

Methylphenidate Steadies ADHD Drivers

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PARIS — Methylphenidate really can keep people with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder on the straight and narrow, according to a study that was conducted in the Netherlands.

Dr. Joris C. Verster and his colleagues at the University of Utrecht Institute for Pharmaceutical Sciences, the Netherlands, compared the driving skills of 18

patients when they took their methylphenidate (Ritalin) with their ability when they went off medication.

Each patient made two 100-kilometer round trips in normal traffic. The protocol called for maintaining a steady speed of 95 km/hour while staying in the right lane. Twice each second, a camera on the automobile roof recorded the distance to the center of the road. The patients, aged 21-30 years, were able to maintain a steady speed on both trips, but they weaved sig-

nificantly more when they were not medicated, Dr. Verster reported in a poster at the annual congress of the European College of Neuropsychopharmacology.

The weaving or standard deviation of lateral position was more pronounced on the return leg of the round trips.

"The problem is sustained attention. It takes one hour to perform the test. They see all sort of stuff on the side of the road, (such as) leaves falling from trees. ...That is really concerning," he added. ■

CDC Develops Autism Education Materials

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in conjunction with its "Learn the Signs. Act Early" campaign, has developed a free resource kit for child care providers and educators about child development and autism. It is hoped that the materials—available in both English and Spanish—will be shared with parents, teachers, and day care providers. For more information on the CDC campaign and the child development and autism materials, visit www.cdc.gov/actearly. ■

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