**New drug could be 'game changer' in battle against asthma**

By [PRESS ASSOCIATION](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/search.html?s=&authornamef=Press+Association)

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The first new asthma drug for nearly 20 years could have the power to significantly reduce the severity of the condition, researchers have found.

The new drug, which has been hailed as a "game changer", could reduce the number of people who die from the condition.

Three people die from asthma attacks every day, and according to Asthma UK two thirds of the deaths are preventable.

But the pill, called Fevipiprant, was shown to reduce inflammation and repair the lining of the airways in a study led by the University of Leicester.

Professor Chris Brightling, senior research fellow at the institution, said: "A unique feature of this study was how it included measurements of symptoms, lung function using breathing tests, sampling of the airway wall and CT scans of the chest to give a complete picture of how the new drug works.

"This new treatment, Fevipiprant, could likewise help to stop preventable asthma attacks, reduce hospital admissions and improve day-to-day symptoms - making it a 'game changer' for future treatment."

A total of 61 people took part in the research, with one group being given 225mg of the drug twice a day for 12 weeks, and the other a placebo.

The rate in people with moderate-to-severe asthma taking the medication was reduced from an average of 5.4% to 1.1% over that time period, according to the study published in the Lancet Respiratory Medicine journal.

The drug, which is currently being evaluated in late stage clinical trials, has described as having "massive promise" by asthma charities.

Dr Samantha Walker, director of research and policy at Asthma UK, said: "This research shows massive promise and should be greeted with cautious optimism.

"The possibility of taking a pill instead of using an inhaler will be a very welcome one among the 5.4 million people in the UK with asthma, particularly as this study focused on people who develop the condition in later life, some of whom we know can struggle with the dexterity required to use an inhaler.

"More research is needed and we're a long way off seeing a pill for asthma being made available over the pharmacy counter, but it's an exciting development and one which, in the long term, could offer a real alternative to current treatments."

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-3726716/New-drug-game-changer-battle-against-asthma.html#ixzz4NQhZSOOC>   
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