This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Infectious disease				
Sepsis	Caspase-7	<p>Studies in mice suggest that caspase-7 downregulation could help treat septic shock and endotoxemia. In a mouse model of endotoxemia, caspase-7 knockout led to decreased splenic lymphocyte apoptosis, a hallmark of fatal sepsis, while maintaining similar plasma cytokine and chemokine levels compared with what was seen in wild-type mice. In a mouse model of lethal endotoxemia, all knockout mice survived compared with only 40% of wild-type mice. Further studies are necessary to develop caspase-7 inhibitors and to test them in additional animal models of shock.</p> <p>AM-Pharma B.V. has alkaline phosphatase and Xoma Ltd. has Neuprex opebacan targeting lipopolysaccharide in Phase II and Phase I/II testing, respectively, to treat sepsis.</p> <p>ART-123, a soluble form of recombinant human thrombomodulin from Artisan Pharma Inc., is in Phase II testing to treat sepsis.</p> <p>Xigris drotrecogin alfa, a recombinant version of human activated protein C (APC), is marketed by Eli Lilly and Co. to treat sepsis.</p> <p><i>SciBX</i> 2(5); doi:10.1038/scibx.2009.193 Published online Feb. 5, 2009</p>	Findings unpatented; available for licensing	<p>Lamkanfi, M. <i>et al. Blood</i>; published online Jan. 23, 2009; doi:10.1182/blood-2008-09-178038</p> <p>Contact: Thirumala-Devi Kanneganti, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Memphis, Tenn. e-mail: thirumala-devi.kanneganti@stjude.org</p>