



Welcome to the quarterly update of the Spinal Cord Research Hub (SCoRH), an initiative of the Spinal Research Institute (SRI). In this newsletter, discover ways that the SCoRH platform can assist you, and find out more about other SRI programs.

SCoRH - Site Online

We're pleased to let you know that our recent updates have been completed and SCoRH is back online.

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Welcome to SCoRH

The Spinal Cord Research Hub

The Spinal Cord Research Hub (SCoRH) is an online platform uniting the international spinal cord research sector.

It enables researchers, clinicians, and people living with spinal cord injury to connect, share, and collaborate.

SCoRH is an initiative of the [Spinal Research Institute](#).

Learn more about the [Spinal Cord Research Hub](#).



Announcing the 2024 SCI Research Collaboration Grant recipients!

Each year, the Spinal Research Institute awards SCI Research Collaboration Grants to support attendance at the International Spinal Cord Society (ISCoS) Annual Scientific Meeting. These grants are designed to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and to build relationships between individuals, institutions and countries involved in spinal cord research. They also provide an opportunity to connect with institutions and organisations that support the grant recipient's area of research.

We are pleased to announce the eight recipients of the SCI Research Collaboration Grant for 2024. They will be travelling to Antwerp, Belgium to

participate in the 63rd International Spinal Cord Society Annual Scientific Meeting (ISCoS 2024), from 22-25 September 2024.

Leena R Chaudhari - India

Leena R Chaudhari is a PhD student and Junior Research Fellow at D.Y. Patil Education Society in Kolhapur. Her research focuses on developing tissue-engineered spinal cords, unlocking potential to heal damaged neural connections and restore function in people with SCI.



Maria Cunha - Portugal

Maria Ribeiro-Cunha, MD, is a PhD candidate and physiatrist specialising in SCI rehabilitation. Her research focuses on unravelling how gut dysbiosis impacts post-SCI outcomes, including neuroinflammation and functional recovery by investigating microbial composition changes.



Ryan Dorrian - Australia

Ryan Dorrian is a PhD candidate at the University of Adelaide's SCI Research Group. Focusing on secondary complications such as neuropathic pain, bladder impairment and cognitive dysfunction, he is researching a novel electrical stimulation device to improve outcomes post-SCI.



Kanishka Gambhir - India

Kanishka Gambhir is completing a masters of physiotherapy at the Institute of Rehabilitation Sciences, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, New Delhi. Her research investigates the efficacy of inspiratory muscle training in enhancing sitting balance and respiratory function.



Natalia Padula - Brazil

Natalia Padula is a physiotherapist researching longitudinal care of adults and elderly individuals with SCI. This includes physical activity, exercise participation, metabolic assessments, prevention of



secondary complications, health education, and epidural stimulation.

Angela Hanks Philippus - US

Angela Hanks Philippus is a Research Project Specialist at the University of Minnesota managing research on traumatic injuries, including SCI. Angela is pursuing a doctorate on psychosocial factors that contribute to participation and positive outcomes after traumatic injury.



Srisankavi Sivasankar - Australia

Srisankavi Sivasankar is a PhD candidate at the University of Adelaide. Her research employs advanced behavioural assessments and analytical techniques to characterise secondary SCI complications, which her research aims to ameliorate through novel electrical stimulation therapy.



Laura Stendell - Australia

Laura Stendell is a PhD candidate at the University of Technology Sydney and she is also a Senior Physiotherapist working in neurological rehabilitation. Laura's research focuses on physical activity behaviours in middle-aged and older people with SCI.



We are looking forward to seeing the 2024 SCI Collaboration Grant recipients present their posters and presentations that have been accepted for presentation by the ISCoS Committee - well done to these early career researchers.

The SRI's Emma Peleg and Antonio Vecchio will also be attending ISCoS this year. They will be presenting a number of posters with Talking Poster Presentations scheduled for Wednesday 25 September, 2-3:30pm.

In addition, Antonio will be co-presenting a Workshop: [Courage to Love: Strategies for social rehabilitation and romantic engagement post SCI](#) (Monday 23 September, 1 - 2:30pm, Okapi 2 Room) and an Instructional Course: [Time to embrace digital media in the SCI world: publishing or perishing in the hashtag generation!](#) (Wednesday 25 Sept, 11:20am - 12:50pm, Gorilla Room 1).

Please come along to support these early career researchers. If you'd like to contact Emma or Antonio ahead of the conference for any details, please email

Second SCoRH Online Networking Event for 2024

The second SCoRH Online Networking Event for 2024 was held recently. It was attended by SCI researchers and clinicians across all career stages. Attendees in the early stages of their careers were able to connect with more senior researchers, and this led to valuable connections and conversations.



