

# Ancient drug being trialled for Ross River fever

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 306 Sunshine Coast and Gympie 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 launched the limited clinical trial this month and is seeking people with the Ross River virus to take part.

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

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.

Paradigm Biopharma CEO Paul Rennie said the drug could prove to be the best treatment for "the worst flu you've ever had".

- **NewsRegional**