

# Newsletter di Psicologia Positiva

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A cura della Società Italiana di Psicologia Positiva

Welcome to the 5th issue of the Positive Psychology Newsletter edited by the Italian Society of Positive Psychology. This is a special issue addressed to its members as well as those who get to know about this topic for the first time. It consists in a brief presentation of the society and in the abstracts its members have published in 2006. Criteria for accepting members' abstracts were: a) publication in national or international journals in 2006; b) presentation at congresses in 2006. We voluntarily excluded books and book chapters. Enjoy reading! ☺

## The Italian Society of Posity Psychology

Over the last decade, social and medical sciences have paid growing attention to wellbeing and quality of life. Initially, these topics were investigated through objective indicators such as income, physical health, housing conditions, and social roles. However, a great number of studies has shown that objective indicators do not provide adequate assessment of individuals' wellbeing and satisfaction, nor of the development level of a nation (Goldwurm, Baruffi, & Colombo, 2004). Quality of life and wellbeing are indeed relativistic concepts: Each individual has his/her own personal interpretation on the basis of his/her physical conditions, social role, psychological characteristics, and interaction style with the environment.

Therefore, it is crucial to identify subjective indicators of wellbeing: Individuals appraise personal health, degree of satisfaction in the social, working and personal domains, achievements and future objectives on the basis of parameters that can widely differ from the objective conditions they live in.

In psychology, the study of subjective wellbeing has given rise to the wide-spread and multifaceted movement of Positive Psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), whose activities have originated from two basic perspectives. The hedonic perspective includes studies that mainly analyze pleasure, considered as purely individual wellbeing, related to positive sensations and emotions. The eudaimonic perspective focuses on the analysis of factors that favor the development and fulfilment of individual potentials and authentic human nature. It derives from Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia, which takes into account what is useful to the individual, what enriches personality. Eudaimonia comprises individual satisfaction as well as development towards integration with the surrounding world. The term implies an interaction process and mutual influence between individual and collective wellbeing, so that individual happiness takes place in the social space (Delle Fave, 2005).

Positive Psychology has offered highly innovative theoretical and applied contributions in all psychological areas, including mental health, development, and work. It emphasizes the crucial role of individuals' resources and

potentials, which have been mostly neglected by previous research focusing on deficits and pathology. This represents an authentic reversal in perspective: Interventions privilege the mobilization of personal abilities and resources, rather than the reduction or compensation of limitations.

In Italy, scholars' and professionals' interest in Positive Psychology has led to the foundation of the Italian Society of Positive Psychology in December 2004. The idea came after the Second European Congress in Positive Psychology held in Verbania, Italy, in July 2004, which favored the encounter of those researchers who have worked on positive psychology topics for years (Delle Fave, 2006). Its 18 founding members, coming from the most varied cultural backgrounds, felt the need to create a space for exchange and dialogue in Italy which could promote the circulation of the information, and the identification of new constructs and intervention strategies.

## Aims of the Society

The Italian Society of Positive Psychology (SIPP) is a non-profit society. Among its activities:

- 1) it promotes theory and practice in Positive Psychology.
- 2) it favors and promotes research in Positive Psychology areas, such as:
  - identification of human potential and resources
  - bio-psycho-social aspects of cognition, emotions and positive experiences
  - subjective wellbeing
  - self-esteem, creativity, and spirituality
  - explanatory styles
  - social relationships
  - coping abilities
  - wellbeing in specific populations.
- 3) it fosters the dissemination and teaching of theoretical and applied advancements in the field.
- 4) it provides professionals with training programs and courses.
- 5) it carries out professional positive psychology intervention for promoting quality of life, psychological wellbeing and health in the personal, working, family and social spheres.

6) it promotes, establishes and encourages scientific relations with scholars or national and international associations pursuing the same goals.

In pursuing these goals, among other things, SIPP organizes and takes part in national and international congresses, conferences, seminars, courses, and meetings, and it may affiliate with similar national and international associations. In addition, it promotes the publication of paper and electronic articles, journals, and books.

### Activities of the Society

The activities of the Italian Society of Positive Psychology have thus far been consistent with its aims and can be divided into the following actions.

*Promotion of positive psychology symposia at national and international congresses.*

Ex. XIII National AIAMC Congress / XI Latini Dies Congress (Milano, 5-8 May 2005); International CIANS Conference (Bratislava, 29 June – 2 July 2005); Milano, 16-17 June 2006).

*Creation and update of a positive psychology website*

The site [www.psicologiapositiva.it](http://www.psicologiapositiva.it) is the Society's official site, but it is also an authoritative source of information on positive psychology at the national and international levels. It gives information in Italian and English on journals, books, congresses, links, training and so forth.

*Publication of the Positive Psychology Newsletter*

The Positive Psychology Newsletter is sent 4 times a year to its members: It offers up to date news, reviews and articles on the positive psychology world.

*Participation in the "Positive Wednesdays"*

"Positive Wednesdays" are bimonthly 2-h meetings in which positive psychology topics are presented and discussed, with the aim of updating members on the state of the art in positive psychology research.

### Subscription

To become Member of SIPP, please send your application including:

- Subscription form (available online at: [www.psicologiapositiva.it](http://www.psicologiapositiva.it))
- CV

To:

Società Italiana di Psicologia Positiva  
c/o IMIPSI - Scuola Asipse  
Via Settembrini, 2  
20124 Milano  
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Your application will be considered at the following meeting of the Management board. You will receive notification after deliberation, and subscription will be completed by payment of subscription fees.

Subscription fee for 2007 amounts to 50 euros. Additional information about the Society, and all other correspondence, should be directed to:

E-mail: [psicologiapositiva@tiscali.it](mailto:psicologiapositiva@tiscali.it)

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### Società Italiana di Psicologia Positiva Italian Society of Positive Psychology

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### Executive Committee

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#### Journal (Special Issues)

- Passaggi – Rivista Italiana di Scienze Transculturali
- Ricerche di Psicologia
- Il Pendolo
- Journal of Positive Psychology
- Journal of Happiness Studies

### WELLBEING AND CULTURE

**Delle Fave, A. e Massimini, F.**

**Esperienza ottimale e potenzialità di sviluppo: evidenze transculturali (presentazione orale).**

**VII Congresso Nazionale di Psicologia della Salute "Promuovere Benessere con Persone, Gruppi, Comunità". Book of abstracts, p. 58. Cesena, 28-30 settembre.**

Numerosi studi hanno evidenziato il ruolo attivo dell'individuo nel replicare differenzialmente le informazioni culturali, in termini di interessi ed opportunità d'azione disponibili nel quotidiano. In questo processo, definito selezione psicologica gioca un ruolo chiave l'esperienza ottimale. Questo studio transculturale analizza le caratteristiche di tale esperienza e le attività associate, e ne delinea le potenzialità per lo sviluppo individuale e sociale.

I dati sono stati raccolti tramite *Flow Questionnaire* tra 1106 partecipanti in diverse culture: India, Indonesia, Iran, Thailandia, Filippine, Costa D'Avorio, Marocco, Somalia, Navajo, Rom, Italia. I partecipanti erano invitati ad identificare l'esperienza ottimale nella propria vita e ad indicarne le attività associate. Dopo aver selezionato tra queste l'attività favorente l'esperienza ottimale più intensa, ne descrivevano i correlati psicologici su scale Likert 0-8.

L'esperienza ottimale è stata identificata da 953 partecipanti (86.2%). Le attività associate all'esperienza più intensa appartengono in prevalenza all'ambito produttivo (lavoro e studio, 41%) e al tempo

libero strutturato (sport e attività artistiche, 36,5%). Le dimensioni cognitive dell'esperienza ottimale (elevata concentrazione, controllo della situazione, feedback chiari dall'attività) sono risultate stabili attraverso culture ed attività. Differenze significative in funzione delle attività sono invece emerse nei valori delle variabili motivazionali ed affettive. In particolare, i livelli di piacevolezza e desiderabilità dell'attività mostravano fluttuazioni opposte rispetto alla percezione di obiettivi a lungo termine.

Questi risultati indicano che gli individui tendono a coltivare preferenzialmente attività complesse e significative. Ciò dovrebbe essere tenuto in considerazione nelle politiche di intervento in ambito lavorativo, educativo e ricreativo. L'efficacia di una società nell'offrire opportunità d'azione impegnative e gratificanti, ma anche rilevanti per lo sviluppo dell'individuo e della collettività può rappresentare un indice di complessità della cultura, laddove per sviluppo si intenda non l'evoluzione finalistica, ma l'integrazione interna di un sistema e la sua interazione armonica con l'ambiente.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. e Massimini, F. (1985).

