

Presenter's name: Eszter Bálint

Degree, affiliation: Semmelweis University - Institute of Behavioural Sciences, Kapcsolat Equine-Assisted Therapy and Training Center

Curriculum vitae:

EDUCATION

Equine-assisted psychotherapy - Hungarian Equestrian Therapy Association (2019-2021)

Sport and performance psychologist - Hungarian University of Sport Sciences (2017-2019)

Psychologist (Clinical and health psychology specialisation) - Eötvös Loránd University (2014-2016)

EXPERIENCE

Equine-assisted therapist - Kapcsolat Equine-Assisted Therapy and Training Center (2019-present)

PhD student, psychologist - Semmelweis University - Institute of Behavioural Sciences (2021-present)

Assistant lecturer - Eötvös Loránd University - Faculty of Education and Psychology - Institute of Psychology (2022-present)

Sportpsychologist (several sport clubs -triathlon, artistic gymnastics, soccer, equestrian sports- 2018-2022)

Program director of the mental health program - Háttér Society (2019-2021)

Psychologist - Pesti Barnabás Secondary School (2019-2020)

Psychologist, Coordinator of the psychologist team - Bolyai Children's Home Center (2016-2019)

Category: Oral presentation

Topic: Horse Related Topics: Human – horse Interactions and Communication

Authors:

Eszter Bálint, Semmelweis University - Institute of Behavioural Sciences, Kapcsolat Equine-Assisted Therapy and Training Center

György Purebl MD, PhD Semmelweis University - Institute of Behavioural Sciences

Edina Kardos, Somogy County Kaposi Mór Teaching Hospital, Kapcsolat Equine-assisted Therapy and Training Center

Title: THE RYTHM OF CONNECTION – EXPLORING THE PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF HORSE – HUMAN RELATIONSHIP IN EQUINE ASSISTED THERAPY

Keyword 1: equine assisted psychotherapy

Keyword 2: emotional transfer

Keyword 3: synchronization

Abstract:

Horses are increasingly recognized and referred to as “mirrors” which refers to their high functioning emotional-social abilities. This also makes them great co-therapist in equine-assisted settings. It's probable that this phenomenon can be explained by emotional transfer between horses and humans, which could be looked at as a synchronization between the participants of the interaction. In trying to make this synchronicity evident, our choice was to turn to the examination of physiological markers. Heart rate and other related variables, i.e. HRV appears to be the easiest of the physiological markers

to grasp when studying equines and already have been measured in several studies and is considered a reliable measure in the research of stress reactions and emotions and horse-human interactions, and is also non-invasive. We planned a pilot-study to address the gap in the research of the background mechanisms of equine assisted therapies. We are investigating the synchronization process through HRV recorded of all three agents in the therapeutic triangle: the horse, the client, and the therapist. We obtained simultaneous HRV records during a standardized session of equine assisted intervention, enabling us to examine the existence of the synchronization and the pattern of action-reaction in stressful situations. The standardized session had a strict framework: it starts with a baseline situation (standing next to a horse), followed by a stressful event (having to lead the horse through a scary obstacle), ended by a brief relaxation. To examine the variables, that could have a possible effect on the forming of the synchronization, we analysed the horse-human compatibility based on the Big Five factors, and on the attachment styles of the participants. (At the time of abstract submission, the experiment is still in progress, so therefore the results are not included in the abstract, but will be in the presentation)