Rockford man gets life back after struggling to treat his depression

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Brian & Roxann Smith

ROCKFORD (WREX) - Medical experts say for millions of Americans living with depression, medication isn't always the answer. Rockford resident Brian Smith found the right help and didn't have to look too far.

"Everything was hopeless, I thought my life had no meaning and that nobody needed me." Brian says.

He and his wife, Roxann, describe Brian's life stuck in the depths of depression.

"It doesn't matter what you say, what you do. You can't make them feel better." Roxann explains.

Brian was diagnosed 30 years ago and healing had been a constant battle.

"At one time, I did live in New Mexico for a year and a half. When I was out there the doctor out there had me on seven different anti-depressants at the same time and I still wasn't feeling any better."

Last year, while looking online, Brian stumbled upon transcranial magnetic stimulation, or TMS, a treatment available close to home.

"I saw this and I saw Rosecrance and thought 'It's right here! I don't have to go anywhere, it's right here.'" Brian says.

TMS is non-invasive. You don't need surgery and nothing goes in your blood stream. You sit in a chair and a treatment coil generates an electro-magnetic pulse, targeting the left pre-frontal cortex which controls moods.

"It is producing healthy brain functioning. It's kind of just taking a generator to the brain in that area and then over time the brain just starts to take over through this idea of neuroplasticity. From there, we can see clients getting better on their own." says Rosecrance affiliate Aspen Counseling & Consulting TMS Coordinator Ian Cox.

After decades of failed medication routines, Brian only needed two months of TMS. His last treatment was in May.

"I just have been doing a lot better, I can handle pressure a lot better, I'm not as anxious, I sleep better." he says.

Roxann explains, "We're just enjoying everything now; our kids, our grandkids."

Brian still takes a small amount of medication, but that could change.

He smiles and says, "I don't even know if I need that."

TMS was approved by the Food & Drug Administration in 2008. It's been available at Aspen Counseling & Consulting for the last three years. Out of the roughly 70 patients Aspen has seen since they started offering TMS in 2010, only around 10%didn't benefit.

About NeuroStar TMS Therapy®

NeuroStar TMS Therapy indicated for the treatment of Major Depressive Disorder in adult patients who have failed to achieve satisfactory improvement from one prior antidepressant medication at or above the minimal effective dose and duration in the current episode.

The safety and efficacy of NeuroStar TMS Therapy in Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) was studied in a randomized controlled trial of patients who had failed to receive benefit from one to four prior antidepressant medications. A retrospective subgroup analysis of the overall study population demonstrated that the device was safe and effective for patients who had failed to benefit from one prior antidepressant medication of adequate dose and duration in the current episode. In this study population, patients had received a median of 4 total prior antidepressant medication attempts in the current episode, one of which achieved treatment adequacy at or above the minimal effective dose and duration.

In a controlled trial, patients treated with active NeuroStar TMS Therapy received greater than 3 times the improvement in depressive symptoms compared to placebo at four weeks (MADRS, -7.1 vs -2.1, P=0.0006).[1] An open-label, uncontrolled clinical study showed approximately half of the patients treated with NeuroStar TMS Therapy experienced significant improvement in their depression symptoms. About a third of the patients treated with NeuroStar TMS Therapy experienced complete symptom relief at the end of 6 weeks.[1]

NeuroStar TMS Therapy should not be used (is contraindicated) in patients with implanted metallic devices or non-removable metallic objects in or around the head. NeuroStar TMS Therapy is not associated with systemic side effects reported for antidepressant medications. The most frequently reported side effect with NeuroStar TMS Therapy is scalp pain or discomfort at the treatment location. There is a rare risk of seizure with NeuroStar TMS Therapy; in post-market experience, the risk is approximately 0.1% (1 in 1000 patients). Patients undergoing treatment for Major Depressive Disorder, including NeuroStar TMS Therapy should be monitored closely for worsening symptoms and signs of suicidal behavior and/or unusual behavior.

The safety of NeuroStar TMS Therapy in the presence of concomitant antidepressant medication was evaluated in a 6-month follow-up open-label clinical trial in patients who had previously responded to acute NeuroStar TMS Therapy. The safety outcomes did not differ from those observed during acute TMS monotherapy.[2]

The safety and effectiveness of NeuroStar TMS Therapy has not been established in the following patient populations or clinical conditions through a controlled clinical trial: Patients who have failed to receive benefit from 2 or more antidepressant medications given at or above minimal effective dose and duration in the current episode or who have had no prior antidepressant medication failure; Patients who cannot tolerate withdrawal of antidepressant medications; Patients who have a suicide plan or have recently attempted suicide; Depression secondary to a general medical condition or substance-induced; seasonal affective disorder; Patients younger than 22 years of age or older than 70 years of age; Patients with history of substance abuse, obsessive compulsive disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder; Patients with a psychotic disorder, including schizoaffective disorder, bipolar disease, or major depression with psychotic features; Patients with neurological conditions that include history of seizures, cerebrovascular disease, dementia, increased intracranial pressure, having a history of repetitive or severe head trauma, or with primary or secondary tumors in the CNS; Patients with metal in or around the head, including metal plates, aneurysm coils, cochlear implants, ocular implants, deep brain stimulation devices and stents; Patients with vagus nerve stimulators or implants controlled by physiologic signals, including pacemakers, and implantable cardioverter defibrillators; Patients with major depressive disorder who have failed to receive clinical benefit from ECT or VNS; Patients who are pregnant or nursing. NeuroStar TMS Therapy has not been demonstrated to be equivalent in efficacy to ECT for the treatment of major depressive disorder. Efficacy was not studied in patients using concomitant antidepressant medications or receiving psychotherapy during TMS Therapy treatments. Safety and efficacy have not been established for NeuroStar TMS Therapy beyond a 4-6 week acute course, use of treatment parameters outside the labeled protocol or for maintenance therapy.

NeuroStar TMS Therapy is available by prescription only. Patients should talk to their doctor when considering NeuroStar TMS Therapy as a treatment option. For questions regarding this article, please contact Customer Service at 1-877-600-7555. Full safety and prescribing information is available at www.NeuroStar.com.

1. Demitrack MA, Thase ME. Clinical significance of transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) in the treatment of pharmacoresistant depression: synthesis of recent data. Psychopharm Bull. 2009, 42(2): 5-38
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