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# Virtual Training for Inexperienced Nursing Students in the Operating Room: Reducing Stress while enhancing Knowledge and Self-Efficacy

Inas Redjem <sup>a,b</sup>, Arnaud Hualmé <sup>b</sup>, Jérôme Chapoul <sup>b</sup>, Mathieu Risy <sup>c</sup>, Florian Nouviale <sup>c</sup>, Alexandre Audinot <sup>c</sup>, Valérie Gouranton <sup>c</sup>, Estelle Michinov <sup>a</sup>, Pierre Jannin <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> LP3C, Université Rennes 2

<sup>b</sup> LTSI-Inserm, Université de Rennes

<sup>c</sup> INSA Rennes, IRISA, Université de Rennes



The operating room (OR) is a demanding and high-pressure environment, yet, students often have limited exposure during their training, leaving them ill-prepared for clinical practice<sup>1</sup>. This study aims to use immersive virtual reality (iVR) to introduce nursing students to the OR environment in a controlled and immersive way, exploring its impact on anxiety, stress, self-efficacy, and knowledge acquisition through an experimental design with pre-post measures.

## METHOD

### Pedagogical material

We have developed an iVR training tool allowing students to immerse themselves in the OR; navigate through and interact with the environment; obtain detailed information about aseptic areas, medical staff, and OR equipment.

### Two conditions

Participants either explored the OR environment using a **slideshow** (n = 16) or through **iVR** (n = 24).

