This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/ pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Neurology				
Alzheimer's disease (AD)	Nicotinic acetylcholine receptor $\alpha 7$ (CHRNA7)	<p>Studies in mice suggest that increasing CHRNA7 expression could help treat and prevent AD. In a mouse model of AD, <i>Chrna7</i> knockout increased both levels of pathogenic β-amyloid ($A\beta$) oligomers and neurodegeneration compared with <i>Chrna7</i> expression. In the <i>Chrna7</i> knockout mice, learning and memory defects were more severe at five months than they were in control animals, suggesting that CHRNA7 could have a protective role in early AD. Next steps include identifying a way to preserve CHRNA7 in early AD.</p> <p>At least five companies have CHRNA7 agonists in clinical testing to treat neurological conditions.</p> <p>SciBX 3(8); doi:10.1038/scibx.2010.251 Published online Feb. 25, 2010</p>	Findings unpatented; unavailable for licensing	<p>Hernandez, C. <i>et al. J. Neurosci.</i>; published online Feb. 17, 2010; doi:10.1523/ JNEUROSCI.5038-09.2010 Contact: Kelly T. Dineley, The University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, Texas e-mail: ktdinele@utmb.edu</p>