MENTOR PROGRAM DEVELOPING & STRENGTHENING EMERGING SPINAL CORD INJURY RESEARCH TALENT INTERNATIONALLY

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INTRODUCTION

The Spinal Research Institute's (SRI) Mentor Program is now in its fifth year. The program aims to progress the research careers of talented spinal cord injury (SCI) early career researchers. Structured mentoring provides significant benefits to those who participate and equips individuals with research skills particularly those from developing countries, and with limited access to experienced researchers.

METHODS

Eligibility for mentee participation is assessed through a competitive application process, which requires a well-defined research project, together with clear and realistic objectives for the mentoring relationship. Shortlisted applicants are scored against criteria. Once a mentee is selected for the program, time is taken to find an appropriate mentor who will align with the mentee's research area and career objectives. Baseline and follow-up surveys are conducted to assess satisfaction and progress. Feedback from the surveys is used to refine the mentor program.

RESULTS

Mentees from eight countries have been paired with mentors across the world. 100% of mentees surveyed reported feeling strongly connected with the SCI research field and were confident to progress their research after participating in the mentor program - this is a 40% increase from baseline reporting for connection with the SCI field and confidence to progress research. 100% of mentees surveyed reported that the mentor program had improved their research skills over the 12-24 month period.

CONCLUSION

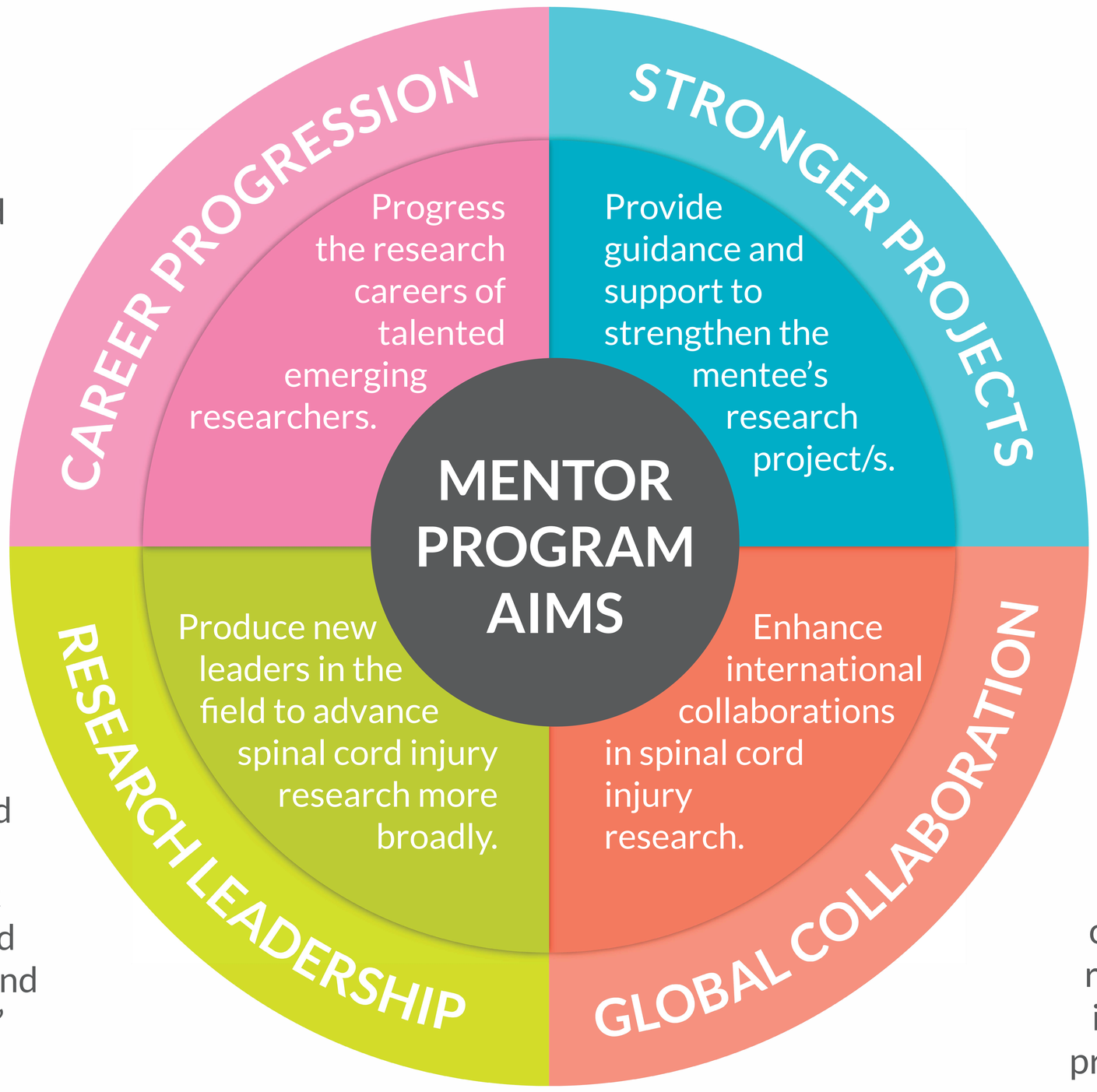
Applications for the Mentor Program doubled in 2023, indicating that this program is fulfilling a need within the SCI research community. The SRI's mentor program equips researchers with skills that might not be available within their own organisation.

MENTEE FEEDBACK

"SRI Mentor Program is excellent. It has encouraged interested researchers from around the world to mentor low middle income country researcher."
(Mentee, 2022)

"I have been supported with deepening my research knowledge and international collaboration by the SRI Mentor Program."
(Mentee, 2024)

"Very impressive. The mentor match has guided the opportunity for me to receive a grant to visit my mentor's institute and further our connection and my research experience."
(Mentee, 2022)



8
countries represented by mentees, paried with mentors across the world

100%
of mentees rated their experience as excellent (2022)

100%
reported improved research skills

100%
reported stronger connection with the SCI research field, leading to increased confidence in progressing their research

63RD ISCoS ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING

The Spinal Research Institute's Mentor Program was launched in 2020 with the aim of improving global collaobration in the field of SCI research. The program is in its 5th year.

thesri.org/mentor-program

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.

SPINAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE