This week in techniques

Approach	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Assays & screens			
High throughput, microfluidic platform for the isolation of epithelial cell adhesion molecule (EpCAM)-positive and EpCAM-negative circulating tumor cells (CTCs) from blood samples	<p>A high throughput, microfluidic platform called the CTC-iChip could help guide cancer diagnosis and prognosis. The platform separates CTCs from the blood via a series of steps involving microfluidic methods for rare cell handling and magnetic-based cell sorting. The CTC-iChip was used to isolate EpCAM-positive CTCs from the blood of patients with prostate, lung, breast, pancreatic or colorectal cancer and EpCAM-negative CTCs from the blood of patients with metastatic breast cancer, pancreatic cancer or melanoma. The CTCs were of sufficient quality that they could be characterized using immunohistochemistry, RNA molecular analysis or gene expression profiling. Next steps include adding molecular assay components to the device.</p> <p>SciBX 6(17); doi:10.1038/scibx.2013.422 Published online May 2, 2013</p>	Multiple patents covering various aspects of the technology at different stages of filing; exclusively licensed to Johnson & Johnson	<p>Ozkumur, E. <i>et al. Sci. Transl. Med.</i>; published online April 3, 2013; doi:10.1126/scitranslmed.3005616 Contact: Mehmet Toner, Harvard Medical School, Boston, Mass. e-mail: mtoner@hms.harvard.edu</p>