

This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Pulmonary disease				
Pulmonary fibrosis	Rho kinase; myocardin-related transcription factor A (MKL1; MAL; MRTF-1)	<p>Human tissue and mouse studies suggest inhibiting Rho kinase or MKL1 could help treat pulmonary fibrosis. Pulmonary myofibroblasts from patients with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) or a mouse model for lung fibrosis had greater activation of Rho kinase signaling than myofibroblasts from uninjured controls. In a mouse model for lung fibrosis, the Rho kinase inhibitor Eril fasudil or knockout of Mkl1 decreased fibrosis compared with saline or no knockout. Next steps include finding a partner to start Phase II studies of Rho kinase inhibitors in patients with IPF.</p> <p>Eril is marketed by Asahi Kasei Pharma Corp. to treat aneurysm.</p> <p>At least four other companies have Rho kinase inhibitors in preclinical development to Phase III trials for ophthalmic, pulmonary and cardiovascular indications.</p> <p>SciBX 6(10); doi:10.1038/scibx.2013.244 Published online March 14, 2013</p>	Unpatented; licensing status not applicable	<p>Zhou, Y. <i>et al.</i> <i>J. Clin. Invest.</i>; published online Feb. 22, 2013; doi:10.1172/JCI66700</p> <p>Contact: Victor J. Thannickal, The University of Alabama at Birmingham, Birmingham, Ala. e-mail: vjthan@uab.edu</p> <p>Contact: Yong Zhou, same affiliation as above e-mail: yzhou@uab.edu</p>