

# UMS to do research on spinal cord injuries

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**KOTA KINABALU:** Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) has signed a collaborative agreement with Swiss Paraplegic Research (SPF) to conduct research studies on spinal cord injuries.

The agreement was signed by UMS Vice-Chancellor, Professor Datuk Dr Kasim Hj Mansor and SPF Director, Professor Dr Med Gerald Stucki at Nottwil, Switzerland on Tuesday.

It was also witnessed by UMS Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation, Professor Ir Dr Rosalam Hj Sarbatly and SPF Managing Director Mirjam Brach.

According to Dr Kasim, the research focuses on the level of care, quality of life and rehabilitation of those who have had spinal cord injuries.

"It is an initiative from the World Health Organisation



Kasim (fourth right) and Gerald Stucki (fourth left) after signing the research collaborative agreement document. Also seen are members of the UMS delegation and SPF management officers.

(WHO) where Swiss Paraplegic Research, which is a leading research institution in Europe, is responsible for coordinating the implementation of research on

an international scale.

"This study will be conducted in 42 countries including Malaysia, which at UMS the research is led by Associate

Professor Dr Fatimah Ahmedy as a rehabilitation medicine specialist and an Associate Professor in Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences, UMS along

with several other medical experts in the same field in this country," he explained.

According to Dr Kasim, the agreement will also result in cooperation in the exchange of expertise between the two institutions to increase the visibility of UMS towards supporting international efforts in the field of spinal cord injury research.

He said among the studies that have been discussed include developing a rural rehabilitation center located in Beaufort, Sabah that can be used as a facility to carry out rehabilitation research based on artificial intelligence (AI-assisted rehabilitation).

"The main aim of this research is to optimize the ability of those who are paralyzed and disabled to be able to return to work and lead a daily life in the

community.

"Indeed, this study is very timely because it is seen in line with the research skills of UMS which focuses on the university's contribution to the community through the village rehabilitation center as a living lab.

"With the inspiration of UMS as an innovative community leader, I am confident that this center can be a reference to help rural communities who suffer from physical problems and disabilities due to limb injuries to return to work.

"Indirectly, this can help the government in improving the national economy as well as reducing the burden of health costs," added Dr Kasim.

Swiss Paraplegic Research researchers are expected to come to Sabah for research in early 2024.