Question 1:

According to Lucas et al, the virtual machines are effective because of two factors: rapport-building using vision and prosodic analysis to provide active listening behaviors helping to reduce the fear of self-disclosure and allow for a sense of anonymity, an illusion of privacy, to elicit more honest response coming from the sense that no one is observing or judging.

Question 2:

The study design was an experimental research since the author manipulated the independent parameters to measure the dependent parameters. The participants in the study were randomly assigned to either the virtual human or human. Some participants interacted with VH when it was controlled by a human, whereas other participants interacted with VH when her responses were fully automated independent of what they were told. Such study was conducted to gather evidence for the hypothesis whether humans interact more openly in front of a virtual human as compared to a human.

Question 3:

The main take is that the VHs can help overcome psychological barriers in clinical interviews. The participants provide more open and honest responses in medical interviews that can help them receive better care and avoid serious consequences. Therefore, the benefits of VH-administrated clinical interviews are substantial. Another benefit is that the VH-interviewers can be used to reach patients for whom it would otherwise be more costly to provide health screening services, such as those who are in a remote or sparely populated location.

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