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**Degree, affiliation:** Licenciatura en psicología, Maestría en educación y docencia. Centro de Aprendizaje y Rehabilitación Asistida con Equinos A.C.

**Curriculum vitae:**

Experienced psychologist specializing in equestrian therapies, with over 15 years of dedicated service in the fields of disability rehabilitation and addiction treatment. Proficient in comprehensive patient assessment, personalized treatment planning, and ongoing familial support. Demonstrated ability in pioneering and directing social welfare initiatives, fostering collaborative partnerships with both public and private sector entities.

Orchestrated inclusive events during the 2011 Parapanamerican Games and provided specialized training for athletes with disabilities.

Spearheaded addiction rehabilitation efforts, integrating horse-assisted group therapy into treatment modalities for seven years.

Conducted workshops to train physiotherapists, occupational therapists, and fellow psychologists in equestrian therapy methodologies.

**EDUCATION**

Maestría en Educación y Docencia, Universidad Guadalajara Lamar, 2023

Licenciatura en Psicología, Universidad Guadalajara Lamar, 2011

**Category:** Oral presentation

**Topic:** Treatment methods of equine-assisted psychotherapy: Group training methods

**Authors:**

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**Title:** THE HORSE AS A REINFORCEMENT AGENT FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

**Keyword 1:** Equine-assisted interventions

**Keyword 2:** Autism spectrum disorder

**Keyword 3:** Reinforcement

**Abstract:**

Equine-assisted Services (EAS) have gained popularity in therapeutic settings, especially for addressing the needs of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Despite anecdotal support, the existing literature lacks consistency in methodology. This study aims to empirically clarify concepts related to the efficacy of EAS in ASD interventions.

**Objective:** The objective of this study is to assess the reinforcing function of therapy horses through preference and reinforcement assessments, specifically focusing on their impact on the response rate of children with ASD within equine-assisted therapy.

**Design:** Five children diagnosed with ASD, aged between 5 and 10 years, with limited verbal development, prior experience with horses, and independent riding skills, participated in this study. The study employed a multi-session design, including parent interviews, preference assessments, reinforcement training, and reinforcement testing.

**Results:** The results revealed a hierarchy of preferences for each participant, determined by combining structured interviews with parents and preference assessments. Preliminary results indicated promising outcomes regarding the reinforcing efficacy of therapy horses for children with ASD, with further analyses underway to evaluate response rates and the hierarchy of preferences obtained.

**Conclusion:** This study presents an approach to exploring the potential role of horses as reinforcers in animal-assisted interventions. Initial findings suggest that horses may serve as effective reinforcers for maintaining or shaping desired behaviors in children with ASD. Additionally, parental reports of positive changes in children's behavior during the study raise questions regarding the contingent versus non-contingent participation of horses, warranting further investigation.