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## Panitch Project Receives Synthes Prize for Spine Research

Researchers from Barrow Neurological Institute at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center, Purdue University, and Arizona State University were recently awarded the Synthes Prize for Spine Research at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons.



The research project, led by Mark Preul of Barrow and Allysa Panitch of Purdue, has shown that injecting biomaterial gel into a spinal cord injury site provides significantly improved healing, thus indicating that a "practical path" to treatment may be found for spinal injury patients.

The engineered hydrogel, made up mainly of hyaluronic acid (a naturally-occurring body substance) forms a scaffold-like configuration which may help to structurally stabilize the spinal cord injury site, thereby decreasing scarring and promoting a realignment of spinal cord fibers.

The goal of the research team is to synergize neurosurgeons and biomedical engineers in order to develop a biomaterials approach to repair spinal cord injuries.

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