This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/athway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Cancer				
Pancreatic cancer	Smoothed (SMO); sonic hedgehog homolog (SHH)	<p>A study in cell culture and in mice and human tissue suggests that inhibiting SMO in stromal cells could help treat pancreatic cancer. <i>In vitro</i> and in mice, a constitutively active mutant SMO expressed in stromal cells near pancreatic ductal epithelial tumor cells led to activation of oncogenic SHH pathway genes. In human pancreatic ductal adenomas, SHH transcriptional activity was also higher in stromal cells than in epithelial tumor cells. Next steps could include identifying how stromal SHH pathway activation promotes growth of nearby tumors and targeting SMO therapeutics to stromal cells.</p> <p>GDC-0449, a SMO antagonist from Curis Inc. and Genentech Inc., is in Phase II trials for advanced basal cell carcinoma (BCC).</p> <p>BMS-833923 (XL139), a SMO antagonist from Bristol-Myers Squibb Co. and Exelixis Inc., is in Phase I trials to treat advanced solid tumors.</p> <p>Fate Therapeutics Inc. and Infinity Pharmaceuticals Inc. have compounds targeting the SHH pathway in preclinical development for cancer.</p> <p>SciBX 2(9); doi:10.1038/scibx.2009.354 Published online March 5, 2009</p>	Genentech has filed multiple patent applications covering Hedgehog research and its potential commercial implications; licensing status undisclosed	<p>Tian, H. <i>et al. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA</i>; published online Feb. 16, 2009; doi:10.1073/pnas.0813203106</p> <p>Contact: Frederic J. de Sauvage, Genentech Inc., South San Francisco, Calif. e-mail: sauvage@gene.com</p>