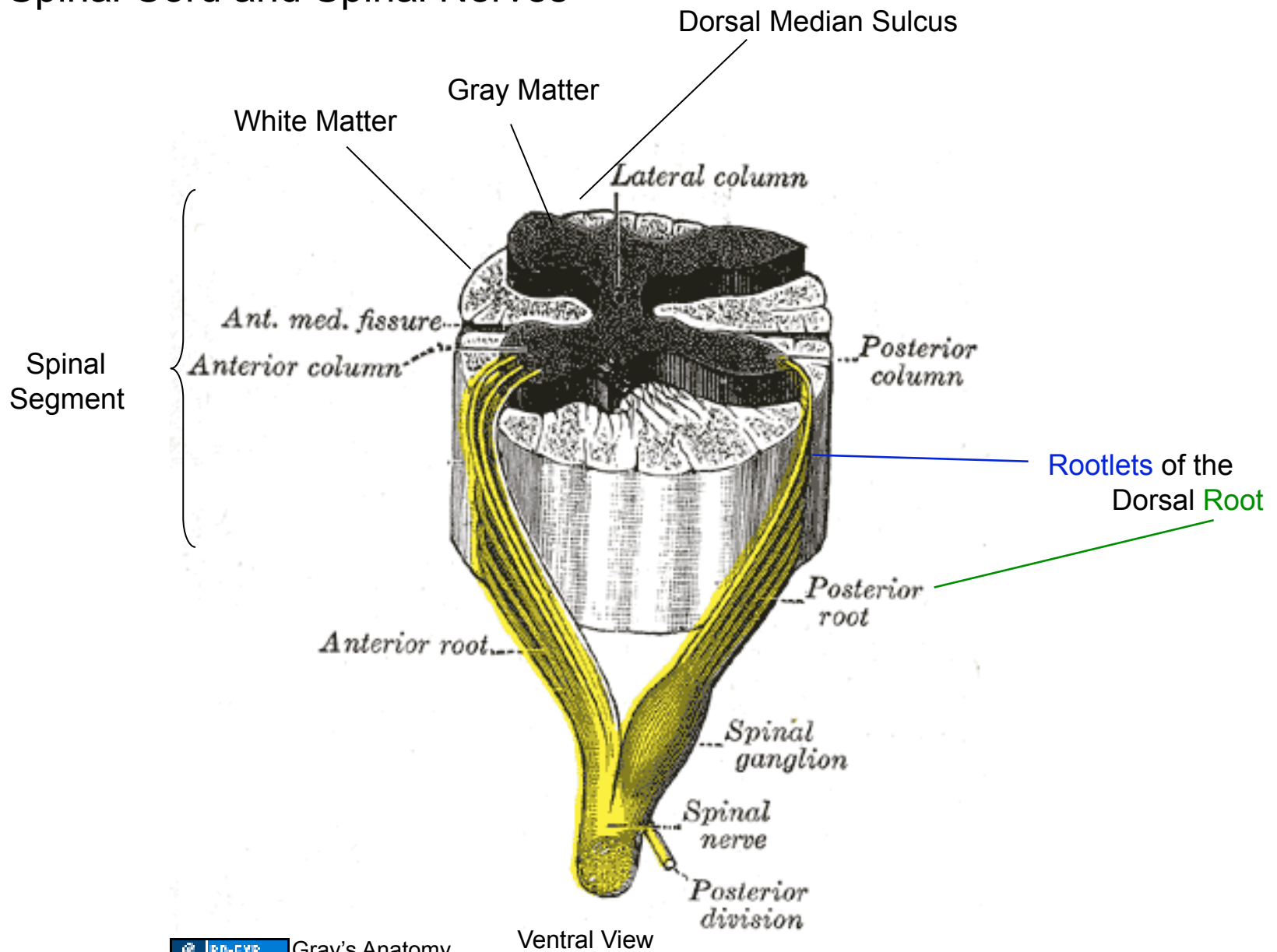


Spinal Cord Anatomy

- A. Funiculi - dorsal, lateral & ventral
- B. Horns - dorsal, lateral and ventral
- C. Laminae



The Spinal Cord and Spinal Nerves



SPINAL NERVES:

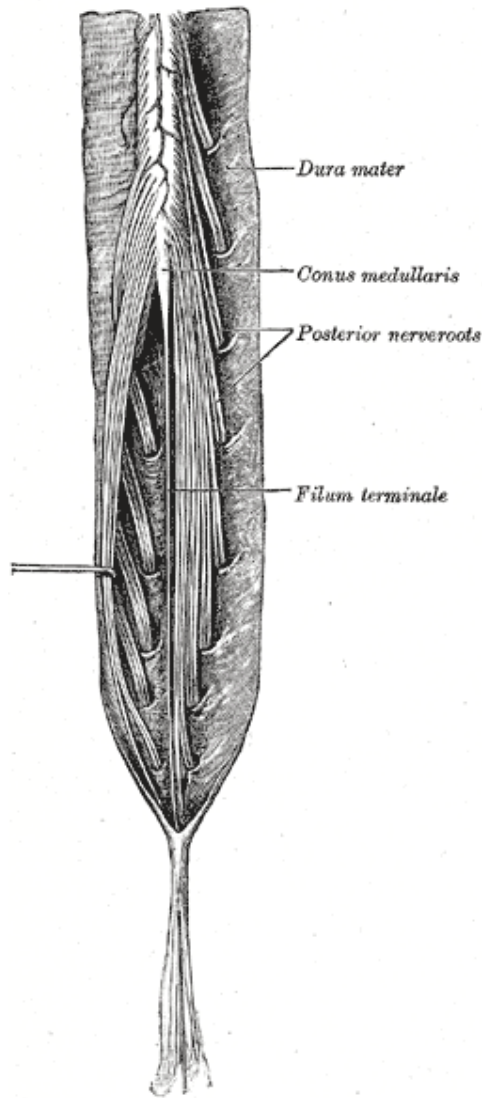
31 pairs (left and right) innervate the neck, trunk and limbs from 5 regions of the spinal cord:

8 pairs of cervical nerves
innervate the neck and arms

12 pairs of thoracic nerves
innervate the thorax

5 pairs of lumbar nerves and
5 pairs of sacral nerves and
1 pair of coccygeal nerves
collectively innervate the abdomen,
pelvis, and legs





Spinal nerves pass through the vertebral column (intervertebral foramen)

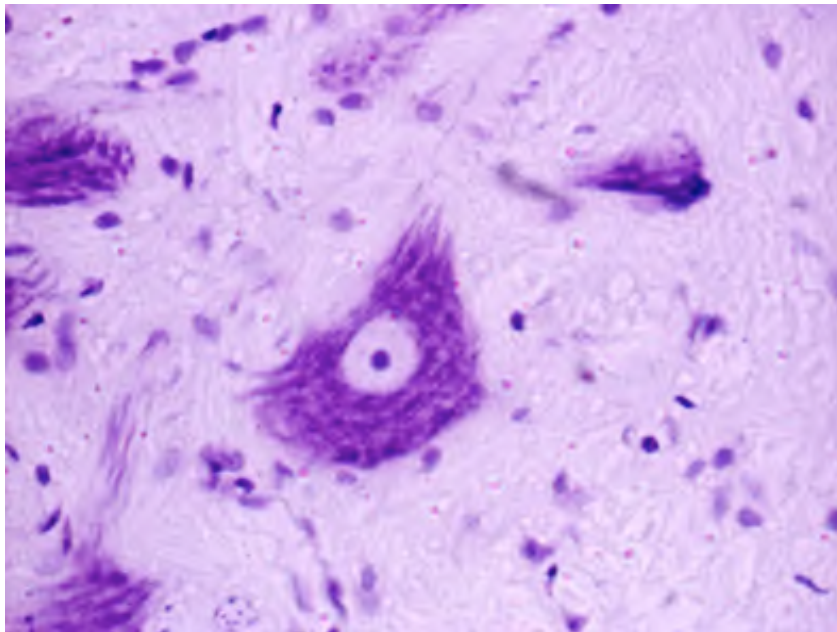
The first (C1) emerges between the first vertebrae and the base of the skull.

C8 emerges from intervertebral foramen between C7 and T1.

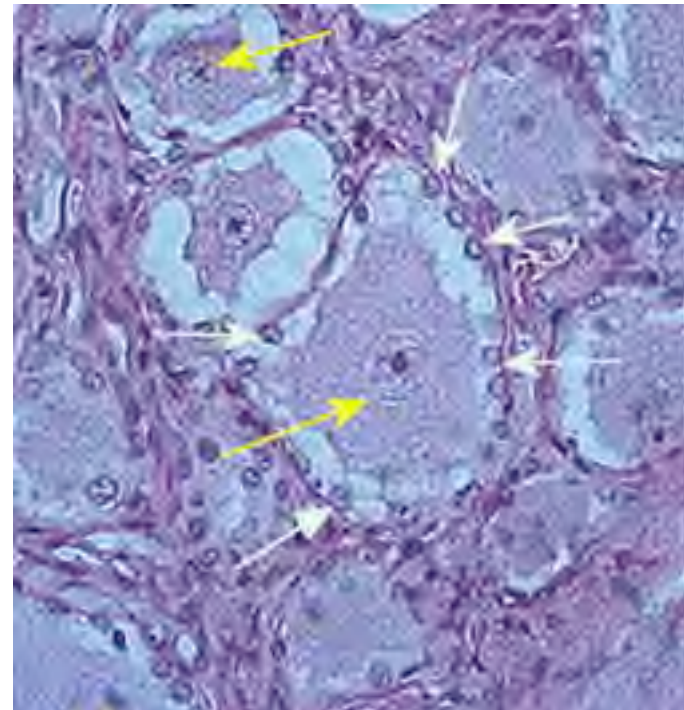
Other spinal nerves emerge from intervertebral foramen below the vertebrae of the same number.

The vertebral column grows longer than the spinal cord; therefore, these vertebrae become located several segments below the entrance/exit of the spinal nerve from the spinal cord.

