

Virtual nature interventions at Palliative Medicine in Västerbotten

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NATUREACH – Palliative care, WP 3.3



Aim To explore experiences and effects of using immersive virtual nature environments in patients and their relatives in a palliative care context.



Specific objectives Will virtual nature environments impact

Patients' experiences of well-being?

Close relatives' experiences of the situation and their state of mind?

The staff's experience of mental stress, recovery and energy?

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Intervention patients & close relatives

VR nature sessions at three occasions in connection with home visits by the nurse in charge.

Afterwards possibility to borrow the equipment for two weeks to continue with VR nature on their own.



PATIENT

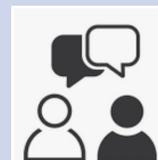
Rating of symptoms (NRS) before and after VR nature

pain
anxiety
nausea
breathlessness



CLOSE RELATIVE

Rating of mood



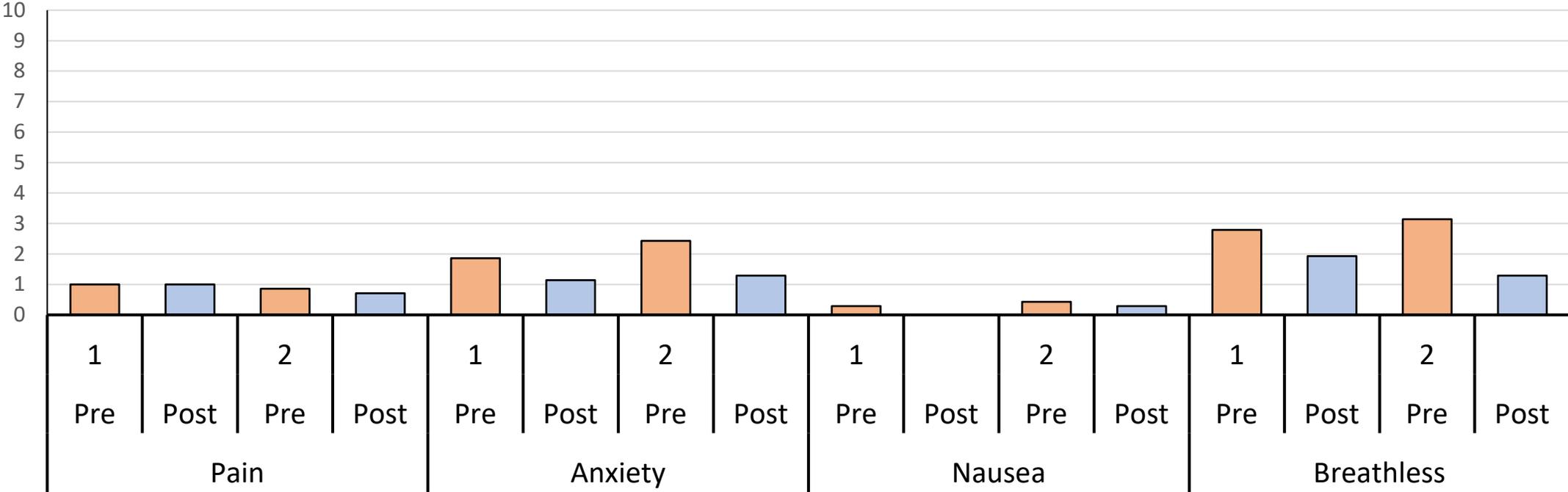
Afterwards individual semi-structured interviews of patients and relatives

Characteristics of patients and close relatives

	Patients, n=7	Close relatives, n=4
Sex, women/men	2/5	4/0
Age, mean value (min, max)	76 (68, 84)	76 (69, 78)
Living with close relative, n	6	
Previous experience of IVR, n	0	0
Disease, n		
Cancer	4	
Lung disorder	3	
Cardiovascular disease	2	
Qualitative interview, n	5	4

