This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Ophthalmic disease				
Age-related macular degeneration (AMD)	VEGF-A	<p>An <i>in vitro</i> study identified an antagonist of VEGF-A that could be useful for treating AMD. The D-stereoisomer of VEGF-A was synthesized and used to screen for D-protein ligands of VEGF-A. <i>In vitro</i>, the highest-affinity D-protein ligand, D-RFX001, bound the naturally occurring L-stereoisomer of VEGF-A and prevented it from binding the VEGF receptor (VEGFR). Next steps at Reflexion Pharmaceuticals Inc. include optimizing the stability of D-RFX001 and comparing its inhibitory activity with that of Avastin bevacizumab and Lucentis ranibizumab in animal models of AMD.</p> <p>Lucentis, a humanized mAb fragment against VEGF-A, is marketed in the U.S. by Roche's Genentech Inc. unit to treat wet age-related macular degeneration (AMD). Genentech and Chugai Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd. market Avastin, an anti-VEGF mAb, to treat various cancers.</p> <p>SciBX 5(36); doi:10.1038/scibx.2012.961 Published online Sept. 13, 2012</p>	Findings patented; available for licensing from Reflexion Pharmaceuticals	<p>Mandal, K. <i>et al. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA</i>; published online Aug. 27, 2012; doi:10.1073/pnas.1210483109</p> <p>Contact: Sachdev S. Sidhu, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario, Canada e-mail: sachdev.sidhu@utoronto.ca</p> <p>Contact: Stephen B.H. Kent, The University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill. e-mail: skent@uchicago.edu</p>