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Curriculum vitae:

Dan Manolachescu has completed his studies in veterinary medicine at the University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine in Romania. After graduation, he obtained a diploma in Communication, and pursued a career as a professional horse rider and horse trainer around the globe. Following a riding accident that left him completely paralyzed he continued his scientific career obtaining a master's degree in Ethology and Human-Animal Interaction at the Faculty of Animal Sciences and Biotechnologies, Cluj Napoca. He is currently researching human-horse emotional contagion in a PhD program at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine where he is also the chief administrative officer. This case study presents his rehabilitation through EAT as a comprehensive method for physical and emotional recovery. His recovery was featured in the RESETED documentary released this year by an independent producer.

Category: short paper

Topic: Disabilities & Symptoms: Spinal Cord Injury, Spinal Diseases

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Title: EQUINE-ASSISTED THERAPY (EAT) FOR TETRAPARESIS: A HOLISTIC APROACH TO PHYSICAL RECOVERY, EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING, AND SOCIAL REINTEGRATION - A CASE STUDY

Keyword 1: Spinal Cord Injury, Spinal Diseases

Keyword 2: equestrian injuries

Keyword 3: recovery after spinal cord injury

Abstract:

Equine-assisted therapy (EAT) is receiving increased interest and showing promising results as an alternative treatment for various physical and psychological conditions. Recent studies revealed that EAT improves neuromuscular function by using horse movement as a remedy instrument, so patients with tetraparesis can benefit from these therapeutic approaches. Although the benefits of EAT are evident, due to the lack of formal regulation in Romania and the recreational nature of these activities, many health professionals remain sceptical about their efficiency and the advantages of EAT are still subject to debate. Furthermore, in the rehabilitation of tetraparesis few consider emotional recovery and social reintegration just as important as the physical one. This case study explores the efficiency of equine-assisted therapy in a comprehensive approach that considers physical recovery, emotional well-being and social reintegration of a person with tetraparesis after a spinal cord injury (SCI) describing the therapeutic goals, interventions, and outcomes observed over a period of four years with weekly EAT therapy/training sessions. Using the ASIA impairment scale according to International

Standards for Neurological Classification for Spinal Cord Injury, and the psychological assessment following the World Health Organization Quality of Life Scale (WHOQLS) the case study reported a progression from a Grade A to a Grade D on the ASIA scale and from a very poor quality of life to a moderately to good score on the WHOQLS scale. Therefore, our findings propose equine-assisted therapy as a source of significant physical benefits, but also a complex and holistic approach to psychological rehabilitation, emotional well-being, and social reintegration of patients with tetraparesis.