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Delle Fave, A. (2006). Selezione psicologica ed esperienze ottimali: applicazioni ed implicazioni transculturali. *Passaggi*, 11, 35-54.

Massimini F., Csikszentmihalyi M. e Delle Fave, A. (1988). Flow and Biocultural Evolution. In M. Csikszentmihalyi e I. Csikszentmihalyi (a cura di), *Optimal experience – Psychological studies of flow in consciousness* (pp. 60-81). New York: Cambridge University Press.

### HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

**Antonelli, E.**

**La felicità è un valore? Uno studio con anziani, adulti e giovani (poster).**

**1° Convegno Nazionale di Psicologia dell'Invecchiamento. Book of abstracts, p. 19. Padova, 14 -15 ottobre.**

Questo studio si è posto l'obiettivo principale di appurare se la felicità e la soddisfazione per la propria vita componenti, emotiva l'una e cognitiva l'altra, del benessere soggettivo, siano dei valori per soggetti italiani di diverse età. A 180 individui di età compresa tra i 20 e i 95 anni è stato somministrato il Questionario dei Valori (QV; Antonelli et al., 2001), ai cui 15 valori sono stati aggiunti i concetti "Felicità" ed "Essere soddisfatto/a della propria vita". I soggetti dovevano valutare l'importanza di ogni valore in quanto principio-guida della propria vita. I risultati

principali hanno evidenziato che il benessere personale costituisce un valore di grande rilievo per i soggetti esaminati, trasversale alle fasce d'età esaminate. In particolare, gli anziani hanno valutato la felicità e la soddisfazione per la propria vita come importanti principi-guida della loro esistenza, al pari dei giovani e degli adulti. La discussione concerne i limiti dello studio e i suoi possibili risvolti applicativi.

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Antonelli, E., Vidi, M., Rubini, V., e Saviane, S. (2001). Costruzione e validazione di un questionario per la rilevazione dei valori. *TPM. Testing, Psicometria, Metodologia*, 8, 79-102.

Diener, E. e Seligman, E.P. (2004). Beyond money: Toward an economy of well-being. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 5, 1-31.

**Bassi, M. e Preziosa, A.**

**Twins' similarities and differences: The daily experience of monozygotic and dizygotic couples (presentazione orale).**

**3<sup>rd</sup> European Conference on Positive Psychology. Book of abstracts, p. 59. Braga, Portugal, 3-6 luglio.**

Psychological research on twin couples has primarily focused on genetic and socio-cultural components in determining behavioral similarities and differences. Studies mostly deal with the analysis of personality traits of twins reared apart or together. Little attention has been paid to the experience of "being twins", considered as an elective state of sharing a close relationship that could affect personal growth and well-being. We thus focused on the subjective evaluation of quality of experience in twins' daily life contexts, and on their opportunities for retrieving optimal experience – characterized by a perceived balance between high challenges and high personal skills, engagement, and intrinsic reward. Analyzing the quality of experience can shed light on similarities and differences in developmental tasks, identity building, and psychological selection, that is the long-term preferential investment in self-selected interests and activities.

We investigated time budget and associated quality of experience of twin couples reared and living together. In particular, we explored their individual evaluation of shared situations and activities, in order to highlight similarities and differences in current daily life as well as in the pattern of experience fluctuation.

The sample comprised 3 twin couples (aged between 22 and 23): a female monozygotic couple, a male monozygotic couple, and a

female dizygotic couple. They were administered experience sampling method (ESM) longitudinally through repeated one-week sessions for one year. They provided on-line samplings of daily events and experience, which were collected at the reception of an acoustic signal sent at random intervals 6-8 times a day. Synchronized assessment was performed so as to gather information on how each member of the couple experienced the same situations when they were together at signal reception. Data were analyzed through the experience fluctuation model, in which quality of experience is evaluated according to the relationship between perceived challenges and personal skills.

Results showed differences between mono- and dizygotic couples in terms of daily time budget. Monozygotic twins shared a wide range of activities, whereas the dizygotic couple reported a much more individualized schedule. As concerns the quality of experience, the global fluctuation pattern of the participants was consistent with data gathered among other samples. In particular, optimal experience was detected in situations where both perceived challenges and skills scored above the average. However, within couples each individual presented a unique experiential profile, which resulted complementary to the profile of the twin brother or sister.

The longitudinal analysis of twins' daily life allowed us to shed light on the unfolding of their psychological selection. Similarities and differences emerged between and within twin couples. Couples raised together undertake a common growth process, in which each member has to achieve his/her personal differentiation. This process therefore contributes to shape each member's development as an individual, as well as the development of the other member of the couple.

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Stewart, E. (2000). Towards the social analysis of twinship. *British Journal of Sociology*, 51, 719-737.

**Caprara, G.V. e Steca, P.**

**The contribution of self-regulatory efficacy beliefs in managing affect and family relationships to positive thinking and hedonic balance.**

*Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 25, 601-625.

In line with prior work, the present study aimed at examining a conceptual model that assigns a crucial role to affective and family interpersonal self-regulatory efficacy beliefs in influencing the cognitive and affective components of subjective well-being, namely, positive thinking and hedonic balance. Positive thinking is posited as the latent dimension underlying life satisfaction, self-esteem, and optimism. In contrast, hedonic balance is posited as the difference between positive affect and negative affect, as they are experienced in a variety of daily life situations. The present study was conducted on 347 Italian married males and females, and its findings corroborated the paths of posited relations linking the variables of interest. In particular, both one's perceived capacities to manage negative and positive affect and to manage relationships with the spouse and children accounted for a considerable portion of the variance in both subjective well-being components.

Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 1-26.

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Caprara, G.V. e Steca, P. (2006). Affective and interpersonal self-regulatory efficacy beliefs as determinants of subjective well-being. In A. Delle Fave (a cura di), *Dimensions of well-being. Research and intervention* (pp.120-142). Milano: Franco Angeli.

**Caprara, G.V., Steca, P., Gerbino, M., Paciello, M., e Vecchio, G.**

**Looking for adolescents' well-being: self-efficacy beliefs as determinants of positive thinking and happiness.**

*Epidemiologia e Psichiatria Sociale*, 15, 30-43.

Aims - The present study is part of a longitudinal project aimed at identifying the personal characteristics and the developmental pathways conducive to successful adaptation from childhood to adulthood. The study examined the concurrent and longitudinal impact of self-efficacy beliefs on subjective well-being in adolescence, namely positive thinking and happiness. Positive thinking has been operationalized as the latent dimension underlying life satisfaction, self-esteem and optimism. Happiness has been operationalized as the difference between positive and negative affects, as they are experienced in a variety of daily situations.

Methods - In a group of 664 Italian adolescents, a structural model positing adolescents' emotional and interpersonal self-efficacy beliefs as proximal and distal determinants of positive thinking and happiness has been tested. Results - Findings attest to the impact of affective and interpersonal-social self-efficacy beliefs on positive thinking and happiness both concurrently and longitudinally. Conclusions - Adolescents' self-efficacy beliefs to manage positive and negative emotions and interpersonal relationships contribute to promote positive expectations about the future, to maintain a high self-concept, to perceive a sense of satisfaction for the life and to experience more positive emotions

- Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 1-26.
- Caprara, G.V. (2002). Personality Psychology: Filling the gap between basic processes and molar functioning. In C. von Hofsten e L. Bakman (a cura di), *Psychology at the Turn of the Millennium: Volume 2. Social, Developmental and Clinical Perspectives* (pp. 201-224). Brighton, UK: Psychology Press.
- Caprara, G.V. e Steca, P. (2006). Affective and interpersonal self-regulatory efficacy beliefs as determinants of subjective well-being. In A. Delle Fave (a cura di), *Dimensions of well-being. Research and intervention* (pp.120-142). Milano: Franco Angeli.

