

Repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (rTMS) for Treatment Resistant Depression

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What's this project about?

In Alberta, more than 120,000 people suffer from Major Depressive Disorder. Treatment Resistant Depression (TRD) is usually defined as a failure to respond to two appropriate trials of first-line interventions, which can include medication or psychological treatments. Between 30-60% of people with Major Depressive Disorder will not respond to first line treatment. Repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (rTMS) uses a magnetic field to change electrical activity on the surface of the brain. By repeating this over time, the function of the targeted area can improve, which can reduce the symptoms of depression. The AMH SCN™ is supporting the provincial rollout of this technology for adults with TRD.

How will we do this?

A Provincial Implementation Working Group consisting of representation from all Zones meets regularly to ensure that clinical protocols are being rolled out as required and that standardization exists across the province. An Evaluation Subcommittee is leading a provincial evaluation of rTMS in Alberta to ensure that we are meeting the intended outcomes and to support the case for future spread of the rTMS.

Where are we now?

rTMS was previously available in Ponoka at the Centennial Centre and in Edmonton as part of the Day Hospital Program at Alberta Hospital Edmonton. A second clinic in downtown Edmonton (108 street) and two clinics in Calgary (Foothills and Rockyview General Hospital) were launched in the Fall of 2019. As of January 2020, 98 patients have been assessed and begun rTMS treatment. This preliminary report, while based on low numbers of treated patients, suggests very promising treatment gains for those receiving rTMS. Further administrative data on emergency presentations and acute care length of stay data will be obtained once 200 patients have completed the treatment and follow-up requirements.

Who is involved?

Edmonton, Calgary, and Central Zone are active partners in the current rollout. North and South Zones sit on the Implementation Working Group and continue to seek funding to support additional scale and spread.

For more information on this project, please contact the Addiction and Mental Health Strategic Clinical Network™: AddictionMentalHealth.SCN@albertahealthservices.ca

