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PhD-student, Lund University, department of Health Sciences, part-time. Reg. Occupational Therapist (OT),1986. Currently OT in psychiatric services, Region Dalarna, part-time. Project manager and development manager for nature-based interventions and EAS, Region Dalarna 2012-2022. Doctoral project "Personal recovery, return to work and occupational engagement in people with stress-related mental health problems who are provided a nature-based intervention".

Publication: Pálsdóttir AM., Gudmundsson M., Grahn P. (2020). Equine-Assisted Intervention to Improve Perceived Value of Everyday Occupations and Quality of Life in People with Lifelong Neurological Disorders: A Prospective Controlled Study Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health.

Presentation: Dublin, HETI International Congress, 2018. Equine assisted interventions as support for everyday function and activities. Gudmundsson M, Pálsdóttir AM, Grahn, P., Åström, M.

Certified member of the Swedish Organization of EAS, named OHI.

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Title: A NOVEL NATURE-BASED INTERVENTION REHABILITATION PROGRAM INCLUDING EQUINE-ASSISTED THERAPY (THE NBI-RP) FOR PEOPLE WITH SEVERE STRESS-RELATED MENTAL HEALTH, PERSONAL RECOVERY, AND ACTIVITY LEVEL

Keyword 1: occupational therapy

Keyword 2: equine-assisted therapy

Keyword 3: psychiatry

Abstract:

Objective: Stress-related mental health problems (MHP) are increasing worldwide. It has been shown that people with stress-related MHP may benefit from nature-based interventions (NBI), and equine-assisted therapy (EAT) to support their health, recovery, and activity level of daily life. However, the evidence-base to support this is still weak and there is a knowledge gap concerning health-, recovery- and activity-oriented outcomes for participants in an intervention combining NBI and EAT. The aim of this study was thus to evaluate the possible effects of a novel rehabilitation concept, the NBI-RP, a nature-based intervention including equine-assisted therapy for people with severe stress-related MHP.

Design: Forty participants completed the study, which utilized a one-group pretest-posttest design. The NBI-RP was delivered in groups at a farm-based rehabilitation centre in the south of Sweden. It consisted of 24 weeks in two 12 week-phases running over each. Data were collected using well-tested questionnaires reflecting health, recovery, and activity level.

Results: The analysis showed improvement with medium to large effect sizes over time according to outcomes on health as well as personal recovery and activity level with exception for self-mastery. All outcomes were statistically significant with p-values $\leq .05$.

Conclusions: This innovative rehabilitation program holds promise as a recovery-oriented service that may bolster perceived health, personal recovery, and activity levels among individuals grappling with severe stress-related mental health problems. The NBI-RP could thus be beneficial as a complementary rehabilitation to current psychiatric care services. Results from the study will be presented at the congress.