

## NEWS RELEASE

BLACK DOG INSTITUTE



### **PARTICIPANTS REQUIRED FOR NEW DEPRESSION TREATMENT TRIAL**

The Black Dog Institute, in conjunction with the University of NSW is trialling an alternative treatment for depression – known as Mild Brain Stimulation (MBS).

The new treatment stimulates the brain with a mild electrical current, a thousand times weaker than electro-convulsive therapy (ECT).

Unlike ECT, which requires the patient to be anaesthetised and results in a seizure, the new treatment is painless with no known serious side effects. There is no anaesthetic or seizure and people participating in the MBS trial are fully awake and alert during the 20 minute treatment.

The trial is taking place at the Black Dog Institute Building, Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick and is particularly suitable to patients seeking an alternative to medication or who were unable to tolerate anti-depressant drugs or ECT.

Participants will receive MBS for 20 minutes three times per week over about a month. Depressed patients aged 18 and over who want to take part in the trial should phone 02 9382 3720 or email [TMSandDCS@unsw.edu.au](mailto:TMSandDCS@unsw.edu.au). Information is also available on the Black Dog Institute website [www.blackdoginstitute.org.au](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au)

Heading up the research is Psychiatrist, Dr Colleen Loo, who explained that MBS involved passing a very weak electrical current through the skull to stimulate neurons in a region of the brain known as the prefrontal cortex, an area which is underactive in people with depression. “It primes the neurons so that when they are triggered, their response is enhanced,” said the Doctor.

A small study of 10 depressed patients by German and American doctors recently found improvements in mood with MBS while researchers in the sixties and seventies reported good results using smaller electrical currents over a few hours. But with anti-depressant medications being developed around the same time, these trials were not continued.

Dr Loo said scientists were studying different treatments for depression to give patients more options.

**Media Inquiries:** Contact Ian Dose (M) 0419 618 606 or email [i.dose@unsw.edu.au](mailto:i.dose@unsw.edu.au)