



Digital Transformation in the Health and Care
Professions(BMHP6026)

VIRTUAL REALITY (VR) FOR THERAPY

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Virtual Reality (VR) For Therapy

1. Introduction

Virtual reality (VR) functions as a complete virtual technology that lets users experience digital worlds through motion-tracking devices and head-mounted displays. The health and care sectors now use VR as a therapeutic tool that helps patients manage their pain while treating their mental health issues and physical rehabilitation, and symptom control. The United Kingdom shows increasing interest in VR therapy because healthcare services face higher demand and staff shortages while organizations search for new treatment methods that better serve patient requirements. The National Health Service (NHS) executes its digital transformation projects, which develop fresh solutions and personalized treatment options through technological progress. Recent studies in the UK demonstrate that NHS facilities have utilized virtual reality technology across various departments which include stroke rehabilitation and pain management, neurorehabilitation, and palliative care services (Phelan et al., 2021). The research shows that

medical professionals now accept virtual reality technology as an additional treatment option that works together with standard medical treatments. The paper employs a scoping review method to create a map which summarizes recent research about VR therapy treatment in the UK between 2019 and 2025. Scoping reviews help identify major subjects which contain potential benefits and present challenges for developing fields that contain multiple types of changing evidence. The review examines how virtual reality therapy impacts the workforce and service delivery, patient outcomes, and community effects by using only peer-reviewed academic literature, NHS evidence from PubMed and ProQuest, and NHS publications.

2. Impact on Workforce

The deployment of virtual reality treatment creates major effects for the healthcare workforce because it directly influences their essential job functions, required skills, and educational requirements (NHS England, 2024). The application of virtual reality (VR) technology in therapeutic settings needs clinicians who can deliver care, but also requires staff to operate advanced digital systems while using their existing medical expertise.

2.1 Changes in Job Roles and Practice

VR therapy has transformed the role of clinicians who now function as digital intervention facilitators. UK physiotherapy and rehabilitation facilities require clinicians to establish VR systems, guide patients through virtual reality simulations, and monitor patient treatment results. The current use of virtual reality technology remains low according to UK pediatric physiotherapists who participated in a national survey which showed strong interest in future virtual reality applications (Alrashidi et al., 2025). The growing expectation that virtual

reality will become standard practice shows that physiotherapists in the UK today already anticipate its future adoption.

Physicians working in inpatient neurorehabilitation centers demonstrated their new professional responsibilities when they incorporated virtual reality relaxation sessions into their existing treatment methods (Edwards, 2025). The findings show that digitally enabled healthcare settings bring about transformations in clinical responsibilities.

2.2 Workforce Competency and Training

The successful implementation of virtual reality requires workers to achieve basic digital skills. UK clinicians have identified three elements that affect virtual reality system adoption: user experience with the system, their confidence level, and their training with the system. According to Alrashidi et al. (2025), physiotherapists who cannot use virtual reality in their work environment face training shortages and time limitations as their main obstacles. Edwards (2025) discovered that staff members required basic assistance before they could use virtual reality technology and apply it to their treatment processes. The current findings demonstrate that people have greater concerns about the digital abilities of NHS personnel. The implementation of virtual reality technology will face unpredictable usage patterns because users depend on their own motivation rather than established business plans and explicit educational resources.

2.3 Interprofessional Collaboration

VR therapy programs require increased partnerships between doctors and digital specialists and technical support teams. The implementation process needs service managers, IT departments, and therapists to work together for safe and effective system usage (Kouijzer et al.,

2023). This cooperative strategy supports integrated care models and is in line with the multidisciplinary working priorities of the NHS.

2.4 Workforce Challenges

The application of VR therapy still faces a number of organizational and structural obstacles. Such technologies show great potential for improving healthcare services, yet it encounters obstacles that require resolution. Employee resistance to change remains a significant barrier, which particularly affects professionals who lack trust in digital tools and who consider virtual reality to be a threat to established healthcare methods. The NHS resource limitations which include financial constraints, time limitations, and staff shortages, restrict both training opportunities and successful VR integration into regular treatment procedures (Khan, 2023). The NHS trusts face a critical problem because different organizations within the NHS maintain different levels of digital infrastructure, together with their financial resources and their dedication to leadership, which results in different levels of VR technology implementation (Khan, 2023). The existing workforce disparities will become worse because some healthcare workers will achieve advanced digital skills, whereas others will remain untrained. The VR therapy system provides multiple benefits that help develop professional skills and operational effectiveness, and create new healthcare delivery systems (Pottle, 2019). Yet its impact on healthcare personnel depends on permanent funding for employee development and active medical guidance, together with educational programs that guarantee fair access and participation throughout the entire healthcare system.

3. Impact on Service Delivery

As adaptive technology-based methodologies that maintain traditional care frameworks, virtual reality therapy has begun to impact healthcare service delivery.

3.1 Transformation of Day-to-Day Service Delivery

VR therapy has become part of standard medical practice in UK clinical environments because it provides an extra treatment option that complements existing medical procedures. The NHS inpatient neurorehabilitation center used virtual reality relaxation sessions to establish their effectiveness as a normal treatment method, which did not interfere with existing therapeutic programs, according to Edwards (2025). The existing treatment systems can use virtual reality technology because it does not require the development of new treatment systems.

3.2 Efficiency and Capacity

The use of virtual reality technology (VR) does increase operational efficiency because it allows patients to interact with their treatment while providing medical professionals with a standardized treatment method (Pope et al., 2025). When it comes to enhancing symptom control and heightening patient satisfaction through chronic pain treatment, compliance with the controlled therapeutic environment of virtual reality (VR) could remain every so often useful to pain management and patient rehabilitation.

