This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Neurology				
Epilepsy; stroke	Pannexin 1 (PANX1); N-methyl-D-aspartic acid receptor (NMDA receptor)	<p>Studies in cell culture and in brain slices suggest that inhibiting activation of PANX1 in NMDA-expressing neurons could help treat epilepsy, stroke and other neurological disorders. In cultured hippocampal neurons, activation of the NMDA receptor induced a secondary current that was mediated by PANX1 activation. In rodent brain slices, increased NMDA receptor activation triggered epileptic-like activity that was decreased with a Panx1 channel-blocking peptide. Next steps include investigating the signals that trigger activation of PANX1.</p> <p>At least five companies have NMDA receptor antagonists in development to treat various forms of pain.</p> <p>SciBX 2(1); doi:10.1038/scibx.2009.25 Published online Jan. 8, 2009</p>	Unpatented; unlicensed	<p>Thompson, R. <i>et al. Science</i>; published online Dec. 4, 2008; doi:10.1126/science.1165209</p> <p>Contact: Roger J. Thompson, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada e-mail: thompson@ucalgary.ca</p> <p>Contact: Brian A. MacVicar, same affiliation as above e-mail: bmaccvicar@brain.ubc.ca</p>