

Annual Report 2015

of the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation, its subsidiaries
and partner organisations



Photos: The most important objective

A spinal cord injury is life-changing, forever. Needless to say, people have a great desire to keep leading their lives with as few limitations as possible. The objectives of resuming the best possible quality of life are every bit as individual as the person and their diagnosis of a spinal cord injury. The objective is to encourage the patients to completely refocus every day on their personal success in Nottwil.

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Commonly used abbreviations

SPG	Swiss Paraplegic Group
SPF	Swiss Paraplegic Foundation
BA	Benefactors' Association of the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation
SPC	Swiss Paraplegic Centre
SPA	Swiss Paraplegics Association
SPR	Swiss Paraplegic Research
Sirmed	Swiss Institute of Emergency Medicine
SHS	Seminarhotel Sempachersee
NPO	Nonprofit Organisation

Living a self-determined and independent life.

The Swiss Paraplegic Foundation creates a unique network of services for people with spinal cord injury, from primary care through to the end of their lives. Its aim is to provide comprehensive rehabilitation and to reintegrate those affected into family life, society and the working environment.

Duty-bound by our success story



Every day over the past twelve months, we have seen evidence of the considerable interest displayed by the general public and by people with spinal cord injury in the solidarity network operated by the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation.

Thousands of visitors have availed of various opportunities to find out about the activities of our unique organisation. In 2015, this included in particular the joint anniversary celebrations conducted by the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation, the Swiss Paraplegics Association, the Swiss Paraplegic Centre and Swiss Paraplegic Research, the UCI Para-cycling Road World Championships, as well as almost 600 corporate tours and hundreds of smaller events at the Nottwil campus.

At the same time, we discovered, not altogether unexpectedly it must be said, that demand had continued to rise for the areas of service offered across the entire spectrum. People with spinal cord injury faithfully rely upon the network of services provided by the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation, which are at their disposal throughout their entire lives. The challenge facing us is to continually adapt these to reflect current circumstances in order to comply with the mission of the foundation with high quality services. The trust which has been placed in us obliges us to continue our success story.

In order to embark upon new chapters, work was done across the group on countless projects, both small and very large, throughout the year, such as the clinic upgrade and extension. This takes courageous people who can help to shape and implement our vision once again. They are our 1.8 million benefactors and many donors. Thanks to their «backing», we once again managed to come up with all the finance for the services in demand in 2015. Their solidarity enables us to maintain and continue to develop the network of services to this high standard. And there are the 1500-plus employees of the Swiss Paraplegic Group who champion the cause of people with spinal cord injury, displaying huge commitment, enabling the organisation's excellent reputation to continue to grow. Our sincerest thanks to you all!

Dr. sc. tech. Daniel Joggi
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

Dr. iur. Joseph Hofstetter
Director of the Swiss Paraplegic
Foundation

«I was a cheesemaker for 33 years with my own dairy; gardening was my second love. That was before I had my accident helping out on my son's farm. I need a new hobby now that I will enjoy, that will fill my time and give me something to do when I get back home. Making art out of lime wood could appeal to me. While it is difficult for me to make the small cuts in the wood as I lack strength in my hand, patience will reap rewards. My most important objective? To be able to stand on my own feet and take a few steps again. I should have achieved that by the time I am discharged from the clinic in five months.»

Josef Kobler (58), tetraplegic following an accident



Demonstrating real solidarity

The Swiss Paraplegic Foundation and its Benefactors' Association were once again able to count on the great solidarity of the general public in 2015. Their membership subscriptions and contributions served to fund valuable financial support, as well as investments which will deliver the optimum direct benefits for people with spinal cord injury.

Almost a third of households in Switzerland are members of the Benefactors' Association (BA) of the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation (SPF): 1.8 million members in 1.06 million households supported the vision of comprehensive rehabilitation and the SPF's extensive network of services. Their subscriptions accounted for 87.6% of revenue from fundraising. All in all, the BA paid a total of CHF 70.8 million to the SPF to maintain its network of services in support of people with spinal cord injury in Switzerland. This income includes CHF 68.8 million in membership subscriptions and CHF 2.0 million in donations. Donations and bequests, which were directly received by the SPF contributed 12.4% of the income.

A quarter of funds from benefactors and donations were paid directly to people with spinal cord injury

The BA of the SPF posted support contributions amounting to CHF 5.6 million (compared to CHF 4.4 million in the previous year) for members involved in accidents during the year under review leaving them permanently wheelchair-dependent. It is impossible to forecast developments in these support contributions to BA members, nor is there any readily identifiable trend; the only thing that can be assumed is that another 200 people in Switzerland will be left paralysed as a result of an accident year after year.

Performance data – Solidarity

Figures in CHF millions	2015	2014
Revenue	78.5	76.0
from membership fees	68.8	68.7
from donations and bequests	9.7	7.3
Funds used for	78.5	76.0
Support contributions	17.2	17.6
Support payments to injured Benefactors' Association members	5.6	4.4
Direct aid for paraplegic people	11.2	10.7
Research contributions to third parties	0.4	2.5
Operating contributions	22.8	29.0
Medicine area of services ¹⁾	11.5	11.6
Integration and Lifelong Assistance area of services	1.9	6.6
Research area of services	8.4	10.8
Solidarity area of services	1.0	0.0
Other use	38.5	29.4
Reinvestment for the maintenance of infrastructure at Nottwil	22.1	12.7
Expenses for benefactor services and fundraising activities ²⁾	12.8	12.7
Administration expenses ²⁾	3.6	4.0

¹⁾ without Clinical Trial Unit (CTU) and Research Program in Rehabilitation Quality Management of SPC, which are both attributed to the Research Division

²⁾ Calculation according to ZEW0

95% of the benefactor support went to claimants in German-speaking Switzerland in 2015, and 5% to members in the Italian-speaking region of Switzerland who had sustained spinal cord injury. 37% of the members injured were registered as individual members, 35% had family membership, 23% had married couple's membership of the BA, and 5% were registered as permanent members.

During the year under review, 1072 applications were approved (+ 24%) for direct aid within a total sum of CHF 11.2 million (10.7 million in the previous year). With its direct aid, the SPF makes contributions towards medical services which are not covered by guarantors, to home adaptations, to the procurement of aids such as wheel-chairs or respirators and provides interest-free loans, as well as one-off grants for avoiding hardship.

People with spinal cord injury in Switzerland benefited directly from a quarter (24%) of membership subscriptions through the disbursement of support contributions and direct aid payments in 2015.

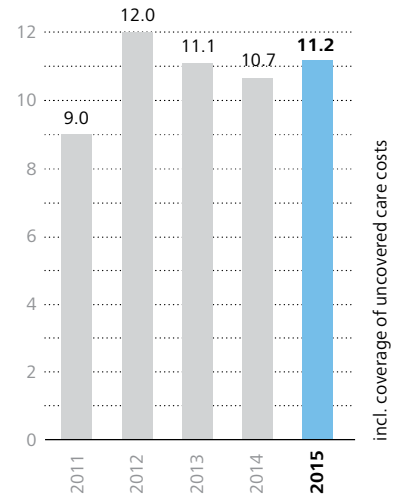
A third of funds from benefactors earmarked for the network of services

A third (33%) of all funds from benefactors went towards indirect support for people with spinal cord injury. The expenditure for ensuring and promoting comprehensive rehabilitation amounted to CHF 22.8 million (CHF 29.0 million in the previous year). This includes the operating contributions of CHF 11.5 million (CHF 11.6 million in the previous year) to cover the deficit paid to the Swiss Paraplegic Centre (SPC) as the main organisation involved in the provision of medical services, and to Sirmed and ParaHelp. Deficits arose, in particular, in cases where services were not covered by cost providers, such as health insurance schemes, accident insurance companies or social security agencies. The research activities, primarily those conducted by Swiss Paraplegic Research (SPR), benefited from support funding of CHF 8.4 million (CHF 10.8 million in the previous year). (The difference compared to the previous year can be explained by the research contribution of CHF 2 million to Balgrist Campus Ltd., which was paid one-off research donation in 2014.) There was expenditure of CHF 1.9 million (CHF 6.6 million in the previous year) for integration and lifelong assistance, covered in the main by the Swiss Paraplegics Association (SPA). As the SPA was the welcome recipient of an exceptionally large bequest of CHF 5.1 million in 2015, the deficit was correspondingly lower.

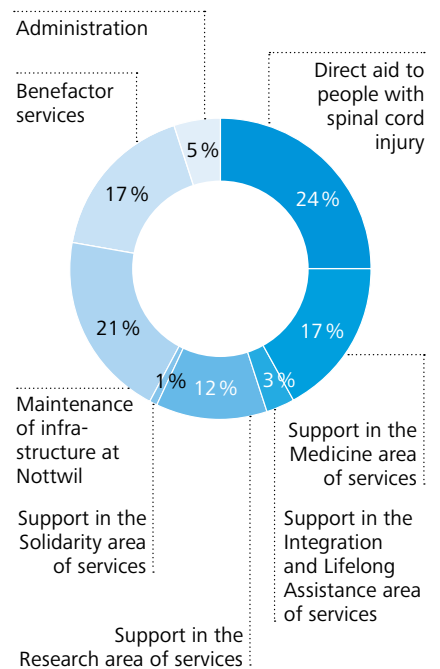
Around one fifth (21%) of the funds from benefactors was used for the maintenance of the 25-year old infrastructure of the specialist clinic or for its (re-)financing in 2015.

Direct aid from the SPF to people with spinal cord injury

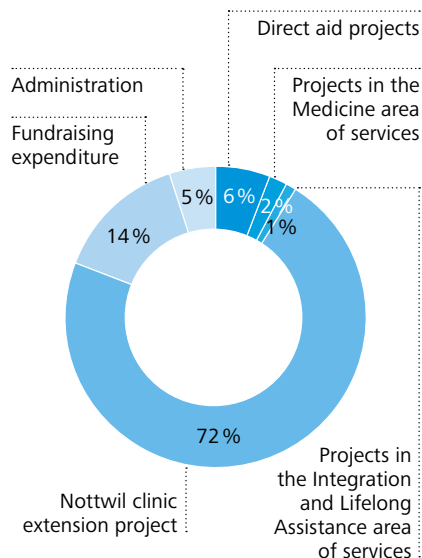
2011–2015, figures in CHF millions



SPF's use of funds in 2015 received from benefactors



SPF's use of donations in 2015

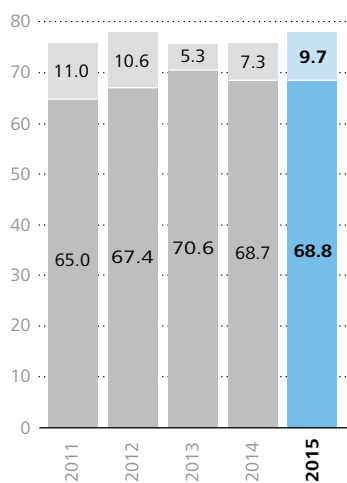


Use of earmarked donations

There has been an increase in demand for services and products from group companies: In addition to the increased life expectancy of people with spinal cord injury in Switzerland, this is also attributable to the ever greater reluctance by state social security agencies to provide funding, as a result of which people affected are turning increasingly to the benefactor and donor-funded services provided by the SPF. Therefore, the SPF must gear itself up to meeting rising demand for its resources. While the BA had almost exclusively asked for membership subscriptions in the past, it sought earmarked donations for the first time in the year under review.

In contrast to funds raised from membership subscriptions, which are used by the SPF to maintain the actual network of services, donations are earmarked for selected innovation and development projects in all areas of services – Solidarity, Medicine, Research as well as Integration and lifelong assistance. This enables the BA to deliver the optimum direct additional benefits for people with spinal cord injury at all times. Earmarked donations are placed in predefined funds, for instance for contributing towards the financing of the clinic upgrade and extension with the very latest medical facilities. In 2015, 72% of donations were used for the Nottwil clinic extension project. During the year under review, special donations which were not earmarked for the building project were used to finance the «Youth rehabilitation holiday weeks», as well as specific direct aid services.

Development of Foundation's fundraising revenue
2011–2015, figures in CHF millions



■ Donations and bequests
■ Membership and society subscriptions

Highly efficient fundraising

The SPF compared its fundraising efficiency with the benchmark published by VMI/ZEWO in 2015. This nationwide study shows, among other things, how many cents the non-profit organisations surveyed in a global assessment of all fundraising activities used, on average, for every franc raised. All in all, the SPF had a fundraising efficiency or ROFI (Return on Fundraising Investment) in 2015 of an impressive 16.4 cents, which compares favourably with the Swiss benchmark of 21.2 cents.

