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Discovery by Australia boosts hopes of preventing Type I diabetes

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Type 1 diabetes affects about 12 in every 100,000 Australians, with an average of about seven new cases diagnosed per day



Australian researchers may be a step closer to preventing Type 1 diabetes after identifying a crucial protein that could prevent the autoimmune disease from taking hold.

University of Queensland and Mater researchers have developed a biological agent, sRAGE, that boosts white blood cell function which is damaged in individuals who develop Type 1 diabetes.

Type 1 diabetes is a potentially life-threatening chronic condition in which the pancreas produces little or no insulin.

UQ Faculty of Medicine researcher, Professor Josephine Forbes said the protein discovery was an exciting development.

“Our laboratory tests show sRAGE can correct faulty regulatory T-cells to better prevent the immune system from going haywire and causing diabetes. Our pre-clinical studies indicate this agent will be safer and far less intrusive than current treatments being tested for Type 1diabetes prevention, such as regulatory T-cell infusions. We’ve already started working with companies overseas to explore ways of delivering the treatment in tablet form and we’re optimistic about starting clinical trials within three years”, said Professor Forbes.