

Several cranial nerves may be affected by the same disease process. In this situation, the main clinical problem is to determine whether the lesion lies within the brainstem or outside it. Lesions that lie on the surface of the brainstem are characterized by involvement of adjacent cranial nerves (often occurring in succession) and late and rather slight involvement of the long sensory and motor pathways and segmental structures lying within the brainstem. The opposite is true of primary lesions within the brainstem. The extramedullary lesion is more likely to cause bone erosion or enlargement of the foramina of exit of cranial nerves. The intramedullary lesion involving cranial nerves often produces a crossed sensory or motor paralysis (cranial nerve signs on one side of the body and tract signs on the opposite side).

Involvement of multiple cranial nerves outside the brainstem is frequently the result of trauma, localized infections including varicella-zoster virus, infectious and noninfectious (especially carcinomatous) causes of meningitis (Chaps. 164 and 165), granulomatous diseases such as Wegener's granulomatosis, Behçet's disease, vascular disorders including those associated with diabetes, enlarging aneurysms, or locally infiltrating tumors. Among the tumors, nasopharyngeal cancers, lymphomas, neurofibromas, meningiomas, chordomas, cholesteatomas, carcinomas, and sarcomas have all been observed to involve a succession of lower cranial nerves. Owing to their anatomic relationships, the multiple cranial nerve palsies form a number of distinctive syndromes, listed in Table 455-2. Sarcoidosis is the cause of some cases of multiple cranial neuropathy; tuberculosis, the Chiari malformation, platybasia, and basilar invagination of the skull are additional causes. A purely motor disorder without atrophy always raises the question of myasthenia gravis (Chap. 461). As noted above, Guillain-Barré syndrome commonly affects the facial nerves bilaterally. In the Fisher variant of the Guillain-Barré syndrome, oculomotor paresis occurs with ataxia and areflexia in the limbs (Chap. 460). Wernicke's encephalopathy can cause a severe ophthalmoplegia combined with other brainstem signs (Chap. 330).

The cavernous sinus syndrome (Fig. 455-4) is a distinctive and frequently life-threatening disorder. It often presents as orbital or facial pain; orbital swelling and chemosis due to occlusion of the ophthalmic veins; fever; oculomotor neuropathy affecting the third, fourth, and sixth cranial nerves; and trigeminal neuropathy affecting the ophthalmic (V1) and occasionally the maxillary (V2) divisions of the trigeminal nerve. Cavernous sinus thrombosis, often secondary to infection from orbital cellulitis (frequently *Staphylococcus aureus*), a cutaneous source on the face, or sinusitis (especially with mucormycosis in diabetic patients), is the most frequent cause; other etiologies include

aneurysm of the carotid artery, a carotid-cavernous fistula (orbital bruit may be present), meningioma, nasopharyngeal carcinoma, other tumors, or an idiopathic granulomatous disorder (Tolosa-Hunt syndrome). The two cavernous sinuses directly communicate via intercavernous channels; thus, involvement on one side may extend to become bilateral. Early diagnosis is essential, especially when due to infection, and treatment depends on the underlying etiology.

In infectious cases, prompt administration of broad-spectrum antibiotics, drainage of any abscess cavities, and identification of the offending organism are essential. Anticoagulant therapy may benefit cases of primary thrombosis. Repair or occlusion of the carotid artery may be required for treatment of fistulas or aneurysms. The Tolosa-Hunt syndrome generally responds to glucocorticoids. A dramatic improvement in pain is usually evident within a few days; oral prednisone (60 mg daily) is usually continued for 2 weeks and then gradually tapered over a month, or longer if pain recurs. Occasionally an immunosuppressive medication, such as azathioprine or methotrexate, needs to be added to maintain an initial response to glucocorticoids.

An idiopathic form of multiple cranial nerve involvement on one or both sides of the face is occasionally seen. The syndrome consists of a subacute onset of boring facial pain, followed by paralysis of motor cranial nerves. The clinical features overlap those of the Tolosa-Hunt syndrome and appear to be due to idiopathic inflammation of the dura mater, which may be visualized by MRI. The syndrome is usually responsive to glucocorticoids.

456 Diseases of the Spinal Cord

Stephen L. Hauser, Allan H. Ropper

Diseases of the spinal cord are frequently devastating. They produce quadriplegia, paraplegia, and sensory deficits far beyond the damage they would inflict elsewhere in the nervous system because the spinal cord contains, in a small cross-sectional area, almost the entire motor output and sensory input of the trunk and limbs. Many spinal cord diseases are reversible if recognized and treated at an early stage (Table 456-1); thus, they are among the most critical of neurologic emergencies. The efficient use of diagnostic procedures, guided by knowledge of the anatomy and the clinical features of spinal cord diseases, is required to maximize the likelihood of a successful outcome.

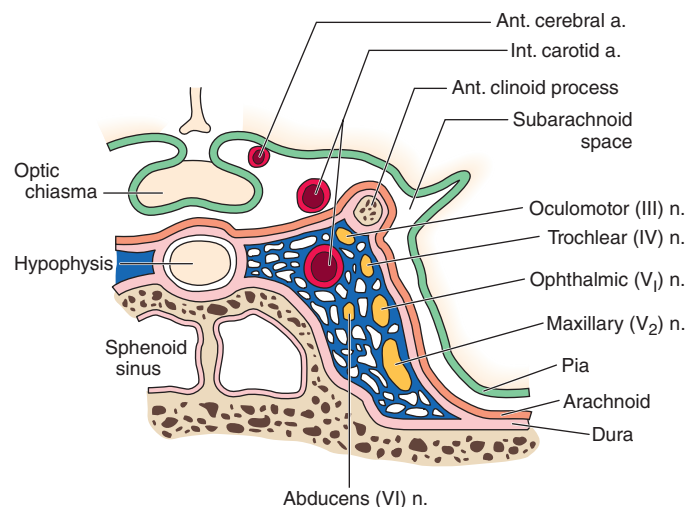


FIGURE 455-4 Anatomy of the cavernous sinus in coronal section, illustrating the location of the cranial nerves in relation to the vascular sinus, internal carotid artery (which loops anteriorly to the section), and surrounding structures.

APPROACH TO THE PATIENT: Spinal Cord Disease

SPINAL CORD ANATOMY RELEVANT TO CLINICAL SIGNS

The spinal cord is a thin, tubular extension of the central nervous system contained within the bony spinal canal. It originates at the medulla and continues caudally to the conus medullaris at the lumbar level; its fibrous extension, the filum terminale, terminates at the coccyx. The adult spinal cord is ~46 cm (18 in.) long, oval in shape, and enlarged in the cervical and lumbar regions, where neurons that innervate the upper and lower extremities, respectively, are located. The white matter tracts containing ascending sensory and descending motor pathways are located peripherally, whereas nerve cell bodies are clustered in an inner region of gray matter shaped like a four-leaf clover that surrounds the central canal (anatomically an extension of the fourth ventricle). The membranes that cover the spinal cord—the pia, arachnoid, and dura—are continuous with those of the brain, and the cerebrospinal fluid is contained within the subarachnoid space between the pia and arachnoid.

The spinal cord has 31 segments, each defined by an exiting ventral motor root and entering dorsal sensory root. During