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Young horseback riders' voice of their participation rights.

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Abstract

The UN Convention on the Right of the Child became part of Swedish law in 2020. Consequently, every coach in sport must make sure that children's rights are secured. The overall aim with this PhD-project is to analyze conditions for a child rights perspective to be implemented in equestrian sport. In equestrian sport, young people cultivate several skills; they learn to cooperate, take initiatives and be responsible. Abuse and harassment are heard of but seldom spoken out loud, maybe because of fear of losing the opportunity to take part. It seems to be a paradoxical situation – the stable context produces leaders and many young horseback riders have a strong voice, but it also produces youths who are powerless and vulnerable. In this presentation, the purpose is to give voice to young horseback riders and analyze what they themselves feel that they can decide about in their sport. An online survey for riders aged 15-17 years has been carried out. The survey consisted of almost 70 questions and 569 youths responded. In this presentation we focus on some open-ended questions about young riders' views of what they can and want to decide and have a voice about. The preliminary results show that many of the young riders do not feel that they can exercise their participation rights the way they should. The conclusion is that young horseback riders want to be more involved and they want to have a stronger voice in matters that concern them.