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The effect of 14 weeks of gait cycle in autism spectrum disorder

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The term hippotherapy refers to how occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech-language pathology professionals use evidence-based practice and clinical reasoning in the purposeful manipulation of equine movement to engage sensory, neuromotor, and cognitive systems to achieve functional outcomes (AHA, 2016). This paper discusses the effect of 14 weeks of hippotherapy on Gait Cycle (length of steps, speed of steps, number of steps per minute, gait cycle duration) of individuals with autism spectrum disorder. The participants consisted of 24 males between 7-18 years old, diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and randomly placed in experimental and control groups (N=12) for each group. The experimental group participated in 14 weeks of hippotherapy sessions. The control group did not attend in any hippotherapy or any physical activity outside of their ordinary life during the research period. The statistical analysis shows significance in the scores of the Gait Cycle (length of steps, gait cycle duration, number of steps per minute, speed of steps) of the experimental group versus the control group as compared with the time before the exercises ($p=0.027$), ($p=0.001$), ($p=0.0001$), ($p=0.001$). The result has shown 14 sessions of hippotherapy had a positive effect on Gait Cycle of people diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, with being in unstable level and improvement in balance systems and physical status, especially flexibility and strength.

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