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THE DISTILLERY

This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/ pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Cancer				
Cancer	Phosphoinositide 3-kinase (PI3K); protein kinase B (PKB; Akt)	Studies in mice and in cell culture suggest that blocking PI3K/Akt signaling could help sensitize tumor-initiating cells to radiation therapy. In a mouse model of breast cancer, radiation therapy plus perifosine, an alkylphosphocholine modulator of the PI3K/Akt and other signal transduction pathways, reduced the percentage of tumor-initiating cells compared with radiation therapy alone. Next steps could include evaluating PI3K/Akt pathway inhibitors and radiation therapy in additional animal cancer models. Aeterna Zentaris Inc. and Keryx Biopharmaceuticals Inc. are running Phase III trials of perifosine to treat multiple myeloma (MM) and Phase II trials for various other cancers. At least seven other companies have compounds that inhibit Akt signaling in Phase II or earlier to treat cancer. *SciBX* 3(7); doi:10.1038/scibx.2010.211 Published online Feb. 18, 2010	Patent and licensing status unavailable	Zhang, M. *et al. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA*; published online Jan. 25, 2010; doi:10.1073/pnas.0910179107 **Contact:** Jeffrey M. Rosen, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, Texas e-mail: jrosen@bcm.tmc.edu