

Attention deficit medication helps drug addicts: study

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The active ingredient in Ritalin, a medication used to control the symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD, could help boost self-control in cocaine addicts, a study published Monday showed.

Yale University psychiatry professor Chiang-shan Ray Li administered Ritalin's active ingredient, methylphenidate, to volunteers who were addicted to cocaine, and asked the participants to perform a computer test that assessed [impulse control](#).

The participants were instructed to quickly press a button whenever a "go" prompt appeared on the screen.

But randomly during the test, the "go" prompt was rapidly followed by a "stop" prompt, indicating that the subjects should resist the impulse to press "go."

Study participants who were given methylphenidate were better able to resist pressing the button than were participants who were given a placebo, the study published in the [Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences](#) found.

"The main finding of this work is that [methylphenidate](#) improved inhibitory control in cocaine-dependent patients," the study says, suggesting that the active ingredient in Ritalin should be investigated as a treatment for disorders such as addictions, which are related to self-control deficits.

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