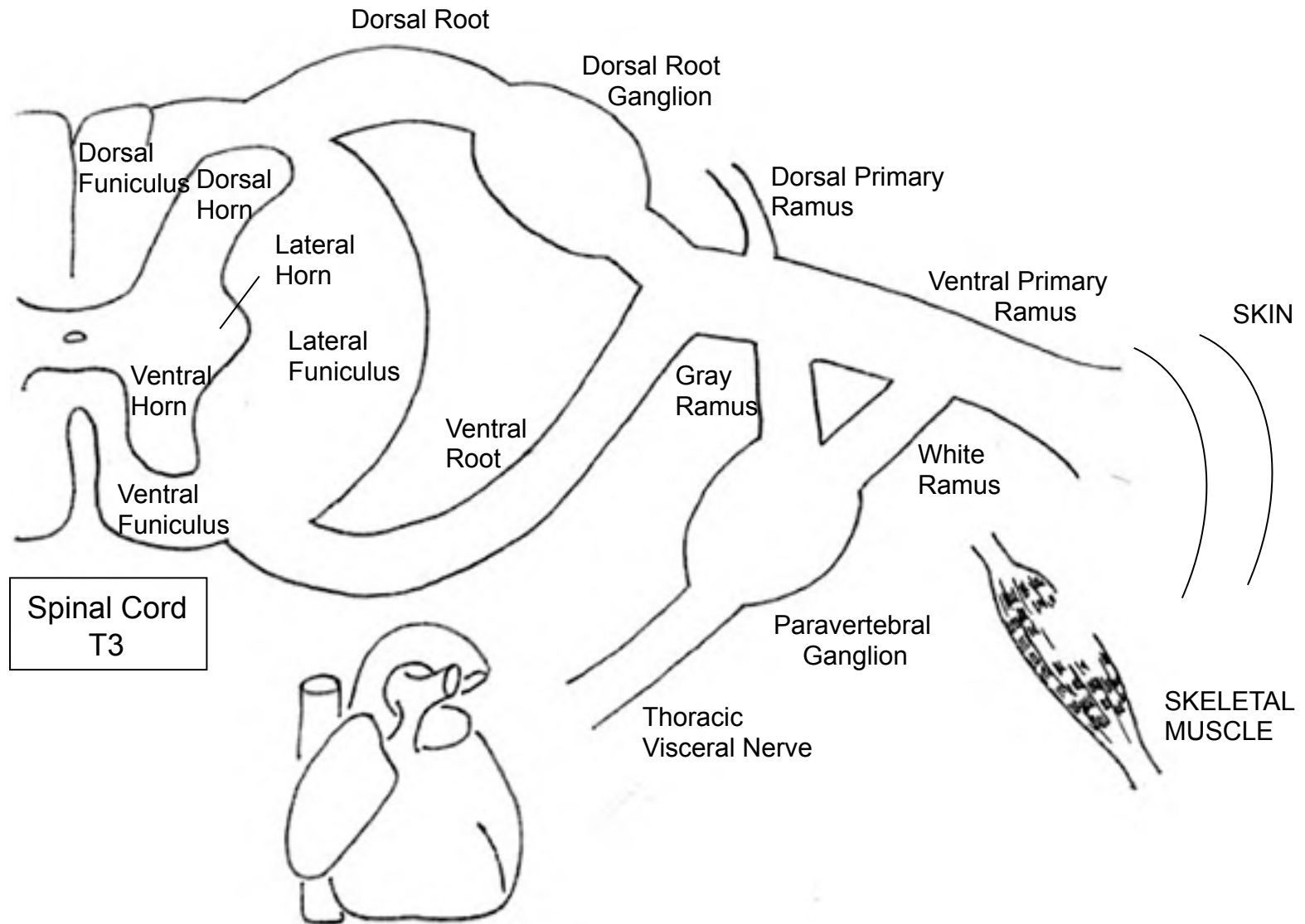
Motor Neuron Spinal Cord Ventral Horn



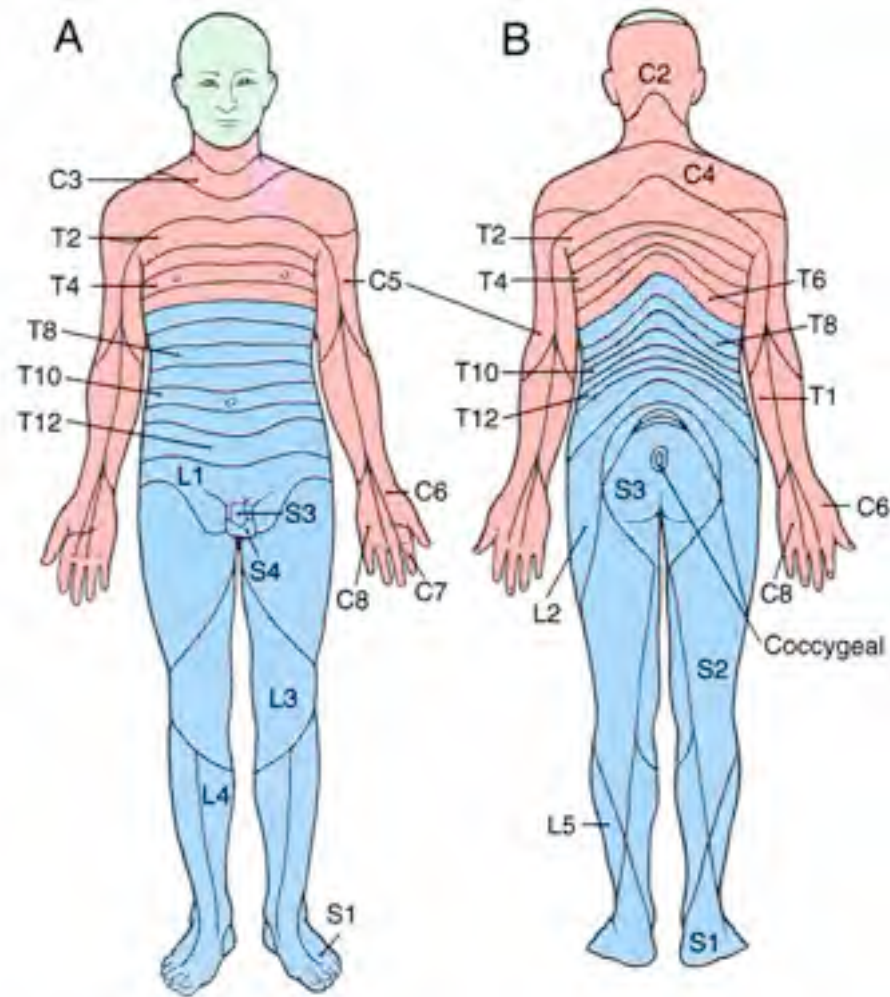
Sensory Neuron Dorsal Root Ganglion



Spinal Cord and Spinal Nerve



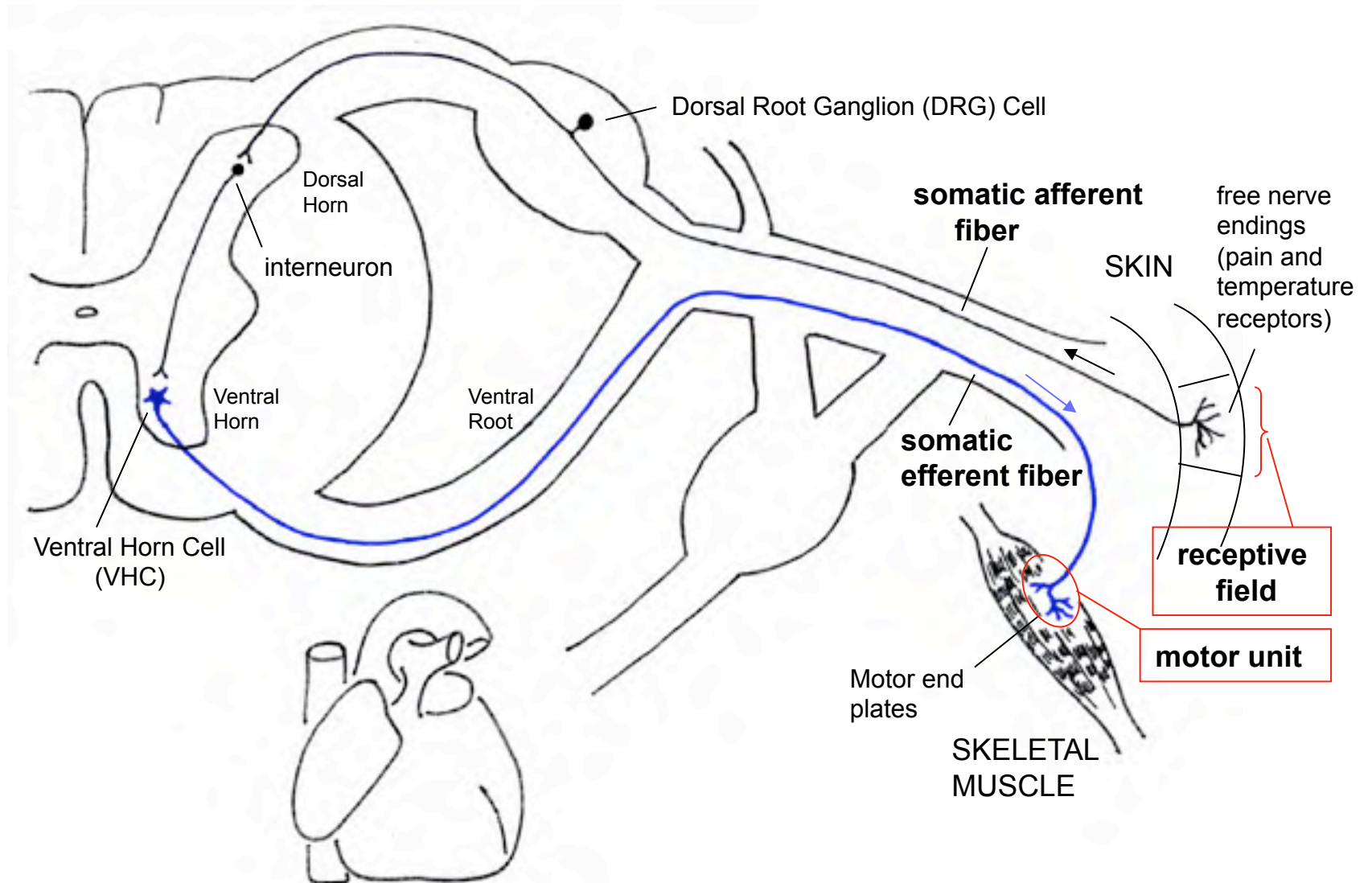
A “dermatome” = an area of skin innervated by one segment of the spinal cord (in other words, by one pair of spinal nerves).



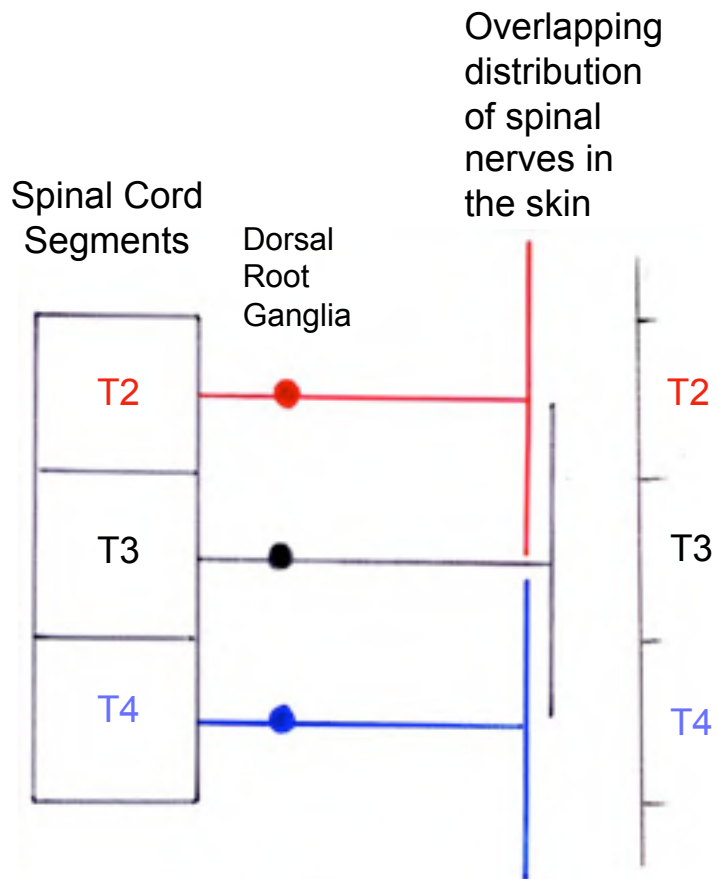
Receptive Fields and Motor Units

Receptive Field = area of skin innervated by one DRG neuron

Motor Unit = total number of skeletal muscle fibers innervated by one motor neuron

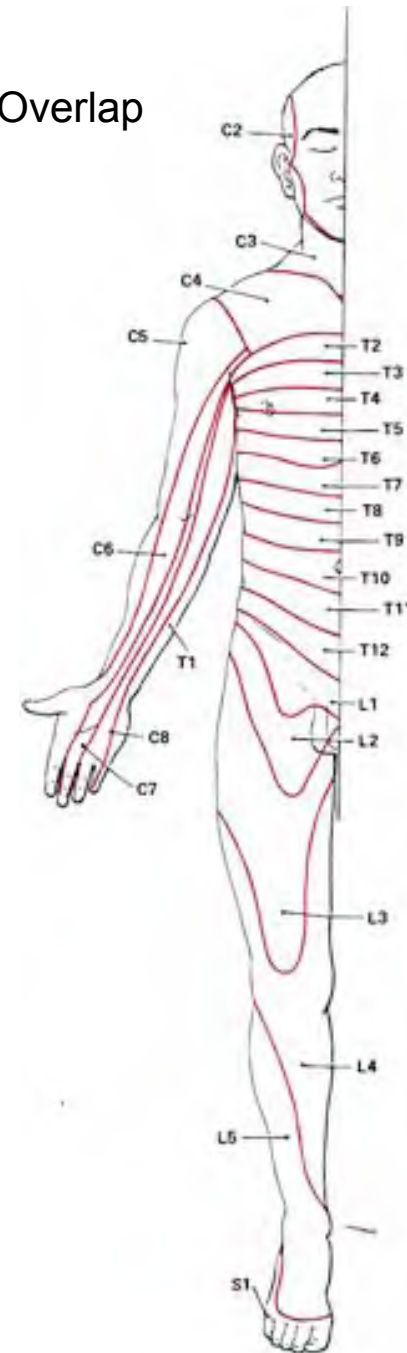


Dermatomes of Adjacent Spinal Cord Segments Overlap



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the dermatome map

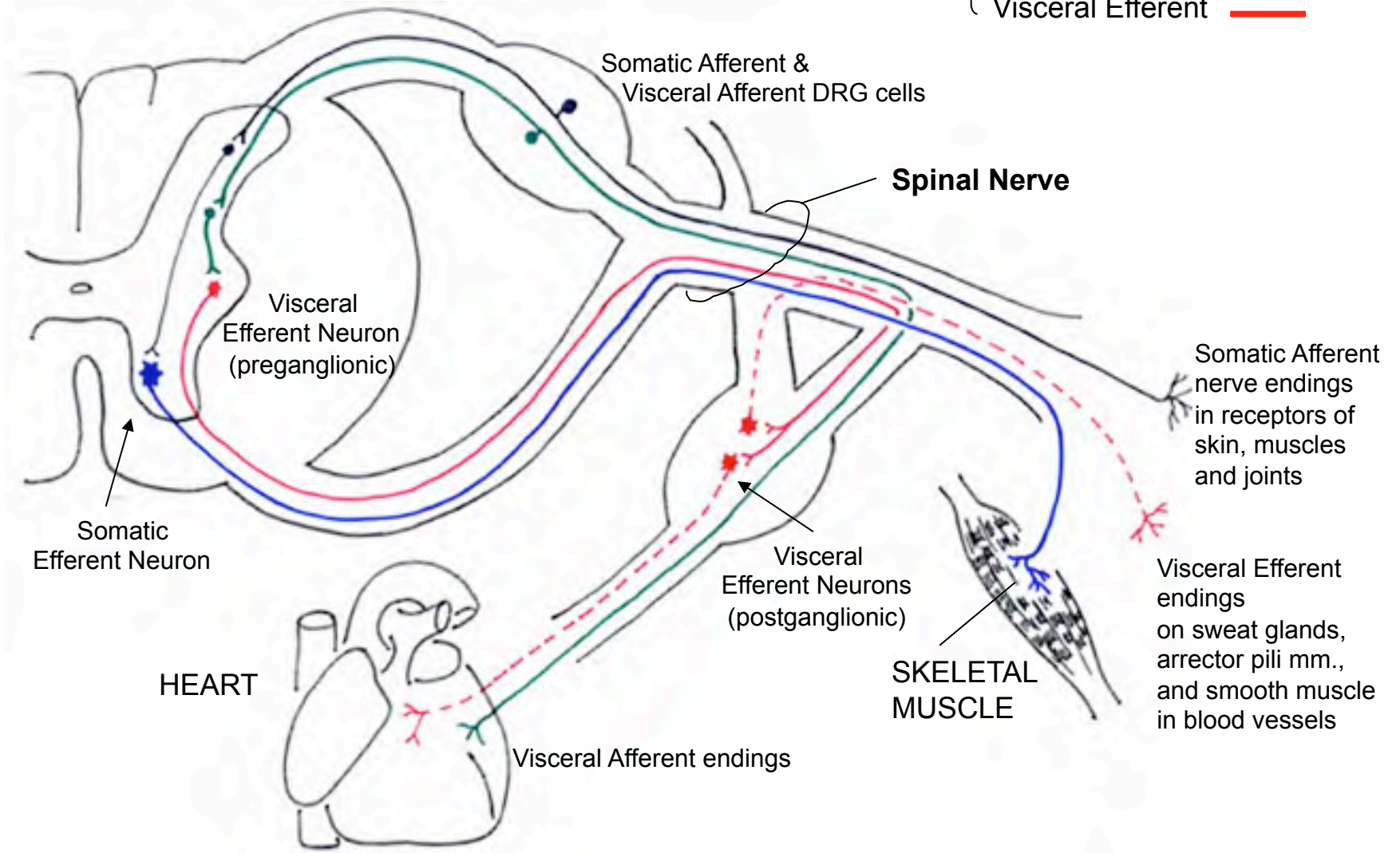


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Manter and Gatz's
Essentials of
Clinical
Neuroanatomy
and
Neurophysiology,
8th ed, Fig. 6-1

Four Functional Components of the Spinal Nerve:

