## This week in therapeutics

| Indication | Target/marker/ pathway | Summary | Licensing status | Publication and contact information |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Infectious disease** | | | | |
| HCV | Interferon-α (IFN-α) | Studies of human liver biopsies and peripheral blood mononuclear cells suggest that antagonizing IFN signaling prior to treatment with pegylated IFN-α might help treat HCV in some patients. Analysis of IFN-induced signaling and IFN-stimulated genes (ISGs) from 16 patients both before and after pegylated IFN-α2β injection showed that ISG expression was upregulated after injection in patients who responded to the treatment, whereas expression was initially high in nonresponding patients and did not change with injection. Further studies are necessary to develop and test neutralizing anti–IFN-α2β antibodies for enhancing responses to IFN-α therapies. Human Genome Sciences Inc. and Novartis AG are developing Albuferon albumin–IFN-α, which is in Phase III testing to treat HCV. Pegasys peginterferon alfa-2a, a pegylated recombinant IFN-α2a from Roche, is in Phase III testing to treat HCV infection. PEG-Intron peginterferon alfa-2b, a pegylated recombinant IFN-α2b from Enzon Pharmaceuticals Inc. and Schering-Plough Corp., is in Phase III testing to treat HCV infection. | Priority patent application filed in Europe; not yet available for licensing | Sarasin-Filipowicz, M. *et al. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA*; published online May 5, 2008; doi:10.1073/pnas.0707882105 **Contact:** Markus H. Heim, University Hospital Basel, Basel, Switzerland e-mail: markus.heim@unibas.ch |