This week in techniques

Approach	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Markers			
Cholesterol oxidation products as biomarkers for diagnosing Niemann-Pick disease type C1 (NPC1) and monitoring treatment response	<p>Profiling cholesterol oxidation products may provide a biomarker for diagnosing NPC1 and for monitoring response to therapy. In a mouse model of NPC1, levels of cholesterol oxidation products were higher in the plasma prior to the onset of neurological symptoms than those in healthy control mice. In a feline model of NPC1, cyclodextrin decreased cholesterol oxidation products and symptoms compared with no treatment. In NPC1 patients, levels of two specific cholesterol oxidation products were greater than those in healthy controls ($p < 0.001$). Next steps include conducting larger-scale clinical tests and adapting the assay for newborn screening.</p> <p>SciBX 3(45); doi:10.1038/scibx.2010.1369 Published online Nov. 18, 2010</p>	<p>Patent application filed covering use of oxysterol biomarkers for clinical testing and screening; available for licensing from the Washington University in St. Louis Office of Technology Management</p>	<p>Porter, F.D. <i>et al. Sci. Transl. Med.</i>; published online Nov. 3, 2010; doi:10.1126/scitranslmed.3001417 Contact: Daniel S. Ory, Washington University in St. Louis School of Medicine, St. Louis, Mo. e-mail: dory@wustl.edu</p>