

INFLUENCE ON FUNCTIONAL MOBILITY AND MOTIVATION OF HIPPO THERAPY FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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Abstract. The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence on functional mobility and motivation of hippotherapy for people with special needs. Twelve people with disabilities (autism, Down's syndrome and cerebral palsy) were divided in two groups: adults with disabilities (T-1) and children with disabilities (T-2). They participated in 8 times (30 min each) hippotherapy sessions. Functional mobility was measured pre and post hippotherapy by Time Up and Go Test (TUG). The motivation was evaluated for every person during each hippotherapy session. Assessing the change of functional mobility before and after the hippotherapy sessions, it can be assumed that the hippotherapy activities have contributed to an improvement. The motivation results show that there is a statistically significant difference from the third hippotherapy session – the intension to participate in the hippotherapy sessions is increasing.

Keywords: Hippotherapy; horse; disability; autism; Down's syndrome; cerebral palsy.