

Terms & Conditions

Spierfonds Impact Award

2026

The Spierfonds Impact Award is a prize for a young researcher who has made one concrete and valuable achievement with significant scientific and/or societal impact in the neuromuscular field between **October 1, 2025, and October 1, 2026**. The aim of this award is to recognize and reward young distinguished researchers, inspiring and encouraging them to continue enriching the neuromuscular field with their dedication and contributions.

Introduction

The Spierfonds aims to improve the lives of people with a neuromuscular disorders. We encourage young researchers to contribute to this mission from their unique perspective and innovative mindset. With the Spierfonds Impact Award, we annually reward an innovative young researcher (preclinical or clinical) who has made one clearly tangible and meaningful contribution to the neuromuscular field. This can include:

- (creative) communication, such as interviews or podcasts,
- developing a new tool, app, or guideline,
- providing patient information, for example, by organizing a patient day,
- a scientific achievement, such as a new discovery or publication,
- implementing a technique in the Netherlands or establishing a new collaboration.

With the Spierfonds Impact Award, the Spierfonds aims to provide young, talented researchers with the opportunity to stimulate their professional development, broaden their insights, increase their chances of future grants, and attain a prominent position within the neuromuscular field in the Netherlands.

The prize

The winner of the Spierfonds Impact Award will receive:

- €2,500 to be used for personal and/or scientific development (such as attending a conference, training, or international experience).
- An interview in the [SpierKrant](#) and other communications from the Spierfonds.
- Invitation to serve as a one-time member of the jury for the Spierfonds Impact Award next year.

Who qualifies for the Spierfonds Impact Award?

The audience for the Spierfonds Impact Award consists of young researchers aspiring to a position as a group leader in the neuromuscular field. This award contributes to both the visibility and professional development of the researcher. We particularly encourage young researchers who do not yet hold a permanent research position.

The following researchers are eligible to apply:

- The applicant is working in the Netherlands.
- The applicant has made one concrete achievement with scientific and/or societal impact in the neuromuscular field between **October 1, 2025, and October 1, 2026**.
- The applicant is in the final year of their doctoral research or has been awarded their doctorate for no longer than eight years ago at the closing date, following the [extension policy](#) of NWO.
- The applicant is actively engaged in the neuromuscular field and aspires to a scientific career within this field.

- The applicant has not previously won the Spierfonds Impact Award.

As long as the applicant meets the previously mentioned criteria, they are eligible to compete for the prize in multiple years.

Submission

The deadline for submission of the Spierfonds Impact Award is **October 21, 2026**. Applications can be submitted via email to onderzoek@spierfonds.nl.

A complete application consists of:

- A completed application form (in [Dutch](#) or [English](#)).
- Up to two letters of recommendation from relevant individuals (such as a supervisor, collaborator, or patient representative).

Selection procedure

The Spierfonds will assess whether the submission meets all the conditions outlined in these regulations. If essential components are missing, the Spierfonds may decide not to process the application. A minimum of three submissions are required for the award to be granted.

In the event of overwhelming interest, the Spierfonds may decide to conduct a pre-selection based on potential impact.

The Jury

The winner of the Spierfonds Impact Award is selected by a jury composed of (preclinical and clinical) researchers, patient representatives, last year's winner and the Spierfonds. Jury members must have no conflict of interest with the applicant, and the assessment of applications is non-discriminatory, confidential, and transparent.

When completing the application form, you should consider the composition of the jury and ensure clear and understandable language.

The Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on two criteria:

- **Impact**
The Spierfonds adopts a broad definition of impact, encompassing both relevance and added value for scientific advancement (scientific impact) and positive effects for patients and/or society as a whole (societal impact).
- **Applicant Profile**
The Spierfonds Impact Award is granted to researchers who stand out due to their motivation, innovative approach, forward-thinking, and broad perspective. Traditional scientific excellence, such as the number of publications, is not the primary focus.

Awarding

Applicants will be notified of the decision via email by early December. The awarded monetary prize should be used for personal and/or scientific development (soft skills, conference attendance, training, etc.). Once the arrangements regarding the use of the prize and the timeframe have been finalized, the Spierfonds will transfer the awarded amount to the applicant's account.

The Spierfonds aims to make a maximum contribution to education and advocacy. The winner of the Spierfonds Impact Award may be invited to participate in publicity activities, events, and/or communication efforts.