



Autumn 2015



The nsif newsletter

A message to nsif supporters on the one-year anniversary of Panorama's To Walk Again

21st October 2015 marked one year since scientists announced they had recorded the first instance of reconnecting long spinal nerve fibres. This followed a multi-year case study involving a patient named Darek Fidyka. This started with eight months' pre-operative intensive rehabilitation to check for any recovery. This was followed by a surgical intervention and post-operative rehab. A team of experts tracked the results.

Darek is continuing to make remarkable progress, as you can see from this [video](#). Before the procedure, which was carried out at Wroclaw University Hospital in Poland, Darek had complete, chronic paralysis from full spinal cord transection. For the year ahead, we have great plans. We hope that when 2016 draws to a close, we will be looking back on a year that has been as fruitful as the last 12 months have been.

We have two key priorities:

1. To support the Polish team, with targeted funding, in their work to find two more patients that fit the criteria to receive the same procedure as Darek. We will fund these two patients through the project. The Polish team has not yet started the patient selection process, because a lot of preparations are necessary to begin the next phase of the project. However, we will be tracking their progress closely and telling our followers as soon as they are ready to launch.

2. To maintain funding to the Spinal Repair Unit at the UCL Institute of Neurology. This incredible team has been responsible for the research upon which the clinical work being done in Poland is based. The team there is led by Professor Geoffrey Raisman, supported closely by Prof. Ying Li and Dr. Daqing Li. Their research has opened up the field of nerve fibre regeneration. Today, they are advancing the research, for example by looking for the best source of olfactory ensheathing cells in human tissue, and shedding more light on how the spinal cord could be repaired.

We marked 12 months since Panorama with a social media campaign that highlighted how important scientific research is to progress. Science funding, generally, is dwarfed by the size of the problems it is trying to solve. In some way, scientific research is trying to tackle every major threat to human wellbeing. At nsif, our commitment is to fund a cure for paralysis from spinal cord injury. We believe that a cure is possible and that we are on an incredibly exciting path. That progress is, quite simply, thanks to you. Because we are 100% privately funded.

The pioneers who support us are providing hope to millions of spinal-injured people worldwide that their future may be different than the one they had imagined, or been told to imagine.

Spinal cord injury is something that takes away people's freedom to do the smallest daily tasks independently – from brushing your teeth to breathing. The research nsif is funding aims to give it back.

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