

Avatar therapy-linked emotions identified in treatment-resistant schizophrenia

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The predominant emotions expressed by patients with treatment-

resistant schizophrenia undergoing virtual reality-based Avatar therapy (AT) are mostly neutral, joy, and anger emotions, according to a study published online June 12 in *BMC Psychiatry*.

Alexandre Hudon, M.D., from the Centre de recherche de l'Institut Universitaire en Santé Mentale de Montréal, and colleagues used content analysis of immersive sessions transcripts and [audio recordings](#) for 16 patients with treatment-resistant [schizophrenia](#) who underwent AT between 2017 and 2022 to identify the underlying emotions at the core of the patient-Avatar interaction during AT.

The researchers identified anger, contempt/disgust, fear, sadness, shame/embarrassment, interest, surprise, joy, and neutral emotions in the study. Patients mostly expressed neutral, joy, and anger emotions, while interest, disgust/contempt, and neutral emotions were the predominant emotions expressed by the Avatar.

"This study portrays a first qualitative insight on the emotions that are expressed in AT and serves as a steppingstone for further investigation in the role of emotions in the therapeutic outcomes of AT," the authors write.

More information: Alexandre Hudon et al, Exploration of the role of emotional expression of treatment-resistant schizophrenia patients having followed virtual reality therapy: a content analysis, *BMC Psychiatry* (2023). [DOI: 10.1186/s12888-023-04861-2](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-023-04861-2)

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