Clinic upgrade and extension: Prepared for building work to start

Rescue helicopters have been landing straight onto the roof of the SPC since April 2015. The new helicopter landing pad is a model example nationwide with internationally recognised colour signalling according to the latest guidelines, the possibility for incoming flights to be guided in by GPS in poor visibility and a state-of-the-art weather station installed by Rega. Following the groundbreaking ceremony for the clinic upgrade and extension on 1 October, preparatory work had been carried out on the site of the future extension and at the location of the planned underground car park by the end of the year. 2016 will present some challenges for patients, relatives, visitors and employees. In addition to noisy work at the rear of section 1 of the SPC building, a temporary structure is to be created on the meadow in front of the indoor swimming pool, which will house the Centre for Pain Medicine, Orthotec’s wheelchair mechanics workshop and the IT Department until the construction work has been completed. The extension should be ready by the end of 2017. It will initially serve as a replacement space for the wards which are being upgraded in sections 1 and 2. The entire construction work is likely to take until 2019, and the clinic will remain in full operation throughout. The SPF also faces a mammoth challenge in financing the new build and conversion work. The cost of the clinic upgrade and extension, which is not state-subsidised, is put at CHF 150 million. It is hoped that CHF 15 million or 10% of the total cost of the build will have been generated through earmarked donations within a good three years, by the time the building work is completed. Further information: www.praplegie.ch/bauprojekt

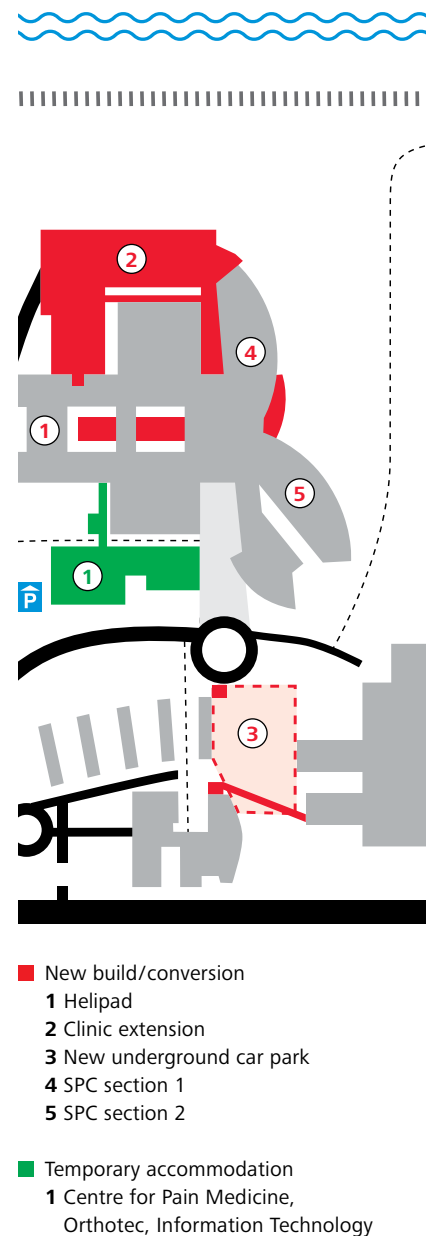
Perceived as a highly competent organisation

Current market research from Demoscope has shown that the SPF ranks among the three most highly rated aid organisations in Switzerland in terms of goodwill, innovation, competence and effectiveness. In addition, it is regarded as undoubtedly the most competent organisation representing people with disabilities in Switzerland. In terms of public awareness, the SPF has maintained its values at the high level achieved in previous years (according to GfS Donations Monitor data): 88% of the respondents indicated that they had at least heard of the SPF or were more familiar with it than that. This means that the solidarity network enjoys an outstandingly good image. In a further survey, the SPF’s tattoo image campaign achieved above-average results in terms of goodwill, perception, effectiveness and how memorable it is.

Unbroken interest from visitors

Guided tours and events enabled the general public to see how the foundation concept is put into practice, day in, day out. In Nottwil, 180 guides from all levels of the hierarchy and internal areas gave some 11,000 keen visitors a lasting insight into the operations at the specialist clinic; over 1100 people in 80 different occupations perform work at the SPC for people with spinal cord injury.

Map for the extension of the clinic in Nottwil





Walter Steffen, Leader of Nottwil Town Council, and Guido A. Zäch, freeman of the town of Nottwil



Anniversary celebrations in Nottwil

An estimated 9000 more people came to Nottwil at the end of October for the two days of celebrations to mark the anniversaries. There were five in all: The Swiss Paraplegic Foundation turned 40, the Swiss Paraplegics Association was 35, the Swiss Paraplegic Centre celebrated 25 years, Swiss Paraplegic Research reached 15, and it was the 80th birthday of the founder and honorary president, Guido A. Zäch. As part of the anniversary celebrations, Nottwil Town Council made the pioneer a freeman of the town; the chief executive of the council, Walter Steffen, awarded the certificate to Guido A. Zäch

Hospitality and meetings

The Seminarhotel Sempachersee (SHS) organised more than 5000 meetings attended by over 173,000 people in 2015. Overnight stays were up 1.1% on the previous year. In addition to the core business of seminars and conferences, which accounted for around 41,400 participants in the year under review, the SHS's open-air cinema, which is popular regionally, posted record figures of 6800 cinema-goers and restaurant guests. To enable the expectations of all patients, guests and visitors to continue to be met, planning for the modernisation of the hotel and similar complex was initiated after the groundbreaking ceremony for the clinic upgrade and extension.

The catering for the 600 athletes and for the numerous visitors in the Sport Arena Nottwil and in the thousand-capacity marquee during the UCI Para-cycling Road World Championships was ensured thanks to the commitment shown by the hospitality staff and by the many volunteers. The hospitality staff also provided the catering for over 9000 people attending the two-day anniversary celebrations in Nottwil at the end of October.

New living needs identified

New residential accommodation for the elderly and for wheelchair users opened its doors in Nottwil in May 2015. This involved the SPF entering into a public private partnership with Nottwil Town Council and with the Orbano housing cooperative. Together, they formed the Awono limited liability company and built 25 small apartments which meet the needs of wheelchair users and the elderly. The SPF is tasked with managing the apartments. As its immediate neighbours, the tenants can avail of the individual services of the Eymatt Centre for the Elderly. The apartments also form part of the «Ageing» network set up by the SPF, which has entered into partnership agreements with retirement institutions nationwide on the support and nursing of older people with spinal cord injury.



«I became dependent on the respirator from one day to the next. For five months. Until I was given a diaphragm pacemaker implant which now helps me to breathe. It sounds so simple; however, it was an extremely stressful, frightening, painful experience. I am also currently learning how to use the «cough assist» device, which I can flexibly connect to an access point on my neck. I will use this device at home. I need it because I lack the strength to cough myself. Luckily, I can live independent of the respirator thanks to the diaphragm pacemaker. I will be able to drive into the village and go to cafés to meet friends. I will be able to move about freely at home; I will be independent. This is my greatest objective once I am discharged from the SPC following my rehabilitation.»

Mariette Tschannen (50), tetraplegic as a result of illness

Geared towards efficiency

The Swiss Paraplegic Centre has continued to perform with the criteria «effectiveness, expediency and cost-efficiency» in mind. This requires highly developed, process-led medicine, centred around the needs of the patient.

Following the disproportionately high percentage of people with tetraplegia admitted to the Swiss Paraplegic Centre (SPC) for initial rehabilitation in 2014, the specialist clinic reported a higher proportion of people with paraplegia in 2015. Spinal cord injuries resulted from an accident in around half of all initial rehabilitation cases: falls led to the spinal cord injury in the case of 43% of people affected, sports accidents with 35% and road traffic accidents in 18%. 52,482 nursing days were clocked up for a total of 1085 inpatients who were discharged from the clinic after initial rehabilitation or follow-up treatment in 2015.

The number of beds at the SPC was increased by 7 to 150, and average bed occupancy was 96.5%.

Strong process orientation and expanded contract for services

The expansion in bed capacity was achieved within the existing infrastructure, which was only possible due to highly developed processes. The workflows defined in the quality management system demonstrated their worth day in, day out, as evidenced by the report on the second ISO 9001:2008 monitoring audit, which was passed in mid-December. Information technology is also increasingly playing a part in the success.

Here, the promising «Patient Management Cockpit» IT project was completed in February 2015. It enables inter-disciplinary teams to access an up-to-date overview of all the medical services to be provided for each patient. The individual processes will now be specified further and modules from peripheral systems integrated, in a follow-up project. Furthermore, extensive preliminary projects were launched in the year under review with a view towards replacing two of the hospital's key systems, KIS and ERP: The replacement for the Clinical Information System KIS is earmarked to coincide with the opening of the clinic's new building. It will only take until early 2017 for the new ERP Administrative System to be available.

Performance data – Medicine

	2015	2014
SPC Beds	150	142.7
SPC Bed occupancy in per cent	96.5	96.8
SPC Completed hospitalisations	1 085	1 027
SPC Care days	52 482	50 432
Thereof care days for patients with respiratory support	10 739	9 423
ParaHelp New patients supported	301	288
ParaHelp Hours spent on care	9 122	8 897
Sirmed Courses run	603	574
Sirmed Persons attending courses	7 644	5 981

In a welcome development, the Canton of Lucerne has expanded the scope of its contract for services. This will enable the SPC to develop skills in this area within the scope of its medical services, such as in weaning from mechanical respiration or in sport traumatology.

Efforts to achieve an independent model of paraplegia tariffs

Balgrist Zurich, REHAB Basel, CRR Sion and SPC Nottwil teamed up in March 2015 to form the Swiss Association of Paraplegic Centres. Complementing the work of the Swiss Paraplegia Society (SSoP), which acts as a specialist medical association, the new association can join forces in the area of spinal cord medicine and they can collaborate on consultations with cantonal authorities, Swiss Conference of the Cantonal Health Directors (GDK), SwissDRG AG, insurance providers, medical examiners and cantonal doctors. The Zurich University of Applied Sciences was commissioned by the paraplegic centres to develop a patient classification system as a basis for calculating tariffs in rehabilitation and published its final report in the summer. On the basis of this report, the Swiss Association of Paraplegic Centres submitted an application to SwissDRG in late autumn to adopt an independent tariff model for its inpatient rehabilitation.

Support on 36 clinical research projects

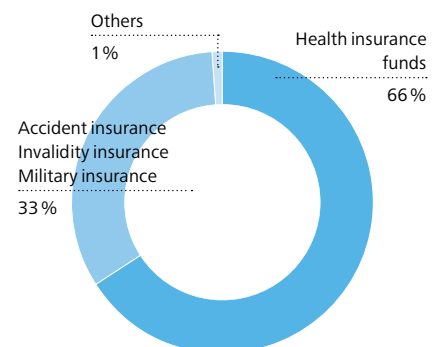
As a result of the approval of 18 new research projects, there were a total of 36 studies in progress at the end of the year under review, undertaken by and with the involvement of the Clinical Trial Unit (CTU), the department for clinical research of the SPC. The successful implementation of a multi-centre study on the use of walking robots (exoskeleton) merits special mention. Research was carried out in that study into the wide range of effects of maintaining movement for people with spinal cord injury. The CTU will continue to carry out research in the area of Rehab Engineering in a cooperation project with Burgdorf University of Applied Science and the research group headed by Professor Kenneth Hunt. The «Life and Care» symposium on breathing and respiration organised by the CTU provided a platform for an international knowledge transfer. The exchange with national and international experts from the research sector remains important for further scientific development in respiratory medicine. In 2015, the CTU of the SPC also launched the CTU Central Switzerland, in association with Lucerne Cantonal Hospital and the University of Lucerne. It supports clinics which are actively engaged in research with specific services, thereby enhancing Central Switzerland’s standing as a centre of research.

Comparison of care days (by patients’ home cantons)

Central Switzerland Cantons of Lucerne, Nidwalden, Obwalden, Schwyz, Uri, Zug
Midlands Cantons of Aargau, Bern, Solothurn, Basel-Land, Basel-Stadt, Zurich
Western Switzerland Cantons of Fribourg, Geneva, Jura, Neuchâtel, Vaud, Valais
Eastern Switzerland Cantons of Appenzell Ausserrhoden and Innerrhoden, Glarus, Graubünden, Schaffhausen, St. Gallen, Thurgau
Ticino
Abroad
Total

Care days in 2015 by guarantor (cost centre)

Health insurance funds	34 812
Accident insurance, Invalidity insurance, Military insurance	17 479
Others	191



Area of impact widened

2015	2014
10 161	7 830
22 773	23 223
10 112	9 163
5 002	5 127
1 724	1 446
2 710	3 643
52 482	50 432

The Intensive Care Medicine, Pain Medicine and Surgical Medicine department forged ahead with the further development of construction planning in 2015. Its focus is consistently directed at the needs of patients, and the processes are aligned accordingly. Construction work will get under way at the Swiss Paraplegic Centre (SPC) in spring 2016.

