



Herald Sun
Friday 17/8/2007
Page: 76
Section: Business News
Region: Melbourne Circulation: 525,000
Type: Capital City Daily
Size: 155.60 sq.cms.
Published: MTWTFS-

Brief: SOON_1DIAB



Playing catch-up in diabetes fight

IF there is a disease that is really running rampant around the world it is type two diabetes.

Its growth almost exactly mirrors the adoption of Western diets and fast food outlets and it shows no signs of slackening.

An estimated 250 million people around the world are sufferers, many undiagnosed, with a projection of 380 million by 2025.

And it is one of the really big-ticket items on burgeoning health budgets, representing about 11 per cent of US health care spending.

One company trying to come up with some new answers for the estimated one million Australians with the disease is Melbourne-based biotechnology group Dia-B.

Headed by chief executive Ken Smith and chaired by former Health Minister Dr Michael Wooldridge, Dia-B has some novel treatments for the escalating problem.

"We are aiming to be the main repository of diabetes research in the country," said Ken.

Dia-B's lead product, ISF402, is an oral drug that increases the effectiveness of insulin.

It delays the breakdown of insulin and prolongs its blood-sugar lowering effects.

The compound has been through phase 1a human trials and, if phase two trials are successful and approvals are forthcoming, could be released by 2012.

Other potential drugs in the development pipeline include IM014 and an agent that acts on CDA1.

The first is synthesised from the bark of a South Pacific tree and has shown the ability to reduce blood glucose concentrations.

CDA1 has been identified as the cause of many diabetic complications including renal failure, tissue and organ fibrosis and problems with wound healing.

Researchers are hoping to find a new chemical that can prevent some of these damaging side-effects.

In line with yesterday's tumbling market, Dia-B closed down 0.6¢ at 5.9¢ a share.