This week in techniques

Approach	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Drug platforms			
Crystal structure of NLR family CARD domain containing 4 (NLRC4)	<p>The crystal structure of NLRC4 could help guide the rational design of compounds against the target. NLRC4 is a component of the inflammasome, which helps to activate inflammatory cytokines. A crystal structure of NLRC4 lacking its caspase recruitment domain (CARD) identified a region critical for maintaining the inactive, autoinhibited form of the protein and also suggested a potential ligand-induced activation mechanism. Mutagenesis studies identified specific amino acid residues that contribute to autoinhibition. Next steps include collaborating with another lab to perform a virtual screen for candidate NLRC4 inhibitors.</p> <p>SciBX 6(27); doi:10.1038/scibx.2013.704 Published online July 18, 2013</p>	Patent and licensing status undisclosed	<p>Hu, Z. <i>et al. Science</i>; published online June 13, 2013; doi:10.1126/science.1236381 Contact: Jijie Chai, Tsinghua University and the Tsinghua University-Peking University Center for Life Sciences, Beijing, China e-mail: chaijj@mail.tsinghua.edu.cn</p>