

XR PEDIATRICS Newsletter



Here at XRPeds, we've been keeping busy this Fall and we have some exciting updates to share with you!

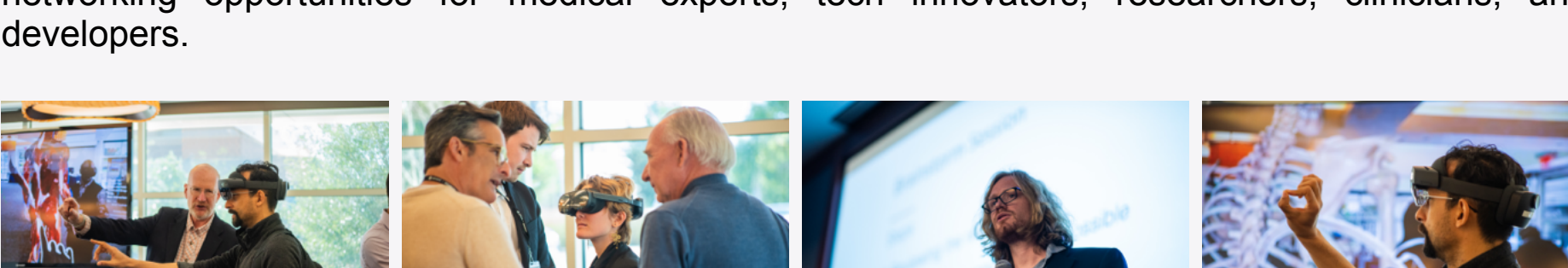
Yale Center for Immersive Technologies in Pediatrics

We're thrilled to announce that the XR Pediatrics lab is now fully operational. Our cutting-edge lab is equipped with state-of-the-art extended reality (XR) technology, allowing us to explore innovative solutions for pediatric healthcare. With this milestone, we're poised to conduct groundbreaking research, develop immersive training programs, and create interactive experiences that will shape the way we approach pediatric care.



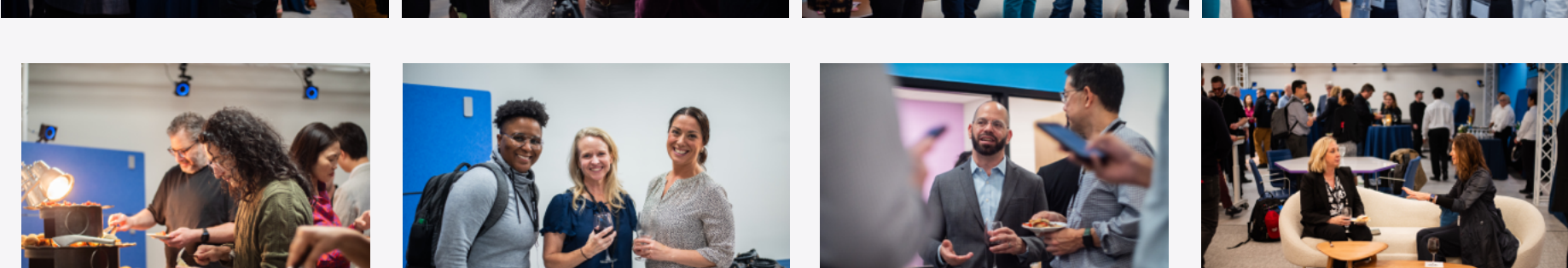
Inaugural Pediatrics and Virtual Reality Healthcare Symposium

We partnered with the International Virtual Reality and Healthcare Association (IVRHA) to host the Inaugural Virtual Reality and Pediatrics Healthcare Symposium on September 19-20, 2023 at the Yale West Campus. The 2-day event brought together engaging educational sessions and networking opportunities for medical experts, tech innovators, researchers, clinicians, and developers.



Inaugural Pediatrics and Virtual Reality Healthcare Symposium Reception at the Yale Center

Our reception at the Yale Center for Immersive Technologies in Pediatrics for the Inaugural Virtual Reality and Pediatrics Healthcare Symposium was a huge success! It was a fantastic night packed with lively conversations and invigorating exchanges, uniting the brightest minds in pediatric healthcare and XR technology.



