This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/ pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Transplantation				
Graft-versus-host disease (GvHD)	BLyS (TNFSF13B; BAFF)	<p>A study in patients suggests that decreasing BAFF expression may be useful for preventing and treating chronic GvHD. In a cohort of hematopoietic stem cell transplantation recipients, those with chronic GvHD had significantly higher BAFF levels than recipients without the disease ($p=0.0003$) and healthy donors ($p<0.0001$). Patients with active or inactive chronic GvHD had significantly fewer CD19⁺ B cells than patients without the disease ($p=0.001$ for active; $p=0.01$ for inactive). Higher BAFF expression and lower B cell numbers were associated with a greater risk for developing chronic GvHD following the stem cell transplant. Next steps include identifying agents that inhibit BAFF expression.</p> <p>LymphoStat-B belimumab, a human anti-BLyS mAb from Human Genome Sciences Inc. and GlaxoSmithKline plc, is in Phase III testing to treat lupus.</p> <p>At least four other companies are developing BLyS-targeting compounds to treat autoimmune diseases or cancer.</p> <p><i>SciBX</i> 2(5); doi:10.1038/scibx.2009.205 Published online Feb. 5, 2009</p>	Unpatented; unavailable for licensing	<p>Sarantopoulos, S. <i>et al. Blood</i>; published online Jan. 23, 2009; doi:10.1182/blood-2008-09-177840</p> <p>Contact: Stefanie Sarantopoulos, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, Mass. e-mail: stefanie_sarantopoulos@dfci.harvard.edu</p>