The Expert Says – Fall 2019

Barbara Sahakian, PhD, a professor of clinical neuropsychology at the University of Cambridge, discusses ethical and practical issues raised by the use of smart drugs on her school blog.

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Who could benefit?

More effective cognitive enhancers with fewer detrimental side effects can help people in certain professions, such as doctors and military personnel, focus and avoid serious adverse events at work.

Are there additional issues to consider?

“As a society, we certainly need to be concerned about the use of these drugs by healthy children and adolescents whose brains are still in development,” Sahakian says.

What guidelines should govern smart-drug usage?

The long-term safety and effectiveness of these medications in healthy people must be proved, and individuals should be dissuaded from purchasing them online because doing so can be dangerous.

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