

Hannah Urtz

*Whoa There! Calm Your Horses! The Effect of Human Anxiety on Equine*

The purpose of my experiment was to determine the effect of human anxiety on the horses they ride and to better understand the human/horse emotional connection. To conduct my experiment I used an Equine Polar Health Monitor to measure the horse's heart rate. I manually measured the rider's heart rate by recording their steady pulse for 15 seconds, then multiplying by 4 to get their beats per minute. I informed the rider that I was going to "Spook" the horse they were on, and then recorded the same data. I then found and graphed the percent increase of both the horse and rider to show the correlation between the two. I also calculated the correlation coefficient rate of my data, to determine whether or not my results were statistically significant. My hypothesis was not supported because my data showed that there is very little to no correlation between the heart rate of the rider and the rate of the horse out of the select group that I tested. My background research shows that there may be a significant increase in the horse's heart rate corresponding to the rider's increased heart rate, however, my results are not statistically significant enough to support the research for my testing. I am able to conclude that while some horses may be affected by human anxiety, out of the select group that I tested, most horses were not significantly affected by an increased rider heart rate.