**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**Department of Developmental Services**

**Research Review Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Date: November 3, 2023**

**By Teams:** Erin Brown (Chairperson), Janet George, Joshua Greenberg, Rosalie Edes, Joseph Weru, Deborah Dreyfus, and Sofia Langman (observer/minutes)

Not in Attendance: Patricia Shook (technical difficulties), Kathleen Gallagher

Additional Attendees: N/A

**Agenda Items**

1. Administrative matters.
2. **“Understanding accessibility barriers in virtual reality (VR) environments for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities”**

Krishna Venkatasubramanian, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Computer Science and Statistics, University of Rhode Island;

1. **“Validity Testing of the Refractory Behavior Index (RBI) Assessment Tool”**

John O’Neill, Ph.D., BCBA-D, LABA, Director of Research, Judge Rotenberg Educational Center

**HOUSEKEEPING**

* Chair established quorum

**Review and Vote on September 1, 2023, and September 22, 2023, Meeting Minutes**

Outcome

* Chair moved for a vote and Committee members agreed to adopt the September 1, 2023, meeting minutes (Janet George abstained due to absence)
* Chair moved for a vote and Committee members agreed to adopt the September 22, 2023, meeting minutes (Janet George and Deborah Dreyfus abstained due to absence)

**DISCUSSION**

Chair presented proposal for discussion:

**“Understanding accessibility barriers in virtual reality (VR) environments for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities”**

Krishna Venkatasubramanian, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Computer Science and Statistics, University of Rhode Island.

* Discussed importance of preparing for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to use VR in the future.
* RRC discussed accessibility of VR for individuals with disabilities and abilities of VR to adapt to different individuals’ needs and comfort levels.
* Discussed physical risks associated with VR and exclusion criteria as related to medical ailments.

Issues

* Proposal requires further clarification on the purpose of the research, and how the information collected is intended to be evaluated; relabel the study as a pilot study.
* Proposal needs clarity on whether/how it will tailor its explanation of virtual reality to the sample population considering disparity of participants’ prior knowledge of virtual reality.
* Proposal needs to explicitly address HIPAA in regard to the video recordings of individuals partaking in study.
* Proposal needs clarification on how it plans to extrapolate evaluation considering the wide range of age diversity in the study group.
* Proposal needs clarification on the physical risks associated with VR; such as in relation to light/motion sensitivity, seizure disorders, motion sickness, etc.
* Questions 32a and 32b within the proposal should be answered in the affirmative and address the physical and psychological well-being of participants.

Outcome

* Chair moved, and RRC members unanimously agreed to defer discussion pending the receipt of the following additional information:
  + Clarification on the purpose of the study
  + Clarification that the video recording of participants is HIPA, and how the study plans to address that.
  + Clarification on how the population group and size of the population group will be selected.
  + Clarification on how to carry out evaluation considering the diversity of study group.
  + Clarification on how to explain Virtual Reality to the sample population given the disparity in background knowledge of virtual reality.
  + List of medical conditions that are not conducive to the study and how that will be addressed.
  + Clarification on who is paying for the study.

### APPROVED RESEARCH

None

### NON-APPROVED RESEARCH

### 

None

**CLOSING MATTERS**

The Committee did not discuss proposal, “Validity Testing of the Refractory Behavior Index (RBI) Assessment Tool”. The next meeting, including discussion of said research proposal, is scheduled for December 1, 2023.