Breakthrough in reversing cystic fibrosis

Hannah Devlin Science Editor

One of the first treatments for cystic fibrosis to show signs of reversing symptoms of the inherited disease has been developed by scientists.

A small study of ten patients found that a combination of two existing drugs reduced inflammation of the lungs and the saltiness of sweat in patients — two of the main indicators of the condition.

Nine of the patients showed signs of having responded to the drugs, although the two-month trial was not long enough to show whether this improved their lung function, overall health or life expectancy.

Anil Mehta, a co-author of the study at the University of Dundee, said: "The results suggest that it might be possible to arrest the disease. Obviously we are still at an early stage but if these results are replicated in a placebo-controlled clinical trial, then I believe it could be a potential game-changer."

The team hope to raise £1.3 million to run a year-long clinical trial with 120 patients. Cystic fibrosis affects about one child in every 2,500 and the condition causes difficulty breathing and lung infections, and can affect the liver, pancreas and intestines.

Times 12.11.14