

# Neurological System

LA County College of Nursing & Allied Health  
 School of Nursing

N113 Medical/Surgical Nursing

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foot.com

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# Neurological System

Central nervous system

Brain

Spinal cord

Peripheral nervous system

Peripheral nerve

ADAM

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# Neurological System

## Nursing Assessment Objectives

- Identify appropriate nursing assessment questions
- Discuss methods utilized to assess clients
- Describe various associated characteristics
- Identify cultural variations
- Discuss older adult variations
- Identify appropriate health promotions and client/family teaching

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## Student Activities

### ➤ Required Readings



- Berman
- Chapter 30
- Pp. 580-589

**Remember to read content in the boxes**

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## Pre-Procedure

Verify  
MD order

Introduce  
self

Identify  
client

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## Implementation of Neurological Nursing Assessment

Explain

What you  
are going  
to do

Why you  
are going  
to do it

Perform  
Hand  
Hygiene

Use appropriate  
infection control  
procedures

Provide  
privacy

Door, drape, chaperone

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## Neurological Nursing Assessment

Begins from across the room

Routine screening first by RN

Complete, thorough, detailed exam by MD or NP

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## Neurological Nursing Assessment

3 major client considerations for extent of exam

- Chief complaint
- Physical condition
- Willingness to participate/cooperate

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## Clinical Alert!!

All questions in an exam must be appropriately related to the client's:

- Age
- Language
- Education level
- Culture

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## Nursing Assessment Questions

Nursing history focus

- Orientation
  - Person, place, time, (and event)
- Presence of pain
  - Head, back, or extremities
- Speech disorder (slurred)

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## Nursing Assessment Questions (cont.)

Nursing History focus:

- Loss of consciousness
- Fainting, convulsions
  - Management of active seizure
- Trauma
  - Head or spinal cord injuries
- Tingling or numbness
- Tremors
- Limping or paralysis
- Uncontrolled muscle movements
- Memory loss or mood swings
- Problems with any of 5 senses

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## Neurological Nursing Assessment

Examination includes:

- Mental status
- Level of consciousness
- Cranial nerve function
- Reflexes
- Motor function
- Sensory function

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## Neurological Nursing Assessment: Mental Status

### Mental status

- Reveals general cerebral function
- Cognitive
- Affective

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## Neurological Mental Status Nursing Assessment

4 areas of assessment

- Language
- Orientation
- Memory
- Attention span and calculation

\*\*Abnormalities require a more extensive exam by MD or NP\*\*

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## Neurological Mental Status Language Assessment

Language

Unable to comprehend or express oneself

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## Mental Status Language Assessment: Aphasia

### Aphasia

- Defects or loss of power to express or comprehend r/t disease or injury of cerebral cortex

Sensory or **receptive** aphasia (comprehension)

Motor or **expressive** aphasia (function)

16

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## Mental Status Language Assessment: Receptive Aphasia

Sensory or receptive  
aphasia  
**(COMPREHENSION)**

**Auditory** aphasia—  
unable to *comprehend*  
symbolic content  
associated with **sound**

**Visual** aphasia—  
unable to  
*comprehend/understand*  
**printed or written**  
figures.

17

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## Mental Status Language Assessment: Expressive Aphasia

Motor or expressive aphasia

- Unable to **OUTWARDLY EXPRESS** oneself through
  - writing
  - making signs
  - speaking

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## Mental Status Assessment: Language, Modified

When client has difficulty speaking, assess client's abilities:

- Identify objects
- Read and match words & pictures
- Obey simple commands
  - Written
  - Verbal

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## MATCHING GAME

- Language
- Orientation
- Memory
- Attention  
Span/Calculation
- Obeys simple commands
- Knows Location
- Ability to focus
- Expressive aphasia

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## Mental Status Assessment: Orientation

Oriented x	Awareness of
1. Person	(Who: Others)
2. Place	(Where/Location)
3. Time	(When)
4. Event/purpose	(Why/what)
{Self	(Themselves)}

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## Mental Status Assessment: Memory

Listen for lapses in memory

3 categories of memory

- Immediate recall
- Recent memory
- Remote memory

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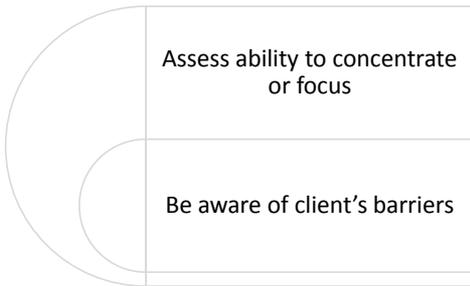
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## Mental Status Assessment: Attention Span & Calculation



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## Neurological Assessment: Level of Consciousness (LOC)

