This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/ pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Infectious disease				
HCV	HCV non-structural protein 2 (NS2); NS3	<p><i>In vitro</i> studies suggest that targeting HCV NS2 could help treat HCV infection. Crystallographic analysis of HCV NS2 expressed in baby hamster kidney cells showed that it cleaved the NS2-NS3 site of the HCV polyprotein, the polypeptide that contains all HCV proteins. These results indicate that NS2 is an NS2-NS3-specific protease. Next steps include designing cellular assays for screening inhibitors of the NS2 protease. Telaprevir (VX-950; MP-424), a small molecule HCV NS3 protease inhibitor from partners Vertex Pharmaceuticals Inc., Mitsubishi Tanabe Pharma Corp. and Johnson & Johnson, is in Phase III testing to treat HCV infection. Schering-Plough Corp.'s HCV NS3 protease inhibitor boceprevir is in Phase III testing to treat HCV infection. At least eight other companies have NS3 protease inhibitors in preclinical to early-stage clinical testing to treat HCV infection.</p> <p>SciBX 2(11); doi:10.1038/scibx.2009.455 Published online March 19, 2009</p>	Unpatented; available for licensing	<p>Schregel, V. <i>et al. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA</i>; published online March 9, 2009; doi:10.1073/pnas.0810950106</p> <p>Contact: Norbert Tautz, University of Lubeck, Lubeck, Germany e-mail: Tautz@molbio.uni-luebeck.de</p>