

Will Virtual Reality (VR) be able to overcome the disconnect in patient-physician communication?

Set-up & objectives of ENGAGE – an integrated educational program for physicians in Myasthenia Gravis (MG)

Ina Weisshardt¹ Ivo Vlaev² Cornelia Reyes¹ Mihai Streza³ Sophie Barry⁴

¹ LLH Concepts, Haimhausen, Germany, ²University of Warwick, London, UK, ³Wondder, Berlin, Germany, ⁴UCB Pharma, Dublin, Ireland



Introduction:

- People living with MG suffer from a chronic unpredictable neuromuscular disease characterized by fluctuating muscle weakness.
- Five overarching themes were identified that are relevant for the patient: living with fluctuating and unpredictable symptoms; a constant state of adaptation and trade-offs in all aspects of life; treatment inertia, often resulting in under-treatment; a sense of disconnect with healthcare professionals; and feelings of anxiety, frustration, guilt, anger, loneliness and depression.¹
- Immersive learning has been identified to increase empathy and understanding of the patient experience of illness², leading to the formation of ‘practitioner empathy’³ - a core competency for medical practitioners dealing with MG patients.
- We chose to utilize VR technology in our immersive learning experience as, a recent study utilizing VR technology significantly enhanced learners’ knowledge, attitude and empathy towards patients suffering from psychosis.⁴
- In our educational intervention we will utilize VR to immerse learners in the evidenced experience of living with MG, highlighting the biopsychosocial impact.
- With our research-based approach we will determine if VR is suited to change the learner’s behaviour with regards to patient-physician communication and shared decision making.
- Our ambition: Develop a learning intervention prototype that can be integrated as a fixed component into pre- and postgraduate training.

Ref.: 1 Farrugia ME et al (2020) A Practical Approach to Managing Patients with Myasthenia Gravis—Opinions and a Review of the Literature. *Frontiers in Neurology* 11: 604. 2 Hargrove A et al (2020) Virtual reality and embodied experience induce similar levels of empathy change: Experimental evidence. *Computers in Human Behavior Reports*. 2:100038 3 Formosa NJ et al(2018) Testing the efficacy of a virtual reality-based simulation in enhancing users’ knowledge, attitudes, and empathy relating to psychosis. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 70(1), 57-65. 4 Stark-Wroblewski K et al (2008) Use of virtual reality technology to enhance undergraduate learning in abnormal psychology. *Teaching of Psychology*. 4: 343-348.

For further information, please contact:
Dr. Ina Weisshardt LLH Concepts Gbr Eggentalerstrasse 5, 85778 Haimhausen
Ina.weisshardt@llhconcepts.eu

Project Hypothesis

At least three of the overarching themes (treatment inertia, sense of disconnect with HCPs and feeling of anxiety) are closely linked with barriers in patient-physician communication and the lack of SDM (shared decision making)

Project Objectives

- Increase physicians’ awareness and knowledge of the impact of living with MG on many aspects of life.
- Increase physicians’ appreciation of the patient’s perspective of uncontrolled MG
- Enhance HCPs’ readiness to engage in SDM processes to enhance MG patients’ outcomes.

Project Design

