

This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Neurology				
Pain	Spinophilin	Studies in mice suggest that targeting spinophilin could help reduce tolerance and dependence associated with opioid analgesics. Spinophilin is a neuronal scaffold protein that plays a role in synaptic transmission. Spinophilin knockout mice had less sensitivity to the analgesic effects of low doses of morphine, methadone and fentanyl than did wild-type mice. Spinophilin knockout mice developed earlier morphine tolerance and a higher degree of morphine dependence than was seen in their wild-type littermates. Ongoing research is investigating how overexpression of spinophilin in particular regions of the brain might improve analgesic responses to morphine and fentanyl.	Not patented; unlicensed	Charlton, J. <i>et al. Neuron</i> ; published online April 23, 2008; doi:10.1016/j.neuron.2008.02.006 Contact: Venetia Zachariou, University of Crete, Crete, Greece e-mail: vzachar@med.uoc.gr