Certified as a trauma centre with an inter-regional, nationwide remit

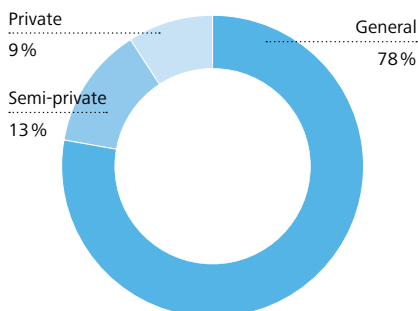
The Swiss Spine and Spinal Cord Centre has become increasingly established, as borne out by the large number of non-paralysed patients being referred. It is under the medical leadership of the Head of Department Dr. med. Martin Baur and is operated at the sites in Nottwil (SPC) and Lucerne (Lucerne Cantonal Hospital). The great importance of the highly specialised acute care provided by the SPC in this area was demonstrated by its certification as a specialist centre for traumatology within the Central Swiss Trauma Network. Consequently, the clinic has the task of providing care to people with severe spinal cord injury both across regions and nationwide.

Targeted investment in the next generation of professionals has proved to be worthwhile: The FMH has recognised the Department of Anaesthesia as a centre of further training; the first two junior doctors have already been appointed. Postgraduate courses in anaesthesia nursing will also be available from 2016.

The Swiss Weaning Centre, led by the Head of Department PD Dr. med. Markus Béchir, EMBA, has brought specialists from Intensive Care Medicine, Speech Therapy, Respi-Care and Spinal Cord Medicine even closer together in a new process structure for respiratory medicine. At the same time, the Swiss Weaning Centre was pleased to report increasing referrals from university hospitals and private clinics in 2015, as well as numerous successes with patients who had proved to be difficult to wean from respiratory equipment.

Care days in 2015 by insurance class

General	41 030
Semi-private	6 817
Private	4 635



Innovative offers in tetra hand surgery and pain medicine

The Centre for Pain Medicine at the SPC, one of the largest pain facilities in the German-speaking world, reported a further increase in inpatient treatments in the year under review. Epiduroscopy, which was introduced in 2014, has proved to be a success in this competence centre; it is a percutaneous, minimally invasive procedure which is used in the diagnosis and treatment of pain syndromes in the vicinity of the spinal cord.

The haemodialysis and haemofiltration which have also been available since 2014 are greatly appreciated by renal patients.

A milestone was reached in tetra hand surgery. The team of doctors from the SPC has been holding consultations at two other spinal cord injury centres since the summer. The specialists use these consultations as an opportunity to show people around the country what possibilities there are for improved hand and grip functions, leading to an enhanced quality of life. For further assessments and surgical treatment, the patients are referred to the specialist team at the SPC.

Challenge taken up

By increasing its bed capacity in 2015, the Swiss Paraplegic Centre (SPC) has ensured that recently injured or ill people with spinal cord injury, as well as spinal cord injured patients with an acute disease can be admitted without delay.

Coping with exceptional bed capacity usage

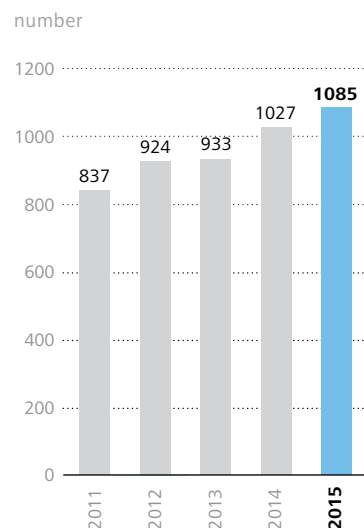
Bed capacity usage, which has been exceptionally high since the second half of the year, posed a great challenge to the Acute Medicine and Rehabilitation department. It occasionally proved to be difficult to find accommodation for privately insured patients as well as for patients who needed to be isolated in single rooms due to an infection. The unsatisfactory situation was used as an opportunity to review existing arrangements and to develop new concepts for enhanced use of resources and prioritisation. New visiting structures have already contributed towards improvements in efficiency and quality. The function and activity-led visits have proved to be particularly useful. They take place within a therapeutic or nursing context and offer a specific insight into the current treatment situation. The updated training concept for junior doctors also reflects the need for increased quality. It also now includes specific training courses, as well as intensive communication training, the latter under the expert guidance of Basel University Hospital and involving senior doctors at the SPC.

Expertise in demand across a wide field

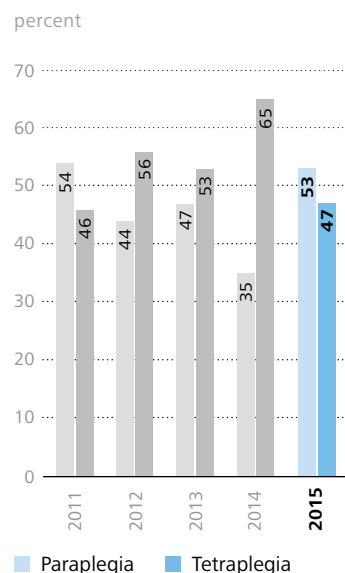
The SPC has been offering a gynaecological consultation service for women with spinal cord injury in specially equipped premises since April 2015. The consultations are provided in association with the Lucerne Cantonal Hospital, Sursee; it has proved popular with inpatients and outpatients alike.

The «reha Swiss Congress 2015» was also well received; it was held in association with the Swiss Society for Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and SAR – Swiss Association for Rehabilitation in Nottwil, and was supported by numerous speakers from the SPC.

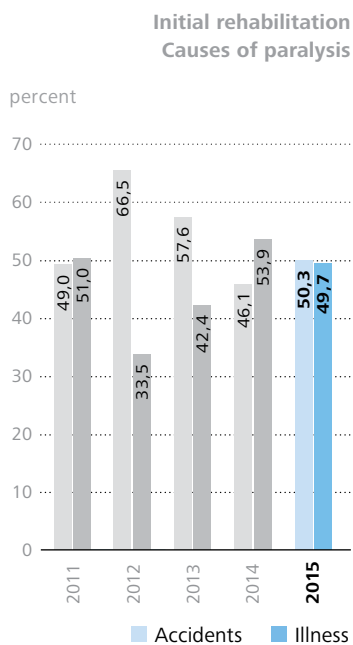
Completed hospitalisations



Initial rehabilitation ratio para-/tetraplegia



Professional support doubled

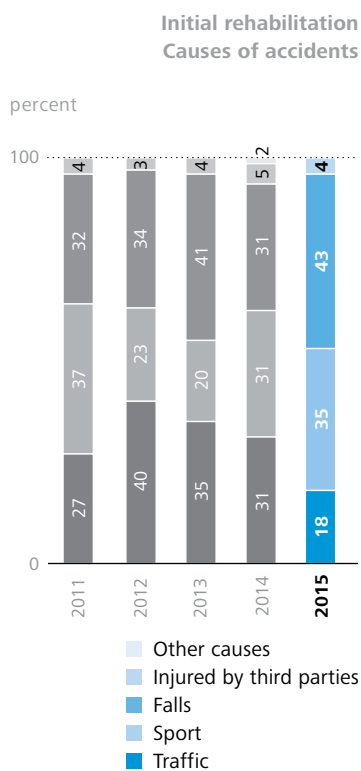


Promising reintegration into the workplace and individual career planning for people with spinal cord injury requires conscientious, professional support, not least of all due to ever-increasing demands placed upon the individual in general. ParaWork becomes involved during the rehabilitation phase to implement measures to facilitate reintegration into the workplace and continues this support on an outpatient basis.

Officially recognised as a training centre for patients

While the provision of work-related support for patients during initial rehabilitation was on the same scale as had been the case in previous years, 2015 saw a marked rise in support services delivered as part of the long-term care during the post-hospital phase. For example, the number of outpatient assessments and training measures was double that of the previous year; and outpatient coaching during training or in the workplace, which has been a permanent service provided by ParaWork since 2015, has been expanded. This is because ParaWork is increasingly being engaged by the competent cost centres to undertake an active coaching mandate for patients throughout the entire period of retraining, which in some cases even takes a number of years.

Thanks to a contractual agreement with the Canton of Lucerne, ParaWork is now also an officially recognised college of training for patients with its new ParaSchool. The corresponding concept is already being implemented.



ParaWork recognised training centre for patients

Restarts implemented

The Outpatient department at the Swiss Paraplegic Centre (SPC) is an important point of contact in life-long after-care for people with spinal cord injury. Specialists from all of the departments at the SPC are available to provide around 9000 outpatient assessments and treatments on a multi-disciplinary basis every year. 2015 was characterised by extensive changes in personnel and premises for the Outpatient Medicine department.

Outpatient department opened in Italian-speaking Switzerland

The Neurourology premises in Nottwil were renovated and upgraded, in step with the modernisation of the x-ray facilities. In addition, Radiologie Luzern Land has upgraded the equipment for magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) at the Lucerne Cantonal Hospital, Sursee. This coordinated acquisition yielded cost benefits for both parties.

The Outpatient department in Lausanne, which is led by the speciality registrar Axel Crone and which is now in its third year in operation, has become very well established. It has been very well received among people with spinal cord injury in French-speaking Switzerland. The Neurourology department of the SPC has also been offering its services in this outpatient department since 2015. A second project started in November with a spinal cord injury consultation at Bellinzona Cantonal Hospital led by the Head of Department Dr. med. Michael Baumberger. This is designed as a less complex arrangement than its counterpart in western Switzerland, and it has a smaller presence on site. The definitive arrangement will be refined in 2016.

Changes in personnel

Sports Medicine Nottwil has been run by Dr. med. Phil Jungen since October. His many years of experience in outpatient sports medicine, combined with expertise in spinal cord medicine from his previous work as a speciality registrar at the SPC, as well as his wide range of contacts will enable Sports Medicine Nottwil to develop further in terms of expertise and commercially. Head of Department Dr. med. Matthias Strupler took early retirement after twelve years as head of Sports Medicine Nottwil.

Head of Department Dr. med. Franz Michel retired from the Outpatient department in Nottwil. In the course of restructuring, Dr. med. Beat Flückiger took over the running of Interventional Medicine (IVM) and of the Respi-Care Team. This was integrated into the Swiss Weaning Centre over the course of the year.



Neurourology at the Swiss Paraplegic Centre

Impressive services on offer



There is greater demand than ever for the training courses run by the Swiss Institute of Emergency Medicine, Sirmed. Its quality assurance measures were officially recognised by three different agencies in 2015.

ParaHelp was also awarded certification at the end of the year. The 15-strong team also received words of praise in the customer survey which was conducted for the first time.

New attendance record at Sirmed

Sirmed ran over 600 workshops during the year under review. An unprecedented figure of more than 7500 people from all around the country attended training events, up over 27% on the previous year. This continues a trend which has been positive for years. In addition to the intensive day-to-day business, it was primarily concerned with reviewing available workshops, as well as with implementing updated international guidelines and quality assurance measures in training courses. The measures implemented for the quality assurance of infrastructure, organisational structures and processes were awarded the ISO mark during the re-certification in 2015; the Department of Education of the Canton of Lucerne renewed its endorsement; and the Swiss Resuscitation Council issued its seal of quality. Given the increasing competition to attract the top specialists, Sirmed also paid special attention to the recruitment of its central resource, its staff.

Great appreciation for ParaHelp

A first-ever customer survey on the quality of the services provided has revealed that ParaHelp customers feel that they receive good advice. Many of the people surveyed took the opportunity to express their appreciation by giving personal praise. The «Old Age and Accommodation» coordination office, which was created in 2014, opened its doors in 2015 and advised elderly people with spinal cord injury on issues regarding accommodation for older people. The «Ageing» network, which is a partnership agreement in the support and nursing of older people with spinal cord injury, has been increased again to include a further four retirement residences. This means that a housing solution can now be offered to even more interested parties. In order to publicise the coordination office and the network, a first ParaHelp discussion entitled «Generation (R)oldies» was held in September. Over 70 people attended the public event.

Following the ISO 9001:2008 quality management system standard in February, it only took until December for ParaHelp to receive its certification. Further logical adaptations, such as switching over to mobile performance record-keeping with tablets, will help to build even greater efficiency into working practices in future.



«Since being diagnosed with a spinal cord injury, I come back to Nottwil a lot. For instance, to go the Wheelchair Mechanics Department to have the settings of my new wheelchair optimised. It replaces my legs and must fit my body perfectly. However, in most cases I attend the Centre for Pain Medicine of the SPC as an outpatient in order to have the extremely severe pains and muscle cramps, which I suffer from every day, alleviated. They became so severe that I had a pain pump with medication implanted at the SPC. It is apparent now that unfortunately the effect isn't permanent. We are now giving electro-stimulation a try. This involves applying electrodes to the vertebral canal. If I could finally get my pain under control, I would be able to return to work and set up my own business. That is my biggest wish. I have had an idea about what I could do.»

