

Introduction to the Special Issue

The Third World Congress on Spina Bifida Research and Care held in March of 2017 offered unique content and contacts that were unmatched in the health care world of Spina Bifida. It was one of the foremost Spina Bifida research events because it brought many health care providers and researchers from various disciplines together under the same roof to hear the latest research conducted on Spina Bifida from various parts of the world. There are no other conferences quite like this one.

One of the primary goals of the Spina Bifida Association (SBA) is to improve the health of people who have this complex birth defect that requires health care from so many disciplines. Health care for children with Spina Bifida has improved over the years, but we still can improve on pediatric care. However, SBA recently conducted a survey of over 1,000 adults with Spina Bifida, and the results point to a health care landscape that is more complex with fewer health care providers. Whether for adults or children, research is still essential to understanding Spina Bifida, finding better methods to treat people with Spina Bifida, and improving their health outcomes.

The World Congress events, powerful education tools, have become an influential tool in stimulating clinical and basic research. The Third World Congress expanded the knowledge of health care professionals and researchers on Spina Bifida and care related to its multiple conditions. As one of the largest meetings related to Spina Bifida care and research, the Third World Congress was the springboard for developing relationships that may lead to further research.

While the World Congress events are crucial to improving care for people with Spina Bifida, equally significant is making sure that others know about the research related to their care. This is why I'm delighted that the *Journal of Pediatric Rehabilitation Medicine: An Interdisciplinary Approach* is amplifying the research presented at the Third World Congress on Spina Bifida Research and Care.

Best Regards,

Sara Struwe
Spina Bifida Association President & CEO