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Scientists say a new pill could revolutionise asthma treatment for hundreds of thousands of Britons. A trial of the drug helped reduce inflammation of the airways in asthma patients. It's thought there are more than half a million Britons who suffer from moderate or severe asthma. Around 1400 die each year as a result of the condition. Scientists think the drug, which is called Fevipiprant, could benefit at least half of sufferers - so 250,000 people. Joining me now from Leicester is Clinical Professor in Respiratory Medicince at Leicester University Chris Brightling. Tell us a little bit more about the findings of this trial, how excited are you? Really excited. We currently have inhalers and an injection for asthma but at the moment we haven't had a new pill for over 18 years and this was really exciting because we looked at asthma in a number of different ways, we looked at the symptoms, how good the patients' breathing tests were, and we looked at inflammation by sampling the airway, and we did CT scans. What was remarkable with this drug, just with 60 patients over three months, it improved symptoms, improved the breathing tests, improved information and improved the damaged the lining of the airway, and some improvements on the CT scans. So this combination of improvements really is quite striking. You mentioned just 60 patients involved so a pretty small trial. Does that mean we should

treat the results with a bit of caution? We need to be cautious with the number of patients tested but we already know that similar studies that have shown the same reduction of inflammation as in this study have led to a halving of asthma attacks and admissions to hospital, so we can have some confidence that this is likely to be beneficial. Later studies have started to address exactly that question. Hameed people do you think this potentially could help? -- how many people. If you look at the number of patients with poorly controlled asthma, they need inhalers or other treatments such as injections. The pattern of inflammation that this treatment is likely to benefit could be at least half of those who have these problems. A lot of sufferers

at the moment rely on inhalers and steroids. If this new pill were out on the market, would it mean people could reduce their reliance on steroids? Could they rule them out? What will be tested is whether people could reduce their need for preventive treatment and potentially then reduce relieving medication. One of the probe would badly controlled asthma is sometimes people need to take oral steroids which are effective in asthma but come at a price, increased risk of osteoporosis, diabetes, hypertension. If this treatment can improve asthma control but also reduce the risks associated with other therapies that will be incredible. RUSI able to explain in simple terms how this drug works? -- are you able. It stops some of the inflammatory cells that are in the

blood moving into the airway, so we have been able to measure that by samples from the airway and also sputum samples. What also is into ting is that it also seems to have direct effects on the lining of the airway. The lining of the airway is important because it is the way we protect ourselves against the environment, so this perhaps will reduce exposure to allergens and pollutants and also infection to the airway. It is this double affect that reduces the cells coming in and driving inflammation as well as improving the integrity of the lining of the wall of the airway. If further trials prove successful and back-up your results, how soon do you think people may forget this pill on prescription? With all of these trials, the answer is not soon enough. The current late phase studies will be completing in about a year and a half, there will be

other late phase studies, so we are looking at between two and three years before this will be available to give to patients. We really appreciate you coming on and telling us a bit about your findings. Really interesting stuff, thank you. It has changed billions of lives around the world, and today the World Wide Web marks 25 years as a publicly available service. It was British computer scientist Sir Tim Berners-Lee who gave birth to the idea, while working at a Swiss physics laboratory in 1989. The first server was launched two years later, on 6 August 1991. Richard Suchet reports. MODEM DIALLING TONE It's to this music that the World Wide Web was born. A dissonant melody that ushered in the digital age is 25 years old. It is hard to believe how much the world has changed since then.