This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Hepatic disease				
Liver fibrosis	Mothers against decapentaplegic homolog 3 (MADH3; SMAD3); transforming growth factor receptor- β 1 (TGFB1); vitamin D receptor (VDR)	<p><i>In vitro</i> and mouse studies suggest VDR agonists could help treat or prevent liver fibrosis. In mice, prophylactic and therapeutic use of the VDR agonist calcipotriol prevented or decreased chemically induced liver fibrosis compared with no treatment. In primary hepatic stellate cells, VDR agonism suppressed TGFB1-induced activation of profibrotic <i>SMAD3</i> genes. Next steps include using cell- or tissue-targeting approaches to develop vitamin D-based therapeutics.</p> <p>Leo Pharma A/S and CSL Ltd. market Dovonex calcipotriol/betamethasone to treat psoriasis. At least four other companies have vitamin D analogs in Phase II testing or earlier to treat cancer or autoimmune diseases.</p> <p>SciBX 6(19); doi:10.1038/scibx.2013.468 Published online May 16, 2013</p>	Patent application filed; unavailable for licensing	<p>Ding, N. <i>et al. Cell</i>; published online April 25, 2013; doi:10.1016/j.cell.2013.03.028</p> <p>Contact: Ronald M. Evans, Salk Institute for Biological Studies, La Jolla, Calif. e-mail: evans@salk.edu</p> <p>Contact: Michael Downes, same affiliation as above e-mail: downes@salk.edu</p>