

1-2021

Provider Perceptions of Virtual Reality as a Therapeutic Tool

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Recommended Citation

Eberts, Margaret; Vincent, Christine; Naik, MD, Tejal U.; and O'Hayer, Virginia, "Provider Perceptions of Virtual Reality as a Therapeutic Tool" (2021). *Phase 1*. Paper 1.

https://jdc.jefferson.edu/si_dh_2023_phase1/1

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SKMC Class of 2023: SI/DH Abstract

Word count: 255

Title: Provider Perceptions of Virtual Reality as a Therapeutic Tool

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Introduction: Virtual reality (VR) shows significant potential as a healthcare tool, especially in the management of anxiety disorders and pain. However, despite recent studies demonstrating the effectiveness of VR, there continues to be limited use among providers. A lack of resources and understanding of the feasibility of clinical VR use may present a significant barrier for VR implementation. Through studying the perceptions of providers using VR clinically, this study aims to understand the achievability of VR as a standardized therapy.

Methods: Researchers distributed an online, self-administered questionnaire to healthcare providers identified on VR application websites. The questionnaire consisted of five sections including respondent demographics, VR value, onboarding, billing, and clinical use. Inclusion criteria was providers in the United States using VR actively or in the past year as a therapeutic tool. Exclusion criteria was providers in other countries or providers who did not have email access. Twenty-two responses were received, and four excluded.

Results: The most commonly cited use of VR among providers was acute pain/anxiety (N=11, 61.1%) treatment, followed by specific and social phobia (N=6, 33.3% each). In relation to the onboarding process, the slight majority (N=10, 58.8%) of providers did not find transitioning to VR difficult. Of those who did, cost was the most commonly cited barrier. Most providers (N=15, 88.2%) received training on their VR platform which they found beneficial.

Discussion: While VR is a treatment adjunct that is well-received by patients and providers, associated costs may present the largest barrier to implementation.