This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/ pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Other				
Hearing loss	MicroRNA-96 (miRNA-96)	<p>Studies in mice and in humans identified mutations in miRNA-96 that could be useful predictors of susceptibility to hearing loss. In one study, a single base change in the target region of murine miRNA-96 disrupted development of sensory hair cells and led to progressive hearing loss. In the second study, genetic analysis of Spanish families with progressive hearing loss revealed point mutations in various locations in the seed region of miRNA-96, whereas the mutations were not found in normal-hearing Spanish controls. Next steps could include developing a diagnostic based on the miRNA-96 findings and further elucidating the effects of modulating miRNA-96 expression on its targets to develop therapeutics.</p> <p>Quark Pharmaceuticals Inc. has a small interfering RNA molecule in preclinical development to treat acute hearing loss associated with ototoxicity and acoustic trauma.</p>	<p>First study: patent and licensing status not applicable</p> <p>Second study: unpatented; licensing status undisclosed</p>	<p>Lewis, M. <i>et al. Nat. Genet.</i>; published online March 12, 2009; doi:10.1038/ng.369 Contact: Karen P. Steel, The Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute, Hinxton, U.K. e-mail: kps@sanger.ac.uk</p> <p>Mencia, Á. <i>et al. Nat. Genet.</i>; published online March 12, 2009; doi:10.1038/ng.355 Contact: Miguel Ángel Moreno-Pelayo, Hospital Ramon y Cajal, Madrid, Spain e-mail: mmoreno.hrc@salud.madrid.org</p>

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