This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Autoimmune disease				
Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD)	Invariant NK T (iNKT) cells	<i>In vitro</i> and mouse studies suggest <i>Bacteroides fragilis</i> -derived glycosylceramide sphingolipids (GL-Cers) could help treat IBD by inhibiting activation of iNKT cells. In cocultures of bone marrow dendritic cells and iNKT cell hybridomas, <i>B. fragilis</i> -derived GL-Cers decreased IL-2-mediated activation of iNKT cells compared with ceramide sphingolipids. In a mouse model of ulcerative colitis, colonization with sphingolipid-defective <i>B. fragilis</i> increased disease severity compared with wild-type <i>B. fragilis</i> . In the same model, a GL-Cer increased colonic iNKT cell numbers and decreased disease symptoms compared with vehicle. Next steps could include testing <i>B. fragilis</i> -derived GL-Cers in additional models of IBD.	Patent application filed; licensing status unavailable	An, D. <i>et al. Cell</i> ; published online Jan. 16, 2014; doi:10.1016/j.cell.2013.11.042 Contact: Dennis L. Kasper, Harvard Medical School, Boston, Mass. e-mail: dennis_kasper@hms.harvard.edu Contact: Richard S. Blumberg, same affiliation as above e-mail: rblumberg@partners.org
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