Excitability

By

Dr\Nour A. Mohammed

Associate Professor of Physiology Faculty of Medicine, Mutah University 2024-2025

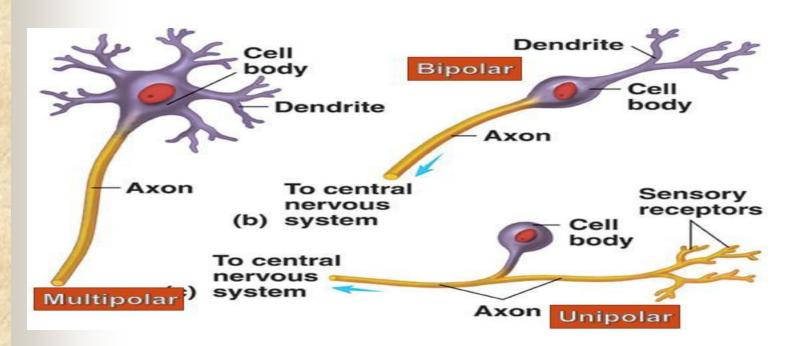
Types of neurons

According to the processes: (shape)

Unipolar: e.g. cells in dorsal root ganglia.

Bipolar: e.g. bipolar cells of the retina.

Multipolar: e.g. cells of cerebral cortex.



- According to function:
- 1) Sensory (Afferent) which carry sensations from organs to the CNS.
- 2) Motor (Efferent) which arise from CNS to carry orders to organs.
- According to myelination:
- 1) Myelinated nerve fiber: e.g. preganglionic neuron.
- 2) Non-myelinated nerve fiber: e.g. postganglionic neuron.

The myelin sheath

- It is a thick layer around the axon formed of lipoprotein substance.
- It is covered by outer neuro-lemmal tube.
- It is Insulator to electric currents.
- So, <u>I</u>ncrease speed of conduction.
- It is Interrupted by nodes of Ranvier through which ions can pass.
- Formed by the Schwann cell which rotates around the axon many times forming multiple layers.
- In CNS, the myelin sheath is formed by oligodendroglia cells.

Mechanism of Nerve Impulse Conduction

A. In the unmyelinated nerve fibers:

During rest, membrane is polarized. (+ve outside).

At site of stimulation the membrane is depolarized (-ve outside).

Then a **local current flow** occurs between the depolarized area and surroundings areas:

- In the inner surface: +ve charges migrate from the point of depolarization to the surrounding sites.
- In the outer surface: +ve charges migrate from the surrounding sites to point of depolarization.

■ The results are:

- Point of stimulation begins to repolarize.
- ➤ The surrounding sites being to depolarize partially till they reach the firing level ⇒ action potential.

This is repeated. So, conduction occurs along the nerve fiber.

It is called the (Current sink).

The speed of propagation is directly proportional to the diameter of the nerve.

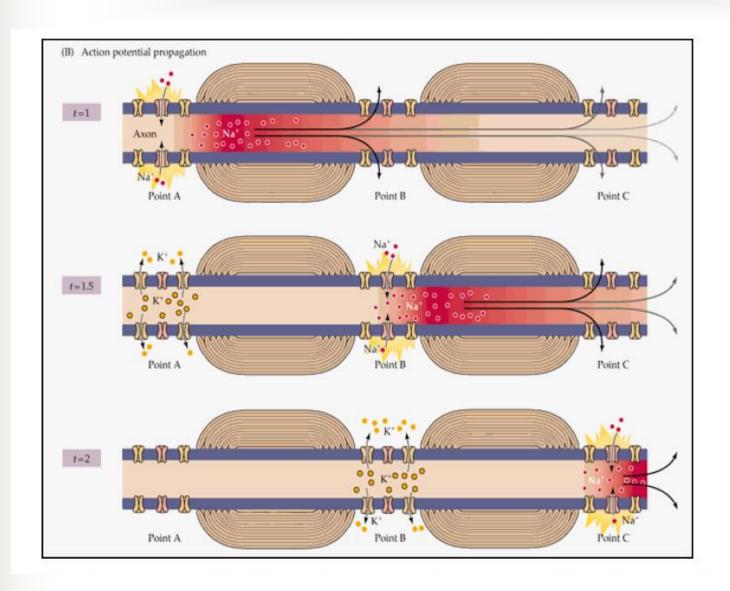
B. In the myelinated nerve fibers

The same mechanism as in the unmyelinated But the impulse jump from one node of Ranvier to the other because the myelin is insulator for current

So, it is called (Jumping or Saltatory or Node to node) conduction

It is characterized by:

- 1) The rate of conduction in the myelinated nerve is 50 to 100 times faster than in the unmyelinated.
- 2) It occurs with less energy.



Excitability of nerve

Definition

It is the ability of the living tissue to **respond** to an adequate **stimulus**.

■ The stimulus:

It is the **change** in the environment of the living tissue which may be electrical, chemical, mechanical or thermal.

Factors determine the effectiveness of the stimulus.

Intensity (strength) of the stimulus:

Threshold stimulus: it is the minimal intensity which produces nerve impulse in the nerve fiber.

Subthreshold stimulus: ⇒ no impulse (but local response).

Suprathreshold stimulus: \Rightarrow the same impulse of the threshold. But, in less time.

The single nerve fiber obeys all or none law.

- Duration of the stimulus:

Rate of rise of intensity of the stimulus:

If a **subthreshold** stimulus is applied to the nerve and increased **slowly**, the nerve accommodate itself to the passage of the current ⇒ **no response**. If intensity increased **rapidly**, accommodation is not observed ⇒ **response**.

