



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

Dear preferredname,

The Australian Research Council (ARC) describes engagement as the interaction between researchers and research end users outside of academia, with the aim of sharing knowledge, building understanding, and creating mutual benefit. It is a formal definition, but one I find useful because it leaves room for interpretation and practice.

In my role as Community and Consumer Engagement Manager at Spinal Research Institute, I think about engagement in fairly simple terms. To me, it is about the movement of information and the relationships that make that movement possible. Engagement happens when researchers, people living with spinal cord injury, family members, clinicians, and organisations are connected and able to learn from one another. It is not only about structured activities, but whether information can flow in both directions.

I use the ARC definition as a guide rather than a rule book. Engagement is not just about sharing research at the end of a project, but about involving people throughout the process. It means listening to lived experience, understanding different priorities, and recognising that expertise exists well beyond academic settings. Sometimes engagement is a meeting or a workshop. Other times it is a conversation, a question, or feedback that shifts how research is approached.

When engagement works well, it brings the broader spinal cord injury community together around shared goals, particularly improving the quality of life for people living with spinal cord injury. It helps reduce gaps between research and everyday experience, and it allows ideas to be tested against reality.

At its core, engagement is really about storytelling. It is about sharing information in ways people can understand, learning from each other's experiences, and making sure research is part of a larger, ongoing conversation rather than something that sits on a shelf.

If you want to get involved in some current research, there are three studies currently looking for participants - scroll down to see them.

Kind regards

Antonio Vecchio

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](mailto:antonio.vecchio@thesri.org).

Know someone who might like to read our consumer update? Forward it!  
Reading this because someone forwarded it to you? Subscribe below!

Subscribe

## Studies and trials currently seeking participants

**How can we make talking about therapy options for spinal cord injury better?**

**Recruiting participants living in Australia for a group discussion, either online or in person**

Do you or a family member have a spinal cord injury and tried to speak to a health professional about a therapy, such as a stem cell therapy, not offered as standard care here in Australia? These conversations can be difficult, and this study aims to find out - what would make it better?

Interested? Contact Leanne Rees, physiotherapist and researcher, by email at [Leanne.Rees@mcri.edu.au](mailto:Leanne.Rees@mcri.edu.au) or call or text 0498 392 367.

**Restoration of respiratory and upper limb function after cervical SCI (RRULI)**

**Recruiting participants living in Melbourne, Australia for in person assessment and home-based therapeutic intermittent hypoxia**

Restoration of respiratory and upper limb function after cervical SCI (RRULI) is a home-based trial investigating therapeutic intermittent hypoxia in combination with breathing and upper limb exercise training. Therapeutic intermittent hypoxia involves breathing low-oxygen air for brief periods. It may create new or stronger nerve connections and increase the effects of rehabilitation. Learn more on the [study website](#).

Interested? Contact Laura Stendell by email at [laura.stendell@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:laura.stendell@unimelb.edu.au) or call or text 0468 862 693.

### Understanding body image after injury

#### Recruiting participants worldwide for an online survey

Have you experienced a spinal cord injury? Researchers at Adelaide University are inviting adults to complete a short (10–15 minute) anonymous survey exploring body image after injury. Your insights may help improve rehabilitation and support for people living with spinal cord injury.

Access the [online survey](#).

Questions? Contact Professor Susan Hillier by email at [susan.hillier@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:susan.hillier@adelaide.edu.au).

## 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.

[Donate](#)

We are registered with the Australian Charity and Not-for-profits Commission.



## The Spinal Research Institute's Consumer Engagement Program is supported by



**The Marian &  
E.H. Flack Trust**

THE WILLIAM ANGLISS  
CHARITABLE FUND

**Brian M.  
Davis**  
Charitable  
Foundation



Spinal Research Institute  
Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre  
1 Yarra Boulevard, Kew, VIC, 3101

Want to change how you receive these emails?  
You can [unsubscribe](#) from this list.