



A Systematic Review of Virtual Reality Applications for Individuals with Sexual Disorder

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Sexual interest and desire dysfunctions encompass reduced interest, thoughts, and responsiveness, affecting a notable proportion of adults. Psychological elements such as anxiety and depression, in conjunction with health issues, play a role in sexual disorders. Despite virtual reality (VR) technology demonstrating effectiveness in addressing mental health conditions, its application in treating sexual dysfunctions is an area requiring further exploration. This review seeks to elucidate the current utilization of VR for individuals with sexual dysfunction and identify avenues for advancing treatment strategies in this domain.

Methods and Materials: The review utilized the PubMed, Web of Science, and Scopus databases up to August 31, 2023. Information extracted from the studies included country, publication year, sample size, study type, hardware used, clinical focus, outcomes, and critical discoveries.

Results: Exploring PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science databases revealed 1737 studies, resulting in 1563 unique studies post-duplicate removal. Following a full-text evaluation of fifteen studies, seven were included, conducted between 1997 and 2023 across Italy, Canada, and Denmark. Among 413 participants, mainly male, the study investigated the influence of VR on ejaculate quality, examined clinical aspects of sexual aversion disorder, and integrated VR into psychotherapy for treating erectile dysfunction and premature ejaculation, demonstrating favorable outcomes in sexual health interventions.

Conclusion and Discussion: VR technology offers a valuable tool for pinpointing triggers and scenarios contributing to sexual dysfunction. By providing controlled and immersive virtual environments, this technology facilitates realistic emotional and behavioral responses akin to real-life situations, aiding in the assessment and treatment of sexual dysfunctions.

Keywords: Sexual and gender disorder, Systematic review, Virtual reality