#### **Gheno, S. e D'Angelo, G.**

**Il self empowerment e lo sviluppo di resilienza in minori vittima di esperienze sfavorevoli (presentazione orale).**  
**6° Convegno Nazionale "Psicologia per la politica e l'empowerment individuale e sociale. Dalla teoria alla pratica". Book of abstracts, pp. 191-193. Lecce, 7-9 settembre.**

Introduzione. Con il termine 'maltrattamento infantile' (child abuse or maltreatment) si intendono secondo l'OMS "tutte le forme di cattiva cura fisica e affettiva, di abusi sessuali, di trascuratezza o di trattamento trascurante, di sfruttamento commerciale o altre, che comportano un pregiudizio reale o potenziale per la salute del bambino, la sua sopravvivenza, il suo sviluppo o la sua dignità nel contesto di una relazione di responsabilità, di fiducia o di potere". In questo contesto Felitti (2001) introduce la nozione di Esperienze Sfavorevoli Infantili (ESI) per indicare quell'insieme di situazioni vissute nell'infanzia che si possono definire come 'incidenti di percorso' negativi più o meno cronici rispetto all'ideale percorso evolutivo sia sul piano personale che relazionale e che, in linea con il più moderno sviluppo delle conoscenze sul complesso delle situazioni di cattiva cura nei confronti

dei bambini e sulla patogenesi delle conseguenze dannose ad esse correlate, producono esiti patologici.

Risulta così di grande attualità il concetto di 'resilienza' intesa in generale come capacità del soggetto di mantenere un discreto livello di adattamento anche in condizioni di vita particolarmente sfavorevoli (Cyrulnik & Malaguti, 2005). In particolare già Rutter (1987) notava come "certi bambini arrivavano a funzionare bene anche nelle situazioni più terribili. Si è realizzato che le risposte dei bambini a queste situazioni sono estremamente differenti: certi bambini crollano e vanno molto male; altri riescono a sopravvivere; e altri sembrano andata bene e diventano forse più forti dopo avere attraversato tali esperienze". Successivamente a queste prime osservazioni si è sviluppato un filone definibile come 'educazione alla resilienza' (Malaguti, 2003; Labrozzi, 2004) vista come risorsa per prevenire il disagio psichico derivante da esperienze traumatiche.

Obiettivi. Il presente contributo si propone di sviluppare un modello di intervento finalizzato allo sviluppo di resilienza in soggetti vittime di ESI. L'impianto metodologico di partenza è costituito dal modello del self empowerment (Gheno, 2005), inteso come processo di sviluppo del sentimento di potere personale, e dal modello della 'casita' della resilienza (Malaguti, 2003), che ripercorre le tappe evolutive della resilienza nella persona.

Metodologia. Sono stati svolti una serie di laboratori con un gruppo di educatori e formatori operanti nell'ambito di minori vittime di maltrattamento. Nei laboratori, a partire da una condivisione del concetto di resilienza come strumento di promozione del benessere in minori vittime di ESI, veniva sviluppata una progettualità circa strumenti psicoeducativi di intervento per l'educazione alla resilienza. I laboratori prendevano l'avvio da una consegna ai gruppi, che riguardava il compito da svolgere (elaborazione di sessioni formative, costruzione di strumenti di valutazione/osservazione, costruzione di strumenti didattici), si procedeva quindi ad un lavoro in sottogruppi, seguito da una discussione in plenaria animata da due conduttori, un clinico esperto di maltrattamento ed uno psicologo esperto di formazione ed educazione.

Cyrulnik, B., Malaguti, E. (2005). *Costruire resilienza. La riorganizzazione positiva della vita e la creazione di legami significativi*. Trento: Erikson Editore.

Gheno, S. (2005). *L'uso della forza. Il self empowerment nel lavoro psicosociale e comunitario*. Milano: McGraw-Hill.

Malaguti, E. (2003). E' possibile educare alla resilienza? *Animazione Sociale*, 11, 65-74.

#### **Steca, P., Anconetti, A., e Parisi, I.**

**Life goals and personal values in the promotion of individual well-being (presentazione orale).**

**3<sup>rd</sup> European Conference on Positive Psychology. Book of abstracts, p. 84. Braga, Portugal, 3-6 luglio.**

In the study of optimal psychosocial functioning a special attention has been posited to the factors that mostly promote and guarantee individual well-being. Several theoretical approaches and empirical studies attested to the central role of life goals in promoting individual well-being: having and pursuing valued personal goals sustain individuals' engagement in gratifying activities that gives substantial meaning to their life (Brunstein, 1993; Emmons, 2003). However the role of the typology of goals on individual well-being is less known, and very scarce is the knowledge and on the concerted influence of personal goal and personal values on people's well-being.

General aim of the present study was to examine how different types of goals and personal values are associated to three main indicators of individual well-being: life satisfaction, self-esteem and optimism. Specific aims of the study were:

- to identify types of people pursuing qualitatively different goals and pursuing diverse personal values. In evaluating values we referred to Schwartz's (1992) model that identifies ten universal basic values: Power, Achievement, Hedonism, Stimulation, Self-direction, Universalism, Benevolence, Tradition, Conformity, and Security.
- to explore differences in individual well-being related to the different goals they pursue and the values system they adopt.

Two groups of subjects were involved. 220 Italian young adults composed the first group. Self-report questionnaires were used to measure life satisfaction, self-esteem and optimism, whereas open-ended questions were employed to identify most valued life goals. We also gave a list of the ten values identified by Schwartz and asked participants to put them in order according to the priority in their life. 500 Italian adults, spanning in age from young to late adulthood, composed the second group. We exclusively used self-report questionnaires to assess well-being, personal goals and values of the participants. On both data sets we applied statistical techniques of clustering to the end of identifying specific typologies of people on the basis of their life goals and values systems. We then analyze types's composition in terms of gender and age, and compare them to explore differences in life satisfaction, self-esteem and optimism.

Results showed that the combination of various types of goals, most related to personal relationships, job career, or self-enhancement, with Schwartz's basic personal values give rise to specific types of people.

Gender and age differences also emerged: females and aged people are more oriented to interpersonal relationships and to self-transcendence values. People evaluating more personal goals aimed to bettering their interpersonal relationships were more satisfied with their life than people pursuing other types of goals.

The combination of personal goals and values clearly differentiate people: pursuing certain goals and adopting certain values strongly influence the person one is. Furthermore, not every goals or values may promote personal well-being; goals aimed to better people interpersonal life seems to be more powerful than other goals.

Brunstein, J.C. (1993). Personal goals and subjective well-being: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 65, 1061-1070.

Emmons, R.A. (2003). Personal goals, life meaning, and virtue: willsprings of a positive life. In L.M. Keyes e J. Haidt (a cura di), *Flourishing: a positive psychology and the life well-lived* (pp. 105-128). Washington DC: American Psychological Association.

Schwartz, S. H. (1992). Universals in the content and structure of values: Theoretical advances and empirical tests in 20 countries. In M. Zanna (a cura di), *Advances in experimental social psychology*, Vol. 25 (pp. 1-65). New York: Academic Press.

**Steca, P., Caprara, G.V., e Tramontano, C.**  
**Positive thinking as a core component of subjective well-being: Developmental pathways and correlates from adolescence to early adulthood (presentazione orale).**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> European Conference on Positive Psychology.** Book of abstracts, p. 29. Braga, Portugal, 3-6 luglio.

In the last decades a large theoretical and empirical effort has been devoted to subjective well-being (SWB), leading to distinguish two main components: a cognitive component, corresponding to the individual's evaluation of their life satisfaction, and an affective component, corresponding to the predominance of positive affect over negative affect (Diener, 1994, 2000). Recently, Caprara and colleagues have suggested that self-esteem and optimism should be added to life satisfaction in contributing to the cognitive component of SWB (Caprara & Steca, 2005, under submission). Various studies have shown strong relations among life satisfaction, self-esteem and optimism, and similar patterns of relations between them and aspects of individual well-ness (Diener & Diener, 1995; Lucas, Diener, & Suh, 1996; Scheier, Matthews, Owens, Magovern, & Carver, 1990; Schimmack & Diener, 2003). Thus life satisfaction, self-

esteem and optimism probably share common evaluative processes which turn into a general positive outlook towards life, oneself and the future; empirical findings have attested to a common latent dimension, underlying life satisfaction, self-esteem and optimism, across ages and gender (Caprara & Steca, under submission).

General aim of the present study is to corroborate the validity of positive thinking on a large group of individuals, followed longitudinally in the transition from adolescence to early adulthood. Specific aims were:

- to verify that a common latent dimension lies at the core of life satisfaction, self-esteem, and optimism;
- to analyze the developmental trends of positive thinking;
- to explore the associations of positive thinking with personal adjustment across gender and over time.

The participants were 462 adolescents (202 male and 260 female), evaluated three times along a period of six years, with a mean age of 17.28 at Time 1. Self-report questionnaires were used to measure the variables of interest. Structural equation modeling has been used to test that a common latent dimension underlies life satisfaction, self-esteem, and optimism. The developmental trends of positive thinking have been analyzed by the use of a mixture modelling statistical approach, leading to the identification of distinct groups of subjects following different developmental trajectories, namely, with distinct levels and patterns of change in positive thinking across the time points. Finally, we examined the extent to which each developmental trajectory was associated with different levels of various maladjustment and well-adjustment indicators during adolescence and early adulthood.

