

This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Infectious disease				
Malaria	Pfs48/45 protein	<p>A study in mice suggests that properly folded Pfs48/45 protein could be a useful component of malaria vaccines. Pfs48/45 is a transmission-blocking recombinant protein expressed during the sexual stages of <i>Plasmodium falciparum</i>. An N-terminally truncated variant of Pfs48/45 was fused to periplasmic maltose-binding protein and coexpressed with four periplasmic folding catalysts in <i>Escherichia coli</i> to ensure proper folding. The correctly folded protein was stable for at least nine months and elicited transmission-blocking antibodies in >90% of immunized mice. Next steps include removing the periplasmic maltose-binding protein tag followed by scale-up for GMP manufacturing of the protein for use in humans.</p> <p>No fewer than four companies have malaria vaccines in development stages ranging from discovery to Phase II.</p>	Not patented; unlicensed	<p>Outchkourov, N. <i>et al. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA</i>; published online March 10, 2008; doi:10.1073/pnas.0800459105 Contact: Hendrik G. Stunnenberg, Radboud University Nijmegen Medical Center, Nijmegen, The Netherlands e-mail: h.stunnenberg@ncmls.ru.nl</p>