This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/ pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Neurology				
Alzheimer's disease (AD)	β -Amyloid (A β) ion channels	<p>An <i>in vitro</i> and cell culture study suggests that inhibiting the activity of ion channels formed by Aβ fragments could help treat AD. Treatment of human cortical neurons with non-plaque forming Aβ fragments led to neurite degeneration and increased apoptosis compared with no treatment. Pretreating the neurons with zinc, an ion channel conductance blocker, prevented the neurite degeneration caused by the peptide fragments. Next steps include conducting tissue culture studies and screening for small molecule inhibitors that block ion channels formed by Aβ peptides.</p> <p>SciBX 3(13); doi:10.1038/scibx.2010.411 Published online April 1, 2010</p>	<p>Patent application filed covering Aβ protein channel structure and uses in identifying potential drug molecules for neurodegenerative diseases; available for licensing from the University of California, Santa Barbara Office of Technology and Industry Alliances</p> <p>Contact: Bernadette McCafferty, University of California, Santa Barbara, Calif. phone: 805-893-5150 e-mail: mccafferty@tia.ucsb.edu</p>	<p>Jang, H. <i>et al. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA</i>; published online March 22, 2010; doi:10.1073/pnas.0914251107</p> <p>Contact: Ratnesh Lal, University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, Calif. e-mail: rlal@ucsd.edu</p> <p>Contact: Ruth Nussinov, SAIC-Frederick Inc., Frederick, Md. e-mail: ruthnu@helix.nih.gov</p>