This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Neurology				
Alzheimer's disease (AD)	β -Amyloid (A β)	<p>Studies in cell culture and in flies suggest that stabilizing an α-helical conformation of Aβ could help treat AD. Ligands were designed that induced residues 16–23 of Aβ to form an α-helix rather than the β-strand that occurs in toxic amyloid aggregates. In murine hippocampal slices incubated with Aβ peptide, treatment with these ligands increased electrophysiological activity compared with no treatment. Moreover, human Aβ-expressing <i>Drosophila</i> treated with the ligands had longer lifespans, no loss of mobility and less nervous tissue degradation compared with untreated controls. Next steps include synthesizing and testing additional helix-stabilizing ligands to confirm the results.</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>SciBX 2(21); doi:10.1038/scibx.2009.884 Published online May 28, 2009</p>	Patented; licensing status undisclosed	<p>Nerelius, C. <i>et al. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA</i>; published online May 18, 2009; doi:10.1073/pnas.0810364106</p> <p>Contact: Jan Johansson, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden e-mail: jan.johansson@afb.slu.se</p> <p>Contact: Roger Strömberg, Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden e-mail: roger.stromberg@ki.se</p>