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Local business leads the way with pain-relief drug

A new method of manufacturing will allow medication to be mass-produced, writes **Louis White**.

For 15 years, Australian healthcare company Medical Developments International and the CSIRO have been working together to develop a unique invention that will benefit patients around the world.

Finally, after an arduous process that involved going back to the start to create a new manufacturing method, a new non-addictive drug can be upscaled quickly, which will benefit patients around the world.

The emergency painkiller, Pentrox, commonly known as “the green whistle”, has been granted initial regulatory approval for sale in the European and British markets.

Pentrox is a fast-onset, non-opioid analgesic used for pain relief by self-administration in patients with trauma and those requiring analgesia for surgical procedures.

The new manufacturing process, developed in MDI's Melbourne plant, gives the company a competitive advantage to increase production of Pentrox's underlying drug, methoxyflurane, tenfold in order to meet the required large-scale demand.

“The new manufacturing process was 2½ years in the making,” MDI chief executive John Sharman says. “It has resulted in an enormous efficiency gain, which will increase efficiency by 10 times over how we were previously manufacturing.

“The reality is that 99 per cent of pharmaceuticals companies manu-

facture drugs the same way. We are now the first in the world to manufacture them differently.

“The process is patentable and we have kept our intellectual property a secret and this new process has opened the door globally for our product.”

MDI is an Australian company delivering emergency medical solutions to improve patient outcomes.

Pentrox has been widely used in Australia for more than 30 years by

hospitals, ambulances, defence forces, national sporting codes and emergency services.

“We believe that Pentrox offers an effective alternative to established products already used in Europe and expanding into this market has substantially increased our business already,” Sharman says.

“We expect exporting this product through Europe and beyond will increase our business by up to 15 times but because our manufacturing process is very scalable, we won't need to add anyone in that area because of the way we have set it up.”

Pentrox, which is made in Melbourne, has significant advantages over other analgesics such as nitrous oxide and morphine in that it is rapid, self-administered, non-addictive, non-narcotic, safe to use and provides strong pain relief.

MDI has regulatory approval to sell the product in England, France, Ireland and Belgium, where there

are more than 50 million accidents and emergency hospital attendances each year.

MDI has estimated these markets for Pentrox are worth \$100 million per year.

Saudi Arabia, Israel, New Zeal-

and, Malaysia and Mexico are also on the list for potential sales, as is the United States.

“We believe our product is superior to all our current competitors and when you take Pentrox your pain will subside within 10 breaths,” Sharman says.

CSIRO scientists have been working with MDI since 1999, looking at ways to improve production capabilities.

The CSIRO helped MDI develop the initial production process in Melbourne when the original overseas supplier stopped manufacturing methoxyflurane more than 15 years ago.

It has been the only global manufacturer since and the new technology cements that advantage.



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MDI says the drug Pentrox can relieve pain faster than its competitors.