This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/ pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Musculoskeletal disease				
Muscular dystrophy	Osteopontin (OPN; SPP1); transforming growth factor- β 1 (TGF β 1)	<p>Studies in mice suggest that inhibiting OPN could help treat Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD). In a mouse model of DMD, murine quadriceps muscles lacking Opn had lower expression of Tgfβ1, a mediator of muscle fibrosis, than controls that had functional Opn. Young mice lacking Opn also had significantly greater muscle strength than mice with functional Opn ($p \leq 0.05$). Older mice lacking Opn had significantly lower collagen levels in the diaphragm and heart muscle than mice with functional Opn ($p \leq 0.05$). Collagen can contribute to fibrosis. Next steps could include evaluating an Opn antagonist in animal models of DMD. At least 10 companies have compounds in Phase II or earlier development to treat muscular dystrophy.</p> <p>SciBX 2(22); doi:10.1038/scibx.2009.918 Published online June 4, 2009</p>	Patent and licensing status unavailable	<p>Vetrone, S.A. <i>et al.</i> <i>J. Clin. Invest.</i>; published online May 18, 2009; doi:10.1172/JCI37662</p> <p>Contact: Melissa J. Spencer, UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine, Los Angeles, Calif. e-mail: mspencer@mednet.ucla.edu</p>