

## **Causal attribution and physiological, emotional and cognitive state lexicon in mental retardation.**

*Marianna Alesi<sup>1</sup>, Annamaria Pepi*

Subjects with mental retardation, who have experienced repeated failures, may develop an attribution profile characterised by a bias towards primarily external causes. Consideration of internal causes requires the involvement of higher metacognitive and metalinguistic levels. Consequently, attribution to effort requires an awareness of one's own internal states. The aim of our study is to investigate the relationship between the attribution style and the knowledge of internal states words (physiological, emotional and cognitive) in subjects with mental retardation. The group consisting of 14 subjects was given an Attribution Test (Pepi and Alesi, 2001) and a Comprehension and Production Internal States Test (Alesi and Pepi, 2004). The results show a significant relationship between attribution style and knowledge of internal states words.

In particular, subjects with mental retardation tend to attribute mainly performance to external help and to present low internal states lexicon. The results of this study provide support for the complex and multidimensional picture of causal attribution in subjects with mental retardation which has emerged from recent research.

*<sup>1</sup>Dipartimento di Psicologia, Università degli Studi di Palermo, v.le delle Scienze Edificio 15 – 90128 Palermo – Fax 091-7028430*

E-mail: [marianna.alesi@unipa.it](mailto:marianna.alesi@unipa.it) oppure [ape@unipa.it](mailto:ape@unipa.it)