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# Moments Apart: Bridging Immersive Film and Neuroscience to Foster Compassion in Caretakers of Patients with Alzheimer's Disease

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## Abstract

Alzheimer's disease presents profound challenges not only for patients but also for the family members and healthcare professionals who provide their care. Despite advances in medical research, the subjective experience of living with Alzheimer's remains underexplored, leaving caregivers without the tools to fully grasp its cognitive and emotional impact. *Moments Apart* research project addresses this gap through an innovative fusion of immersive film, virtual reality (VR), and neuroscience. The stereoscopic 360° narrative places viewers in the perceptual world of an Alzheimer's patient, gradually revealing the illness's disorienting effects by portraying interactions with a daughter who appears simultaneously as both a child and an adult. The completed film has already been tested with caregivers, and preliminary findings indicate a significant increase in empathy, awareness, and understanding of patients' lived realities. Mixed-methods evaluation, including pre- and post-experience surveys, physiological measures, and qualitative interviews, demonstrates that the VR experience enhances emotional engagement and equips caregivers with practical insights for improved communication and support. Beyond its immediate impact on caregiving, the project establishes a novel interdisciplinary model for integrating immersive storytelling and cognitive science in medical education. By offering a scientifically informed VR experience, *Moments Apart* contributes to a deeper understanding of Alzheimer's, challenges related to stereotypes, and opens new avenues for research and training. This research project highlights the transformative potential of immersive media to advance caregiver education and foster more compassionate practices in the face of one of today's most pressing public health challenges.

**Keywords:** compassion; dementia care; empathy; neuroscience; virtual reality