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## New hope for MS treatment

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**SUE DUNLEVY**

A BREAKTHROUGH Australian treatment that could reverse the damage caused by multiple sclerosis could be fast-tracked after one of the world's biggest pharmaceutical companies expressed interest.

Monash University researcher Dr Steven Petratos this week met with the global pharmaceutical giant and said if the company came on board clinical trials could begin in three years instead of five to 10.

Thousands of Australians with secondary progressive multiple sclerosis could be eligible to take part in clinical trials for the drug.

The *Herald Sun* reported earlier this week that Dr Petratos had found the drug DITPA — approved by the US FDA for use in clinical trials to treat a rare disorder called Allan-Herndon-Dudley syndrome — could repair the damaged coating on nerve cells.

Demyelination, where nerve cells are stripped of their protective sheath, is a hallmark of MS, which causes loss of motor control, muscular spasms, incontinence, weakness, memory loss and problems with thought and planning.

Dr Petratos has modified the drug to reduce side effects.