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Opinion by discipline: a content analysis of attitudes and perceptions regarding equine training techniques in an online discussion forumE.A. LOFGREN^{*}, E.C. ALLEN, C. BRADY

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There is an increasing amount of research regarding equine training techniques and equipment exploring their physical, psychological, and behavioral impacts on the horse. However, information about attitudes and perceptions of equestrian communities regarding training practices can be elusive. This qualitative study focused on attitudes and perceptions of equestrians regarding training methods and equipment in an online discussion forum. Forum posts were chosen for thematic analysis due to their unobtrusive nature, which allowed for anonymity and candor. Three specific discipline groups from the forum were analysed: Dressage, Hunter/Jumper, and Western. Forum threads were filtered by three topic areas identified in Equitation Science literature as potential sources of compromised welfare in ridden horses: hyperflexion, spurs, and nosebands (N=144). Prevalent themes amongst all three disciplines were welfare concerns within their own discipline, negative feelings towards horse competition judges and governing bodies for “rewarding” unethical practices, and justification for utilizing certain practices or equipment. Specific to discipline, posts about hyperflexion in the Dressage group yielded themes of negativity towards judges, governing bodies, and professional riders. The Hunter/Jumper and Western groups reflected themes of not identifying hyperflexion as a concern in their sport, negative feelings about dressage, while also justifying instances where they have utilized similar practices. The topics of spurs and nosebands yielded themes of negativity towards different disciplines, knowledge deficit concerns, and justification for practices within all three discipline groups. Further implications of this research include continuing inquiry in this area and using these findings for intentional education and communication with equestrian audiences.

Keywords: on-line; equestrian disciplines; ethics; training; welfare**SUBTHEME: ETHICAL AND WELFARE CONSIDERATIONS IN THE EQUINE INDUSTRY**

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The role of heart rate monitoring to assess workload during maintenance interval training in national hunt racehorsesJ. WILLIAMS^{1,*}, K. KENWORTH¹, T. JONES²¹University Centre Hartpury, Hartpury, Gloucestershire, GL19 3BE, UK²Fine Equinity, Cleveland, Durham, TS18 3TS, UK^{*}Corresponding author: jane.williams@hartpury.ac.uk

Quantitative assessment of racehorse fitness levels achieved through heart rate monitoring (HRM), can aid trainers in formulating evidence-based training regimes. Despite this, HRM is not used consistently within racehorse training. This study evaluated how the maintenance workload of racehorses actively engaged in training and racing in the UK, varied across an interval-training regime (6 weeks). Fine Equinity™ HR monitoring systems collected weekly HR data (Mean HR and end HR) for 10 thoroughbred racehorses (age: 9.1±1.9 years; ability Official Rating: 127.2±7.95) during a maintenance interval training session (speed: 9m/s) on a 3 furlong (0.38m) all-weather gallop. Workload levels were determined by the same experienced National Hunt trainer. Training sessions comprise a warm-up (1000m) followed by 3 canter interval runs: 0.38km. Mean HR for each run and horses' HR at the end of each piece of work were recorded. The mean percentage of

HR maximum (%HRmean) and HRend (%HRend) for each horse between canter runs for individual training sessions and across the 6-week period was calculated. Friedman's analyses with Wilcoxon Signed Rank post-hoc tests (Bonferroni adjustment: $P<0.01$) examined if differences in %HRmean or %HRend occurred across the cohort and for individual horses. Racehorse workload demonstrated no significant sequential increases within training sessions ($P>0.05$), despite trainer perception that this did occur. For the majority of runs (70%) horses worked above medium intensity ($>75\%$ HRmax; >173 bpm), exceeding aerobic thresholds and the targeted maintenance workload. Increasing industry understanding of how HRM can be used to monitor fitness within training can prepare horses appropriately for racing.

Keywords: training; horseracing; heart rate; fitness; equine; welfare

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It's all about the sex: preconceived ideas about horse temperament based on human gender and horse sexK. FENNER^{1,*}, G. CASPAR¹, M. HYDE², C. HENSHALL³, N. DHAND¹, F. PROBYN-RAPSEY⁴, K. DASHPER⁵, P. MCGREEVY¹¹University of Sydney, Camperdown, 2006, NSW, Australia²HD Writing and Educational Services, Canberra, 2604, ACT, Australia³Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, NSW, Australia⁴University of Wollongong⁵Leeds Beckett University, Leeds, UK, LS6 3QS^{*}Corresponding author: kate@kandooequine.com.au

An online survey was conducted to explore preconceptions of horse temperaments based on horse sex. The questionnaire required respondents to allocate three hypothetical horses (either a mare, gelding or stallion) to four riders – a man, woman and female and male child. Family members were described as equally capable of riding every horse and each horse was described as suitable for all riders. There were 1,233 survey respondents, 75% of whom were riders with at least eight years of experience. Binomial logistic regression revealed the girl had 2.5 times the odds of being allocated a gelding compared to the boy ($P<0.001$). Respondents were significantly more likely to allocate the stallion to the man and nearly 50% of participants did not allocate a horse to the boy even though they ranked rider sex as least important to their choice ($P<0.001$). When asked to select a positive or negative descriptor from a series of nine paired terms to describe horse temperament, a greater proportion of respondents assigned geldings positive ratings on terms such as calm, trainable, reliable and predictable. Participants were also asked which horses were most suitable for three equestrian disciplines: show-jumping, dressage and trail-riding. The current findings indicate that respondents allocated favourable attributes to geldings and preferred them for equitation. The results suggest that riders engage in the horse-human dyad with strongly biased, preconceived ideas about temperament based at least in part on the sex of the horse. This could have far-reaching implications for training and welfare.

Keywords: horse-human dyad; gender stereotype; bias; temperament

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Selection of suitable personality traits evaluated via linear traits in American Quarter HorsesP. BOSCH¹, U. KÖNIG V. BORSTEL², S. KUHNKE^{2,3,*}¹HFVU Nuertingen-Geislingen University, Nuertingen, Germany²University of Kassel, Kassel, Germany³Deutsche Quarter Horse Association e.V., Aschaffenburg, Germany^{*}Corresponding author: s.kuhnke@arcor.de