

Factors that Influence Young Adults' Preferences for Virtual Reality Exergames in Weight Control Setting: Qualitative Study

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INTRODUCTION

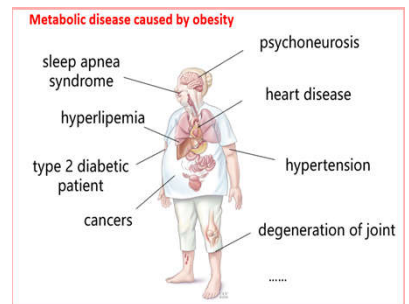
Obesity could compromise people's health and elevate the risk of numerous severe chronic conditions and premature mortality. Young adults are at high risk of adopting unhealthy lifestyles related to overweight and obesity, as they are at a phase marked by several significant life milestones that have been linked to weight gain. They gain weight rapidly and excess adiposity mostly accrues, compared with middle-aged and older adults when weight stabilizes or even decreases. Virtual reality exergames have the potential to increase physical activity in people's daily lives. However, the factors that influence young adults' preference for using virtual reality exergames for weight control remain unclear.

OBJECTIVE

To identify, characterize, and explain the factors influencing young adults' preference for weight control using virtual reality exergames.

METHOD

This qualitative study used semi-structured interviews. Four focus group interviews were conducted with 23 young adults aged between 18 and 25 years. The qualitative data were analyzed using Colaizzi's phenomenological methodology.



RESULTS

Three major factors were found to influence young adults' preference for virtual reality exergames in weight control settings: individual factors, social or environmental factors and expectations of virtual reality exergames. Individual factors included experience with previous weight control methods, previous experience with virtual reality, psychological status, attitudes toward personal BMI, preference for exercise type, and acceptance of virtual reality exergames. Social or environmental factors included social definition of beauty, weather or public health events, and knowledge of virtual reality provided. Expectations of virtual reality exergames included cost of the device, the fun of virtual reality exergames, supervision, modality of virtual reality exergames, feedback after exercise, convenience to use, and weight loss effect.

Themes and subthemes

| Theme | Subtheme |
|---|---|
| Individual factors | Experience with previous weight control methods |
| | Previous experience with virtual reality |
| | Psychological status |
| | Attitudes toward personal BMI |
| | Preference of exercise type |
| | Acceptance of virtual reality exergames |
| Social or environmental factors | Social definition of beauty |
| | Weather or public health event |
| | Knowledge of virtual reality provided |
| Expectations of virtual reality exergames | Cost of the device |
| | Fun of virtual reality exergames |
| | Supervision |
| | Modality of virtual reality exergames |
| | Feedback after exercise |
| | Convenience to use |
| | Weight loss effect |

CONCLUSIONS

Young adults take various factors into account when deciding whether to use virtual reality exergames for weight control. These factors can inform the development and further refinement of devices, guides, and policies related to virtual reality exergames for controlling weight.

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