This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Cancer				
Breast cancer; ovarian cancer	HER2 (ERBB2; neu)	Studies in mice suggest that an oncolytic herpes simplex virus (HSV) strain engineered to target HER2-positive cells could help treat HER2-expressing cancers. In mice bearing HER2-hyperexpressing human tumors, intratumoral administration of the HER-2-targeting oncolytic HSV significantly inhibited tumor growth compared with that in mice treated with control HSV. Next steps could include investigating the therapeutic potential of using the HER-2-targeting oncolytic HSV in combination or sequentially with small molecule inhibitors and mAbs. NV1020, an engineered oncolytic HSV-1 strain from MediGene AG, is in Phase II testing to treat liver metastasis. OncoVEX GM-CSF, a modified HSV-1 strain encoding granulocyte macrophage colony-stimulating factor (GM-CSF) from BioVex Inc., is in Phase III testing to treat metastatic melanoma. SciBX 2(21); doi:10.1038/scibx.2009.863 Published online May 28, 2009	Patent application filed in Europe; unlicensed	Menotti, L. <i>et al. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA</i>; published online May 18, 2009; doi:10.1073/pnas.0812268106 Contact: Gabriella Campadelli-Fiume, University of Bologna, Bologna, Italy e-mail: gabriella.campadelli@unibo.it