

White matter in the CNS

The white matter of the Central Nervous System is difficult to represent. The first reason is that it represents an complex network of connections, of which we have a limited knowledge. The second reason is that the reality contradicts our current vision of anatomy: if the axons making the white matter are considered as part of their neural cell - what they are in reality - we have a part of the telencephalon in the spinal cord! For this reason, it has been considered as advantageous to consider the white matter as an independant constituting part of the CNS, whatever their original source cells.

In this new schema, described by a recent publication (see Baud et al, 2019), the connections of the white matter are classified by:

1. their origin,
2. their type,
3. other attributes.

When considering any single segment of the CNS, references are given to the white matter components of interest there. A component visible in different segments could be referenced several times.