This week in techniques

Approach	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Drug platforms			
Cell-free circulating tumor DNA as a cancer diagnostic	<p>A method to isolate, amplify and sequence tumor-derived circulating DNA fragments could help track cancer progression without requiring a biopsy. A high throughput deep-sequencing platform was adapted to amplify and sequence DNA fragments in blood samples from patients with ovarian cancer. In two cohorts of patients, the platform identified mutations in the <i>p53</i> gene associated with advanced ovarian cancer. The method also tracked treatment response and disease progression in 2 patients with ovarian cancer and detected 10 different mutations in a breast cancer patient. Next steps include validating and optimizing the platform for use in a hospital setting.</p> <p>SciBX 5(26); doi:10.1038/scibx.2012.692 Published online June 28, 2012</p>	Unpatented; freely available to public	<p>Forsheew, T. <i>et al. Sci. Transl. Med.</i>; published online May 30, 2012; doi:10.1126/scitranslmed.3003726 Contact: Nitzan Rosenfeld, Cambridge Research Institute, Cancer Research UK, Cambridge, U.K. e-mail: nitzan.rosenfeld@cancer.org.uk Contact: James D. Brenton, same affiliation as above e-mail: james.brenton@cancer.org.uk</p>