This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/ pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Cancer				
Cancer	G protein-coupled receptor 39 (GPR39); smoothened (SMO)	<i>In vitro</i> studies suggest agonizing GPR39 could inhibit the hedgehog pathway to help treat cancer. A cell-based screen for hedgehog pathway inhibitors identified cyclohexyl-methyl aminopyrimidines (CMAPs) that inhibited the pathway downstream of SMO. In mouse cells with an active hedgehog pathway, siRNA targeting <i>Gpr39</i> attenuated CMAP-induced loss of cellular viability. In the mouse cell lines, overexpression of <i>Gpr39</i> increased CMAP-induced loss of cellular viability compared with wild-type expression. Next steps include identifying specific hedgehog-dependent cancers that express GPR39. Heptares Therapeutics Ltd. has a GPR39 agonist in preclinical testing to treat diabetes. SciBX 7(16); doi:10.1038/scibx.2014.455 Published online April 24, 2014	Patent status undisclosed; available for licensing	Basilana, F. <i>et al. Nat. Chem. Biol.</i> ; published online March 16, 2014; doi:10.1038/nchembio.1481 Contact: Sarah J. Luchansky, Novartis Institutes for BioMedical Research, Cambridge, Mass. e-mail: sarah.luchansky@novartis.com Contact: Rishi K. Jain, same affiliation as above e-mail: rishi.jain@novartis.com