



The shock treatment is hoped to help improve serotonin levels without the side effects experienced by using anti-depression drugs

BY DAVID JARVIS

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ELECTRIC shock treatment is being used to treat depression and anxiety in a major NHS trial. The gadget being trialled, which is the size of a mobile phone, works by sending micro-currents of electricity to increase a patient's naturally occurring "alpha waves" that are believed to create a more relaxed state of mind.



The shock therapy is being trialled to help those suffering from depression or anxiety

The devices have already been handed out to 120 patients at the Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust for a 24-week-long study.

If deemed a success, the gadget could be rolled out by the NHS within two years.

Peter Caunt, of the Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust, said: "We know this type of therapy works.

"The key to this study is to find out how cost-effective it can be compared to conventional treatments involving tablets and cognitive behavioural therapies."

The Alpha-Stim gadget uses mild electric shocks, aiming to stimulate the brain, is already in use by the British Army and US military for post-traumatic stress.

Those involved in the NHS trial, which began in September, are required to use the device for 20 minutes a day.

Patients clip the two electrodes to their earlobes with wires running to a machine.