

## **Investigating perceptual and attitudinal body image disturbance in anorexia nervosa using biometric self-avatars in virtual reality**

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### **Authors**

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### **Aim**

The major aim of this research is to investigate body image disturbances in (a) the perceptual and (b) the attitudinal component in patients suffering from anorexia nervosa and to investigate if potential distortions change over the course of illness, i.e. as a function of body weight.

### **Background**

Body image is as a multidimensional concept, including (a) a perceptual, (b) an attitudinal and (c) a behavioural component. Disturbances of body image are a core psychopathology of anorexia nervosa (AN) which are very difficult to treat and are an unfavorable prognostic factor. In order to enhance therapy approaches for the treatment of body image disturbances in AN, more knowledge on the characteristics and mechanisms of intact and disturbed components of body image in AN is needed.

### **Method**

We will investigate both, the perceptual and the attitudinal component of body image in AN patients by using realistic and distortable biometric self-avatars. This means that the respective patient will be confronted with a very realistic model of her own body that is based on her own anthropometric data that has previously been assessed via a 3D-Scan procedure. Patients will be asked to do several tasks on the perceptual and the attitudinal part of body image with self-avatar in a virtual reality surrounding. In order to assess changes over the course of illness, we will implement a longitudinal design, assessing AN patients before and after inpatient treatment, and include a group of recovered former AN patients.

### **Execution**

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