

I am writing as a nurse in the NHS who is also a patient with depression. I am concerned that a very effective treatment for depression that does not respond to other treatments is not being made available to the public in most parts of the country. Where it has been available, it is now being withdrawn because of cuts to funding of NHS mental health services. The treatment is called transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS). It was approved for widespread use in the NHS for depression by NICE in 2015.

As a previously high functioning nurse I have suffered with treatment depression for 10 years. I have been treated with every anti-depressant and anti-psychotic drug available, had multiple long hospital admissions and received more than 200 treatments of ECT, resulting in significant memory loss and the added trauma of receiving the treatment twice per week. ECT elevated my mood for between 3-4 months but I was still barely functioning and never present at work as I knew I would become ill again. My only option at that point was to have maintenance ECT for the foreseeable future which would further my memory loss and quality of life.

Out of frustration my husband and I decided to research further into TMS and luckily due to having private health care via my husband's employer I then commenced TMS and a course of 30 sessions in total. I travelled to Birmingham every day because there was no NHS provision at my local Trust. The treatment itself was easy, approximately 30 minutes each treatment with no side effect and no general anaesthetic so I was able to drive to and from the treatment centre.

The results were and still are miraculous and life changing after such a long period of time with unsuccessful treatment. I am now fully functional, I exercise every day, I eat healthier food because I feel so good and have lost 4 stone in a year, weight that I gained as a result of the many appetite inducing medications. The most thrilling feeling is happiness, the re-engagement with friends, volunteering, being present and returning to my career in nursing which is my passion. All these benefits I would never have dreamed could happen. However, TMS treatment has made now my reality. I was never given an option of TMS in the NHS- it was ECT or nothing, a further depressing future for myself and my family.

I strongly believe that this treatment should be available in the NHS as an option to patients and families suffering like I was. It is an easy less intrusive treatment with the added benefit of being able to travel to treatment and with no side effects. If I had been given the option between ECT and TMS, I would have chosen TMS every time due to the reduced impact to my memory, my family and risk of general anaesthetic. It appears to me that we are only offering one treatment that does not work

for very long, is risky, expensive, damaging to memory. It is less cost effective and the long- term effects of this are far reaching both financially and most of all clinically. I would not want any other patient or family to see their relative in the same position as myself. I feel that this treatment must be available to all and an option to choose from to ensure equality within the NHS especially since this is part of the NHS's seven principles which is as follows- "The NHS to provide comprehensive services to all". In this instance this principle is non-existent and is providing no options for patients and a sub optimal treatment with no longevity or quality of life for suffering patients.

I have made some rough calculations based on an average cost of an NHS mental health bed only at £600/day. The total amount of days as a inpatient was 721 days at a cost of £432,600 over 9 years. This does not include ECT treatment, CPN support, Crisis support, multiple medications, blood tests (lithium levels), the input of emergency services and admissions on the general site post suicide attempts (waiting 9 days for a mental health bed) and seizures following drug reactions. These figures are pretty astounding in comparison to a course of TMS with a private provider at £7000 for a course of thirty sessions and this year's maintenance cost of £2400.

Finally, I urge you to make this treatment a priority for patients to start to lead a happy and fulfilling life and NOT a life that is unproductive but full of sadness, a shortened life filled with feelings of suicidal ideation

We are requesting that the Department of Health takes steps to ensure that TMS is routinely available in all NHS mental health services in England, and we also hope that Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland might also listen.

Thank you for reading this. I hope you might help the British public to access this treatment for depression.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stanley". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.