Grant Opportunity for Yale Students & Trainees

Do you have an idea for how immersive media (AR, VR, XR) could support the physical and mental health of the youth in your community? Our lab, XRPediatrics seeks to support students and post grad trainees (including hospital residents and fellows) wishing to begin work on a mentored project focused on improving psychosocial and health outcomes for underrepresented youth through an immersive media powered intervention.

Budget: \$10,000

Important dates:

- 29 Nov 2023: *Initial proposals due*
- 11 Dec 2023: *Outreach to the finalists*
- 16 Jan 2024: *Interviews with the finalists*
- Jan 2025: *Project deadline*

To Apply: Scan the QR Code on the right.



XR for Social Work: Love146 Visit to the XRPeds Lab

The social workers from Love146 visited the XRPeds lab to learn about the possibilities of XR technology integration into their services for client engagement and support. The social workers from Love146 are dedicated professionals who work tirelessly to support survivors of human trafficking and exploitation, providing crucial assistance and care to help them rebuild their lives. XRPeds showcased the potential of XR technologies and addressed pressing questions regarding safety considerations for vulnerable youth and immersive, embodied social components of XR.



CDC DeBugged Brainstorm Session

In a recent collaborative brainstorm session for a CDC funded project, tentatively titled, *DeBugged*, XRPediatrics, together with PreviewLabs (our developer), explored creative solutions for an innovative VR videogame intervention focused on increasing hand and phone hygiene practices of parents with babies in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) setting. Stay tuned for updates as XRPediatrics and PreviewLabs forge ahead in bringing the DeBugged VR intervention to life.



Recent Events

DeBugged at Serious Play Conference

Our Co-Director, Dr. Kimberly Hieftje presented DeBugged, a VR game funded by the CDC, along with Bernard Francois, of PreviewLabs (our developer), at the Serious Play Conference at Toronto Metropolitan University in October 2023. DeBugged leverages known strategies to enhance retention and efficacy of training infection control behaviors among NICU parents through an immersive, hands-on educational experience. Participants had the opportunity to learn about how behavior change VR games are co-created with developers, through the use of a game playbook, or behavior change manual.



International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies Pre-Conference Workshop

In November 2023, Drs. Kimberly Hieftje, Steve Hollon, Skip Rizzo, Iony D. Ezawa, along with PhD Candidate Noah Robinson presented strategies and considerations on using virtual spaces to deliver peer-based support for survivors of trauma at the ISTSS Pre-Conference Workshop.



ABCT (Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies) 57th Annual Convention

Dr. Kimberly Hieftje together with Drs. Steve Hollon, Skip Rizzo, Iony D. Ezawa, L. Federmann and Ph.D. Candidate, Noah Robinson (CEO & Founder of Innerworld) presented on the ethical considerations related to mental healthcare when providing therapy without a therapist to a full house at the ABCT 57th Annual Convention in Seattle in November 2023.



Live Podcast in Explore XR

In the latest episode of ExploreXR, presented by GigXR, a healthcare content delivery platform, our Directors, Drs. Hieftje and Marks had a great conversation with David King Lassman on how they are applying immersive technology with a focus on pediatric care.

