

This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/ pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Cardiovascular disease				
Myocardial infarction (MI); heart failure	β -Catenin	<p>Studies in mice suggest that antagonizing β-catenin in the heart could help treat cardiomyopathy and improve outcomes following MI. In a murine coronary artery ligation model of MI, cardiomyocyte-specific depletion of β-catenin increased heart pumping function and lowered the heart weight to body weight ratio and infarct size compared with what was seen in control mice that had stabilized β-catenin. β-catenin depletion also enhanced cardiac progenitor cell differentiation following ischemia, which could contribute to cardiac repair mechanisms. Further studies are necessary to repeat the genetic findings using a pharmacologic approach such as a general or heart-specific β-catenin inhibitor.</p> <p>Avalon Pharmaceuticals Inc.'s AVE316, a small molecule that lowers β-catenin levels, is in preclinical testing to treat cancer.</p> <p>SciBX 1(45); doi:10.1038/scibx.2008.1100 Published online Dec. 18, 2008</p>	Worldwide patent application filed for β -catenin inhibition to treat cardiovascular disease; available for licensing	<p>Zelarayan, L. <i>et al. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA</i>; published online Nov. 24, 2008; doi:10.1073/pnas.0808393105</p> <p>Contact: Martin W. Bergmann, Charité-Medical School Berlin, Franz Volhard Klinik, Germany e-mail: martin.bergmann@charite.de</p> <p>Contact: Jean-Luc Balligand, University of Louvain Medical School, Brussels, Belgium e-mail: balligand@mint.ucl.ac.be</p>