This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/ pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Infectious disease				
Leishmania; malaria; trypanosome	Not applicable	<p>Studies <i>in vitro</i> and in mice identified a class of dicationic 2-phenylbenzofurans that could help treat protozoa infections. <i>In vitro</i>, several of these dicationic compounds had better activity against <i>Trypanosoma brucei rhodesiense</i>, <i>Plasmodium falciparum</i> and <i>Leishmania donovani</i> than the marketed antiprotozoal compounds pentamidine and melarsoprol. The new compounds had low cytotoxicity against cultured rat myoblasts but good potency in a mouse model of trypanosomiasis. Studies to move selected compounds through IND submission and Phase I testing are ongoing. Pentamidine and melarsoprol are generics that are approved to treat pneumonia caused by <i>Pneumocystis carinii</i> and human African trypanosomiasis (HAT), respectively.</p> <p>SciBX 1(38); doi:10.1038/scibx.2008.928 Published online Oct. 23, 2008</p>	Compound class patented for the tropical disease indications; available for licensing to treat HAT and leishmaniasis	<p>Bakunov, S. <i>et al. J. Med. Chem.</i>; published online Oct. 9, 2008; doi:10.1021/jm800918v</p> <p>Contact: Richard R. Tidwell, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, N.C. e-mail: Tidwell@med.unc.edu</p>