This week in techniques

Approach	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Drug platforms			
Direct conversion of Alzheimer's disease (AD) patient-derived fibroblasts into functional neurons	<p>Direct conversion of AD patient-derived fibroblasts into functional neurons could be useful for generating new cellular models of disease. In AD patient-derived fibroblasts, forced expression of five transcription factors in the presence of three neuronal survival factors generated cells with a neuronal phenotype. The induced neurons had altered amyloid precursor protein (APP) processing and had greater β-amyloid ($A\beta$) production than neurons derived from healthy individuals. Next steps include evaluating the use of the converted neurons for drug screening applications and characterizing the neurons generated from sporadic AD patient fibroblasts.</p> <p>SciBX 4(31); doi:10.1038/scibx.2011.889 Published online Aug. 11, 2011</p>	Patent application filed; available for licensing from Columbia Technology Ventures	<p>Qiang, L. <i>et al. Cell</i>; published online Aug. 5, 2011; doi:10.1016/j.cell.2011.07.007</p> <p>Contact: Asa Abeliovich, Columbia University, New York, N.Y. e-mail: aa900@columbia.edu</p>