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THE DISTILLERY

This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/ pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Cancer				
Hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC)	MicroRNA-26 (miRNA-26a)	Studies in cell culture and in mice suggest that delivering miRNA-26a to the liver could help treat HCC. In human HCC biopsies, levels of miRNA-26a were significantly lower than those in normal liver biopsies ($p<0.02$). In cultured human HCC cells, retroviral overexpression of miRNA-26a resulted in lower proliferation than treatment with the empty retroviral vector. In mice with established liver tumors, adeno-associated virus vector–mediated delivery of miRNA-26a significantly reduced tumor burden and liver-to-body weight ratio compared with delivery of an empty vector ($p<0.05$ for both). Next steps include developing encapsulated nanoscale systems for delivering miRNA-26a to liver tumors and potentially to other tumor types. *SciBX* 2(26); doi:10.1038/scibx.2009.1042 Published online July 9, 2009	The Johns Hopkins University has applied for patents covering use of miRNA-26a replacement therapy to treat cancer; licensing status undisclosed	Kota, J. *et al. Cell*; published online June 12, 2009; doi:10.1016/j.cell.2009.04.021 **Contact:** Joshua Mendell, The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Baltimore, Md. e-mail: jmendell@jhmi.edu **Contact**: Jerry Mendell, Nationwide Children's Hospital, Columbus, Ohio e-mail: jerry.mendell@nationwidechildrens.org