



Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS)

Information for patients, carers,
family and support persons




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Clinic**
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Community
of Care

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What is Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation? (TMS)

Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) is a technology that is being developed as a new treatment tool for depression and a number of other disorders.

TMS is a procedure that involves the focused application of a magnetic field to superficial regions of the brain, changing the activity level of cells in the stimulated areas. During a TMS procedure, an electrical current passes through a small coil placed close to the scalp, this current induces a magnetic field.

The magnetic field is applied in pulses that can pass into the brain without resistance. If the magnetic field is of sufficient strength it will stimulate electrical activity in nerves below the coil, causing them to fire. TMS can be applied in differing ways to either increase or decrease local brain activity.



TMS in Depression

Studies have been evaluating the role of TMS in depression for over 20 years. These studies have shown that TMS can relieve the symptoms of depression in a proportion of individuals suffering from this condition. It is possible that it acts by changing activity in areas of the brain that are abnormally active in patients with depression.

TMS treatment has progressively become more available in clinical practice. It has been available in Canada for a number of years and was licensed in the USA in 2008. More recently, TMS Treatment has been approved for use in Australia by the TGA (Therapeutic Goods Administration). TMS is also endorsed by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists.

TMS at The Melbourne Clinic

TMS treatment is provided to all suitable patients of the hospital who have been referred for treatment of depression. TMS is often used with other therapeutic modalities such as medications and psychological therapy.

The most common indications for TMS treatment are where antidepressant medications have not relieved symptoms or been well tolerated.

Each treatment session takes approximately 30 to 40 minutes. For the initial course of TMS patients usually have 20 sessions of TMS over four weeks. TMS treatment is generally very well tolerated and appears to be free of major side-effects.

This treatment can be provided either on an inpatient or outpatient basis. Please speak about outpatient TMS with your psychiatrist. We recommend patients should not drive after TMS treatment or return to work that day.

Fees, charges and health insurance

The Melbourne Clinic is a preferred hospital and has contractual arrangements with most major health funds and regulators of compensation which include The Department of Veterans Affairs, WorkSafe and Transport Accident Commission.

The Patient Services Staff at The Melbourne Clinic will confirm health insurance entitlements and advise patients and their families, where possible prior to admission of any out of pocket expenses. They will also co-ordinate approval requirements for admissions supported by compensation like WorkSafe. Patients who are not privately insured should speak with Patient Services Staff who will advise them of the fees.

Referral process

To be assessed for suitability for TMS treatment, please fax your referral letter to 03 9487 4655.

For further information please contact:

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