

State of the science in spinal cord injury rehabilitation 2011: informing a new research agenda

A W Heinemann, J D Steeves, M Boninger, S Groah and A M Sherwood

Abstract

Study design: This manuscript summarizes recommendations from the State of the Science Conference in Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation 2011.

Objectives: To develop an agenda for spinal cord injury (SCI) rehabilitation research in the next decade.

Setting: Participants scheduled planning meetings and then gathered at the 2011 joint meeting of the American Spinal Injury Association and International Spinal Cord Society in Washington DC.

Methods: Recommendations were made by an international, multidisciplinary team that met in large plenary sessions and breakout groups during the meeting.

Results: Recommendations are organized by conference track, including neurological and functional recovery; technology issues; aging with spinal cord injury; and employment, psychosocial and quality of life issues.

Conclusion: A number of themes emerged across the conference tracks, including the need for improved measures of process and outcome constructs, application of qualitative and quantitative research designs, and use of contemporary statistical analytic approaches. Participants emphasized the value of collaborative research that uses the latest methods, techniques and information.