

Determination of the Polish Konik horse's usefulness to hippotherapy with the use of behaviour tests

S u m m a r y

Investigations on the usefulness of Polish Konik horses to hippotherapy were conducted on nine mares and one stallion from the preserved stud in Roztocze National Park in Zwierzyniec. The horses were subjected to three training cycles: in July, September and November in 2004. During exercise in September and November each horse was tested with regard to its progress, cleverness and willingness to work. The tests consisted of 12 behavior stereotypes assessed with 0-10 point scale. During the first three tests performed in September, adult horses (5 mares) were estimated considerably better than young horses. While in November, a general increase of the level of marks in both groups of horses was found. Average marks of adult and young horses differed significantly, indicating the differentiation of abilities of the horses examined. The results indicate that Polish Konik horses show predisposition to work with disabled persons. Tests of this kind should be continued also for horses of other breeds.