VIRTUAL REALITY SHOWS CHILDREN WHAT TO EXPECT BEFORE MRI

King's College Hospital in London now offers the My MRI at King’s virtual reality app for children and their parents to use before children undergo the scan.

For many children, a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan can be extremely scary, with general anesthetic often the only way to help them get through the experience. Now, two of London’s King’s College Hospital’s staff members have created the My MRI at King’s virtual reality (VR) app to help children and their parents prepare for the examination.

Currently available from the Google store for Android, and soon to be available from the Apple store for iOS, the My MRI at King’s app not only tries to help children acclimatize to the loud tapping noises that are part of the scan, it also helps teach them that they need to keep very still during the entire period within the machine. As well as being available in the hospital, parents can download the app for home use. The developers behind the app included the entire journey a child will take, from entering the hospital all the way to preparing for the scan and then the scan itself.

Technological innovation is hard at work in healthcare, helping make care more accessible as well as affordable and easy to manage. Virtual reality is helping teach emergency birth care, and an artificial intelligence robotic arm is helping physiotherapists provide routine treatments. How could this type of development be localized for even more personalized treatment?

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