- Very early and highly sensitive **indicator of neurological status change.**
- **Clearly** describe client's response to stimuli
  - Alert, lethargic, stuporous, comatose
  - Glasgow Coma Scale (GCS)
    - Most commonly used to assess LOC

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## Glasgow Coma Scale

- Originally, predictor of head injury recovery
  - \*\*Most commonly used to assess LOC\*\*
  - Efficient and quick
- 3 major areas assessed
  - Eye Opening
  - Verbal Response
  - Motor Response
- Score totals 3-15

Table 30-10 Berman, pg. 581

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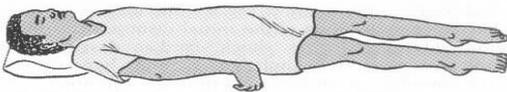
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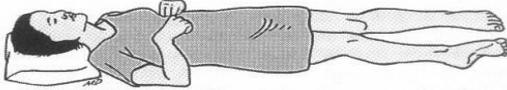
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## Posturing



A. Extension posturing (decerebrate rigidity)



B. Abnormal flexion (decorticate rigidity)

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## Reflexes

- Automatic response to a stimulus
- Responses graded 0,+1,+2,+3,or +4
- Evaluation of reflexes
  - Testing
    - Deep tendon reflexes (DTR)
    - Superficial reflexes
  - Observation of primitive reflexes

27

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## Superficial Tendon Reflexes

- Stimulate skin or mucous membranes
  - Light touch sensation
- Babinski (plantar) reflex
  - Nml (negative):
    - all toes bend down
  - Abnormal (positive):
    - big toe moves up
    - toes flare out



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZFu7bdbnZx8>

28

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## Assessment of Motor Function

Evaluates

- Cerebellar function
- Proprioception

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## Neurological Nursing Assessment: Motor Function—Cerebellar Function

- Helps control posture
- Involved in body movements and coordination
- Controls skeletal muscle to maintain equilibrium

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## Neurological Nursing Assessment: Motor Function--Proprioception

- Movement and position sensation
- Sensory nerve terminals, chiefly in muscles, tendons, joints, and internal ear

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## Motor Function Assessment

Evaluation includes:

- Gross motor function
- Fine motor function

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## Gross Motor & Balance Assessment

Generally, use **Romberg + 1** other gross motor test

### Romberg Test +

Walking Gait

Standing on One Foot w/eyes Closed

Heel-Toe Walking

Toe or Heel Walking

33

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## Gross Motor Function Assessment: Romberg Test



### Romberg Test

- Feet together
- Arms resting at sides
- First with eyes open,
- Then with eyes closed

(Google.com, 2013)

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## Gross Motor Function: Romberg Test Findings

### Normal findings (Negative Romberg):

- Client may sway slightly
- Upright posture maintained
- Foot stance maintained

### Abnormal findings (+Romberg):

- Cannot maintain foot stance
- Moves feet apart to maintain stance

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## Gross Motor Function Assessment: Walking Gait

Assess gait while client walks  
across the room and back

### Normal

- Ambulates with ***strong, steady*** gait with ***upright*** posture.

### Abnormal

- Ambulates with ***unsteady, irregular, staggering*** gait with ***poor posture*** and ***wide stance***.

36

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### Gross Motor Function: Standing on One Foot w/Eyes Closed

Client closes eyes; stands on one foot.

#### Normal

- Maintains stance x5 sec minimum

#### Abnormal

- CANNOT maintain stance x5 sec

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### Gross Motor Function: Heel-Toe Walking

Client walks straight line,  
heel directly in front of toes

#### Normal

- Maintains heel-toe walking along straight line

#### Abnormal

- Assumes wider foot gait to stay upright

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### Gross Motor Function: Toe or Heel Walking

Client walks several steps on toes  
and then on heels

#### Normal

- Client walks several steps on toes or heels

#### Abnormal

- Cannot maintain balance on toes and/or heels

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## Neurological Nursing Assessment: LEAP Program

- Bureau of Primary Health Care of US Gov., 1992
- LEAP: Lower Extremity Amputation Prevention Program
  - Goal: identify high risk clients
  - 5 step program
  - Standard practice for at risk clients
    - Foot screening at least 4 X per year

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## Fine Motor Function Assessment: Upper Extremities (UE)

- Finger to nose test
- Alternating supination & pronation hands on knees
- Finger to nose to nurse's finger
- Fingers to fingers
- Fingers to thumb (same hand)

Berman, pgs. 585-587

41

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## Fine Motor Function Upper Extremities Finger-To-Nose Test

Client abducts and extends arms at shoulder and rapidly touches nose alternating index fingers. Repeat with eyes closed.