Hervé Brohon (41), paraplegic following an accident

Lifelong commitment

The Swiss Paraplegics Association, which represents the area of integration and lifelong support, and Orthotec championed the cause of people with spinal cord injury with their customary passion and expertise in 2015. Both saw high demand for their services and increased the packages they offer accordingly.

The Swiss Paraplegics Association (SPA) assists people with spinal cord injury throughout their lives with a comprehensive package of services delivered by a number of its departments, i.e. Wheelchair Sport Switzerland, Institute for Legal Advice, Culture and Leisure, Centre for Obstacle-free Building and Life Coaching.

Promoting sport at all levels

In 2015, the wheelchair athletes battled for places on the squad for the 2016 Rio Paralympics; at the IPC Athletics Grand Prix and at the UCI Para-cycling Road World Championships, two major events both staged in Nottwil. Swiss athletes scooped 16 medals, five silvers and eleven bronzes. The juniors secured a further 16 medals. Wheelchair Sport Switzerland (WSS) not only seeks to develop careers in sport, but also to motivate people with spinal cord injury to involve themselves in healthy exercise with a wide range of options. Once again, WSS organised the «move on» training camp, aimed at recreational athletes and new emerging talent, as well as mono-ski-bob courses, «fun for wheelies» for teenagers and the «Kids Camp». In addition, WSS enhanced its training portfolio in 2015 to include the two-day introductory course for «esa Swiss Adult Sport» leaders (with a qualification in wheelchair sport).

Significance of patient reports recognised

As SPA members require ever more specialist legal support, the Institute for Legal Advice (IRB) has worked with the paraplegic centres to make their personnel more aware of the legal issues involved. The IRB organised training to inform doctors, nursing staff and therapists about the impact of patient reports. Whereas previously they were only intended for the patient dossiers, nowadays social security agencies are increasingly reliant on that information.

Performance data – Integration and Lifelong Assistance

	2015	2014
SPA Wheelchair clubs	27	27
SPA Members of all Wheelchair clubs	10 900	10 700
SPA Events (without Wheelchair club events)	413	362
SPA Participants at awareness courses	1386	1558
SPA Strategic and operational involvement	65	64
SPA Hours giving advice and on LUFEB ^{1) 2)}	45 000	48 000
SPA Cooperation and alliance contracts	58	57
SPA Legal advice dossiers maintained	289	230
SPA Building advice	320	295
SPA Medals won at Paralympics, World and European Championships	32	38
Orthotec Adapted vehicles	253	221
Orthotec Sold adapted wheelchairs (mechanic/electric)	667	640
Orthotec Packs of incontinence items	13 444	13 465

¹⁾ Services to support and promote the integration of people with disabilities

²⁾ 2015 provisional data

Events and trips are very popular

During the year under review, the Culture and Leisure department ran 15 trips for groups. The nine «Tetra Respite Weeks», which are aimed at people with tetraplegia, i.e. people with a high level of paralysis, were largely booked out once again. A satisfaction rating of between 89% and 93% shows how valuable the meticulous preparation for these group trips is. Further cultural and social events, such as the annual central festival for all SPA members, an ultralight flight in France or the Christmas market in Notwil attracted around 1100 participants. The awareness courses resonated well with companies and clubs: nearly 1500 people attended almost 70 courses to find out about the issues surrounding people with spinal cord injury.

Building made more accessible

There is greater demand than ever for adapted housing for people with disabilities. The main activity of the «Centre for Obstacle-free Building» (OFB) is to provide individual building advice to people with spinal cord injury on moving home, or on building or converting homes. 320 building consultations resulted in 124 projects being carried out in which the OFB was responsible for the planning and for some aspects of the project management. In addition, the architects from the OFB assessed 41 applications made to the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation to have the costs of building measures paid where some or all of the costs were not covered by insurance companies.

More advice provided

The SPA sales representatives from the Life Guidance department, who are wheelchair users themselves, give advice to patients nationwide in their local language. Once again, they reported a sharp increase in social advice cases in the year under review; these types of cases have become more complex and more costly. 50 people availed of extensive assistance with integration into work after completing a training course, with finding a new job or with further training. The advisors found a job or came up with the right solution on what to do next for around 75% of all enquiries.

Commitment in representing interests

In addition to taking a seat on the board of Inclusion Handicap, the umbrella association for disability organisations, the SPA has good links with the Swiss Working Group on Rehabilitation (SAR): It attended around 30 meetings during the year under review, which is evidence of its active involvement in joint lobbying efforts. In addition, managerial personnel at the SPA are required to represent the interests of people with spinal cord injury in as many sectors as possible. In 2015, they held 65 seats in, among other things, organisations that represent policy interests, sports commissions, foundations, university councils and professional bodies. In the area of Applied knowledge transfer, the SPA has stepped up its cooperation with the University of Lucerne and the University of Winterthur, and also implemented initial projects.



Investment in the future



Orthotec silicone workshop

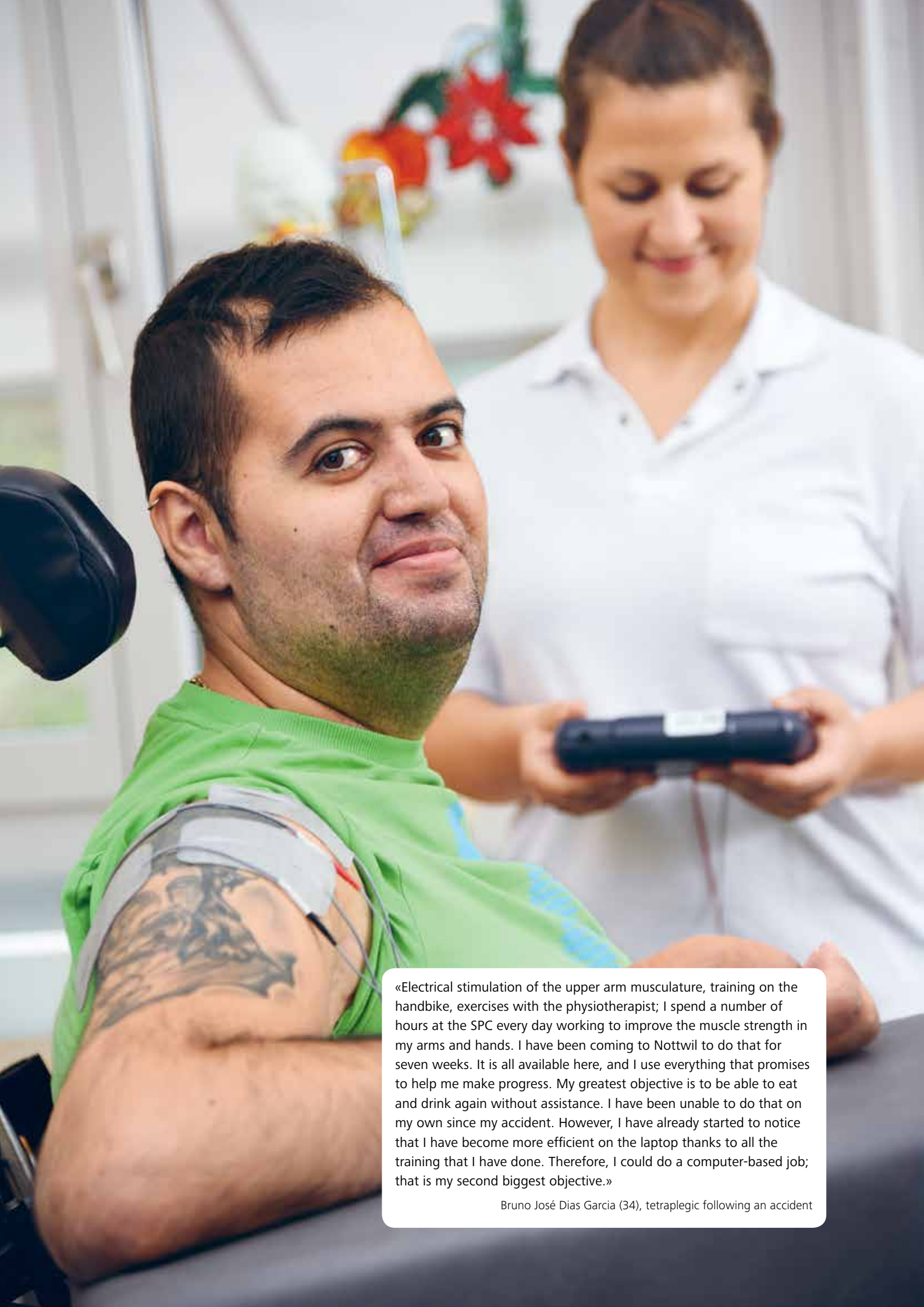
Orthotec reported excellent growth in all its segments in 2015, i.e. Incontinence Items, Orthopaedic Technology, Wheelchair and Rehabilitation Technology and Vehicle Adaptation. The company successfully implemented key projects in addition to its day-to-day business; others will bear fruit in the months and years to come.

Keeping pace with development

The stability with which orthotic device wearers move and stand has been improved significantly through the use of new joint systems. This has enabled many patients with incomplete paralysis to improve their physiological gait pattern. Together with the introduction of the digital foot scan and the CAD/CAM production technology, it has become possible to manufacture orthotic devices for paralysis with more precise fits. Moreover, employees trained in the processing of silicone have been manufacturing padded segments for preventing decubitus cost-efficiently on-site since 2015. As the specialist area of orthopaedics technology is developing rapidly, there was also particular focus during the year under review in training apprentices as well as in the further training of specialist personnel. In addition, the Orthopaedics Technology team had to prepare itself for relocating to temporary premises at a different location due to the expansion of the clinic and, at the same time, devote itself intensively to planning a new workshop.

Software-supported processes

The Wheelchair and Rehabilitation Technology team was also substantially affected by planning work in connection with the construction project. In addition, preparations had to be made for the costly implementation of the new ERP software for production planning, as well as service and contract management. Initial tests confirmed that the process can be performed much more efficiently in future from the order to invoicing. The Vehicle Adaptation section has benefited from the same ERP solution since the end of 2014. The investment has already made a substantial contribution towards successful, customer-led and efficient service management, as well as towards improved stock procurement.



«Electrical stimulation of the upper arm musculature, training on the handbike, exercises with the physiotherapist; I spend a number of hours at the SPC every day working to improve the muscle strength in my arms and hands. I have been coming to Nottwil to do that for seven weeks. It is all available here, and I use everything that promises to help me make progress. My greatest objective is to be able to eat and drink again without assistance. I have been unable to do that on my own since my accident. However, I have already started to notice that I have become more efficient on the laptop thanks to all the training that I have done. Therefore, I could do a computer-based job; that is my second biggest objective.»

Bruno José Dias Garcia (34), tetraplegic following an accident

Knowledge as capital

Making sustainable improvements to the lives of people with spinal cord injury lies at the very heart of research into comprehensive rehabilitation. Swiss Paraplegic Research seeks to help them stay healthy, enjoy a high quality of life, participate in life, gain easy access to public facilities and services, have greater opportunities for equality in the workplace and, thus, have a greater sense of self-determination.

Swiss Paraplegic Research (SPR) has been supported by the Federal Government and by the Canton of Lucerne for eight years as a non-university research institution. This underlines the national importance of the focus of its research. SPR is aiming to enhance the present and future of people with spinal cord injury through the comprehensive and holistic provision of healthcare and rehabilitation. In order to achieve this target, it is essential to combine various research methods, as well as to liaise closely in networks of experts with universities, clinics and professional associations at home and abroad.

The new «Learning Health System for Spinal Cord Injuries» initiative

The comprehensive approach to research into rehabilitation for people with spinal cord injuries is gaining momentum around the world. The WHO report into «Spinal-cord injuries – International perspectives», which was started by SPR, has contributed significantly towards this. Its recommendations are to be implemented as part of an initiative within the Global Disability Action Plan which was adopted by the World Health Assembly in 2014. SPR plays the leading role in this international initiative, with a focus on spinal cord injuries, under the auspices of two international organisations, the ISCoS (International Spinal Cord Society) and the ISPRM (International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine), and in official cooperation with the WHO.

The «Learning health system for spinal cord injuries» initiative launched by SPR for that purposes encompasses the determination of functional capability, identification of problems and requirements in relation to healthcare and rehabilitation, as well as social integration. In order to implement the findings from the international study, stakeholder dialogues are to be developed with patients, policy-makers, service providers and healthcare institutions. At the end of 2015, 18 countries from all around the world made a commitment to adopt the SPR-led «Learning health system for spinal cord injuries» initiative.