Results confirmed the validity of the positive thinking construct, as a latent factor made up by life satisfaction, self-esteem and optimism. Developmental trajectories analyses led to the identification of different patterns characterized by a diverse trend of positive thinking along time and specific associations with internalizing and externalizing problems, physical health, as well as with positive outcomes as successful at school and positive relations with others.

Subjective well-being can be well conceptualized as a broad construct regarding three main evaluations, relative to the self, the own life and the future. People characterized by different levels and trends of positive thinking along time present differential psychosocial adjustment.

Diener, E. (2000). Subjective well-being: the science of happiness, and a proposal for a national index. *American Psychologist*, 55, 34-43.

Caprara, G.V. e Steca, P. (2006). Affective

and interpersonal self-regulatory efficacy beliefs as determinants of subjective well-being. In A. Delle Fave (a cura di), *Dimensions of well-being. Research and intervention* (pp. 120-142). Milano: Franco Angeli.

Lucas, R.E., Diener, E., e Suh, E.M. (1996). Discriminant validity of well-being measures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71, 616-628.

**Steca, P., Manzi, C., Pozzi, R., Parisi, I., e Anconetti, A.**

**Differenze di genere nel benessere individuale: l'influenza dei concetti di sé (presentazione orale).**

**VII Congresso Nazionale di Psicologia della Salute "Promuovere Benessere con Persone, Gruppi, Comunità".** Book of abstracts, pp. 382-383. Cesena, 28-30 settembre.

Introduzione:

La letteratura sul benessere individuale evidenzia differenze di genere significative a favore degli uomini lungo tutto l'arco di vita (es. Caprara, Caprara, e Steca, 2003). Alcune spiegazioni di tali differenze fanno appello alle diversità dei ruoli sociali di uomini e donne e, in particolare, al conflitto tra ruoli che la donna vive in epoca recente, in seguito all'ingresso nel mondo lavorativo e alle maggiori possibilità di carriera. Studi recenti mostrano come alle donne siano richieste caratteristiche ed atteggiamenti tradizionali del ruolo sessuale maschile, tanto più quanto la professione svolta presenta elevato individualismo e competizione (Prentice e Carranza, 2002). Tale conflitto di ruoli ha verosimilmente un suo parallelo in una conflittualità più profonda, relativa al concetto che la persona ha di sé, e a quello che vorrebbe o ritiene di dover essere. Lo studio dei concetti di sé ha evidenziato negli uomini una tendenza a sviluppare un *self-construal* (s.c.) di tipo "indipendente", nel quale l'individuo è visto come unico e indipendente dagli altri e nelle donne un *self-construal* di tipo "relazionale-interdipendente", nel quale la persona è definita principalmente dalle sue relazioni interpersonali (Cross, Gore, e Morris 2003). Conflitti e discrepanze significative tra concezioni di sé hanno effetti deleteri su vari aspetti del benessere individuale (Pavot, Fujita, e Diener, 1997).

Obiettivi:

Obiettivi della ricerca sono quelli di:

- indagare i concetti di sé, in termini di s.c. "indipendente" o "relazionale-interdipendente", di uomini e donne che svolgono professioni differenti;
- verificare la presenza di una maggiore coesistenza di aspetti tipici del s.c. "indipendente" e "relazionale-interdipendente" nelle donne che svolgono professioni "tradizionalmente maschili";
- verificare la presenza di una maggiore

conflittualità tra aspetti del sé posseduti, ascritti o desiderati nelle donne rispetto agli uomini e, in particolare, in coloro che svolgono professioni “tradizionalmente maschili”;

-esaminare come tale conflittualità si leghi ad importanti aspetti del benessere soggettivo.

Metodi:

Hanno partecipato alla ricerca 100 uomini e 100 donne di età compresa tra 25 e 55 anni. Strumenti autovalutativi derivati dalla *Relational-Interdependent Self-Conceptual Scale* (Cross et al., 2003) e dal *Twenty Statements Test* (Kuhn e McPartland, 1954) sono stati impiegati per valutare gli aspetti del concetto di sé. Liste di aggettivi e questionari noti in letteratura sono stati usati per la valutazione delle caratteristiche dei ruoli sessuali e del benessere soggettivo.

Risultati e conclusioni:

I risultati, derivati da analisi statistiche multi-livello, hanno evidenziato differenze tra uomini e donne che ricalcano diversità tradizionali tra i due sessi, ma che danno conferma di una maggiore assimilazione della donna alla visione di sé in termini “più indipendenti”. Come ipotizzato, una maggiore conflittualità tra aspetti del sé si associa a un minore livello di benessere.

Caprara, G.V., Caprara, M. e Steca, P. (2003). Personality's correlates of adult development and aging. *European Psychologist*, 8, 131-147.

Cross, S.E., Gore, J.S., e Morris, M.L. (2003). The relational-interdependent self-construal, self-concept consistency, and well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85, 933-944.

Pavot, W., Fujita, F. e Diener, E. (1997). The relation between self-aspect congruence, personality and subjective well-being. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 22, 183-191.

## WORK

Caprara, G.V., Barbaranelli, C., Steca, P. e Malone, P.  
**Teachers' efficacy beliefs as determinants of job satisfaction and students' achievement.**  
*Journal of School Psychology*, 44, 473-490.

Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs were examined as determinants of their job satisfaction and students' academic achievement. Over 2,000 teachers in 75 Italian junior high schools were administered self-report questionnaires to assess self-efficacy beliefs and their job satisfaction. Students' average final grades at the end of junior high school were collected in two subsequent scholastic years. Structural equation modeling analyses corroborated a conceptual model in which teachers' personal efficacy beliefs affected their job satisfaction and students' academic achievement, controlling for previous levels of achievement.

Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 1-26.

Caprara, G.V., Barbaranelli, C., Borgogni, L., e Steca, P. (2003). Efficacy beliefs as determinants of teachers' job satisfaction. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 95, 821-832.

Woolfolk Hoy, A. e Davis, H.A. (2006). Teacher self-efficacy and its influence on the achievement of adolescents. In F. Pajares e T. Urdan (a cura di), *Self-efficacy of adolescents* (pp. 117-137). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

Gheno, S.

**Potere personale e benessere lavorativo (presentazione orale).**

*VII Congresso Nazionale di Psicologia della Salute “Promuovere Benessere con Persone, Gruppi, Comunità”*. Book of abstracts, pp. 355-356. Cesena, 28-30 settembre.

Introduzione. Il presente contributo si riferisce a quella vasta area dello sviluppo organizzativo rappresentata dall'empowerment. Il costrutto di empowerment si è diffuso nelle organizzazioni come sviluppo e diffusione della responsabilità e delle competenze (Conger & Kanungo, 1988), ma agire sull'empowerment implica lavorare anche sul sentimento di potere delle persone che fanno parte dell'organizzazione. In questa prospettiva si colloca il modello operativo del self empowerment (Bruscaglioni & Gheno, 2000) che legge lo sviluppo del sentimento di potere come processo di apertura di nuove possibilità per le persone. L'esperienza sul campo ha peraltro evidenziato un nesso tra il livello di possibilità percepite ed il benessere. Tra gli altri, un recente studio ha individuato una correlazione tra sentimento di potere e percezione di salute in una popolazione di lavoratori (Gheno & Bisio, 2005), facendo ipotizzare il self empowerment come fattore protettivo dallo stress.

Obiettivi. Il presente contributo vuole esplorare il nesso esistente tra il livello di possibilità percepite ed il benessere sul lavoro, verificando in particolare l'ipotesi che uno sviluppo del self empowerment possa costituire un fattore protettivo dallo stress in una prospettiva di resilienza.

Metodo. A diverse popolazioni di lavoratori e non lavoratori sono state sottoposte due scale di empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995; Gheno, 2005) insieme ad altri strumenti di valutazioni del benessere soggettivo (GHQ) e di fattori di resilienza (SOC, GSE, BNSG, BNSW). I dati raccolti vengono rilette alla luce delle osservazioni svolte in oltre un decennio di interventi di self empowerment (Gheno, 2005).

