BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN CONSUMERS & RESEARCHERS THROUGH EDUCATION TO PROVIDE GREATER CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

Research institutions and funding bodies increasingly require demonstration of consumer engagement in research projects, beyond only trial participants. However, consumers often feel they do not have enough knowledge about the research process to get involved. Through its Consumer Engagement Program, the Spinal Research Institute (SRI) aims to bridge this gap by providing consumers with education about involvement in all stages of the research process.

METHOD

In 2022, the SRI developed a four-part webinar series delivered at six week intervals. The purpose was:
1. to provide people with lived experience of spinal cord injury (SCI) a foundation knowledge of the research process, and
2. to increase researchers' awareness of the value of consumer engagement and provide strategies for incorporating consumer engagement into their research practice.

The recordings from the series were repackaged as a series of 16 short, single topic videos that have been posted on YouTube as a permanent resource.

RESULTS

The webinar series was successfully completed in August 2022. The first two webinars focused on the role research has on the quality of life of the consumer community and highlighted strategies for greater consumer engagement. The third webinar provided an opportunity for consumers to engage with researchers directly and showcased the diversity of research within the SCI field. The fourth webinar focused on a current PhD candidate who explained how they incorporated consumer engagement in their doctoral research. The mean series viewer registration was 57.

CONCLUSION

Education plays a vital role in facilitating consumer engagement in SCI research. Increasing researchers' and consumers' knowledge and skill sets allows them to work together in partnership to ensure research outcomes represent the needs of the consumer community. However, the education should be explicitly targeted to each audience rather than broadly disseminated.

WEBINAR SERIES NOW AVAILABLE AS 16 SHORT YOUTUBE VIDEOS

1. What is research?
2. History of SCI research
3. Impact & benefits of SCI research
4. Q&A session one
5. The research cycle
6. Who are SCI consumers?
7. Engaging consumers in research
8. Q&A session two
9. Chat with Dr Anne Palermo
10. Chat with Dr Marnie Graco
11. Chat with Dr Ali Lakhani
12. Q&A session three
13. Consumer engagement & PhD research
14. Consumer engagement in my PhD
15. Advice for engaging consumers
16. Q&A session four

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The Spinal Research Institute's Consumer Engagement Program puts consumers at the forefront of research, by supporting them to co-design and co-deliver research that is relevant to the needs and priorities of the spinal cord injury community.

thesri.org/consumer-engagement

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