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Annual Review of Cybertherapy and Telemedicine 2011
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INTRODUCTION

A shift is slowly and surely occurring in the realm of healthcare – the field of cybertherapy is becoming more commonly recognized and its wide array of innovative technologies is becoming more widely accepted and implemented throughout the world. Although small-scale projects may be more common than wide-scale adoption of new, cutting-edge technologies, trends are repeatedly pointing to the fact that the advantages that telehealth and mobile health, for example, have to offer – more readily accessible medical records, user friendly, reliable health advice at your fingertips, “patient-centric” care – are undeniable and work to meet the needs of all those involved in healthcare.

The growth of cybertherapy is resulting in exciting advancements in the ways in which healthcare addresses patient and caregivers’ needs alike. The resulting flexibility and innovative options mean that patients are becoming more educated, more responsible, and more proactive in taking charge of their own health. This, in turn, leads to adopting and adhering to healthier lifestyle choices. The end goal of healthier bodies, healthier minds, and more efficient, effective healthcare is becoming more real and attainable each and every day.

Although the task of fully adopting and integrating these new types of healthcare into existing healthcare systems may seem a daunting task, we aim to increase awareness on a basic level. In light of the proactive nature encouraged by cybertherapy and its components, we work to provide informative research and ongoing studies of innovative teams of researchers from around the globe. We hope that this volume helps to increase awareness of developing projects, and to identify fields which are in need of further attention.

We have put a great deal of effort into the definition of the structure of the volume and in the sequence of the contributions, so that those in search of a specific reading path will be rewarded. To this end we have divided the different chapters into four main sections:

1. **Critical Reviews**: These chapters summarize and evaluate emerging cybertherapy topics, including technology-enhanced rehabilitation, Interreality, and Intersubjectivity;
2. **Evaluation Studies**: These chapters are generally undertaken to solve some specific practical problems and yield decisions about the value of cybertherapy interventions;
3. **Original Research**: These chapters research studies addressing new cybertherapy methods or approaches;
4. **Clinical Observations**: These chapters include case studies or research protocols with long-term potential.

For both health professionals and patients, the selected contents will play an important role in ensuring that the necessary skills and familiarity with the tools are available, as well as a fair understanding of the context of interaction in which they operate.
In conclusion, this volume underlines how cybertherapy has made initial progress in treating a variety of disorders. However, there is more work to be done in a number of areas, including the development of easy-to-use and more affordable hardware and software, the development of objective measurement tools, the need to address potential side effects, and the implementation of more controlled studies to evaluate the strength of cybertherapy in comparison to traditional therapies.

We sincerely hope that you will find this year’s volume to be a fascinating and intellectually stimulating read. We continue to believe that together we can change the face of healthcare.

*Brenda K. Wiederhold*  
*Stéphane Bouchard*  
*Giuseppe Riva*
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We would like to extend a warm and heartfelt thank you to all members of the review board whose help made this year's publication possible:

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