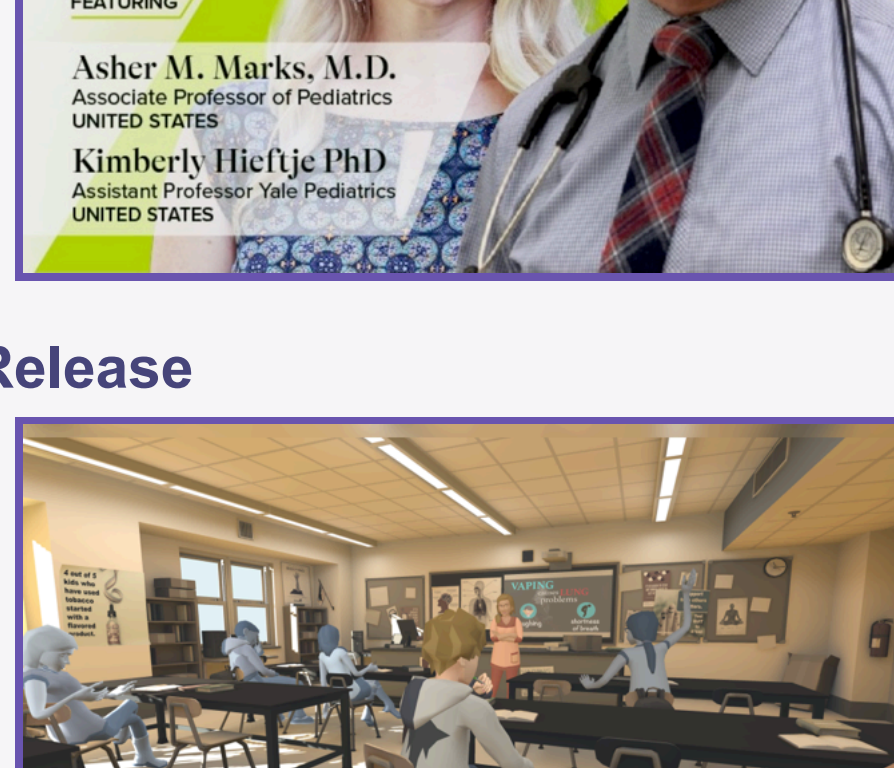
[Check It Out!](#)



Press Release

Our press release is out! We are partnering with three Connecticut school districts to tackle both marijuana and nicotine vaping prevention for adolescents through our vaping prevention VR videogame, *Invite Only VR*, funded by the Connecticut Department of Public Health.

[Check It Out!](#)



Recent Publications

- We published protocol for a pre-post study for the use of immersive virtual reality (VR) spaces to engage adolescent and young adult patients with cancer in therapist-guided support groups. This is the first ever use of VR to engage adolescent cancer patients with remote peer-to-peer support.

Marks, A., Garbatini, A., Hieftje, K., Puthenpura, V., Weser, V., & Fernandes, C. F. (2023). Use of Immersive Virtual Reality Spaces to Engage Adolescent and Young Adult Patients With Cancer in Therapist-Guided Support Groups: Protocol for a Pre-Post Study. *JMIR research protocols*, 12, e48761. DOI: [10.2196/48761](#)

- We published an article on 'Black Adolescent Females' Perceptions of PrEP for HIV Risk Reduction' in the Journal of the International Association of Providers of AIDS Care (JIAPAC). It is associated with the InvestIDate project. This qualitative data documents Black teen girls' perceptions of PrEP and the lack of outreach to this population about the usefulness of this drug in preventing HIV.

Budge, M., Opara, I., Weser, V. U., Sands, B. E., & Hieftje, K. D. (2023). Black Adolescent Females' Perceptions of PrEP for HIV Risk Reduction. *Journal of the International Association of Providers of AIDS Care (JIAPAC)*, 22. DOI: [10.1177/23259582231206934](#)

- Dr. Veronica Weser co-authored 'Incorporating Virtual Reality in Public Health Campaigns: COVID-19 as the Context' along with Dr. Zhan Xu, Dr. Mary Laffidy, and Ph.D. student Lulu Peng. Using COVID-19 as a context, this study designed and tested virtual reality (VR) campaigns based on construal level theory. This study examined whether participants were more likely to endorse COVID vaccines when they experienced a first person visualization of COVID transmission either from another avatar coughing or their own avatar coughing.

Xu, Z., Weser, V., Peng, L., & Laffidy, M. (2023). Incorporating Virtual Reality in Public Health Campaigns: COVID-19 as the Context. *Social Science Computer Review*. DOI: [10.1177/08944393231185257](#)