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[Can Magnetic Stimulation Cure Bulimia?](#)

Unconclusive results

Like anorexia, bulimia is a severe eating disorder. Only that in this situation, the person, instead of fasting, crams even 15,000 calories in two hours' time. Then, the person eliminates what she/he ate, by vomiting or taking laxatives/diuretics. Usually, the patient eats secretly and, after having consumed the food and his/her anxiety is calmed down, experiences again the feeling of guilt. The wrong use of laxatives can destroy the gut bacteria, provoking inflammations and infections. Frequent vomiting can provoke dehydration, tooth decay, esophagus lesions and even heart insufficiency. Usually, those with bulimia have a normal weight or they are a little overweight. It affects especially women aged 15-24, and it can be triggered/accelerated by stressful and depressive events, like frustration or break-up, boredom or loneliness. Antidepressants induce positive effects in such cases, thus bulimia could be linked to deficient serotonergic transmission. The left dorsolateral prefrontal cortex is supposed to control the eating behavior and to be impaired in eating disorders. The disorder is hard to get rid of it, especially as in many cases relapses take place. Bulimia may also be connected to low self-esteem or a perfectionist character, with too high expectations from his/her own person. Teenagers, especially girls, are extremely sensitive about their looks, and the simplest teasing about their body weight or speed of fat accumulation can trigger eating issues. Now, a team at the Innsbruck University (Austria) has found a method of treating bulimia using magnetic pulses! Transcranial magnetic stimulation is clearly a non-invasive method influencing the cortical activity. The research was made on 14 bulimic women. To exclude false bulimic patients, all subjects were first submitted to a one-week sham treatment. This was followed by 3 weeks of real magnetic treatment or sham stimulation. Changes in binges and purges were assessed using the Hamilton Depression Rating Scale (HDRS), the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) and the Yale-Brown Obsessive Compulsive Scale (YBOCS). The daily average number of binges per day dropped significantly between baseline and the end of treatment in both groups. Both groups had also the same purge behavior after some time. It seems that repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS) does not have additional benefit over placebo in treating bulimia. Researches implying more subjects would clarify this issue.