Performance data – Research

	2015	2014
Projects supported by the EU and by national funds (ongoing/completed)	12	9
Publications	124	96
Dissertations (ongoing/completed)	23	22
Master's theses (ongoing/completed)	49	28
Conference papers	71	78

Research platform for spinal cord injuries

The continuation of the long-term Swiss Spinal Cord Injury Cohort Study (SwiSCI – www.swisci.ch), which has been running since 2010 and which was started by SPR, was a national priority. By recording the individual care situation for people with spinal cord injury throughout their lives, problem areas, risk factors, needs, shortcomings in supply and possible means of intervention are systematically identified. Specific possibilities for improvement can be ascertained at all levels from the results, from clinical performance to reintegration into the workplace and through to provision of care at home – ultimately enabling new treatment approaches to be evaluated in terms of their effectiveness, reliability and cost-efficiency from the patients' perspective, or the discovery of the sudden diseases associated with the spinal cord injury. Based on data from what is now several thousand people with spinal cord injury who participated in the SwiSCI either through the hospital data or through direct surveys, a representative, comprehensive picture is being built up of the situation affecting people with spinal cord injury in Switzerland.

Development of the next generation of young researchers

Cooperating with the Division of Health Sciences and Health Policy at the University of Lucerne, SPR also performed an important task in initial and further academic training. In 2015, a cohort of 25 Master's students successfully completed their Master's thesis, and thus their Master's degree in Health Sciences, at SPR. There are currently 20 Ph.D. students integrated into the structured Ph.D. programme and, consequently, into ongoing projects undertaken by SPR.

The Young Investigator programme specifically nurtures the development of post-doctoral staff by integrating the new generation of academic researchers into ongoing research activities at SPR, as well as into the application process for projects to the European Union and to the Swiss National Fund. The cooperation with the new generation of researchers will help, at the same time, to safeguard quality in the implementation of current projects, as well as innovation in the further development of research themes. Knowledge transfer, health communication and quality management are additional themes to which SPR was also committed in the year under review. Together with the Swiss Paraplegics Association and the Swiss Paraplegic Centre, research outcomes and findings are shared and used promptly. The Paraforum website serves the same purpose. It is used by wheelchair users and their relatives to share information and experiences.



» Small gestures – great happiness

Almost one in every three Swiss households supports the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation as a benefactor. The solidarity, well-being and goodwill are overwhelming – and necessary. After all, lifelong assistance for people with spinal cord injury is important. This enables them to lead a dignified life, with as much control as possible over their own destiny and to give them the best possible opportunities to integrate into family life, society and the working environment.

Money is required for this. 1.8 million benefactors and countless donors are committed to helping people with spinal cord injury; who are these people, and why such solidarity? What motivates them to help? Where does the money go and what exactly is done with it? What do people with spinal cord injury think about the support, and what effect does it have?

Benefactors and donors, as well as people with paraplegia and tetraplegia tell their very personal, touching stories. They are all part of a unique solidarity network.



Simply wonderful

Essentially, it has been an unbelievable success story – for 40 years, the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation has operated a unique network of services for people with spinal cord injury, from their initial care through to the end of their lives. Its aim is to provide comprehensive rehabilitation and to reintegrate people affected into their family, work and a social life. This charity, which is the only one of its kind in the world, is based solely on the solidarity shown by the Swiss public.

I have been a wheelchair user ever since I had a skiing accident 39 years ago. I know what it is like to become totally dependent from one second to the next. How doggedly you have to battle to recover as much of your mobility as possible and, more especially, to be able to live a self-determined life again after a long process of resilience. The inner resolve it takes to plot a new course in life, to have relationships with others from a different perspective and to acquire new job skills.

Therefore, I am eternally grateful along with all the other people in Switzerland with paraplegia and tetraplegia for the help, support and great solidarity that allow the Foundation to deliver all the services which are so immensely valuable to us.

Dr. sc. techn. Daniel Joggi
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

Passionate. Aurora plays the violin with her mother Cristina as often as she possibly can.



«The aid is fundamentally important»

Aurora Savoldo still has her whole life ahead of her and is very driven. The 22-year-old from Ticino is lively and always on the move; and as she knows only too well, her «vagabond lifestyle» as a paraplegic is only possible thanks to the support that she receives from the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation.

«You can approach life in one of two ways: you can either be positive or negative. I have opted for the positive approach.» Aurora Savoldo has good cause to express that sentiment. What happened to her four years ago completely turned her life on its head. She had a terrible accident by chance on the way to a music lesson and ended up being run over by her own car. Aurora Savoldo has been paraplegic ever since. She has learned not to compare her new circumstances with her previous life. The native of Ticino is often on the move, does sport, visits friends and goes out. «My mother thinks that I am a vagabond», she says.

Free again

Aurora Savoldo is lucky to be so independent. She is fully aware that this freedom is due to a large extent to the direct aid she receives from the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation. The lift in her parents' house, the wheelchair access from the street to the front door, the bath and the adapted car, of course, enable her to lead an independent life. «I wouldn't be able to get around independently by public transport, which is why the car represents freedom and independence for me. The aid was and is of fundamental importance to me.»

Aurora Savoldo will be completing her vocational school diploma this summer. She is looking forward to working with young people as a qualified care worker. This is also a personal issue for her. «Ideally, I would like two children», she reveals. She is currently looking for an apartment of her own with her boyfriend. In addition, she also chats with mothers who are wheelchair users. «I want to be well prepared if I ever become a mother.»



Love of children. Aurora Savoldo's nephew Gabriel loves to travel in the lift with her.

«My greatest wish would be to go on holiday with my wife»

Robert Linder has run a mountain restaurant in Jura for as long as he can remember and is also a farmer. The 60-year-old, who always used to do the work of two people, unexpectedly became paraplegic after suffering from back problems and having a number of operations. Thanks to the financial support from the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation, he can live at home again, in his restaurant and with his beloved animals. Without aid, his entire existence would have been under threat.



Friends. People frequently meet Robert Linder in the restaurant, and he is often accompanied by his dog, Aston.

«Bonjour Robert, ça va?» («Hello Robert, how are you?») It is midday, and the first visitors are arriving for lunch. Robert Linder moves around the restaurant in his wheelchair – a chat here, a few words there. Anyone visiting his restaurant, «Les Places» which sits at an altitude of 1150 metres in the French-speaking Bernese Jura, knows what to expect: a fabulous view, an entrecôte de cheval – and the couple who own it. His wife, Ankica Linder, is the quiet one in the background who gets things done; he is the born barman. He is always up for a little fun. Robert grins. «Let's go see «Röbel», the calf up in the Alps.» That was always the line. Year in, year out.

Until fate struck with full force. He had suffered with intervertebral disc problems for years. After various operations in which his thoracic vertebrae were braced, he suddenly became paralysed. He was then admitted to the Swiss Paraplegic Centre in Nottwil almost a year ago. Half a year of rehabilitation followed. A period of time when «Röbel» was noticeably absent from his restaurant. «Sales figures dipped massively», he says. Thanks to the quick support provided by the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation, three part-time staff were taken on, and they were able to keep the business going. «Without that aid, it would have been very difficult», says Robert Linder. Cooking, serving, cleaning, shopping and tending to the farm and the livestock; his wife would not have been able to do all that on her own. That explains why Robert Linder is delighted to have received financial support from the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation that enabled him to come back home last October.



Farmer. The time-served farmer makes the trip to his barn everyday using the Swiss Trac.



Freedom. Thanks to the new entrance that has been built into the kitchen, he can leave the house in his wheelchair, without encountering any obstacles.

Love of animals. Robert Linder is as happy in the cowshed with his cattle and cows as he is with his guests.

Steep, creaking stairs

For this to be possible, the house first of all had to be adapted for wheelchair access. A new bathroom, an entrance into the restaurant kitchen without a threshold, and the installation of a lift. Some of the adaptations had to be paid for in advance by the Foundation because the decisions and, consequently, the IV (invalidity insurance) payments were still outstanding.

He also received financial support for an adapted car. Mobility is particularly important in such a remote location. It brings back independence.

How funds received from benefactors were used in 2015

All the funds received are used to maintain and further develop the comprehensive network of services provided by the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation.

- Around a quarter (24%) is paid to patients in the form of benefactors' benefits and direct aid contributions.
- Around one third (33%) is used to maintain the comprehensive network of services. This means that the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation and its group companies (such as the Swiss Paraplegic Centre) finance services which are not completely covered by health insurance schemes, accident insurance policies or social security.
- Around one fifth (21%) goes towards maintaining existing infrastructure in Nottwil or towards financing it.

Lightheaded. This suspended lift enables Robert Linder to get upstairs as if he is on a chairlift.

The lift in the old narrow staircase is special. A curious construction leads to the upper floor, a type of suspension lift, in which Robert Linder suspends his wheelchair from two wire cables and can mount the staircase. This enables him to get into the apartment and into the office where he can do the paperwork for the business once again. Otherwise, Robert Linder is mainly consigned to inactivity. Unfortunately. And that goes for his second job as a farmer as well. A neighbour has been looking after the farm for almost a year. But even if Robert doesn't pick up the pitchfork himself anymore, he can still visit «his» animals every day. Needless to say, he knows them all by name. He speaks to them all lovingly and strokes them.

At first glance, it appears as though Robert Linder has accepted his fate. He has a perfect turn of phrase for virtually every situation. He was given the nickname «Clown of Ward D» in the Swiss Paraplegic Centre in Nottwil. There was generally lots of laughter wherever he was. The thing is, Robert Linder does not find his situation funny at all. If you scratch the surface, it becomes apparent that he struggles with his fate. «Initially, it came as a real shock, and I fell into a trough», he explains. However, the psychological work in Nottwil actually worked really well.

«It was a bit more difficult at home. You see the others having to work flat out and there's nothing you can do to help.» And then he resorts to his usual defence mechanism, gallows humour. «I wasn't all that fond of working before anyway, so the wheelchair is just perfect for me.» His wife laughs in the background. Is she happy to have her husband home again? «Yes and no», she says. She finds it difficult to see how her husband, who used to be able to do the work of two people, can no longer do anything. «I used to charge around before, from the kitchen straight out to the haystacks and back again», says Robert Linder. «She used to say that I could turn my hand to anything. Now I'm holding the business back.»

Put his all into the restaurant

Having said all that, he is content. Not least of all because he received all the help and support during his rehabilitation in Nottwil and later on at home to enable him to remain in Tramelan (BE). «The people in Nottwil were wonderful in terms of everything they did for me.» He has lived here since 1971, he has built everything up and converted everything, and he has put his all into the farm and into the restaurant. «I would be devastated if I had to leave.»





Well groomed. Robert Linder can see to his own personal care in the new bathroom.

Hard-working. Along with the apartment, the first floor also houses the office where he does the paperwork for the business.

A good team. His wife Ankica is the quiet one in the background who gets things done; he is the born barman. They complement each other perfectly.



Sociable. Robert Linder has always enjoyed sitting down with the guests and is always able to tell a good tale.

Robert Linder does not miss any opportunity to recruit new benefactors from among his guests. He proudly explains that he has already managed to persuade lots of them to do it.

He doesn't know what the future holds. But Robert Linder has one objective in mind: «After all the times when my Ankica had to face such difficulties and still stayed so strong, my greatest wish would be to go on holiday with her for two weeks.»

Help goes where it is needed

Applications for direct aid are assessed, taking income and assets into consideration. Depending on their circumstances, the patient may have to contribute towards the costs. As a general rule, help should go where it is needed. Not every application for financial support is approved.



Remote. The road to Isenthal (UR) leads through a steep, impassable gorge.



Inaccessible. Until recently, Martha Gasser's house was only accessible by steps.

«I would have had to forget it had it not been for the funds from benefactors»

A skiing accident turned Martha Gasser's life upside-down a year ago and left her tetraplegic. Without financial support, she would have had to give up everything that was dear and important to her. Her home in the remote village of Isenthal in the Canton of Uri, her independence, her career and her social environment. Thanks to the aid she receives, the 53-year-old can lead an independent life again now and she knows that money is the «answer to her happiness».

The journey to Isenthal in Uri is not for the faint-hearted. Setting out from Lake Uri, a narrow road winds up through a breath-taking gorge with almost vertical cliff faces. Martha Gasser's house is located in the village at the top, slightly raised on a slope. Until recently, it was only accessible by steps.

Inevitably, you would think that anyone living there would have to be good on their feet. They are not the ideal circumstances for someone who will be wheelchair-bound for the rest of her life. Martha Gasser has only been back home since mid-December, although she already seems to be adjusting well to her new life in a wheelchair. As an incomplete tetraplegic, she can move her arms and hands, albeit with limitations.

Everyone receives help

A benefactor benefit of 200,000 francs is paid to any member who suffers spinal cord injury as a result of an accident and becomes permanently wheelchair-dependent. 5.6 million francs in benefactors' benefits was recorded in 2015. However, anyone with spinal cord injury can apply to the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation for direct aid, irrespective of whether or not they are members of the Benefactors' Association. Over 1000 applications were approved last year.





