IMPACT OF THE SPINAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE'S COLLABORATION GRANTS ON SCI RESEARCH CAREERS OVER 8 YEARS

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BACKGROUND

The Spinal Research Institute (SRI) has offered annual research collaboration grants to early career researchers since 2016 to attend the International Spinal Cord Society (ISCoS) Annual Scientific Meeting, with the objective to support them to build strong networks for future collaborative research pathways. The SRI sought to understand the longer term impact to early career researchers from this opportunity.

METHODS

The Research Collaboration Grants Program invites annual submissions from early career SCI researchers from across the world, with a focus on those from low and middle income economies. Each applicants' research track record, proposed collaborations, intentions of continuing with SCI research, and the relevance of their research to the SCI community were independently scored by reviewers, with grants allocated to the strongest applicants. Criteria assessed included limited access to funding for registration, travel and other related expenses.

Feedback on the overall experience and benefits is sought from all recipients directly after the conference. In December 2023, the SRI sought longer-term impact feedback via a survey sent to all past recipients from 2016 to 2021 (n=75). 2022 and 2023 recipients (n=23) were not surveyed due to the short time that had elapsed since their conference experience.

CONCLUSION

The productive exchange of ideas, gaining of new insights, and establishing of new collaborative relationships are examples of how stepping out of the day-to–day work environment can lead to light bulb moments for their research that might not have occurred otherwise.

The SRI continues to support SCI researchers to attend the annual ISCoS conference and grow their research network.

IMPACT

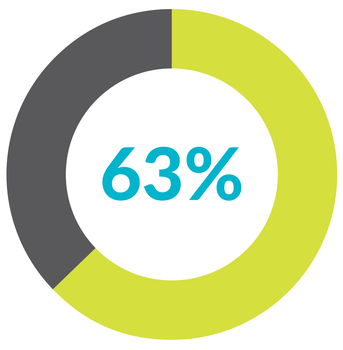
SCI early career researchers benefit from the generation of new ideas and the forming of collaborative relationships that are beneficial in the years that follow.

"The attendance helped to expand our collaboration horizons beyond the national and regional levels." (Grant Recipient)

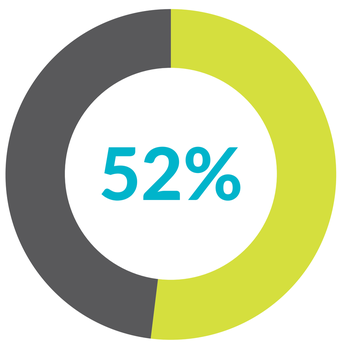
"Helped me to generate ideas for projects that I am currently developing." (Grant Recipient)

"Most of the information we have learnt at ISCoS has been implemented mainly in our in-patient area." (Grant Recipient)

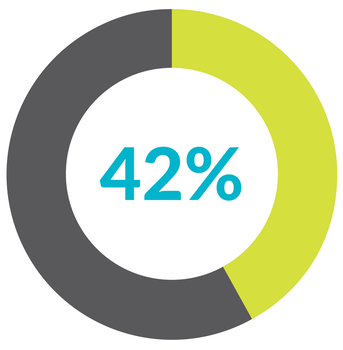
RESULTS



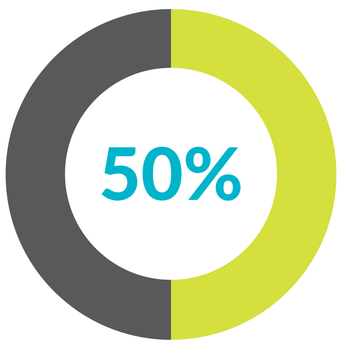
have progressed a research or project idea initiated at the ISCoS conference



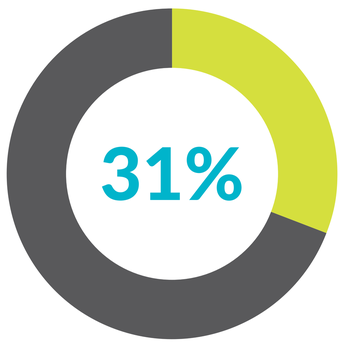
have applied skills and information they learned at the conference into their clinical practice



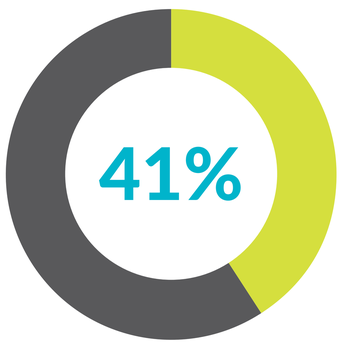
said their research has gained wider exposure as a result of conference attendance



formed collaborative relationships at the ISCoS conference



have been involved in collaborative research with people that they met at the conference



made 3-5 new networking connections at the conference and 22% made 6-10 new connections

Respondents described how the opportunity enabled them to make new connections in other countries and connect with researchers in the same field or discipline. Recipients described generating new ideas and directions for their own research and forming ongoing collaborative relationships.

Acknowledgements

- To the grant recipients that responded to the survey and who use the collaboration opportunity to improve the landscape of SCI research.
- To the highly respected Review Committee that gives their time and professional expertise each year to score and select candidates to receive the collaboration grant opportunity.

63RD ISCoS ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING

The Spinal Research Institute has been awarding SCI Research Collaboration Grants since 2016.

The program is in its 9th year.

thesri.org/collaboration-grants

The Spinal Research Institute is an Australian registered charity building research collaboration and consumer engagement to improve the lives of people with spinal cord injury.

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