



WELCOME TO THE SPINAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE'S **CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT UPDATE**

Dear preferredname,

In spinal cord injury research, small and large studies often work together rather than in isolation. Each plays a different role, and together they help ensure research is both scientifically sound and relevant to everyday life.

At the Spinal Research Institute, we place strong value on consumer voice, and this is often best captured in smaller studies. Focus groups, surveys, interviews, and other qualitative research approaches give people living with spinal cord injury the opportunity to share their experiences, priorities, and concerns in their own words. These studies are flexible and responsive, allowing researchers to explore issues that may not yet be ready for large-scale testing. [Watch a 90 second video about qualitative research.](#)

Smaller studies also allow researchers to build trust and understanding with the spinal cord injury community. They create space for two-way conversations, where participants are not just providing data but helping to shape how research is approached. This process can highlight practical barriers, ethical considerations, or unintended impacts that may not be obvious when designing a study from a purely clinical perspective.

The insights gained from smaller studies frequently inform larger trials. They help shape research questions, refine interventions, and identify outcome measures that actually matter to consumers. This information is also important when justifying why a larger clinical trial should take place, particularly when seeking funding or broader support.

Larger trials then build on this early work by testing effectiveness and safety at scale. When smaller and larger studies are connected in this way, research is more likely to reflect lived experience as well as clinical priorities. Valuing consumer input early helps ensure that later trials are grounded in real-world needs and have a clearer purpose from the outset.

Kind regards

Antonio Vecchio
Community and Consumer Engagement Manager
Spinal Research Institute

Join the journey

We need more people with lived experience of spinal cord injury to get involved in research. If you are interested in participating in research, or sharing your knowledge and experience to help develop research, please get in touch with Antonio at antonio.vecchio@thesri.org.

Know someone who might like to read our consumer update? Forward it!
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Looking for research-backed information?



The Spinal Cord Injury Research Evidence (SCIRE) Project is an international collaboration of scientists, health professionals and the community. SCIRE provides systematic reviews of spinal cord injury (SCI) research, enabling researchers and health professionals to guide their practice based on current best evidence. [Visit SCIRE Professional](#).



Spinal Cord Injury Research Evidence (SCIRE) Community provides free information about spinal cord injury research that is written in everyday language. [Visit SCIRE Community](#).

Interested in clinical trials? Check your eligibility for current trials



Australian Clinical Trials is an Australian Government initiative to provide information and resources to consumers, health care providers, researchers and industry about clinical trials. [Visit Australian Clinical Trials.](#)



SCI Trials provides the community with a way of finding out about spinal cord injury clinical trials that are relevant to them in the fastest way possible. [Visit SCI Trials.](#)



The SCI Trials Finder matches people with spinal cord injuries and clinical trials. It helps people to easily locate, understand and participate in clinical trials that fit their situation. [Visit SCI Trials Finder.](#)

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

We welcome donations to support our work throughout the year.

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