The Immersive Virtual Environment Testing Area

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Why Use VR For Research (and Practice)?

- Reduces usual tradeoff between control and realism
- Allows simulation of complex or impossible scenarios
- Enhanced behavioral measurement opportunities
- Portable, distributable

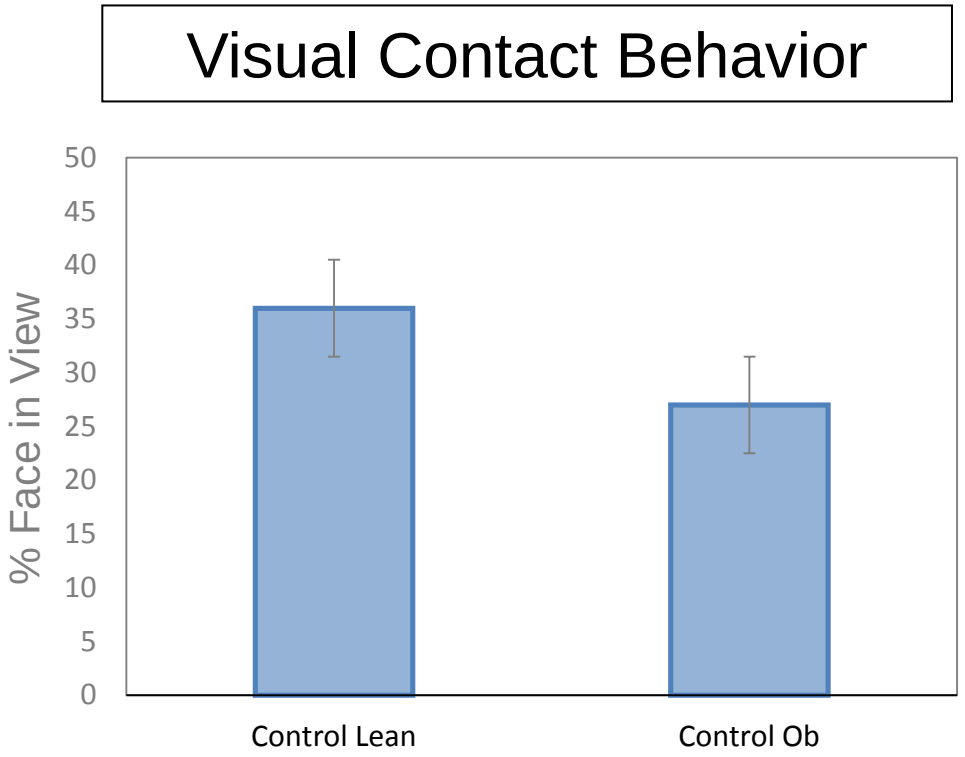
Example: Healthcare Communication Research

How does a patient's weight influence physician trainees' treatment of that patient and decisions made for her care?

- Two versions of Jennifer Taylor
  - Identical except for weight status
  - Controlled interaction in a psychologically/visually realistic environment

