

Technology will help with pocovid depression

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COVID-19 depression technology

Even every third patient who has been severely affected by COVID-19 experiences depression. Experts are looking for new methods of treatment - one of such methods, using VR technology, was used in the hospital in Glucholazy.



According to the World Health Organization, depression is about to become the second most serious disease in the world - the latest data say about 264 million patients suffering from this disease (photo: Shutterstock).

Even before the coronavirus pandemic, many patients suffered from depression - its appearance, however, made the situation much worse. This is because new risk factors have emerged, including fear for the health of oneself and one's family, fear of losing a job or the negative impact of lockdown.

According to the World Health Organization, depression is about to become the second most serious disease in the world - the latest data say about 264 million patients suffering from this disease. On the other hand, young people are most at risk.

What's more, just passing COVID-19 also has an impact on our mental health. Every third person with a severe course of this disease indicates mental and neurological disorders. Among the long-term symptoms, among others, for anxiety, depression, chronic fatigue, trouble concentrating and sleeping, headaches and memory disorders.

NEW METHODS OF THERAPY

So specialists are looking for new treatments - one of them is the use of virtual reality (read also: [Wales launches an application that will help patients suffering from the long-term effects of the coronavirus](#)).

In the center of the Ministry of Interior and Administration in Glucholazy, at the end of 2020, a pilot therapy program was carried out for people who had experienced COVID-19, using the proprietary VR TierOne program, a startup from Wrocław.

Prof. Jan Specjelnik, Head of the Therapeutic Rehabilitation Department at the hospital in Glucholazy, was to comment:

- The rehabilitation program, in addition to psychological care, includes relaxation training using VR. The needs associated with this therapy are enormous and go beyond the inpatient rehabilitation program.

The therapy includes 3 components: a set of medical procedures supporting the treatment and rehabilitation process, a medical device that uses virtual reality and a two-week therapeutic cycle.

The patient, thanks to the wearing of special glasses, is to move to the "garden of rebirth", where, in conditions of complete isolation from hospital realities, he follows the therapist's words and performs the tasks assigned to him, including painting mandala.

One of the authors of the idea is Dr. Jarosław Szczygieł, who heads the department at the Upper Silesian Rehabilitation Center REPTY. A member of the expert team is also dr hab. Joanna Szczepańska-Gieracha, prof. extra and certified psychotherapist of the European Psychotherapy Association and teacher of psychotherapy at the Polish Erickson Institute.

Paweł Pasternak, director of VR TierOne, said about his program:

- Polish medical institutions can often boast of the best equipment for the treatment and rehabilitation of patients, but not in the area of taking care of the mental health of the patient. We fill this niche by providing technology and a therapy program to support the recovery of stroke and other severe disease patients, including COVID-19. They are all very often associated with depression.

This technology is also to be used at the Cardiology Center in Wrocław, the Siwy Dym Foundation for Activating Seniors, and at the Analgomed Pain Treatment Center in Wrocław.

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