This week in techniques

Approach	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Disease models			
Mouse model of Parkinson's disease (PD)	<p>Transgenic mice expressing a mutant form of the human parkin (PARK2) protein could help guide the development of neuroprotective PD therapies. The transgenic mice developed late-onset hypokinetic motor deficits and age-dependent dopaminergic neuron loss compared with wild-type controls. In the transgenic mice, proteinase K-resistant α-synuclein accumulated in the midbrain, similar to what is seen in PD patients, and colocalized with 3-nitrotyrosine, which indicates oxidative protein damage. Wild-type controls did not show such effects. Next steps include testing a homozygous mutant model to accelerate the disease process—neurodegeneration in the heterozygous model takes about 18 months.</p> <p>Affiris GmbH's PD01, which targets α-synuclein, and Alnylam Pharmaceuticals Inc's Mayo8S2M, a small interfering RNA against α-synuclein, are each in preclinical testing to treat PD.</p> <p>SciBX 2(8); doi:10.1038/scibx.2009.336 Published online Feb. 26, 2009</p>	Model unpatented; available for licensing from the University of California, Los Angeles for preclinical testing of candidate neuroprotective therapeutics for PD	<p>Lu, X. <i>et al. J. Neurosci.</i>; published online Feb. 18, 2009; doi:10.1523/JNEUROSCI.5351-08.2009</p> <p>Contact: X. William Yang, University of California, Los Angeles, Calif. e-mail: xwyang@mednet.ucla.edu</p>