



South African Society of Psychiatrists

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SASOP POSITION STATEMENT ON TMS (TRANSCRANIAL MAGNETIC STIMULATION)

BACKGROUND

SASOP and members of the multidisciplinary team met in July 2022 to review evidence and reach consensus on the clinical care pathways for Depression, Bipolar Mood disorder and Schizophrenia. The clinical care pathways are currently under review and will be published soon. This position statement reflects the consensus of the meeting on TMS.

SUMMARY

Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) is an effective treatment for major depressive disorders. 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. It has a very favourable side effect profile.

It has robust evidence as an augmentation strategy for treatment resistant depression (TRD).

In the SASOP guidelines TRD will be managed by level 3 path care, thus by a specialist psychiatrist. TMS should be offered in clinical settings with appropriate stimulation protocols, delivered by trained technicians, on SAHPRA approved magnetic stimulators.

Monitoring for treatment response, non-response and treatment-related side effects should occur on a regular basis throughout treatment.

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 ECT is required instead.

References:

Fitzgerald PB, George MS, Pridmore S. The evidence is in: Repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation is an effective, safe and well-tolerated treatment for patients with major depressive disorder. *Aust N Z J Psychiatry*. 2022 Jul;56(7):745-751. doi: 10.1177/00048674211043047. Epub 2021 Aug 28. PMID: 34459284.

Papadimitropoulou K, Vossen C, Karabis A, Donatti C, Kubitz N. Comparative efficacy and tolerability of pharmacological and somatic interventions in adult patients with treatment-resistant depression: a systematic review and network meta-analysis. *Curr Med Res Opin*. 2017 Apr;33(4):701-711. doi: 10.1080/03007995.2016.1277201. Epub 2017 Feb 6. PMID: 28035869.

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