This week in techniques

Approach	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Markers			
Serum-based cancer diagnostics	<p>A study in both human cell culture and serum suggests that mRNAs in serum-borne microvesicles could be useful for diagnosing glioblastoma multiforme (GBM) and evaluating disease progression. Cultured glioma cells secreted microvesicles containing multiple mRNAs at higher levels than their originating glioblastoma cells. mRNA encoding epidermal growth factor receptor variant III (EGFRvIII), a causative factor in about half of GBM cases, was found in microvesicles prepared from the serum of 7 of 25 GBM patients but not in the serum of 30 healthy controls. Next steps include developing methods to increase sensitivity and sample quality, and extending the findings to other tumor types.</p> <p>Technology for the preparation and analysis of serum-borne microvesicles is in development by Exosome Diagnostics Inc.</p> <p>SciBX 1(44); doi:10.1038/scibx.2008.1089 Published online Dec. 11, 2008</p>	<p>Patent pending; licensed to Exosome Diagnostics</p>	<p>Skog, J. <i>et al. Nat. Cell Biol.</i>; published online Nov. 16, 2008; doi:10.1038/ncb1800 Contact: Xandra Breakefield, Massachusetts General Hospital, Charlestown, Mass. e-mail: breakefield@hms.harvard.edu Contact: Johan Skog, same affiliation as above e-mail: Skog.Johan@mgh.harvard.edu</p>