This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Cancer				
Liver cancer	MicroRNA-34a (miR-34a)	<p>Mouse and cell culture studies identified a new small molecule that could help treat hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) by activating miR-34a, a known tumor suppressor in the indication. Library screening in human HCC cell lines identified rubone, a small molecule that increased miR-34a levels in a dose-dependent manner. In a mouse xenograft model of HCC, oral rubone dosed at 50 mg/kg decreased tumor growth compared with the same dose of oral Nexavar sorafenib. Next steps include assessing the pharmacokinetic properties of rubone and validating its safety and efficacy in additional preclinical studies.</p> <p>Amgen Inc. and Bayer AG market Nexavar, a small molecule inhibitor of CRAF (RAF1) and multiple receptor tyrosine kinases (RTKs), to treat HCC, renal cell carcinoma and thyroid cancer.</p> <p>SciBX 7(39); doi:10.1038/scibx.2014.1152 Published online Oct. 9, 2014</p>	Patent pending; available for licensing from The Chinese University of Hong Kong Office of Research and Knowledge Transfer Services	<p>Xiao, Z. <i>et al. Cancer Res.</i>; published online Sept. 12, 2014; doi:10.1158/0008-5472.CAN-14-0855</p> <p>Contact: Yangchao Chen, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China e-mail: frankch@cuhk.edu.hk</p>