

Medical hopes rest on tomato

BY KEVIN FEDDY

THE humble tomato is being hailed as a medical marvel following research which shows its juice can reduce the risk of strokes, heart attacks and deep vein thrombosis.

Now Manchester bioscience firm Provexis has secured funding to conduct second-phase trials of CardioFlow, a syrup produced from highly-filtered tomato juice.

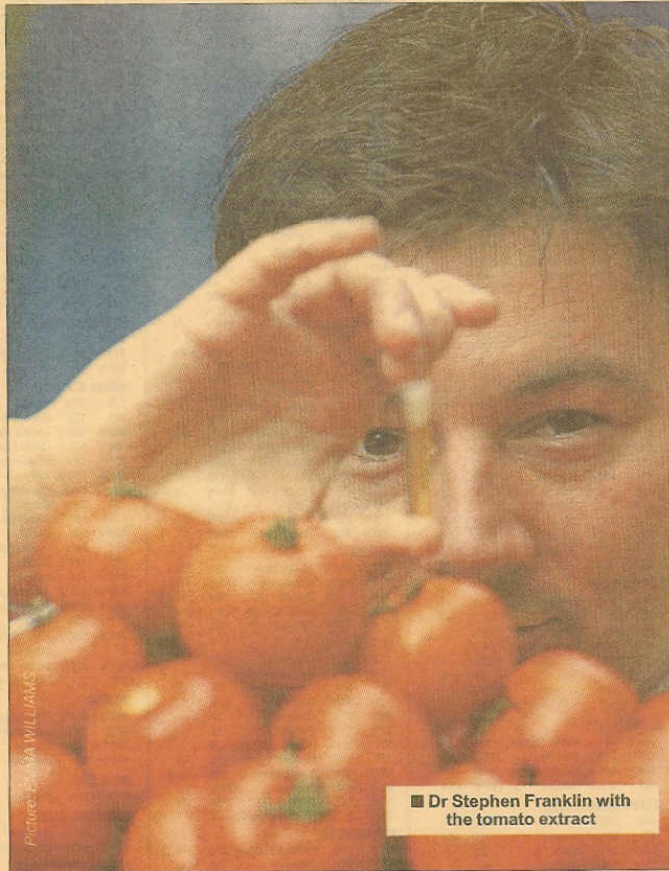
The trials involving 100 volunteers are due to begin next year. If they are successful, CardioFlow could be widely available by the end of 2004.

Provexis hopes to sign a licensing deal with a global food company to bring CardioFlow to market.

It is expected to become an ingredient in healthy food and drinks, such as orange juice, and could be sold in capsule form.

Provexis, based on the Manchester Science Park, has secured around £350,000 in venture capital backing from the Rising Stars Growth Fund, part of Lancashire's Enterprise Ventures. Chief executive Dr Stephen Franklin, 34, has also put in some of his own cash.

Provexis' management team was advised by corporate finance firm Cole Associates, of Deansgate, Manchester.



Picture: ELA WILKINS

■ Dr Stephen Franklin with the tomato extract