

# Proof of concept for wound care trial

**A PROOF-OF-CONCEPT clinical trial for a new therapeutic agent for venous and pressure ulcers has been given the go-ahead at Melbourne's Austin Hospital.**

Led by well-known wound care researcher Associate Professor Michael Woodward of the University of Melbourne, the trial will assess the safety and efficacy of Phoenix Eagle's patented OPAL A filtrate and cream treatment for hard-to-heal ulcers.

It will be a double-blind, randomised, placebo-controlled trial, expected to last for 18 months, Woodward, a member of the company's medical and scientific advisory committee, said.

"Screening will ensure that only truly hard-to-heal ulcers



Michael Woodward

will be admitted to the trial proper and any subject that shows significant improvement in the screening stage will be excluded," he said.

"There are not many new treatments being tested in the area of wound therapies and positive results from this trial are likely to generate strong interest globally."

Woodward said no new active

therapeutic agents for wound care in more than a decade had achieved positive trial results and proceeded to the registration and marketing stage.

"It is wonderful to test an Australian-developed preparation for a problem that affects four per cent of the world's elderly population."

OPAL A is a topically applied liquid or cream derived from paw paw. Phoenix Eagle, a private company based in Perth, has developed a process to extract active compounds from fruits and vegetables for clinical and cosmetic use.

At present, all indications of efficacy are anecdotal but impressive, according to a paper published in *Wound Practice and Research* in May 2008 and a

presentation by Associate Professor Geoffrey Mitchell of the University of Queensland at the Australian Wound Management Association conference in the same month.

The trial will begin on January 15. **HA**



## Outreach for nursing standards in East Timor

**ST JOHN of God Health Care has dedicated \$7.5 million over five years to a program to develop nursing standards and practices in East Timor.**

The healthcare provider is currently recruiting a senior nurse manager to head the program, along with experienced, specialist registered nurses to implement the program at Dili National Hospital.

The nurses will be engaged on a minimum two-year placement and will be involved in mentoring and guiding Timorese nurses in the development and implementation of policies, procedures, systems and practices. Once the new practices have been embedded, they will be rolled out to the country's four district hospitals.

St John of God's director of nursing services, Kate Birrell,

performed an evaluation of nursing standards and practices in East Timor in 2008.

"The standard of nursing care underpins all aspects of patient care, especially in a country such as Timor Leste with limited overall medical resources, medication and biomedical equipment," Birrell said.

"There are currently few over-arching nursing policies or procedures in place and the overall standard of care provided

by the current nursing staff at all hospitals ... is at a basic level."

Newly appointed international health coordinator, Anthea Ramos, is in charge of the recruitment process and said she was seeking nurses with expertise across a range of specialities. "Most importantly, nurses who are resilient, adaptable and have experience working in and managing a changing environment," she said.

"They will be acting as role

models and will need to demonstrate a willingness and enthusiasm to work alongside the Timorese and be a part of something that is life-changing.

"We want to establish consistency within the program as well as ongoing support that is sustainable, rather than short secondments that do not allow the program to have the greatest impact."

The development of the nursing program follows the successful implementation of a pathology development program in East Timor, which has been operating since 2004. St John of God's assistance programs in the country have been recognised by the Global Health Fund and the World Bank as some of the most successful by a non-government agency since the country's independence. **HA**



Anthea Ramos (second from left) with St John of God Health Care staff in East Timor.