This week in techniques

Approach	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Drug platforms			
Activin-A antagonists for boosting vaccine efficacy	<p>Including an activin-A antagonist as a component of vaccines could be useful for enhancing NK cell-mediated immune functions and adaptive immunity. In monocyte-derived dendritic cells (DCs) cocultured with NK cells, the activin-A antagonist follistatin significantly increased NK cell interferon-γ (IFN-γ) production compared with that seen in cells cultured without follistatin ($p < 0.05$). Next steps include <i>in vivo</i> testing in vaccine model systems to evaluate the effectiveness of antagonizing activin-A.</p> <p><i>SciBX</i> 2(5); doi:10.1038/scibx.2009.208 Published online Feb. 5, 2009</p>	<p>Patent cooperation treaty patent application filed for use of activin-A modulators to increase immune response to antigen by inhibiting activin production; unlicensed</p>	<p>Robson, N. <i>et al. Blood</i>; published online Jan. 13, 2009; doi:10.1182/blood-2008-07-166926 Contact: Neil C. Robson, Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research, Heidelberg, Victoria, Australia e-mail: neil.robson@ludwig.edu.au</p>