Foreword

Individuals with spinal cord injury (SCI) have not only motor and sensory deficits but also complex autonomic dysfunctions. This population experiences cardiovascular, bowel/bladder, and thermoregulation dysfunctions and various sexual dysfunctions that should be addressed during their rehabilitation.

Individuals with SCI are frequently encountered in clinical practice by various specialists, but a significant number of physicians are not comfortable with addressing and managing issues of sexual rehabilitation. This is primarily due to the complexity of issues with sexual dysfunctions and autonomic control, lack of practical knowledge, and a paucity of guidelines for clinical management.

This issue of the *Topics of Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation* represents an international collaboration among clinicians and scientists with expertise in SCI and sexuality. It presents the latest advances and our present understanding of sexual dysfunctions following SCI: it

discusses the pathophysiology behind sexual dysfunction and fertility in SCI patients, the issues related to thorough clinical evaluation of sexual functions, and various treatment options available to this specific patient population.

Individuals with SCI rate the recovery of sexual functions among their highest priorities (even higher than recovery of motor functions); this subject is of crucial clinical and research importance. During the last decade, we have made significant effort and progress with respect to the understanding and management of secondary complications including sexual dysfunctions following SCI. However, the medical and research community need to both continue the search for an ultimate cure of SCI and concentrate efforts on present practical issues that will improve the quality of life and enjoyment of persons who are living with SCI.

—**Andrei Krassioukov, MD, PhD, FRCPC**

Issue Editor