# Article information:

Building long-term empathy: A large-scale comparison of traditional and virtual reality perspective-taking | PLOS ONE  
<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0204494>

# Article summary:

1. The study compares the short and long-term effects of traditional perspective-taking tasks and virtual reality (VR) perspective-taking tasks on empathy.

2. Results show that participants who experienced homelessness in VR had more positive, longer-lasting attitudes towards the homeless and were more likely to support affordable housing for the homeless compared to those who performed a traditional perspective-taking task.

3. Participants who engaged in any type of perspective-taking task, including VR, reported feeling more empathetic and connected to the homeless than those who only received information about homelessness.

# Article rating:

Appears moderately imbalanced: The article provides some useful information, but is missing several important points or pieces of evidence that would be required to present the discussed topics in a balanced and reliable way. You are encouraged to seek a more balanced perspective on the presented issues by exploring the provided research topics and looking at different information sources.

# Article analysis:

The article titled "Building long-term empathy: A large-scale comparison of traditional and virtual reality perspective-taking" explores the effectiveness of virtual reality (VR) as a tool for promoting empathy. The authors conducted two experiments to compare the short and long-term effects of traditional perspective-taking tasks with VR perspective-taking tasks.

One potential bias in this article is the use of the term "ultimate empathy machine" to describe VR. This term suggests that VR is inherently superior to other methods of eliciting empathy, which may not be supported by empirical evidence. While the authors acknowledge that there is limited evidence supporting the claim, they still use this term throughout the article, potentially creating a biased view of VR.

Additionally, the article focuses primarily on the positive effects of perspective-taking in VR and does not thoroughly explore any potential negative consequences or limitations. For example, there may be ethical concerns regarding exposing individuals to potentially distressing or traumatic experiences through VR. These risks are not adequately addressed in the article.

The article also lacks a discussion of potential counterarguments or alternative explanations for their findings. By only presenting one side of the argument, it fails to provide a balanced analysis of the topic.

Furthermore, some claims made in the article are unsupported by evidence. For example, the authors state that participants who became homeless in VR had more positive attitudes toward the homeless and signed a petition supporting them at a higher rate than those who performed traditional perspective-taking tasks. However, no statistical analysis or data is provided to support these claims.

There is also a lack of consideration for individual differences and contextual factors that may influence the effectiveness of perspective-taking in VR. The authors do not discuss how factors such as prior experiences, personality traits, or cultural backgrounds may impact participants' responses to VR perspective-taking tasks.

Overall, this article presents an incomplete and potentially biased view of using VR for promoting empathy. It fails to thoroughly address potential risks and limitations while making unsupported claims about its effectiveness. A more balanced and comprehensive analysis of the topic is needed to fully understand the implications of using VR for perspective-taking.

# Topics for further research:

* Ethical concerns of using virtual reality for perspective-taking
* Limitations and risks of virtual reality in promoting empathy
* Negative consequences of virtual reality perspective-taking tasks
* Counterarguments against the effectiveness of virtual reality for empathy
* Individual differences and contextual factors in virtual reality perspective-taking
* Empirical evidence on the superiority of virtual reality as an empathy tool

# Report location:

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