

A “Not For Women Only” Program

IN AN ERA OF PROZAC AND RITALIN— IS BRAIN ENHANCEMENT ETHICAL? IS IT SMART?

Date: Thursday, December 8, 2005

Place: Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Hall
The Rockefeller University

Time: 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

York Avenue at East 66th Street

In recent years, the widespread use of antidepressants and other psychoactive drugs has blurred the line between therapeutic treatment and elective enhancement, subtly changing cultural norms and raising difficult ethical questions. Ritalin, for example, is helping many children with attention deficit disorder, but critics contend it is also overprescribed and emblematic of our society’s “medicalization” of ordinary behavior. Meanwhile, the illegal use of Ritalin as a performance-enhancing stimulant continues to gain popularity with students and their parents.

The coming decade will bring an array of neurochemicals and technologies designed to improve mood, boost cognitive function, sharpen memory, suppress cravings, quell anxiety, and block the ill-effects of stress. How are we to sort out the possible benefits and attendant risks in the brave new world of neuroenhancement?



The December 8 *Women & Science* “Not for Women Only” program will feature guest speaker **Martha Farah, Ph.D.**, a leader in the emerging field of neuroethics. Dr. Farah is a professor of psychology at the University of Pennsylvania, where she directs the Center for Cognitive Neuroscience. Her current research, as she describes it, focuses on issues that lie at the interface of neuroscience and “the real world.”

Joining Dr. Farah in a wide-ranging conversation will be neuroscientist **Bruce McEwen, Ph.D.**, Rockefeller University’s Alfred E. Mirsky Professor and co-author of *The End of Stress as We Know It*. In addition to discussing brain enhancement, they may also consider such topics as the effects of socioeconomic status on children’s brain development, and whether the non-medical use of neuroimaging technologies could one day compromise individual privacy.

For more information please call (212) 327-7434.