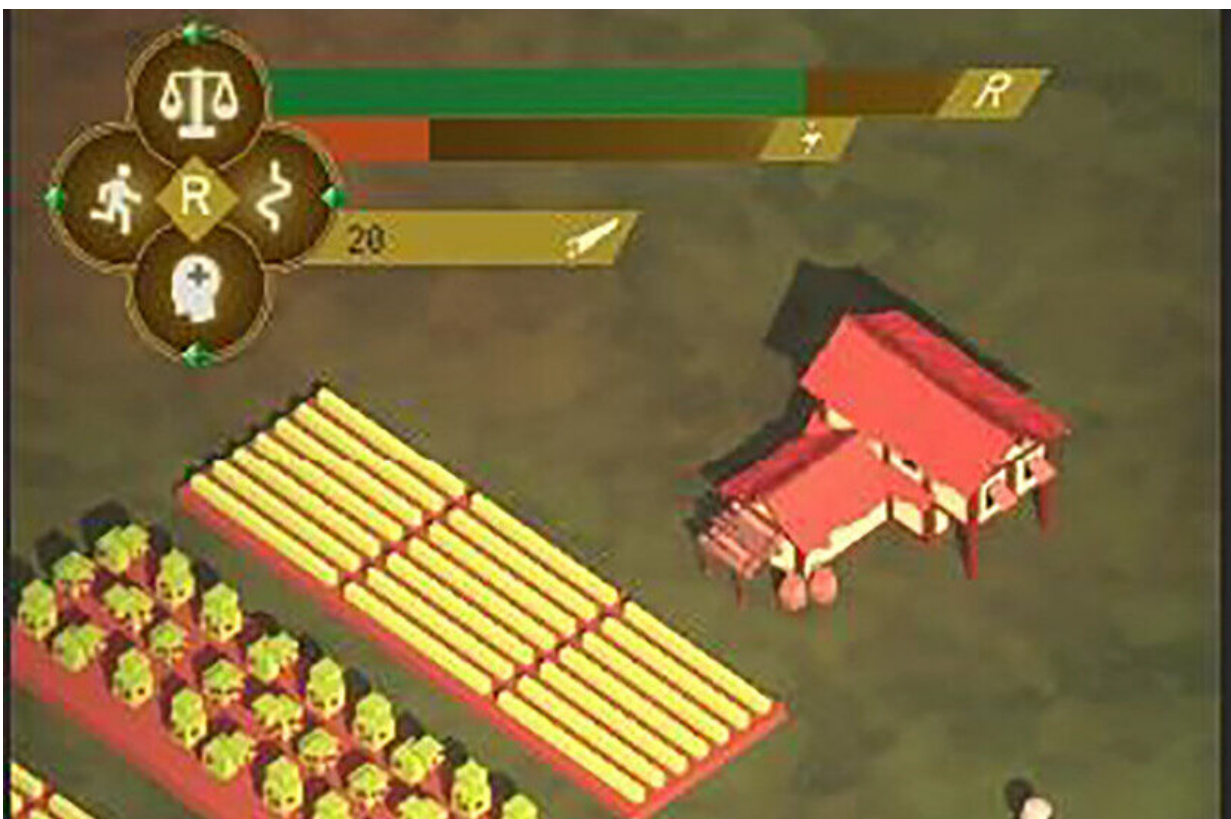


# Thesis presents a video game for the treatment of mild or moderate depressive symptomatology

July 19 2024

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Game screenshot, with the Library building in the middle of the screen, the Power R and the representation of its components, energy and materials indicators at the top, and the action menu at the bottom. Credit: *Internet Interventions* (2023). DOI: 10.1016/j.invent.2023.100624

Depression is the most prevalent mental health disorder in our society, the leading cause of disability and closely linked to suicide. Although there are some psychological treatments, they only reach a small fraction of those who need them. The use of smartphones is a possible solution to expand access to these treatments; however, interventions based on these devices still face high dropout rates.

The doctoral [thesis](#) defended by Águeda Gómez Cambronero under the title "Horizon: Resilience; a psychological intervention based on a serious mobile game for depressive symptomatology," directed by Sven Casteleyn, from the Geospatial Technologies Group (GEOTEC) and Adriana Mira Pastor, from the Laboratory of Psychology and Technology (LabPsiTec), has designed a psychological intervention based on a serious mobile game for depressive symptomatology and, as far as is known, it would be the first video game of these characteristics that incorporates data from the smartphone's movement sensor as an element of the game.

It is a city-building game in which the player has to control a city in order to make it progress and strengthen the resilience of its inhabitants. It is based on cognitive behavioral therapy as well as positive psychology techniques, with a special emphasis on physical activity detected through the smartphone's movement sensor. It has combined innovative techniques from [computer science](#) and psychology to offer an alternative and novel form of treatment.



Dr. Águeda Gómez Cambronero, in the center, together with her thesis supervisors: Sven Casteleyn and Adriana Mira. Credit: Universitat Jaume I of Castellón (Spain)

The game has been evaluated both quantitatively and qualitatively by therapists and patients, who have rated it very positively as a treatment for mild to moderate depressive symptomatology, and have expressed their desire to play. It combines different genres and psychological approaches, as well as encouraging physical activity, and includes the design of a protocol for a future randomized controlled [pilot study](#) that will evaluate its effectiveness on a preliminary basis.

Related research is also [published](#) in the journal *Internet Interventions*.

**More information:** Thesis: [www.tesisenred.net/handle/10803/689528](http://www.tesisenred.net/handle/10803/689528)

Águeda Gómez-Cambronero et al, A smartphone-based serious game for depressive symptoms: Protocol for a pilot randomized controlled trial, *Internet Interventions* (2023). [DOI: 10.1016/j.invent.2023.100624](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.invent.2023.100624)

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