This week in techniques

Approach	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Assays & screens			
High throughput screening platform for identifying synergistic drug combinations	<p>A high throughput screening platform could be useful for identifying synergistic drug combinations to treat a variety of diseases. An initial set of simulations and 13 cell-based screens identified potential drug combinations in cancer and in viral, bacterial, inflammatory and cardiovascular-associated diseases. In a rat model of asthma, one of the combinations, nortriptyline plus budesonide, showed better efficacy than either agent alone and was comparable to the high-dose steroid control dexamethasone. In a rat model of pain, a second combination, nortriptyline plus prednisolone, showed anti-inflammatory effects without the glucocorticoid-related toxicity associated with prednisolone plus dipyridamole, a common anti-inflammatory combination therapy. The two-drug combinations are being evaluated in Phase II trials in patients with osteoarthritis (OA) and rheumatoid arthritis (RA). Synavive, a selective steroid amplifier containing dipyridamole and prednisolone from CombinatoRx Inc., is in Phase II testing to treat OA and RA.</p> <p>SciBX 2(27); doi:10.1038/scibx.2009.1091 Published online July 16, 2009</p>	High throughput screening platform covered by issued and filed patents; available for licensing from CombinatoRx; already nonexclusively licensed to Novartis AG	<p>Lehár, J. <i>et al. Nat. Biotechnol.</i>; published online July 5, 2009; doi:10.1038/nbt.1549 Contact: Alexis A. Borisy, CombinatoRx Inc., Cambridge, Mass. e-mail: aborisy@combinatorx.com Contact: Joseph Lehár, same affiliation as above e-mail: jlehar@combinatorx.com</p>