Title
Response to roose and rutherford

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This letter represents a cautionary note about the use of methylphenidate and stimulants in older adults. Cardiac side-effects of the stimulants is a well-known, well-documented in 1960-70 trials, and a common concern about the use of methylphenidate in the elderly. However, the literature also agrees that stimulants can be safely used in older and medically ill adults. The methylphenidate and citalopram study had a set of strict screening criteria and monitoring throughout for these potential side-effects. Prior evidence, methods and discussion of the side-effects were presented in the introduction and discussion. Interestingly, the reviewers of the paper paid more attention to the side-effects of citalopram that were relatively “new” for the FDA and for the audience prompted by the 2011 FDA warning following citalopram trial in dementia. The more important point is that this study has contributed to resolve the "insufficient evidence" on the safety and efficacy of methylphenidate in older adults with depression. In fact, it also quotes the daily dose range between 10-20 mg with the mean of 16 mg that was effective and well-tolerated. Perhaps, this should be added to the letter, as clinically useful information.

In response to the letter, we also performed additional analyses of the group differences in the changes in systolic and diastolic blood pressure and heart rate. Changes in systolic BP (SBP), diastolic BP (DBP) and heart rate (HR) were not significantly different within or between groups (CIT+PBO, MPH+PBO, and MPH+CIT). However, there was a significant increase in HR for MPH+PBO and MPH+CIT groups but not for CIT+PBO group: CIT=PBO: change in HR (end - baseline): 1.02 (2.01) p = 0.6; MPH=PBO: change in HR: 3.99 (1.81), p = 0.03; MPH+CIT: change in HR: 6.95 (1.83), p = 0.0002.

These additional findings support the caution that clinicians can never be too careful when treating older adults with heart disease and should exercise care and their best judgement in prescribing stimulants to this vulnerable population.