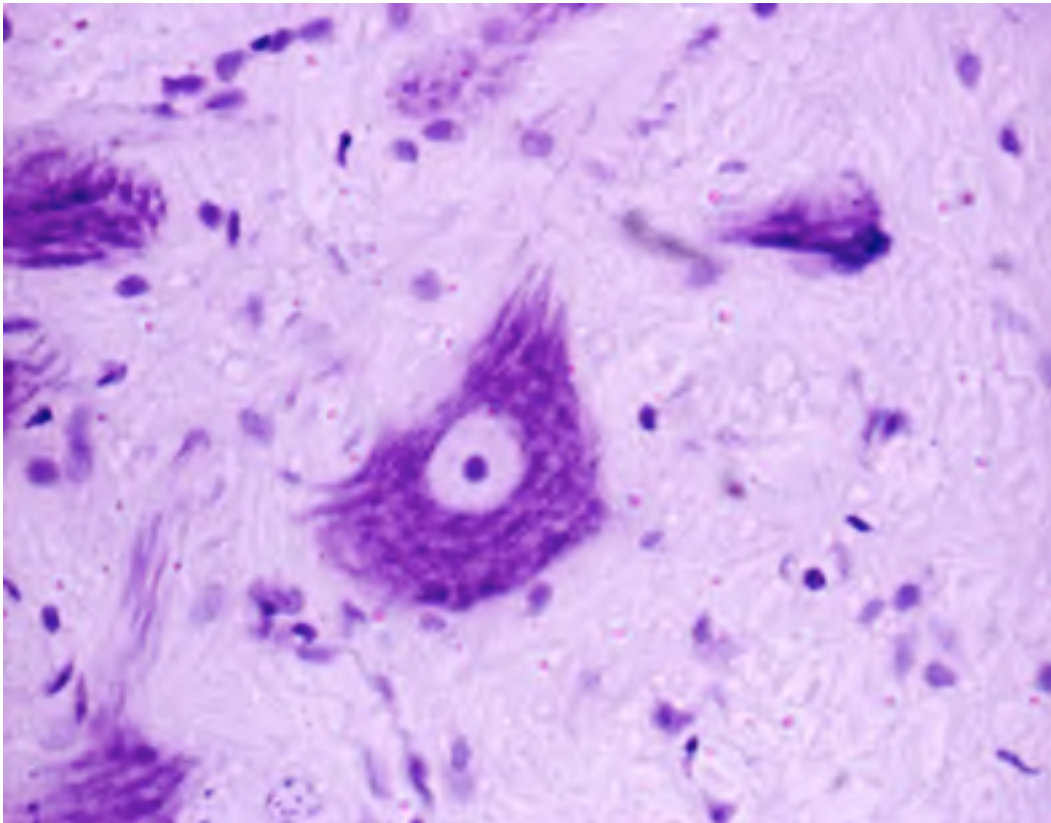
$$2 \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Somatic (body wall)} \\ \text{Visceral (viscera)} \end{array} \right. \times 2 \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Afferent (sensory)} \\ \text{Efferent (motor)} \end{array} \right. = 4 \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Somatic Afferent} \\ \text{Somatic Efferent} \\ \text{Visceral Afferent} \\ \text{Visceral Efferent} \end{array} \right.$$



Gray Matter

Motor Neuron

Spinal Cord Ventral Horn



3 Types of Motor neurons

Alpha Motor Neurons (somatic)

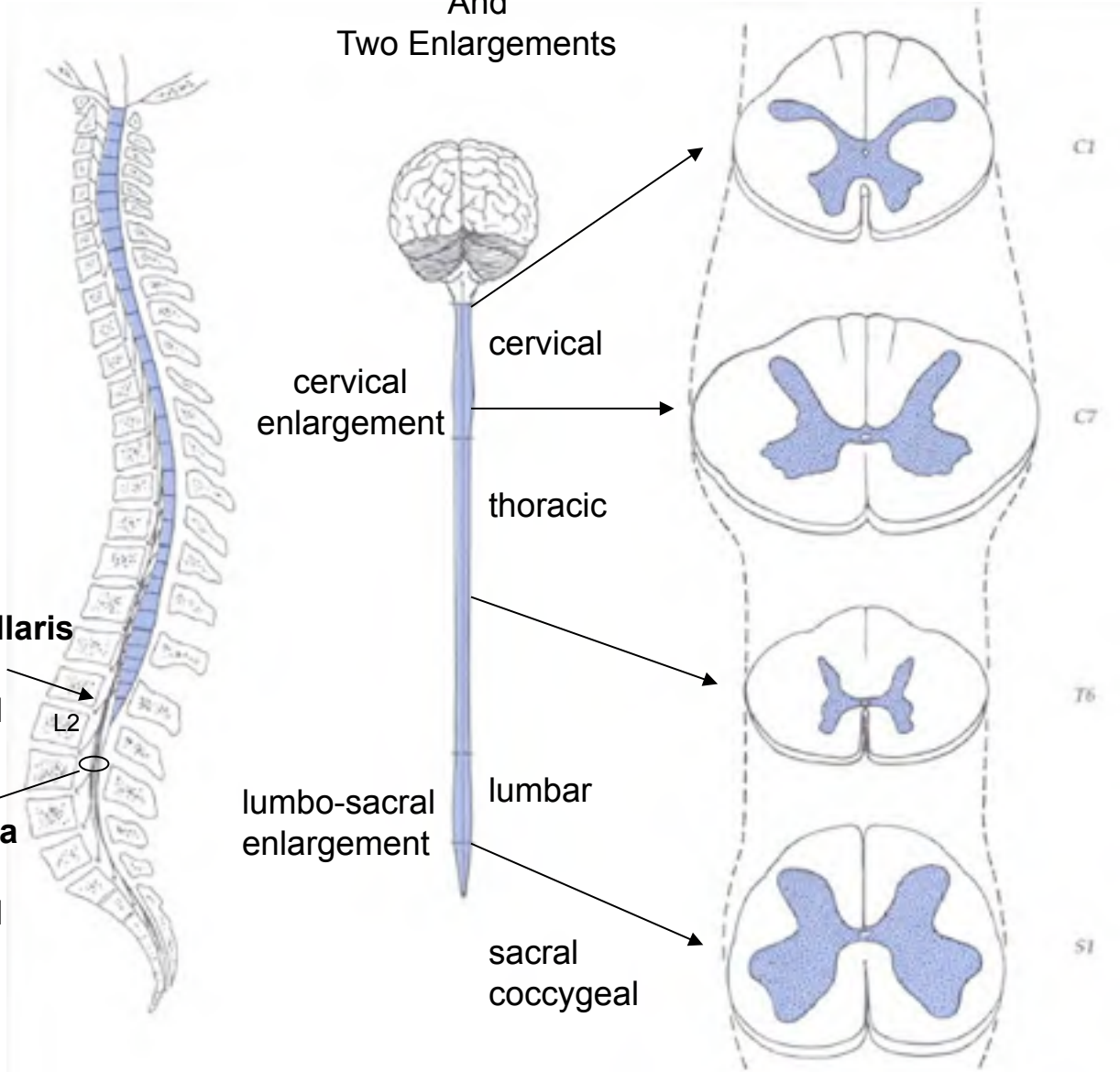
Innervate skeletal muscle

Gamma Motor Neurons

Innervate intrafusal muscle fibers

Preganglionic Sympathetic
Neurons (visceral)

Five Spinal Cord Regions And Two Enlargements

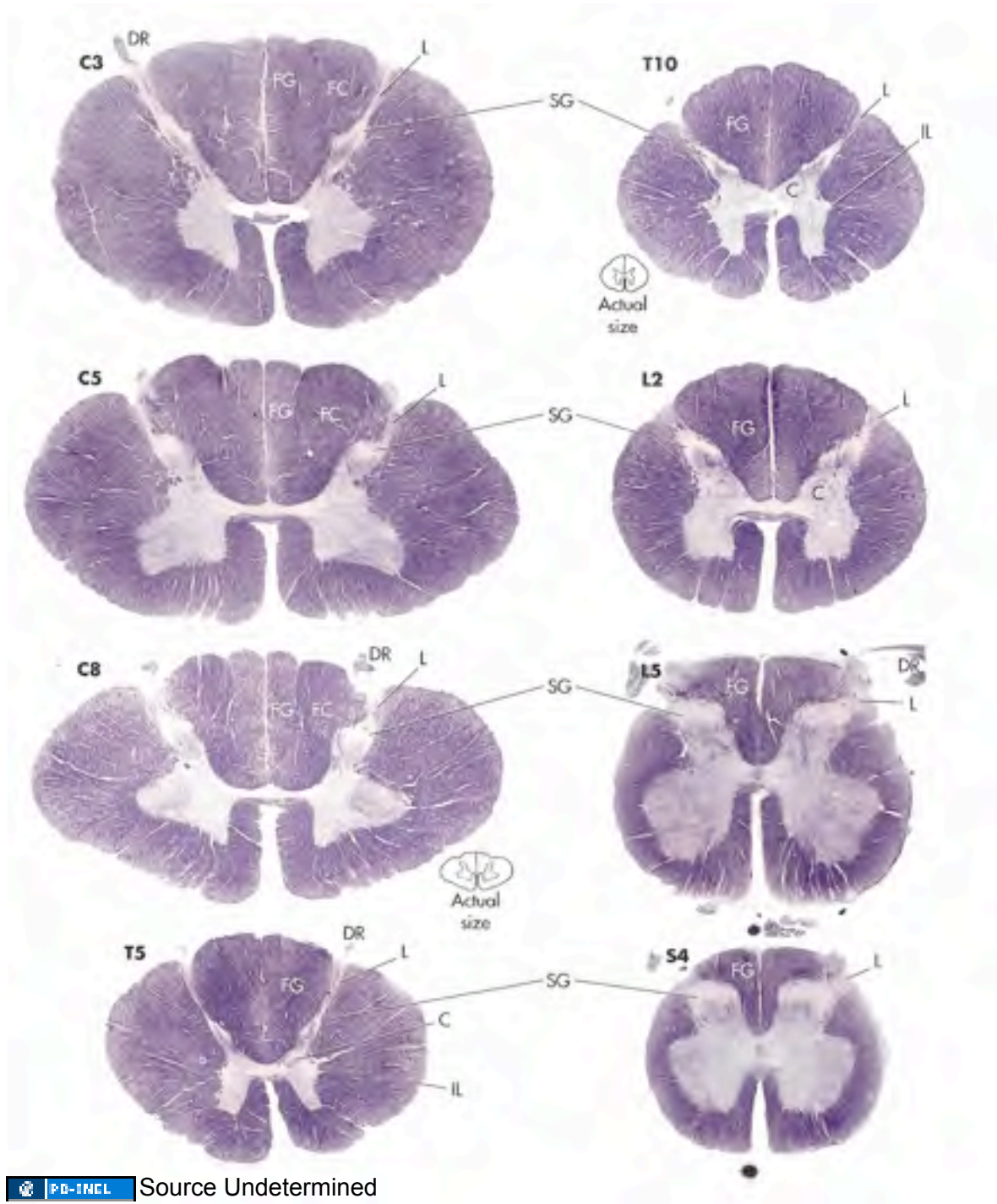


The absolute amount of white matter decreases from cervical to coccygeal segments.

The amount of gray matter is greater in the enlargements than the upper cervical and thoracic regions.

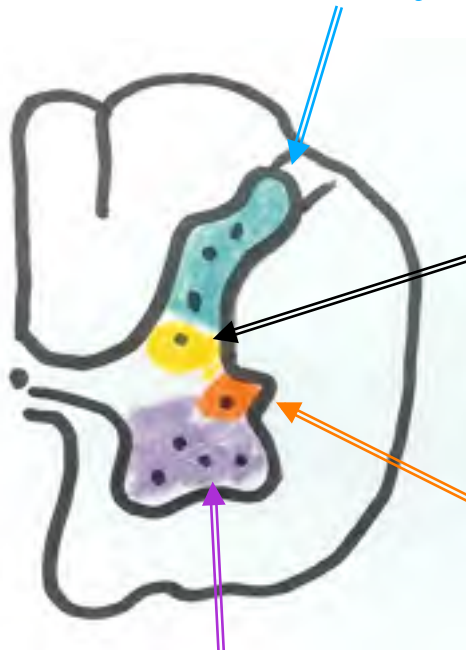
Conus Medullaris
at L1-L2
vertebral level
in the adult

Cauda Equina
from L2
into the sacral
canal



General Organization of the Spinal Cord

GSA (general sensory afferent) – receive somatic sensory input

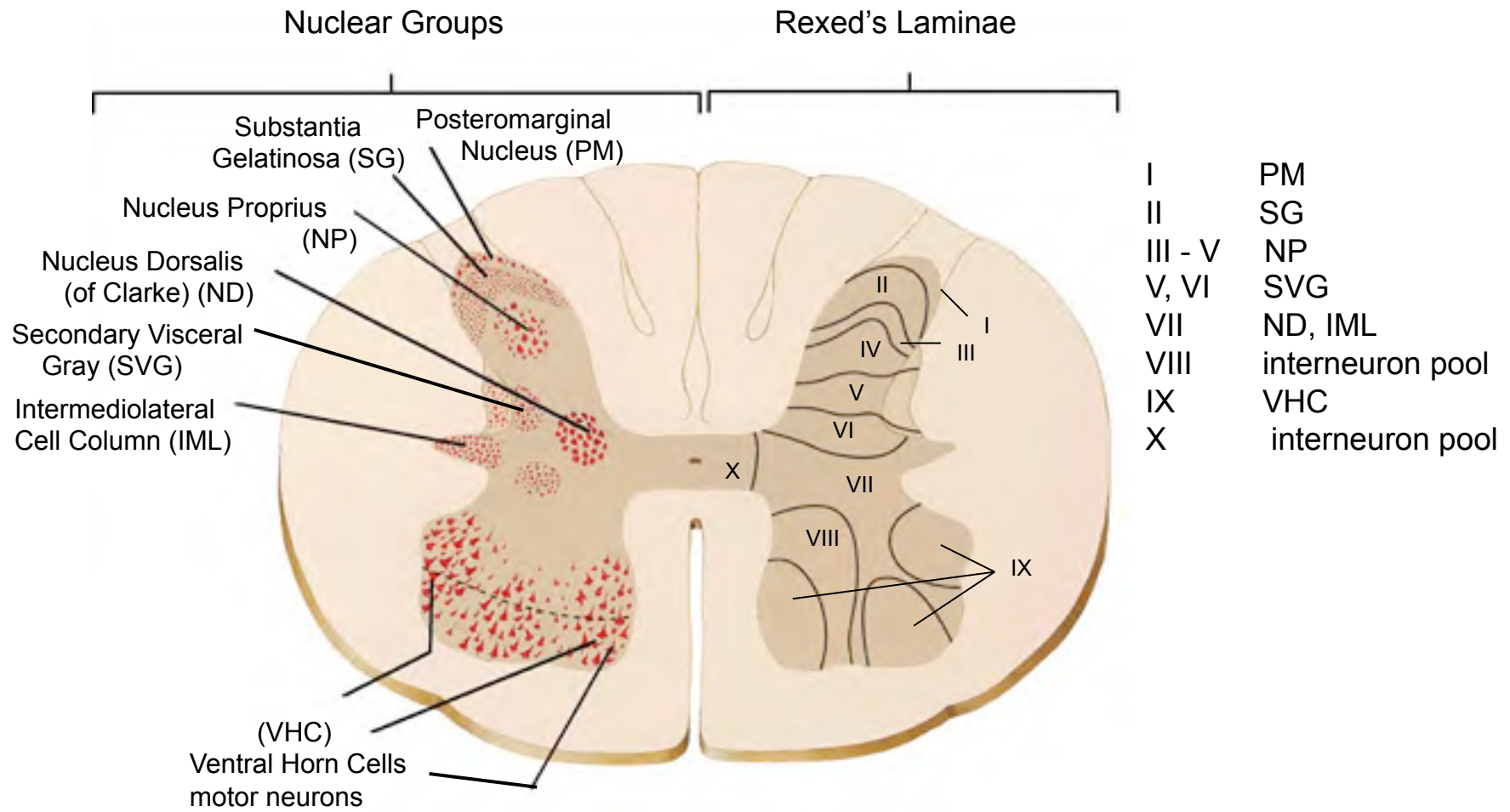


GVA (general visceral afferent)– receive visceral sensory input (restricted distribution)

