We agree with the concerns raised regarding the safety of amphetamines such as methylphenidate/dexmethylphenidate. In fact, we generally support the use of non-pharmacological interventions, such as cognitive behavioral therapy or energy conservation and activity management. However, we believe that the stimulant properties of guarana should be fully considered.

Guarana (Paullinia cupana) is a plant native to the central Amazon, known for its stimulant and aphrodisiac properties, and popular for its use in energy drinks. In a randomized, double-blinded, crossover clinical trial published by our group, guarana demonstrated favorable effects on fatigue during chemotherapy.

The stimulant properties of guarana are generally taken to reflect the presence of caffeine, which comprises only 2.5%–5% of the extract’s dry weight, although other purine alkaloids (theophylline and theobromine) are present in smaller quantities. The doses used in this study (50 mg PO BID) would have negligible amounts of caffeine. Furthermore, no significant increase in cardiovascular events has been demonstrated in any study to date, but larger trials are needed to evaluate this promising therapeutic option for cancer-related fatigue.

REFERENCES