

This week in techniques

Approach	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Drug platforms			
Using RNA activation to increase gene expression	Cell-culture studies suggest that double-stranded RNAs could be used to activate gene expression to treat diseases involving poorly expressed proteins. In RNAa, exogenously added dsRNA homologous to the promoters of certain genes trigger increased transcription. Oligonucleotides complementary to promoter-derived antisense transcripts blocked RNAa of the progesterone receptor gene. Next steps include formulating rules for designing RNAa constructs and optimizing delivery methods for preclinical studies. Alnylam Pharmaceuticals Inc. has licensed the RNAa technology and IP and plans to develop gene activation therapeutics to treat cystic fibrosis (CF) and sickle cell anemia.	Patent pending; licensed to Alnylam	Schwartz, J. <i>et al. Nat. Struct. Mol. Biol.</i> ; published online July 6, 2008; doi:10.1038/nsmb.1444 Contact: Bethany A. Janowski, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, Texas e-mail: bethany.janowski@utsouthwestern.edu Contact: David R. Corey, same affiliation as above e-mail: david.corey@utsouthwestern.edu