This week in techniques

Approach	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Markers			
Circulating microRNA signature to diagnose acetaminophen poisoning	An 11-miRNA signature could be used to identify acetaminophen poisoning earlier and with better sensitivity than measuring alanine aminotransferase (ALT) levels. Profiling of 372 extracellular miRNAs in blood samples from 49 patients yielded an 11-miRNA signature that distinguished acetaminophen poisoning from ischemic hepatitis-induced liver pathology, whereas measurement of ALT levels did not. The miRNA signature also enabled earlier detection of acetaminophen poisoning and detected response to successful treatment with <i>N</i>-acetylcysteine (NAC) more rapidly than measuring ALT levels. Next steps could include validating the miRNA signature in a prospective clinical study. NAC is used in high doses to treat acetaminophen poisoning and is available as an OTC antioxidant supplement. SciBX 7(34); doi:10.1038/scibx.2014.1028 Published online Sept. 4, 2014	Patent application filed covering methodology for miRNA isolation from plasma samples; available for licensing	Ward, J. <i>et al. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA</i>; published online Aug. 4, 2014; doi:10.1073/pnas.1412608111 Contact: Victor R. Ambros, University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester, Mass. e-mail: victor.ambros@umassmed.edu