Benefits of an experimental program of equestrian therapy for children with ADHD.


Abstract

BACKGROUND:
Equestrian therapy has been shown to be a useful instrument in the sphere of the emotional wellbeing and mental health of different population groups.

AIMS:
To empirically determine the effects of a program of equestrian therapy on quality of life and various psychosocial variables of a group of 14 pupils diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), aged from 7 to 14 years.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES:
A quasi-experimental design, with a pre-test and a post-test, was implemented with an experimental group and a control group. The program consisted of 24 biweekly sessions, therefore lasting some 3 months. The data acquisition instruments used were: the "Behavior Assessment System for Children" (BASC) and an ad-hoc quality of life questionnaire.

OUTCOMES AND RESULTS:
The results deriving from the teachers' responses and the different scales of the BASC showed no significant group differences, but for the experimental group there was an improvement in the indicator corresponding to interpersonal relationships in the quality-of-life questionnaire.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS:
It would seem that it is currently possible to recommend this activity, for this target population, as a sporting activity that provides similar benefits to other physical activities, but which is still far from being able to be recognized as a therapeutic activity.