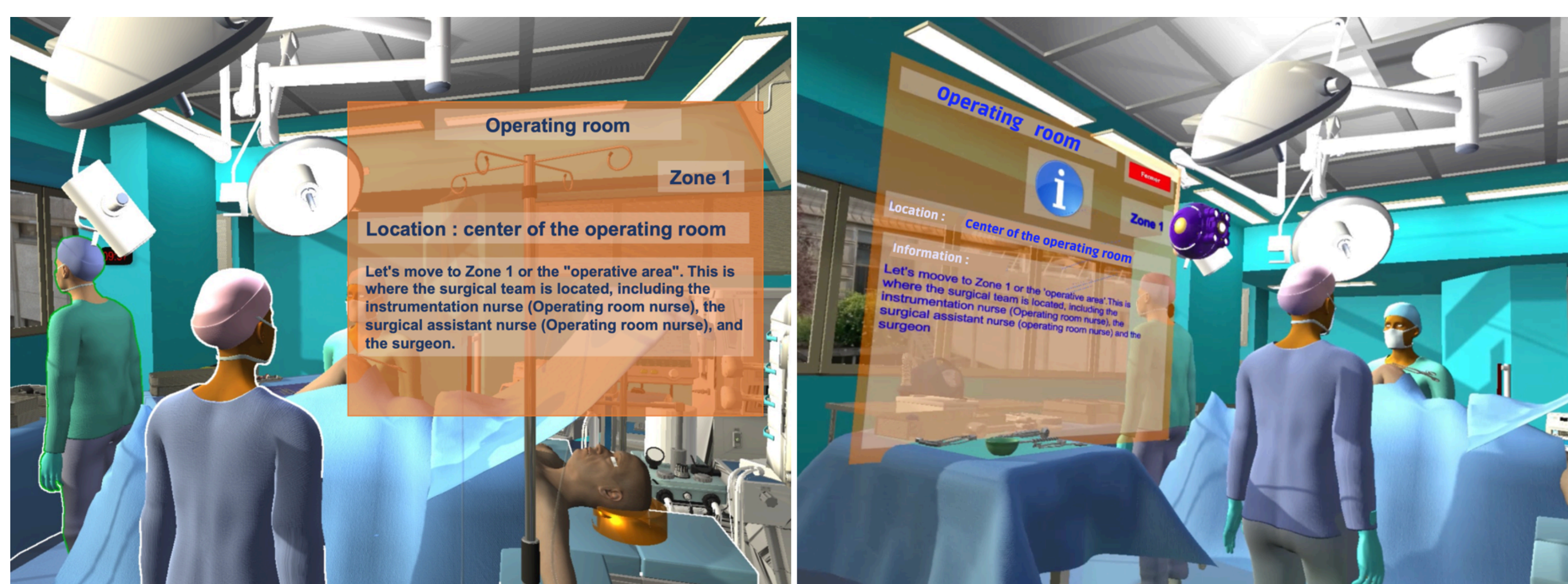


Figure 1. Slideshow (left) and iVR (right) OR experience

### Participants

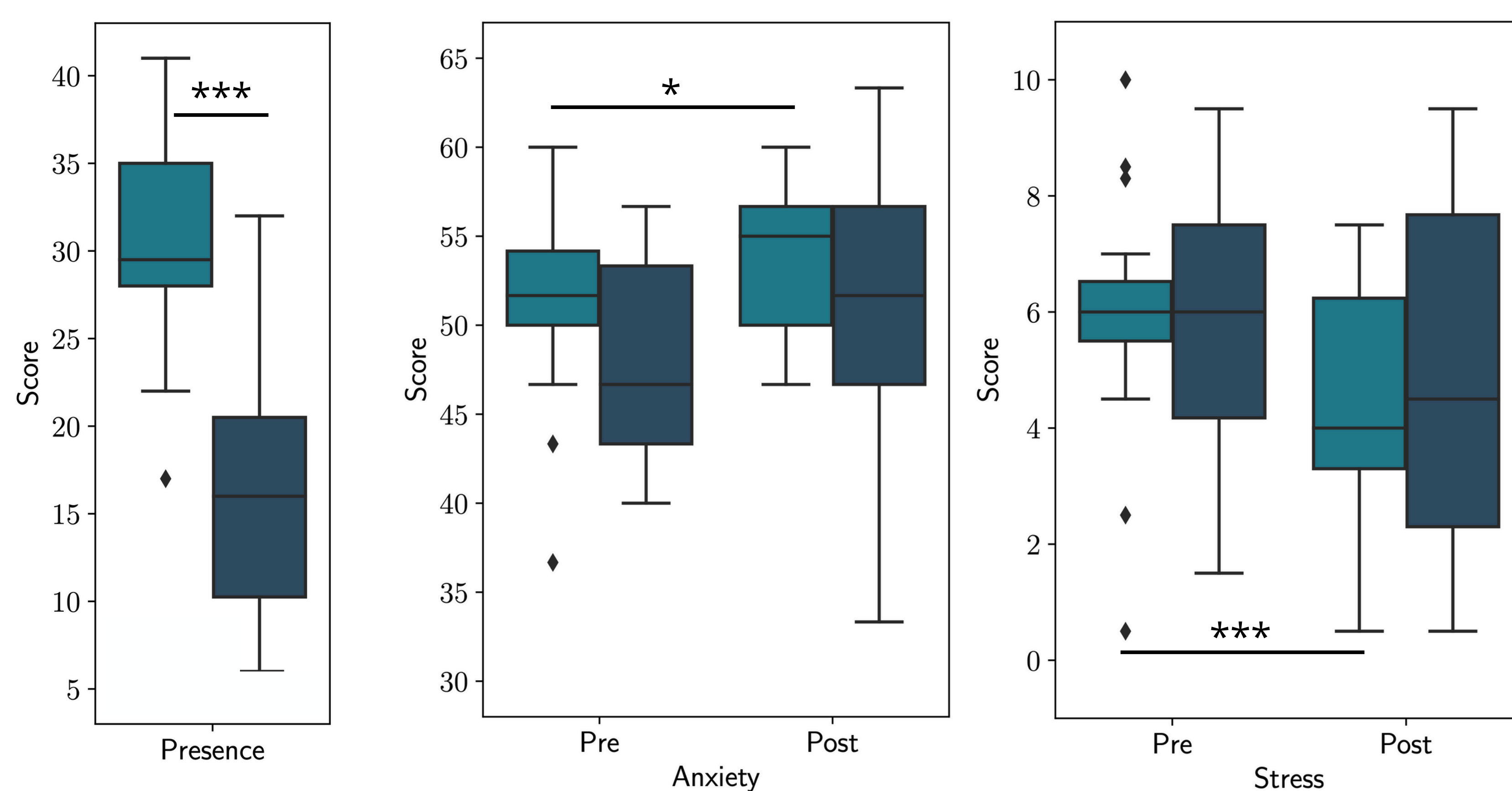
40 second year nursing students **without prior OR experience** were recruited (M age = 23; SD = 6.5). 87% of participants were female, 32% had previously used VR and 60% were not familiar with video games.