Events in this series are held throughout the year. All SCoRH members are welcome and we look forward to seeing you at the next one.

Dietitians group benefits from Research Group Facilitation service

In 2021 a number of dietitian researchers with a particular interest in SCI formed a group on SCoRH. The founding members hoped that the group would become a place for professional conversations, something that did not exist previously. They also wanted a space where they could provide updates of current research projects, share knowledge and resources, and identify areas for collaboration such as development of new resources and research ideas.



Soon after it was founded, the group took advantage of the platform's Research Group Facilitation Service and had an initial meeting with the SRI's Associate Professor Doug Brown and Emma Peleg. Group founders Kate Desneves, Amy Nevin and Priya Iyer credit that meeting as being fundamental in assisting the group to clarify where to start and how to proceed.

Over time, the group had some success, however they also faced challenges such as proposals not being accepted, and staffing changes impacting commencement of their first multi-site research project. Despite these setbacks, they continued to move forward and make progress. The early groundwork they

had done in clarifying goals and identifying necessary steps was essential in maintaining momentum.

Since those early days, the group has moved on to achieve several significant outcomes. These include the following.

- Australian Spinal dietitians have supported each other via email with complex cases and research challenges.
- Dietitians have presented at ANZCoS regularly to raise the profile of dietitians.
- The group has linked with the ISCoS Nutrition SIG.
- The group has shared information on research projects and contributed to each other's research, for example in student research projects.
- Members have published multiple research articles.
- Members have attended SCoRH Online Networking Events.
- The group still plans to develop an Australian Consensus Statement and contribute to the International dataset. One of the group members is involved in drafting a study protocol for the minimum dataset and also for our Australian Consensus Statement.

It is fantastic to see these tangible results stemming from the group's beginnings on SCoRH, and we look forward to hearing more about their progress. If you're a dietitian with an interest in SCI, email us at admin@scorh.org and we will put you in contact with the group.

What is Research Group Facilitation?

This service supports established groups to overcome obstacles that prevent or hinder their progress. Researchers globally are time-poor, and administrative tasks such as organising meetings with group members in a range of international locations can be prohibitively time-consuming. Additionally, as group members are concurrently working on other projects and managing conflicting priorities, it can be difficult to maintain momentum, leading to a lack of clarity about group actions and goals. Research Group Facilitation provides structure and focus that can assist with these issues. If you are interested in the Research Group Facilitation service, please email us at admin@scorh.org.

Mentoring resources

Mentoring in research can provide an individual with skills outside of their own organisation or institution and support growth beyond the resources available to them at their workplace. Through mentoring, researchers can build collaboration opportunities nationally and internationally and develop skills that support them

through the process of research, from idea design and grant writing, through to publication.



Have a look at these great resources from TedX and Mentorloop if you are in a mentoring relationship or considering one.

No One is Talking to the Mentees

“Mentorability is the willingness to understand that we grow from others as others grow from us.”

[Watch the video.](#)

Sharing Experience Rather Than Only Giving Advice

“What makes a quality mentor is the combination of their experiences, but more importantly, their willingness to share their insights and invest their time in developing the mentee... Sometimes the advice comes out as straight out advice, for example ‘this is what you need to do...’ Other times it is questioning, more like coaching, to get you to think through the situation. Other times, the advice comes in the form of simply making an observation that allows you to consider the point from another perspective. That is the mark of a great mentor—they know you and care about you enough to tell you what you need, at the time you need to hear it.”

[Read more.](#)

Mentoring is a lifelong learning opportunity

“Mentors are in a position to illustrate how their field is growing and changing and that, even after many years in the industry, there are still new things to learn. Anyone who feels stagnant in their current position will not make a good mentor. That’s because when someone is starting out in a new career, they want to feel that the time and energy they spend learning will be rewarded and ultimately provide them with career satisfaction. Good mentors are committed and open to experimenting and learning practices that are new to the field.”

[Read more.](#)

Ever thought of being a mentor?

The SRI's Mentor Program continues to grow and we work hard to set up meaningful pairings that will benefit our mentees into the future. If you've ever considered being a mentor in a program like this, please [contact us](#) so that we can keep your details on file for future rounds. Mentees are from a wide range of SCI disciplines and research areas, so your expertise and willingness to work with an emerging researcher could make all the difference.

World SCI Day - September 5th

Every year, on September 5th, we acknowledge and promote World Spinal Cord Injury Day, an initiative of the International Spinal Cord Society (ISCoS). This year's theme is "End Violence - Protect Spinal Cord".

