

Treating depression with brain-stimulating implants

[A] new study out of the University of California, San Francisco, [published](#) [November 29] in Current Biology, seems to offer an intriguing step forward for [deep brain stimulation] as a therapy for depression. Their research suggests there's another possible target for stimulation, one that might provide more reliable improvements in mood.

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The patients had implants placed in various areas of the brain, including near the lateral portion of the orbitofrontal cortex (OFC), a region located right behind the eye. The OFC is known to play a role in decision making, emotion-processing, and mood regulation.

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Over the course of several days, the volunteers had different brain regions stimulated via DBS, including the OFC. Sometimes, the patients were instead given a sham stimulation, which acted as a control. And after each stimulation session, they talked about how they were feeling and answered questionnaires meant to assess their mood.

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Those who had no or little signs of depression didn't experience mood changes afterwards, no matter where the stimulation occurred or if they received it at all. But people with moderate-to-severe depression symptoms did seem to have their mood boosted within minutes.

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"Our findings are important because they provide a new potential target for treating mood symptoms via brain stimulation therapies," [said] author Heather Dawes.

Read full, original post: [Scientists Propose New Way to Treat Depression With Brain Implants](#)