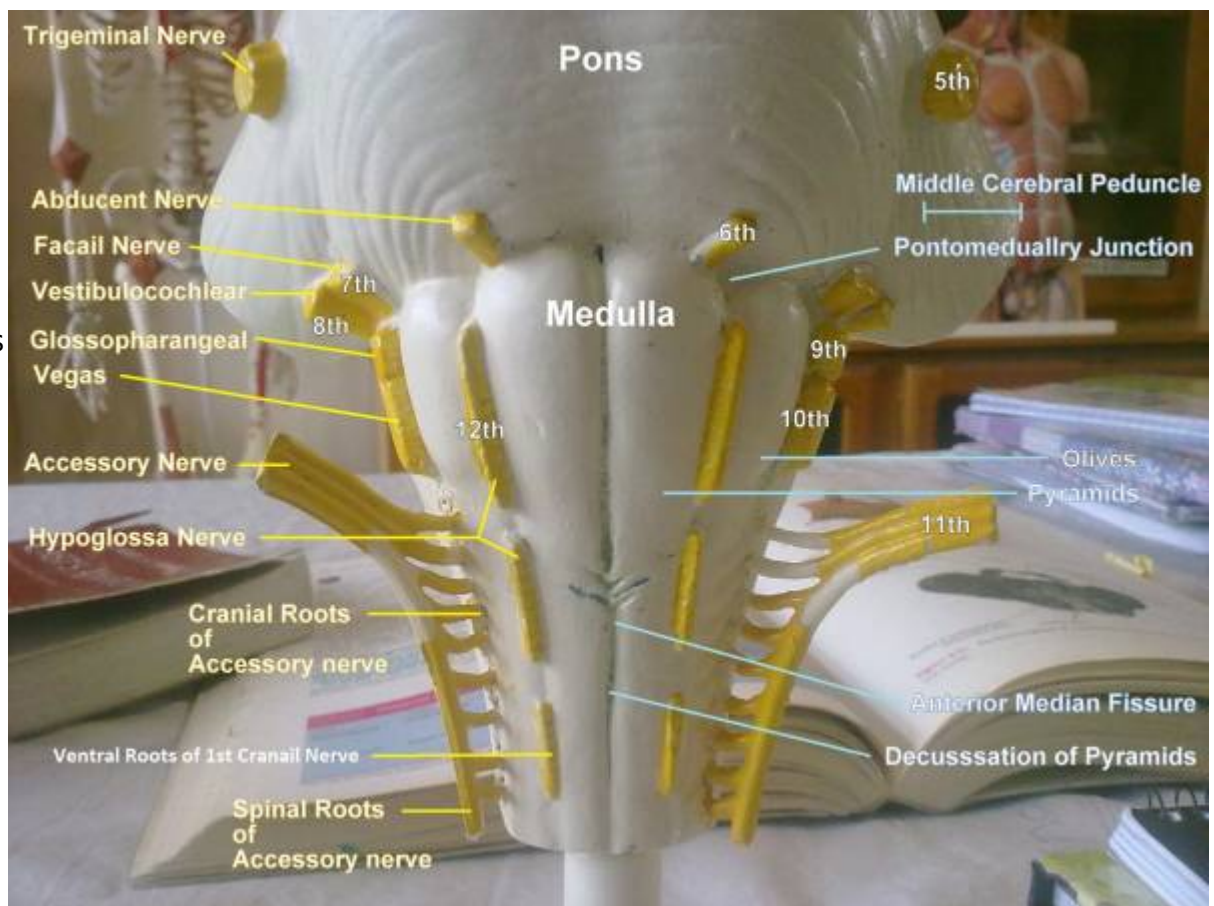


Pontomedullary groove

The transverse groove on the ventral aspect of the **brainstem** that demarcates the pons from the **medulla oblongata**; from its bottom the sixth, seventh, and eighth cranial nerves emerge.



In a high-resolution 3D MRI study, the exit location of CN VI was caudal to the CN VII/VIII complex in 93% of the cases. Clearly, **Samuel Thomas von Sömmerring** rostrocaudal numbering system of CN VI-VII-VIII (abducens-facial-vestibulocochlear CNs) should instead be VIII-VII-VI (vestibulocochlear- facial-abducens CNs). While the inaccuracy of the CN numbering system is of note, what is remarkable is that generations of authors have almost universally chosen to perpetuate this ancient error. No doubt some did this through faithful copying of their predecessors. Others, it could be speculated, chose to depict the CN relationships incorrectly rather than run contrary to long-established dogma.

This study is not advocating that a universally recognized numbering scheme be revised, as this would certainly create confusion. The authors do advocate that future depictions of the anatomical arrangements of the brainstem roots of CNs VI, VII, and VIII ought to reflect actual anatomy, rather than be contorted to conform with the classical CN numbering system ¹⁾.

¹⁾

Eduardo Corrales C, Mudry A, Jackler RK. Perpetuation of errors in illustrations of cranial nerve anatomy. J Neurosurg. 2017 Jul;127(1):192-198. doi: 10.3171/2015.12.JNS151203. Epub 2016 Oct 28. PubMed PMID: 27791521.

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