Virtual farm game to help young cancer patients deal with treatment
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Lo was diagnosed with lymphoma while a Grade 11 student at Surrey's Fraser Heights Secondary School, after developing sudden difficulties with walking and breathing. He required immediate treatment, including chemotherapy.

"I was quite suddenly needing to be in the hospital for extended periods, and realized that those can be long days for kids," says Lo, who hopes to develop games and software to speed up medical procedures and eliminate discomfort for patients and families. Ng, who also spent many hours in hospital with ear ailments, hopes to do similar work.

SIAT Professor Diane Gromala, the pair’s supervisor, says the game is the latest in the lab's efforts to develop virtual reality (VR) approaches that address health care issues.

"The team wanted to do something that offers benefits and meaningful values for the game and VR industry," says Gromala, who is also working with VR companies in Seattle and at Stanford University and designing VR games for kids at Boston Children's Hospital.

"Through their research, the students discovered that most pain research has involved adults rather than teenagers and youths. As Henry learned first-hand, after harsh chemotherapy treatments, patients often experience pain and boredom when they are stuck in bed, where discomfort can be more extreme at a younger age."

Provided by Simon Fraser University