This week in techniques

Approach	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Drug platforms			
Conversion of human embryonic stem (ES) cells and induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells into neural cells	<p>A combination of Noggin and SB431542 may be useful for converting human ES and iPS cells into neural cells for use in cell replacement therapies. Noggin and SB431542 inhibit signaling of a transcription factor called mothers against decapentaplegic homolog (SMAD; MADH). Researchers used the co-treatment protocol to differentiate human ES and iPS cells into a nearly homogeneous population of neural cells that could be further differentiated into neurons and neural crest progeny. Next steps include developing protocols to differentiate the neural stem cells into additional neuronal cell types.</p> <p>SciBX 2(11); doi:10.1038/scibx.2009.472 Published online March 19, 2009</p>	Provisional patent filed covering dual MADH inhibition protocol; licensing status undisclosed	<p>Chambers, S.M. <i>et al. Nat. Biotechnol.</i>; published online March 1, 2009; doi:10.1038/nbt.1529</p> <p>Contact: Lorenz Studer, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, New York, N.Y. e-mail: studerl@mskcc.org</p> <p>Contact: Stuart M. Chambers, same affiliation as above e-mail: chambers@mskcc.org</p>