This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/ pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Ophthalmic disease				
Retinitis	Serine palmitoyltransferase long chain base subunit 1 (SPTLC1; LBC1)	Studies in mice suggest that inhibiting ceramide biosynthesis could help treat retinitis pigmentosa (RP). In a mouse model of RP, retinal ceramide levels were higher than those in wild-type controls. In the same model, topical application of nanoparticles loaded with an inhibitor of SPTLC1, a key enzyme in ceramide biosynthesis, decreased retinal ceramide levels and increased the number of functioning photoreceptor rods compared with application of unloaded nanoparticle controls. Ongoing work includes investigating both the duration of the treatment effects in photoreceptor rods and whether the therapeutic effect extends to photoreceptor cones.	Patented by the University of Milan, the University of Pisa, the National Research Council and Nanovector s.r.l.; available for licensing	Strettoi, E. <i>et al. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA</i> ; published online Oct. 11, 2010; doi:10.1073/pnas.1007644107 Contact: Enrica Strettoi, National Research Council, Pisa, Italy e-mail: enrica.strettoi@in.cnr.it
		SciBX 3(44); doi:10.1038/scibx.2010.1334 Published online Nov. 11, 2010		