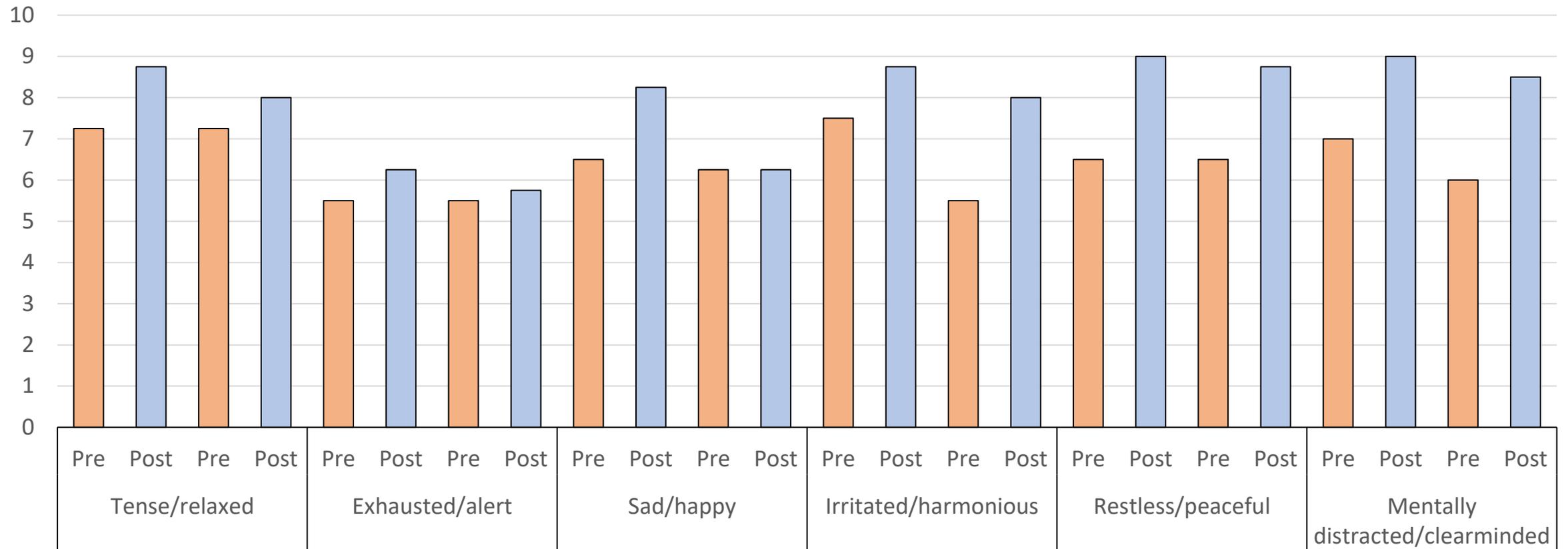
Symptoms in patients before and after virtual nature

NRS, Numeric Rating Scale, 0-10, n=7, high value indicates severe symptoms



Mood in relatives before and after virtual nature

Mood rating, 1-10, n=4, high value indicates a beneficial state



Preliminary results from qualitative interviews of patients (n=5), and their close relatives (n=4)

THEME	SUBTHEME
Being in a place where tranquillity becomes possible	Being released from emotional struggle
	Being released from bodily suffering
	Being in another world
	Feeling unease when nothing happens
Connecting to nature via past experiences	Reliving past experiences
	Grieving lost opportunity
	Feeling at home
Perceiving nature sounds as important	Being moved by nature sounds
	Natural sounds capture attention in a tranquil environment
	Limited audibility makes experience weak or almost absent
Perceiving nature in IVR as a supplement	Complement rather than replacement

Summary



Many patients in palliative home care were too fragile to be suitable for the study.

The equipment worked well for both patients and relatives.

A tendency towards less symptoms of anxiety and breathlessness in patients.

A tendency towards more beneficial mood ratings in relatives.

Qualitative interviews

- mostly positive experiences, but also some concerns about the environments and evoked feelings,
- patient and relative could revive memories, and at times also share them with each other,
- if possible, patient and relative prefer IRL nature, but IVR is a good complement.

Exit plan

- We support Palliative medicine in Umeå and Skellefteå to implement IVR nature as a regular complementary method in palliative home care.
- We have also had some cooperation and dialogue with the hospice Axlagården in Umeå.



Thank You!