This week in techniques

Approach	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Drug platforms			
Conversion of cerebral cortex astroglia into synapse-forming neurons	<p><i>In vitro</i> studies suggest that a single neurogenic factor can reprogram cortical astroglia into neurons that could be used to treat brain injury. In cultures of mouse astroglia-derived neurosphere cells, retrovirus-based expression of <i>neurogenin 2</i> (<i>Ngn2</i>) or <i>distal-less homeobox 2</i> (<i>Dlx2</i>) gave rise to mature neurons capable of forming synapses. Next steps include determining whether similar reprogramming protocols work with human cells and developing a strategy for reprogramming the cells within the brain.</p> <p>SciBX 3(22); doi:10.1038/scibx.2010.689 Published online June 3, 2010</p>	Findings unpatented; unavailable for licensing	<p>Heinrich, C. <i>et al. PLoS Biol.</i>; published online May 18, 2010; doi:10.1371/journal.pbio.1000373</p> <p>Contact: Benedikt Berninger, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, Munich, Germany e-mail: benedikt.berninger@lrz.uni-muenchen.de</p> <p>Contact: Magdalena Götz, same affiliation as above e-mail: magdalena.goetz@helmholtz-muenchen.de</p>