This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Cancer				
Melanoma	β -catenin (CTNNB1); wingless-type MMTV integration site family, member 3A (WNT3A)	<p>Studies in patient samples and in cell culture suggest that increasing WNT3A or CTNNB1 signaling may improve survival of melanoma patients. In primary tumor samples from melanoma patients, higher nuclear CTNNB1 levels were associated with increased survival. In mouse and human melanoma cells, transduction with a lentiviral vector to increase WNT3A and CTNNB1 signaling decreased tumor growth and proliferation compared with what was seen in cells transduced by control vectors. Next steps include identifying compounds that mimic the effects of WNT3A signaling and evaluating their effects in melanoma cells. Avalon Pharmaceuticals Inc's AVN316, a small molecule compound that lowers CTNNB1 protein levels, is in preclinical testing to treat cancer.</p> <p>SciBX 2(4); doi:10.1038/scibx.2009.139 Published online Jan. 29, 2009</p>	Patent application filed; licensed to Fate Therapeutics	<p>Chien, A. <i>et al. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA</i>; published online Jan. 12, 2009; doi:10.1073/pnas.0811902106 Contact: Randall T. Moon, University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle, Wash. e-mail: rtmoon@u.washington.edu</p>