This week in techniques

Approach	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Drug platforms			
Small molecule conversion of human embryonic stem cells (hESCs) into neural stem cells	<p>A cocktail of small molecule inhibitors could be used to convert hESCs into neural stem cells to model diseases and enable cell-based therapies. In cell culture, a cocktail containing small molecule inhibitors of glycogen dependent kinase 3 (GSK3), transforming growth factor-β receptor 1 (TGFBβRI; ALK5) and Notch signaling converted hESCs into neural stem cells. Culture medium containing leukemia inhibitory factor (LIF) plus the GSK3 and TGFBβRI inhibitors preserved the neural stem cell state. Next steps include developing protocols to make other self-renewing, tissue-specific precursor cells.</p> <p>SciBX 4(19); doi:10.1038/scibx.2011.558 Published online May 12, 2011</p>	Patent application filed; available for licensing from the University of California, San Diego Technology Transfer Office	<p>Li, W. <i>et al. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA</i>; published online April 25, 2011; doi:10.1073/pnas.1014041108</p> <p>Contact: Sheng Ding, University of California, San Francisco, Calif. e-mail: sheng.ding@gladstone.ucsf.edu</p> <p>Contact: Kang Zhang, University of California, San Diego, La Jolla, Calif. e-mail: k5zhang@ucsd.edu</p>