Horse Riding and Dimensions of Wellness

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Outline:

• Riding classes led nurse to be a therapeutic horse riding instructor (THR)
• Systematic review about equine assisted activities and therapies (EAAT)
• The dimensions of wellness
• How horse riding interacts with dimensions of wellness
• Recommendations and conclusion from research

Riding Classes Led a Nurse to be a THR Instructor

• 2014, English as Second Language
• 2015, Started Master’s program in nursing
• 2015, started horseback riding classes
• 2016, started the learning process to be THR instructor
• 2017, tried to apply PATH standards in Saudi Arabia

Educational video about THR

• When know about it, got excited to share it
• Educational video was made
• Bandar, was the client, has night blindness and myopia
• Katrina was the instructor
• The video on YouTube and social media

Why systematic review?

• Evidence does not mean one or few research paper(s)
• Lack of supporting evidence of EAAT was reported
• Lack of evidence made providers abstain from referring
• Insurance companies do not pay for EAAT without evidence

History of EAAT

• Hippocrates described horseback riding as a “universal exercise”
• Winston Churchill : “There is something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man”
• The official use of horse riding as modern therapy started in 1950s
• EAAT is growing rapidly

EAAT has 8 types according to PATH
• Equine-Assisted Activities (EAA)
• Equine-Assisted Therapy (EAT)
• Equine-Assisted Learning (EAL)
• Equine-Facilitated Psychotherapy (EFP)
• Hippotherapy, Interactive Vaulting
• Therapeutic Driving, Therapeutic Riding

PATH and others
• PATH is not the only organization that provides EAAT
• Other organizations may use different terminology
• Other organizations may provide different services
• Other terms include: Equine-assisted interventions (EAI)
• Deciding the best fit for the client is challenging

Systematic Review method
• Databases: CINAHL, MEDLINE, PsycINFO, Social Sciences
• Terms: EAAT, Hippotherapy, therapeutic horseback riding
• Time period: from 2015- mid 2018
• Initial considered articles number: 128 articles
• Non-research, opinion, not peer reviewed articles excluded
• Reviewed article after exclusion: 52 articles

Level of evidence
• 21 articles are clustered in the lowest accepted level
• 25 studies used sample size 20 participants or less
• A sample of four was published Three times
• Weak studies do not make cause-effect relationship
• Stories and expert opinions are considered scientifically weak

Findings
• PATH was mentioned in six different studies
• One author was a PATH instructor
• EAAT is a wide term that contains all types
• EAGALA is another international non profit
• EAGALA was mentioned by some authors

Findings
• EAAT supplemental & complementary treatment
• EAAT does not replace any primary intervention
• Five studies described the EAAT as entertaining & therapeutic
• EAAT improves cardiovascular, and brain functions
14 Organizations provide EAAT
   • Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH)
   • Equine-Assisted Growth and Learning Association (EAGALA)
   • American Hippotherapy Association
   • Equine-Assisted Mental Health (EAMH)
   • Gestalt Equine Institute of the Rockies (GEIR)

15 Organizations specialties
   • American Hippotherapy Association: physical, occupational, and speech therapy
   • PATH: Therapeutic Horse Riding (THR)
   • EAGALA: non riding program, ground based work
   • A country may have its own national program
     • Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy Institute in South Africa (EAPISA)

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17 Horse riding & emotional wellness in research
   • Statistically significant (SS) findings worth reporting
   • 5 studies reported SS decrease in depression and anxiety
   • 2 studies reported SS improvement in PTSD
   • 1 scientifically strong study reported no SS difference when compared to standard intervention

18 Horse riding & emotional wellness in research
   • Benefits veterans & military professionals, combats trauma
   • EAAT improves confidence, assertiveness and self-esteem
   • Decreased undesirable behavior
   • Equine service programs, provided better mental health

19 Horse riding & social wellness in research
   • EAAT helps improve social wellness
   • Farm environment requires working in groups
   • Making friends including best friends
   • EAAT SS improved socialization, social communication
   • SS increase in number of used words and new words

20 Recommendation
   • Only one center followed the EAGALA standards strictly among three
   • Standardization is the key to empower EAAT
   • Standardization decreases the variations
   • Benefits of EAAT in a wider perspective
   • Dimensions of wellness may be helpful

21 Wellness from holistic perspective
• After teaching wellness class in MMU
• Wellness from different perspectives
• A holistic view
• More than physical and mental wellness
• One dimension can affect other dimensions

What is wellness
• Wellness is not absence of illness
• Wellness model does not focus on illness
• Wellness has 8 dimensions
• Improving one dimension of wellness improves others
• Physical wellness improves mental wellness

8 Dimensions of wellness
• Emotional, spiritual, intellectual
• Physical, environmental
• Financial, occupational, social

Examples
• Patients with severe mental illness die from heart disease
• Poverty can cause social isolation (financial & social wellness)
• No job = no health insurance (occupational & physical)
• Psychiatric medications may lead to obesity & heart diseases
• Depression and obesity associate and trigger each other

Personal example:
• Bicycling to the university (physical)
• Reading at the university (intellectual, occupational)
• Meeting others at the university (social)
• Meditation and praying room at BU (Spiritual)
• Biking does not burn gas (financial, environmental)
• Biking decreases stress (emotional)

Physical wellness
• Horse riding is a physical exercise
• Horse riding improve physical balance
• Riding improves muscle strength
• Riders try to stay physically fit

Intellectual wellness
• Learning new skills and playing games
• Horseback riding is a skill that requires learning
• Some games can be applied during riding
• Reading in an area of interest
• Consider reading about horseback riding

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Financial wellness

• Balance between saving and spending
• Health insurance does not usually cover EAAT
• Find sponsors for barns
• Finding a way for the rider to ride for free
• Part time job or volunteering opportunities

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Environmental wellness

• Spend time outdoors
• If possible outdoor arena
• Maintain arranged, and clean area
• Treat your horses and trees nicely
• Use compost and recycle bins
•

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Spiritual wellness

• Knowing your own beliefs and values
• Respecting other beliefs and values
• Time for praying each day
• Appreciate beauty of the nature
• Appreciate the beauty and spirit of a horse

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Social wellness

• Keep in touch with family and friends
• A visit or a phone call are helpful
• Quality time when meeting face to face
• Meet new people and appreciate new relation
• Horse riding introduces the rider to new relationships (horse & people)
•

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Occupational wellness

• Balance between work and enjoyable activities
• Balance between horseback riding and work
• Volunteering and paid job should provide satisfaction
• Ask for help when a task is overwhelming
• Working in horseback riding program can be fun
Working in horseback riding program can be fun

- Emotional wellness
  - Balance between accepting challenges and stress
  - Acknowledging and being able to express feelings
  - Finding trusted one who listens without judgment
  - Horse has big ears and does not judge
  - A horse can not talk to someone else

- Interactions
  - Horse riding with others (physical, social wellness)
  - Horse riding is enjoyable and decreases stress (emotional wellness)
  - Having sponsor for therapeutic horse riding (financial wellness)
  - Balance between these dimensions is the key
  - Improving one dimension leads to improvement in other dimensions

- Conclusion
  - Benefits not limited to one dimension of wellness
  - Help your rider to get maximum benefits
  - High quality research is needed
  - Help students like me to do research
  - Ask about the research and the findings

- Any questions?
  - Your questions make the presentation more valuable

- References

  - References for the review available on request