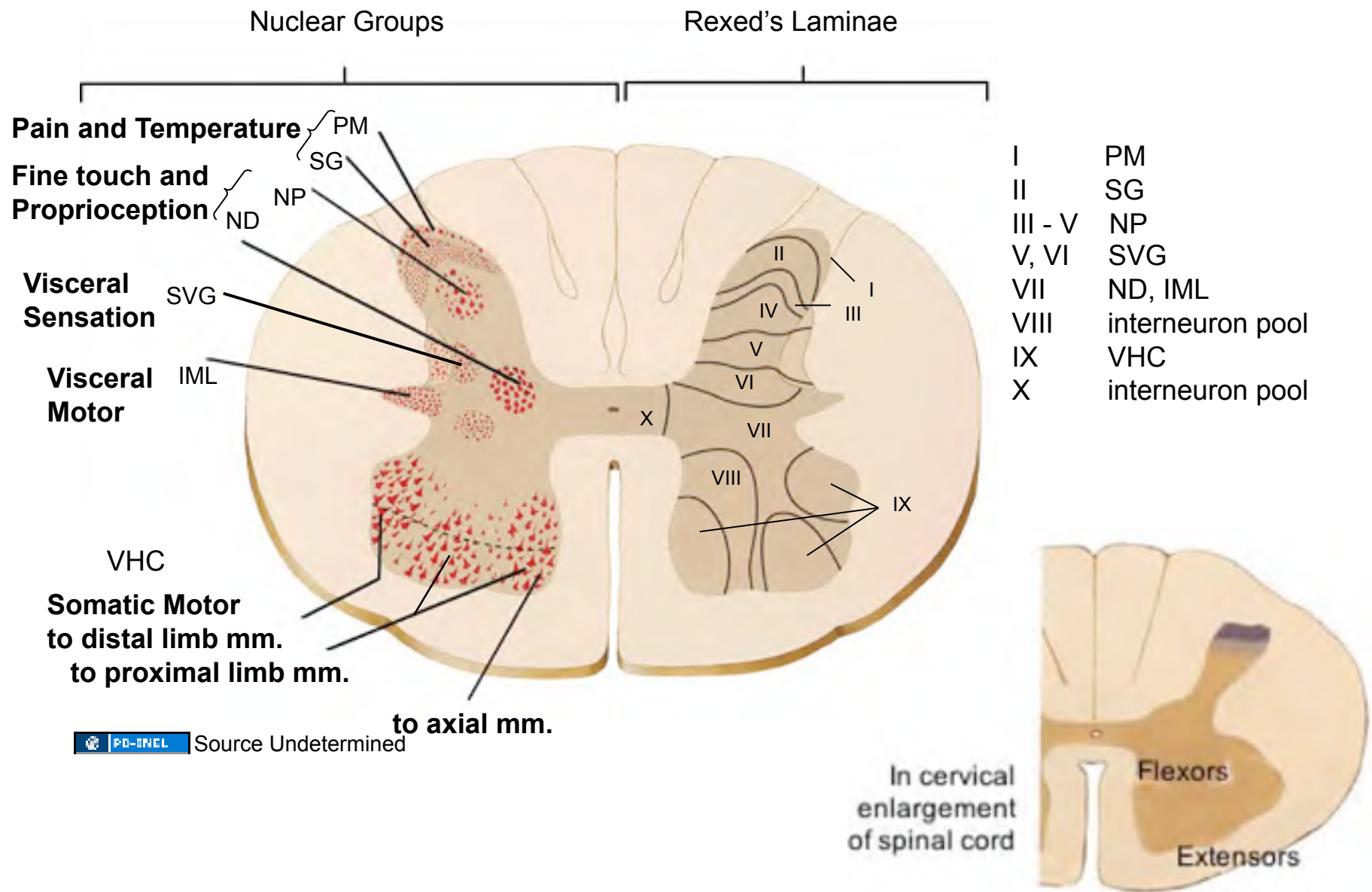
GVE (general visceral efferent) (autonomics) – motor to viscera; secretomotor to organs and motor smooth muscle. (restricted distribution)

GSE (general somatic efferent) – motor to somatic (striated) muscles

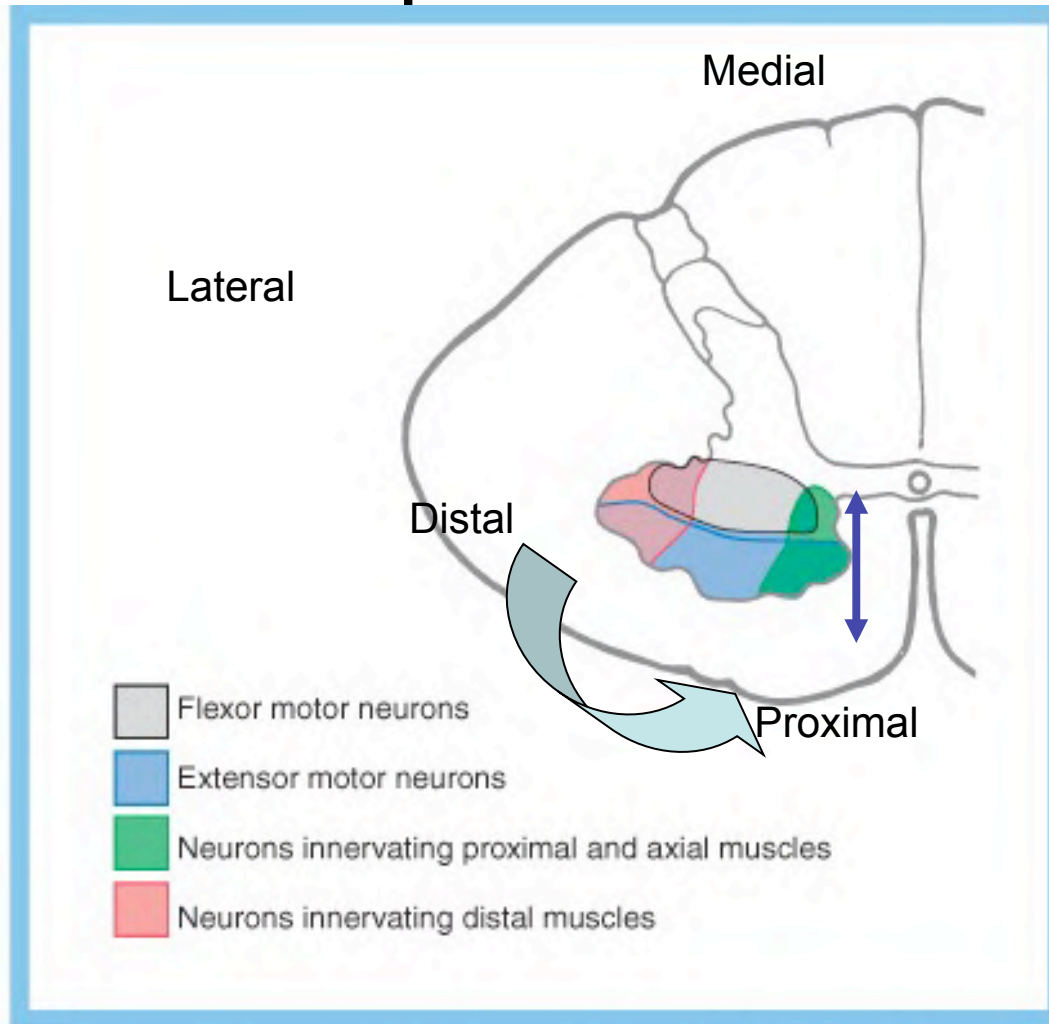
The Spinal Cord Gray Matter



The Spinal Cord Gray Matter



Somatotopic Organization of the Spinal Cord



Dorsal

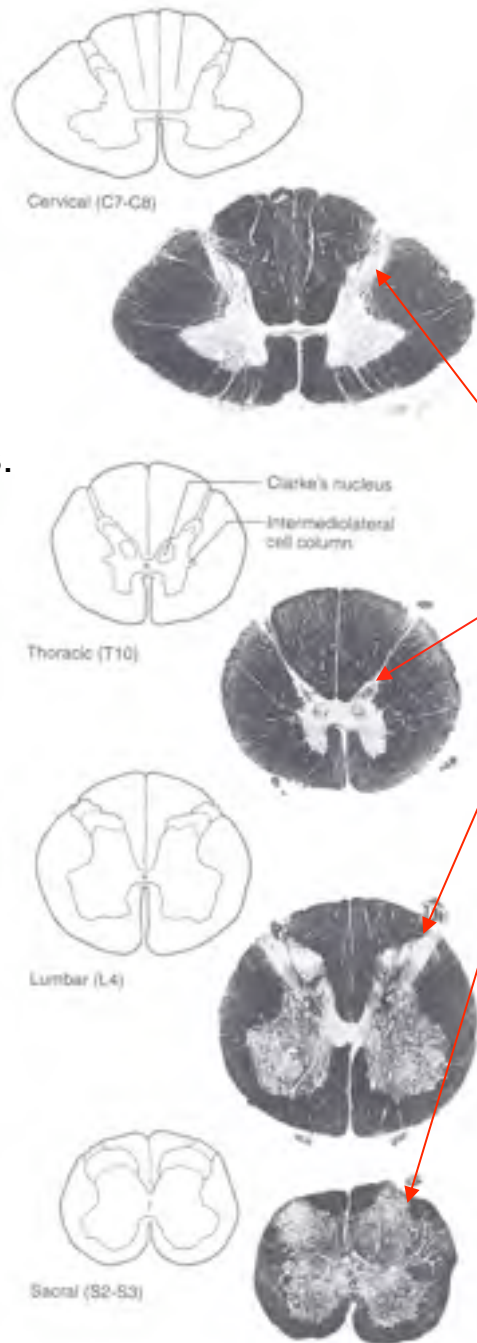
Ventral

Spinal Cord

Longitudinal Organization of the gray matter

Nuclei (laminae) of the gray matter are actually longitudinal columns of cells.

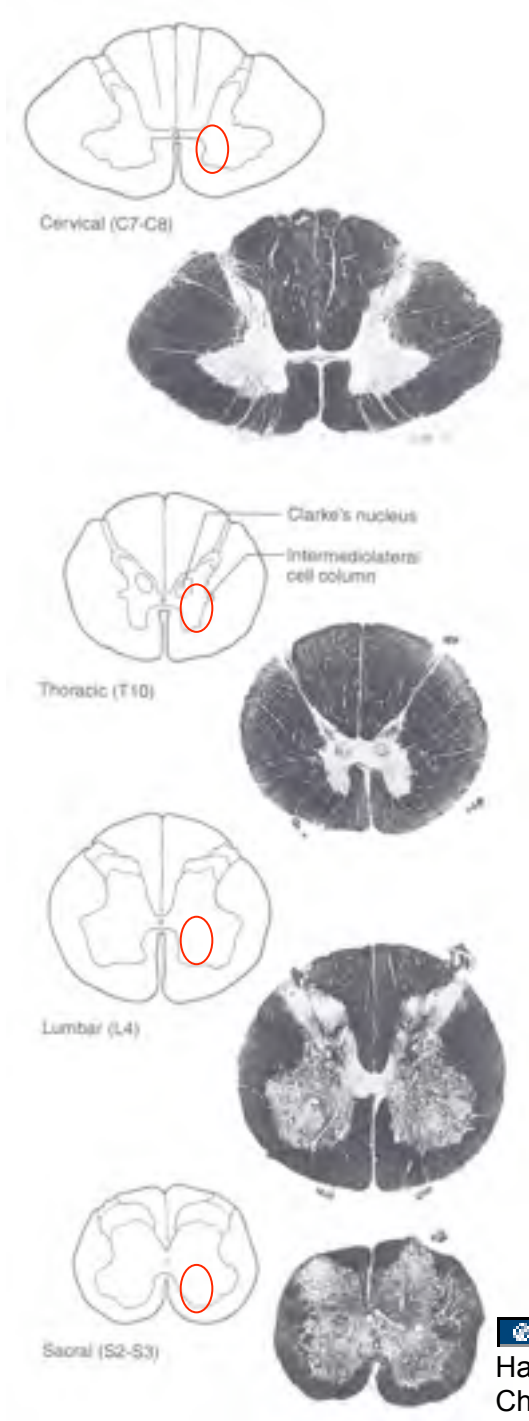
Each column is a structurally and functionally defined population of neurons.



For example, the **substantia gelatinosa** (receiving pain and temperature input) extends throughout the length of the cord.

Spinal Cord

Longitudinal Organization of the gray matter

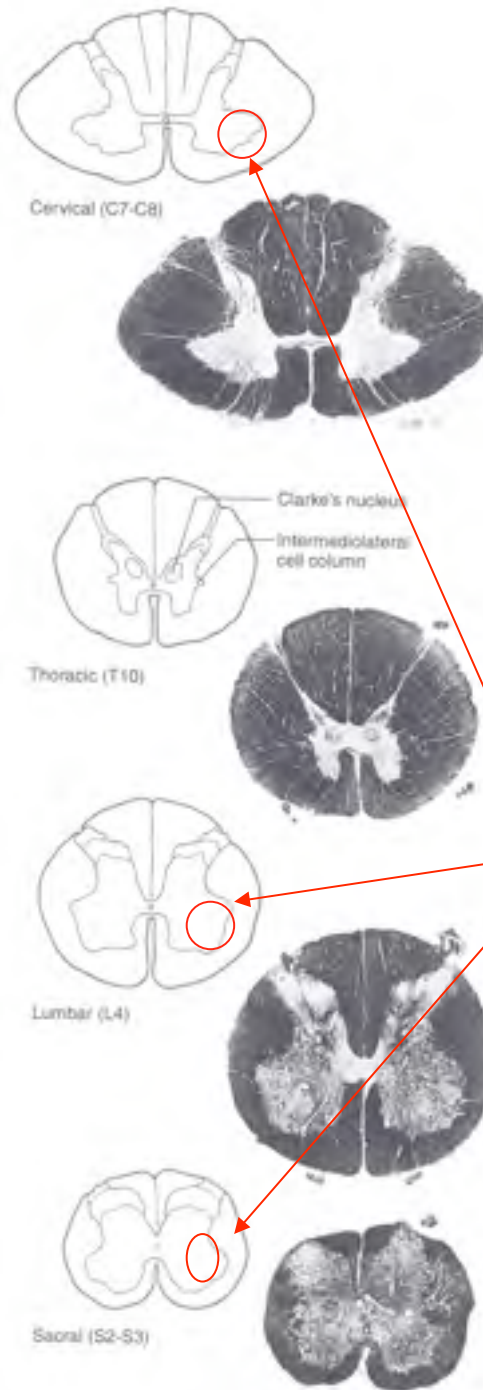


A second example is the column of ventral horn cells that innervate axial muscles at all levels of the vertebral column.

This cell column forms the medial part of the ventral horn.

