



Psychology Journal

SPECIAL ISSUE ON **Emerging Trends in CyberTherapy**

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Health care is one of the areas that will be dramatically reshaped by the emergence of new technologies. Distributed communication media could become a significant enabler of consumer health initiatives. In fact they provide an increasingly accessible communications channel for a growing segment of the population.

Within this scenario Cybertherapy - the integration of and telehealth technologies with the Internet and shared virtual reality - is the next logical step. Although cybertherapy is a branch of telehealth, it is differentiated in several important ways: telehealth to date has been largely non-Internet based and has been characterized by point-to-point (e.g., T1) and dial-up (e.g., telephone, ISDN) information exchange. Cybertherapy, on the other hand, is more accessible due to its increasingly affordable ability to communicate through a common set of standards and across operating systems.

In general, there are two reasons why cybertherapy will be used: either because there is no alternative, or because it is in some sense better than traditional medicine. Nevertheless, the benefits of cybertherapy, due to the variety of its applications and their uneven development, are not self-evident. To date, some cybertherapy applications have improved the quality of health care, and later they will probably lead to substantial cost savings. However, cybertherapy is not simply a technology but a complex technological and relational process. In this sense, clinicians and health care providers that want to successfully exploit cybertherapy need a significant attention to clinical issues, technology, ergonomics, human factors and organizational changes in the structure of the relevant health service.

The goal of this special issue is to analyze the processes by which cybertherapy applications will contribute to the delivery of state-of-the-art health services. Papers are solicited on all the different aspects of cybertherapy (Internet, Virtual Reality, Cellular Phones, etc.), including but not limited to:

- case history, if novel, and clinical trials
- positioning papers examining technological, ergonomics, human factors or organizational needs.

GUEST EDITORS

Giuseppe Riva, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of General Psychology and Communication Psychology at the Catholic University of Milan, Italy and Head Researcher of the the Applied Technology for Neuro-Psychology Laboratory - ATN-P Lab., Istituto Auxologico Italiano, Verbania Italy. In the ATN-P Lab. he conducted several researches and published many papers about methods and assessment tools in psychology and about the use of Virtual Reality and Internet in medicine and in training. He coordinated different European Community research projects. In particular, he was Principal Investigator of the VEPSY UPDATED – Telemedicine and Portable Virtual Environments in Clinical Psychology (IST-2000-25323). This project evaluated the possible clinical use of virtual reality with the following disorders: panic disorder, social phobia and agoraphobia; obesity, bulimia and binge-eating disorders; male impotence and premature ejaculation. Riva has over 100





scientific publications and has given several invited lectures and presentations. Member of the New York Academy of Science and of the American Psychological Association, Riva is actually Editor in Chief for the "Emerging Communication" book series and for the on-line journal "Psychology", Associate Editor for the "CyberPsychology & Behavior" journal and Content Editor of the "International Journal of Virtual Reality".

Brenda K. Wiederhold, Ph.D., MBA, BCIA, serves as Chief Executive Officer of the Interactive Media Institute (IMI), a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization dedicated to furthering the application of advanced technologies for patient care, and as Executive Director of the Virtual Reality Medical Center (VRMC), a professional medical corporation with offices in San Diego, Santa Monica and Palo Alto, California. She is also a Clinical Instructor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of California, San Diego, and a Senior Behavioral Healthcare Consultant for the Telemedicine & Advanced Technology Research Center (TATRC). Dr. Wiederhold is a licensed clinical psychologist and has a doctorate in Clinical Health Psychology, as well as national certification in both biofeedback and neurofeedback. She is on the editorial board of CyberPsychology & Behavior Journal, the advisory board for the International Child Art Foundation, and the technical advisory committee for the California Science Center's exhibit on the scientific and cultural aspects of fear.

Brenda began the first VR and behavioral healthcare symposium at the Medicine Meets Virtual Reality (MMVR) conference, and the symposium has grown in to an independent International Conference, CyberTherapy, now in its 11th year. She is recognized as a national and international leader in the treatment of anxiety, panic, and phobias with virtual reality exposure and cognitive-behavioral therapy, and has served as an invited speaker in Canada, China, Croatia, Germany, Israel, Korea, Luxembourg, Sweden, and Switzerland. She is currently completing her seventh book and has over 100 publications. In January 2005, she was honored for her achievements with the prestigious Richard M. Satava award at the MMVR conference, marking the first time the award was given to someone in the behavioral healthcare field and only the second time in its history that a female researcher has won the award.

Submissions are accepted of any length, discipline and format provided their scientific relevance and accuracy. They should be sent in electronic form to all the following addresses: [articles\(at\)psychology.org](mailto:articles(at)psychology.org), [auxo.psylab\(at\)auxologico.it](mailto:auxo.psylab(at)auxologico.it) and [bwiederhold \(at\) vrphobia.com](mailto:bwiederhold (at) vrphobia.com) no later than **July,10 2006**. Inclusion of color pictures, videos and sound files is welcome.

For complete guidelines, please refer to: <http://www.psychology.org/contribute.htm>. For information on the Journal, please visit the web site (<http://www.psychology.org>). Do not hesitate to contact us for further information [auxo.psylab\(at\)auxologico.it](mailto:auxo.psylab(at)auxologico.it) and [bwiederhold \(at\) vrphobia.com](mailto:bwiederhold (at) vrphobia.com)

