

# Century-old drug hope

A NEW treatment for Ross River fever is being trialled in Queensland and Victoria.

If successful, pentosan polysulfate sodium could be used to significantly reduce the duration and severity of joint pain caused by the virus that has infected 112 Central Queensland residents this year.

The drug has been around for more than a century to prevent formation of platelets during pre-operative procedures and to treat bladder pain.

It has also been used for osteoarthritis in animals and humans.

Paradigm Biopharma chief executive officer Paul Rennie launched the limited clinical trial this month and is seeking people with the



**Ross River virus is detected by a blood test.**

PHOTO: THINKSTOCK

Ross River virus to take part.

It will be at least 12 months before clinical researchers know if the drug is a success, with results to be released in mid-2018, according to Mr Rennie.

If successful, the drug could also be used to treat another mosquito-borne

disease, chikungunya, that is prominent in south-east Asia.

Mater Health Services infectious disease specialist Dr Paul Griffin will oversee the clinical trial.

Dr Griffin said the trial was set to treat 24 Queensland patients but if there was enough interest that number would be increased and trial sites could be set up outside of Brisbane.

He said participants would be injected with the drug twice a week for six weeks and they would be monitored for about 102 days.

“We are very confident of the safety of this medication,” Dr Griffin said.

— **NewsRegional**