



Insurance Commission
of Western Australia

INNOVATIVE SPINAL CORD THERAPY FUNDED BY INSURANCE COMMISSION

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Pioneering research on spinal cord repair has received funding from the Insurance Commission to help deliver improved outcomes for Western Australians who sustain spinal cord injuries at twice the national average.

The project, facilitated via the Neurotrauma Research Program (NRP) at the Perron Institute, aims to reprogram cells that form scar tissue surrounding the spinal cord injury into neurons (nerve cells), so new circuits are formed to restore function.

The chief investigator is Associate Professor Stuart Hodgetts from the Perron Institute and the University of Western Australia. The research team also includes an investigator from Penn State University, USA, and Jinan University, China.

Commission Secretary Kane Blackman says: “The Hodgetts research is novel with the potential to significantly benefit people with a spinal cord injury.

“The funding we provide to the Neurotrauma Research Program is a proactive initiative to help improve the outcomes, and find new methods of

treatment, for Western Australians with acquired brain and spinal cord injuries.

“The cost to the Insurance Commission of lifetime care and support for a person with a spinal cord or other catastrophic injury can be immense – over \$4 million on average – which is why we support innovative research to help manage future claims costs.”

Associate Professor Hodgetts says: “We are very grateful for the financial support from the Insurance Commission to perform what could be a game-changer in terms of potential therapies. It allows us to further develop our novel strategy with a range of different approaches.”

This is the third year of the partnership between the Insurance Commission and the NRP, which was initiated following the introduction of the Catastrophic Injuries Support scheme in 2016.

The Hodgetts research project was selected following a competitive application and scientific peer-review process.

Read about previous Insurance Commission-funded projects [here](#).



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