Risultati e conclusioni. L'esperienza sul campo e i dati in nostro possesso evidenziano

una relazione tra il sentimento di possibilità e il benessere sul lavoro. Ciò ci permette ipotizzare che intervenire sul self empowerment, inteso come percezione del disporre di nuove possibilità, possa contribuire allo sviluppo di condizioni di benessere e di maggiori capacità di gestire situazioni potenzialmente stressanti.

Bruscaglioni, M., e Gheno, S. (2000). *Il gusto del potere*. Milano: Franco Angeli.

Conger, J.A. e Kanungo, R.N. (1988). The empowerment process: Integrative theory and practice. *Academy of Management Review*, 13, 471-482.

Gheno, S. e Bisio C. (2005). L'empowerment fa bene alla sicurezza lavorativa?. *Risorsa Uomo*, 11, 397-410.

Gheno, S.

**Contribution to a tool for self empowerment evaluation (poster).**

*3<sup>rd</sup> European Conference on Positive Psychology*. Book of abstracts, pp. 42-43. Braga, Portugal, 3-6 luglio.

The concept of Empowerment is present in many fields of study and of social practice. Generally empowering processes at the organizational level might include shared leadership and decision-making, empowering processes at the community level might include accessible government, media and other resources. Psychological empowerment is a process by which persons gain control over their lives (Rappaport, 1981) and includes intrapersonal, interactional and behavioral components, like *self-efficacy* (Bandura, 1997), *responsibility* (Rotter, 1966), *hopefulness* (Zimmerman, 1990) and *positiveness* (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Spreitzer (1992) defines some dimensions of the psychological experience of Empowerment: *sense of meaning, competence, self determination and impact*. Bruscaglioni and Gheno (2000) propose an operating model of Self Empowerment. Authors define Self-Empowerment as a process of opening up new possibilities for persons who feel lacking or deprived. Some authors (Magrin et al., 2006) underline as the operating model of Self Empowerment represents an applicative learning theory consistent with the approach of the positive psychology. In fact the Self Empowerment process melts on positive motivations and present internal resources and strengths.

The purpose of the present work is the building of a scale for the evaluation of Self Empowerment consistent to the operating model. A tool which measures the Self Empowerment as perception to dispose of possibility could allow to evaluate dimensions connected to the wellbeing of people. The evaluation itself of such dimensions could furthermore contribute to the people's empowerment (Fetterman, 1996; Gheno,

2002).

A questionnaire of 20 items has been built by a preliminary focus group on a panel of privileged witnesses. The questionnaire is composed of 4 subscales related to the operating phases of the model of the Self Empowerment: focalization on the desire, building of a positive thinkability, mobilization of the internal resources and strengths, personal experimentation. The questionnaire has been submitted to a sample of more than 300 people.

Some preliminary analyses on a smaller sample of employees (100 ca.) had highlighted a positive relation between the level of Empowerment measured with our scale and the working wellbeing perception (Gheno, Bisio, 2005). Subsequently per extent of the sample the first developed analyses have highlighted a normal distribution of the answers to the questionnaire. The results of the questionnaire don't show significant correlations with gender and age, while they turn out correlated with the education's level and the working seniority of the participants. A factor' analysis has highlighted the existence of three independent factors.

Our tool seems to have a good internal validity even if further analyses will have to be developed to verify the reliability. In particular we are interested to investigate the relations between the Self Empowerment and other models connected to the wellbeing of the working people, i.e. the Sense of Coherence (Antonovsky, 1991) and the Self Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000)

Bruscaglioni, M. e Gheno, S. (2000). *Il gusto del potere*. Milano: Franco Angeli.

Magrin, M.E., Bruno, C., Gheno, S., Scrignarò, M., e Viganò, V. (2006). The power of stress: a salutogenic model of Intervention. Delle Fave, A. (ed.), *Dimensions of Well-Being. Research and Interventions* (pp. 470-488). Milano: Franco Angeli.

**Gheno, S., Magrin, M.E., Scrignarò, M., e Viganò, V.**

**Resilience factors and personal well-being in a sample of care workers (poster).**

**7<sup>th</sup> Conference of the European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology. Proceedings, p. 356. Dublin (IRL), 8-10 novembre.**

Objectives. Moving from a salutogenic perspective and coherently with the eudaimonic approach to well-being (Ryan, Deci, 2001), the aim of this research is to investigate the role played by some protective dimensions, 'resilience factors', against psychological distress at work. We focus on the following dimensions: basic psychological needs (Deci, Ryan, 2000), sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1987), mindfulness (Brown,

Ryan, 2003), and self-empowerment (Gheno, 2005).

Methods. The sample is composed of about 100 care workers who attended a training program on human development. To investigate the factors of resilience we use the following scales: the Basic Psychological Needs at Work Scale (Deci et. al, 2001), the Sense of Coherence Questionnaire (Antonovsky, 1993), the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (Brown, Ryan, 2003), and the Self-Empowerment Scale (Gheno, 2005); to investigate the dimension of psychological well-being we use the following scales: the Italian adaptation of the Psychological Well-being Scale (Ruini et al, 2003), the Shortened Diener's Satisfaction With Life Scale (Veenhoven, 2004) and the Italian validation of General Health Questionnaire (Politi, et al, 1994).

Results and Conclusions. Data analysis is still ongoing. Preliminary analysis seem to confirm and specify results coming from data collected in previous researches (Gheno, Bisio, 2005; Magrin, Scrignarò & Viganò, 2004; Magrin et al, 2005) which show a positive correlation between the assumed resilience factors and the level of perceived personal well-being; if so the protective role played by the considered dimensions is confirmed. From a theoretical point of view this kind of results stresses the effectiveness of a salutogenic approach to personal well-being; from an applicative point of view results could be translated in future intervention on health promotion that move from "the ordinary human strengths and virtues (...) with an interest in finding out what works, what is right, and what is improving" (Sheldon, King, 2001, p. 216).

Antonovsky, A. (1993). The structure and properties of the Sense of Coherence scale. *Social Science & Medicine*, 36, 725-733.

Magrin, M.E., Scrignarò, M. e Viganò, V. (2004). Stress as a source of personal well-being: a salutogenic perspective. *Psychology & Health*, 19, 109 (supplemento Giugno 2004).

Ryan, R. M. e Deci, E. L. (2001). On happiness and human potentials: a review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual Review*, 52, 141-166.

**Sartori, R. e Massimini, F.**

**Investigating the quality of experience of rescuers: Emergency and daily life (poster).**

**3<sup>rd</sup> European Conference on Positive Psychology. Book of abstracts, p. 77, Braga, Portugal, 3-6 luglio.**

Psychology of Emergency focuses on the study and application of models and techniques aiming at preserving and restoring victims' psychophysical balance.

Working in an emergency context as rescuers requires the mobilization of considerable

resources at both physical and psychological levels, as well as knowledge and training. In particular, rescuers have to develop high tolerance thresholds for traumatic events and stress factors.

Moreover, this activity lacks in evident external rewards, especially in the case of people such as volunteers who practice it during their free time. From this perspective, the investigation of the quality of experience associated with emergency interventions and with the other domains of daily life can shed light on the motivational patterns characterizing rescuers.

Aim of this study is the investigation of the quality of experience and risk perception in both professional and volunteers rescuers working in the Italian Red Cross;

The participants were Italian Red Cross rescuers aged 25-50 years old, divided in three groups: 10 employees with ambulance working qualification; 8 special techniques team workers; and 10 volunteers ambulance rescuers. Participants were administered the Experience Sampling Method. For one week they carried an electronic device sending acoustic randomized signals 6-8 times a day. At signals receipt, they provided self-reports about ongoing activities and the associated quality of experience.

Participants in the three groups mostly associated rescue activities with optimal experience, reporting a balance between high perceived challenges and adequate personal skills in facing them; they also described high concentration, focus of attention, and positive affect. Risk perception only rarely hit significantly high values in these situations. On the opposite, the other daily domains were prominently characterized by experiences of relaxation and apathy (a condition characterized by disengagement, disruption of attention, low values of perceived challenges and skills).

The findings support the hypothesis that people involved in emergency contexts restructure their experience fluctuation towards a lower perception of risk; moreover, their frequent exposure to high challenges entails difficulties in coping with routine daily activities and low-challenge situations. This is a frequent source of maladjustment, as it has been often demonstrated in people forced to spend long time in emergency conditions. Intervention programs addressed to rescuers should be planned in order to promote a more balanced fluctuation of their experience in daily life and to facilitate their discovery of opportunities for optimal experiences in non-extreme situations.

