

Breed and biometric characteristics of horses used in hippotherapy at two therapeutic centers

S u m m a r y

The objective of the study was to examine the breed and biometric structure of horses used in hippotherapy, with regard to the selection of the horse for the patient. The study was conducted in two rehabilitation centers, where qualified instructors were engaged. Data concern 16 horses used in hippotherapy, mainly of breeds assumed to be useful in this field: Haflinger, Hutzul, Polish Konik and Wielkopolski Horses. It was found that these horses did not have to be of a proper and harmonious conformation. In justified cases, it was possible to use younger (4-year-old) or older (20 and 22-year-olds) horses than usually, provided they matched other criteria of the selection to hippotherapy. In 71% of cases, children with the infantile paralysis were rehabilitated. Destination of certain kind of horses to patients with a particular illness indicates that the horses are selected individually. Not only the illness is taken into account, but also the kind of assistance, exercises performed by the patient and individual physical and psychical properties of the horse.