



## SA pharmaceutical firm Paradigm set to make billions from osteoarthritis drug

Richard Evans, The Advertiser

A pain-reducing osteoarthritis drug that could potentially benefit up to 15 per cent of the western world is set to become a multibillion-dollar product for an Adelaide pharmaceutical company.

The success of the critical phase 2b trials — which have taken two years to plan and implement — means Paradigm can now take the pentosan polysulphate sodium (iPPS) drug to the final stage of research (phase 3), which is likely to lead to mass manufacture of the drug in the USA.



Chief executive officer Paul Rennie was upbeat as the share price rose about 50 per cent in early-morning trading.

Paradigm chief executive officer Paul Rennie founded the ASX listed company in 2015.

“Phase 2 is where we see value for the company. The stock price can bubble along for a while on a good few pieces of news but for the first time the stakeholders can now move to the next stage. It will be a multi-billion dollar product. That’s why there is a lot of interest around phase 2.”

Ten to 15 per cent of the western world suffers from osteoarthritis, Mr Rennie, said with one in five people over 45 afflicted.

“This is all about pain relief and is targeted at the moderate to severe end of the pain spectrum. Pain stops exercising which leads to more ill health,” he said.



Carlton's Andrew Walker has taken part in the iPPS trials. Picture: George Salpigidis

Former Carlton footballer Andrew Walker, whose career was cut short by a knee injury, who has been involved in trialling the drug.

“Just the everyday things I was struggling with, getting from bed to the kitchen and getting the kids ready for school,” he said.

“I retired in 2016 and was booked in for a knee replacement which really scared me. I was 29 years old. I was fortunate to be part of this trial which has given me all sorts of freedom back in my knees.”

Taking the drug will lead to less aches and pains and allow for more exercise thus delaying expensive, and potentially troublesome, joint replacements.

The clinical trials have been held across Australia by Paradigm, Mr Rennie said, with the intent to repurpose iPPS, which is manufactured in Munich by German company, bene pharmaChem.

The phase 2b results confirm the potential for iPPS to be a safe and effective treatment of knee osteoarthritis pain, with 46.2 per cent of subjects tested showing a greater than 50 per cent reduction in pain, he said.

Mr Rennie, who studied science at Flinders University, recently returned to Adelaide with his family and was previously executive vice president (new product development) for the adult stem cell company Mesoblast, before founding Paradigm in 2015.

Paradigm chief scientific officer, Dr Ravi Krishnan, has 35 years of medical research experience under his belt and is an Adelaide University alumni.

Trading in the ASX listed Paradigm Biopharmaceuticals recommenced this morning after a two day hiatus, with shares in the company, which has a market capitalisation of about \$184 million, soaring on the back of trials to combat the pain endured by osteoarthritis sufferers.