Chang, C., Lee, L., Connor, K., Davidson, J.R.T., Jeffries, K. e Lai, T. (2003). Posttraumatic distress and coping strategies among rescue workers after an earthquake. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 191, 391-398.

Delle Fave, A. (2006). The impact of

subjective experience on the quality of life: a central issue for health professionals. In M. Csikszentmihalyi (Ed.), *A life worth living: Perspectives from positive psychology* (pp. 262-290). New York: Oxford University Press.

Delle Fave, A. e Massimini, F. (2005). The investigation of optimal experience and apathy: developmental and psychosocial implications. *European Psychologist*, 10, 264-274.

## EDUCATIONAL MODELS AND INTERVENTIONS

**Balbo, M., Viotti, E. e Goldwurm, G.F.**  
**Health education for a better quality of life (presentazione orale).**  
*International CIANS Conference on Neuro-Psycho-Physiological and social research and interventions from an interdisciplinary point of view. Book of abstracts*, p. 15. Milano, 17-18 giugno.

In the field of medical and social sciences the last decade has been featured by an increasing attention towards the well-being analysis and the quality of life.

Healthy food and psycho-physical well-being mean ever and ever the basic compounds for a suitable quality of life.

The importance of a healthy alimentation is supported by studyings and researches which have led to the introducing of the food education in the syllabuses of primary schools in order to avoid the psycho-physical disturbs deriving from unhealthy alimentation habits.

The goal of our survey wants to observe the behaviour and to state the knowledges that the "children" in a range between nine and ten years old, own concerning alimentation habits.

the methodology of a used survey consists in questionnaires administering through multiple choice, on a sample of 300 pupils in the province of Asti.

The questionnaires have got the aim to a valuate the perception, the attitudes and the behaviour of the individuals regarding the food.

the results that will be worked out and tabulated are going to be introduced, to be discussed and they will be compared to a further research work on a European level.

Goldwurm, G.F. (2002). Quality of life and health promotion. In G.F. Goldwurm, F. Colombo, e S. Masaraki (Eds.), *Proceedings of International CIANS Conference 2001. Neuropsychophysiology and Behavioural intervention in psychosomatics, stress disorders and health promotion* (pp. 3-14). Milano: CIANS.

Goldwurm, G.F., Baruffi, M. e Colombo, F. (2004). *Qualità della vita e benessere psicologico. Aspetti comportamentali e*

*cognitivi del vivere felice*. Milano: McGraw-Hill.

Gomez Ocaña, C. e Ruis Lozano, M. (1995). La qualità della vita: obiettivo prioritario nell'educazione alla salute. *Psicoterapia Cognitiva e Comportamentale*, 1, 25-34.

**Bassi, M., Steca, P., Delle Fave, A. e Caprara, G.V.**

**Academic self-efficacy beliefs and quality of experience in learning.**

*Journal of Youth and Adolescence*. First published online, 19 May.

This study investigated learning activities and associated quality of experience of students with different levels of perceived academic self-efficacy. Two groups were formed out of 130 Italian adolescents (age 15-19), one with high and one with low academic self-efficacy beliefs (31 and 32 participants, respectively). Students provided valuation of academic pursuits and aspirations, and were monitored for one week with experience sampling method (ESM). Attention was paid to the association of learning activities with optimal experience, characterized by a perceived balance between high environmental challenges and high personal skills, involvement, concentration and intrinsic reward. High self-efficacy students reported higher academic aspirations and pursuits than low self-efficacy students. They also spent more time in homework, and primarily associated learning activities with optimal experience. Results have educational implications in fostering motivation and enjoyment in learning. They also provide empirical support to the combination of self-efficacy beliefs and quality of experience in motivational research.

Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: Freeman.

Bassi, M. e Delle Fave, A. (2004). Adolescence and the changing context of optimal experience in time: Italy 1986-2000. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 5, 155-179.

Delle Fave, A. e Bassi, M. (2000). The quality of experience in adolescents' daily life: Developmental perspectives. *Genetic, Social, and General Psychology Monographs*, 126, 347-367.

**Corsale, B. e Goldwurm, G.F.**  
**Optimism and flow in sport (presentazione orale).**

*International CIANS Conference on Neuro-Psycho-Physiological and social research and interventions from an interdisciplinary point of view. Book of abstracts*, pp. 21-22. Milano, 17-18 giugno.

Sport is a field where arouse several and complex factors and psychological processes,

promoting the individual psycho-physical well being. Some principles and theoretic-applied aspects of the Positive Psychology, among other, have a relevant role in such filed, that allow the athletes to perform at the best of their potential and to improve specific abilities.

Athletes, indeed, differ in the possibilities to gain the set sport goals also depending on individual psychological characteristics among which, further those specific for the practiced sportive discipline, have a particular importance the explanatory style and the capabilities of experimenting the flow state.

Several studies prove the relevant importance of the explanatory style for sport performance, highlighting moreover the relation between optimism and perseverance in the goals pursuing.

Another important phenomenon frequently experienced in sport activity is the flow experience, as a rewarding situation which engages completely the individual in his activities, with a dynamic balance between challenges and skills.

Given the peculiar characteristics of sportive contest and the relevance of explanatory style and flow in such field, will be synthetically explained the theoretical propositions and the main empirical data that characterize them in sport performances.

Cei, A. (2002). Impegno e ottimismo: due chiavi del successo. In D. Spinelli (a cura di), *Psicologia dello sport e del movimento umano* (pp. 197-201). Bologna: Zanichelli.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1991). *Flow: the psychology of optimal experience*. New York: Harper and Row.

Jackson, S.A. e Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1999). *Flow in sports: The keys to optimal experiences and performances*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING PROMOTION

**Bielli, D., Colombo, F., Goldwurm, G.F. e Marchi, S.**

**Meditation's training: research on consciousness's development (poster).**

*3<sup>rd</sup> European Conference on Positive Psychology. Book of abstracts*, pp. 77. Braga, Portugal, 3-6 luglio.

When you sit down with crossed legs and you meditate, you are doing a concentration exercise; your mind has to pay attention to breath, to sounds or to images without thinking or thinking as less as possible. In this way your mind learns not to wander and to be anchored to its concentration object.

Why should we make such an effort? This mental work is useful in everyday's life, if you want to be conscious of the inner and the external reality and if you wish to live totally and completely in the present: neither in the

past nor in the future but here and now.

As a matter of fact in everyday's life we are always distracted by a never-ending thinking and we are generally inclined to remember the past or to think about the future. This way of using our mind makes it often difficult to be aware either of the present or of what we are living in a specific moment; it also makes it hard to be conscious of what we are feeling or what we really want from life, as if we lived most of the time with an automatic pilot, without a real awareness.

Whereas meditation teaches you how to put the consciousness of the present and your own inner world between stimulus and reaction so that you can choose the way you want to act. Reaction is an automatic answer to outside events while action is an aware decision to do or not to do something. In this sense meditation makes you the master of your present.

Choosing how to act without prefixed schemes, prejudices or cognitive "filters", in a few words, with awareness, is a guarantee of well-being and freedom, where well-being is the greatest expression of freedom, first of all from oneself.

In our research we aimed at valuing psychophysical well-being and the increase of awareness after a meditation's training carried out with a group of students attending the School of Cognitive Behavioural Psychotherapy in Milan. (Italy)

As measuring instruments we used "The Psychological Well-Being Index" and the "Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale".

Results are on the way to be valued and they will be presented in the final work.

Brown K.W. e Rayan R.M. (2003). Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale in the benefits of being present: The role of mindfulness in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84: 822-848.

Dupuy, H.J. (1984). *The Psychological Well-Being Index* (PGWBI). In N.K. Wenger, M.E. Mattson, C.D. Furberg, J. Elinson (Eds.), Assessment of qualità of life in clinical trias of cardiovascular therapies (pp. 170-183). New York: Le Jacq Pbl. (Trad. it: Questionario per la valutazione dello stato generale di benessere psicologico, versione MIOS, gennaio 2000)

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2005). *Vivere momento per momento*. Milano: Corbaccio.

**Colombo, F., Balbo, M. e Baruffi, M.**  
**Subjective well-being and optimism in a sample of Italian students.**  
*Homeostasis*, 44, 34-39.

Over the past 30 years happiness or subjective well-being has become an important topic in the social sciences. Recently positive psychology has worked to identify and understand positive individual

traits and underpinnings of preventive psychological health. Most importantly, positive psychology has learnt how to foster such traits in young people (Seligman 2002). We studied subjective well-being and attributional style in a sample of Italian students that included 348 subjects (18-19 years old) from seven different types of high schools in Asti. Students from a social-educational school collaborated in the research.