Steep. The stairs inside the house are an insurmountable obstacle which is why she is delighted with the new lift that has been installed.



Practical. Martha Gasser can move her wheelchair under the cooker and the sink, which enables her to cook and wash up.



Functional. A simple wooden ramp enables Martha Gasser to get to the utility room.

Independent. She can see to her own personal care in the adapted bathroom without any assistance.

«The lift is simply wonderful»

«I'm doing well», says the 53-year-old, smiling discretely. She knows that this is anything but obvious. She appreciates that the happiness she has rediscovered is due in no small part to one thing – money. «My independence would not have been possible without adapting the house and being able to use other mobility aids.» There have been many changes, in fact. The newly installed lift enables Martha Gasser to go up to the living space on the first and second floors from the front door without any effort. «It is wonderful for me and makes things so much easier. Before the lift was ready, my husband used to have to help me get upstairs, which was quite hard work. He had to lift me up stair-by-stair in the wheelchair. The lift is almost the most important thing for me. Without it, I would not be able to get out of the house.»

The adaptations in the bathroom and the kitchen, the mobility aids, the wheelchair, the car adaptations: The IV (invalidity insurance) or SUVA (Swiss Accident Insurance Fund) paid for some of it, but not all by a long shot. And where they did, there was often a long delay. Therefore, the direct aid from the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation is important. It provides the necessary financial aid as quickly as possible. Should the IV make a contribution towards the mobility aids at a later date, this money is reimbursed to the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation.



Approach road. Martha Gasser would be unable to access her house without this approach road.

Martha Gasser really appreciates this aid. «This is the only thing that made it possible for me to return home.» She doesn't beat around the bush – «I would simply have had to forget that were it not for the funds from benefactors.» There was so much to do as well that she had to pay out of her own pocket.

The tricky issue was the access to the house. It first appeared that a road could not be built leading to her own house because the IV would not contribute towards the cost of that. Neither would the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation. It applied strict guidelines and not all applications were approved. «We had already started looking around at other houses», she reveals. It would have been a wrench to leave here because she had lived her whole life in Isenthal. «I get to live in wonderful surroundings and my roots are here. It is my home town and it means a great deal to me.»

As luck would have it, it did not come to that. As Martha Gasser had been a member of the Benefactors' Association for many years, she was eligible to receive a benefactor benefit of 200,000 francs. Thanks to this money and to lots of hard graft by her husband and her two sons, the road was built after all. Martha Gasser can now drive right up to the house, load and unload her wheelchair, and this means that she is independent and mobile. It is also the reason why she has been able to return to her job in a home for people with disabilities in Schattdorf already too.



Member. The approach road was only funded thanks to benefactor support.

Fateful skiing accident

Martha Gasser had never imagined that it could happen to her. Until she was out skiing with her family on that fateful day, 12 March last year. «I was skiing a bit ahead of the others. I have no memory of what happened next.» Her husband and sons found her lying on the ground. She was still conscious but in a state of shock, and she was unable to move. «I probably banged my head a number of times when I fell», she suspects.

Rega (Swiss Air Rescue Service) brought her to the Lucerne Cantonal Hospital, where she had surgery on her sixth cervical vertebra. Two days later, Martha Gasser was transferred to the Swiss Paraplegic Centre in Nottwil for rehabilitation.



Training standing up. Martha Gasser can stand up for half an hour every day supported by a standing table. *(above left)*

Work. A low table and a special knife help her to do her everyday jobs. *(above right)*



Family. When her son Toni comes to visit, Martha Gasser is carefree and happy.

Martha Gasser recalls that the early days were difficult. She was completely dependent on other people for assistance. At first, she did not want to see any visitors other than her family. «I had to get things straight in my own head first of all and grumble a bit to him upstairs», she says. She had soon worked out what fate had in store for her. «That moment when I realised that I would have to spend the rest of my life in a wheelchair was extremely difficult.»

But as Martha Gasser emphasises, she never gave up. «I had always been a positive person, and that really helped me.» Her husband was also a great support at that difficult time. But for all that, it was a real challenge for the mother of two, who was in the prime of her life, who enjoyed being outside in the countryside so much and was a very active person. «I have always been able to talk about myself and about what happened. That was important.» There were tears on occasion too, of course. «But I never spent days on end crying.»

She is a contented person again now and visibly happy to be back at home in her beloved valley. And «the valley» also appreciates having her back. «The people here welcomed me back home with open hearts and said that Isenthal is complete again now.»

Gaps in funding are covered

Depending on the treatment, the contributions from cost carriers (health insurance scheme, accident insurance) may be insufficient to cover the total costs associated with the stay in hospital. The resulting shortfall in funding is covered by the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation. This support enables the patient to be offered a tailored, comprehensive range of treatment which guarantees an optimum outcome for their reintegration into family life, work and society.

» I donate out of gratitude

Behind the success story of the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation are 1.8 million benefactors and a large number of donors. Their reasons for wanting to support people with spinal cord injury and for showing such generosity are varied and personal. And sometimes amazing.



Gilbert Darbellay (88), retired bank employee, Thonex GE, regular donor

«I have had 88 years of good fortune that nothing has ever happened to me. I donate out of gratitude because I have never had to avail of the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation.»

Great solidarity

Last year, the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation managed to raise total funding of 78.5 million francs. The funds received from benefactors and donations are used to maintain the network of services. Donations are earmarked and are provided for selected innovation and development projects.

Nathalie Schmid (39), accounting administrator, Lyss BE, donation: 5000 francs towards the upgrade of the clinic in Nottwil

«I ride horses and a motorbike. Statistically speaking, I have an increased risk of having an accident. I am a benefactor; in addition, I make donations to various aid organisations every year. I think that it is important that the Swiss Paraplegic Centre is being extended and upgraded. This will enable everyone who is dependent on it to be admitted.»



Ivan Canetti (31), IT specialist, Monte Carasso TI, benefactor

«I think that it is important to help people who are affected. For example, I see how difficult it is sometimes for a wheelchair user to withdraw money from a cash machine or to get onto a local train. There are still lots of things that need to be improved.»



Josef Bruhin (64), farmer, Schübelbach SZ, donation: 10,000 francs

«For twenty years I organised an annual yodelling benefit concert. It was held for the very last time in December 2015. I donated the entire proceeds from the first and last events to the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation. Twenty years ago, it was 8200 francs, and we raised 10,000 francs in December. As a young farmer, I experienced how a colleague suddenly became paralysed as a result of a gymnastics accident. That left its mark on me. I am delighted to see how many positive things have been done for him thanks to the aid.»



**Astrid Artho (69), Miami USA,
retired forwarding agent, benefactor**

«Whilst I have largely lived in the United States for over 20 years, I have always kept track of how the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation is progressing. I think that it is great that the money is used so well and so sensibly. I worked in air freight, where I saw how people had to move large items of freight, placing themselves in danger. That has prompted me to give something to people to whom fate has dealt a bad hand in life.»



**Annamarie (50) and Beat Unternährer (55), medical analyst
and metalworker, Grosswangen LU, benefactors**

Beat Unternährer: «I have been a benefactor for 37 years. It has definitely been a good idea as I ride a motorbike. I was also involved in a serious motorbike accident, although my spinal column was not affected. I have a good friend who was less fortunate than me and he is now in a wheelchair.»

Annamarie Unternährer: «As a young woman, I tended to think of protection for myself when I became a member. Nowadays, solidarity is more important to me. I actually work at the Swiss Paraplegic Centre and see on a daily basis how meaningful and important the work done there is.»



**Patrick Zipperle (31), building trade adviser,
St. Gallen, benefactor and donor**

«My colleague used to play ice hockey and was generally very active. Suddenly, he was only able to move his head. During his rehabilitation at the SPC, I saw how he lost weight and became helpless. I have experienced how he has had to battle back in life. It has taught me how important solidarity is.»

It happens every other day

Unfortunately, someone suffers a spinal cord injury almost every other day. 155 people underwent initial rehabilitation at the Swiss Paraplegic Centre in 2015. 50.3% of those acute patients suffered their spinal cord injury as the result of an accident. Falls were the cause of the accidents in 43%, while road traffic accidents and sports accidents accounted for 18% and 35% respectively. Initial rehabilitation takes between four and six months for paraplegics and between nine and twelve months with tetraplegics.



**Yves-Alain Piguet (47), managing director,
Nyon VD, corporate membership**

«I could have bought my six employees a good bottle of wine. However, I wanted to do something a bit more meaningful. Therefore, I gave each of them corporate membership as a gift. A bottle of wine becomes empty at some point, whereas membership of the Benefactors' Association is lasting.»

«It is more than money, it is participating in life»

Self-possessed. University, legal internship, qualified as a lawyer: Matthias Lötscher has completed all the necessary training. He is currently working as a solicitor.



At the age of 18, Matthias Lötscher had such a serious crash while ski jumping that he has been tetraplegic ever since. The 29-year-old from Lucerne is a solicitor and is no longer dependent on any support. However, he is appreciative: «Without the financial aid for my training, I would be excluded from life.»

Since taking up a position at a law firm in Zurich last autumn, Matthias Lötscher has become financially independent and no longer requires support. The native of Lucerne says that it has not all been straightforward. When he seriously injured himself ski-jumping at the age of 18 and became an incomplete tetraplegic, he was still at school. «While you may have accident insurance, you do not have an insured salary.» Now finding himself wheelchair-bound, it suddenly became much more difficult and more expensive to complete school education and his subsequent training. From then on, he had to go to school by car as he could not have managed it by public transport. «Therefore, the contribution I received from the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation for a car with disability adaptations was very important. That was the only way I could actually continue with my education and training.»

Expensive student life

While he was at university, Matthias Lötscher also received support for his living costs – books, laptop, petrol, course fees and so on. «The costs were much higher for me. I could not live in a shared house for 500 francs a month.» He was unable to earn his own money. «Just try and find a student job when you are stuck in a wheelchair», he says with a grin.

For many people, money is simply money. «To me, it has an emotional value. It gives me the chance to participate in life. Without the financial support, it would have been more difficult for me to participate in everyday life and to maintain my social environment.» Therefore, he is very grateful that there are people who donate money for people with spinal cord injury. «They have made a considerable contribution that has enabled me to achieve my goals in life so far.»

Mobile. Thanks to his adapted car, Matthias Lötscher is independent and self-reliant.



«Transparency matters greatly to us»



Who are our benefactors and donors and what exactly happens to the money that we receive from them? Daniel Joggi, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation, reveals why transparency is our most important asset, and which benefactors impress him most.

» Which donation have you been most affected by?

A 90-year-old widow who does not have any children comes to mind. She has led a simple life. Her husband was a joiner, and she worked in a factory. Despite her modest existence, she has travelled a great deal and seen something of the world. Since her closest relatives have enough to live on, she wanted to give her savings to people in greater need; therefore, she donated to the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation. Stories like this are encouraging and touching.

» Is there a donation that you have been particularly taken by?

I was especially impressed by a donation from a foundation for 500,000 francs. You do not see an amount of this size every day, and it shows how much trust people have in our solidarity network. The donation was earmarked for a specific purpose and will be used during the conversion and new-build project to expand our respiratory medicine provision. However, I must emphasise that I welcome and am touched by every donation, no matter how small.

» Transparency: How do you ensure that the money actually goes where it is most urgently needed?

Transparency matters greatly to us. To a certain degree, it is our asset. We are only able to engender the trust we need through it. Therefore, we make every effort to be open and transparent in our disclosures about our activities. For example, we manage our group in accordance with national guidelines governing nonprofit organisations. Benefactors and donors can rest assured that the lion's share of every franc ultimately benefits the patients. 16.4 cents of every franc we receive are used for fundraising purposes. This puts us well below the average Swiss benchmark (21.2 cents). In addition, every single donor can receive information at any time about how and where their money is being used.

» ***Along with benefactors, donors are becoming increasingly important. Why is that?***

Switzerland has an increasing number of people with spinal cord injury, with ever-increasing groups of patients at an advanced age and with tetraplegia. Therefore, demand will continue to rise for specialist services in all our group companies. We require more funds to enable us to continue to give all people with spinal cord injury the best possible treatment and to support their reintegration into family life, work and society.

» ***Is it also possible to make a donation for something specific, such as for pain medicine or research?***

Yes. Many donors do not simply want to pay into a large pot; they would prefer for their money to be used for something very specific. This is particularly true of large private donors and foundations. The SPF has set up diverse funds for them especially. They are earmarked to be used for very specific purposes. It is also possible to set up an individual fund earmarked for a separate purpose.

