This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/ pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Neurology				
Alzheimer's disease (AD)	Tumor necrosis factor receptor superfamily, member 21 (TNFRSF21; DR6); caspase-6 apoptosis-related cysteine peptidase (CASP6; MCH2); amyloid precursor protein (APP)	A study in murine cell culture suggests that targeting DR6 and CASP6 could help treat AD. In cultured neurons, a non-amyloidogenic fragment of AD-associated APP activated the proapoptotic receptor DR6 and increased neurodegeneration compared with what was seen using mock control. Cells treated with small molecule inhibitors of CASP6, an axon-specific apoptotic protease, showed less neurodegeneration than mock-treated controls. Next steps include examining the effect of DR6 and CASP6 inhibition in mouse models of AD. Genentech Inc. is developing preclinical compounds that target DR6 and CASP6 to treat AD. Anavex Life Sciences Corp.'s Anavex 1-41, a small molecule that blocks the expression of neuronal caspases, is in preclinical development for AD. *SciBX* 2(8); doi:10.1038/scibx.2009.328 Published online Feb. 26, 2009	Patents pending; unavailable for licensing	Nikolaev, A. *et al. Nature*; published online Feb. 4, 2009; doi:10.1038/nature07767 **Contact:** Marc Tessier-Lavigne, Genentech Inc., South San Francisco, Calif. e-mail: marctl@gene.com