

ABSTRACT

THESIS: Exergames and Their Capacity to Influence Active Lifestyles

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PAGES: 127

Participating in regular physical activity reduces the likelihood of developing heart disease, high blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes. With many people around the world not getting enough exercise and the early abandonment of downloaded mobile fitness apps, it is essential to discover how exergames using gamification and stories can affect non-exercisers. Exercise can lead to a healthier and longer lifespan; however, many adults are not motivated to exercise regularly. This pilot study examined how an exergame that included storytelling affected adult non-exercisers' motivations to adopt an exercise routine. Using the mobile exergame app *Zombies, Run!*, participants played the lead character in a zombie adventure story. As users exercised, they listened to immersive audio missions with gamification features that included collecting emergency supplies for a post-apocalypse community. Exergames using gamification and storytelling techniques show great promise in increasing physical activity in some users; however, their long-term effectiveness and behavior changes of users adopting an active lifestyle are unclear. Seven participants (aged 22-57 years old) walked three times a week for a total of four weeks. The findings of this study demonstrate that motivation to adopt an exercise routine was not positively influenced by exergames using storytelling.