

ASRF Research Grants Guidelines for Applicants - 2021

The Mission of the Australian Spinal Research Foundation is to fund and facilitate research that furthers the understanding and development of chiropractic care. We are committed to growing the knowledge-base on what is central to the practise of chiropractic – the vertebral subluxation – with strong research that is clinically relevant to chiropractors. Over the last 44 years the Foundation as funded over 210 research projects at a cost in excess of AUD\$2.7M.

The ASRF has developed a rigorous two-stage approval process (unique amongst chiropractic research funding bodies), following a review of the processes used by several national and international competitive funding bodies. Our application and assessment process reflect research sector best practice. In 2019 we changed our research categories to provide much-needed support for early career and postgraduate researchers conducting innovative projects focused towards our research agenda.

In 2021 we continue to refine our research agenda by calling for grant applications focussing on the role of subluxation in resilience and adaptability. Based on an extensive survey, our members identified stress and immune function/dysfunction as the two key health outcome areas associated with resilience and adaptability.

Research Agenda

Our Research Agenda supports much-needed investigation of the vertebral subluxation, its effects, and the impact chiropractic care has on human function. It is focused on enhancing the knowledge-base in relation to the vertebral subluxation and is centred on funding research with strong, clinical relevance for chiropractors.

The Australian Spinal Research Foundation Research Agenda:

By 2022: Investigate the impact of Chiropractic care on the quality of life of an individual and on their community.

1. What is the definition of subluxation? (useable in research and translatable to practice) **COMPLETE**
2. Can subluxations be identified validly, reliably & reproducibly? (for research and in practice)
3. What are the impacts of a subluxation and an adjustment?
4. What is the epidemiology of the subluxation?
5. What are the impacts of the subluxation and the adjustment on the community?

(Adopted June 2017)

The ASRF is now calling for Expressions of Interest (EOI) from researchers looking to explore the following items.

- Investigate reliability, validity and reproducibility of stress and immunity outcome measures associated with vertebral subluxation (can stress and immune health outcomes relating to vertebral subluxations be measured using reliable and valid indicators?).
- Investigate the impact of a vertebral subluxation and an adjustment on stress and immune function (what impact does vertebral subluxation and the adjustment have on health outcomes?).
- Investigate the epidemiology of the subluxation relating to stress and immunity (the scientific, systematic, data-driven frequency and patterns of the cause and risk factors of vertebral subluxation in the community).

Grant Categories

The Foundation offers three categories of research funding in 2021.

These are intended to both encourage and support new researchers and novel ideas as well as support projects with a more developed evidence base and researcher track record. The following types of research grants are available:

- **Targeted Research Grants (TRG)** are intended to provide support for quality research projects relevant to the clinical practice and scientific basis of chiropractic and relevant to the research agenda categories that are currently being investigated. **Funding of up to \$20,000 per year is available for between one and two years.**
- **Dave Russell Postgraduate Scholarship Grant (DRPSG)** are intended for researchers who are currently undertaking a research higher degree and are yet to be recipients of competitive project funding. Funds for DRPSG's will be awarded for quality research projects relevant to the clinical practice and scientific basis of chiropractic and relevant to the research agenda categories that are currently being investigated and will be a **maximum of \$10,000 for a maximum period of 1 year.** Only one grant per postgraduate researcher will be awarded.
- **Seeding Research Grants (SRG)** are intended to support novel research ideas, pilot studies or preliminary research develop into viable competitive research proposals for submission for funding to ASRF or other external granting bodies. It is intended that the recipients of SRG apply for full funding under the TRG scheme within 12 months. SRGs are open to any researcher, however preference will be given to an Early Career Researcher (ECR - defined as researchers who are currently within 5 years of having completed postgraduate studies and who have not as yet been recipients of competitive project funding). Funds for SRGs are to support quality research projects relevant to the clinical practice and scientific basis of chiropractic and relevant to the research agenda categories that are currently being investigated and will be a **maximum of \$10,000 for a maximum period of 12 months.**

Application Process

There is a two-stage process for submitting an application for funding.

Stage 1: Expression of Interest (EOI)

All applicants are required to submit an initial EOI. The EOI provides concise, referenced information regarding the intent of the proposed research project, the clinical and/or scientific basis of the intended research, how the proposal meets the Foundation's research agenda, and an indicative budget. Applicants will be notified promptly of the Foundation's decision regarding their expression and if endorsed, will be invited to complete a full submission by the prescribed deadline.

Stage 2: Full Grant Submission

Full Grant Submissions build on information provided in the EOI but provide more extensive details, particularly concerning the proposed methodology and the intended outcomes of the research project. Full applications will also require researchers to submit a short one-page CV outlining:

- their current role,
- key career attainments,
- publications and grants awarded.

Selection Criteria and Process

Both EOI and Full Grant Submissions will be subjected to the same merit-based review process. Scientific and clinical evaluation will be based on project merit and validity, the likelihood of completion and delivery of intended outcomes, track record of the research team and value for money.

Both EOIs and Full Grant Submissions are reviewed for clinical relevance and merit by the Clinical Advisory Panel and assessed by the Research Committee for overall scientific merit.

Full Submissions may, in addition, be subjected to independent external peer assessment.

Allowable Expenditure

Funds will not be provided to pay or supplement the applicant researcher's salary, for travel, conference attendance or publication costs.

Funding will be available to pay for: equipment; consumables; research assistance (except for postgraduate research grants and seeding grants).

Reporting Requirements

Successful recipients are required to provide two formal reports annually and a final report within six months of completion of funding. These reports are to clearly identify progress towards outcomes, including clinical applications and provide full details of publications and conference presentations of findings.

Researchers will also be asked to provide photos and/or video interviews, to keep ASRF supporters informed of project progress. The ASRF will contact Researchers to organise this.

Failure to comply with these requirements may affect funding instalments, as well as any future consideration of funding applications from the researcher.

Publishing and Recognition

Recipients of a Foundation grant are expected to acknowledge support from the Foundation and any of its associated funding partners on any resultant publications, conference presentations and other materials relating to the supported research, such as publicity or marketing materials. Funds facilitated by the Foundation through other organisations should be reflected in the acknowledgements for the Foundations part in the review and funding process.

The Foundation has an expectation that publications also refer to the Foundation's conceptual definition of vertebral subluxation and use chiropractic terms including but not limited to 'vertebral subluxation' and 'adjustment', rather than 'joint dysfunction' and 'manipulation'.

Ethics

Applicants are referred to the NH&MRC Statement on the Ethical Conduct in Human Research. Successful grant recipients will be required to demonstrate ethical approval of the proposed project before funding will be released.

Key Dates

Expressions of Interest must be received on or before 5.00pm AEST, Friday 20th August 2021.

It is anticipated that following assessment, applicants will be notified of whether to proceed to Full Grant Submission by 10th September 2021, with Full Grant Submissions due on the 22nd October 2021.

Please direct all communications to grants@spinalresearch.com.au