

Key takeaways from the webinar:

VAGUS NERVE MASTERY



Somatic motor function: The VN controls the muscles of the pharynx (throat), all the muscles of the larynx (voicebox), the muscles of the palate (roof of the mouth) except for the tensor veli palatini, and the striated muscles in the upper third of the esophagus (food pipe).

Visceral motor function: The VN supplies the smooth muscles and glands of the trachea (windpipe), bronchi, digestive tract, and the heart muscle.

Visceral sensory function: The VN receives sensory information from the base of the tongue, pharynx, larynx, trachea, bronchi, heart, esophagus, stomach, and intestines. It also has pressure receptors in the aortic arch (a major artery) and chemoreceptors (chemical sensors) in the aortic body (a small cluster of cells near the aortic arch).

Special sensory function: The VN carries taste sensations from the epiglottis (the flap that covers the windpipe when swallowing).

Somatic afferent function: The VN provides sensory perception from the outer ear, the external auditory canal (ear canal), the dura mater (a membrane surrounding the brain) of the posterior cranial fossa (back of the skull), and a small area behind the ear.

Pathway from the brain: The VN leaves the brain through the jugular foramen (an opening in the skull) along with the glossopharyngeal nerve and accessory nerve.

Course of the nerve: The VN runs in front of the transverse processes of the atlas (the first vertebra in the neck). This means proper alignment of the atlas is crucial.

Laryngeal innervation: The VN supplies all the intrinsic muscles of the larynx. This is why humming and making sounds can activate it.

Manual activation: Gently massaging the cricothyroid muscle while humming can activate the VN. The

cricoarytenoid muscle is a very important opener of the glottis (the space between the vocal cords) and is supplied by the recurrent laryngeal nerve (a branch of the vagus).

Heart rate regulation: The VN slows down the heart rate, mainly through its influence on the pacemaker region in the sinoatrial node and atrioventricular node. Without the vagus nerve, the heart rate would be around 100 beats per minute.

Breathing and vagal tone: Slow exhalation increases vagal tone (activity). To stretch the diaphragm, exhale with spinal rotation while making an "sssss" sound.

Solar plexus: The solar plexus (celiac plexus) is an important communication center within the autonomic nervous system. Try touching, rubbing, and humming at the solar plexus.

