

Users experience on Virtual Reality Technology for Stroke.

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Introduction

Virtual Reality (VR) has now emerged as a promising tool in stroke rehabilitation. There are several strengths underlying the use of VR within rehabilitation. VR has the possibilities for real-time performance feedback and independent practice in a safe testing and training environment. Relearning daily life activities often comprises intensive training, feedback and training in an environment that motivates the patient to train. If the focus is on these three aspects in rehabilitation, the design of activities should be attractive. To create attractive activities it is important to understand the patient's subjective experience of the activity. Interventions that are productive, pleasurable and distracting can be efficient. The fact that an activity is pleasurable is important for motivating the patient. The possibilities of introduction gaming features into VR scenarios may enhance motivation levels in clients participating in rehabilitation

Objectives

The purpose of this study was to investigate stroke subject's subjective experience of using Virtual Reality technology in acute stroke rehabilitation setting.

Methods

A qualitative method based on content analysis was used and, in addition, elements in order to preserve the subjective experience and reporting of the stroke subjects. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten subjects and the analysis concerned both contents and form in their stories.

Results

The resulting aspects of the contents are presented in three areas: flow, stimulation and participation. Our results indicate that most subjects were very positive towards this new technology. Subjects perceived the training stimulating and inspiring and the activation of the flow experience.

Conclusion

The general experience using the VR approach suggests that this intervention concept is promising in occupational therapy, with a wide range of applicability. Future research should explore how to develop VR environments for occupational therapy so therapists will continue to investigate applying these tools in their clinical practice.

Contribution to the practice/evidence base of occupational therapy.

Absorbing and interesting activities have a valuable effect on mood, health and recovery. The fact that an activity is pleasurable is essential for occupational therapy. OTs must aim to find occupations that discover ways to stimulate motivation.