The survey included Italian versions of different questionnaires: The Satisfaction with Life Scale of Diener for cognitive aspects of happiness; the Psychap Inventory and the Happiness Measures of Fordyce for personality, attitudes, life-style and emotional aspects of happiness (Goldwurm, Baruffi, Colombo 2004); and the Attributional Style Questionnaire of Seligman for optimism and attributional style (Seligman 1990).

Data was analysed according to type of school, academic achievement levels and gender. Young men and women show differences in their general level of subjective well-being. Young men, particularly, demonstrate more optimism and hope than young women.

Fordyce, M.W. (1988) A Review of Research on The Happiness Measures; A Sixty Second Index of Happiness and Mental Health. *Social Indicators Research*, 20: 355-381.

Goldwurm, G.F., Baruffi, M. e Colombo, F. (2004). *Qualità della vita e benessere psicologico*. Milano: McGraw Hill.

Seligman, M.E.P. (1990). *Learned optimism. How to change your mind and your life*. New York: Free Press.

**Colombo, F., Baruffi, M., Bielli, D. e Marchi, S.**

**The Italian version of the Values In Action (VIA) Strengths Survey (poster).**

**3<sup>rd</sup> European Conference on Positive Psychology. Book of abstracts, p. 42. Braga, Portugal, 3-6 luglio.**

Positive psychology focuses largely on strengths. Peterson and Seligman (2004) followed the example of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM)* of the American Psychiatric Association, and they proposed a classification schema of the strengths of character that make the good life possible. As we need a common vocabulary for speaking about the good life, we need assessment tools for investigating its components. The *VIA Strengths Survey* allows to assess 24 strengths of character of an individual, for example: curiosity, originality, generosity, leadership, hope and spirituality. Seligman (2002) pointed out the convergence of valued human strengths across culture and history.

Aim of our research is to provide the Italian translation of the *VIA Strengths Survey* and to

verify the cultural adjustment of the VIA Classification. We followed these steps: a) translation and cultural adjustment of the original version (O) by Italian researchers (A); b) review of version A with the collaboration of a mother tongue and an interpreter; c) administration of version A to a small group with the possibility to make remarks; d) administration of versions O and A to some bilingual subjects; e) preparation of the final Italian version (F); f) use of the version F in a survey with different samples from general population.

We discuss the results regarding problems with the cultural adjustment and psychometric characteristics.

Goldwurm, G.F., Baruffi, M. e Colombo, F. (2004). *Qualità della vita e benessere psicologico. Aspetti comportamentali e cognitivi del vivere felice*. Milano: McGraw-Hill.

Peterson, C. e Seligman, M.E.P. (2004). *Character strengths and values. A handbook and classification*. New York: American Psychological Association and Oxford University Press.

Seligman, M.E.P. (2002). *Authentic happiness*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

**Colombo, F., Baruffi, M. e Goldwurm, G.F.**  
**The short version of the Psychap Inventory (presentazione orale).**

**International CIANS Conference on Neuro-Psycho-Physiological and social research and interventions from an interdisciplinary point of view. Book of abstracts, pp. 20-21. Milano, 17-18 giugno.**

The original version of the Psychap Inventory has 80 item which consists of forced choice statements, each sampling a characteristic useful to distinguish happy from unhappy people. It has four subscales investigating: Achieved Happiness, Happy Personality, Happy Attitudes and Values, Happiness Life-style. The subscales are combined to create the Total Score for the test (Fordyce, 1985).

We prepared the Italian version and tested it in previews work (Goldwurm, Baruffi, Colombo 2004). It is useful in the applied field, particularly, to measure happiness before and after a training to increase subjective well-being (Goldwurm, Baruffi, Colombo 2006).

Aim of the present research is to provide a short version of the Psychap Inventory. It maintains the characteristics of the original version but allows a shorter administration, useful in the research field.

Fordyce, M.W. (1985). The Psychap Inventory: A multi-scale test to measure happiness and its concomitants. *Social Indicators Research*, 18, 1-33.

Goldwurm, G.F., Baruffi, M. e Colombo, F. (2004). *Qualità della vita e benessere*

psicologico. *Aspetti comportamentali e cognitivi del vivere felice*. Milano: McGraw-Hill.

Goldwurm, G.F., Baruffi, M. e Colombo F. (2006). Subjective well being training to increase happiness. In A. Delle Fave (ed.), *Dimensions of well-being* (pp. 441-454). Milano: FrancoAngeli.

**Delle Fave, A.**

**Attaining well-being through engagement in meaningful goals (Keynote address).**

*South African Conference on Positive Psychology: Individual, Social and Work Wellness. Book of abstracts, p. 38. Potchefstroom, 3-7 aprile.*

Human tendency to set and pursue goals, and its role in guiding behavior and in supporting the achievement of developmental tasks were largely investigated. More recently, researchers have explored the relationship between goal pursuit and well-being, showing that setting complex goals and striving for attaining them support positive development, especially when these goals are related to intrinsic motivation and altruistic values. Goal influence on identity building, and the facilitating role of implementation intentions on skill development were analyzed among adolescents and adults.

Researchers also showed that development and goals are influenced by the way people actively organize their own experience in time, thus highlighting a relationship between goals and the dynamic construction of meaning: individuals can attribute different meanings to the same situation, according to progressively more complex patterns of experience organization. Studies on optimal experience can help shed light on this process. Optimal experience is a globally positive state of consciousness, that shows stable cognitive features across activities – namely high concentration, control, perception of high challenges and skills, and clear feedback – while the affective and motivational components vary according to whether the task is freely chosen or compulsory. More specifically, the short-term desirability of an activity – that can foster immediate positive affect and gratification – can diverge from its relevance to long-term goals, which refers to broader pursuits comprising professional, educational and social achievements, potentially related to both intrinsic and extrinsic motives. Cross cultural findings, gathered through single administration questionnaires and repeated on-line sampling procedures, showed that engagement in goal-related tasks can represent *per se* a powerful support to well-being promotion and skill development, even when matched with low short-term task desirability.

Moreover, while the association of a given activity with optimal experience is a key

prerequisite for the preferential replication of that activity in time, the long-term consequences of optimal experiences can deeply differ according to the associated activities. Challenging and intrinsically rewarding tasks can lead to authentic development only if they support both the implementation of skill and competencies, and the social integration of the individual. Several studies have shed light on the dangers entailed in associating optimal experiences with complex and involving, but also anti-social activities.

These findings raise a crucial issue as concerns the distinction between individual well-being and social welfare. In most cultures and in various domains, scholars have dealt with the attempt to harmonize individual needs and goals, and community development. Taking a eudaimonic approach, this presentation will explore the implications of goals perceived in daily activities for the personal growth and social integration of the individual. This perspective highlights the agentic role of individuals in selecting their own developmental tasks on the basis of associated engagement and long-term meaning. Educating people to enjoy engagement in complex activities that can be relevant to social welfare is a premise to foster community empowerment.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. e Csikszentmihalyi, I. (1988) (Eds.). *Optimal experience – Psychological studies of flow in consciousness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Delle Fave, A. (2006). Preface. In A. Delle Fave (Eds.), *Dimensions of well-being. Research and intervention* (pp. 11-12). Milano: Franco Angeli.

Massimini, F. e Delle Fave, A. (2000). Individual development in a bio-cultural perspective. *American Psychologist*, 55, 24-33.

**Delle Fave, A.**

**Subjective experience and the development of complexity (Keynote address).**

*3<sup>rd</sup> European Conference on Positive Psychology. Book of abstracts, p. 56. Braga, Portugal, 3-6 luglio.*

From the beginning of scientific psychology, two basic dimensions have been variously explored by researchers: environmental demands and individual resources. From the early studies on activation by Yerkes and Dodson to the more recent theories investigating the zone of optimal functioning, from research on stress to the investigation of resilience, coping and adversarial growth, from developmental theories to personality studies, scholars have been involved in analyzing the subjective appraisal of environmental risks, challenges and opportunities – on the one side – and the

perceived level of control, abilities and skills – on the other side, as well as their impact on human behaviour and experience.

After a brief overview of these approaches and of their contribution to the investigation of well-being, this presentation will focus on the theory of psychological selection, and more specifically on the impact of perceived environmental challenges and personal skills on the quality and fluctuations of daily experience. This issue will be discussed through results obtained from data gathered during real life by means of experience sampling procedures.

