This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Infectious disease				
Cytomegalovirus (CMV); varicella zoster virus (VZV)	Unknown	<p><i>In vitro</i> studies suggest that 4-benzyloxy-γ-sulfone derivatives can inhibit VZV and CMV infections, including drug-resistant CMV strains. Ten derivatives exhibited activity against CMV and VZV replication in human cell cultures. Additional <i>in vitro</i> experiments showed that two of the compounds inhibited drug-resistant strains of CMV. Future work should identify the derivatives' specific mechanism of action.</p> <p>At least seven companies market therapies to treat CMV infection.</p> <p>At least six companies have antiviral treatments or vaccines in preclinical to early-stage clinical testing to treat or prevent CMV infection.</p> <p>Merck & Co. Inc. markets Varivax, a vaccine against VZV infection. Merck and partner sanofi-aventis Group market Zostavax, a vaccine against VZV infection. Cangene Corp. has VariZIG, approved to prevent or treat VZV infection. Merck and GlaxoSmithKline plc have vaccines against VZV in early-stage clinical testing. Inhibitex Inc. and partners Medivir AB and Epiphany Biosciences Inc. have antiviral agents in early-stage clinical testing to treat VZV infection.</p> <p>SciBX 2(9); doi:10.1038/scibx.2009.362 Published online March 5, 2009</p>	Patent and licensing status unavailable	<p>De Castro, S. <i>et al. J. Med. Chem.</i>; published online Feb. 19, 2009; doi:10.1021/jm8014662</p> <p>Contact: Sonsoles Velázquez, Institute of Medical Chemistry, Madrid, Spain e-mail: iqmsv29@iqm.csic.es</p>