This week in techniques

Approach	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Drug platforms			
Dendrimer-formulated short activating RNAs (saRNAs) to enhance CCAAT enhancer binding protein- α (CEBPA)-dependent gene expression in liver cancer	Cell culture and rat studies suggest dendrimer-formulated saRNAs that bind target gene promoters could help treat cancer. CEPBA-saRNA was conjugated to a triethanolamine core poly(amidoamine) dendrimer for <i>in vivo</i> delivery. In a liver cancer cell line, CEPBA-saRNA increased secretion of albumin and decreased cell proliferation compared with a scrambled saRNA while maintaining hepatocyte function. In a cirrhotic rat model with associated liver cancer, a CEPBA-saRNA dendrimer conjugate increased levels of serum albumin and decreased tumor burden compared with saline or scrambled saRNA-dendrimer, suggesting improved liver function and antitumor activity. Next steps include developing an saRNA-nanoparticle candidate for clinical trials.	Patents filed; available for licensing from MiNA Therapeutics Ltd. Contact: Robert Habib, MiNA Therapeutics Ltd., London, U.K. e-mail: robert@minatx.com	Reebye, V. <i>et al. Hepatology</i> ; published online Dec. 9, 2013; doi:10.1002/hep.26669 Contact: Nagy A. Habib, Imperial College London, London, U.K. e-mail: nagy.habib@imperial.ac.uk Contact: Vikash Reebye, same affiliation as above e-mail: v.reebye@imperial.ac.uk
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