MEDICAL EDUCATION RESOURCE

Frequently Asked Questions – Axilla & Brachial Plexus

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Axilla (1–40)

Q1. What is axilla?

? A pyramidal space between the upper limb and thoracic wall, transmitting neurovascular structures.

Q2. What forms the apex of axilla?

? Cervicoaxillary canal: bounded by clavicle (anterior), scapula (posterior), 1st rib (medial).

Q3. What forms the base of axilla?

? Skin, superficial fascia, axillary fascia.

Q4. What forms the anterior wall of axilla?

? Pectoralis major, pectoralis minor, clavipectoral fascia.

Q5. What forms the posterior wall of axilla?

? Subscapularis, teres major, latissimus dorsi.

Q6. What forms the medial wall of axilla?

? Serratus anterior covering ribs and intercostal muscles.

Q7. What forms the lateral wall of axilla?

? Intertubercular sulcus of humerus.

Q8. What structure maintains hollow of axilla?

? Suspensory ligament of axilla (clavipectoral fascia).

Q9. What is the relation of axillary artery to axillary vein?

? Vein lies anteromedial to artery.

Q10. What divides axillary artery into 3 parts?

? Pectoralis minor.

Q11. Branches of 1st part of axillary artery?

? Superior thoracic artery.

Q12. Branches of 2nd part of axillary artery?

? Thoracoacromial and lateral thoracic arteries.

Q13. Branches of 3rd part of axillary artery?

? Subscapular, anterior circumflex humeral, posterior circumflex humeral.

Q14. Relation of cords of brachial plexus to axillary artery?

? Lateral cord lateral, medial cord medial, posterior cord posterior.

Q15. Tributaries of axillary vein?

? Cephalic vein, thoracoacromial vein, lateral thoracic vein, subscapular vein, circumflex humeral veins.

Q16. Clinical importance of axillary vein?

? Used for central venous access; injury may cause hemorrhage or air embolism.

Q17. Groups of axillary lymph nodes?

? Pectoral (anterior), subscapular (posterior), humeral (lateral), central, apical.

Q18. Which group drains most of the breast?

? Pectoral (anterior) nodes.

Q19. Which group drains upper limb lymphatics?

? Humeral (lateral) nodes.

Q20. Which group drains posterior thoracic wall?

? Subscapular nodes.

Q21. Where are central nodes located?

? In axillary fat near base of axilla.

Q22. Where are apical nodes located?

? Apex of axilla near 1st rib.

Q23. Which lymphatic plexus drains nipple and areola?

? Subareolar plexus of Sappey.

Q24. What is sentinel lymph node biopsy?

? Identification and biopsy of first draining node in breast carcinoma.

Q25. Which nodes are first involved in carcinoma breast?

? Pectoral (anterior) axillary nodes.

Q26. Why can breast carcinoma spread to contralateral breast?

? Communication via parasternal lymph nodes.

Q27. Why does carcinoma breast metastasize to vertebrae?

? Via posterior intercostal veins ? vertebral venous plexus.

Q28. Which nerve is at risk during axillary clearance?

? Long thoracic nerve ? winged scapula if injured.

Q29. Which nerve must also be preserved in axillary clearance?

? Thoracodorsal nerve (latissimus dorsi).

Q30. Clinical sign of long thoracic nerve injury?

? Winging of scapula.

Q31. Clinical sign of axillary nerve injury?

? Loss of abduction above 15°, loss of sensation over regimental badge area.

Q32. Clinical importance of axillary artery compression?

? Can be compressed against 1st rib to control bleeding in limb.

Q33. Clinical importance of axillary artery aneurysm?

? May compress brachial plexus ? pain and paresthesia.

Q34. What is thoracic outlet syndrome?

? Compression of neurovascular bundle in cervicoaxillary canal.

Q35. What is the clinical importance of intercostobrachial nerve?

? Provides referred pain in angina pectoris to inner arm.

Q36. Which wall of axilla is surgically most important?

? Anterior wall (site for approach in axillary clearance).

Q37. What is the floor landmark of axilla?

? Axillary folds.

Q38. Which vein communicates between axillary and superficial epigastric veins?

? Thoracoepigastric vein.

Q39. Clinical importance of thoracoepigastric vein?

? Provides collateral pathway in portal hypertension.

Q40. Why is axillary fat important?

? Fills space, allows movement, and acts as cushion for vessels and nerves.

Brachial Plexus (41–65)

Q41. What is root value of brachial plexus?

? C5–T1.

Q42. What trunks are formed?

? Upper (C5–C6), Middle (C7), Lower (C8–T1).

Q43. Each trunk divides into?

? Anterior and posterior divisions.

Q44. How are cords named?

? In relation to axillary artery.

Q45. Terminal branches of brachial plexus?

? Musculocutaneous, Axillary, Radial, Median, Ulnar.

Q46. Branches from roots?

? Dorsal scapular, Long thoracic.

Q47. Branches from trunks?

? Suprascapular, Nerve to subclavius.

Q48. Branches from lateral cord?

? Lateral pectoral, Musculocutaneous, Lateral root of median.

Q49. Branches from medial cord?

? Medial pectoral, Medial cutaneous of arm, Medial cutaneous of forearm, Medial root of median, Ulnar.

Q50. Branches from posterior cord?

? Upper subscapular, Lower subscapular, Thoracodorsal, Axillary, Radial.

Q51. Largest branch of brachial plexus?

? Radial nerve.

Q52. Which nerve supplies serratus anterior?

? Long thoracic nerve.

Q53. Which nerve supplies deltoid?

? Axillary nerve.

Q54. Which nerve supplies latissimus dorsi?

? Thoracodorsal nerve.

Q55. Which nerve supplies subscapularis?

? Upper and lower subscapular nerves.

Q56. Which nerve injury produces wrist drop?

? Radial nerve.

Q57. Which nerve injury produces ape thumb deformity?

? Median nerve.

Q58. Which nerve injury produces claw hand?

? Ulnar nerve.

Q59. Which nerve injury produces winged scapula?

? Long thoracic nerve.

Q60. Which nerve injury produces regimental badge anesthesia?

? Axillary nerve.

Q61. What is Erb’s palsy?

? Injury to upper trunk (C5–C6) ? waiter’s tip deformity.

Q62. What is Klumpke’s palsy?

? Injury to lower trunk (C8–T1) ? claw hand, ± Horner’s syndrome.

Q63. What is Saturday night palsy?

? Radial nerve compression in axilla ? wrist drop.

Q64. Clinical importance of brachial plexus block?

? Produces anesthesia of upper limb below shoulder.

Q65. Why is axillary artery aneurysm dangerous?

? Compresses brachial plexus ? pain, paresthesia, weakness of limb.