This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Neurology				
Alcoholism	Epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR); happyhour (HPPY)	<p>Studies in <i>Drosophila</i> and in rats suggest that inhibiting EGFR could be useful for treating alcoholism. Genetic and biochemical experiments with <i>Drosophila</i> identified the <i>hppy</i> gene as an inhibitor of the Egfr signaling pathway, and <i>hppy</i> mutant flies showed fewer ethanol-induced behavioral effects than wild-type flies. In a rat model of alcoholism, inhibition of Egfr by Tarceva erlotinib significantly lowered ethanol consumption compared with that of vehicle-treated control rats. Next steps include determining whether doses of erlotinib required for the treatment of alcoholism will be lower than doses used for chemotherapy.</p> <p>Tarceva, a small molecule EGFR inhibitor approved to treat non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) and pancreatic cancer, is marketed by OSI Pharmaceuticals Inc. and Genentech Inc., a unit of Roche, in the U.S. and by Roche elsewhere.</p> <p>SciBX 2(21); doi:10.1038/scibx.2009.883 Published online May 28, 2009</p>	Patent application filed for use of Tarceva to treat addiction; available for licensing	<p>Corl, A. <i>et al. Cell</i>; published online May 21, 2009; doi:10.1016/j.cell.2009.03.020</p> <p>Contact: Ulrike Heberlein, University of California, San Francisco, Calif. e-mail: ulrike.heberlein@ucsf.edu</p>