Attitudes toward Using Social Robots in Psychotherapy

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Abstract

Background and Objectives Robots as intelligent agents are one of the most promising future emerging technologies to be used in healthcare. However, if social robots are to be successfully introduced to people, we must understand the underlying reasons whereupon potential users decide to accept these robots. The aim of the current study was to investigate the attitudes of children and adults toward using social robots in mental health services and to investigate the impact of information regarding the benefits of robots on their attitudes. Method 397 participants, (61 children and 336 adults) completed the survey regarding the use of social robots in psychotherapy, in mental health care and for children. Participants were randomized into two groups: the informed group, which received some information regarding the benefits of using social robots, and the non-informed group, which didn't received any type of information. Results Our findings illustrate that the majority of people have positive attitudes as concerning the use of robots for psychotherapy, considering them useful tools. We did not find any significant differences between the informed group and the non-informed group, neither in adult's responses, nor in children's' responses. Conclusion and discussion The majority of the participants believe that including a robot in the mental health services could increase the effectiveness of the treatment and this represents an encouraging result for this field.