Abstract

Persons with severe visual impairment (VI), blindness (B) and deafblindness (DB) have difficulties in mobility and thereby poor leisure time. Activities as horseback riding become difficult especially for persons with DB who communicate with an assistant/instructor via tactile sign language and need to stop and get information/feedback. Ready-Ride, a tactile communications system can improve the mobility of the persons with B and DB by making distance communication possible. It consists of a transmitter with four buttons which communicates via Bluetooth with a receiver connected to four vibrators via cables. The button(s) are used to activate the specific vibrator(s). The messages can consist of simple "right" or "left" or more complex codes for any needed instruction. Ready-Ride has been evaluated in the riding arena by persons with B and DB who consider it as mobile, easy to use and no need for long introduction or installation of any software/hardware. The vibrations are intuitive, easy to detect and distinguish. The system gives the rider information tactually without disturbing other persons or horses nearby. Using Ready-Ride they got more time to ride and the quality was increased since they could communicate while riding and get immediate feedback directly. One of the riders with DB has been using the system during a long period, in average one lesson a week and participated in different competitions with good results. She says that the use of Ready-Ride is crucial for continued riding, "Ready-Ride is a MUST BEE".