

AffecTech showcases innovative mental health technology

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Members of the public and healthcare professionals have tried out innovative wearables technologies for mental health being developed as part of the AffecTech project.

They were able to test the cutting-edge technologies at a special event in Lancaster, UK held to mark Mental Health Awareness Week.

The public engagement event was organised by the Lancaster University team of the AffecTech project – a four-year research initiative that's developing new digital tools to help people with depression, anxiety and bipolar.

Attendees included professionals from the health and technology sectors, as well as leading mental health charities such as Mind and Anxiety UK.

"This was an enjoyable opportunity for public and professionals to learn more about, and have hands-on experience of new wearable technologies for mental health that we are developing here in Lancaster," said Corina Sas, Professor of Digital Health at Lancaster University, who also leads the AffecTech project.

Professor Sas said: "Affective disorders, such as stress, depression and bipolar conditions, are estimated to be among the highest ranking causes of disease by 2020. The potential social impact of wearable health devices for people with these disorders is vast because emotional awareness and regulation are invaluable for daily functioning.

"Our project marks a significant shift from current wearable technologies that capture emotional responses that then need interpreting by health professionals, towards low-cost self-help technologies for visualising, exploring and regulating emotions that people may be able to use in their daily lives."

Coordinated by Lancaster University, the AffecTech project contributes cutting-edge research and development into wearable systems for emotion regulation.

The international project has been gathering momentum, with its research recognised at the prestigious CHI 2019 Human-Computer Interaction Conference, and Designing Interactive Systems DIS 2019 Conference:

Exploring and Designing for Memory Impairments in Depression

http://eprints.lancs.ac.uk/130241/1/Qu_accepted_CHI_19.pdf

<https://doi.org/10.1145/3290605.3300740>

HCI and Affective Health: Taking stock of a decade of studies and charting future research directions

http://eprints.lancs.ac.uk/130240/1/hci_affective_health.pdf

<https://doi.org/10.1145/3290605.3300475>

Dynamic Displays at Wrist for Real Time Visualization of Affective Data
http://eprints.lancs.ac.uk/124394/1/DIS_WIP_FINAL.pdf
<https://doi.org/10.1145/3197391.3205436>

Towards Affective Chronometry: Exploring smart materials and actuators for real-time representations of changes in arousal
http://eprints.lancs.ac.uk/132485/1/DIS_Camera_Ready_Final.pdf

The former explores how innovations in personal health technologies could release sufferers from the torment of depression, by logging positive memories and combating memory impairments.

AffecTech

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AffecTech Consortium: Lancaster University, UK (coordinator); Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan, Sweden; Trinity College Dublin, Ireland; University of Oxford, UK; Università Di Pisa, Italy; Universitat Jaume I De Castellon, Spain; Università Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore, Italy; Bogazici Üniversitesi, Turkey; Philips Electronics, Netherlands; The Leeds Teaching Hospitals National Health Service Trust, UK; Plux - Wireless Biosignals, Portugal.

For more information visit: www.affectech.org

Press & Communications

Image: Lancaster University AffecTech researcher Claudia Dauden organises headsets during her workshop session on wearables technologies and mindfulness, at Lancaster's Storey arts centre in May 2019.

Professor Corina Sas is available for interview along with other members of the AffecTech team.

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