

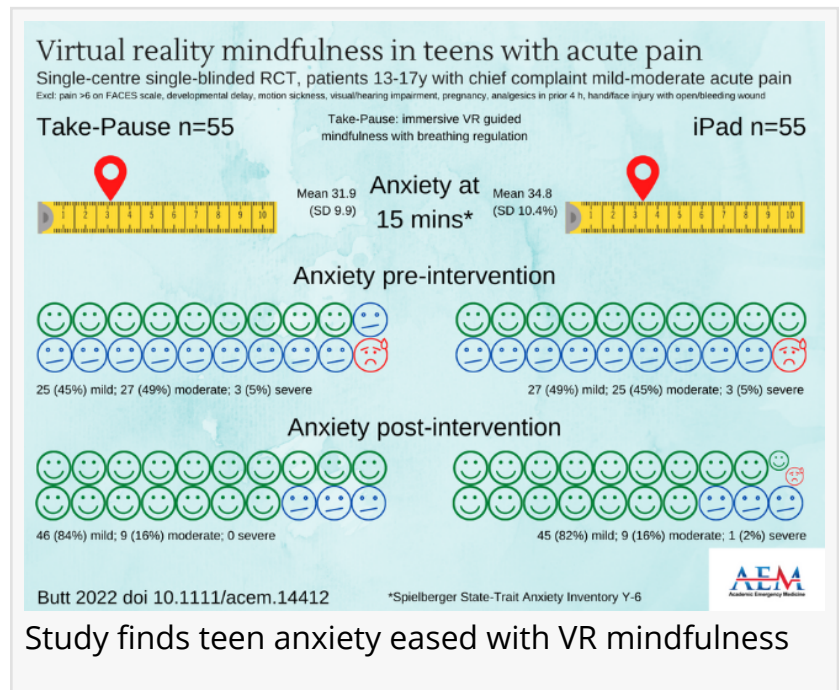
# Virtual Reality Mindfulness Eases Teen Anxiety in the Emergency Department

*Virtual reality was more effective than passive distraction techniques at reducing anxiety during ED visits for moderately painful conditions in teenagers.*

DES PLAINES, ILLINOIS, UNITED STATES, April 5, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A virtual reality (VR) intervention that included Take-Pause, a mindfulness application, was more effective than passive distraction techniques at reducing short-term anxiety during emergency department (ED) visits for moderately painful conditions in teenagers. That is the conclusion of the [study](#) titled Take-Pause: Efficacy of mindfulness-based virtual reality as an intervention in the pediatric emergency department, published in the March 2022 issue of Academic Emergency Medicine (AEM), a peer-reviewed journal of the Society for Academic Emergency Medicine (SAEM).

The authors leveraged the innate curiosity of children and their love of technology to distract them from the real and invented fears inherent to emergency care, leading to significant reductions in self-reported anxiety. With essentially no adverse effect profile, utilizing a simple distraction such as visual or auditory stimuli, providers have been able to decrease the use of anti-anxiety medications for pediatric care.

Mindfulness has garnered interest over the years as another powerful, yet simple tool in reducing emotional stress and increasing the overall well-being of participants. Take-Pause, an organization that has integrated mindfulness into a VR application for adolescents, makes mindfulness immersive, engaging, and accessible. Once the patient has the VR headset on, they are taken on a guided mindfulness journey following a virtual character. Slowing their breathing to match the virtual character's tasks allows the patient to focus and induces a calm-mindfulness state.



This article adds to a growing body of literature that reinforces the value of methods to distract patients of all ages in the ED, to engage their brains toward more positive thought processes, reduce threat perception, and improve their ED experience. The authors have presented a method that will serve as a wellspring for more study, which may lead to mindfulness as a best practice for ED stress reduction.

The lead author of the study is Mahlaqa Butt, MPH, a researcher in the department of emergency medicine at Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York.

Results of the study are discussed in a recent AEM podcast titled [View Master—Virtual Reality Immersion Tool to Reduce Pediatric Anxiety](#).

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#### ABOUT ACADEMIC EMERGENCY MEDICINE

Academic Emergency Medicine, the monthly journal of Society for Academic Emergency Medicine, features the best in peer-reviewed, cutting-edge original research relevant to the practice and investigation of emergency care. The above study is published open access and can be downloaded by following the [DOI link: 10.1111/acem.14412](https://doi.org/10.1111/acem.14412). Journalists wishing to interview the authors may contact Tami Craig at [tcraig@saem.org](mailto:tcraig@saem.org).

#### ABOUT THE SOCIETY FOR ACADEMIC EMERGENCY MEDICINE

SAEM is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to the improvement of care of the acutely ill and injured patient by leading the advancement of academic emergency medicine through education and research, advocacy, and professional development. To learn more, visit [saem.org](http://saem.org).

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