

ENMESH 2017 Groningen

Dr Lucia Valmaggia

King's College London, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience and South London and Maudsley NHS Trust, London, United Kingdom.

The use of Virtual Reality in mental health.

Virtual Reality (VR) has been used in psychology research for over two decades, and in recent years the integration of VR into the computer games industry has contributed to the creation of a much simpler, and more affordable immersive VR systems. This has generated a new impulse in the use of VR for the research, assessment and treatment of mental health problems.

VR enables researchers and clinicians to bring social situations into the consultation room. The same virtual social environment can be presented to different participants to assess, in real-time, their neuro-cognitive functioning, appraisal, emotions, body response and behaviour. VR environments can also form the ideal platform for behavioural experiments and for gradual exposure as VR allows the manipulation of the environment, for example one can manipulate the background noise level or the appearance and behaviour of virtual characters.

In my talk, I will give an overview of the use of VR in mental health and I will focus on the use of VR for psychosis.

Key words: virtual reality; psychosis; schizophrenia; e-health.