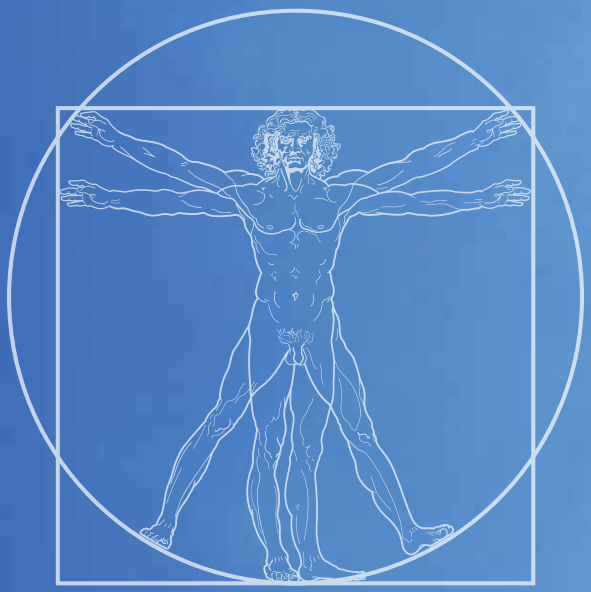

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Italian Network of Psychologists' Associations

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ABSTRACT BOOK

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COMMUNICATIVE ABILITIES IN PATIENTS WITH TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI): THE ROLE OF THEORY OF MIND AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

A10. General issues and basic processes - Language and communication

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Persons with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) frequently report communicative impairments, both at Linguistic and Extralinguistic levels, as well as cognitive difficulties, such as executive functions (EF, attention, working memory, and planning) and theory of mind (ToM) deficits. Despite several studies confirmed these impairments, it is not completely clear the relation among such abilities. Aim of the present study is to investigate the relationship between EF and TOM and pragmatic deficits in chronic patients with TBI. Thirty TBI patients and twenty-four healthy controls performed Linguistic and Extralinguistic tasks of the Assessment Battery of Communication (ABaCo). The tasks investigate the comprehension and production of direct and indirect communicative acts, deceits and ironies. In addition, participants performed a neuropsychological assessment investigating ToM and EF. Results show that patients performed worse than controls in pragmatic tasks, neuropsychological and ToM tests. We also observed a trend of difficulty in the comprehension and production of standard communicative acts, deceits and ironies. A regression analysis reveals that EF and ToM partially explain patients' difficulties, but they are not sufficient to completely explain TBI's communicative deficits. The identification of the role played by cognitive functions to sustain communicative deficits is crucial to design efficacious rehabilitative treatments.