

This week in therapeutics

Indication	Target/marker/pathway	Summary	Licensing status	Publication and contact information
Cancer				
Thyroid cancer	Anaplastic lymphoma kinase (ALK); striatin calmodulin binding protein (STRN)	<p><i>In vitro</i> and mouse studies identified <i>STRN-ALK</i> fusions in highly aggressive thyroid cancers that could help assess prognosis and guide treatment. <i>STRN-ALK</i> fusions were identified in 3 of 256 well-differentiated papillary thyroid cancer samples, 3 of 35 poorly differentiated thyroid cancer samples and 1 of 24 anaplastic thyroid cancer samples. In mice, expression of <i>STRN-ALK</i> increased thyroid cell proliferation and subcutaneous tumor formation compared with expression of a kinase-dead fusion protein and led to constitutive ALK activity. The effects of the active transfects were blocked by the ALK inhibitor Xalkori crizotinib. Next steps could include validating the <i>STRN-ALK</i> fusion protein in additional cancer samples.</p> <p>Pfizer Inc. markets Xalkori to treat non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC).</p> <p>At least eight other companies have ALK inhibitors in Phase II or earlier testing to treat cancer.</p> <p>SciBX 7(9); doi:10.1038/scibx.2014.255 Published online March 6, 2014</p>	Patent and licensing status unavailable	<p>Kelly, L.M. <i>et al. Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA</i>; published online Feb. 3, 2014; doi:10.1073/pnas.1321937111</p> <p>Contact: Yuri E. Nikiforov, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, Pittsburgh, Pa. e-mail: nikiforovye@upmc.edu</p>