

This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/ pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Infectious disease				
Hepatitis C virus (HCV)	HCV protease NS3/4A	Studies <i>in vitro</i> and in rats identified macrocyclic inhibitors of NS3/4A that could be used to treat HCV infection. A computational model of inhibitor-bound NS3/4A guided the optimization of a series of NS3 protease inhibitors, resulting in a single inhibitor with a subnanomolar K_i and an acceptable pharmacokinetic profile in rats. Further studies are necessary to assess the safety of the most optimized compound. Phenomix Corp. and Merck & Co. Inc. each have NS3/4A inhibitors in preclinical development to treat HCV.	Findings have been patented; licensing status undisclosed	Liverton, N. <i>et al.</i> <i>J. Am. Chem. Soc.</i> ; published online March 14, 2008; doi:10.1021/ja711120r Contact: Nigel J. Liverton, Merck Research Laboratories, West Point, Pa. e-mail: nigel_liverton@merck.com