Spinal Cord

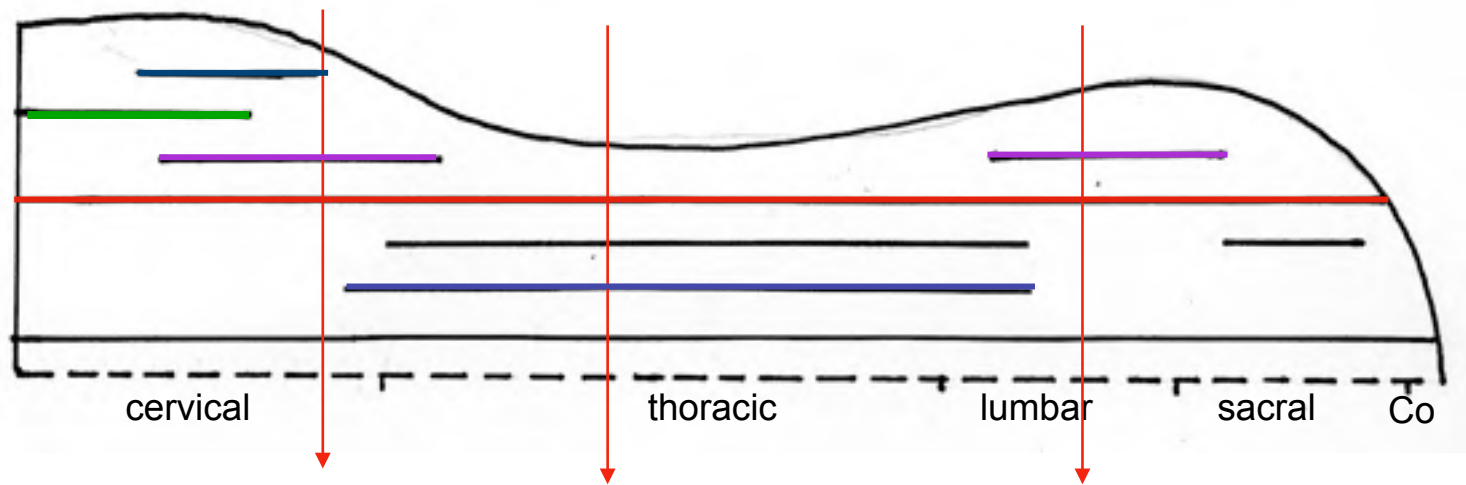
Longitudinal Organization of the gray matter



In the enlargements, neurons innervating the limb muscles form a lateral cell column in the ventral horn.

This is a discontinuous column of cells. These added cells in the enlargements make the ventral horn much larger than the ventral horn of the thoracic cord.

Phrenic Nucleus
 Accessory Nucleus
 VHC - lateral columns
 VHC - medial column
 IML & SVG - visceral
 Nucleus dorsalis
 Substantia Gelatinosa



C7



T4



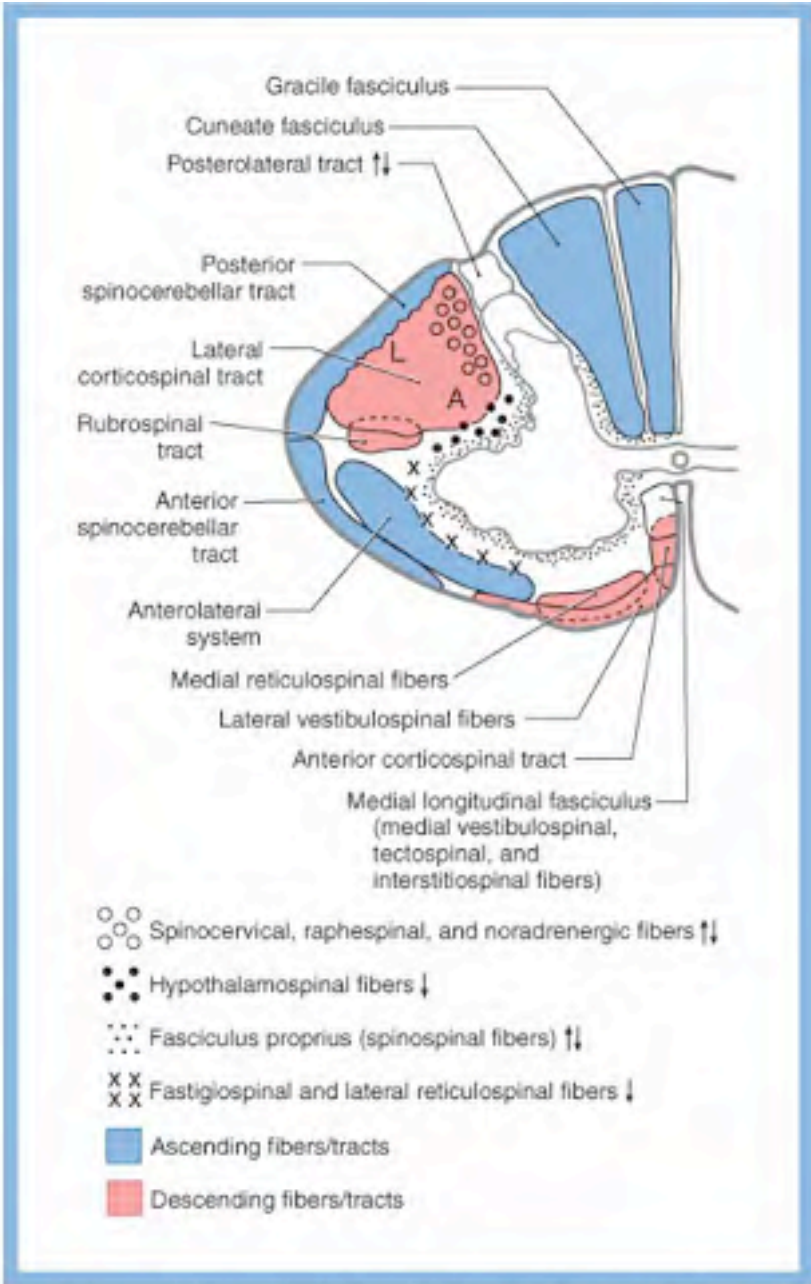
L4

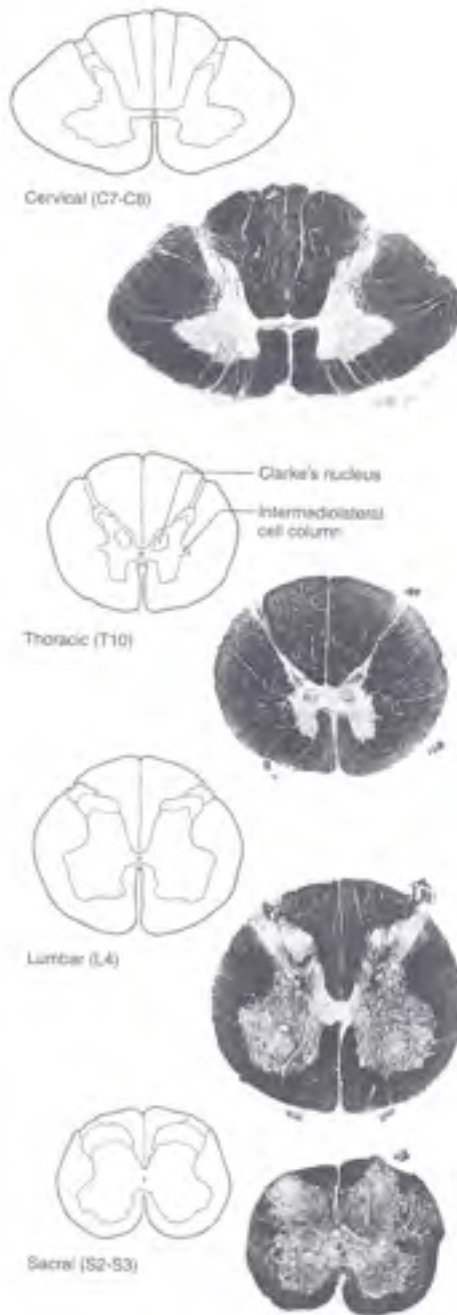
Nucleus or Column	Spinal Level	Function
Dorsal Horn		
Posteromarginal nucleus Substantia gelatinosa Principal sensory nucleus (Nucleus proprius)	All levels	All three nuclei receive primary sensory information. The first two appear to modulate this information, whereas the principal sensory nucleus is associated more with transmission to higher centers and with reflex connections.
Dorsal nucleus of Clarke (nucleus dorsalis)	C8-L3	Nucleus of origin of the dorsal spinocerebellar tract
Ventral Horn		
Spinal accessory nucleus	C1-C5	Lower motor neurons of trapezius and sternocleidomastoid muscles
Phrenic nucleus	C3-C5	Lower motor neurons of the diaphragm
Intermediolateral nucleus	T1-L3 S2-S4	Nucleus of origin of sympathetic preganglionic fibers Nucleus of origin of sacral parasympathetic preganglionic fibers
Medial motor column	All levels	Lower motor neurons that innervate the trunk
Lateral motor column	C5-T1 L1 -S3	Lower motor neurons that innervate the limbs

INTERMISSION

- 10 minute visceral afferent/efferent break

White Matter





The White Matter of the Spinal Cord is composed of:

- ascending tracts (fibers relaying sensory information from the spinal nerves to the brain)
- descending tracts (fibers from the brain that terminate in each segment to influence motor function and sensory transmission)
- fiber bundles with both ascending and descending fibers, carrying information for intersegmental coordination

White matter decreases from the cervical to the sacral segments of the cord.

All tracts have a topographic organization.

Not all tracts are present at all levels of the cord

REFLEXES

This is one of the types of “local processing” that occurs in the spinal cord without influence from higher centers.

A Polysynaptic Spinal Reflex Arc

Receptor - in skin, muscle, joint or viscera

Afferent (sensory) fiber - process of a pseudounipolar cell
in the dorsal root ganglion

Interneuron in Spinal Cord - (distinguishes polysynaptic from
monosynaptic reflex)

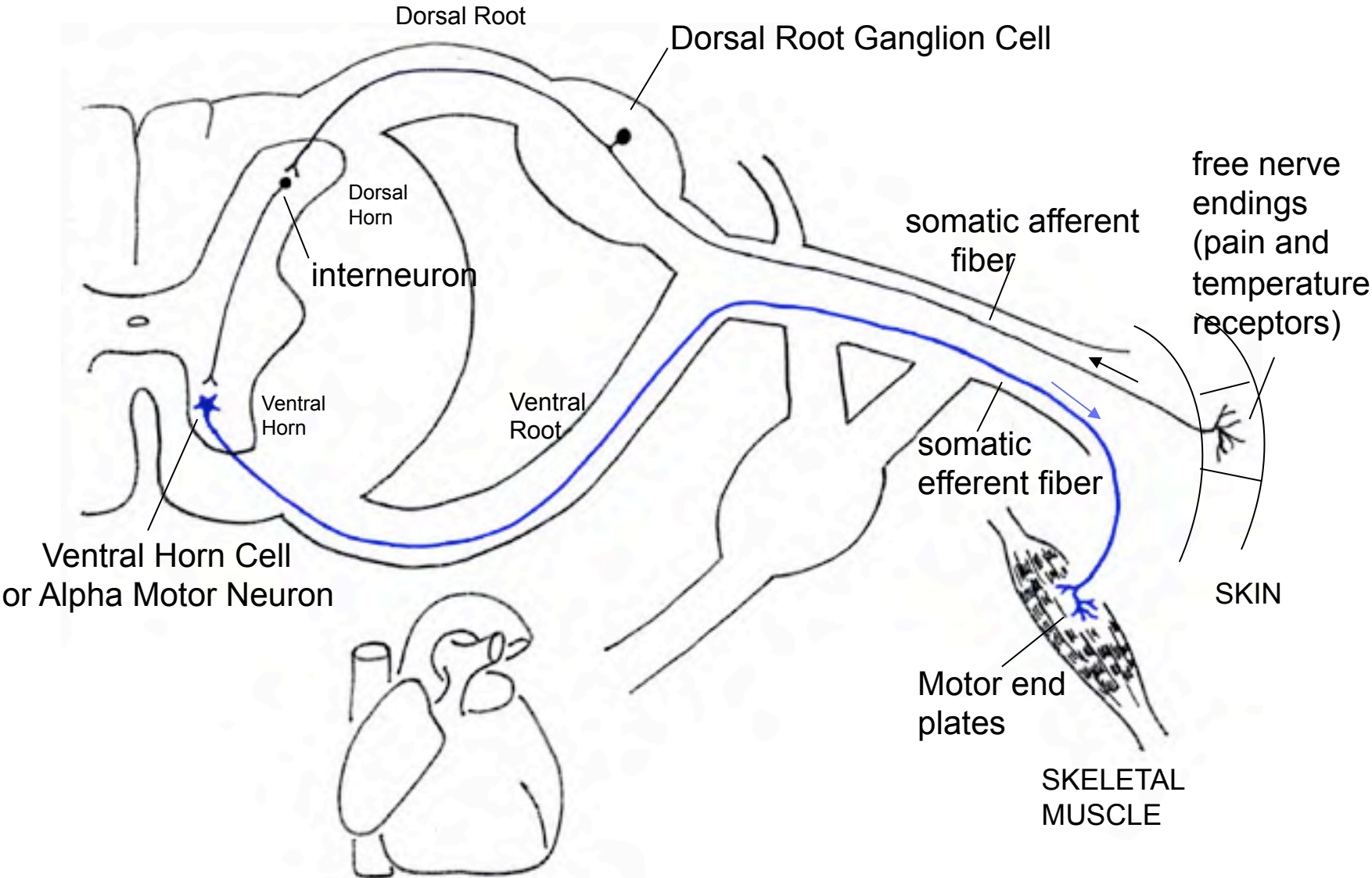
Efferent (motor) fiber - axon of cell in the ventral or lateral horn

