This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Cancer				
Cancer	Procaspase-3; procaspase-6; caspase-3 (CASP3; CPP32); caspase-6 (CASP6; MCH2)	<p>Studies in cell culture suggest that small molecule activators of procaspases could help treat cancer. High throughput screening identified a small molecule that activated procaspase-3 and procaspase-6, the precursors to apoptosis-inducing CASP3 and CASP6. The compound induced apoptosis in human breast and cervical cancer cell lines more efficiently than a nonspecific kinase inhibitor or a topoisomerase inhibitor. Next steps include synthesizing and testing analogs of the lead compound <i>in vitro</i> and <i>in vivo</i>. Antipodean Pharmaceuticals Inc's MitoQ caspase inhibitor has completed Phase II testing to treat raised liver enzyme levels associated with HCV. Gilead Sciences Inc's caspase inhibitor, GS-9450, is in Phase II testing to treat HCV infection and fibrosis.</p> <p>SciBX 2(44); doi:10.1038/scibx.2009.1625 Published online Nov. 12, 2009</p>	Patented by the University of California, San Francisco; available for licensing	<p>Wolan, D. <i>et al. Science</i>; published online Nov. 5, 2009; doi:10.1126/science.1177585</p> <p>Contact: James A. Wells, University of California, San Francisco, Calif. e-mail: jim.wells@ucsf.edu</p>