

Virtual reality technologies for treating agoraphobia or agoraphobic avoidance

Information for the public

Published: 15 November 2023

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NICE has said that gameChangeVR (a virtual reality technology) can be used in the NHS to treat severe agoraphobic avoidance in people with psychosis aged 16 and over.

The NHS is collecting more evidence for this technology. You might be asked if details of your treatment can be collected as evidence. You can ask your healthcare professional for more information about how your information will be stored and used.

Virtual reality (VR) technologies create a simulated environment with scenes that people can explore from their home or a clinic while wearing a headset or viewing a screen. These virtual experiences can trigger emotional responses like those in real-world situations. They can be used to deliver VR therapy or to support cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) with a mental health professional.

gameChangeVR is a VR technology for people with psychosis who have agoraphobic avoidance (difficulties leaving home because of anxiety). It delivers VR therapy using a headset. A virtual therapist within the virtual environment guides the person through a treatment for agoraphobic avoidance using CBT techniques. The therapy is also supported by a mental health professional remotely or in person.

NICE has also said that more research is needed for the following VR technologies, before they can be used in the NHS:

- Amelia Virtual Care to treat agoraphobia
- gameChangeVR to treat mild to moderate agoraphobic avoidance in people with psychosis
- XR Therapeutics to treat agoraphobia.

Is this treatment right for me?

Your healthcare professionals should give you clear information, talk with you about your options and listen carefully to your views and concerns. Your family can be involved too, if you wish. See [our webpage on making decisions about your care](#).

Questions to think about

- How well does it work compared with other treatments?
- What are the risks or side effects? How likely are they?
- How will the treatment affect my day-to-day life?
- What happens if the treatment does not work?
- What happens if I do not want to have treatment? Are there other treatments available?
- How will my information be used, if it is collected?

Information and support

The [NHS webpage on agoraphobia](#) may be a good place to find out more.

These organisations can give you advice and support:

- [Anxiety UK](#), 03444 775 774
- [Mind](#), 0300 123 3393
- [Rethink Mental Illness](#), 0808 801 0525
- [Adferiad Recovery](#), 01792 816600, info@adferiad.org

You can also get support from your local [Healthwatch](#).

NICE is not responsible for the quality or accuracy of any information or advice provided by these organisations.

ISBN: 978-1-4731-7736-9