3.3 Accessibility and Innovation

Virtual reality technology enables patients with walking disabilities to access medical treatment because it reduces their need for physical treatment areas while they undergo their

rehabilitation process in hospitals and public spaces. VR-enhanced therapy provides stroke patients in the UK with a treatment option that boosts their rehabilitation intensity through its combination with standard physiotherapy methods according to the findings of a study conducted by Butcher et al. (2025).

3.4 Service Delivery Challenges

The service delivery process faces challenges because of its requirement for high initial costs and ongoing technical maintenance and integration work with existing IT systems. NHS trusts face limitations in their ability to scale operations because their different digital systems create interoperability challenges (Alrashidi et al., 2025). Healthcare organizations require skilled personnel to handle their governance needs, which involve clinical responsibilities and data security requirements (Alrashidi et al., 2025). The available evidence from the UK demonstrates that virtual reality systems can be implemented successfully and operated safely when organizations establish proper operational frameworks.

4. Impact on Patients

The assessment of VR therapy effectiveness depends on the evaluation of patient perspectives and their actual therapy experiences. The studies from the UK demonstrate that virtual reality technology improves user comfort and engagement while enhancing treatment outcomes.

4.1 Patient Engagement and Motivation

Patients with virtual reality therapy show high engagement levels according to their treatment records. Patients show better rehabilitation results when they used immersion virtual

reality systems because these systems provided more interactive and engaging therapy experiences than they received from standard exercise programs (Butcher et al., 2025). The greater involvement in the treatment process leads to better treatment outcomes and higher patient compliance with therapy.

4.2 Symptom Management and Comfort

Virtual reality shows potential as an effective treatment method for anxiety and pain relief, which particularly benefits patients in sensitive medical environments. The UK service assessment of acute hospital palliative care showed that VR sessions increased patient comfort because they reduced both pain and anxiety levels (Burridge et al., 2025). The results demonstrate that virtual reality technology improves life quality in situations where medical treatment does not focus on achieving complete recovery.

4.3 Health Literacy and Empowerment

Virtual reality technology enables patients to gain educational resources which lead to their empowerment (Pope et al., 2025). The research study demonstrated that patients improved their health knowledge and disease management skills through virtual reality pain education programs.

4.4 Patient-Centred Concerns

The technology causes some patients to develop motion sickness and anxiety symptoms, while others experience discomfort with their experiences. People who lack technology knowledge still face challenges because of digital isolation (Chadwick et al., 2024). The

provision of equitable medical treatment requires healthcare professionals to offer patients the ability to make choices obtain informed consent and to select from different treatment methods.

5. Impact on Community

The effects of VR therapy extend beyond individual patients to their families and caregivers and their whole community. The social effects of digital health solutions need to be considered because these solutions are becoming essential parts of the United Kingdom's health and social care systems (Ross et al., 2016). Virtual reality therapy can improve public health results and change how caregivers interact with patients and how people obtain medical services when used in community-based service delivery systems.

5.1 Access to Care

The implementation of VR therapy enables healthcare interventions to take place in community locations which are nearer to patients' residential areas. The requirement for patients to travel less will help them maintain their medical care while decreasing their financial and operational burdens. Virtual reality (VR) technology provides remote assistance together with guided exercises to enhance community rehabilitation services which support NHS preventive care objectives (Buckingham et al., 2022). Digital infrastructure and connectivity, together with organizational backing, are essential for delivering advantages that will prevent inequality from increasing.

5.2 Impact on Families and Carers

People suffering from chronic medical conditions along with age-related difficulties require essential assistance from both their family members and their non-paying caregivers. The

implementation of virtual reality therapy results in reduced caregiver responsibilities because it enhances patient participation and their ability to manage medical symptoms (Gokani et al., 2025). The ability of patients to experience therapy in a more comfortable state with reduced anxiety and increased motivation capacity results in lower emotional and physical distress for their caregivers who handle their challenging behavior.

Virtual reality educational resources help families understand both their patient's medical condition and treatment process, which enables better home care support. The therapy process becomes more effective through improved communication between patients and their caregivers and medical staff members (Pope et al., 2025). The successful implementation of virtual reality requires caregivers to receive proper training and guidance because they need assistance with its safe and effective use. When families lack proper technology support they face increased responsibilities, which leads to higher stress levels instead of decreasing them.

5.3 Public Health Implications

VR treatment establishes better biomedical results through its power to control rehabilitation outcomes, health literacy skills development, and self-management training. VR treatments create better health outcomes because they enhance patient participation and medical knowledge during treatment (Skidmore et al., 2024). The current system of preventative health initiatives aims to reduce hospital admissions while improving life quality for chronic illness patients.

The potential advantages need fair access to be their main requirement for successful achievement. The computer exclusion problem continues to affect people who lack computer skills, especially elderly individuals and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

The implementation of virtual reality technology will create worse health and digital access disparities unless specific funding supports infrastructure development and training initiatives, and accessible design solutions (Skidmore et al., 2024). Community-level planning and legislative monitoring activities serve as essential elements needed to ensure that VR therapy research will create public health benefits without increasing existing health gaps.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the development of virtual reality treatment serves as a vital component for digital transformation which currently shapes the health and care industries throughout the United Kingdom. The research study conducted in the UK demonstrates that virtual reality technology (VR) helps people manage their symptoms while increasing their involvement and providing additional support for standard treatment methods across various medical and community settings. The impact of this situation extends beyond individual patients to include their relatives, entire communities, employment situations, and methods of delivering services.

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