

Outpatient TMS Information for GPs

Treatment-Resistant Depression

Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (rTMS) 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 against 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 neurons below the coil, causing them to activate. TMS can be applied in differing ways.

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.

Who can have Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation?

TMS is available for patients with depression and who have a history of poor response to, or an inability to tolerate the side effects of antidepressant medications. It is also available to those patients who have had a previous good response to TMS.

TMS involves magnetic energy, some people may be unable to have TMS including those with:

- A cardiac pacemaker or defibrillator (some exceptions can be made depending on consultation with psychiatrist, manufacturer and cardiologist.)
- History of previous head or brain surgery
- Cochlear implants
- Brain aneurysm clips
- History of seizures, fits, epilepsy or stroke
- A neurostimulator or bio stimulator
- Or a significant neurological disorder (e.g. MS, cerebral lupus, brain tumour, etc.)

TMS is not recommended for people during pregnancy. People with dental fillings/braces are able to receive TMS. Your patients will be asked to complete and sign a Safety Checklist prior to receiving TMS.

What happens during a Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation session?

During the session patients are seated in a comfortable chair. They are fully conscious and responsive. There are no medications involved in the treatment. The TMS nurse rests the magnet over the appropriate area of the scalp and activates the magnet. During the prescribed treatment patients may talk with the nurse, rest or meditate as they see fit.

Do your patients need to be in hospital to have TMS?

NO, patients are now able to access TMS treatment through Medicare and Self-Funding options as an outpatient.

How is a patient referred for TMS?

A patient who would like to have TMS as a treatment at The Sydney Clinic will need to be referred to one of our credentialed specialists.

How can your patient access outpatient TMS?

Patients wishing to have TMS as an outpatient have the following options to fund these treatments.

- **Medicare funded TMS:** This model funds ONLY 50 treatments - 35 initial and 15 top ups if re treatment is required. It is available for patients who have never received TMS treatment before in an outpatient OR inpatient setting.
- **Self-funding:** Packages are available from The Sydney Clinic for Outpatient TMS for patients who have already had TMS before, or utilized MBS funding. Estimates can be provided from our billing departments, and an official quote provided after consultation with a credentialed psychiatrist and prescription of treatment outlined.

How do I refer my patient?

All referrals can be sent to our Clinical Intake team. Please stipulate patient is to be reviewed for **Outpatient TMS through Medicare funding or Self Funding.**

(This will allow our Intake team to fast track and triage appropriately.)

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