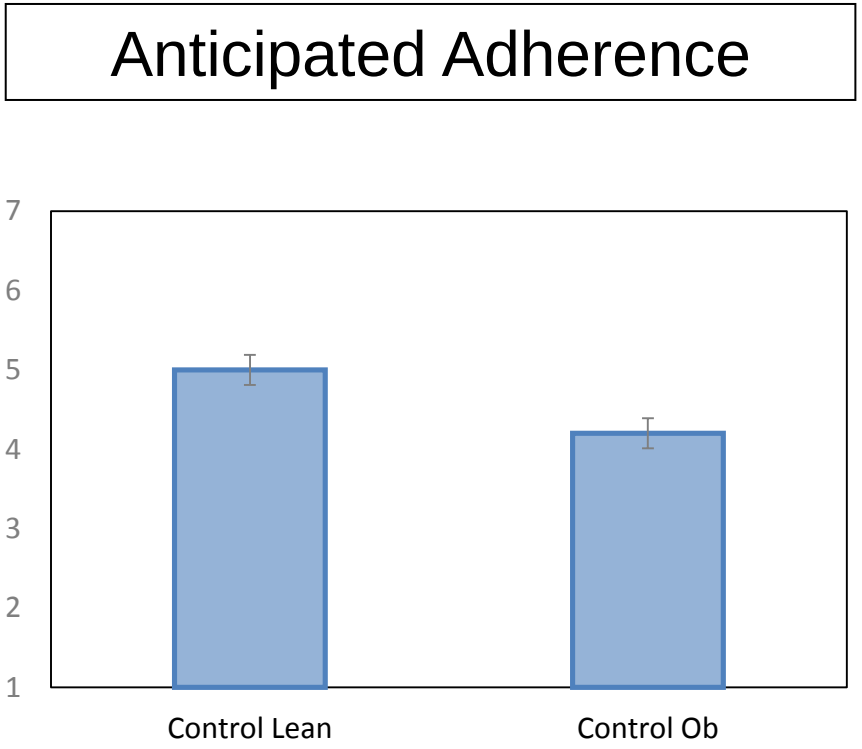
Persky & Eccleston, 2011

Results: Behavioral Measurement



Persky & Eccleston, 2011

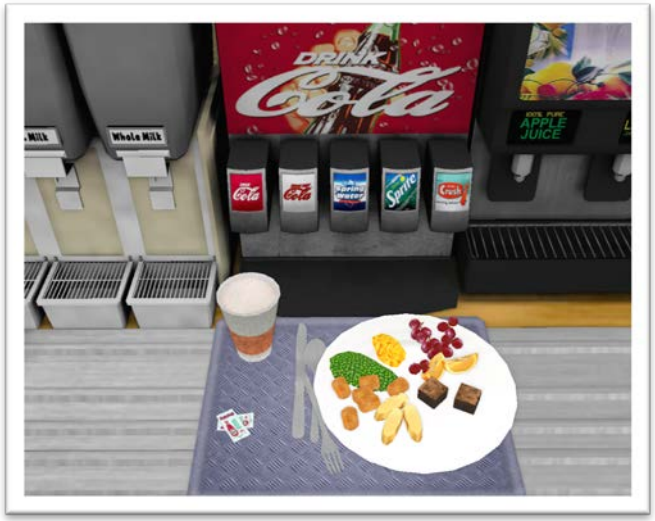
Results: Attitudes about Patient



- Results suggest that patient weight status, isolated from all other variables, elicits biased behavior and attitudes from physician-trainees
- Moving beyond research to apply controlled/realistic VR interactions for training evaluation (ex: pharmacogenetics training among NPs)

Persky & Eccleston, 2011

Example: Health Behavior Research



How does family history-based obesity risk info for child influence parent feeding behavior?

- Does this risk information cause parental guilt?
  - Can guilt be reduced through child feeding behavior?

