

Submission for Strategic Review of Health and Medical Research from SpinalCure Australia (www.spinalcure.org.au)

Spinal cord injury (SCI) in Australia represents a significant part of the disability sector. About 15,000 people are living with SCI and there is one new case of SCI each day in Australia. The lifetime cost per injured person ranges from \$5m - \$10m, depending on whether paraplegic or quadriplegic. Estimated total health and long term care costs are \$2 billion annually (Access Economics 2008).

In considering the current and future needs of SCI within the health and medical research sector, SCA sees the following as paramount:

- Fast access to specialist hospital services (to save life, minimise damage)
- Quick surgical intervention, where required, to minimise damage (researcher Fehlings, Canada) and improve mobility rates.
- Best possible care to minimise potential acute and chronic common side effects (DVTs, infection, pressure problems etc)
- Urgent access to progressive and sustainable physiotherapy services
- Opportunity for 'Walk On' program or equivalent for improved recovery (<http://scia.org.au/walk-on>)
- Establishment of database registration system to enable better management of healthcare for people with SCI (www.spinalnetwork.org.au)
- Upgrade and Improvement of specialist SCI wards (currently severely underfunded/resourced)
- At home carer resources/medical supplies are currently grossly underfunded and need major re-think for SCI people to have independence/dignity
- Establishment of specialist SCI facilities at private hospital(s) to alleviate pressure on public hospital system
- Cross "disease" research participation – to share discoveries from related areas
- Involvement in current and future successful worldwide clinical trials of cellular therapies

- Continued funding of bio technology to advance Australian basic research discoveries (eg EphA4 blocker UQ, or CEBPD protein)
- Evaluation and potential adoption of successful overseas industry incentive programs in biotechnology to boost R&D funding through 'on ramping' the public market (eg JOBS ACT USA)

SpinalCure Australia funds research to end paralysis from SCI

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