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Virtual reality hypnotherapy for healthcare students

Submission date
31/12/2023

Recruitment status
No longer recruiting

Registration date
03/01/2024

Overall study status
Completed

Last Edited
03/01/2024

Condition category
Mental and Behavioural Disorders

[ ] Prospectively registered
[ ] Protocol
[ ] Statistical analysis plan
[ ] Results
[ ] Individual participant data
[ ] Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
Poor student mental health is a priority for universities and there is some evidence that both hypnotherapy and virtual reality (VR) can be helpful in reducing perceived stress in the general population. This is a feasibility trial of an intervention combining hypnotherapy and VR which was trialled in a group of healthcare students.

Who can participate?
Students aged over 18 years registered at St George's University of London

What does the study involve?
The students will be asked to try the VR hypnotherapy experience once a day over 3 days, and it lasts about 7 minutes.
The students will be asked to complete some questionnaires regarding their wellbeing and anxiety levels before and after the 3-day trial, and scales before and after each session measuring how relaxed/happy/sad they feel on a scale of 1 to 10. Pulse and blood pressure will be measured before and after each experience and at the end of the 3 days the students will be asked how they found it overall, what was good and what was bad about it.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
The main risk is of feeling nauseous (cybersickness). Students will have an opportunity to try a novel experience.

Where is the study run from?
St George's, University of London (UK)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
February 2021 to July 2022

Who is funding the study?
St George's, University of London (UK)

Who is the main contact?
Dr Aileen O'Brien, aobrien@sgul.ac.uk

Contact information

Type(s)
Public, Scientific, Principal investigator

Contact name
Dr Aileen O'Brien

ORCID ID
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2824-7190

Contact details
SGUL
London
United Kingdom
SW17
+44 (0)7961174521
aobrien@sgul.ac.uk

Additional identifiers

Integrated Research Application System (IRAS)
22022.0122

Study information

Scientific Title
Virtual reality hypnotherapy for healthcare students: a feasibility trial

Study objectives
A virtual reality hypnotherapy experience will be tolerated and acceptable to healthcare students

Ethics approval required
Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)
Approved 06/06/2022, St George's Research Ethics Committee (SGREC) (SGUL, Cranmer Terrace, Tooting, London, SW17 7DJ, United Kingdom; +44 (0)208 266 6073; sgulrec@sgul.ac.uk), ref: 22022.0122

Primary study design
Interventional

Study design

Single-arm non-randomized feasibility pilot trial

Study type(s)
Other

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Perceived stress

Interventions
This was a pilot so there was only one arm and no randomisation. Students who volunteered for the trial and met the eligibility criteria were allocated a project id and their sex, age group and ethnicity were recorded. Participants were asked to attend a quiet annex of the Student Union for a maximum of 1 hour each day (timed for the end of the teaching day) on three consecutive days. Students tried the virtual reality hypnotherapy experience over 3 days each lasting 7 minutes, involving the voice of a clinical hypnotherapist guiding the user through a series of virtual spaces.

Intervention Type
Device

Phase
Not Applicable

Drug/device/biological/vaccine name(s)
Virtual reality hypnotherapy in oculus headset

Primary outcome(s)
1. Wellbeing measured using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) at the start of the first session and the end of the third session
2. Perceived stress measured using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) at the start of the first session and the end of the third session
3. Depression measured using the Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ2) at the start of the first session and the end of the third session
4. Anxiety measured using the Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-7) questionnaire at the start of the first session and the end of the third session
5. Stress, happiness, sadness, calm, and anxiety measured using visual analogue scales before and after each VR session
6. Students' experience of the VR assessed using qualitative analysis of an open-ended question at the end of the 3 days

Key secondary outcome(s)
Pulse and blood pressure readings assessed as proxy indicators of stress by junior doctors manually (pulse) and with an electronic blood pressure reader before and after each VR session

Completion date
26/07/2022

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

1. Aged over 18 years
2. Student at St George's University of London

Participant type(s)
Healthy volunteer

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Adult

Lower age limit
18 Years

Upper age limit
65 Years

Sex
All

Total final enrolment
14

Key exclusion criteria
1. Epilepsy
2. Pacemaker

Date of first enrolment
07/06/2022

Date of final enrolment
15/06/2022

Locations

Countries of recruitment
United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre
St George's University of London
Cranmer Terrace
London
United Kingdom
SW17 7DJ

Sponsor information

Organisation
St George's, University of London

Funder(s)

Funder type
University/education

Funder Name
St. George's, University of London

Alternative Name(s)
St. George's

Funding Body Type
Private sector organisation

Funding Body Subtype
Universities (academic only)

Location
United Kingdom

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan
The datasets generated will be available on request from Dr Aileen O'Brien (aobrien@sgul.ac.uk).

IPD sharing plan summary
Available on request