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Australia achieves clinical trial success for psoriasis drug

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The trial shows it is possible to develop oral treatments for systemic diseases such as psoriasis



A company launched from Australia-based University of Queensland's Institute for Molecular Bioscience (IMB) has passed an important milestone in developing an oral treatment for the common skin disease psoriasis.

Protagonist Therapeutics was spun out of work by Associate Professor Mark Smythe to develop new drugs for conditions previously only treated with injectables.

The company, in collaboration with Janssen Biotech, has reported that patients in a Phase 2b clinical trial who took the drug candidate JNJ-2113 had a 75 per cent improvement in their plaque psoriasis compared to those who received a placebo.

Psoriasis affects more than 500,000 Australians each year and causes an itchy, scaly and sometimes painful rash.

Dr Smythe said the trial result was a significant achievement for patients and the scientists involved.

"The trial has shown it's possible to treat systemic diseases like psoriasis with peptide-based drugs that are orally delivered," Dr Smythe said.