Prof Belgin Erhan, MD, Chair of the ISCoS Prevention Committee says, "Unfortunately, cases of spinal cord injuries resulting from violence remain a major concern globally. By shining a light on this issue, we aim to raise awareness and inspire collective action. Together, we have the power to prevent violence by creating environments where individuals are valued, respected and protected from harm."



Looking for guidance on engaging the public with your research?

This resource comes from UK Research and Innovation's Good research resource hub. "This research resource hub brings together policies, standards and guidance to support researchers, innovators and organisations, nurturing an inclusive research and innovation environment." Read more [here](#).

Are you seeking participants for your research study or clinical trial?

The SRI regularly receives requests to promote research to potential participants for research projects. We now have an [online form](#) where these requests can be submitted for consideration. Studies and trials currently seeking participants are below.

Online music therapy for people with quadriplegia: A feasibility study

Can online delivery of a group music therapy intervention improve breathing, voice, mood and quality of life for people with quadriplegia? This study was previously undertaken face-to-face, and researchers want to see if they can achieve the same results online.

Six people are sought to join this six week study!

Up to 40% of people with SCI experience anxiety and depression and many are at risk for social isolation. Music therapy has been shown to improve mood and reduce anxiety and depression.

The therapeutic singing intervention that this study is testing was designed in collaboration with Tim McCallum, a quadriplegic professional singer.

For more information, please email Associate Professor Jeanette Tamplin: jeanette.tamplin@unimelb.edu.au



Events and dates

2024 International Spinal Cord Society Annual Scientific Meeting

22-25 September 2024 in Antwerp, Belgium

[More information](#)

Eurospine 2024

2-4 October 2024 in Vienna, Austria

[More information](#)

2024 Annual Scientific Meeting of the Australia and New Zealand Spinal Cord Society

27-29 November 2024 in Fremantle, Australia

[More information](#)

SCoRH member publications

Raguindin, P.F., Itodo, O.A., Eriks-Hoogland, I. et al. Does cardiometabolic risk profile differ among individuals with traumatic and non-traumatic spinal cord injury (SCI): the evidence from the multicenter SCI cohort in Switzerland (SwiSCI). *Spinal Cord* 62, 387–395 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41393-024-00996-5>

Borg, S.J., Borg, D.N., Arora, M. et al. Unmet healthcare needs, access to services and experiences with health providers among persons with spinal cord

injury in Australia. *Spinal Cord* 62, 396–405 (2024).

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41393-024-00997-4>

Senthinathan, A., Tadrous, M., Hussain, S. et al. Examining the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on homecare services among individuals with traumatic and non-traumatic spinal cord injuries. *Spinal Cord* 62, 406–413 (2024).

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41393-024-00999-2>

Draganich, C., Anderson, D., Dornan, G.J. et al. Predictive modeling of ambulatory outcomes after spinal cord injury using machine learning. *Spinal Cord* (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41393-024-01008-2>

Holmes, B.D., Brazauskas, R. & Chhabra, H.S. Spinal cord injury etiology, severity, and care in East Asia: a cross-sectional analysis of the International Spinal Cord Society Database Project. *Spinal Cord* 62, 421–427 (2024).

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41393-024-01003-7>

Li, J., Farrow, M., Ibrahim, K. et al. Racial differences in serological markers across the first year of injury in spinal cord injury: a retrospective analysis of a multi-center interventional study. *Spinal Cord* (2024).

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41393-024-00998-3>

Opportunities

NHMRC Grants and funding

Various opportunities and closing dates

[Read more](#)

Medical Research Future Fund

Various opportunities and closing dates

[Read more](#)

Got something you'd like to share?

Please email us with the details including any relevant links and closing dates.

Our email address is info@thesri.org. You can also tag us on Twitter, LinkedIn or Facebook. Links to our profiles on these platforms are in the footer of this email.

The Spinal Research Institute (SRI) is a not-for-profit organisation building research collaboration and consumer engagement to improve the lives of people with spinal cord injury.

The Spinal Cord Research Hub (SCoRH) is an initiative of the SRI.

SCoRH is a free online platform uniting the international spinal cord injury research sector.

Anyone with an interest in spinal cord injury research is welcome to join - it's quick, free, and easy!

[Join SCoRH](#)

The Spinal Cord Research Hub is supported by Freemasons Foundation Victoria.



Follow the SRI for more updates



Our address is

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The Spinal Research Institute acknowledges
the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work,
the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation.
We pay our respects to Elders past and present.