CN XI

Also known as the accessory nerve. This is a motor nerve that is responsible for head turning and shoulder shrugging via innervation of the sternocleidomastoid and trapezius muscles.



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Accessory Nerve
Accessories
The accessory nerve arises from cranial and spinal roots; however, the cranial aspect joins the vagus nerve and is believed to actually be a part of the vagus nerve. Thus CN XI is often referred to as the spinal accessory nerve.

Motor
Motor
CN XI motor function is clinically tested by assessing the ability of the patient to turn his/her head and shrug his/her shoulders against opposing pressure.

Head Turning
Head Turn
CN XI innervates the sternocleidomastoid muscle which tilts and rotates the head.

Shoulder Shrugging
Shoulders Shrugged
CN XI innervates the trapezius muscle which is responsible for shoulder elevation.

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