This week in techniques

Approach	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Chemistry			
Bacterial polysialyltransferase engineered to generate uniform polysaccharides for therapeutic applications	<i>In vitro</i> studies suggest a bacterial polysialyltransferase could be used to improve drug pharmacology. Pharmacological properties of therapeutic proteins can be enhanced by attached polysialic acid, but polysialyltransferases usually generate polysialic chains of varying lengths because the enzyme retains its substrate for more than one catalytic cycle. Mutational analysis of polysialyltransferase from <i>Neisseria meningitidis</i> identified a point mutation that resulted in the enzyme releasing the substrate after every catalytic cycle, allowing for control over chain length. Next steps include investigating whether uniform polysialylation can be obtained on clinically relevant proteins including interferon- α (IFNA; IFN α).	Unpatented; licensing status not applicable	Keys, T.G. <i>et al. Nat. Chem. Biol.</i> ; published online April 13, 2014; doi:10.1038/nchembio.1501 Contact: Rita Gerardy-Schahn, Hannover Medical School, Hannover, Germany e-mail: gerardy-schahn.rita@mh-hannover.de
	SciBX 7(19); doi:10.1038/scibx.2014.569 Published online May 15, 2014		