

Beyond Proof of Concept: Translating Immersive Virtual Reality Into Scalable Mental Health Care

Participants:

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Symposium Synopsis:

Immersive virtual reality (VR) has moved far beyond proof-of-concept applications toward scalable models of mental health care that can be delivered remotely, used independently, and integrated into routine clinical practice. This symposium brings together three complementary programs of research illustrating that translational continuum. The first presentation examines the development and evaluation of a multiuser telehealth VR clinic in which therapists and clients conduct exposure therapy together, including findings from a completed feasibility randomized trial and design refinements informing an ongoing national trial. The second evaluates a self-guided, preloaded VR behavioral intervention for chronic insomnia, highlighting feasibility, adherence, and preliminary improvements in insomnia and related symptoms among adults with chronic pain. The third presents real-world longitudinal evidence from an outpatient clinic using immersive EEG-guided biofeedback to quantify change in self-regulation among patients with chronic pain and anxiety. Together, these studies span synchronous clinician-delivered care, self-guided treatment, and sensor-enabled therapeutic monitoring. They also integrate user-centered development, controlled evaluation, and implementation evidence. The 45-minute session will comprise three presentations followed by moderated synthesis and audience Q&A focused on clinical translation, scalability, measurement, access in low-connectivity settings, and the methodological standards needed to advance immersive technologies in psychiatry.