Objective: To determine if the provision of recommended assistive technology devices enhances quality of life in individuals with spinal cord injury (SCI).

Design/Method: A cohort prospective design assessed provision of assistive technology devices, their use and realization of benefit from their use. A total of 39 adults with SCI received recommended assistive technology devices through funding from the Neilsen Foundation from 01/01/14-02/19/16. Devices included commode chairs, reachers, tub benches, ramps, walkers, and more. After receiving and using their obtained devices for a minimum of three months, all individuals were sent a follow-up survey regarding their device use and realization of benefit from use. Non-respondents to the survey were contacted by telephone. One refused to participate by phone, one had a “wrong number,” and 1 had died. 18 complete and usable responses were obtained.

Results: The 18 respondents rated 44 assistive devices. Of the 44 assistive devices rated: 27 currently were being used; all being used appropriate hours/day. 13 no longer being used (10 reported they no longer needed or replaced it with a different device (e.g. wheelchair for walker), 3 abandoned/discarded, 4 never received and 2 destroyed in a fire. A t-test of significant mean differences on each item between the users and non-users showed that two items significantly differentiated the user and non-user groups: The fit with the user’s accustomed routine (p<0.05) and feeling secure (safe, confident) with use (p<0.016).

Discussion
Individuals with SCI are functionally dependent on both assistive technology devices and people to assist them to achieve their goals for activity performance and life area participation. With the provision of needed assistive technology devices, it is quite clear that the recipients benefited from them.

Conclusion: This project successfully increased the self-reported quality of life. However, when devices interfered with customary routines and did not result in user safety/confidence in use, they were rejected or replaced with alternatives.