High School Equestrian Coaches Taking the Reins on Resilience of Young Athletes

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**Purpose of Study**
- Understand the coaches’ perceptions of how horses help children
- Understand coaches’ opinions of the costs and benefits of equine competition
- Understand coaches’ management of the risks for children during equine competition

**Methods**
- Qualitative face-to-face phenomenological interviews
- Individually interviewed and audiorecorded
- Open, axial, and selective coding of the completed manuscripts

**Literature Review**
- Horses promote psychological well-being
  - Bond
  - Nonverbal communication
  - Self-confidence
  - Leadership
  - Emotional feeling/mood
  - Expresses personality
  - Mental processing
  - Self-reflection
- Horses promote physical health
  - Decreases blood pressure, stress, cholesterol levels
- Coaches can have an influence on psychological and physical health
- Emotionally support rider
- Ensure horse and rider safety
- Ensure preparation of rider

**Sample**
- Ohio Interscholastic Horsemanship Association (OJHA) Division 2 Coaches
- OJHA is an organization, which promotes continuous growth in programs fostering horsemanship education, sponsors activities to encourage interscholastic participation, and has cooperative adult supervised leadership (advising) for all students in grades 9 through 12 (OJHA, 2013).
- Middle-aged white women
- Volunteers
- Convenience-based

**Results: Benefits**
- "It gives them socialization skills and organizational skills. It humbles them at times. It makes them work together in a group."
- "It is a team event that is not held at their school. The advantages are that they get to participate in a horse activity other than lessons because most of my team does not own their own animals."
- "They have to learn how to handle conflicts. They have to learn how to accept rejection because they are not always going to be placed. They get out there in a group of 20 kids. The judge might not like them that day. They just have to realize that's life."

**Results: Costs**
- "The disadvantages are that they don't get much support from the faculty and staff or other classmates. There is pretty much just OJHA youth at the shows. People don't come and watch it like they do other sports."

**Results: Management of Risk**
- "There has been a lot of preparation before they get to compete on that animal. If they don't have the ability to do certain things, we don't allow them to do that. We let them try new things but not at the risk of a safety issue."
- "Falling off is something that is going to happen to you if you ride a horse, just like if you ride a bicycle."
- "Helmet are smart. That is one thing you can never change. If you have an accident and you don't have a helmet on and you are injured, you are injured. You can't say oh next time I'll just change that."

**Future Research**
- Compare my data with Dr. Laura Sanchez's data on BGSU Equestrian Team
- Interview OJHA riders
  - Understand rider's perception of how horses help them
- Understand rider's opinion of the costs and benefits of equine competition
  - Understanding rider's management of the risks during equine competition
- Interview OJHA parents