

Peer Review

Review of: "Effect of High-Frequency Repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation on Upper-Limb Function After Stroke: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis"

Donatella Bonaiuti¹

1. Independent researcher

The study concerns an important therapeutic possibility for the rehabilitation of stroke patients and is still under investigation. It is well set up with regard to the division of studies according to timing and is sufficiently accurate with regard to the methods of analysis.

Some points, however, would need to be reviewed.

I do not agree with the choice of the EU FMA as the only outcome measure because it describes only motor recovery and not functionality. It would have been better to refer to ARAT as a function measure, which describes the real impact of the functionality possibly acquired with TMS in the reduction of functional dependence.

In any case, in order to better understand at what level of severity of upper limb deficit and therefore already have an idea of the indication for HF TMS, it would be useful to describe all cases with total or only motor EU FMA, while in the reports reported by the different studies both are reported, creating confusion for the reader who wants to have a criterion or creating confusion for the reader who instead wants to have a homogeneous criterion for describing the samples of the different studies. It would also be useful to report, if deductible, how many cases have exceeded the MCID at the end of treatment.

To complete the description of the samples studied in the different studies, in addition to the average age and distance of the stroke, where reported, it would also be interesting to report the sex of the cases, i.e., how many females and how many males in the different series.

In particular: page 3: I paragraph: remove sex among the characteristics of the populations studied if it is not described; page 11: II line: "less prolonged" instead of "less frequent" and "more prolonged" instead of "more frequent." Page 15: In Discussion, at each subchapter, the suggestions for further research to resolve the limitations of the current studies, in my opinion, should be brought together in a subsequent concluding chapter.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.