This week in techniques

Approach	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Disease models			
Mouse model for autism spectrum disorders (ASDs)	<p>A mouse knockout of <i>SH3 and multiple ankyrin repeat domains 3</i> (<i>Shank3</i>; <i>Prosap2</i>; <i>Spank-2</i>) could be useful for studying autism. Mutations and copy number variations in SHANK3 account for fewer than 1% of ASD cases. In mice, <i>Shank3</i> deficiency led to abnormal synaptic morphology and electrophysiological properties, impaired social behavior and excessive grooming compared with normal <i>Shank3</i> expression. Next steps include characterizing the effect of candidate therapeutics on neurological function in <i>Shank3</i> knockouts. Seaside Therapeutics Inc. has arbaclofen (STX209) in Phase II testing for ASDs and Fragile X syndrome. Neuropharm Group plc and Catalent Pharma Solutions Inc. have NPL-2008, a formulation of the selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) fluoxetine, in Phase III testing for ASDs.</p> <p>SciBX 4(13); doi:10.1038/scibx.2011.381 Published online March 31, 2011</p>	Patent pending; available for licensing	<p>Peça, J. <i>et al. Nature</i>; published online March 20, 2011; doi:10.1038/nature09965 Contact: Guoping Feng, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass. e-mail: fengg@mit.edu</p>