This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/ pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Cardiovascular disease				
Hypertension	Melanocortin 4 receptor (MC4R)	<p>A study in humans suggests that MC4R antagonists could be useful for treating hypertension. Overweight and obese subjects with inherited partial loss-of-function mutations in <i>MC4R</i> had a lower prevalence of hypertension than overweight and obese controls with normal MC4R levels (24% vs. 53%; $p=0.009$). MC4R-deficient subjects treated with an MC4R agonist showed higher blood pressure than untreated controls. Next steps could include testing compounds that modulate MC4R activity in animal models of hypertension.</p> <p>Santhera Pharmaceuticals Holding AG has two MC4R antagonists in preclinical development for cachexia—SNT207707 and SNT207858.</p> <p><i>SciBX</i> 2(5); doi:10.1038/scibx.2009.186 Published online Feb. 5, 2009</p>	Patent and licensing status undisclosed	<p>Greenfield, J.R. <i>et al. N. Engl. J. Med.</i>; published online Dec. 17, 2008; doi:10.1056/NEJMoa0803085</p> <p>Contact: I. Sadaf Farooqi, Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, U.K. e-mail: isf20@cam.ac.uk</p>