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A touch of virtual reality

Missing a family wedding, birthday or graduation can be a difficult time for patients unable to leave hospital.

The return of the Pitch at the Sydney Innovation and Research Symposium bought with it an innovation for patients to virtually record their family event and allow sick, elderly or immobile patients a truly immersive experience.

The University of Sydney psychology school lecturer, Dr Hamish MacDougall, working with RPA biomedical engineer Leigh McGarvie, said 'A10D' is the best alternative to attending the real thing.



Pitch judges Dr Teresa Anderson and Gina Finocciaro experience 'A10D' virtual reality.

"The solution is to virtually transport the patient to the family event. It's no substitute for the real experience but it's much better than a couple of photos and we believe it will provide hours of entertainment and happiness for patients stuck in hospital," said Dr MacDougall.

With \$20,000 from the Pitch, supported by Symposium sponsor bupa and additional funds from the University of Sydney, the research project will evaluate the psychological benefits to patients and costs.

A second Pitch to create an Australian-first web application to streamline the recognition and response to a flu outbreak by public health registrars Dr Kai Hsiao and Dr Laura Collie received \$48,000.

"FluCARE will automatically recognise an outbreak and send an alert, saving time for nursing home staff and the public health unit," said Dr Hsiao.

"By getting in sooner and containing the outbreak, we hope to prevent hospitalisations and deaths," said Dr Collie.

A pitch for a clinical coder to join the medical ward round with clinicians at Canterbury Hospital to improve coding accuracy and an educational orientation tool for rehabilitation patients at Balmain Hospital will also be supported.