This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/ pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Neurology				
Alzheimer's disease (AD)	Amyloid- β (A β) precursor protein (APP)	<p>Studies in cultured human fibroblasts suggest that modified β-amyloid (Aβ) peptides or mimetics could help treat AD. Genetic analysis unveiled the A673V mutation in <i>APP</i>. Homozygous individuals had AD, whereas heterozygous carriers within the same family were AD-free. In fibroblasts, mixtures of normal and A673V mutant Aβ were slower to form aggregates than normal or mutant peptides alone. Aggregates composed of mixed normal and mutant peptides were smaller and less chemically stable than aggregates containing only normal or mutant peptides. Next steps include testing modified Aβ peptides or peptidomimetics for their ability to hinder the formation of amyloid aggregates <i>in vivo</i>.</p> <p>Two therapies targeting Aβ are in Phase III testing to treat AD: Alzhemed tramiprosate from Bellus Health Inc. and bapineuzumab from partners Elan Corp. plc and Wyeth.</p> <p>At least 14 other companies have therapies targeting Aβ in preclinical and Phase I testing to treat AD.</p> <p>SciBX 2(11); doi:10.1038/scibx.2009.461 Published online March 19, 2009</p>	Patented; available for licensing	<p>Di Fede, G. <i>et al. Science</i>; published online March 12, 2009; doi:10.1126/science.1168979</p> <p>Contact: Fabrizio Tagliavini, "Carlo Besta" National Neurological Institute, Milan, Italy e-mail: ftagliavini@istituto-besta.it</p>