

Chapter 59

Interactive Games with Robotic and Augmented Reality Technology in Cognitive and Motor Rehabilitation

Ana Belén Naranjo-Saucedo

Virgen del Rocio University Hospital, Spain

Cristina Suárez-Mejías

Virgen del Rocio University Hospital, Spain

Carlos L. Parra-Calderón

Virgen del Rocio University Hospital, Spain

Ester González-Aguado

Fundació Privada Sant Antoni Abat, Spain

Frida Böckel-Martínez

Fundació Privada Sant Antoni Abat, Spain

Antoni Yuste-Marco

Fundació Privada Sant Antoni Abat, Spain

Pablo Bustos

University of Extremadura, Spain

Luis Manso

University of Extremadura, Spain

Pilar Bachiller

University of Extremadura, Spain

Sergi Plana

m-BOT Solutions SL, Spain

Jose M Diaz

m-BOT Solutions SL, Spain

Ricardo Boniche

m-BOT Solutions SL, Spain

Adriá Marco

m-BOT Solutions SL, Spain

ABSTRACT

Over the years, robotics have become technological service tools in different application domains. This chapter presents a direct application of games and robotics as therapeutic tools in the healthcare of patients. These strategies are used in ACROSS project, involving more than 100 researchers from 13 Spanish entities. The main objective of this project is to modify the current perspective of the therapies, taking advantage of the game properties that will be implemented in social robots, which are blocked in providing predefined services. These new systems are able to self-reconfigure and adapt autonomously. In order to provide an open framework for collaboration between universities, research centres, and the

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Administration, ACROSS will develop Open Source Services available to everybody. This chapter aims to contribute a new overview of treatment therapies with elderly and paediatric patients that present cognitive and motor impairments as well as present the methodology of evaluation to determine the effect of games and social robots as a means to carry out a therapy.

INTRODUCTION

Games have been widely proven to contribute to integral development and learning in humans and their socialization. Piaget considers ‘play’ as a mean to develop thought and to learn about the world. Vygotski emphasizes that games contribute to social development because the socio-cultural framework will be trained in ‘play’. Bruner adds that games help to resolve conflict, acquire and recover language. This is applicable in the cognitive rehabilitation of people with cognitive loss or dementia, because it permits to stimulate residual functions and, in some cases, acquire compensatory cognitive strategies. Dementia is a clinical syndrome characterized by an overall cognitive impairment, usually chronic and progressive, that represents decreasing functional activities and social relations. Sometimes, it is associated with a behavioural disorder, which affects the patient, his relatives and friends. (Moyle, 1990; Dorado, 2008)

Games can also be used as a tool for rehabilitation of motor functions in paediatric patients with upper-limb impairments, cerebral palsy and obstetrical brachial paralysis. Cerebral palsy is a neurological disorder of the brain that can be accompanied with other possible clinical signs such as muscle tone disorders, movement and posture disorders, mental disability, and so on. Obstetrical brachial paralysis is a mechanical lesion of the brachial plexus.

Innovative treatments of cognitive and motor rehabilitation, such as the introduction of robot caregivers, multi-sensory systems, augmented reality, and so on, have not been implemented in Spain due to difficulties in the segregation of service network resources. The discontinuity of care

and the lack of rigorous research and knowledge affect the development of non-pharmacological strategies. In this project, we aim to break down such barriers and demonstrate with our experience, the benefits of using these technologies in rehabilitation programs (Woods, 2003; Svansdottir et al, 2006).

The Spanish national project called ACROSS (Auto-Configurable Robots for Social Services) proposes cognitive and motor rehabilitation through games. ACROSS has been funded by the Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Trade belonging to Plan Avanza2. The consortium of the ACROSS project is composed of thirteen organizations. Broadly, the project is part of the development of intelligent environments, in which, through sensor network tools, communication and computation enable a new paradigm in social robotic platforms.

The project aims to analyse current technology to specify basic requirements of future social robots and their environments. For this purpose, we have defined objects with digitally augmented environments that allow robots to know the context and adapt to it. In addition, the project has developed new forms of rehabilitative therapy through the use of interactive games.

Non-pharmacological interventions in which they train different skills and abilities through the use of robotic platforms and augmented reality are being developed in two use cases of our study. These technologies (robotics and augmented reality) linked to the development of interactive games allow specialists to perform cognitive and physical training customized for each patient. In the area of dementia, the main objective is to stimulate the cognitive ability and socialization to compensate for cognitive and functional loss in senior citizens. In the motor area the objective

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