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**BBC**

**Cystic Fibrosis drug offers fresh hope to sufferers**

An international team co-led by scientists at Queen's University, Belfast, has developed a new drug for Cystic Fibrosis sufferers.

The drug specifically targets the so-called Celtic gene which is common in Ireland.

But the researchers believe the breakthrough will have significant implications for all CF sufferers.

The drug should be available to patients next year.

Patients take two tablets a day.

Less than a year ago, scientists were awarded £1.7m to research and develop the drug. Specialists from Europe, America and Australia were involved in the project.

They found significant improvement in lung function, quality of life and a reduction in disease flare ups for those receiving the new treatment.

Stuart Elborn from Queen's University, Belfast, co-led the team.

"The development of this drug is significant because it is the first to show that treating the underlying cause of Cystic Fibrosis may have profound effects on the disease, even among people who have been living with it for decades.

"The remarkable reductions in sweat chloride observed in this study support the idea that VX-770 improves protein function thereby addressing the fundamental defect that leads to CF."

Dr Judy Bradley, from the University of Ulster said: "This is a ground breaking treatment because it treats the basic defect caused by the gene mutation in patients.

"Correcting the cells with this mutation shows that treatments aimed at the basic mutation can work leading to improvements in lung function and symptoms."

Dr Damien Downey, from the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust said: "The success of this study illustrates the benefits that come from collaborative work here in Northern Ireland.

"Not only will this breakthrough help patients in Ireland and the UK but it has the potential to change the lives for those with Cystic Fibrosis around the world."

As a result of the recent work researchers from Queen's University, University of Ulster and clinicians from Belfast Health and Social Care Trust have been selected to join the European Cystic Fibrosis Society Clinical Trials Network.

This means Cystic Fibrosis researchers in Northern Ireland will be collaborating with their European counterparts to work toward improved treatments for Cystic Fibrosis on a global level. "

The new drug will be submitted for licensing in the Autumn of this year and is expected to be available to patients by as early as next year.

Metro (UK)

June 20, 2011 Monday   
Edition 1;   
Ireland

**Irish CF breakthrough**  
  
**BYLINE:** Michael McHugh  
  
**SECTION:** NEWS; FRONT PAGE; Pg. 1  
  
**LENGTH:** 337 words

A NEW drug which makes it easier to clear the lungs of bacteria offers fresh hope to sufferers of cystic fibrosis.

Researchers developed the treatment which targets a basic defect caused by a genetic mutation, known as the Celtic gene.

The study, carried out by Queen's University Belfast, the University of Ulster, the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and teams of researchers in Europe, US and Australia, found significant improvement in lung function, quality of life and a reduction in disease flare-ups for those receiving the new treatment.

Dr Judy Bradley, of the University of Ulster, said: 'This is a ground-breaking treatment because it treats the basic defect caused by the gene mutation in patients.

'Correcting the cells with this mutation shows that treatments aimed at the basic mutation can work, leading to improvements in lung function and symptoms,' Dr Bradley added.

The drug, VX-770, is a significant breakthrough not only for those with the Celtic gene, known as G551D, but also for all other cystic fibrosis sufferers as it indicates that the basic defect in the condition can be treated.

It is the first drug aimed at the basic defect to show an effect.

While it is still too early to determine whether it will improve life expectancy, improvements in breathing tests and reduction in flare-ups suggest better survival rates.

Stuart Elborn, director of the Centre for Infection and Immunity at Queen's University, said: 'The development of this drug is significant because it is the first to show that treating the underlying cause of cystic fibrosis may have profound effects on the disease, even among people who have been living with it for decades.'

The drug will be submitted for licensing this autumn and is expected to be available to patients next year.

Cystic fibrosis is Ireland's most common life-threatening inherited disease.

About one in 19 people are carriers of the CF gene and where two carriers parent a child together, there is a one in four chance of the baby being born with the disease.

The Express

June 21, 2011 Tuesday   
Edition 1;   
National Edition

**NEW CYSTIC FIBROSIS AID;**Health news IN BRIEF  
  
**BYLINE:** Rosemary Leonard  
  
**SECTION:** NEWS; Pg. 38  
  
**LENGTH:** 168 words

SCIENTISTS have developed a ground-breaking new treatment for cystic fibrosis.

The drug will benefit patients with the "Celtic gene", a mutation particularly common in Ireland.

An international research team led by Queen's University Belfast found major improvement in lung function, quality of life and a reduction in disease flare ups for those receiving treatment VX-770.

Cystic Fibrosis (CF) is the UK's most common life-threatening genetically inherited disease with over 9,000 sufferers.

The drug has been hailed as a breakthrough for all CF patients as it indicates the basic defect in the disease can be treated.

Scientists say it is too early to confirm if this will improve life expectancy but the improvements in the breathing tests and reduction in flare-ups suggest so.

Study leader Stuart Elborn says: "The drug is significant because it is the first to show that treating the underlying cause of CF may have profound effects on the disease even among people who have been living with it for decades."

The Mirror

June 21, 2011 Tuesday   
Eire Edition

**NEW DRUG WILL HELP CF PATIENTS;**RESEARCH  
  
**SECTION:** NEWS; Pg. 26  
  
**LENGTH:** 138 words

By MICHAEL McHUGH

A NEW drug for people with cystic fibrosis will make it easier to clear the lungs of bacteria, Irish researchers have vowed.

The treatment targets a basic defect caused by a genetic mutation known as the Celtic gene because it is so common here.

Dr Judy Bradley, of the University of Ulster, said: "This is a ground-breaking treatment because it treats the basic defect caused by the gene mutation in patients.

"Correcting the cells with this mutation shows that treatments aimed at the basic mutation can work, leading to improvements in lung function and symptoms."

Philip Watt, chief of the CF Association of Ireland, said: "This is exciting news. It is the first time that a drug will impact on Cystic Fibrosis itself.

"It's the most significant breakthrough since the so called 'CF gene' was discovered in 1989."

The Sun (England)

June 21, 2011 Tuesday   
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Ireland

**Sufferers hail new CF drug**  
**SECTION:** NEWS; Pg. 2  
  
**LENGTH:** 143 words

CYSTIC fibrosis campaigners have welcomed a "groundbreaking" new drug that targets the killer condition.

Trials of VX-770 at Queen's University in Belfast were found to significantly improve lung function and quality of life for sufferers.

The treatment is the first of its kind to work directly on the genetic defect, which causes thick mucus to build up in the lungs and digestive tract of CF patients.

Cystic fibrosis campaigner Orla Tinsley said: "For scientists to be able to target those cells which cause the inflammation and stall the progression of the illness brings us closer to finding a more successful treatment.

"It should decrease the requirement for intravenous treatment and slow down the rate of lung damage, perhaps prolonging life."

However the the Cystic Fibrosis Association of Ireland warned "we are still a long way from finding a cure".