This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/ pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Neurology				
Pain	IL-18; IL-18 receptor (IL-18R)	<p>Studies in rats suggest that blocking IL-18 signaling in the spinal cord could help treat neuropathic pain. In rat spinal nerve ligation models of neuropathic pain, IL-18 was upregulated in the microglia of the spinal dorsal horn compared with what was seen in uninjured littermates. Antibodies targeting IL-18 or IL-18R prior to injury lowered mechanical pain hypersensitivity after injury compared with that seen in mice that received vehicle or IgG control antibody. Further studies are necessary to determine the effects of systemic IL-18 knockout, to develop an antibody that suppresses IL-18 function in spinal microglia and to develop a drug delivery system.</p> <p>Avigen Inc.'s ibudilast (AV411), a glial attenuator that suppresses IL-1β, tumor necrosis factor-α and IL-6, whose production might be induced by IL-18, is in Phase IIa testing to treat neuropathic pain. SLC022, a small molecule glial cell modulator from Solace Pharmaceuticals Inc., is in Phase II testing to treat neuropathic pain.</p> <p>SciBX 1(44); doi:10.1038/scibx.2008.1082 Published online Dec. 11, 2008</p>	Findings unpatented; unavailable for licensing	<p>Miyoshi, K. <i>et al. J. Neurosci.</i>; published online Nov. 26, 2008; doi:10.1523/JNEUROSCI.3512-08.2008</p> <p>Contact: Koichi Noguchi, Hyogo College of Medicine, Hyogo, Japan e-mail: noguchi@hyo-med.ac.jp</p>