

Ritalin 'safe to use as brain enhancer'

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Healthy people should be able to take the anti-hyperactivity drug Ritalin to boost brain power, says a British ethicist.

Bioethics expert Professor John Harris, of the University of Manchester, said if the drug was safe for children, adults should also be able to take it.

Writing on the British Medical Journal website, Harris said many students were already using the drug to improve their study skills and concentration — although the drug requires a prescription.

Ritalin, also known as methylphenidate, is given to children with ADHD, or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Harris said it was "unethical" to stop healthy people from taking the drug and that there was evidence it was safe to use.

But Professor Anjan Chatterjee, of the University of Pennsylvania, also writing on the British Medical Journal website, said there were too many risks unless a person was actually ill.

He said the US Food and Drug Administration had labelled Ritalin with a "black box" — the most alarming of possible warnings — because of its high potential for abuse, dependence, risk of sudden death and serious effects on the heart. — [bbc.com](#)

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