

Welsh shingles drug set for final hurdle

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A new Welsh-developed drug to help alleviate the suffering of shingles could move a step closer for patients if the final stage of testing is given the go-ahead.

A new shingles drug (FV-100), discovered by Professor Chris McGuigan's team from Cardiff University's Welsh School of Pharmacy together with a virology group at the Rega Institute in Belgium and US biopharmaceutical company, Inhibitex Inc, is due to complete Phase II of its clinical trials.

If the drug completes Phase II it will enter the third and final stage which could see the drug being available to patients in less than three years.

Cardiff University's Professor of Medical Chemistry, Chris McGuigan, who led the team which discovered the new [antiviral drug](#), said: "We are now entering the final and most crucial stage in the journey from the discovery of a new drug to the market.

"If we successfully complete this stage the drug would be available to help alleviate the [pain](#) and suffering for millions of shingles patients, not only in Wales but across the world."

Shingles is caused by the same viral infection that causes chicken pox. It is estimated that one-in-five people in the US, Europe and Japan will be affected by the condition during their lifetime.

The condition is characterised by [skin lesions](#), blisters and rash, and

acute pain, and in many cases, post-herpetic neuralgia which is a painful and often highly distressing condition resulting from [nerve damage](#) caused by the virus. Initial tests of FV-100 showed it has the potential to greatly reduce all of these symptoms.

In Phase I trials of FV-100, no serious adverse events in healthy volunteers were reported and data supported the potential for once-a-day dosing in future trials. Previous lab research has also shown the drug to be up to 10,000 times more potent against the virus than existing treatments.

Professor McGuigan added: "We believe this drug has the potential to be the most powerful inhibitor ever discovered to treat shingles.

"Each year only 15-20 new medicines are approved for clinical use and the chance of FV100 becoming an approved medicine improves the further we successfully progress through each of the clinical stages.

"We are incredibly excited at the prospect of FV-100 becoming commercially available in the future, and potentially being the first drug discovered in Cardiff University to make it to the marketplace."

Provided by Cardiff University

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