



For Immediate Release

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Completion of Study on the Effects of Hippotherapy on Balance and Gait in Ambulatory Children with Spastic Cerebral Palsy

Chagrin Falls, Ohio, September 14, 2015- Central Michigan University recently completed a multi-center, randomized control trial assessing the effects of the addition of 12 weekly sessions of hippotherapy compared to the children's usual therapy routines. The project was funded through a grant from the Horses and Humans Research Foundation and was led by Principal investigators Debbie Silkwood-Sherer DHS, PT, HPCS and Nancy H. McGibbons MS, PT, HPCS. McGibbons stated that although "We were disappointed in the numbers that we were striving for, we were not disappointed in the results that, once again, show the benefits of hippotherapy and add to the overall body of knowledge."



Children with cerebral palsy, from the ages of three to six, participated in this study. The team assessed balance, gait, participation and quality of life of all participants before and after intervention. Researchers also assessed whether improvements continued or were maintained by completing follow-up assessments 12 weeks after the hippotherapy sessions were concluded.



A number of children in the control group dropped out resulting in an imbalance in the age and the level of CP involvement of the children receiving hippotherapy vs. the control group. This was a confounding factor for the researchers in analyzing the data. Despite these complications, the researchers found that when analyzing changes within each group, both groups improved in most measures. This was not a surprising outcome since all children were receiving some form of therapy (physical, occupational, and/or speech). However, results indicated

that only the group receiving hippotherapy demonstrated statistically significant improvements on measures of balance, participation, and quality of life.

Final efforts to submit a manuscript for publication are under way. Once published, more details of the study's outcomes will be made available. Once published, more details of the study's outcomes will be made available.



Horses and Humans Research Foundation (HHRF) is the only organization dedicated solely to funding research to support the equine-assisted activities and therapies field. Since its founding Horses and Humans Research Foundation (HHRF) has awarded \$400,000 in professional research efforts led by eight research teams in the United States, Canada and Germany.

HHRF is a non-endowed foundation dependent solely on donations. To make a donation and/or learn more about this and other Horses and Humans Research Foundation projects visit <http://www.HorsesandHumans.org>.



Through investment in rigorous research, Horses and Humans Research Foundation will serve as a catalyst to advance knowledge of horses and their potential to impact the health and wellness of people.

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