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Curriculum vitae:

Originally from Ioannina, Greece, Alexandra earned her PhD from the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the Medical School of the University of Ioannina. She has also held academic fellowships in Special Education at both the University of Ioannina and the University of Macedonia in Greece. Her research interest is in the rehabilitation of children with neurological disorders. In addition, she has been running her own business at Ioannina Therapeutic Riding Centre in Greece for the last 15 years. Alexandra has served as a vice president of HETI since June 2021, holds the chair of the Research Committee and is a chief editor in HETI Journal: International Research and Practice.

Category: Oral presentation

Topic: Horse Related Topics: Equine Welfare

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Title: ETHICS AND EQUINE WELFARE IN EQUINE ASSISTED SERVICES

Keyword 1: Ethical Guidelines

Keyword 2: Welfare

Keyword 3: Equine-Assisted Services

Abstract:

Objective: Horse welfare is an increasing interest worldwide, particularly from those in developed countries who now have the knowledge and resources to be able to offer the best management systems and treat their horses with respect, compassion and understanding. The objective of this work is to present an overview of ethical and welfare guidelines in Equine Assisted Services (EAS). It clarifies the key aspects as they relate to the service providers, service users, and equines.

Design: During the Erasmus + project 2019-1-FI01-KA202-060805, international organizations engaged in discussions about service providers and equine welfare ethical guidelines. By engaging in discussions and brainstorming sessions, the method for creating this work incorporated information of the work of HETI ethics and welfare task forces, as well as the IAHAIO task force, which both drawing upon current best practices and evidence-based research in EAS.

Results: It is the ethical responsibility of all service providers to manage the welfare of horses and to be sure that horses are not subject to any form of abuse neglect or distress, either physical or mental/emotional. Service providers must supervise the interaction between horses and clients for the benefit of both and in a manner that upholds the welfare of the horses. Ethical and welfare Guidelines are a base integrated into the entire educational process (and to further education of the Service providers). They include the horse and service provider and are brought to the knowledge of the service user (and family + cooperating professionals).

Conclusion: Horses are part of education and therapy services. While working in these areas involving horses, one can experience improvements in health, education, and general needs. However, prioritizing the health, needs, welfare, training, and education of the horses is also crucial.