



Opinions On The Impact Of Equestrian Therapy On The Development Of Young People

Karoly BODNAR, Barbara KUDLACSEK

*Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Szabadsag u. 1-3. 5540 Szarvas,
Hungary*

• Introduction

Numerous scientific studies have shown that closeness to animals, frequent contact with them, and care for them have a beneficial effect on the physical and mental health of all ages. This is the basis of animal-assisted therapies. In this work, the authors examined the effects of equine therapies and horse training on children and young people in the Great Plain region of Hungary.

• Material and method

The questionnaire used questions that addressed opinions and experiences related to equestrian therapy, as well as the respondents' demographics and equestrian activities. The questionnaire was completed using Google Forms and distributed via Facebook. However, the 131 responses received cannot be considered representative of the entire Hungarian population.

During the research, 4 interviews were also conducted, with a horse trainer, an equine therapy trainer, a parent and a leader of an animal-assisted activity, in person and over the phone. The interview questions were predetermined, but it was possible to ask additional questions related to the answers.

In addition to summarizing the questionnaire responses and based on the opinions of the interviewees, a SWOT analysis was also conducted on opinions related to equestrian therapy.

• Results and discussions

Everyone agreed that, depending on the age group, equestrian activities had a positive effect on the physical development of children, reducing balance and movement coordination disorders, and improving stamina.

Dealing with animals increased the sense of responsibility, accustomed them to regular care, improved concentration, and had a more positive attitude towards learning.

At the same time, the interviewees said that there are few qualified therapists, and the prices and hourly rates of equestrian businesses are generally high compared to the solvency of the demand.

On the other hand, starting an equestrian therapy business (land, buildings, horses, feed, caretakers, and trained professionals) is an investment that pays off slowly compared to keeping hobby horses and recreational riding or an equestrian tourism business.