### Normal

- Repeated/rhythmic touching nose

### Abnormal

- Misses nose or gives slow response

42

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**Fine Motor Function Upper Extremities  
Alternating Supination & Pronation  
Hands on Knees**

Client pats both knees w/palms of both hands and then backs of hands @ increasing rate

**Normal**

- Rapid alternation of supination and pronation on knees

**Abnormal**

- Slow, clumsy movements
- Irregular timing
- Difficulty alternating supination & pronation

43

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**Fine Motor Function Upper Extremities  
Finger to Nose and to Nurse's Finger**

Client touches nose, then nurse's index finger @ 45cm (18in.) @ a rapid increasing rate

**Normal**

- Coordinated, rapid performance

**Abnormal**

- Misses finger
- Moves slowly

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**Fine Motor Function Upper Extremities  
Fingers to Fingers**

Client spreads arms broadly, shoulder height and brings fingers midline, slowly then rapidly, eyes open, then w/eyes closed

**Normal**

- Accurate, rapid performance

**Abnormal**

- Slow, inconsistent movement and finger touch

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### Fine Motor Function Upper Extremities Fingers to Thumb, Same Hand

Client touches each finger of one hand to thumb of same hand, rapidly

#### Normal

- Rapidly touches finger to thumb of each hand

#### Abnormal

- Uncoordinated movement of one or both hands

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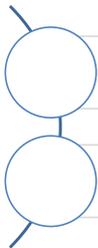
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### Fine Motor Function Assessment: Lower Extremities (LE)



Heel down opposite shin

Toe or ball of foot to nurse's finger

Berman, pgs. 585-587

47

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### Fine Motor Lower Extremities Heel Down Opposite Shin

Client places heel of one foot below opposite knee and runs heel down shin to foot

#### Normal

- Demonstrates bilateral equal coordination

#### Abnormal

- Tremors
- Awkward movement
- Heel moves off shin

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## Fine Motor Function Lower Extremities Toe or Ball of Foot to Nurse's Finger

Client touches your finger w/large toe of each foot

### Normal

- Smooth, coordinated movements

### Abnormal

- Misses finger;
- Cannot coordinate movement

49

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## Neurological Nursing Assessment: Sensory Function

Include:

- Light-Touch
- Pain
- Temperature
- Position
- Tactile discrimination

Abnormal sensory responses

- Loss of sensation or abnormal sensation
  - Anesthesia/ paresthesia
  - Hyperesthesia/hypoesthesia

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## Detailed Neurological Assessment of Sensory Function

Client's eyes closed for all sensory tests

Light touch

Pain

Temperature

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## Sensory Function Light-Touch

Compare light-touch sensation of symmetric areas of body with wisp of cotton.

### Normal

- Light tickling or touching sensation felt

### Abnormal

- Anesthesia;
- Hyper/hypoesthesia;
- Paresthesia

52

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## Sensory Function Pain Sensation

Client identifies sharp or dull or unknown when random areas of body are touched with dull & sharp ends of safety pin

### Normal

- Discriminates sharp and dull sensations

### Abnormal

- Reduced, heightened, or absent sensation

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## Sensory Function Temperature Sensation

Client identifies warm or cold when random areas of body are touched with warm or cold object.

### Normal

- Identifies warm or cold sensation with touch with warm or cold object to body

### Abnormal

- unable to identify warmth or cold when body touched with warm or cold object

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## Detailed Neurological Sensory Function Nursing Assessment

Client's eyes closed for all sensory tests

Position sense

Tactile discrimination

- One & two point discrimination
- Stereognosis
- Extinction

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## Detailed Sensory Function Position Sensation

Client identifies position of digit as middle finger or big toe are moved up, down, or straight out.

Normal

- Readily determines position of fingers and toes

Abnormal

- Unable to determine position of one or more fingers or toes

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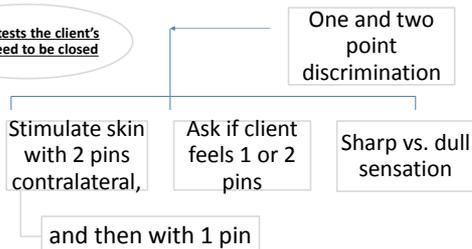
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## Tactile Discrimination: One & Two Point

For all tests the client's eyes need to be closed



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## Tactile Discrimination Stereognosis

### Stereognosis

- Recognition of objects by touch or manipulation of objects

58

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## Tactile Discrimination Extinction

### Extinction

- Failure to perceive touch on one side of body when two symmetrical sides are touch simultaneously

59

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## Lifespan Considerations

Development of muscle tremors

Less efficient short term memory

Sensory, memory, & mental endurance impairment

Elderly

Unfamiliar situations may cause confusion

Less intense reflexes

Slower Impulse transmission & reaction

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## Health Maintenance & Promotion

Annual health exams

Healthy diet & exercise

Maintain a stimulating/safe environment

- Clocks/ calendar/ pictures/light, etc.

