

The superior salivatory nucleus (or nucleus salivatorius superior) of the facial nerve is a visceromotor cranial nerve nucleus located in the pontine tegmentum. It is one of the salivatory nuclei.

Parasympathetic efferent fibers of the facial nerve (preganglionic fibers) arise according to some authors from the small cells of the facial nucleus, or according to others from a special nucleus of cells scattered in the reticular formation, dorso-medial to the facial nucleus – the superior salivatory nucleus.

Some of the preganglionic fibers travel along the greater petrosal nerve through the pterygoid canal (where they join the postsynaptic fibers of the deep petrosal nerve and are called the nerve of the pterygoid canal and synapse in the pterygopalatine ganglion, whereupon the postganglionic, postsynaptic, efferent fibers travel to innervate the lacrimal gland and the mucosal glands of the nose, palate, and pharynx.

Preganglionic parasympathetic fibers are also distributed partly via the chorda tympani and lingual nerves to the submandibular ganglion, thence by postganglionic (vasodilator) fibers to the submandibular and sublingual salivary glands.

The term “lacrimal nucleus” is sometimes used to refer to a portion of the superior salivatory nucleus.

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