

Dear Ms. Scudiero.

I am writing in regards to the January 26, 2007 meeting of the Neurological Devices Panel. I have been closely following the scientific literature on the use of transcranial magnetic stimulation for a number of years. This is of special interest to me as most of my time is spent working with depressed patients who have not responded to multiple trials of antidepressant medications. Further trials of medications, combinations of medications will help some of these patients but the odds of responding to yet another trial of medications are quite low. Some of these patients will receive ECT, which is effective, but also has cognitive effects that deter patients from continuing treatment. Some of our patients are also receiving vagus nerve stimulators. We are seeing positive results from this treatment but it is obviously not a treatment suitable for everyone. My understanding of the TMS literature is that there has been a consistently positive effect reported in the studies for depression. I am impressed with the safety, lack of need for anesthesia, and lack of the cognitive side-effects seen with ECT. We have had numerous inquiries about this modality from patients and other professionals. I am convinced from many consultations for severe depression, that there are quite a number of patients who would be suitable candidates for TMS. It appears that this would give us another important tool to treat patients, especially those who either do not qualify for or are very reluctant to pursue ECT or VNS.

I believe that we should use every available treatment to assist our depressed patients. It is well established that depression is a leading cause of disability and that existing treatments will not help everyone with depression.

Thank you for your consideration.

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