

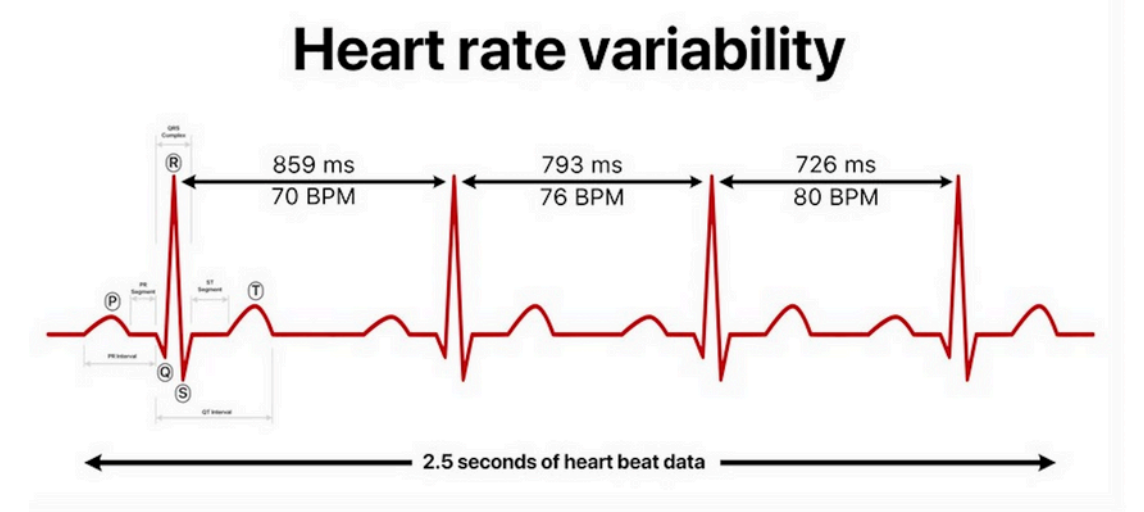
The impact of Equine Facilitated Services on the psychosocial health

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Objective

The scientific literature reports a positive impact of Equine Assisted Mental/Health on heart rate variability, which is one of the indicators of the autonomic nervous system state and adaptability to stress. Czech equine facilitated Therapy Association in cooperation with Czech Technical University in Prague is conducting research focused on development of solutions for monitoring of the physiological functions of horses and humans and on evaluation of the effect of Equine Assisted Services interventions. In this paper, we will demonstrate an example of the impact of Equine Assisted Mental/Health on the heart rate variability of a senior female participant.



Design

A 70-year-old participant underwent a 60-minute Equine Assisted Mental/Health intervention 1-3 times a week (21 sessions per 3 months). Measurements were taken one day before and one day after the intervention. A total of 42 data points were evaluated. A commercially available mobile application system, MyAge TM, was utilized for simple data measurement in the home environment. The data were analyzed using a paired t-test.

Results

A value was obtained indicating a decrease in Functional Age by 6 months at the 99% level of significance. Values for changes in Stress and Regeneration were approximately 5% and statistically significant at the 95% level of significance.

Conclusion

The results suggest an improvement in heart rate variability after the Equine Assisted Mental/Health intervention. We welcome cooperation with other experts and organizations in our future research, in which we will also monitor additional parameters during the intervention to determine the immediate effect of Equine Assisted Mental/Health and mutual interaction between the horse and the human.