Effector - muscle (striated or smooth) or gland

Afferent Arrives

Efferent Exits

Spinal Reflex Arc



The Flexor Reflex

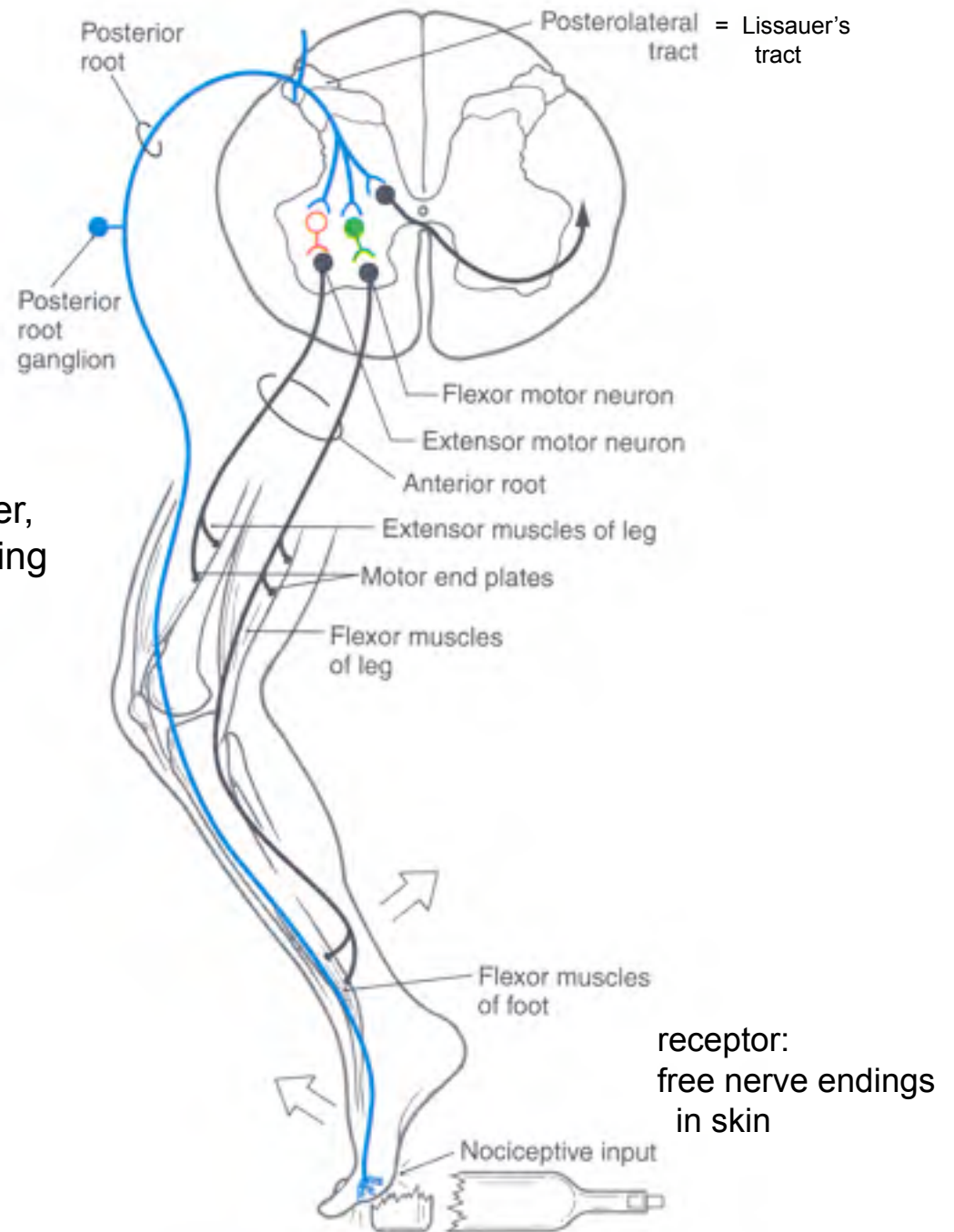
- contraction of flexor muscles in response to pain and
- inhibition of antagonists

Pain fibers (afferents) are small diameter, lightly myelinated, slowly-conducting fibers

Polysynaptic

Branching axons of the afferents spread activation to flexor VHCs in adjacent spinal segments

Result is recruitment of all flexors of the limb (and inhibition of the extensors)



Flexor Reflex

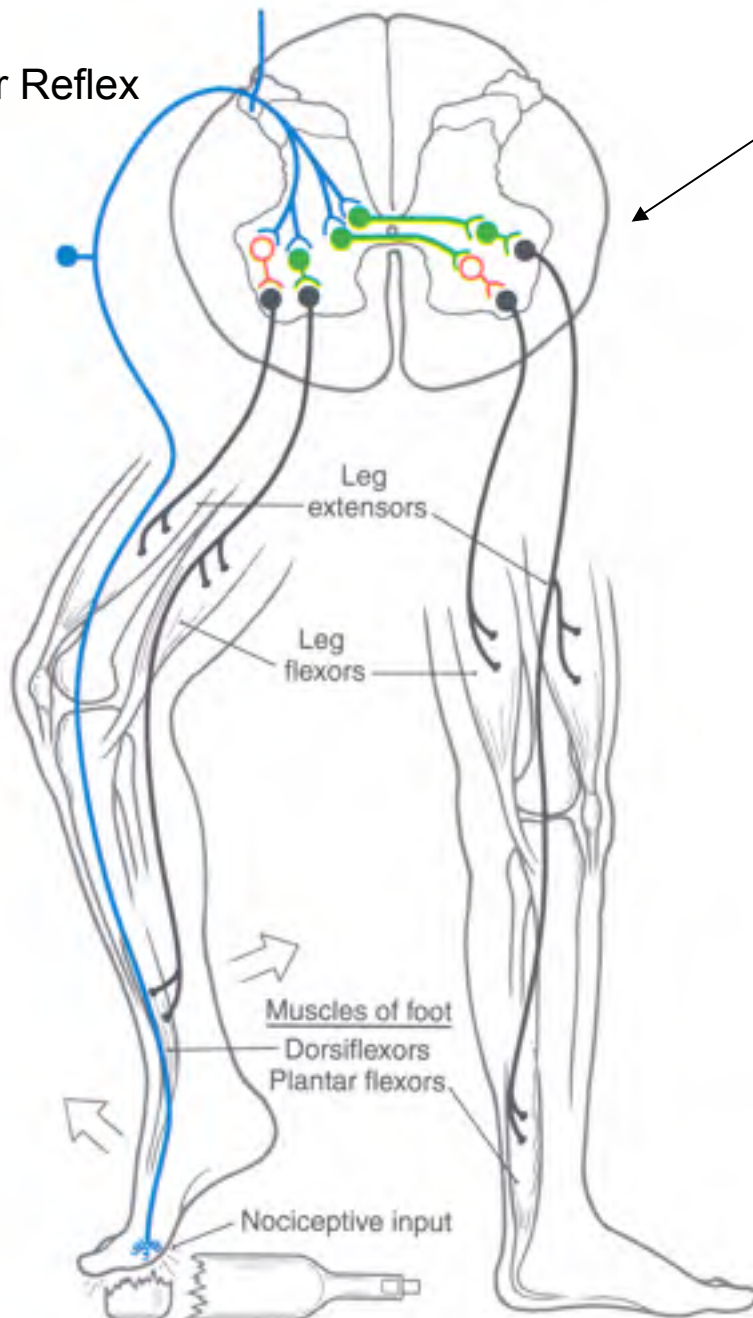
The Crossed Extension Reflex

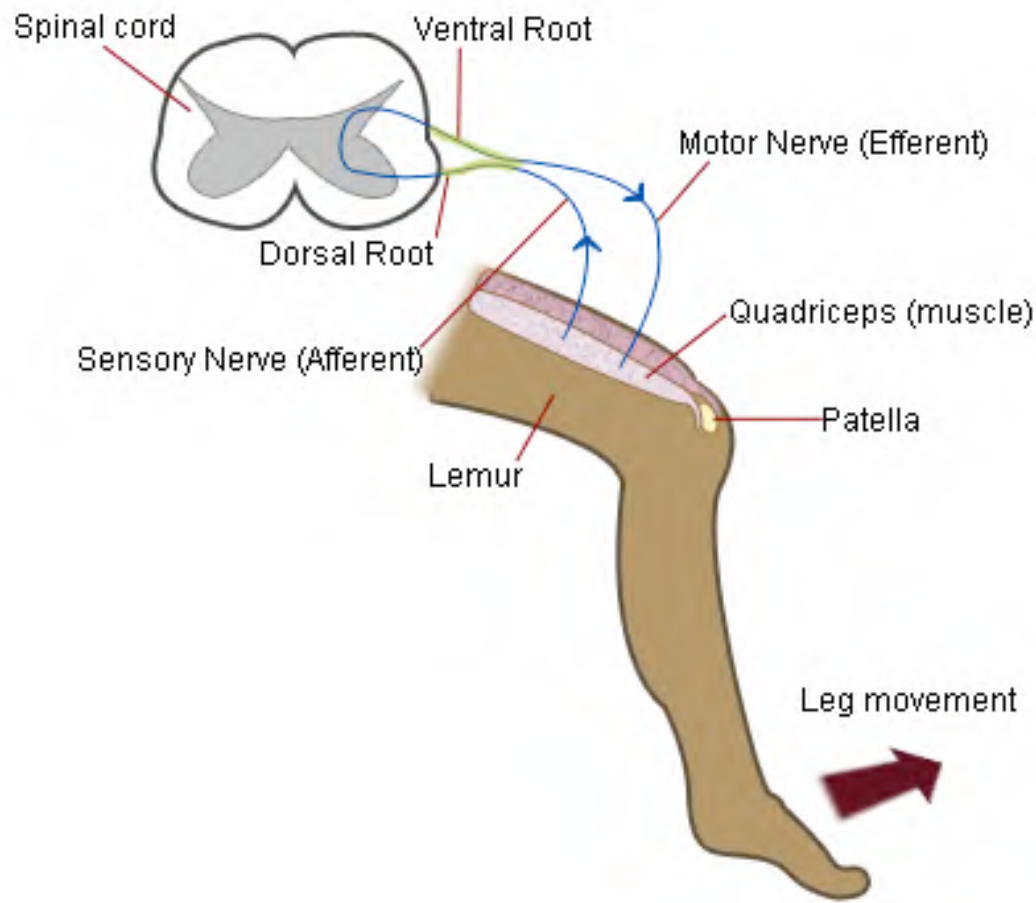
Elicited by the afferents of the Flexor Reflex

Interneurons send axons to the contralateral ventral horn

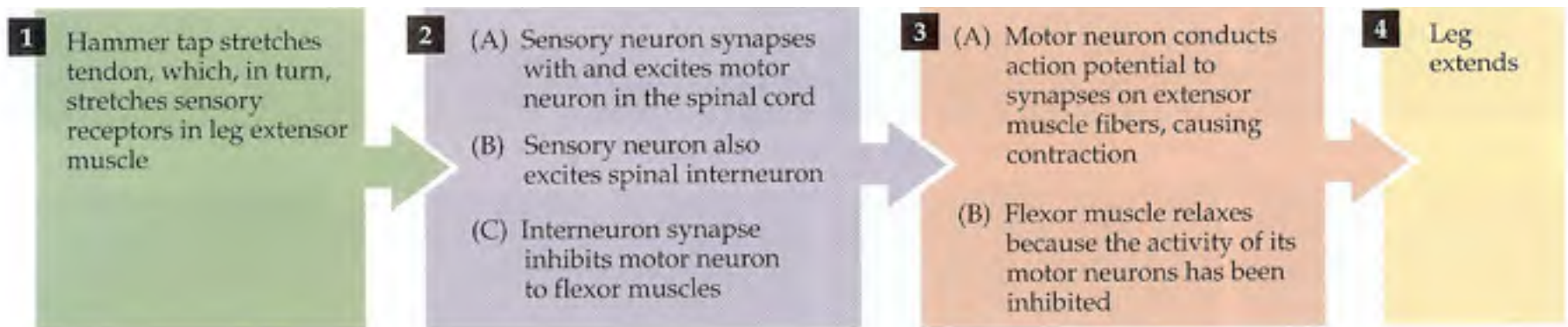
Activate:
excitatory interneurons
to Ventral Horn Cells that
innervate extensors

inhibitory interneurons
to VHCs that innervate flexors

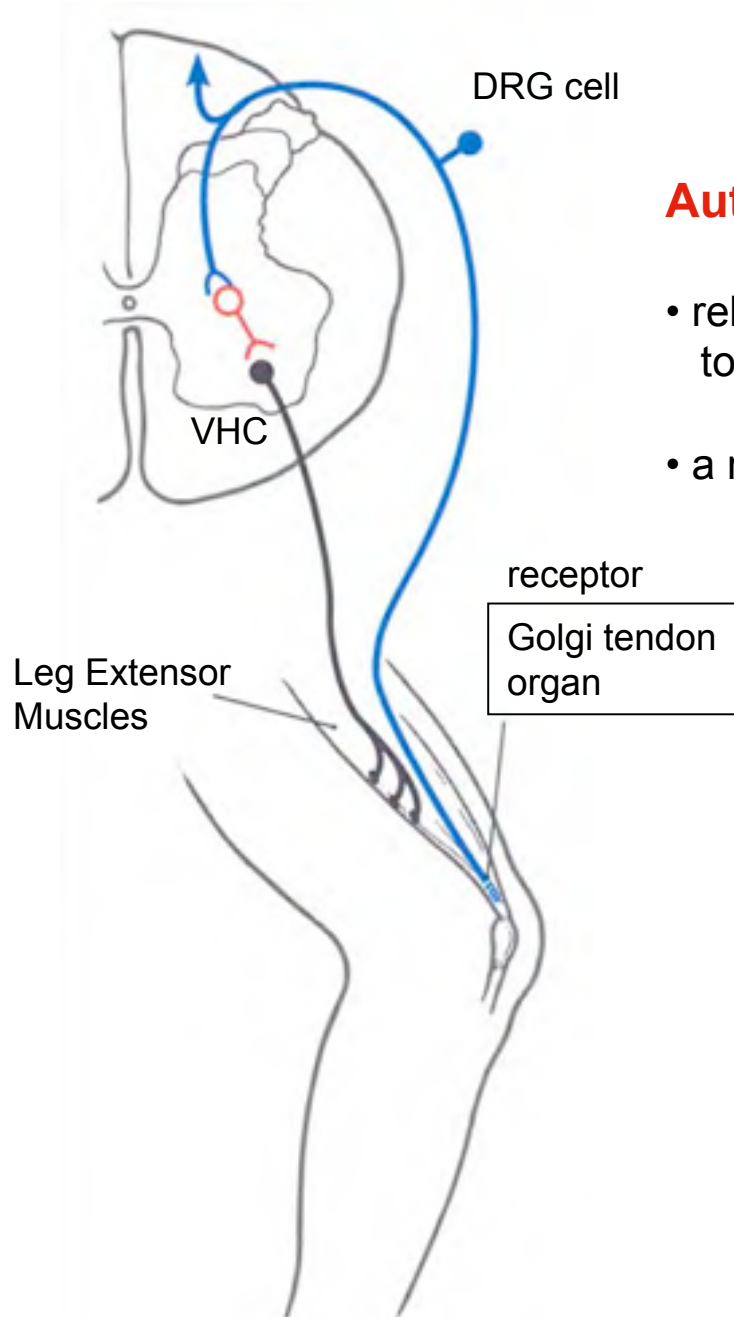




[Christina T3, Wikipedia](#)



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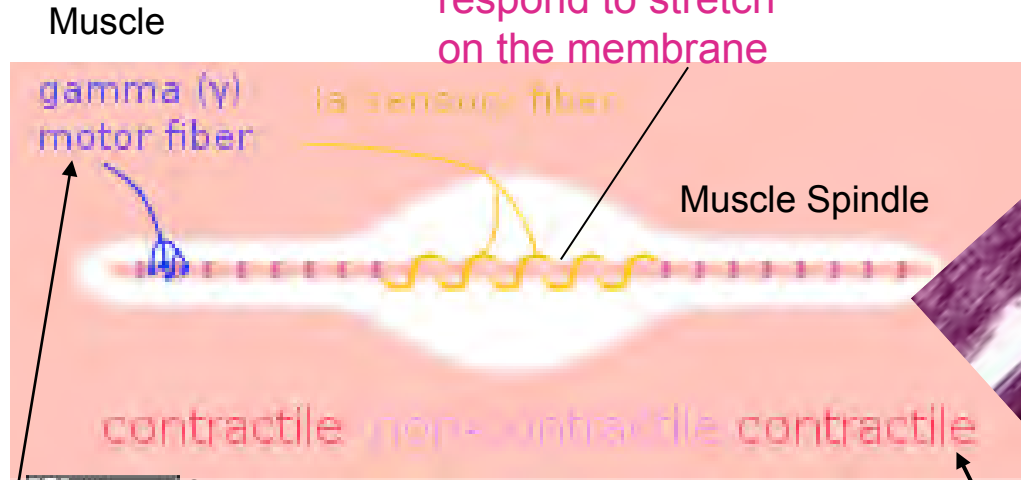


