This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/ pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Cancer				
Breast cancer	Unknown	<p>A study in cell culture identified ceramide analogs that could help treat chemoresistant breast cancer. Ceramides are a family of lipid molecules that consist of sphingosine and a fatty acid. In hormone therapy-resistant and chemoresistant human breast cancer cell lines, one of the analogs significantly reduced cell proliferation compared with the parent compound and had IC₅₀ values in the low micromolar range. Next steps include evaluating the ceramide analogs <i>in vivo</i> and in combination with chemotherapeutics.</p> <p>Genz-112638, a ceramide analog that inhibits glucosylceramide synthase (GCS) from Genzyme Corp., is in Phase III testing to treat Gaucher's disease.</p> <p>BL-4060, a ceramide analog from BioLineRx Ltd., is in preclinical development to treat solid tumors.</p> <p>SciBX 2(36); doi:10.1038/scibx.2009.1372 Published online Sept. 17, 2009</p>	Patent pending covering ceramide analogs and their use in chemoresistant and endocrine therapy-resistant breast cancers; licensing status undisclosed	<p>Antoon, J.W. <i>et al. J. Med. Chem.</i>; published online Aug. 20, 2009; doi:10.1021/jm9009668</p> <p>Contact: Maryam Foroozesh, Xavier University of Louisiana, New Orleans, La. e-mail: mforooze@xula.edu</p>