

Using an AI-Driven Child Avatar to Train Interviewing Skills of Healthcare Professionals Working with Victims of Child Abuse

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Introduction: It is established that paediatricians have a crucial role in responding to cases of child maltreatment, with a growing focus exploring the role of dental practitioners. Best practice guidelines, such as the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) protocol, are utilised by the police or child protection (CPS) workers for child forensic interviews. Although paediatricians and dentists conduct the clinical forensic medical and dental examinations needed for child abuse investigations, they do not receive the essential training for interviewing children. Although healthcare professionals are not conducting formal forensic interviews, conversations between the child and the healthcare professional may yield information and reliable accounts of the child's experience. This planned study aims to utilise an investigative interviewing training program with an artificial intelligent (AI) child avatar for healthcare professionals who work with victims of child abuse. This training program has been developed and is currently being tested in CPS workers.

Methods: A dynamic interviewing training program that utilises AI to generate a child avatar and responses with generative pre-trained transformer 3 (GPT-3) will be tested in paediatricians and dentists who work at Norwegian Children's Houses. This study will use a pre-post test design to assess the effectiveness of this training program in healthcare professionals. The type of questions (open-ended vs. closed and/or suggestive/leading) will be the outcome variable. Interviewer performance will be measured to determine whether the training program has a positive effect in healthcare professionals by examining interviewer performance based on best practice guidelines. After completion of the training program, a follow-up after three months will be conducted to determine if healthcare professionals are able to apply these acquired interviewing skills in their forensic examinations.

Conclusions: Healthcare professionals may benefit from an interactive-learning training program that may improve the quality of child interviews.