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Demonstration of Olfactory Nerve Function

Experiment 6 - Practical Notes

Name: _____ Roll no.: _____ Date: _____

Aim

To demonstrate non-irritant odour recognition for each nostril separately.

Principle

Olfactory receptor input travels through the olfactory pathway associated with cranial nerve I. Irritant vapours can stimulate trigeminal pathways and are unsuitable for an isolated smell-recognition demonstration.

Requirements

- Consenting volunteer, instructor and separate containers with familiar non-irritant odours such as vanilla or coffee.
- Odour-free control, disposable materials and recording sheet.

Procedure

1. Screen

Ask about current congestion, allergy, recent infection and willingness to participate. Avoid any material to which the volunteer is sensitive.

2. Explain

Allow normal comfortable breathing. Ask the volunteer to close the eyes and gently occlude one nostril without pressure.

3. Present

Hold the selected container at an appropriate distance; avoid touching the nose. Ask whether an odour is noticed, then whether it can be identified.

4. Compare

Repeat with the other nostril and a different familiar odour, allowing recovery between presentations. Include an odour-free comparison.

5. Record

Document detection, recognition and the nostril tested. Congestion, attention and unfamiliarity are possible limitations.

Observations and Record

Odour / control	Right nostril: detected / named	Left nostril: detected / named
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Worked Example

The numbers below are illustrative; enter your own observations in the record.

- Detected but not named means detection was present but recognition was uncertain. Do not record anosmia from that single observation.

Result

Record the observed outcome and calculated value, with units. State whether the stated laboratory specification was met; do not copy the worked example as your result.

Precautions

- Do not use ammonia, strong acids, solvents or irritant perfumes.
- Keep containers separate and clean; do not repeatedly expose a volunteer who reports discomfort.

Viva Questions and Answers

1. Which cranial nerve is chiefly tested?

Cranial nerve I.

2. Why avoid ammonia?

Its irritant effect may stimulate the trigeminal system.

3. Why test each nostril separately?

It allows right-left comparison rather than relying on a combined response.

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