This week in techniques

Approach	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Assays & screens			
Inner-ear hair cell cultures generated from embryonic stem cells (ESCs) as a screening platform for otology drugs	Inner-ear cell cultures generated from ESCs could help identify drug compounds that are ototoxic or promote inner-ear hair cell differentiation and regeneration. In serum-free 3D cultures of mouse ESCs, sequential treatment with cocktails of human proteins and small molecule inhibitors induced differentiation into inner-ear sensory epithelial cells. Electrophysiological, genetic and morphological analyses classified the cells as type II vestibular hair cells, which aid in sensing head position and movement. Ongoing studies include generating cochlear hair cells from mouse ESCs and functional hair cell types from human ESCs.	Patent application filed by the Indiana University School of Medicine; unavailable for licensing	Koehler, K.R. <i>et al. Nature</i> ; published online July 10, 2013; doi:10.1038/nature12298 Contact: Eri Hashino, Indiana University, Indianapolis, Ind. e-mail: ehashino@iupui.edu
	SciBX 6(31); doi:10.1038/scibx.2013.835 Published online Aug. 15, 2013		