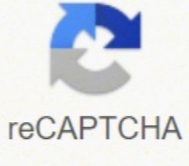




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What are sensory receptors and effectors

Home Health & Medicine Anatomy & Physiology nervous system, organized group of cells specialized for the conduction of electrochemical stimuli from sensory receptors through a network to the site at which a response occurs.Follow the electrical and chemical changes undergone to transmit an impulse through the human nervous systemThe movement of impulses through the nerve cell, involving both chemical and biological changes.Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.See all videos for this articleAll living organisms are able to detect changes within themselves and in their environments. Changes in the external environment include those of light, temperature, sound, motion, and odour, while changes in the internal environment include those in the position of the head and limbs as well as in the internal organs. Once detected, these internal and external changes must be analyzed and acted upon in order to survive. As life on Earth evolved and the environment became more complex, the survival of organisms depended upon how well they could respond to changes in their surroundings. One factor necessary for survival was a speedy reaction or response. Since communication from one cell to another by chemical means was too slow to be adequate for survival, a system evolved that allowed for faster reaction. That system was the nervous system, which is based upon the almost instantaneous transmission of electrical impulses from one region of the body to another along specialized nerve cells called neurons. How much of the human body's energy does the brain use? On average, how many times does the human heart beat per minute? Energize your brain and quicken your pulse rate by taking this quiz. Nervous systems are of two general types, diffuse and centralized. In the diffuse type of system, found in lower invertebrates, there is no brain, and neurons are distributed throughout the organism in a netlike pattern. In the centralized systems of higher invertebrates and vertebrates, a portion of the nervous system has a dominant role in coordinating information and directing responses. This centralization reaches its culmination in vertebrates, which have a well-developed brain and spinal cord. Impulses are carried to and from the brain and spinal cord by nerve fibres that make up the peripheral nervous system.This article begins with a discussion of the general features of nervous systems—that is, their function of responding to stimuli and the rather uniform electrochemical processes by which they generate a response. Following that is a discussion of the various types of nervous systems, from the simplest to the most complex. Solomon D. Erulkar The simplest type of response is a direct one-to-one stimulus-response reaction. A change in the environment is the stimulus; the reaction of the organism to it is the response. In single-celled organisms, the response is the result of a property of the cell fluid called irritability. In simple organisms, such as algae, protozoans, and fungi, a response in which the organism moves toward or away from the stimulus is called taxis. In larger and more complicated organisms—those in which response involves the synchronization and integration of events in different parts of the body—a control mechanism, or controller, is located between the stimulus and the response. In multicellular organisms, this controller consists of two basic mechanisms by which integration is achieved—chemical regulation and nervous regulation. In chemical regulation, substances called hormones are produced by well-defined groups of cells and are either diffused or carried by the blood to other areas of the body where they act on target cells and influence metabolism or induce synthesis of other substances. The changes resulting from hormonal action are expressed in the organism as influences on, or alterations in, form, growth, reproduction, and behaviour. Plants respond to a variety of external stimuli by utilizing hormones as controllers in a stimulus-response system. Directional responses of movement are known as tropisms and are positive when the movement is toward the stimulus and negative when it is away from the stimulus. When a seed germinates, the growing stem turns upward toward the light, and the roots turn downward away from the light. Thus, the stem shows positive phototropism and negative geotropism, while the roots show negative phototropism and positive geotropism. In this example, light and gravity are the stimuli, and directional growth is the response. The controllers are certain hormones synthesized by cells in the tips of the plant stems. These hormones, known as auxins, diffuse through the tissues beneath the stem tip and concentrate toward the shaded side, causing elongation of these cells and, thus, a bending of the tip toward the light. The end result is the maintenance of the plant in an optimal condition with respect to light. In animals, in addition to chemical regulation via the endocrine system, there is another integrative system called the nervous system. A nervous system can be defined as an organized group of cells, called neurons, specialized for the conduction of an impulse—an excited state—from a sensory receptor through a nerve network to an effector, the site at which the response occurs. Organisms that possess a nervous system are capable of much more complex behaviour than are organisms that do not. The nervous system, specialized for the conduction of impulses, allows rapid responses to environmental stimuli. Many responses mediated by the nervous system are directed toward preserving the status quo, or homeostasis, of the animal. Stimuli that tend to displace or disrupt some part of the organism call forth a response that results in reduction of the adverse effects and a return to a more normal condition. Organisms with a nervous system are also capable of a second group of functions that initiate a variety of