

This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Metabolic disease				
Gout	Solute carrier family 2 (facilitated glucose transporter), member 9 (SLC2A9)	<p>A genome-wide association study identified a urate transporter protein that might contribute to high levels of serum uric acid and thus be a useful target for treating gout. About 10% of people with hyperuricemia—excessively high serum uric acid levels—develop gout. The study in 986 Croatian individuals identified genetic variants within the <i>SLC2A9</i> transporter gene that explained 1.7% of variance in serum uric acid concentrations in men and 5.3% of variance in women. In <i>Xenopus laevis</i> oocytes, strong uric acid transport activity developed at two days after injection of <i>SLC2A9</i> mRNA. Next steps include developing a high-throughput screen to identify small molecules that inhibit <i>SLC2A9</i>.</p> <p>At least six companies have compounds in development to treat gout. sanofi-aventis Group markets Fasturtec rasburicase, a recombinant urate-oxidase, to treat hyperuricemia and gout.</p>	Patent application filed for <i>SLC2A9</i> protein as a solute carrier; currently unlicensed; will be available for worldwide licensing in fields of gout and metabolic syndrome	<p>Vitart, V. <i>et al. Nat. Genet.</i>; published online March 9, 2008; doi:10.1038/ng.106</p> <p>Contact: Alan F. Wright, Western General Hospital, Edinburgh, U.K. e-mail: alan.wright@hgu.mrc.ac.uk</p>