Treatment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in adults using virtual reality through a mindfulness programme

Serra-Pla JF, Pozuelo M, Richarte V, Corrales M, Ibáñez P, Bellina M, Vidal R, Calvo E, Casas M, Ramos-Quiroga JA.

Rev Neurol. 2017 Feb 24;64(s01):S117-S122.

Abstract

INTRODUCTION:
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a highly prevalent neurodevelopmental disorder, which presents a high comorbidity with anxiety and affective signs and symptoms. It has repercussions on the functioning of those suffering from it, who also have low therapy compliance and generate a significant cost both at a personal level and for society. Mindfulness is a psychological treatment that has proved to be effective for ADHD. Virtual reality is widely used as a treatment in cases of phobias and other pathologies, with positive results.

AIMS:
To develop the first treatment for ADHD in adults based on virtual reality and mindfulness, while also resulting in increased treatment adherence and reduced costs.

PATIENTS AND METHODS:
We conducted a pilot study with 25 patients treated by means of virtual reality, in four 30-minute sessions, and 25 treated with psychostimulants. Measures will be taken pre-treatment, post-treatment and at 3 and 12 months post-treatment, to evaluate both ADHD and also depression, anxiety, functionality and quality of life. Data will be later analysed with the SPSS v. 20 statistical program. An ANOVA of independent groups will be performed to see the differences between treatments and also a test-retest to detect whether the changes will be maintained.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS:
It is necessary to use treatments that are effective, reduce costs and increase therapy adherence. Treatment with virtual reality is an interesting alternative to the classical treatments and is shorter and more attractive for patients.