

Equine-Assisted Research Support Discussion

The meeting began with introductions from various participants, including Alexandra Stergiou, the vice president of HETI and chief editor of the HETI journal, who hosted the session. The discussion focused on research in equine-assisted services, exploring how HETI can support researchers in this field. Participants shared their backgrounds and interests, ranging from therapeutic riding and trauma work to equine-assisted psychotherapy and learning. The session concluded with Alexandra announcing her presentation on equine-assisted services, followed by an open discussion.

Advancing Equine Research Accessibility

The HETI Research Committee, established in 2021, aims to promote research in equine-assisted services and has set short-term and long-term goals, including connecting with student members and developing an open-access international repository. The committee has been collaborating with HHRF to create an open-source digital repository and has made progress by listing the HETI journal in CrossRef and adding meta tags. The journal, which celebrated its 30th anniversary last year, is now accessible for free, and the committee is seeking to index it in more scientific databases, including Google Scholar and Scopus. They are also in need of additional peer reviewers to ensure the quality and relevance of the journal.

Journal's Progress and Future Plans

The group discussed the journal's progress and future plans. Alexandra shared that they had applied to be included in PubMed and were working to improve the quality of their articles to meet the requirements. They had been rejected the first time but were making improvements based on feedback. Rita suggested organizing workshops to make research more accessible to practitioners who might be intimidated by the process. Alexandra agreed that case studies were important in their field and mentioned they had maintained a category for them in the journal.

Equine Therapy Guidelines and Collaboration

The group discussed the European network of equine-assisted therapy practitioners and their guidelines for case studies, which are being reviewed and considered for submission to HETI. They explored the possibility of organizing subgroups with like-minded professionals to collaborate on case studies, particularly in areas such as autism and learning difficulties. Anita shared insights about autism research in Israel, South Korea, and Japan, highlighting the work done by Professor Suki Park and the Special Olympics. The discussion emphasized the potential benefits of international collaboration and the importance of addressing trauma in children with disabilities.

Equine Research Data Standardization

The meeting focused on discussing research and data collection methods for equine-assisted services, particularly for children with learning difficulties. Participants agreed on the need for standardized outcome measures to facilitate larger-scale research and systematic reviews. Maria suggested creating a data bank where practitioners could contribute their assessment tools and results, which could be used by researchers. The group also discussed the

importance of ethical approval for research projects. Alexandra proposed including outcome measure discussions at the next congress. The conversation ended with an invitation for participants to send their email addresses to Alexandra for further information about the HETI research committee and journal.