This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Dermatology				
Itch	MAS-related GPR member D (MRGPRD)	Human and mouse studies suggest blocking activation of MRGPRD could help treat histamine-independent itch. β -Alanine is known to activate MRGPRD receptors in humans and rodents. In 11 healthy subjects, intradermal injection of the muscle-building supplement β -alanine induced itching. <i>Mrgprd</i> -deficient mice were insensitive to itch induced by β -alanine injection but still showed an itch response to histamine injection. Next steps include developing MRGPRD antagonists and determining whether β -alanine is an endogenous mediator of chronic itch.	Work unpatented; licensing status not applicable	Liu, Q. <i>et al.</i> <i>J. Neurosci.</i> ; published online Oct. 17, 2012; doi:10.1523/JNEUROSCI.3509-12.2012 Contact: Xinzhong Dong, The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Baltimore, Md. e-mail: xdong2@jhmi.edu Contact: Robert H. LaMotte, Yale School of Medicine, New Haven, Conn. e-mail: robert.lamotte@yale.edu
<i>SciBX</i> 5(42); doi:10.1038/scibx.2012.1110 Published online Oct. 25, 2012				