

Media information

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**Australian discovery
provides new hope for arthritis sufferers**

Australian researchers believe they have discovered a significant new anti-inflammatory compound which could provide new hope for arthritis sufferers.

By contrast with recently developed arthritis treatments such as the anti-TNFs, chaperonin 10 is a natural protein normally found in the body. It acts to limit overproduction of a broad range of inflammatory proteins, including TNF.

An exploratory study published today in the international medical journal *The Lancet* shows that the compound, known as chaperonin 10, proved in a double blind trial that it was safe and effective in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis.

The study findings show that clinical improvement was obtained in all patients that completed the trial. A small group of patients in the trial at the highest dose level, experienced up to a 70 percent improvement in symptoms. In fact, clinical remission was achieved in 13% of patients.

The researchers, from a multicentre study group including the University of Queensland, Monash University in Melbourne, and Royal Perth Hospital used a compound developed by Brisbane-based bio-pharmaceutical development company, CBio Ltd, funded in part by the Australian federal government.

CBio Chief Executive, Dr Wolf Hanisch, said chaperonin 10 is a naturally occurring heat-shock protein, and has anti-inflammatory properties related to the inhibition of Toll-like receptor signalling pathways of the innate immune system.

"Administration of chaperonin 10 limits excessive immune activation and slows the pathological processes of autoimmune and chronic inflammatory diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis" Dr Hanisch said.

The study findings published in *The Lancet* were described as 'encouraging in terms of the signs and symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis'. There were no toxicity or drug-related tolerability issues in the patient group and further studies are needed to determine the optimum dose for accelerated improvement of symptoms, the authors said.

The researchers are Dr Steven Hall (Monash); Dr Peter Nash (University of Queensland); Dr Andrew Taylor (Royal Perth Hospital); Dr Daina Vanags, Ms Bronwyn Williams, Dr Barbara Johnson, Ms Julissa Weiss and Dr Dennis Feeney (CBio Ltd).

The study was supported in part by a Pharmaceutical Partnerships Program (P3) grant from the Australian government awarded in 2005.

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