This week in techniques

Approach	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Imaging			
MRI contrast agent targeting vascular cell adhesion molecule-1 (VCAM-1) for detection of early brain metastases	<p>VCAM-1-targeting MRI contrast agents could help detect early brain metastases and enable early therapeutic intervention. In two mouse models of brain metastasis and in human postmortem brain tissue containing metastatic lesions, VCAM-1 was upregulated on tumor-associated blood vessels but not on normal blood vessels. In the two mouse models of brain metastasis, i.v. injection of VCAM-1-targeting microparticles of iron oxide resulted in more sensitive MRI visualization of metastases, including tumors of <1,000 cells, compared with injection of a clinically used gadolinium-based MRI contrast agent. Ongoing work includes developing a form of the agent for human use and establishing a spinout company for clinical translation of the imaging agents.</p> <p>SciBX 5(16); doi:10.1038/scibx.2012.430 Published online April 19, 2012</p>	Unpatented; licensing status not applicable	<p>Serres, S. <i>et al. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA</i>; published online March 26, 2012; doi:10.1073/pnas.1117412109 Contact: Nicola R. Sibson, University of Oxford, Oxford, U.K. e-mail: nicola.sibson@oncology.ox.ac.uk</p>