6.14: VI Glossary

Accommodation: The ability of the eye to adjust from near vision to far vision. Pupils constrict at near vision and dilate at far vision.

Anosmia: Partial or complete loss of smell. This symptom can be related to underlying cranial nerve dysfunction or other nonpathological causes such as a common cold.

Babinski response: A reflex demonstrated by the fanning of toes with the great toe pointed toward the back (dorsum) of the foot. In adults, the Babinski response is considered abnormal and an indication of motor neuron disease.

Broca's area: An area located in the frontal lobe that is responsible for the production of language and controlling movements responsible for speech.

Bruit: A swishing sound heard upon auscultation.

Central nervous system: The part of the nervous system that includes the brain (the interpretation center) and the spinal cord (the transmission pathway).

Cerebellum: The part of the brain that coordinates skeletal and smooth muscle movement and maintains equilibrium and balance.

Cerebral cortex: The cerebrum is covered by a wrinkled outer layer of gray matter.

Comatose: A decreased level of consciousness with a score of less than 8 on the Glasgow Coma Scale.

Convergence: The action of both eyes moving inward as they focus on a close object using near vision.
**Dermatome:** An area of the skin that is supplied by a single spinal nerve.

**Diplopia:** Double vision (i.e., seeing two images of a single object).

**Dysphagia:** Difficulty swallowing.

**Dysphasia:** Difficulty speaking.

**Hypothalamus:** The autonomic control center of the brain that controls functions such as blood pressure, heart rate, digestive movement, and pain perception.

**Kinesthesia:** A person’s sense of movement.

**Level of consciousness:** A patient’s level of arousal and alertness, commonly assessed by asking them to report their name, current location, and time.

**Motor nerves:** Nerves in the peripheral nervous system that transmit motor signals from the brain to the muscles to cause movement.

**Nystagmus:** Involuntary, shaky eye movements.

**Paralysis:** The partial or complete loss of strength, movement, or control of a muscle or group of muscles within a body part that can be caused by brain or spinal injury.

**Peripheral nervous system:** The part of the nervous system that includes the cranial and spinal nerves.

**Proprioception:** A person’s sense of their body position.

**Ptosis:** Drooping of the eyelid.

**Sensation:** The function of receiving information about the environment. The major senses are taste, smell, touch, sight, and hearing.

**Sensory nerves:** Nerves in the peripheral nervous system that carry impulses from the body to the brain for processing.

**Stereognosis:** The ability to perceive the physical form and identity of an object based on tactile stimuli alone.

**Thalamus:** Relays sensory information and motor information in collaboration with the cerebellum.