Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS)
Referral information for psychiatrists and general practitioners

What are the approved indications for use of rTMS?

Repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (rTMS) is approved only for treatment of Major Depressive Disorder in adult patients who have failed to achieve satisfactory improvement from at least two prior antidepressant medications at or above the minimal effective dose and duration in the current episode. Presence of another psychiatric illness in addition to Major Depressive Disorder requires a careful assessment by a specialist to determine patient's suitability for rTMS.

TMS is not a treatment for clinical emergency where an urgent response is needed.

Are there any contra-indications to rTMS?

There are several reasons why someone cannot have rTMS. These include:

» a diagnosis of epilepsy or history of seizure(s)
» head injury or an active brain illness such as a recent stroke or another condition that predispose the patient to a seizure.
» anything that may be affected by the magnetic field – such as metal implants in the head, surgical clips, cardiac pacemakers, implanted medication pumps or electrodes
» an unstable medical condition (for example heart disease) that could be exacerbated if they were to suffer a seizure
» pregnancy - the safety of rTMS in pregnancy has not been evaluated and is not recommended at this time.
» Heavy alcohol use, illicit drug use and certain prescription medications that lower seizure threshold.

What are the side effects and risks of rTMS?

There are several potential side effects that might be experienced during an rTMS procedure:

A headache or neck ache can occur, similar to a tension headache, caused by the stimulation of nerves in the scalp.

The stimulation itself may be uncomfortable.

As the magnetic field passes into the brain, it can cause stimulation of muscles in the scalp causing them to contract.

It has the potential to cause a fit or seizure. Safety guidelines to limit the dose of rTMS have been applied since the late 1990s and there have been very few seizures with the treatment since then. Generally, the risk appears quite low.
What is the duration of treatment?

A standard course of rTMS includes treatment with 20 sessions over four weeks (five a week from Monday to Friday).

Each treatment session takes roughly 20 -45 minutes.

Can I change the psychotropic medications while my patient is underdoing the rTMS?

Changes to psychotropic medications are best avoided during the course of rTMS. As noted above in side effects, the main concern is that of drugs affecting seizure threshold. Any changes should be conveyed to the rTMS Clinic as the patient might need a lower or higher dose of rTMS. Changes to medications may make it difficult to ascertain the effect of rTMS. Metro South Addiction and Mental Health Services

Who does the clinic take referrals from?

The TMS clinic takes referrals from psychiatrists and GP’s who are familiar with the Patients health and have the ability to monitor patient’s mental health and provide ongoing care while patient is undergoing TMS.

The referring doctor can request a consult over telephone with a specialist from our clinic to determine suitability and eligibility of their patient for TMS. The referring doctor can also request a referral cover form from the clinic via fax or e mail.

How much does it cost?

There are no out of pocket expenses for receiving TMS at Metro South Addiction and Mental Health Services. Travel expenses must be met by consumers.

Contact us

Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation Clinic

Metro South Addiction and Mental Health Services

Level 2, 51 Wembley Road

Logan Central

(07) 3089 4011

Email: MSAMHS_TMS@health.qld.gov.au