

# WHAT ARE THE LIFE STORIES OF EQUINE CLIENTS' RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR ANIMAL CHIROPRACTOR?: AN EXPLORATION INTO THE SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACTS ON ANIMAL CHIROPRACTOR-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP THROUGH NARRATIVE INQUIRY

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## Background

There is no research into the animal chiropractor-client relationship which is an integral part of the treatment process and can influence aftercare adherence and animal welfare.

## Objectives

To explore and shed light on possible influences on the animal chiropractor-client relationship in the equine setting, while also producing narratives to promote thought and reflective practice in musculoskeletal practitioners.

## Study Design

The theoretical underpinnings of this research are grounded in poststructuralism and hermeneutical phenomenology, leading to a narrative inquiry approach. Narrative inquiry allows for the presentation of data in stories which can be understood and experienced by many.

## Methods

Unstructured interviews were carried out with 5 female participants on their experiences with an animal chiropractor and narratives generated as a co-construction between researcher and participant. The researcher transcribed the interviews verbatim, each transcript was member checked. Themes were highlighted and narratives constructed.

## Results

Participants' narratives of their experience with practitioners were presented. The main themes to arise were 'being in tune', knowledge, trust and communication. 'Being in-tune' was seen as more important. Empathy, body language, temperament, and emotion were terms used by participants to define 'being in-tune'.

## Conclusions

Knowledge, trust and communication are all themes present in previous research. 'Being in-tune' was an unexpected outcome and isn't defined in the current literature. 'Being in-tune' was defined in this research by drawing on research into personality, empathy, emotional intelligence, body language, and horse training methods. 'Being in-tune' warrants further investigation to educate practitioners, improve the practitioner-client relationship and horse welfare.

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## Declarations

Ethical declarations: Legal and ethical requirements have been met and informed consent obtained from all participants, this was reviewed by the College of Health Research Ethics Committee (CoHREC) before commencement of the study.

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