This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/ pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Cancer				
Lung cancer	Versican (VCAN); toll-like receptor 2 (TLR2)	Studies in cell culture and in mice suggest that blocking VCAN or TLR2 could be useful for treating lung cancer. Biochemical screening of mouse Lewis lung carcinoma cells showed that Vcan is a macrophage activator that acts through Tlr2 to stimulate the production of tumor necrosis factor-α (Tnf-α) in bone marrow cells and increase metastatic growth. In Tlr2^{-/-} mice receiving lung cancer cells, they had greater survival, fewer and smaller tumors and less metastasis than wild-type mice that received the cancer cells. Wild-type mice given Vcan-silenced lung cancer cells had better survival and less metastasis than mice that received Vcan-expressing lung cancer cells. Next steps include evaluating the effect of blocking VCAN or TLR2 in human cancer cells. SciBX 2(3); doi:10.1038/scibx.2009.90 Published online Jan. 22, 2009	Unpatented; unlicensed	Kim, S. <i>et al. Nature</i>; published online Dec. 31, 2008; doi:10.1038/nature07623 Contact: Michael Karin, University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, Calif. e-mail: karinoffice@ucsd.edu