Horse Riding and Dimensions of Wellness

Khalid Almasloukh, MSN, RN
PhD student

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- Non-research, opinion, not peer reviewed articles excluded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

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)
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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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

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
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

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
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

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
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

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
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)

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
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