McBride, Persky et al., 2013; Persky, McBride et al., 2015

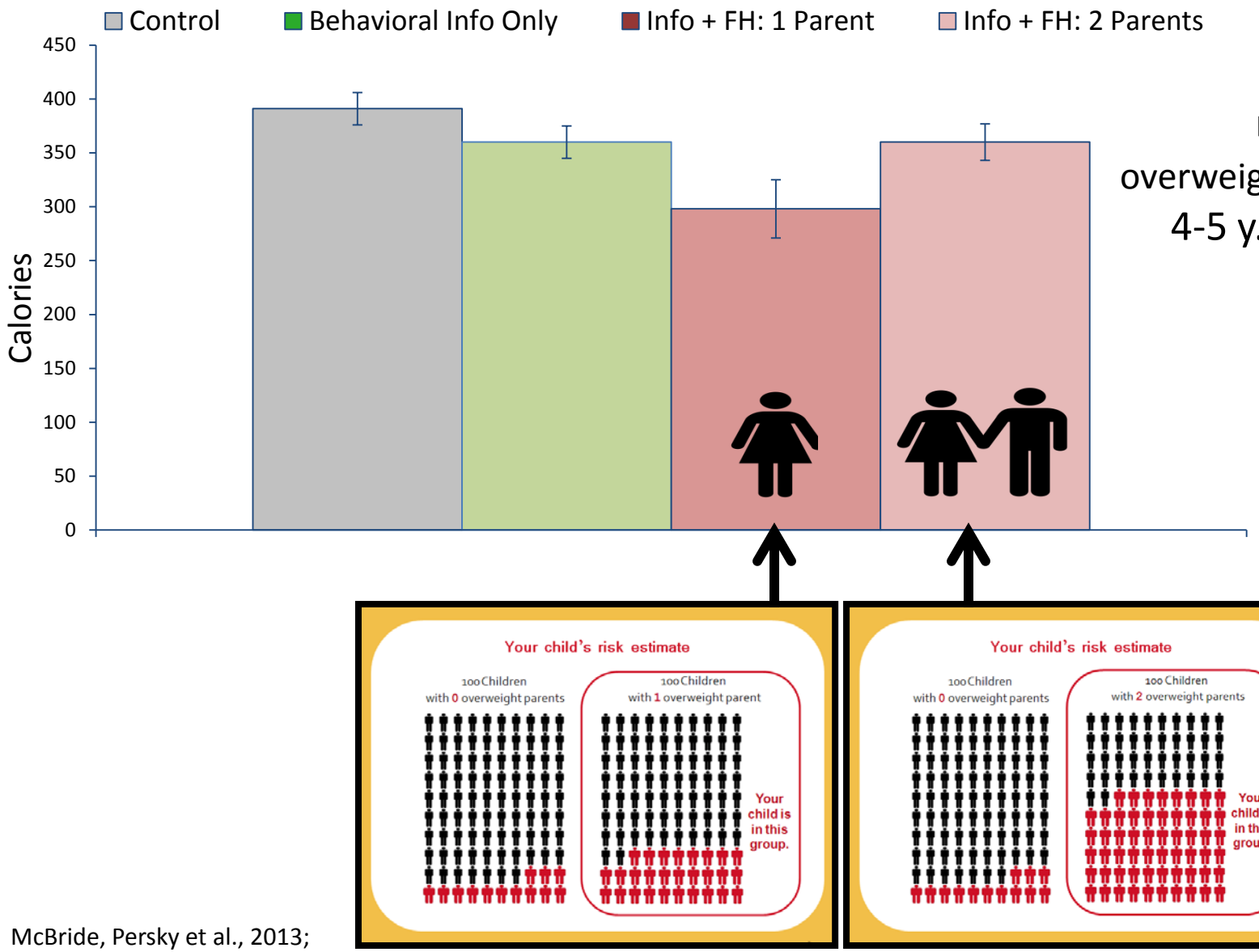
The VR Buffet

- Controlled yet psychologically-realistic research setting
- Expanded behavioral measurement opportunities

Validation

Persky, Goldring et al., Under Review

Feeding Behavior in the VR Buffet

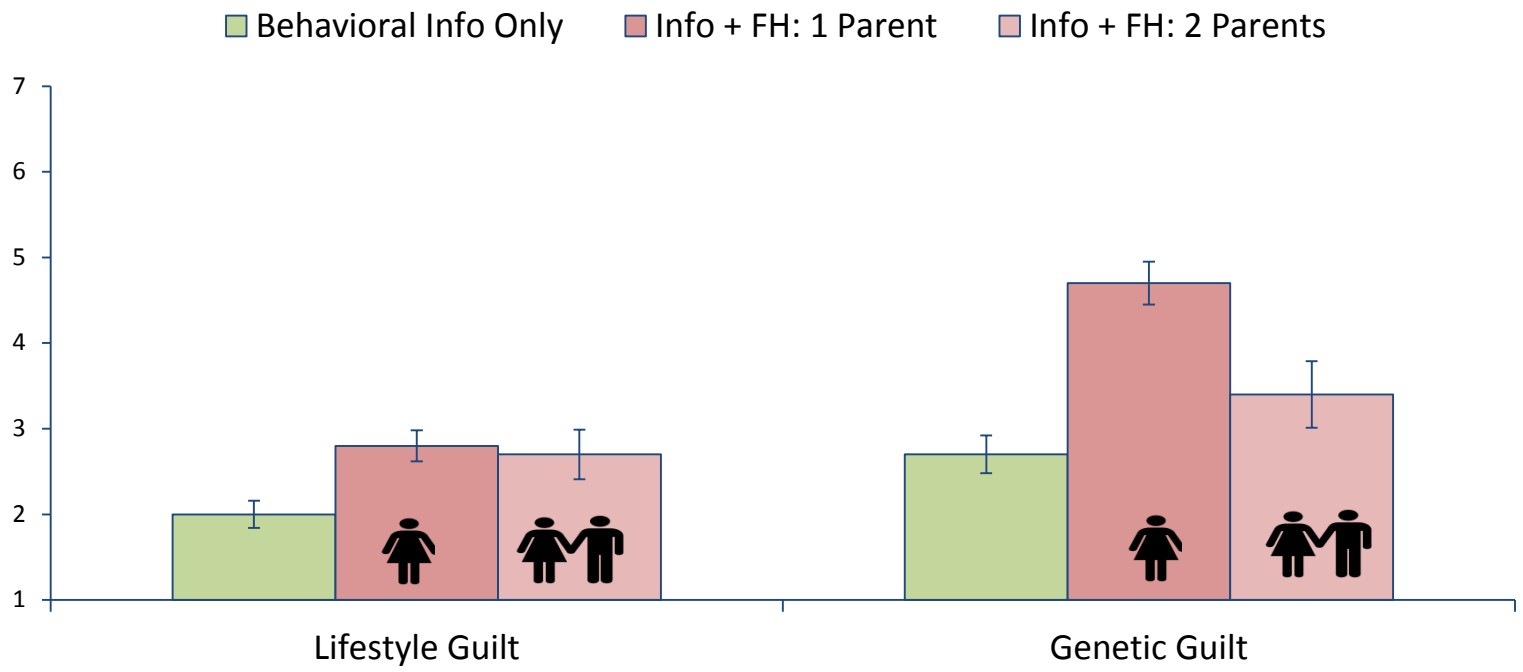


n=221
overweight mothers of
4-5 y.o. children

McBride, Persky et al., 2013;

Mothers' Guilt

Guilt experiences

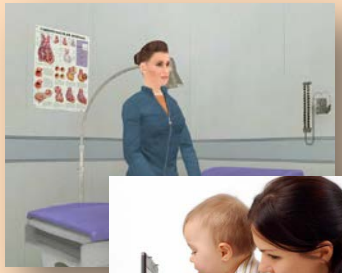


Making healthier food choices was associated with lower levels of *both types* of guilt.

Persky, McBride et al., 2015

Summary

Research



- Determine influence of key factors in shaping response to health messages
- In a setting with experimental control, but also psychological realism associated with practice settings and an expanded array of behavioral measures

Training and Practice

- Generate strategies to communicate and apply health information in practice settings
- Generate VR tools to transition to practice settings

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