

TMS TRENDS

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TRANSCRANIAL DIRECT CURRENT STIMULATION (tDCS)

Transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS) is a non-invasive brain stimulation treatment that uses direct electrical currents to stimulate specific parts of the brain. A constant, low intensity current is passed through two electrodes placed over the head which modulates neuronal activity. This technology has been investigated as a treatment for neurological and psychiatric diseases since the 1960s and clinical trials have shown tDCS to be safe and effective in treating depression. In fact, tDCS therapy is approved for the treatment of depression in the European Union.

It should be noted that unlike other neuromodulation devices such as electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), or vagal nerve stimulation (VNS) which are FDA-cleared, tDCS is **not** FDA-cleared and is only used on an investigational or experimental basis in the US at this time.

However, tDCS is a highly-promising therapy for depression without the side effects commonly associated with oral antidepressant medications. It is a non-systemic (does not circulate in the bloodstream throughout the body) and non-invasive (does not involve surgery) form of neuromodulation.

What does a tDCS session look like? While seated in the treatment chair, saline infused electrode patches are positioned on the forehead using a specially designed strap. For approximately 30 minutes, mild direct electrical current (DC) then stimulate specific positions of the brain according to past experimental protocols empirically demonstrated to effectively reduce symptoms of depression. The treatment is typically administered daily (Monday – Friday) for 3-6 weeks depending upon patient response.

If you are suffering from treatment resistant depression, please contact us or visit our website at www.psychfirst.com for more information about the possible benefits of tDCS.

We are pleased to announce the adoption and implementation of a new Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation coverage policy with **Aetna**, effective 7/29/2016. This coverage decision will now provide access to **TMS** for approximately 18 million members nationwide.