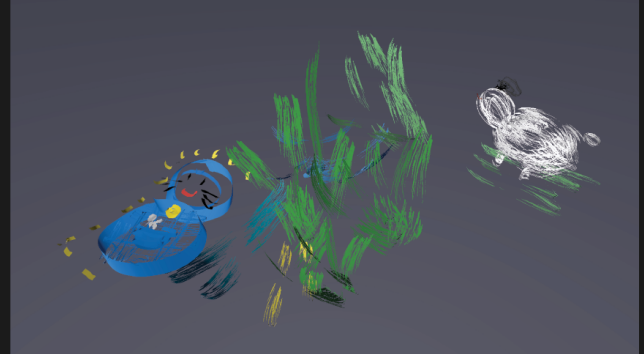


Remote art therapy in collaborative virtual environment: a pilot study on feasibility and usability

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PROBLEM

The need for remote art therapy has increased rapidly due to the global pandemic.

Remote art therapy faces the challenge of effectively translating and maintaining the unique triangular therapeutic relationship among the therapist, the client, and the artworks in the digital world.

The off-the-shelf applications only support therapists to observe the art creation process on computer monitors without actual participation.

EXPERIMENT DESIGN

We designed and implemented a highly customised collaborative virtual environment (CVE) for this pilot study.

Each participant had a 30-minute one-on-one session with the registered expressive arts therapist (the fourth author of the paper), followed by a semi-structured interview focusing on possible improvements to the CVE.

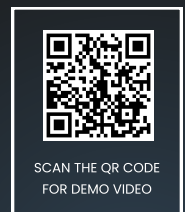
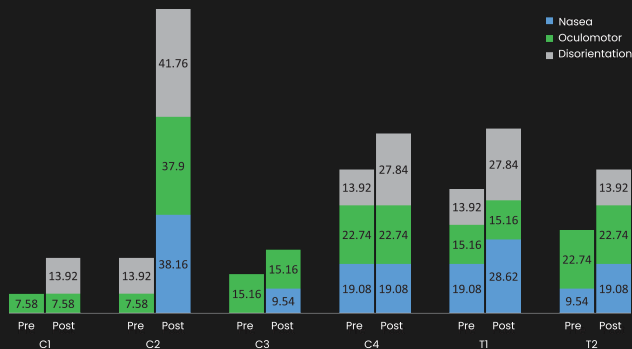
During the sessions, clients were asked to draw a comfortable and cosy space, and the therapists were asked to evaluate the system.

PARTICIPANTS

Four young adults and two registered art therapists were recruited. The four young adults were referred by an NGO and participated as clients. The two therapists had remote arts therapy experience using video conferencing tools. Except for one client (C3), other participants had no VR experience.

MEASURES

System Usability Scale (SUS)
Simulator Sickness Questionnaire (SSQ)



RESULTS

Quantitative

- The SUS scores suggest that the usability of the CVE was good.
- The SSQ scores suggest that using the CVE for remote art therapy did not introduce more cybersickness symptoms.

RESULTS

Qualitative

- Both therapists agreed that the CVE was a promising medium for delivering remote arts therapy and found it easy to use.
- Except for one client (C2), who had a long history of being sensitive to motion sickness, other clients found the process enjoyable and interesting.

FINDINGS

- The CVE-enabled approach was feasible, and the system's usability was high.