



Prix Galien MedTech Innovation Award

Juryreport for VRelax - Winner of the prize -

VRelax is an app to reduce stress - a problem that many people suffer from. Stress can cause a lot of personal suffering, but in addition to being a social problem, it is also a societal problem that is associated with absenteeism, which in turn results in high health care costs. VRelax is an innovative and mature virtual reality system that the manufacturer has actually developed together with clients and their caregivers. The system has already proven itself in terms of satisfied user groups. This, in multiple clinical and ambulatory care environments and care institutions, both within the Netherlands and abroad. And is thus a great -and rewarding- example of broader scale-up of VR technology designed for care, in care.

VRelax has been clinically studied. It has also been published in an authoritative peer-reviewed journal. Within a randomized crossover trial (VRelax therapy versus standard relaxation exercises), 50 patients with anxiety-associated disorders were studied. Both treatment methods were successful, but the use of VRelax led to significantly better outcomes. The jury does note, however, that in your submission for the Prix Galien you cite only one peer-reviewed study published in a heterogeneous patient group. One good study is hopeful but still weak evidence, and you are apparently also aware of this, given the following study that has been started in ICUs in English hospitals to offer staff a stress-free moment in difficult times. The latter is very appealing to the jury, and they emphasize the value of starting well-designed, clinically randomized trials in more diverse settings.

What the jury appreciates even more, and for which it rewards you today, is that VRelax is a very user-friendly system. The app has freedom of choice; for example, the user can choose which virtual environment best suits the person and the situation at that moment. The VRelax dashboard also gives the user instant insight and bio-feedback if desired. The health data it monitors can be helpful in getting the stress response better under control. The possibility of using the dashboard to conduct questionnaires and surveys is an elegant feature.

The jury would also like to give the producer of the winning initiative a number of additional insights. This, of course, to help the innovation along! For an innovation to really 'land' in healthcare, science and proof of action are a prerequisite, but often not sufficient. You have involved stakeholders such as nurses and carers in research and implementation, and this is also extremely important.



The jury strongly recommends scaling up here as well, by involving patient associations. We also believe that the scientific evidence 'across settings' needs to be strengthened. And we strongly encourage you to also investigate whether the use of VR can lead to fewer anxiolytic drugs. We also advise you to actually prepare the system for connection to the various electronic patient environments by respecting the MedMij standards in the delivery of outcome reporting, including by embedding generic care information building blocks where possible. We suggest to really engage in remote health monitoring by exploring a link with Apple Healthkit and Google Fit. This would keep the patient in the lead in terms of data sharing on their own smartphone, and also immediately prepare data for delivery to various electronic patient records and PBMs.

Finally. The Jury of the Prix Galien MedTech Innovation Award expresses its sincere admiration for VRelax and their ability to use VR widely in healthcare. For the vulnerable patient but also for the caregiver under a lot of stress especially in COVID times - this is a fantastic development. A development that is important, especially in situations where increasingly vulnerable patients have to be cared for with fewer and fewer people. And deserves our support! We look forward to further developments and research, and we are happy to stay informed about this.

It is therefore a great pleasure for me to present the MedTech Innovation Award 2020-2021 to this great initiative on behalf of the MedTech jury.

Prof. Dr. Marlies P. Schijven

*Jury President Prix Galien MedTech Innovation Award
On behalf of the jury of the Prix Galien Netherlands*