

AMUSEMENT AND REHABILITATION OF SENILE ELDERLY PATIENTS BY VIRTUAL PLAYING FACILITY

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For the support of happy life and rehabilitation of senile elderly patients, a theater-type playing facility for their amusement is provided by the techniques of virtual reality. The playing facility consists of a playing room, a video camera, a projector, and a computer and game software. It provides the senile elderly appropriate playing game at home and in geriatric institutions, in which they touch and hit moving virtual objects accompanying special sounds and pictures. They are observed to pay a considerable attention to it and even to have an interest in the virtual play area that they have never experienced. They enter the virtual inner space by combining their image with the playing game, which is supported by the concerning various software. It is, however, not necessary to take the trouble to teach them for the introduction into the games, because they can join the games very naturally by some gestures of helpers and imitation of behaviors of the others. The games are designed on the basis of their commonly experienced things in their youth. Thus, they enjoy playing with even little children and with helpers and nurses. The playing senile elderly patients are observed enjoying their play with their comrades who watch it around them or from the outside of the play area. Not only the playing elderly but also the watching elderly have been observed to have some chat with their expressive face change. There has been also seen decrease in their sudden abnormal behaviors in some while after their play. The amusement by virtual reality has been confirmed a good help to their nursing which keeps them within some definite place in a certain while and provides change of their mood during and after the game.