★ Strength-duration curve

It is a relationship between the **intensity** of the stimulus & the **time** of its application to the nerve to give a response.

Within limits, the stronger the stimulus, the shorter its duration

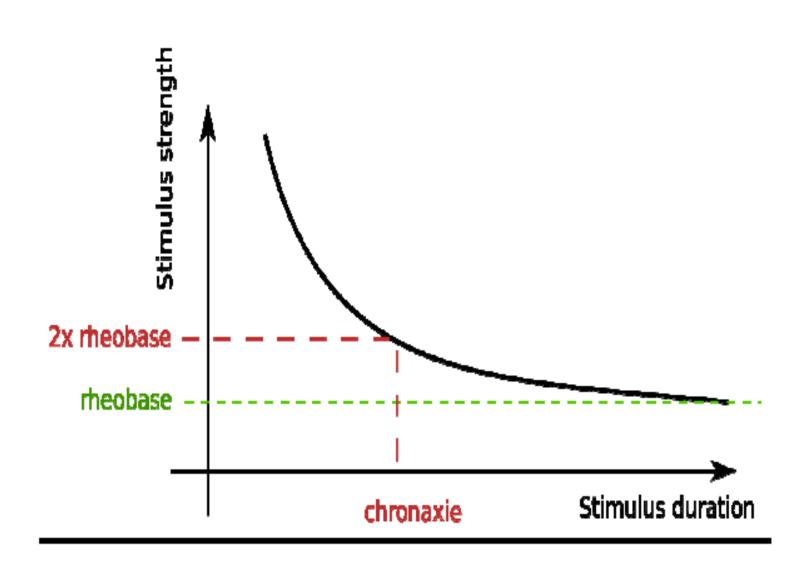
From the curve

Rheobase

It is the minimal strength of current that can excite the nerve (threshold).

Utilization time

It is the time needed for excitation by Rheobase



Chronaxie

It is the time needed by a current double the rheobase to excite the nerve.

It's used to **measure the excitability** The longer the chronaxie the less the excitability

Minimal time

It is the minimal time below which no excitation occurs whatever the strength of the stimulus i.e. stimuli of extreme short duration will not excite.

Factors Affecting the Excitability of Nerves

- **Temperature**: *Cooling* decreases nerve excitability While warming increases it.
- Pressure: Mechanical pressure on a nerve reduces its excitability.
- Blood supply: Nerve excitability is decreased in cases of ischemia.
- Oxygen supply: O2 lack decreases nerve excitability
- **H+ concentration**: **Alkalinity increases while acidity decreases the excitability of nerves.
- **Chemicals**: nerve excitability is decreased by *excess CO2* and *alcohol* and anesthetic drugs e.g., *ether*, *chloroform* and *novocaine*.

Electrolytes

A. Ionic changes that increase nerve excitability

- 1- **Decreased Ca2+ concentration**: This increases the membrane permeability to Na+
- 2- **Increased Na+ concentration**: This facilitates the process of depolarization.

B. Ionic changes that decrease nerve excitability

- **1- Increased Ca2+ concentration**: This decreases the membrane permeability to Na+
- **2- Decreased Na+ concentration**: This decreases nerve excitability by delaying the process of depolarization.

Electrotonic Potentials (ETPs)

- ETPs are localized potential changes that occur in nerves when stimulated by subthreshold constant currents.
- Such currents are obtained from batteries and either the cathode (-ve electrode) or the anode (+ve electrode) can be used for stimulation.

Anelectrotonic potential (or AN-Eelectrotonus)

- This is the potential change that occurs when using anodal (+ve) currents for stimulation. It is a state of **hyperpolarization** caused by net addition of +ve charges at the outer surface of the nerve membrane.
- It is associated with a decrease of excitability of the nerve so, the nerve excitability may be completely lost (anodal block).

Catelectrotonic potential (CAT -electrotonus)

- This is the potential change that occurs when using cathodal (—ve) currents for stimulation. It is a state of partial depolarization
- Caused by net addition of –ve charges at the outer surface of the nerve membrane It is associated with an increase of excitability of the nerve.
- However, the decrease of the membrane polarity leads to an increase in both **K**+ **efflux** & **Cl- influx** which repolarizes the membrane and restores the resting membrane potential.

N.B.: Stimulation at the cathodal end resulted in three types of depolarization:

	catelectrotonus	local response	firing level
-Stimulus	Subthreshold	Subthreshold	Threshold or
			more
-Depolarization	Less than 7mv.	From 7 to 25	25 or more
-Mechanism	Passive	Passive and	active
		partial active)	
-Forces affect	Repolarization	Repolarization	Depolarization
the membrane	mask this	mask this	force is more&
	effect	effect	action potential
			resulted

Types of Nerve Fibers

1. Group A nerve fibers:

These have the largest diameters (3-20 μ m) and the highest speeds of conduction (15-120 m/sec).

They are further subdivided into:

- *Alpha (α) *Beta (β) *Gamma (γ) *Delta (δ)
- They are most sensitive to pressure
- 2. Group B nerve fibers:
- These have smaller diameters (1.3 3μ m) and moderate speeds of conduction (3-15 m/sec).
- They are most susceptible to O2 lack.
- 3. Group C nerve fibers:
- These have the smallest diameters (0.3 1.3 μ m) and the slowest
- speeds of conduction (0.5-3 m/sec).
- They are most susceptible to **local anesthetic drugs** (e.g., cocaine and novocaine).