behaviour patterns. Animals may go through periods of exploratory or appetitive behaviour, nest building, and migration. Although these activities are beneficial to the survival of the species, they are not always performed by the individual in response to an individual need or stimulus. Finally, learned behaviour can be superimposed on both the homeostatic and initiating functions of the nervous system. All living cells have the property of irritability, or responsiveness to environmental stimuli, which can affect the cell in different ways, producing, for example, electrical, chemical, or mechanical changes. These changes are expressed as a response, which may be the release of secretory products by gland cells, the contraction of muscle cells, the bending of a plant-stem cell, or the beating of whiplike “hairs,” or cilia, by ciliated cells. The responsiveness of a single cell can be illustrated by the behaviour of the relatively simple amoeba. Unlike some other protozoans, an amoeba lacks highly developed structures that function in the reception of stimuli and in the production or conduction of a response. The amoeba behaves as though it had a nervous system, however, because the general responsiveness of its cytoplasm serves the functions of a nervous system. An excitation produced by a stimulus is conducted to other parts of the cell and evokes a response by the animal. An amoeba will move to a region of a certain level of light. It will be attracted by chemicals given off by foods and exhibit a feeding response. It will also withdraw from a region with noxious chemicals and exhibit an avoidance reaction upon contacting other objects. The key difference between receptor and effector is that receptor is a cell or a group of cells in a sense organ that receives a particular stimulus while an effector is an organ that produces a response to the stimulus. Receptor, central nervous system, and effector are three components of reflex actions of the nervous system. Receptors receive stimuli and convert them into nerve impulses. Sensory neurons carry these nerve impulses to the central nervous system. The central nervous system processes the information and sends impulses to effectors through motor neurons. Effectors convert impulses into responses or actions. CONTENTS 1. Overview and Key Difference 2. What is a Receptor 3. What is an Effector 4. Similarities Between Receptor and Effector 5. Side by Side Comparison - Receptor vs Effector in Tabular Form 6. Summary What is a Receptor? Receptor is a specialized cell or a group of cells of a sensory organ which receives a stimulus. Receptors detect changes in the external or internal environments. For example, eyes are sensitive to light; ears are sensitive to sounds; noses are sensitive to chemicals, and skin is sensitive to pressure and temperature. Likewise, different sensory organs are sensitive to different stimuli. They are able to convert the received stimulus into an electrical signal or nerve impulse. Sensory neurons carry the impulse generated from the stimulus to the central nervous system in order to process. After processing and interpreting the signal, the central nervous system sends information to effector organs to produce the response. Effectors are mainly muscles or glands. Figure 01: Receptor in Reflex Arc 1 - Heat Source, 2 - Finger (receiver) 3 - Spinal cord, 4 - Axon Neuron Afar (sensory), 5 - Axon Neuron Afar (motor), 6 - Muscle (effector), 7 - Impulse Plants do not have sensory organs, yet they receive stimuli. They receive stimuli via the shoot tips or root tips. Shoots respond to light while roots respond to gravity, moisture and nutrients in the soil. What is an Effector? Effector is a muscle or a gland that produces a response to a stimulus. Effectors receive commands from the central nervous system in order to produce a response. Effectors are present in any part of the body. Motor neurons carry impulses to effectors. Once effectors receive impulses, they convert impulses into actions. For example, a muscle contracting to move an arm. A muscle squeezing saliva from the salivary gland is another example. The action of a gland releasing a hormone is also a result of an effector. What are the Similarities Between Receptor and Effector? Both receptor and effector respond to stimuli. Information flows from receptors to effectors. They generate or convert nerve impulses. They are connected to neurons. Moreover, they work with the central nervous system. What is the Difference Between Receptor and Effector? Receptor detects a stimulus while the effector produces an action to a stimulus. So, this is the key difference between receptor and effector. Furthermore, the receptors are specialized cells of sensory organs, while effectors are mainly muscles and glands. Thus, this is another important difference between receptor and effector. Besides, receptors are connected to sensory neurons, while effectors are connected motor neurons. Below infographic shows more differences between receptor and effector in tabular form. Sensory receptors are sensitive to changes occurring in external or internal environments. Receptors are found in sensory organs such as ears, eyes, nose, mouth and internal organs. They receive stimuli and convert into nerve impulse and send to the central nervous system for interpretation and processing. Effectors are the muscles and glands that produce an action in response to the stimulus. Effectors convert nerve impulses to responses or actions. Thus, this is the summary of the difference between receptor and effector. Reference: 1. Marzanyan, Anna. “Physiology, Sensory Receptors.” StatPearls [Internet]., U.S. National Library of Medicine, 27 Oct. 2020, Available here. 2. “The Structure and Function of the Nervous System - Coordination and Control - The Nervous System - AQA - GCSE Biology (Single Science) Revision - AQA - BBC Bitesize.” BBC News, BBC, Available here. Image Courtesy: 1. “Img arc reflex muda” By MartaAguayo - Own work (CC BY-SA 3.0) via Commons Wikimedia

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