Advancing Effectiveness of Interactive Health Games

Digital games provide powerful and compelling interactive experiences. When they are well researched and designed to motivate health behavior change, they can significantly improve players’ health.

Health Games Research is an $8.25 million national program that works to advance the innovation, design, and effectiveness of health games and game technologies. It has funded 21 research projects across the U.S.

The program also serves the field through its research publications and presentations, scientific leadership, advocacy work, and collaboration with funding agencies that support research on health games.

Health Games Research is funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Pioneer Portfolio, which supports innovative ideas and projects that may lead to breakthroughs in health and health care.

Many health games that are designed with a strong evidence base in behavioral health have made an important difference, according to recent research. Randomized controlled studies have found that games have improved players’ health behaviors and outcomes in areas such as healthy eating, physical activity, physical therapy, cognitive training, smoking cessation, cancer treatment adherence, asthma self-management, and diabetes self-management, to name a few. These studies demonstrate the vast impact and potential of games in this growing field.

To learn more, visit www.healthgamesresearch.org for Research Briefs, Featured Colleagues, Twitter posts, and grantee projects. Search the site’s database to find research publications, game development resources, academic degree programs, organizations, conferences, events, and hundreds of health games.

For Health Care Providers
See how games and game technologies can improve players’ healthy lifestyles and self-care, assist with diagnosis, enhance treatments, motivate adherence, and train clinicians.

For Game Developers
Learn how games can be designed to improve health and how new digital game platforms can deliver games that support health behavior change and clinical care.

For Researchers
Discover new research methods and findings in our interdisciplinary field, identify funding sources, and find colleagues and organizations that share your interests.

For Funding Agencies
Find out why more research is needed to improve the design and implementation of health games that address a wide range of target populations and health behaviors.
Health Games Research has funded 21 research projects:

**Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia**
Reward Circuitry, Autism and Games that Teach Social Perceptual Skills

**Cornell University**
Mindless Eating Challenge: Persuasive Mechanisms in Mobile Health Games

**George Washington University**
Active-Adventure: Investigating a Novel Exergaming Genre in Inner City School Physical Education Programs

**Georgetown University**
Wii Active Exergame Intervention for Low-Income African American Obese and Overweight Adolescents

**Indiana University**
BloomingLife: The Skeleton Chase - An Alternate Reality Game to Motivate Physical Activity

**Long Island University**
Dance Video Game Training and Falling in Parkinson’s Disease

**Maine Medical Center**
Family-Based Exergaming with Dance Dance Revolution (DDR)

**Michigan State University**
Buddy Up! Harnessing Group Dynamics to Boost Motivation to Exercise Short-Term and Long-Term Effectiveness of Exergames for Young Adults

**Teachers College, Columbia University**
Lit: A Game Intervention for Nicotine Smokers

**Union College**
Seniors Cyber-Cycling with a Virtual Team: Effects on Exercise Behavior, Neuropsychological Function and Physiological Outcomes

**University of California, San Diego**
Behavioral Choice Theory Approach to Testing Entertainment for Adolescent Physical Activity

**University of California, San Francisco**
A Video Game to Enhance Cognitive Health in Older Adults

**University of Central Florida**
Practicing Relapse Prevention in Artificial-Reality Environments [PREPARE]: A Game-Based Therapy Maintenance Tool

**University of Florida**
Action Video Games to Improve Everyday Cognitive Function in Older Adults

**University of North Carolina**
Presence: Predicting Sensory and Control Effects of Console Video Games in Young Adults

**University of South Carolina**
Commercially-Available Interactive Video Games for Individuals with Chronic Mobility and Balance Deficits Post-Stroke

**University of Southern California**
Effectiveness of Social Mobile Networked Games in Promoting Active Lifestyles for Wellness Robot Motivator: Towards Adaptive Health Games for Productive Long-Term Interaction

**University of Vermont**
Breath Biofeedback Video Game for Children with Cystic Fibrosis

**University of Washington**
Video Games for Dietary Behavior Change and Improved Glycemic Control in Diabetes

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