

This week in techniques

Approach	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Disease models			
Rat model for glial role in amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)	<p>A rat model of ALS could be useful for understanding the role of glial cells in the disease. In wild-type rats, transplanted rat glial precursor cells with a human ALS-linked mutation in superoxide dismutase 1 (SOD1) differentiated into astrocytes. Rats with those SOD1-mutant astrocytes developed motor neuron dysfunction and motion disorder resembling ALS compared with controls transplanted with wild-type astrocytes. Next steps include characterizing the spread of ALS-like pathology from transplantation sites and testing the effect of astrocytes on other forms of ALS besides the rare SOD1-driven form.</p> <p>The researchers are collaborating with Q Therapeutics Inc. to develop human analogs of astrocyte precursor cells to treat ALS.</p> <p>SciBX 4(40); doi:10.1038/scibx.2011.1128 Published online Oct. 13, 2011</p>	Unpatented; licensing status not applicable	<p>Papadeas, S.T. <i>et al. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA</i>; published online Oct. 3, 2011; doi:10.1073/pnas.1103141108 Contact: Nicholas J. Maragakis, The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Baltimore, Md. e-mail: nmaragak@jhmi.edu</p>