This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/mark- er/pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Neurology				
Neurology	β -catenin	<p>Studies in mice and in cell culture suggest that stabilizing β-catenin may be useful for treating stroke and other neurological disorders characterized by a leaky blood-brain barrier (BBB). In mice, activation of β-catenin in BBB endothelial cells improved BBB permeability properties compared with those seen in mice that had inactivated β-catenin. In cultured mouse brain endothelial cells, β-catenin stabilization increased expression of BBB-related proteins compared with that seen in cells in which the protein was not stabilized. Next steps include characterizing the pathways involved in forming the endothelial barrier.</p> <p>AVN316, a small molecule from Avalon Pharmaceuticals Inc. that lowers β-catenin protein levels, is in preclinical testing to treat cancer.</p> <p>SciBX 1(41); doi:10.1038/scibx.2008.1002 Published online Nov. 13, 2008</p>	Preliminary patent filed; available for licensing from the FIRC Institute of Molecular Oncology-European Institute of Oncology Campus Technology Transfer Office	<p>Liebner, S. <i>et al. J. Cell Biol.</i>; published online Oct. 27, 2008; doi:10.1083/jcb.200806024</p> <p>Contact: Elisabetta Dejana, Italian Foundation for Cancer Research Institute of Molecular Oncology, Milan, Italy e-mail: elisabetta.dejana@ifom-ieo-campus.it</p> <p>Contact: Holger Gerhardt, Cancer Research UK, London, U.K. e-mail: holger.gerhardt@cancer.org.uk</p> <p>Contact: Stefan Liebner, Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, Frankfurt, Germany e-mail: stefan.liebner@kgu.de</p>