Autogenic Inhibition

- relaxation of a muscle in response to relatively high tension on the tendon
- a relatively rapid and a discrete response

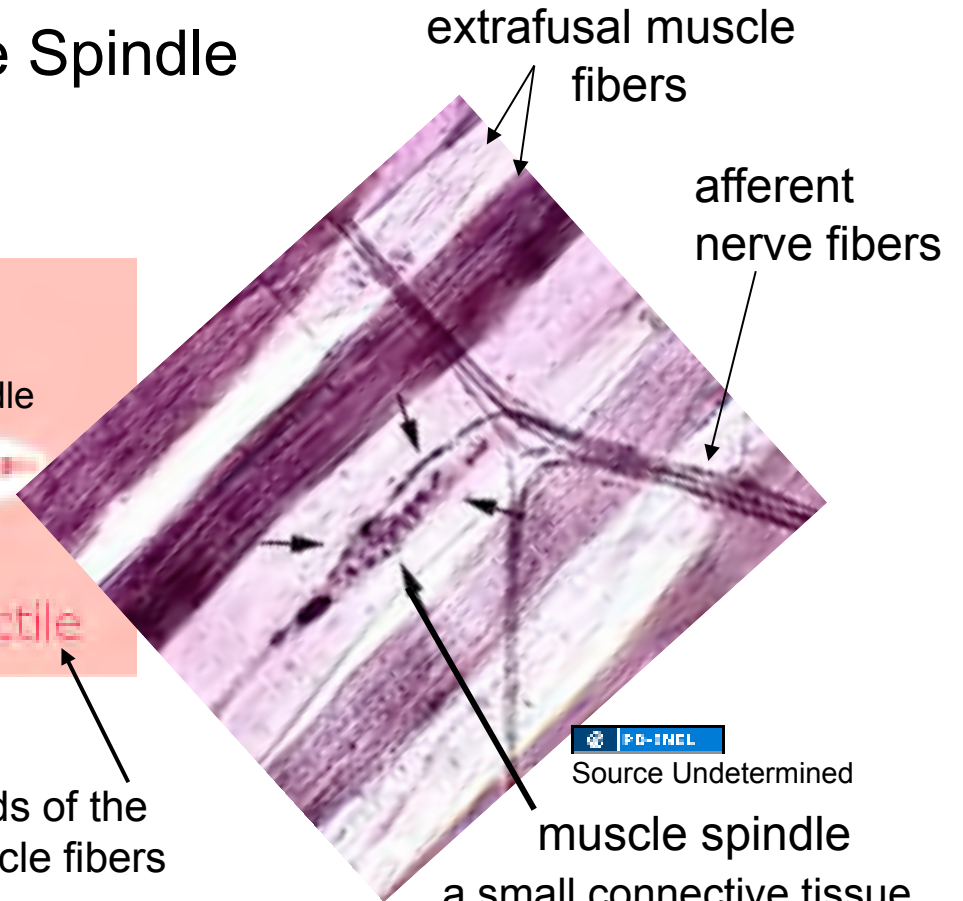
The Muscle Spindle

Muscle spindle afferents respond to stretch on the membrane



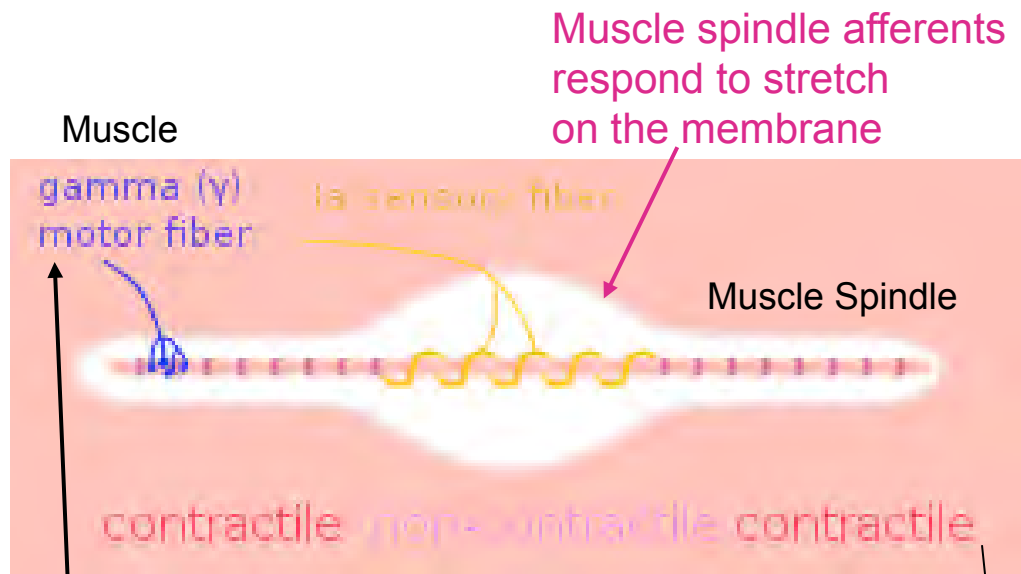
Gamma motor neuron axon controls contraction of the intrafusal fiber

contractile ends of the intrafusal muscle fibers



muscle spindle
a small connective tissue capsule containing "intrafusal" muscle fibers

The Brain Controls the Muscle Spindle's Responsiveness



Gamma motor neuron axon controls contraction of the intrafusal fiber

contractile ends of the intrafusal muscle fibers

The muscle spindle is stretched by lengthening of the muscle.

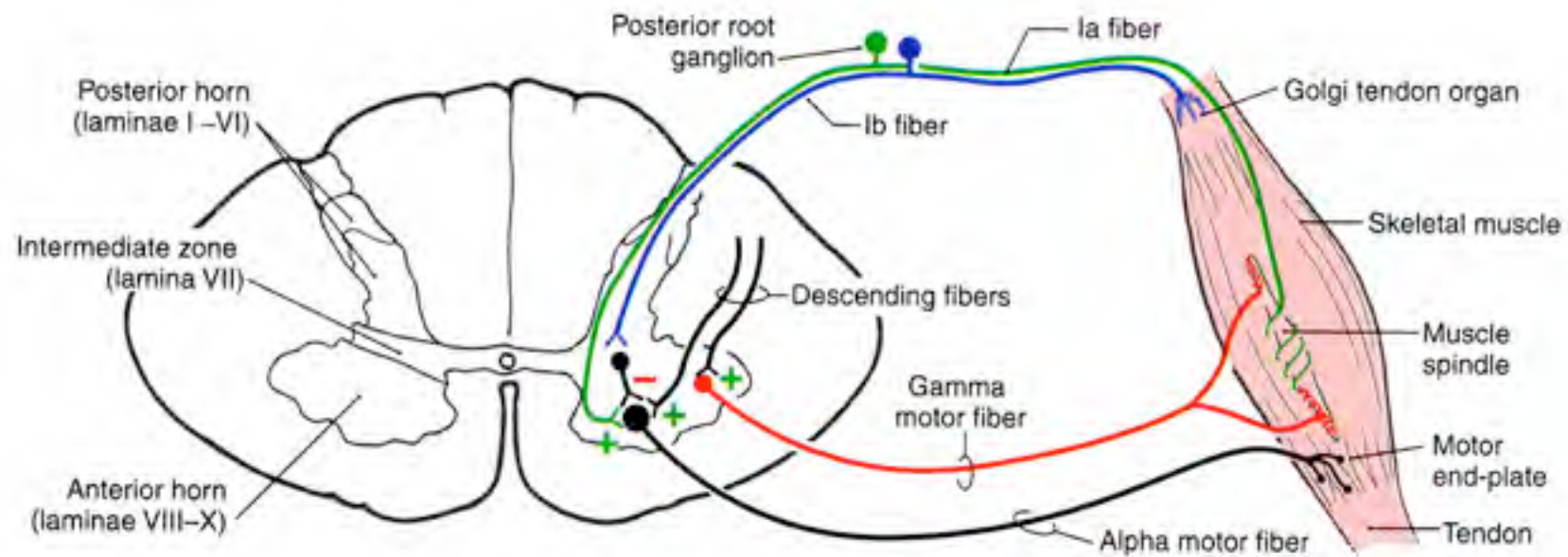
The firing of the afferent fibers in response depends upon the tension on the central part of the intrafusal fibers.

Contraction of the intrafusal fibers (via gamma motor neuron firing) sets the tension on the central region of the intrafusal fiber.

This control is governed by input to the gamma motor neurons from the brain.

Alpha Motor Neurons Integrate Input from the Brain
with Input from the Muscles, Tendons and Joints

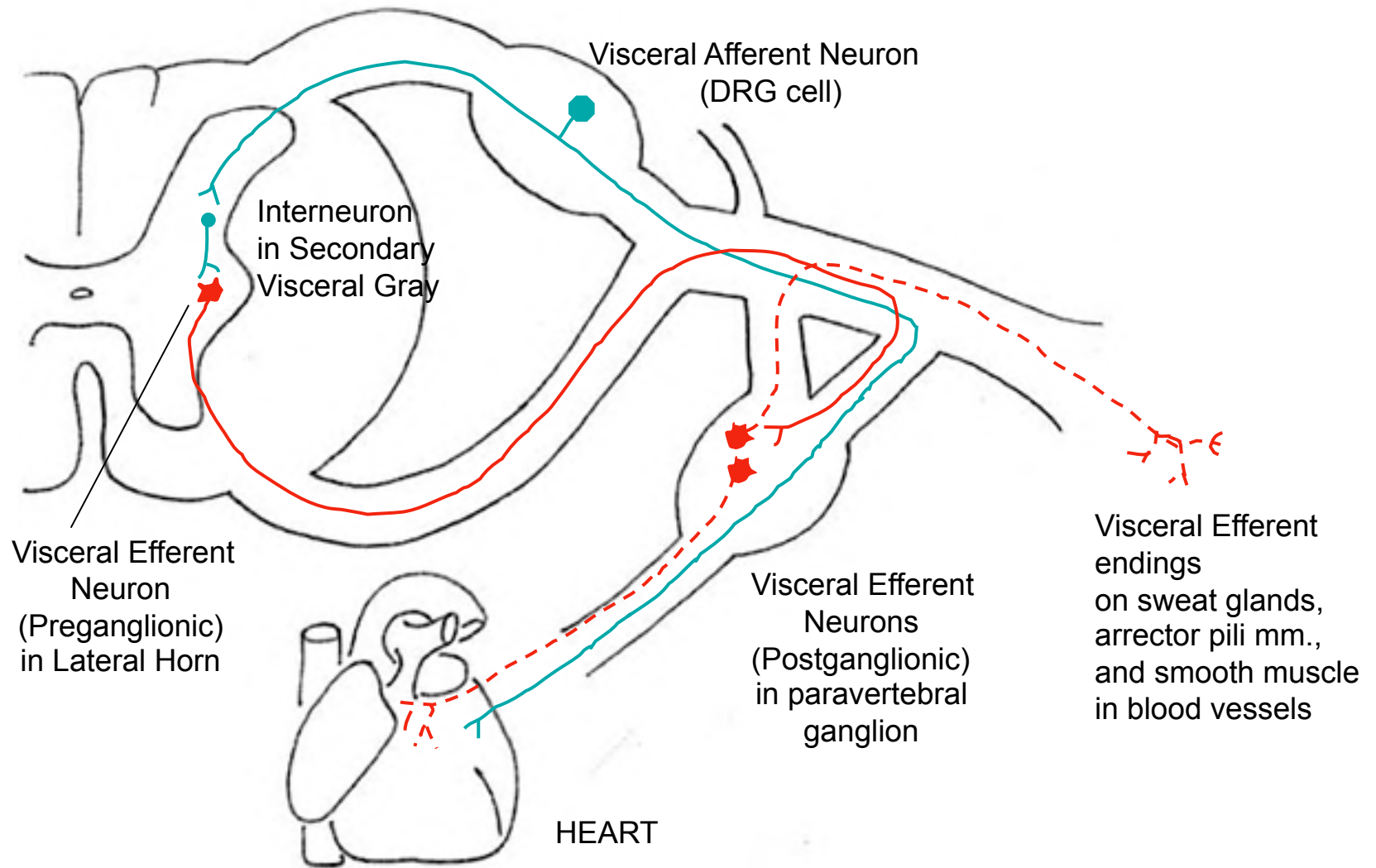
Gamma Motor Neurons are controlled by the Brain



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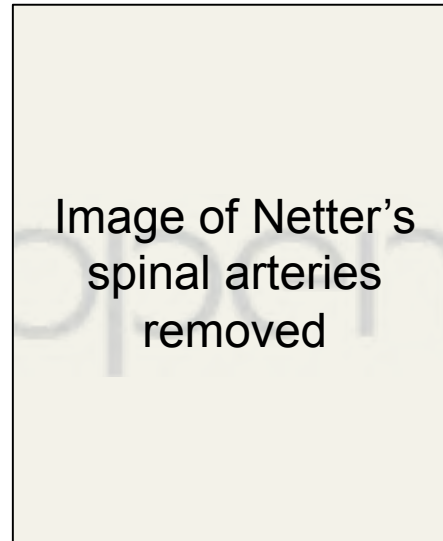
“Alpha-gamma coactivation” from the brain (“descending fibers”) keeps the muscle spindle sensitive to changes in length and the rate of change.

