

## STATEMENT ON COGNITIVE ENHANCEMENT AND STUDENT USE OF ADDERALL

April 26, 2010

On April 25, 2010, the CBS television news show *60 Minutes* aired a segment on “Boosting Brain Power.” This is an important topic, but one that cannot be adequately addressed in the 12 minutes dedicated to it in the program. As one of the individuals interviewed, I want to clarify my position and share important points not covered in that segment.

It is important to distinguish between discussions of the ethics of cognitive enhancement in general – Should people try to enhance their intellectual ability pharmacologically? On what grounds would we decide whether this is right or wrong? – and discussions of the advisability of using Adderall, specifically, to attempt to do so.

Why is this distinction important? The article on cognitive enhancement shown in the segment, as well as the interview in which I argued that cognitive enhancement could bring positive benefits to humanity, referred to cognitive enhancement in general. In contrast, Adderall has risks that make it ill-suited for use without a physician’s supervision. As a scientist who is not a physician, I am conducting research on its cognitive effects, but I am not advocating the illicit use of it or any other medication. Indeed, the show cited my concerns regarding the effects of Adderall on cognition.

I hope that the *60 Minutes* program will stimulate thoughtful debate about cognitive enhancement as a goal for research and drug development, and encourage appropriate caution concerning the misuse of medications including Adderall.



Martha J. Farah, PhD  
Walter H. Annenberg Professor of Natural Sciences  
Director, Center for Neuroscience & Society