This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Infectious disease				
Amebiasis	Not applicable	<p><i>In vitro</i>, mouse and hamster studies suggest auranofin could be repurposed to treat amebiasis, a disease caused by infection with the protozoa <i>Entamoeba histolytica</i>. A high throughput screen for compounds that inhibit <i>E. histolytica</i> identified the rheumatoid arthritis (RA) drug auranofin. <i>In vitro</i> assays showed auranofin was 10 times more potent against <i>E. histolytica</i> than the current standard therapy metronidazole. In a mouse model of amebic colitis and a hamster model of amebic liver abscess, oral auranofin decreased parasite burden, inflammatory response and liver damage compared with oral metronidazole or saline control. Next steps include clinical testing.</p> <p>Prometheus Laboratories Inc. markets Ridaura auranofin to treat RA.</p> <p>Pfizer Inc. markets Flagyl metronidazole to treat giardiasis, <i>Clostridium difficile</i>-associated diarrhea (CDAD) and other bacterial and parasitic infections.</p> <p>SciBX 5(23); doi:10.1038/scibx.2012.604 Published online June 7, 2012</p>	Patent application filed; available for licensing	<p>Debnath, A. <i>et al. Nat. Med.</i>; published online May 20, 2012; doi:10.1038/nm.2758</p> <p>Contact: Anjan Debnath, University of California, San Francisco, Calif. e-mail: anjan.debnath@ucsf.edu</p>