

TMS TRENDS

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TMS THERAPY PROMISING FOR MEMORY BOOST

<http://www.newsweek.com/electricity-brain-transcranial-magnetic-stimulation-boost-memory-267251>

A recent study found that Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) can enhance the parts of the brain associated with memory by making the neurons in that brain region work better together. The researchers learned of TMS' positive impact on memory by first figuring out which regions of the brain worked with the main memory structure, the hippocampus, and then testing the treatment's influence on these areas.

The team found that at baseline, the regions work together fairly well. Over the course of five days of TMS treatment, however, they found that the areas worked even better together. The lead researcher reported that the areas were working more in concert with one another and likened it to an orchestra getting a better conductor.

Though only healthy individuals were tested in this study, the research has dramatic implications for memory-impaired individuals, such as Alzheimer's patients, stroke victims, and those who have suffered memory loss due to psychiatric conditions such as schizophrenia. To date, no drugs or surgeries have been found to boost memory, so TMS offers a unique remedy to this problem.



FACTORS THAT PREDISPOSE PATIENTS TO TREATMENT-RESISTANT DEPRESSION

Decades of research have focused on the identification of risk factors associated with treatment-resistant depression (TRD). The most reliable include:

- 1) Duration of episode
- 2) Severity of episode
- 3) Melancholic features
- 4) Lack of symptomatic improvement within the first couple of weeks
- 5) Comorbidity
- 6) Old age
- 7) Subtherapeutic doses of antidepressants
- 8) Patient nonadherence
- 9) Intolerable adverse effects
- 10) Wrong diagnosis

Treatment options for TRD include:

- 1) Switching to another antidepressant drug of the same class or another class
- 2) Augmenting with another drug (e.g. atypical antipsychotic) or combining with psychotherapy (CBT)
- 3) Neurostimulation (e.g. rTMS, vagus nerve stimulation, deep brain stimulation)

HIGHMARK BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD COVERAGE

Effective September 22, 2014, access to repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS) will now be available to approximately 5.7 million Highmark BC/BS subscribers in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and West Virginia. Members living outside these states may also have benefits for TMS.