This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/ pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Cancer				
Acute myelogenous leukemia (AML)	B cell lymphoma 2 (BCL-2; BCL2); BCL2-like 11 apoptosis facilitator (BCL2L11; BIM)	<p>Mouse and patient sample studies suggest inhibiting BCL-2 could help improve the efficacy of Nexavar sorafenib against AML. In samples from four patients with AML, Nexavar plus the BCL-2 inhibitor obatoclax increased death of leukemic cells compared with either agent alone and had minimal toxicity toward normal cells. In murine AML xenografts, sorafenib plus obatoclax decreased tumor growth and increased survival compared with either agent alone. Next steps include running a clinical trial of the combination in patients with AML.</p> <p>Bayer AG and Onyx Pharmaceuticals Inc. market the receptor tyrosine kinase (RTK) inhibitor Nexavar to treat renal and liver cancer.</p> <p>Teva Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd. has obatoclax in Phase II testing to treat small cell lung cancer (SCLC).</p> <p>At least 12 other companies have compounds targeting BCL-2-family proteins in Phase III trials or earlier to treat various cancers.</p> <p>SciBX 5(15); doi:10.1038/scibx.2012.384 Published online April 12, 2012</p>	Unpatented; licensing status not applicable	<p>Rahmani, M. <i>et al. Blood</i>; published online March 23, 2012; doi:10.1182/blood-2011-09-378141</p> <p>Contact: Steven Grant, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Va. e-mail: stgrant@hsc.vcu.edu</p>