This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/ pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Neurology				
Pain	Gastrin-releasing peptide receptor (GRPR; GRP-R)	<p>A study in mice suggests that targeting GRP-R could help relieve itching. In mice, intrathecal delivery of bombesin-saporin, a GRP-R agonist coupled to a cytotoxic compound, selectively killed GRP-R⁺ neurons and led to less chemically-induced scratching behavior compared with intrathecal delivery of control peptide-saporin. Mice lacking GRP-R⁺ neurons still responded normally to thermal and inflammatory pain. Next steps include identifying GRP-R antagonists and testing them in animal models of itchiness.</p> <p>SciBX 2(33); doi:10.1038/scibx.2009.1285 Published online Aug. 27, 2009</p>	<p>Patent pending, available for licensing through the Washington University in St. Louis Office of Technology Management Contact: Nichole Mercier, Washington University in St. Louis, St. Louis, Mo. e-mail: NMercier@otm.wustl.edu</p>	<p>Sun, Y.-G. <i>et al. Science</i>; published online Aug. 6, 2009; doi:10.1126/science.1174868 Contact: Zhou-Feng Chen, Washington University in St. Louis School of Medicine, St. Louis, Mo. e-mail: chenz@wustl.edu</p>