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## Cranial Nerves

- **The nurse needs to be aware of specific nerve functions and assessment methods for each cranial nerve to detect abnormalities**

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## 12 (XII) Cranial Nerves Mnemonics

- Name
  - On Old Olympus' Towering Top, A Finn And German Viewed A Hop
- Sensory/ Motor/ or Both
  - Some Say Marry Money, But My Brother Says Bad Business Marry Money

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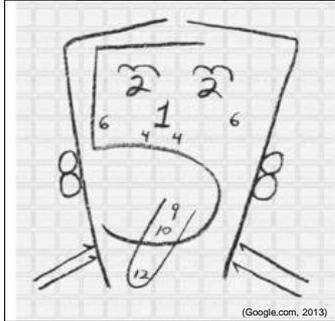
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## 12 Cranial Nerves

- I. Olfactory (S)
- II. Optic (S)
- III. Oculomotor (M)
- IV. Trochlear (M)
- V. Trigeminal (B)
- VI. Abducens (M)
- VII. Facial (B)
- VIII. Auditory (S)
- IX. Glossopharyngeal(B)
- X. Vagus (B)
- XI. Accessory (M)
- XII. Hypoglossal (M)



(Google.com, 2013)

64

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### I – Olfactory [Sensory, (On)]

#### Function:

- Smell

#### Assessment Method:

- Have client close eyes and identify different aromas
- Examples:
  - Coffee, vanilla, orange or lemon

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### II - Optic Nerve [Sensory,(Old)]

#### Function

- Vision and Visual Fields

#### Assessment Method

- Snellen Chart
- Check visual fields by confrontation
- Conduct ophthalmoscope exam
  - (Berman, boxed skill 30-6)

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### III – Oculomotor [Motor,(Olympus’)]

#### Function:

- Extraocular eye movement (EOM)
- Controls movement of ciliary muscles of lens

#### Assessment Method

- Six ocular movements and pupil reaction
- (Berman, boxed skill 30-6)

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### IV – Trochlear [Motor, (Towering)]

#### Function:

- Extraocular eye movement (EOM)
- Specifically, moves eyeball downward and laterally

#### Assessment method

- Six ocular movements

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### V – Trigeminal [Both, (Top)]

#### Function:

- Sensation of:
  - Cornea, skin of face, nasal mucosa
- Motor: muscles of mastication

#### Assessment Method:

- Test light touch, face, cotton ball (maxillary branch)
- Corneal reflex, blink reflex (ophthalmic branch)
- Ask client to clench teeth (mandibular branch)

69

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## VI – Abducens [Motor, (A)]

### Function:

- Extraocular movement (EOM)
- Moves eyeballs laterally

### Assessment Method:

- Assess directions of gaze

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## VII – Facial [Both, (Finn)]

### Function:

- Facial expression
- Taste (anterior two thirds of tongue)

### Assessment Method:

- Ask client to:
  - Smile, raise eyebrows, frown, puff out cheeks, or close eyes tightly
- Identify various tastes (tip of tongue)
  - Sugar, lemon juice (sweet or sour)

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## VIII – Auditory [Sensory, (And)]

### Function:

- Equilibrium
- Hearing

### Assessment Method:

- Cerebellar functions: gait/coordination
- Assess hearing
- Auditory and tuning fork

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### IX – Glossopharyngeal [Both,(German)]

#### Function:

- Swallowing ability, tongue movement, taste (posterior tongue)

#### Assessment Method:

- Ask client to move tongue from side to side and up and down
- Apply taste on posterior tongue

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### X – Vagus [Both, Viewed]]

#### Function:

- Sensation of pharynx and larynx
- Swallowing
- Vocal cord movement

#### Assessment Method:

- Assessed with cranial nerve IX
- Assess speech for hoarseness

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### XI – Accessory [Motor, (A)]

#### Function:

- Head movements; shrugging of shoulders

#### Assessment Method:

- Ask client to:
  - Shrug shoulders against your resistance
  - Turn head against your resistance

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## XII – Hypoglossal [Motor, (Hop)]

### Function:

- Protrusion of tongue;
- Moves tongue up and down & side to side

### Assessment Method:

- Ask client to protrude tongue at midline and then move it side to side

76

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## Conclusion

- Identified appropriate nursing assessment questions
- Discussed methods utilized to assess clients
- Described various associated characteristics
- Identified cultural variations
- Discussed older adult variations
- Identified appropriate health promotions and client/family teaching

77

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- Questions????

- Practice, practice, practice!

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