

Dermatome Chart Program Transcript

This is a dermatome chart showing the sensory distribution to the body. The left figure is a frontal view. The right figure is from the back.

Each figure has, on one side, the spinal nerves associated with sensation in that area and, on the opposite side, the peripheral nerves corresponding to that area. As you can see, there is quite a difference between the two. For example, in the frontal view on the left, the L3 spinal nerve overlaps with nerves from the obturator, the anterior femoral cutaneous nerve, and the lateral femoral cutaneous nerve. We see that L4 in the leg corresponds with the saphenous nerve from the femoral and the lateral sural cutaneous, which is off the common fibular. So again we see this mixture.

On the posterior view, we find that while the posterior leg is mainly going to be from the sacral plexus, the anterior leg was from the lumbar plexus. We have, near the gluteal region, S3 and S2—again overlapping the posterior femoral cutaneous nerve off of the sciatic. And then, the bottom is as one, which overlaps the sural nerve and the lateral sural cutaneous nerve, off of the common fibular nerve. So, it's important that we take into consideration not only the spinal nerve level but also the cutaneous nerve, going to that area, when we're doing our assessment of the patient.