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POSTED: 8:00 p.m., Aug. 16, 2009
LAST MODIFIED: 8:20 p.m., Aug. 16, 2009

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FOCUS: UNIVERSITY RESEARCH

UM researcher aims to treat CF through nanoemulsion tech

By [Ryan Beene](#)

University of Michigan researcher Dr. James Baker, director of **Michigan Nanotechnology Institute for Medicine and Biological Sciences**, is working to develop a new use for his nanoemulsion technology — bacteria- and fungi-killing microscopic oil droplets — to treat cystic fibrosis.

The new application has brought additional funding to his company, NanoBio, which has already brought in more than \$100 million in funding since 1996.

People with cystic fibrosis suffer from a genetic defect that often leads to severe bacterial infections in the lungs. But because the infections are treated with antibiotics, over time the bacteria can become resistant, leaving patients with no relief.

"Unfortunately there are many patients out there without any type of treatment available, and that is really the most common cause of death among CF patients," he said.

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But in February, his research demonstrated that the nanoemulsion can kill all the antibiotic-resistant bacteria in the lungs. He is currently testing the safety of nanoemulsions in the lungs.

Until now, the application for the nanoemulsions could only be delivered on infected areas on the surface, like cold sores. The oil droplets penetrate the skin and kill the viruses that cause cold sores, as well as bacteria and fungi on skin and mucus membranes.

If proven to be safe for lung tissue, the technology could be delivered through an aerosol inhaler.

"It could have a really important impact," he said.

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