

Title: POSITIVE EFFECT OF EVERYDAY VIRRY VR BREAKS ON CARE HOME RESIDENTS DIAGNOSED WITH DEMENTIA

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Abstract (250 words)**:**
In developing this study we built upon Harvard University Professor Edward O. Wilson's biophilia hypothesis, which expands E. Fromm's theory to position biophilia as the basis of human existence. The overwhelming majority of people have a love of and keen interest in animals. 20 elderly residents (mean = 80.2, median = 82, SD = 8.614) of a care home in Malakhovka, a suburb of Moscow, participated in a study of the impact of visiting a virtual savanna via Virry VR technology. These 20 people later formed an experimental group. A control group was formed of 22 elderly residents (mean = 80, median = 80.5, SD = 9.6). Among the participants were elderly people with differing levels of cognitive function, but all with an MMSE score of at least 24. This condition was set due to the study's requirement for interaction with and feedback from the participants. A resident with an MMSE score of 16 also chose to take part, having learned about the study from a participating neighbor, and the effect on this particular resident pleasantly surprised both care home staff and the Virry VR research group.
The positive effect of embedding a visit to a virtual savanna in the everyday routine of care home residents with dementia was noted. Over the course of the study, the mood of the participants improved significantly and their satisfaction with life increased after each immersion in the virtual reality environment. Their level of pain also decreased and through long-term observation, it became apparent that a visit to the virtual savannah has a cumulative effect associated with a decrease in the subjective level of pain.
There was a clear improvement in memory test results. It should be noted that the inclusion of a new type of activity in an elderly person's environment gives them a stimulating experience and it is highly probable that this has a positive effect on cognitive abilities that decline with age. It can be assumed that visiting the savannah via VR arouses interest in the new and re- orientates the entire cognitive system with knowledge, whilst also having an immediate positive impact on the individual's wellbeing, setting a positive emotional scene that enables a different attitude to life.

Biography (100 words)

Svetlana Dragayeva is the co-founder of Fountain Digital Labs and creator of the BAFTA-winning app Virry and Virry VR series. Svetlana spent ten years in film production and then went on to focus her digital knowledge in the education and emotional wellness sectors. She has degrees in cognitive linguistics, politics, cultural studies, narratology, and also taught film at OSU. She is currently finishing her PhD at University College London. Svetlana is speaking soon Virtual Reality

and Healthcare Global Symposium and spoke at VRX Conference (San Francisco), Games for Change (New York), Apps World (London) and several other international events.

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