### Measures

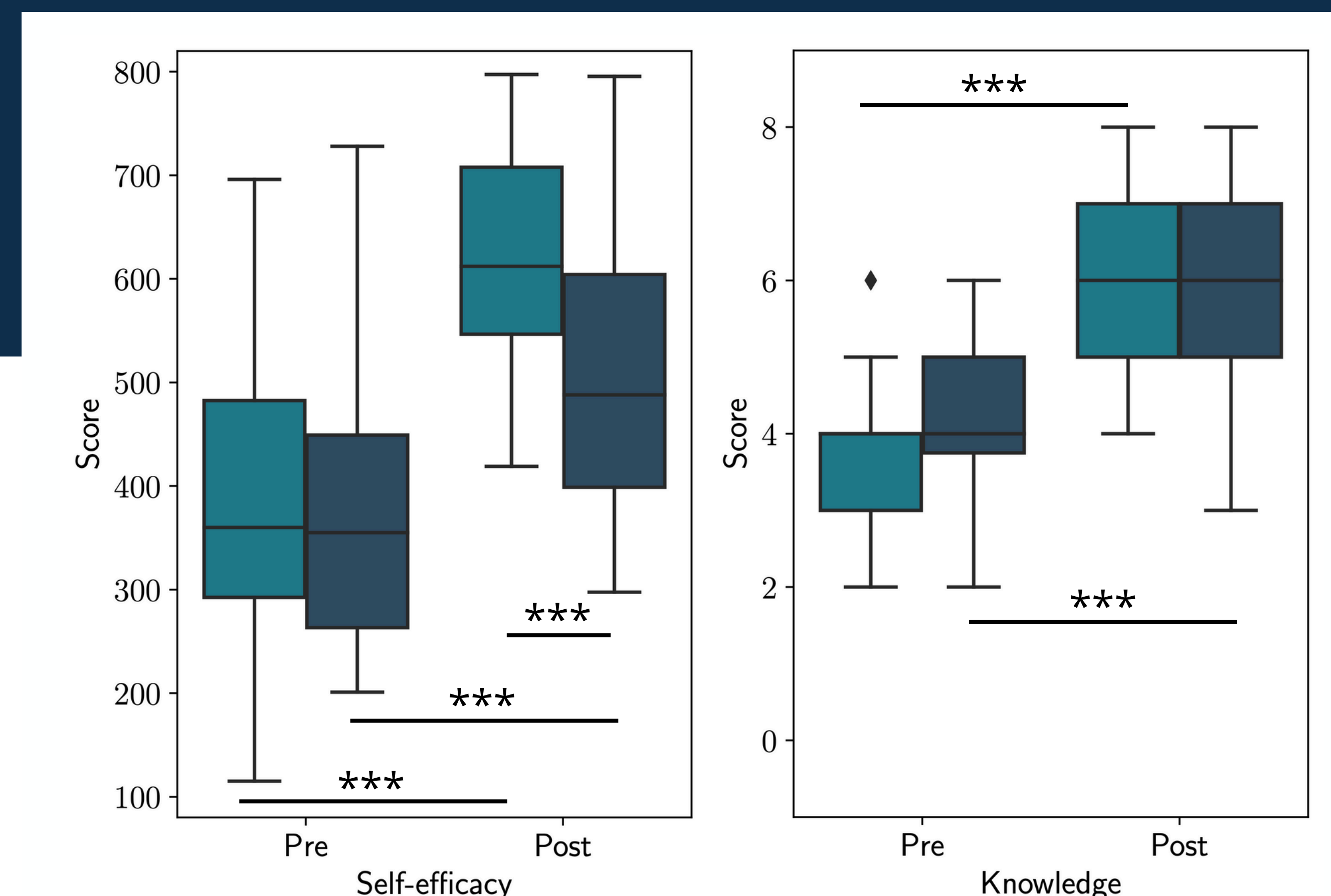
- **Presence** (Slater-Usuh-Steed Questionnaire)<sup>2</sup>
- **Anxiety** (STAI 6 items)<sup>3</sup>
- **Stress** (visual analog scale)
- **Self-efficacy** (9-items visual analog scale)  
e.g. 'I feel confident recognizing some of the instruments used by the surgeon during knee surgery'
- **Knowledge** about OR equipment, medical staff and aseptic areas (9-items quiz)

## RESULTS

Legend: iVR (teal), Slideshow (dark blue). \*\*\* p < .001. \* p < .05.



The iVR group reported a significantly **higher level of presence** (immersion), an **increase in anxiety** levels from pre- to post-intervention, and a **reduction in stress** levels post-intervention.



The iVR OR experience was **more effective in enhancing self-efficacy**. Both slideshows and iVR equally **enhanced knowledge** without any significant difference between groups.

## CONCLUSION

Implementing an iVR initial OR visit offers a practical and immersive solution to address the challenges associated with limited exposure to the OR. By reducing stress while enhancing self-efficacy and knowledge, this innovative approach has the potential to enhance healthcare education and ultimately contribute to improved patient care.

### REFERENCES

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