Visceral Spinal Reflex Arc



Blood Supply to the Spinal Cord

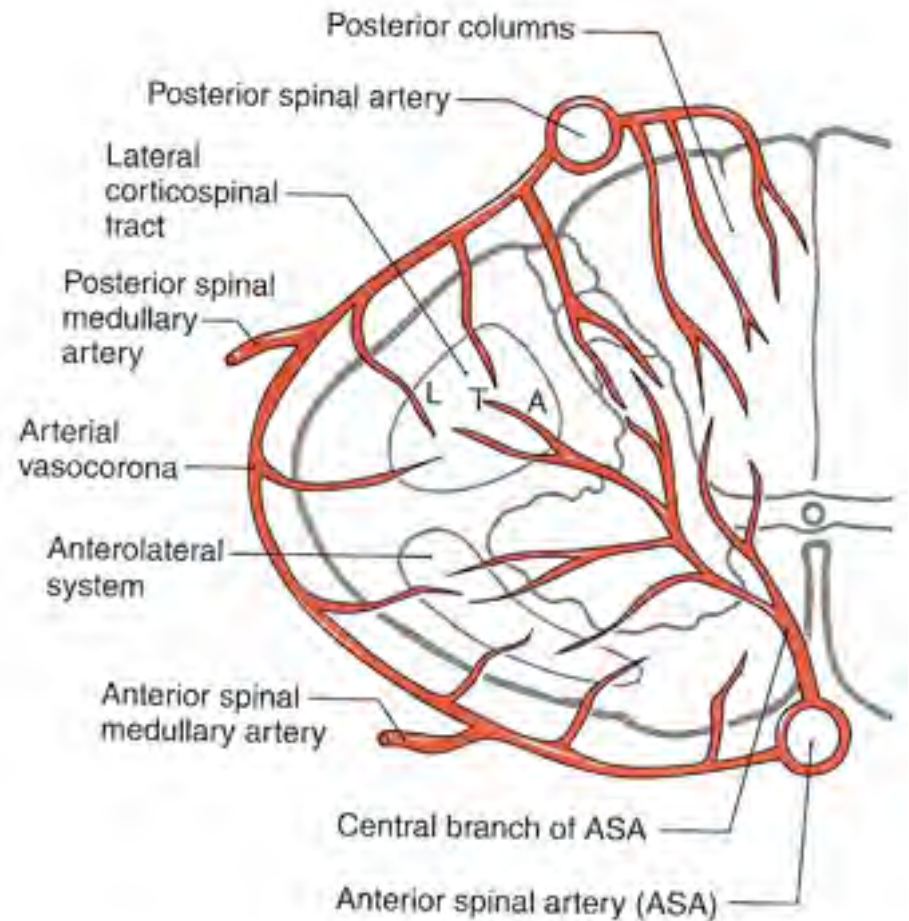
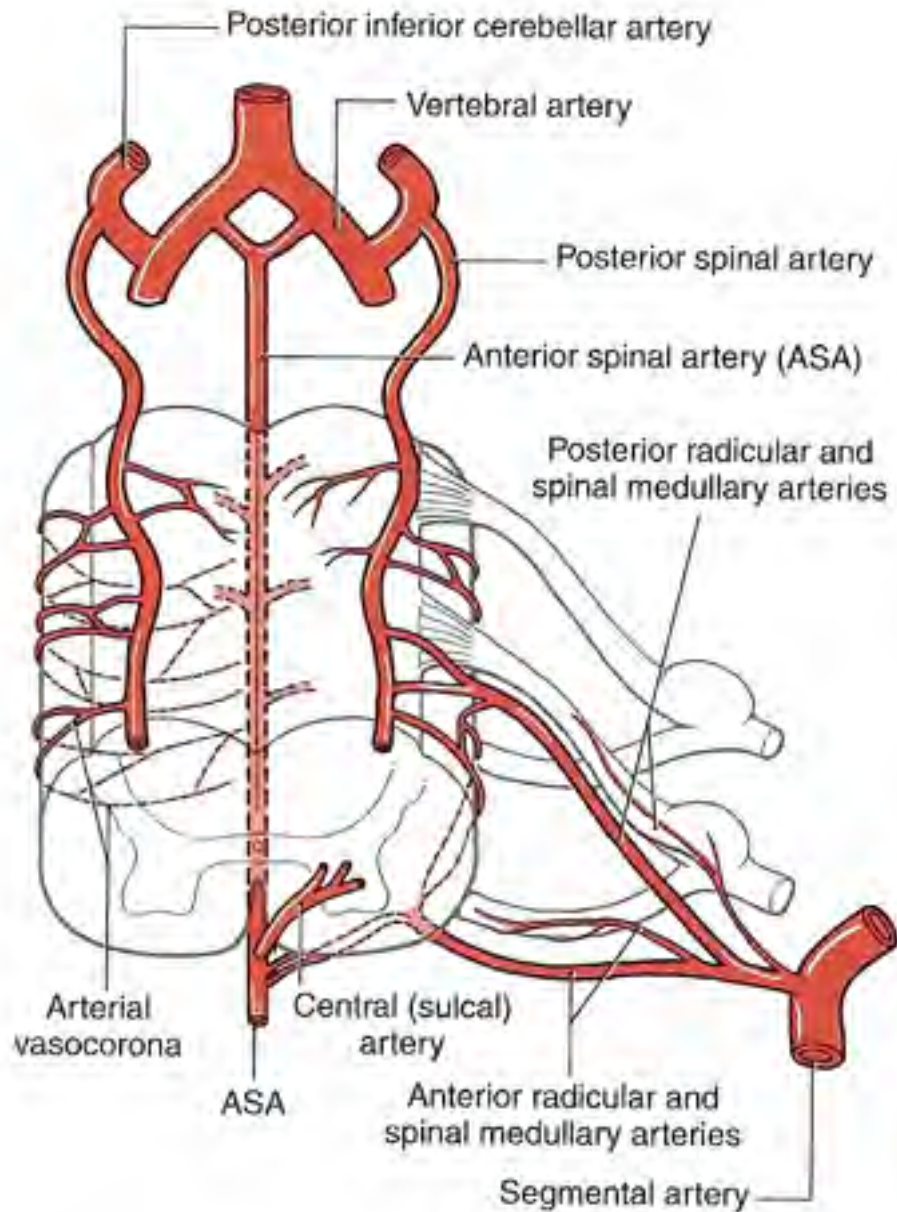
Ventral Spinal
and
Ventral Radicular
Arteries



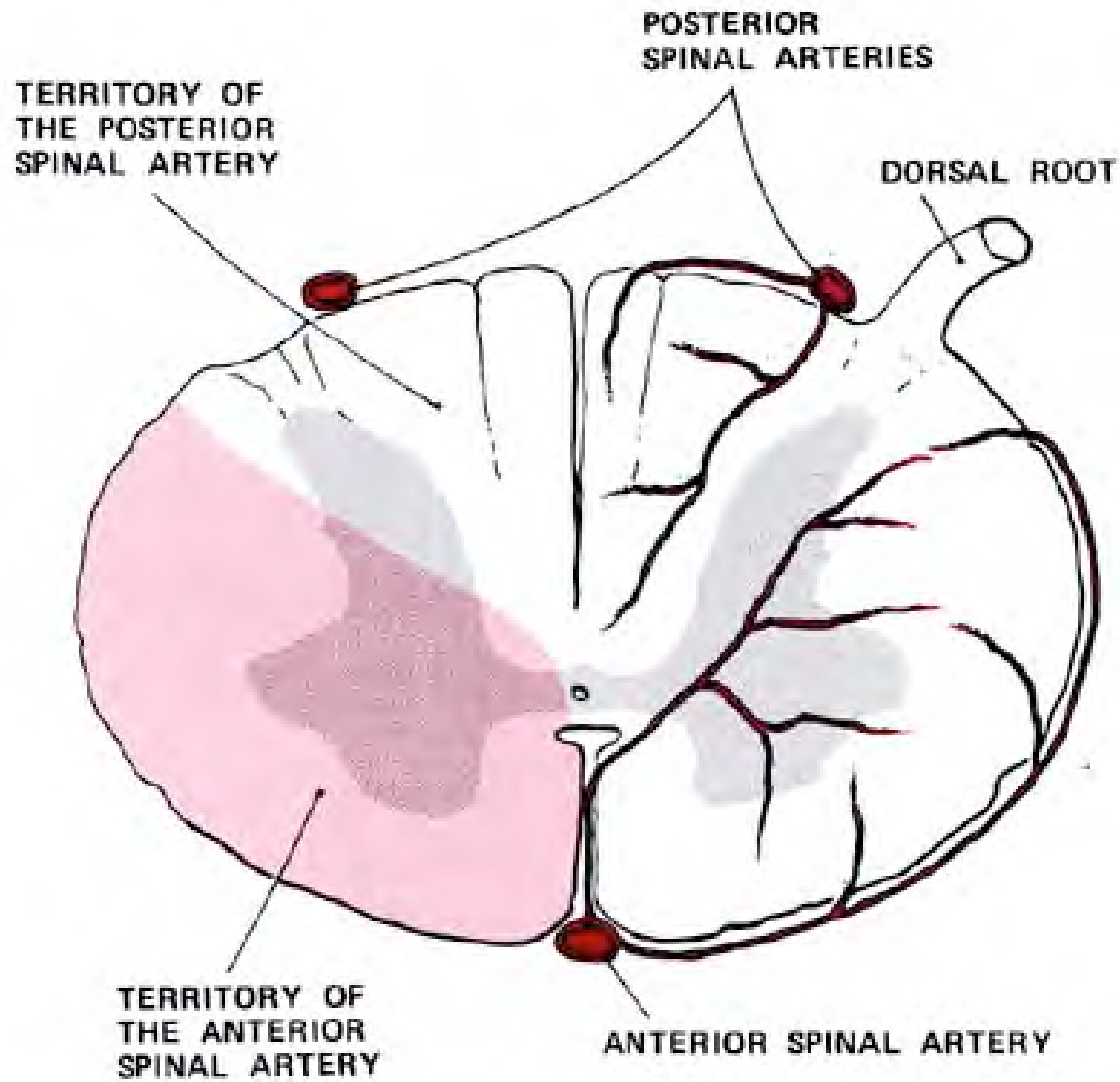
Dorsal Spinal
and
Dorsal Radicular
Arteries

Ventral and Dorsal spinal branches off the vertebral arteries descend the spinal cord and are supplemented by spinal radicular branches of the segmental arteries.

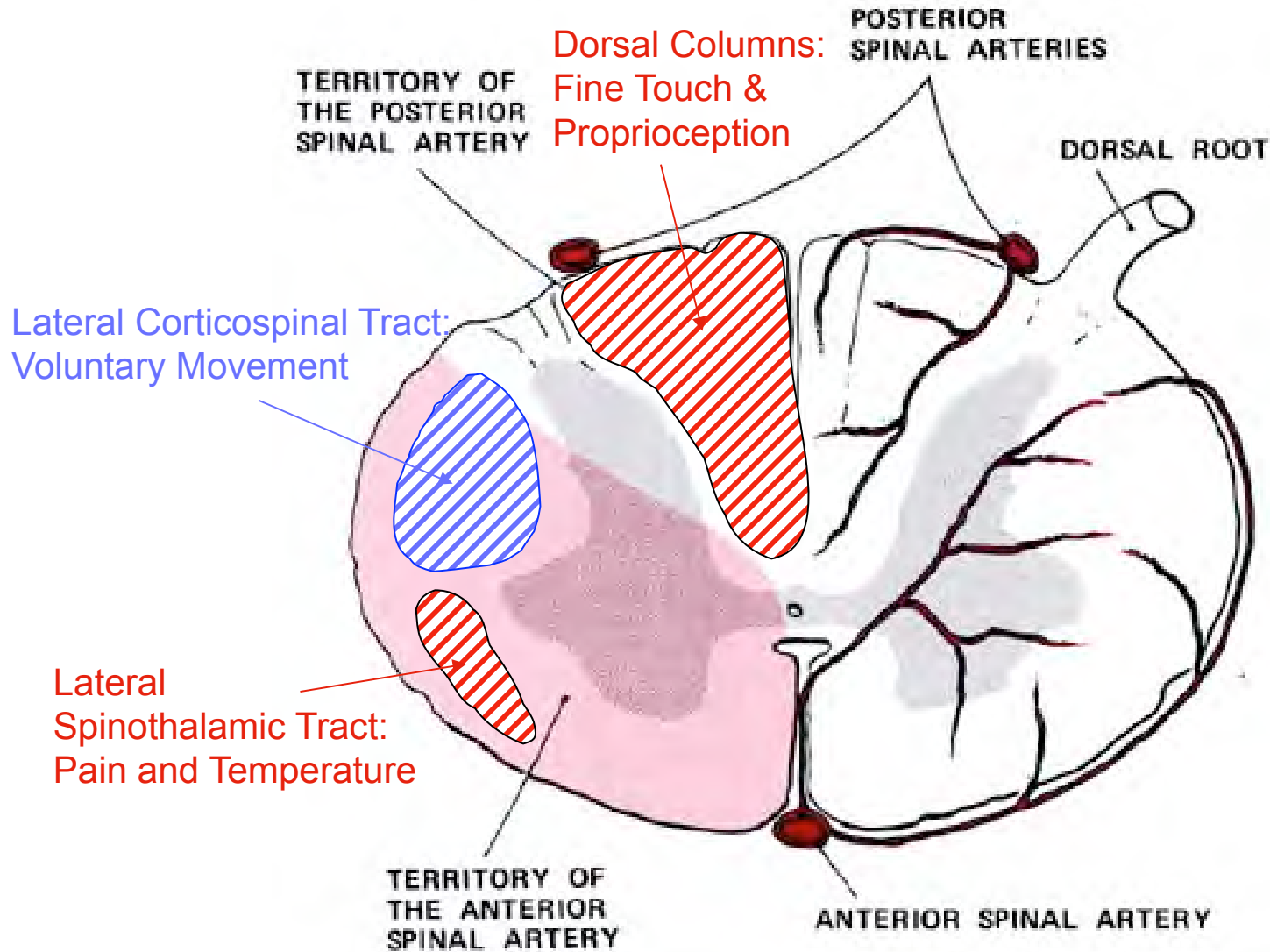
BLOOD SUPPLY OF SPINAL CORD



Blood Supply to the Spinal Cord



Blood Supply to the Spinal Cord



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Slide 3: UCSF, School of Medicine http://missinglink.ucsf.edu/lm/IDS_101_histo_resource/cell_structure.htm

Slide 8: Haines, *Fundamental Neuroscience*, 2nd ed., Churchill-Livingstone, 2002)

Slide 9: G.M. Shepard, *Neurobiology*, 3rd Edition Fig. 9.3

Slide 10: Haines, *Fundamental Neuroscience for Basic and Clinical Applications*, 3rd edition, 2005, Fig. 9-1

Slide 11: Gray's Anatomy; Source Undetermined

Slide 12: Source Undetermined, See also Manter and Gatz's *Essentials of Clinical Neuroanatomy and Neurophysiology*, 8th ed

Slide 13: Gray's Anatomy

Slide 15: Gray's Anatomy

Slide 16: UCSF School of Medicine, http://missinglink.ucsf.edu/lm/IDS_101_histo_resource/cell_structure.htm; University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey

Slide 17: Source Undetermined

Slide 18: Haines, *Fundamental Neuroscience for Basic and Clinical Applications*, 3rd edition, 2005, Fig. 18-4

Slide 19: Source Undetermined

Slide 20: Source Undetermined; Manter and Gatz's *Essentials of Clinical Neuroanatomy and Neurophysiology*, 8th ed, Fig. 6-1

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Slide 38: Haines, *Fundamental Neuroscience*, 2nd ed., Churchill-Livingstone, 2002

Slide 41: Haines, *Fundamental Neuroscience for Basic and Clinical Applications*, 3rd edition, 2005, Fig. 9-6

Slide 42: Haines, *Fundamental Neuroscience*, 2nd ed., Churchill-Livingstone, 2002

Slide 43: Haines, *Fundamental Neuroscience*, 2nd ed., Churchill-Livingstone, 2002

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Slide 51: Haines, Fundamental Neuroscience for Basic and Clinical Applications, 3rd edition, 2005, Fig. 8-25

Slide 52: Manter and Gatz's Essentials of Clinical Neuroanatomy and Neurophysiology, 8th ed, Fig. 6-1

Slide 53: Modified From Manter and Gatz's Essentials of Clinical Neuroanatomy and Neurophysiology, 8th ed, Fig. 6-1