

Carol Murphy

Patient

Testimony for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

My name is Carol Murphy. I have had migraine headaches for over 40 years. Unfortunately I am one of those people for whom medication was far from successful. Once you have progressed through the beta blockers, anti depressants, anti seizures and abortive medications, you become willing to try more aggressive treatments. I have done occipital blocks, which causes scar tissue and the possibility of worsening headaches, and I have had steroidal cervical blocks and Botox with minimal success.

Michigan Head Pain and Neurological Clinic was able to design a regimen for me that kept me out of the emergency rooms and functioning most of the time, but that all changed in 2005 when I turned 60. Just another milestone I thought, but for migraine sufferers, it becomes a traumatic age. I no longer fit into Michigan's protocols for migraine medications and so they would not allow me to continue with any of the medications I was on. Instead, "stroke risk" was stamped on my forehead. So I quickly had a "stroke assessment" done which proved that everything was in normal limits but "protocols" outweighed that assessment and I was left with nothing more than the narcotic pain killer oxycodone. Oxycodone numbs the pain but nothing to break the headache cycle, and with 3-4 aura migraines a week, my life was going downhill fast.

When I got into the program at Ohio State with the Transcranial Magnetic Stimulator, I had little expectations of it working. I was told to put the device on my head and activate it twice during the aura. When I used the device, the aura finished its cycle, but the blood vessels in the

brain never filled with blood-- therefore no pain. For 9 months I had a normal life. If I had promised to do something on a particular day, I could! I never left the house without my devise. If my car was going to be more than 15 minutes away from me, I carried my devise with me. My life had turned around- I could do anything, any time I wanted to! You could say I was living life again.

In June of 2006, Ohio State took back the TMS(Transcranial Magnetic Stimulator), so it could go to the FDA. It is now July 2011 and where is my devise? In England!

In many ways, I am not the classic migraine sufferer. When people think about a migraine, the picture they see is of someone in a dark room, rolled up in a ball, vomiting. That is not me. When the blood vessels in your head expand, any part of your body can be effected. My feet and legs get so cold there is no way I can sleep. I call it bone cold because there is no way of warming them until the migraine lets up. Oxy(oxycodone) numbs pain , but it does not break the cycle of a migraine. With the TMS, the blood vessels never dilated- no cold feet. Sleep!

Although vomiting is not a problem, I do have urinary and bowel problems. By day two, the abdominal migraine starts. I walk around holding my lower abdomen as if I had just had surgery. Again, no dilated blood vessels, no abdominal pain.

But for me, the more serious problem is neurological. I call it "MY no noun days". If the headache lasts 2-3 days, then there are "No adjective days" as well. The thoughts in my head are clear, but the words coming out of my mouth are jumbled or nonexistent. Sometimes it's just easier to not try to communicate, but I still work. It's hard to be professional when you are constantly saying "Let me start over." With the TMS, none of this happens.

As I age, falling becomes more of a factor. During a migraine, my left foot drags. With my balance just off a little because my ears feel full, catching my toe is really dangerous. Lack of balance and a "foot drop" gets more critical with each year. With the TMS, this also doesn't happen.

Now I live my life between a rock and a hard place. I can take the narcotic OXYI and be at risk for the addiction that can come with it and be faced with the possibility of having a stroke after an aura, or I can go without any medication and let the pain tear my body down. Some days I want a life and just take the medication, but other days I just crawl into my hole and grin and bear it, so as not to feel drugged all the time. I want my machine back!! I want to look forward to a quality of life free of pain. Most people can't say they can go back in time, but I can. If I had that TMS device, health wise I could go back five years to a time when my life was free of pain. Five years is a long time to wait!

There are millions of migraine sufferers out there. They all have their own story to tell. Most everyone knows someone who has migraines. Drugs are not always the answer. We, as Americans, should not have to go to England to get medical equipment to help live a normal life. This is a product made in America, by Americans, but not for use by Americans. We waited five years for FDA approval. How many more years is it going to take to bring us up to UK standards in medical equipment?