» ***Which project is especially close to your heart?***

Our vision is to provide comprehensive treatment, rehabilitation and optimal integration of people with spinal cord injury into society, and this will continue to be our vision in the future. This requires courageous and visionary thinking and action. We cannot rest on our laurels, we have to continue to develop this solidarity network. Therefore, the upgrade and extension of the clinic is currently our clear and primary focus of attention. With two additional wards, we will continue to be able to provide care for people with paraplegia and tetraplegia at any time in future.

Any questions?

Do you wish to support the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation?
Become a member of the Benefactors' Association and help us with a donation, an inheritance or a legacy.
P +41 41 939 62 62, sps@paraplegie.ch



*Zuhause, 5. August 1979,
erste Treppenstufe verfehlt.*

With a legacy or an inheritance, you can leave behind a better future for people with spinal cord injuries.

Telephone 041 939 62 62, www.paraplegie.ch/legat



**Swiss
Paraplegic
Foundation**



«I have always been passionate about cooking and have enjoyed treating my family and guests to my dishes and to the aperitifs that I have created myself. I absolutely want to be able to do that again. As independently as possible, of course. That is my objective. I have availed of the opportunity on a few occasions to try out the obstacle-free practice apartment and kitchen at the SPC. If I am able to go home in four weeks, my kitchen will also be adapted to be wheelchair-friendly. Whether I am cooking for two, four or six people is a much bigger consideration as a wheelchair user. I now have to consciously allow for time and effort. However, one thing is certain: I can't wait to welcome my first guests.»

Isa Bapst (73), paraplegic following an accident

Increased services covered

The demand for the packages available in the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation's extensive network of services rose further in 2015. The resulting additional costs were financed through membership subscriptions and, in particular, through additional revenue from donations.

Of paramount importance to the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation (SPF) is the attainment of its varied objectives of improving the quality of the lives of people with spinal cord injury. The SPF has divided its objectives into four strategic areas of services: «Solidarity» (SPF, Benefactors' Association of the SPF, Sempachersee Seminar Hotel), «Medicine» (Swiss Paraplegic Centre, Sirmed, ParaHelp), «Integration and Lifelong Assistance» (Swiss Paraplegics Association, Orthotec) and «Research» (Swiss Paraplegic Research). Some companies within the group undertake tasks arising from multiple areas of services.

The greater demand among all service providers could only be coped with through increased personnel (+3.4% rise in staffing), and this also led to greater operating expenditure. These additional costs were financed through additional payments for services, as well as through significant revenue from donations and legacies. The group's entire operational payments rose by 5.5% to CHF 238.4 million. The development in the operational expenditure of the Swiss Paraplegic Group was marginally disproportionately below income; it rose by 4.5% to CHF 231.3 million.

Thanks to successful calls for donations – for the expansion and upgrading of the clinic, as well as for various new services for the care of people with spinal cord injury at the SPC – there was an increase in income from donations of CHF 2.5 million on the previous year. In addition, a large bequest of CHF 5.1 million was received. The net revenue from the supply of goods and services increased by only CHF 1.3 million or 0.9% due to the rise in patient figures, which is a reflection of the fact that tariffs in healthcare have largely been frozen.

Financial performance data of Swiss Paraplegic Group

Figures in CHF millions	2015	2014
Operating revenue	238.4	225.9
Change in %	5.5	2.4
Ordinary result	7.6	10.2
in % of the operating revenue	3.2	4.5
Annual result prior allocations/appropriation	11.6	9.9
in % of the operating revenue	4.9	4.4
Balance sheet total	481.2	463.3
Organisation capital Group including affiliated organisations	347.3	335.8
in % of the balance sheet total	72.7	72.4

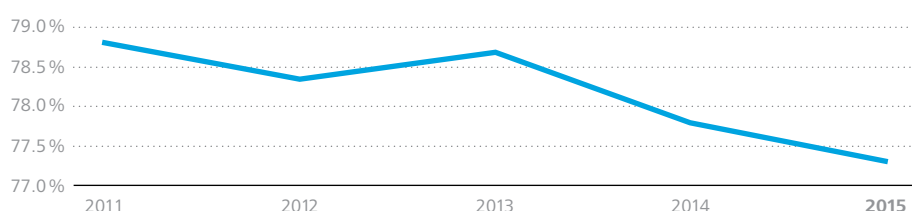
Operating statement of Swiss Paraplegic Group

Figures in CHF millions	2015	2014
Revenue from membership fees and fundraising	83.9	76.2
Net sales from goods and services	153.2	151.9
Changes in inventory and own work capitalised	1.3	- 2.2
Operating revenues	238.4	225.9
Direct aid, benefactor benefits	- 19.7	- 17.6
Personnel expenses	- 122.0	- 118.8
Other operating expenditure	- 58.9	- 59.7
Depreciations	- 30.7	- 25.3
Operating expenses	- 231.3	- 221.4
Operating result	7.1	4.4
Financial result	0.5	5.8
Ordinary result	7.6	10.2
Profit from real estate held for investment and extraordinary result	7.1	- 0.2
Change in fund capital and tax result	- 3.1	- 0.1
Annual result before allocations/appropriation	11.6	9.9
Allocations/appropriations of organisation capital	- 11.6	- 9.9
Balance	0.0	0.0

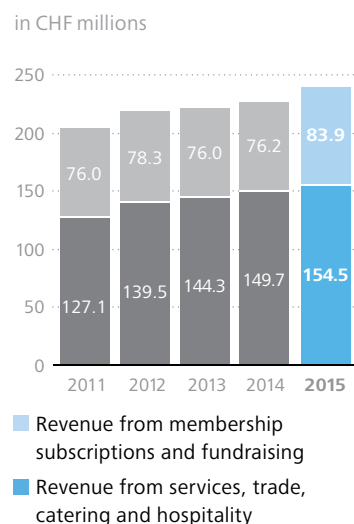
Given the state of the capital markets and stock markets in 2015, financial income fell by CHF 5.3 million. As a consequence, results from ordinary activities were CHF 2.6 million lower than in the previous year. The one-off special effect of the additional revenue from the sale of investment properties to part-finance the building activities in Nottwil resulted in an annual profit of CHF 11.6 million, which was CHF 1.7 million up on the previous year. This profit was allocated to free capital and will help to finance the building project.

The degree to which costs are covered, i.e. services paid for by service beneficiaries or by charity organisations, or by insurance companies and health insurance schemes, fell by 0.5% to 77.3%; this meant that benefactors and donors financed 22.7% of all costs in 2015.

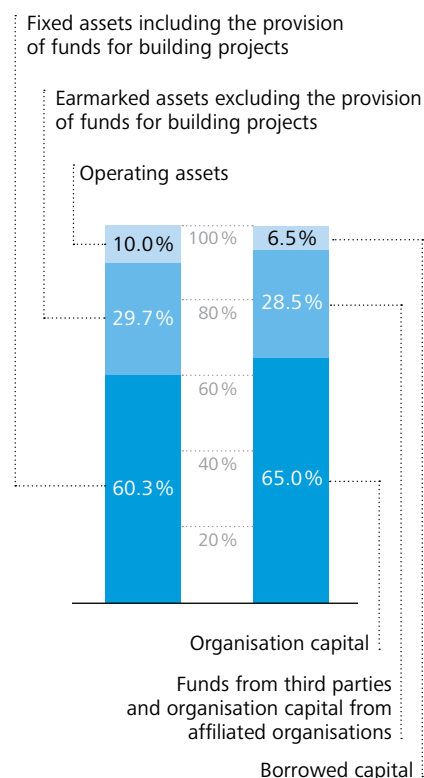
Swiss Paraplegic Group cost coverage



Evolution of SPG total income 2011 – 2015

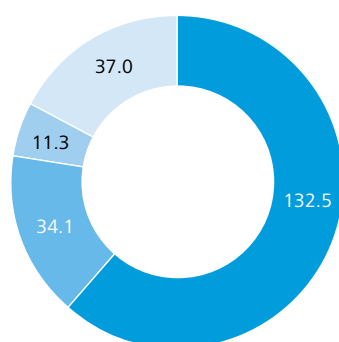


Balance sheet structure of the SPG as of 31/12/2015

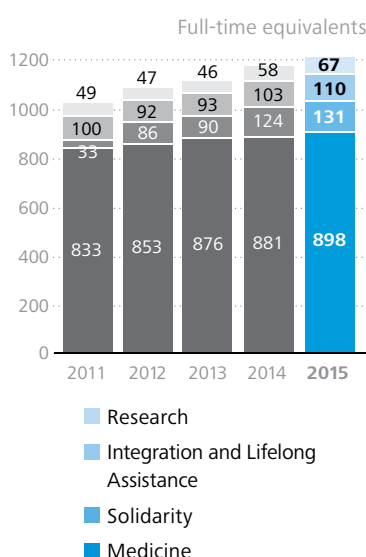


Breakdown of project costs (excluding expenses for fundraising and administration) across areas of services

in CHF millions



- Medicine
- Integration and Lifelong Assistance
- Research
- Solidarity

Evolution of the SPG personnel per area of services 2011–2015

Consolidated balance sheet of Swiss Paraplegic Group

Figures in CHF millions

	2015	2014
Cash	9.8	22.0
Receivables	19.0	20.0
Other current assets	19.1	9.9
Operating revenue	47.9	51.9
Financial investments, participations and investment properties	10.6	27.7
Tangible and intangible assets	218.9	233.9
Earmarked investments	203.8	149.8
Fixed assets	433.3	411.4
Assets	481.2	463.3
Short-term liabilities	29.4	80.7
Long-term liabilities	2.0	41.6
Borrowed capital	31.4	122.3
Fund capital from third-party funds	102.5	5.2
Association capital and earmarked capital belonging to affiliated organisations	34.7	34.5
Organisation capital with earmarked capital	312.6	301.3
Organisation capital including affiliated organisations	347.3	335.8
Liabilities	481.2	463.3

Improving the balance sheet structure

With the completion of the sale of the investment properties and one-off special income of CHF 4.5 million (following deduction of all associated costs and taxes), this completes the planned provision of equity of around CHF 60 million for the building work on the extension and upgrade of the clinic, which is now under way.

For the purposes of simplifying the financing structure, the «Benefactor advance payments fund» was created in 2015 as part of the «Third-party fund», to be used as a depository for advance payments made by members for future years. The amounts in question are shown separately as earmarked assets under Assets. The organisational capital reported, including that of affiliated organisations, remained constant at around 72%.

Human Resources: Recruitment process simplified

In 2015, the SPG employed an average of 1578 people (70% women, 30% men in 1206 full-time equivalent posts). About 50% of staff were employed part-time. There was a staff turnover of 9.6%. The recruitment process has been done electronically since early 2015. The SPG appears to be an attractive employer – 4870 application packs were received and processed via the e-recruitment tool.

Network

The Swiss Paraplegic Group (SPG) includes one foundation, two partner organisations and six limited liability companies which are owned exclusively by the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation. These nine units, which are independent legal entities, form a closely interconnected network of services, which is unique worldwide, for the comprehensive rehabilitation of people with spinal cord injury.

■ Solidarity

- **Maintain a comprehensive approach.**
The SPG provides a comprehensive, practical range of services for people with spinal cord injury – in every area of their life, and for the rest of their lives.
- **Encourage interaction.**
The SPG intends the Nottwil Campus to be a centre of excellence for integration, assistance and lifelong learning for patients of all ages.
- **Ensure goodwill.**
The SPG makes sure that its benefactors and donors are aware of the unique network of services available and support us sustainably in the long term.
- **Encourage multidisciplinary exchanges.**
The SPG seeks to establish a strong network both nationally and internationally that will guarantee better basic conditions for people with spinal cord injury.
- **Promote initial and further training.**
The SPG encourages the initial and further training of specialist personnel in the field of comprehensive care for people with spinal cord injury.

■ Research

- **Improve quality of life.**
The SPG aims to contribute to the sustainable improvement of the health, social integration, equal opportunities and self-determination of people with spinal cord injury by carrying out comprehensive rehabilitation research, including clinical research. The SPG plays a leading role in this area.
- **Encourage the exchange of know-how.**
The SPG exchanges know-how and information with universities and institutions both in Switzerland and abroad. It works closely with the World Health Organisation (WHO) to create a specific network in order to make sure that the latest scientific findings can be put into practice.
- **Set standards.**
The SPG develops internationally binding standards. These make it easier to check, compare and ensure high-quality care.

Unique network of services

■ Medicine

- **Ensure comprehensive care.**
In the Swiss Paraplegic Centre in Nottwil, the SPG offers all the medical services needed to guarantee the professional acute care and rehabilitation of people with spinal cord injury. It encourages them to become involved in their therapy and to take responsibility.
- **Strengthen partnerships.**
The SPG strengthens relationships with partners in specific disciplines and local institutions for the benefit of people with spinal cord injury.
- **Play a role in defining health policies.**
The SPG is a member of specialist committees with a political influence that endeavours to ensure that highly specialised medical care for people with spinal cord injury will continue to be provided within the healthcare system.

