

The cerebrospinal venous system: anatomy, physiology, and clinical implications.

[MedGenMed](#). 2006 Feb 22;8(1):53.

There is substantial anatomical and functional continuity between the veins, venous sinuses, and venous plexuses of the brain and the spine. The term "cerebrospinal venous system" (CSVS) is proposed to emphasize this continuity, which is further enhanced by the general lack of venous valves in this network. The first of the two main divisions of this system, the intracranial veins, includes the cortical veins, the dural sinuses, the cavernous sinuses, and the ophthalmic veins. The second main division, the vertebral venous system (VVS), includes the vertebral venous plexuses which course along the entire length of the spine. The intracranial veins richly anastomose with the VVS in the suboccipital region. Caudally, the CSVS freely communicates with the sacral and pelvic veins and the prostatic venous plexus. The CSVS constitutes a unique, large-capacity, valveless venous network in which flow is bidirectional. The CSVS plays important roles in the regulation of intracranial pressure with changes in posture, and in venous outflow from the brain. In addition, the CSVS provides a direct vascular route for the spread of tumor, infection, or emboli among its different components in either direction.