This week in techniques

Approach	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Drug platforms			
Small molecules plus transient expression of transcription factors to convert fibroblasts to pancreatic β cells	Fibroblasts transiently expressing transcription factors and treated with small molecules could provide transplantable pancreatic β cells to help treat type 1 diabetes. In mouse fibroblast cultures, transient expression of four pluripotency transcription factors plus delivery of specific small molecule combinations produced transdifferentiated endoderm-like cells that could be further converted into pancreatic progenitor-like cells and all three pancreatic lineages. In a mouse model of hyperglycemia, transplanted pancreatic progenitor-like cells gave rise to all three pancreatic cell types, including glucose-responsive, insulin-producing β cells, which reduced hyperglycemia. Next steps include translating the approach to human cells and trying to substitute the genetic introduction of pluripotency factors for noninvasive methods.	Patent application filed; available for licensing	Li, K. <i>et al. Cell Stem Cell</i> ; published online Feb. 6, 2014; doi:10.1016/j.stem.2014.01.006 Contact: Sheng Ding, University of California, San Francisco, Calif. e-mail: sheng.ding@gladstone.ucsf.edu
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