This week in techniques

Approach	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Drug platforms			
Binding scaffolds based on variable lymphocyte receptors (VLRs)	<p><i>In vitro</i> studies suggest VLR-based binding scaffolds could be an alternative to immunoglobulin-based antibody scaffolds, which are large, expensive to produce in mammalian cells and difficult to design. A binding scaffold based on VLRs from jawless vertebrates was designed to target lymphocyte antigen 96 (LY96; MD2) and was produced in a bacterial expression system. In a cell-based assay, the MD2-targeting VLR scaffold decreased a lipopolysaccharide (LPS)-induced immune response compared with no treatment. Ongoing studies suggest the VLR-based binding scaffolds have greater binding efficacy than mAbs. Next steps include testing the scaffold proteins in animal disease models.</p> <p>SciBX 5(8); doi:10.1038/scibx.2012.218 Published online Feb. 23, 2012</p>	Findings patented; available for licensing for therapeutic and diagnostic applications	<p>Lee, S.-C. <i>et al. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA</i>; published online Feb. 10, 2012; doi:10.1073/pnas.1113193109</p> <p>Contact: Hak-Sung Kim, Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, Daejeon, South Korea e-mail: hskim76@kaist.ac.kr</p>