Effectiveness of cognitive behavioural therapy with the use of virtual reality in the treatment of adults with-alcohol use disorder in clinical settings: Protocol of a scooping-review

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Alcohol use disorder represents a significant public health issue that profoundly impacts individuals' quality of life. Virtual reality-assisted cognitive behavioral therapy has emerged as an innovative strategy that integrates established psychotherapeutic techniques with immersive, controlled environments.

Objective: This protocol outlines a systematic review aiming to evaluate the effectiveness of Virtual reality-assisted cognitive behavioural therapy in reducing alcohol cravings and consumption, promoting cognitive restructuring, and enhancing self-efficacy in adults with alcohol use disorder.

Methodology: A scoping review was conducted following the recommendations of the Joanna Briggs Institute and the PRISMA-ScR checklist. The search was conducted in the CINAHL, MEDLINE, and PsycINFO databases. Studies published in the last 10 years in English, Portuguese, and Spanish were included. This protocol follows the guidelines of the Joanna Briggs Institute. It will include English, Spanish, and Portuguese articles published in the last 10 years. Searches will be conducted in recognized databases such as CINAHL Plus and PubMed. Two independent reviewers will screen the articles based on title and abstract, using Rayyan for data extraction.

Results: The review is anticipated to identify evidence on the effectiveness of Virtual reality-assisted cognitive behavioural therapy interventions, particularly regarding the reduction of alcohol cravings and consumption, improvements in cognitive restructuring, and increased self-efficacy. These outcomes may underline the potential of virtual reality to enhance adherence to treatment protocols and provide safe environments for therapeutic skill development.

Conclusions: The findings from this review are expected to offer valuable insights into the role of virtual reality in augmenting traditional cognitive behavioural therapy for alcohol use disorder. Additionally, the protocol will help identify current research gaps and guide future studies to optimize the use of innovative technological interventions in clinical settings.