Description of Procedure or Service

Transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) is a noninvasive technique that is being investigated as a modality for treatment resistant major depression (TRD). TMS was first introduced in 1985 as a new method of noninvasive stimulation of the brain. In October 2008, the NeuroStar® TMS received FDA marketing clearance as a de novo device for therapy of patients with TRD. Brief repetitive pulses of magnetic energy are applied to the scalp via a large electromagnetic coil to generate low levels of electrical current in the underlying brain tissue. These fields penetrate through nearby tissues, including the scalp, skull, meninges, and cerebrospinal fluid, to induce electric currents in underlying cortical neurons. The frequency of TMS pulses influences the effects on axons. Low frequencies of less than 5 Hz will hyperpolarize axons, transiently reducing their normal firing to inhibit their normal effects.

Depending on stimulation parameters (frequency, intensity, pulse duration, stimulation site), repetitive TMS (rTMS) to specific cortical regions can either increase or decrease the excitability of the affected brain structures. The goal of TMS is to stimulate areas of the brain involved in mood regulation to lessen the duration or severity of depressive episodes. TMS may be used to augment pharmacotherapy or in lieu of a new medication. Transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) is a non-invasive method of induction of a focal current in the brain and transient modulation of the function of the targeted cerebral cortex.

Background

Transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) is a noninvasive method of delivering electrical stimulation to the brain. A magnetic field is delivered through the skull where it induces electric currents that affect neuronal function. In contrast to electroconvulsive therapy, TMS does not require anesthesia and does not induce a convulsion. Repetitive TMS (rTMS) has been utilized as a treatment of depression. TMS (rTMS) has been investigated as a treatment of other disorders, including alcohol dependence, Alzheimer’s disease, neuropathic pain, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), post-partum depression, Parkinson disease, stroke, posttraumatic stress disorder, panic disorder, epilepsy, dysphagia, Tourette syndrome, schizophrenia, migraine, spinal cord injury, fibromyalgia and tinnitus.

Repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation should be performed using a U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-cleared device in appropriately selected individuals, by physicians who are adequately trained and experienced in the specific techniques used. A treatment course should not exceed 5 days a week for 6 weeks (total of 30 sessions), followed by a 3-week taper of 3 transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) treatments in week 1, 2 TMS treatments the next week, and 1 TMS treatment in the last week.

Regulatory Status

There are multiple FDA-approved devices currently used to deliver repetitive transcranial stimulation; examples include:
Neurostar TMS, MagStim Rapid Therapy System and Magvita TMS Therapy System versions with and without MagProR20.

Guidance regarding requirements for these devices may be found at:
https://www.fda.gov/medicaldevices/deviceregulationandguidance/guidancedocuments/ucm265269.htm

**Policy Statement**

GEHA will provide coverage for TMS when it is determined to be medically necessary because the medical criteria and guidelines as documented below have been demonstrated.

**When treatment for TMS is covered for any of the following indications:**

1) Administered by an FDA cleared device and utilized in accordance with the FDA labeled indications; and
2) The member meets one of the following criteria:
   A) There is documentation via legible medical records of failure of four trials of psychopharmacologic agents, including two different agent classes, during the current depressive episode; or
   B) The member is unable to tolerate a therapeutic dose of medications as evidenced by documentation via legible medical records of four trials of psychopharmacologic agents with distinct side effects; and
   C) The member is age 18 years or older; and
   1) The member has a confirmed diagnosis of severe major depressive disorder (single or recurrent episode), documented by standardized rating scales that reliably measure depressive symptoms (e.g., Beck Depression Scale [BDI], Hamilton Depression Rating Scale [HDRS], Montgomery-Asberg Depression Rating Scale [MADRS], etc.); and
   2) There is documentation via legible medical records of failure of a trial of a psychotherapy known to be effective in the treatment of major depressive disorder of an adequate frequency and duration, without significant improvement in depressive symptoms, as documented by standardized rating scales that reliably measure depressive symptoms (e.g., Beck Depression Scale [BDI], Hamilton Depression Rating Scale [HDRS], Montgomery-Asberg Depression Rating Scale [MADRS], etc.); and
   3) The member is currently receiving or is a candidate for electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) and rTMS is considered a less invasive equally effective treatment option (e.g., in cases with psychosis, acute suicidal risk, catatonia or life-threatening inanition rTMS should not be utilized); and
   4) The member has no contraindications to rTMS (refer to contraindications below); and
   5) A treatment course should not exceed 5 days a week for 6 weeks (total of 30 sessions), followed by a 3-week taper of 3 transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) treatments in week 1, 2 TMS treatments the next week, and 1 TMS treatment in the last week.
When treatment for TMS is not covered:

1) Persons with high alcohol or illicit drug consumption; or
2) The member is suicidal; or
3) The member has a metal implant in or around the head (e.g., aneurysm coil or clip, metal plate, ocular implant, stent); or
4) The member has neurological conditions (e.g., cerebrovascular disease, dementia, history of repetitive or severe head trauma, increased intracranial pressure or primary or secondary tumors in the central nervous system); or
5) The member has a seizure disorder/epilepsy; or
6) If the member has severe cardiovascular disease, the member has not been evaluated and cleared for rTMS by a cardiologist.
7) GEHA considers transcranial magnetic stimulation experimental and investigational for the following indications because its value and effectiveness has not been established (not an all-inclusive list):
   A) Alzheimer's disease
   B) Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis
   C) ADHD
   D) Anxiety disorders
   E) Auditory verbal hallucinations
   F) Autism
   G) Blepharospasm
   H) Bulimia nervosa
   I) Chronic pain including neuropathic pain (e.g., orofacial pain, and central post-stroke pain)
   J) Communication and swallowing disorders (e.g., aphasia (including post-stroke aphasia), dysarthria,
   K) Dysphagia (including post-stroke dysphagia), and linguistic deficits
   L) Epilepsy (including status epilepticus)
   M) Congenital hemiparesis
   N) Dystonia
   O) Fibromyalgia
   P) Levodopa-induced dyskinesia
   Q) Migraine
   R) Mood disorders
   S) Obsessive-compulsive disorder
   T) Panic disorder
   U) Parkinson disease
   V) Phantom pain associated with spinal cord injury
   W) Post-traumatic stress disorder
   X) Schizophrenia
   Y) Smell and taste dysfunction (e.g., phantosmia and phantageusia)
   Z) Spasticity
   AA) Stroke treatment (e.g., motor impairment, and post-stroke hemiplegia)
   BB) Substance addiction
   CC) Tourette syndrome
Tinnitus
Traumatic brain injury

Policy Guidelines

Clinical information required to determine medical necessity must be submitted along with the appropriate authorization request form. This includes: patient history and evaluation, including tried and failed treatments; current presentation of symptoms; and treatment plan, including frequency and total number of sessions requested.

Physician documentation

CPT

90867 Therapeutic repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) treatment; initial, including cortical mapping, motor threshold determination, delivery and management

90868 Therapeutic repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) treatment; subsequent delivery and management, per session

90869 Therapeutic repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) treatment; subsequent motor threshold re-determination with delivery and management

Scientific references


Wang HN1, Wang XX1, Zhang RG1, Wang Y1, Cai M1, Zhang YH1, Sun RZ1, Guo L1, Qiao YT1, Liu JC1, He H1, Wang ZH1, Wan YC1, Tan QR2, Zhang ZJ3.4. Clustered repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation for the prevention of depressive relapse/recurrence: a randomized controlled trial. Transl Psychiatry. 2017 Dec 18;7(12):1292. doi: 10.1038/s41398-017-0001-x.