

Project Title: Exploring the therapeutic benefits of virtual reality for people living with an incurable illness

Principal Supervisor: Dr Nicola White

Secondary Supervisors: Prof Paddy Stone, Dr Victoria Vickerstaff

Department & Institution: Marie Curie Palliative Care Research Department, Division of Psychiatry, University College London

Collaborative Organisation: Rescape Innovation Ltd.

Project Description:

During this PhD, the doctoral candidate will explore the potential benefits of virtual reality for people who are living with an incurable illness.

Aims: This doctoral study will (1) review the evidence of the therapeutic effectiveness of virtual reality for adults diagnosed with an incurable illness in any setting (2) explore the optimum content, “dosage” (i.e., number and length of sessions), and duration of virtual reality for people living with an incurable illness (3) explore the effectiveness of virtual reality on health-related outcomes over a 12-month period in a hospice setting.

Methods: (1) A systematic review of the evidence of virtual reality for those with an incurable illness (2) Qualitative workshops exploring the use and preferences of virtual reality with people living with an incurable illness, informal carers, and staff. (3) Quantitative study exploring the potential benefits of virtual reality.

Candidate Requirements:

Essential criteria

- Upper 2:1 (≥65 pass mark) or 1st class undergraduate degree in a health or social science discipline.
- Master's degree in research methodology, nursing, public health, sociology, psychology or similar discipline, or equivalent professional experience. The applicant should expect any postgraduate degree to be awarded prior to commencing the PhD.
- Evidence of experience or training in research methodology, if not apparent from the above.
- Evidence of excellent organisational, problem-solving and analytical skills.
- Data management skills.
- Willingness to travel within and possibly beyond London for research purposes.
- Ability to work independently as well as in a collaborative research team.

Desirable criteria

- Experience of working with/conducting research with health/social care service users.
- Research experience in a field relevant to the PhD studentship.
- Understanding of virtual reality technology.
- Publications in peer-reviewed academic journals. Please briefly describe your contribution to any published work in your CV.

The post-holder will be expected to contribute to the wider activities and life of the MCPCRD and UCL.

Please support your application by detailing modules or courses undertaken during your studies, research internships or employment, and any peer-reviewed, academic publications.

Eligibility: Only applicants eligible to pay fees at the UK rate will be considered.

Key References:

Mo, J., Vickerstaff, V., Minton, O., Tavabie, S., Taubert, M., Stone, P., & White, N. (2022). How effective is virtual reality technology in palliative care? A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Palliative Medicine*, 02692163221099584.

Further details about the project may be obtained from:

Informal enquiries: n.g.white@ucl.ac.uk

For full details about postgraduate study at UCL and the graduate admission policy visit <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/graduate/>

Deadlines and how to apply:

The candidate will be recruited through a formal, open recruitment process managed through the UCL recruitment system. All applicants will be required to complete a written application form and if they fulfil the eligibility criteria, they will be invited to interview. The studentship will be advertised through UCL, the Doctoral Training Partnerships, Marie Curie, www.jobs.ac.uk and www.findaphd.com. The short-listing and interview panel will comprise Dr Nicola White (Primary supervisor), Dr Victoria Vickerstaff and Prof Paddy Stone (subsidiary supervisors) and the Mental Health and Mental Healthcare Pathway Leader (Dr Vaso Totsika).

Application deadline: Tuesday 28th February 2023

Likely dates for interviews: 7, 8, 9 March 2023

Please submit applications in the following format:

- A CV, including full details of all University course grades to date.
- Contact details for two academic or professional referees.
- A personal statement (750 words maximum) outlining (i) your suitability for the project with reference to the criteria above, (ii) what you hope to achieve from the PhD and (iii) your research experience to date.

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

Please send electronic applications to:

Contact name: Mrs Yana Kitova, Senior Departmental Administrator

Contact details: y.kitova@ucl.ac.uk