



South African Society of Psychiatrists

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SASOP POSITION STATEMENT ON TRANSCRANIAL MAGNETIC STIMULATION (TMS) USE IN PSYCHIATRY

Summary

Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) is an effective treatment for major depressive disorders and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). It involves the focal application of a localised, pulsed magnetic field to the cerebral cortex, inducing small electrical currents which stimulate or inhibit nerve cells.

Key messages

- TMS is a safe and effective and evidence-based treatment for depression and OCD. It has a very favourable side effect profile.
- It has robust evidence as an augmentation strategy for treatment resistant depression (TRD). TMS has also been approved as an adjunctive treatment of OCD.
- In the SASOP guidelines treatment resistant depression (TRD) should be managed by level 3 care, thus by a specialist psychiatrist. TMS should be offered in clinical settings with appropriate stimulation protocols, delivered by trained technicians, using South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) approved TMS devices.

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- The TMS provider should be a medical practitioner registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) who has received appropriate training in TMS and must be responsible for the training and supervision of the TMS technicians.
- When TMS is used in the treatment of psychiatric disorders a psychiatrist should prescribe TMS and monitor treatment response and adverse effects.
- Monitoring for treatment response, non-response and treatment-related side effects should occur on a regular basis throughout treatment preferably with a standardised assessment tool.
- For patients with depression that is very severe, associated with psychotic features, highly treatment resistant, or requires a rapid response due to acute risk, psychiatrists need to consider whether treatment with electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) is required instead.

Recommendations regarding TMS training

- The provider/clinician should have received training in the core competencies (core knowledge, safety and ethics, basic skills and advanced skills) required for clinicians as per the IFCN (International Federation of Clinical Neurophysiology) recommendations.
- Training should be obtained through a South African or international accredited higher education and training institute or TMS accreditation course.
- Training should be matched to the responsibilities of the technicians, clinicians and scientists as per the IFCN recommendations.



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