■ Integration and Lifelong Assistance

- **Create networks throughout Switzerland.**
In association with its partners, the SPG establishes a network structure that helps people with spinal cord injury in Switzerland.
- **Improve integration.**
The SPG offers comprehensive services to meet people's needs in order to improve the integration into society of people with spinal cord injury.
- **Support people with spinal cord injury and their family and friends.**
The SPG helps people with spinal cord injury to lead an independent life and educates their friends and family so that they can provide the necessary support. It optimises the range of services available in the field of prevention.

Operating statement of the Swiss Paraplegic Group per area of services

	Solidarity	Medicine	Integration and Lifelong Assistance	Research	Consolidation	Group
Figures in CHF millions						
Income from Fundraising	78.5	0.2	5.2	0.1	- 0.1	83.9
Income from goods and services	26.5	120.1	26.9	2.1	- 21.1	154.5
Operational contributions Foundation	1.0	11.5	1.9	8.4	- 22.8	0.0
Operating revenues	106.0	131.8	34.0	10.6	- 44.0	238.4
Previous year	101.3	130.1	32.3	10.1	- 48.0	225.8
Direct aid, benefactor benefits	- 39.6	0.0	- 3.9	0.0	23.8	- 19.7
Personnel expenses	- 13.6	- 89.5	- 12.6	- 7.8	1.5	- 122.0
Other operating expenditure	- 20.0	- 38.0	- 16.8	- 3.4	19.3	- 58.9
Depreciation	- 24.3	- 4.9	- 0.8	- 0.1	- 0.6	- 30.7
Operating expenses	- 97.5	- 132.4	- 34.1	- 11.3	44.0	- 231.3
Previous year	- 95.4	- 130.5	- 32.5	- 10.7	47.7	- 221.4
Operating result	8.5	- 0.6	- 0.1	- 0.7	- 0.0	7.1
Previous year	5.9	- 0.4	- 0.2	- 0.6	- 0.3	4.4

Solidarity area of services

The increase in income in the Solidarity area of services of around CHF 4.7 million to CHF 106 million is attributable to greater income from fundraising, as well as to higher internal offsetting with group companies. The total operating expenditure grew by CHF 2.1 million, which is attributable exclusively to higher depreciations on operating properties (CHF +4.5 million). The gross value of the operating properties in Nottwil was CHF 482 million at the end of 2015.

Savings were achieved in the operating contributions to the SPA (CHF -4.7 million) because the operational deficit in 2015 was largely financed through a bequest. The increased payments of CHF 2.1 million in direct aid and benefactor support (totalling CHF 39.6 million) are due to the overall increase in support for members who have suffered accidents (CHF +1.2 million), greater demand for financial contributions to avoid social aid (CHF +0.6 million), as well as to uncovered nursing days (CHF +0.3 million). The operating profit in the Solidarity area of services of CHF 8.5 million was allocated to free capital.

Note: The consolidated 2015 Annual Financial Statement for the Swiss Paraplegic Group has been prepared in accordance with the Swiss GAAP FER accounting standard. Figures and information published in that report correspond to a summary of the separate financial report with consolidated annual financial statements, which have been audited by PricewaterhouseCoopers AG (Lucerne). The publications mentioned can be downloaded from the Internet (www.paraplegie.ch) or are available on request from the Secretarial Office of the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation, 6207 Nottwil (tel. 041 939 63 63, sps.sec@paraplegie.ch).

Medicine area of services

The increased income in the Medicine area of services of CHF 1.7 million is primarily attributable to increased payments in the SPC; Sirmed and ParaHelp also contributed towards this. The SPC managed to increase its bed capacity by 4.9%, without there being any drop in average capacity usage. Costs in the Medicine area of services rose by CHF 1.9 million or 1.5% to CHF 132.4 million, whereby this increase was largely due to higher staffing costs (CHF +2 million).

Cost savings were achieved by the new «Procurement and Logistics» department through its procurement management system which was restructured in 2015 and which is reflected in the quality management system. Initial tendering processes for larger supply contracts led to some significant savings in costs. In a pilot project, the supply of materials and the automatic review of stock using a balance system was successfully tested on a ward, and this was then rolled out to all the wards.

The operating contributions financed by benefactors for the Medicine area of services amounted to a total of CHF 11.5 million, enabling a balance to be almost achieved in the operating result (CHF –0.6 million). The degree of cost coverage in the Medicine area of services was around 91 %.

Integration and Lifelong Assistance area of services

Income in this area of services was up CHF 1.7 million on the previous year. This increase is attributable to the one-off earnings from the UCI Para-cycling Road World Championships (CHF +0.9 million), as well as to increased sales at Orthotec (CHF +0.7 million).

The costs rose by CHF 1.6 million to CHF 34.1 million, with revenue of CHF 1.0 million for the UCI Para-cycling Road World Championships in the case of the SPA on the one hand, and with around CHF 0.6 million – mainly sales-related – in the case of Orthotec. The degree of cost coverage in the Integration and Lifelong Assistance area of services was around 79%.



Research area of services

Due to expansion and research activities, including those surrounding the SwiSCI (Swiss Spinal Cord Injury Cohort Study) national research platform, the costs rose by CHF 0.5 million. Despite the inclusion of the operating contribution of CHF 8.4 million from the SPF to SPR, the costs additionally allocated to this area of services caused a deficit of CHF 0.7 million in the Research area of services. These are assigned costs for neurobiological research (laboratory) at the SPF and for the clinical research undertaken by the Clinical Trial Unit, as well as the rehabilitation quality management at the SPC.

The costs for the entire Research area of services amounted to CHF 11.3 million in 2015. This resulted in a degree of cost coverage by third-party funds of around 19%.



UCI Para-cycling Road World Championships at the Sport Arena Nottwil



«I have now made so much progress and I am able to work at my computer for 30 minutes with a mouth-controlled computer mouse. I was only able to manage ten minutes two months ago. It looks so easy, but if I overdo it, I get a bad strain in my neck as a result. Therefore, my next objective is to be able to operate the computer with my right hand using a joystick too. That would enable me to resume my career and work for my employer again from home. It really matters to me to get back to work.»

Alexander Ryf (58), tetraplegic following an accident

Federal structures

The Swiss Paraplegic Foundation is run in compliance with current guidelines for non-profit organisations. They guarantee transparency in the duties, targets, structures and organisation.

The Swiss Paraplegic Foundation (SPF) has undertaken to run the Swiss Paraplegic Group (SPG) in accordance with the national guidelines for nonprofit organisations (NPO) and to abide by obligations to disclose. Nonprofit governance is primarily geared towards multidimensional targets and fulfilment of the Foundation's mission, with due regard for the interests of benefactors and donors. The key difference between non-profit organisations and limited liability companies is that the latter's corporate governance is principally concerned with financial and economic factors in the interests of owners and investors.

Purpose and objective

The SPF, which was founded in 1975 by Guido A. Zäch, is concerned with the comprehensive rehabilitation of people with spinal cord injury. It takes and supports measures which the current state of science and technology deem appropriate to achieve this aim.

Structures

The Swiss Paraplegic Foundation is a foundation within the meaning of section 80 et seqq. (personified special-purpose fund) of the Swiss Civil Code, with its registered office in 6207 Nottwil (LU). In order to achieve the goals envisaged by its founder, the SPF has founded various organisations of very different legal natures (non-profit limited liability companies and societies) or supported their formation. In the cooperation agreement between the SPF and the Benefactors' Association (BA), the BA assigned the handling of its day-to-day affairs (fundraising, communication, benefactor services, member support, finance and controlling) to the SPF. The cooperation agreement of the SPF with the Swiss Paraplegics Association (SPA), the umbrella association for 27 wheelchair clubs and partners in the area of Integration and Lifelong Assistance services, regulates the finance for the Association's activities and the further development of the area of services for people with spinal cord injury.

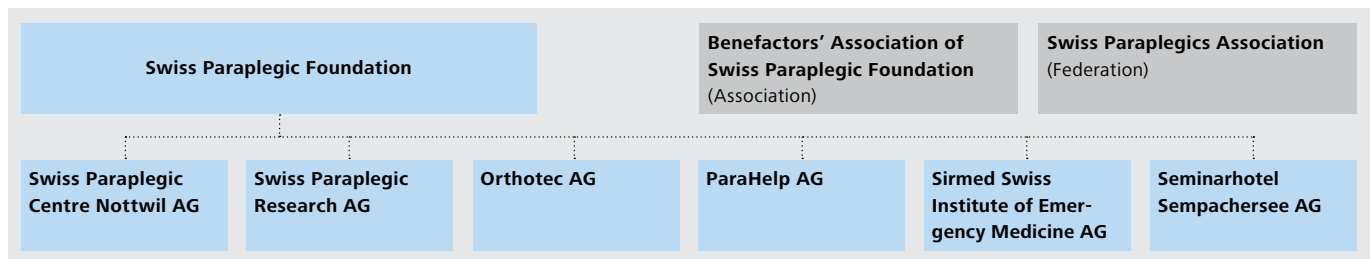
Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is the highest executive body in the SPF and in the SPG. It comprises a minimum of seven and a maximum of eleven members. The Board of Trustees is self-constituting. The new term of office for all members of the Board of Trustees runs until 2019.

Boards of directors, Management Board SPF and Directors' Conference

The strategic leadership rests with the Board of Trustees. It engages a member of the Board of Trustees as well as identified sector specialists as Management Board members to run the subsidiaries. They have the power to implement the strategy in the respective subsidiary and assume overall responsibility for its activities. The operational areas of the SPF are Administration, Direct Aid, Meeting, Legal Services, Real Estate, Corporate Communications, Benefactor Marketing and Fundraising, Finance and Controlling, as well as Laboratory. The Directors' Conference coordinates and optimises the operational activities of the Group companies.

Structure of the Swiss Paraplegic Group



- Group companies:** Foundation, its subsidiaries and affiliated organisations (also known as partner organisations) which are fully factored into the consolidated accounts.
- Foundation and its subsidiaries,** all of which are 100% owned by the Swiss Paraplegic Foundation
- Closely related organisations** (also known as partner organisations): cooperation agreements to carry out the foundation's mission

Process control

The organisation and coordination between the committees are illustrated in the diagram opposite, «Management structure of the Swiss Paraplegic Group». The regulations are updated annually, if necessary. The planning period for the strategy review and renewal is four years and will commence in autumn 2016 for the 2017 to 2020 period.

Reciprocal board memberships and remuneration

The reciprocal board memberships within the SPG – members of the Board of Trustees are also members of the management board in the affiliated organisations – enable activities to be coordinated and enhance the flow of information. The separate Non-profit Governance Report contains detailed information about this, as well as about the pay of members of supervisory bodies.

Auditing and external supervision

PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) AG Lucerne have been the auditors for the SPF and the group auditors since 2008. Following a tendering process, PwC was confirmed in March 2015 for the coming years. The SPF comes under the supervision of the state, i.e. of the Federal Supervisory Board for Foundations (Secretariat General of the Federal Department of Home Affairs [EDI]), Inselgasse 1, 3003 Bern, and submits the necessary documentation every year.

Information policy

The website www.paraplegie.ch informs the public about current events. «Paraplegie», the magazine for benefactors, is circulated to BA members every quarter. It carries extensive features on the activities of the SPG. Individual group companies present details of specific services and offers in their own publications. The employees of the SPG can keep up with news in the staff magazine «à jour» as well as via the Intranet, among other things.

Members of the Board of Trustees

- **Daniel Joggi, Chairman** since 2009, member since 2000
- **Hans Jürg Deutsch, Vice-Chairman** since 2008, member since 2002
- **Christian Betl, member** since 2010
- **Jacqueline Blanc, member** since 2010
- **Susy Brüscheiler, member** since 2010
- **Heinz Frei, member** since 2002
- **Ulrich Liechti, member** since 2010
- **Barbara Moser Blanc, member** since 2012
- **Kuno Schedler, member** since 2010
- **Luca Stäger, member** since 2014
- **Erwin Zemp, member** since 2010

This Annual Report provides a quick overview of purpose and objective, as well as structures, processes and organisation. The unabridged Non-profit Governance Report, dated 31 March 2016, containing detailed information about the individual bodies, management structures, networks, memberships and remuneration, as well as a complete directory of personnel, is available to view online at www.paraplegie.ch.

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Zertifizierungen



Die führenden Rehabilitationskliniken der Schweiz



swiss clinical trial organisation





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- 1 Subsidiaries
- 2 Partner organisations
- 3 Participations through subsidiaries
- 4 Participation by the Foundation
- 5 Partnership with the Lucerne Cantonal Hospital

PUBLICATION DETAILS

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