This week in techniques

Approach	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Markers			
Brown adipose tissue (BAT) in adult humans	<p>Two separate studies in humans identified physiological and genetic markers of BAT, which could aid the development of BAT-targeted therapies. Prior studies had challenged whether humans possess BAT. Postmortem MRI and histopathology studies of human infants identified a depot of cells with markers comparable to those of BAT cells in animals. In biopsies from adult humans, cells with histological and genetic markers of BAT were found in the back of the neck. Next steps include developing strategies to induce proliferation in existing BAT cells or transdifferentiation of other cells into BAT cells.</p> <p>Ember Therapeutics Inc. has discovery-stage compounds that induce BAT development to treat obesity and metabolic syndrome.</p> <p>SciBX 6(17); doi:10.1038/scibx.2013.428 Published online May 2, 2013</p>	Findings for both studies unpatented; licensing status not applicable	<p>Cypess, A.M. <i>et al. Nat. Med.</i>; published online April 21, 2013; doi:10.1038/nm.3112 Contact: Aaron M. Cypess, Harvard Medical School, Boston, Mass. e-mail: aaron.cypess@joslin.harvard.edu</p> <p>Lidell, M.E. <i>et al. Nat. Med.</i>; published online April 21, 2013; doi:10.1038/nm.3017 Contact: Sven Enerbäck, University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden e-mail: sven.enerback@medgen.gu.se</p>