Results will be analyzed from a developmental perspective, in the attempt to outline the long-term implications of the engagement in activities providing individuals with increasingly complex opportunities for action, and thus promoting progressive skill refinement and behavioural development. Attention will also be paid to the relationship between individual pursuit of well-being and cultural evolution trends.

Delle Fave, A. (1996). Esperienza ottimale e fluttuazioni dello stato di coscienza: risultati sperimentali. In F. Massimini, P. Inghilleri, e A. Delle Fave (Eds.), *La selezione psicologica umana - Teoria e metodo d'analisi* (pp.541-568). Milano: Cooperativa libraria I.U.L.M.

Delle Fave, A. e Massimini, F. (2005). The investigation of optimal experience and apathy: developmental and psychosocial implications. *European Psychologist*, 10, 264-274.

Massimini, F. e Delle Fave, A. (2000). Individual development in a bio-cultural perspective. *American Psychologist*, 55, 24-33.

**Delle Fave, A. e Bassi, M.**

**Health and subjective well-being (presentazione orale).**

*International CIANS Conference “Neuro-psycho-physiological and social research and interventions from an interdisciplinary point of view”. Book of abstracts, pp. 24-25. Milano, 17-18 giugno.*

Researchers and practitioners are devoting increasing attention to the role of subjectivity in the evaluation of well-being. The issue has been traditionally investigated in term of objective indicators, such as income, health and housing conditions. However, there is evidence that economic indicators do not provide an adequate evaluation of the developmental resources and goal attainment of a person or a community (Biswas-Diener & Diener, 2001; Marmot & Wilkinson, 1999). As several studies show, it is also important to identify and measure subjective indicators of well-being, referring to individuals' judgements about their own state, satisfaction with life, social relationships, work and

health, future goals and personal achievements (Delle Fave & Massimini, 2005; Diener, 2000; Veenhoven, 2002).

Several researchers in health psychology stressed the need for considering quality of life a subjective concept, and for interpreting it from the individual perspective (Delle Fave, 2006; Fitzpatrick, 2000). In 2001 WHO launched the revised International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, in which functioning is a multidimensional construct comprising three individual and environmental dimensions: impairment of biological or psychological structures or functions, activity limitations, and participation restrictions (constraints in the fulfillment of expected social roles). Physical conditions as well as socio-cultural factors deeply influence individual behavior, and they can affect the growth and integration potential of people with reduced levels of functioning. However, in their turn, individuals develop their personal evaluation of what a good quality of life and functioning means.

Individuals actively interact with their social context, and selectively cultivate in their life a subset of the available opportunities for action, in terms of activities, interests, relationships. This process, defined *psychological selection*, is guided by the quality of experience perceived in the daily life and situations. Cross-cultural findings (Delle Fave & Massimini, 2004) showed that people's quality of experience, their personal expectations concerning performance and life satisfaction, their strategy in identifying and exploiting environmental opportunities for action and development provide crucial information to clarify the concept of quality of life and to design effective rehabilitation programs.

Delle Fave, A. e Massimini, F. (2004). Bringing subjectivity into focus: optimal experiences, life themes and person-centred rehabilitation. In P.A. Linley e S. Joseph (Eds.), *Positive psychology in practice* (pp. 581-597). London: Wiley & Sons.

Delle Fave, A. e Massimini, F. (2005). The relevance of subjective well-being to social policies: optimal experience and tailored intervention. In F. Huppert, N. Baylis e B. Keverne (Eds.), *The science of well-being* (pp. 379-402). Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

Diener, E. (2000). Subjective well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55, 34-43.

**Gheno, S. e Longo, L.**

**Il self empowerment nella riabilitazione psicosociale di pazienti con disturbi psichici gravi (presentazione orale).**

**6° Convegno Nazionale "Psicologia per la politica e l'empowerment individuale e sociale. Dalla teoria alla pratica". Book of abstracts, pp. 123-125. Lecce, 7-9 settembre.**

Introduzione. A partire dai primi lavori in psicologia di comunità, negli anni '90 le istituzioni sanitarie operanti nell'ambito della salute mentale hanno iniziato a sviluppare programmi di empowerment rivolti ai pazienti e al territorio. Tali sperimentazioni hanno posto in evidenza il ruolo del sentimento di potere nella promozione del benessere e della salute mentale, al punto che nel 1997 la stessa OMS, nella dichiarazione di Jakarta, ha assunto il concetto di empowerment come principio guida della promozione e della cura della salute (Killian et al., 2003). Numerosi studi mettono peraltro in evidenza che ove si sviluppi il sentimento di potere personale gli obiettivi di salute di pazienti con malattie mentali gravi sono molto favoriti (Corrigan, 2002). In letteratura si concorda sul fatto che l'empowerment personale sia correlato a dimensioni psicologiche interne e sociali legate all'azione (Hansson & Bjorkmann, 2005). Da ciò si può ricavare che l'integrazione tra attività di elaborazione psicologica e di sperimentazione personale sia particolarmente efficace a promuovere il self empowerment e quindi il benessere di persone con disturbi psichiatrici gravi. In un simile contesto si comprende la centralità dell'inserimento lavorativo nelle attività di riabilitazione psichiatrica: nel lavoro l'individuo può rafforzare la stima di sé, la responsabilità, la assunzione di decisioni – tutte categorie proprie dell'empowerment psicologico – in un contesto di azione e relazione. Peraltro numerosi studi in ambito psichiatrico (Drake et al., 1996; Mueser et al., 2004; Salyers et al., 2004) mettono in evidenza l'opportunità di sviluppare servizi riabilitativi che integrino attività cliniche, educative e sociali.

Obiettivi. Il presente lavoro si propone di presentare un programma di sviluppo dell'empowerment finalizzato a facilitare l'inserimento lavorativo di pazienti psichiatrici gravi. Il programma si colloca all'interno di un progetto sperimentale della Regione Lombardia e vede lo svolgersi al proprio interno di gruppi formativi progettati sulla base del modello del self empowerment (Gheno, 2005) che propone lo svilupparsi del sentimento di potere secondo un percorso di attivazione e focalizzazione del desiderio, di costruzione di una pensabilità positiva di sé, di valutazione delle risorse disponibili.

Metodologia. I gruppi vedono la partecipazione di 5-7 pazienti con diagnosi psichiatriche gravi in carico ai servizi territoriali e sono condotti da due operatori sanitari. Ogni incontro è finalizzato ad una specifica fase del processo di empowerment e prevede l'utilizzo di strumenti costruiti ad hoc o rielaborati da altri setting formativi. Gli incontri hanno una durata di circa due ore per sei volte e sono propedeutici ad un periodo di stage lavorativo. A sua volta allo stage potrà far seguito un più lungo periodo di tirocinio.

Risultati. I primi dati riferiti a 3 gruppi hanno

evidenziato un buon risultato in termini di benessere, di rinforzo della motivazione lavorativa e dell'esame di realtà nei partecipanti. Un ulteriore dato interessante sembra essere relativo all'avviarsi di una comunità professionale tra gli operatori coinvolti nell'intervento.

Corrigan, P.W. (2002). Empowerment and serious mental illness: Treatment, partnership and community opportunities. *Psychiatric Quarterly*, 73, 217-228.

Gheno, S. (2005). *L'uso della forza. Il self empowerment nell'intervento psicosociale e comunitario*. Milano: McGraw-Hill.

Mueser, K.T., Clark, R.E., Haines, M., Drake, R.E., McHugo, G.J., Bond, G.R., Salyers, M.P., Becker, D.R., Drake, R.E., Torrey, W.C., e Wyzik, P.F. (2004). A ten-year follow-up of a supported employment program. *Psychiatric Services*, 55, 302-308.

**Goldwurm, G.F., Baruffi, M., Bielli, D., Corsale, B., Colombo, F. e Marchi, S.**

**Positive psychology and cognitive-behaviour modification (poster).**

**36<sup>th</sup> Annual Congress of the EABCT. Book of abstracts, p. 193. Parigi, Francia, 20-23 settembre.**

Over the last decade, social and medical sciences have paid growing attention to quality of life and well-being. Initially, objective indicators such as income, physical health, housing conditions, and social roles were mainly investigated. However, a great number of studies have pointed out the importance of subjective indicators to provide adequate assessment of the quality of life and well-being. A lot of studies on subjective well-being or happiness show that those who are happy and satisfied with their lives are more resistant to the pathological effects of negative events both at the psychological and physical level.

Positive Psychology offers innovative theoretical and applied contributions. It emphasizes the fundamental role of individuals' resources and potentials, which have been mostly neglected by previous research focusing on deficits and pathologies. Cognitive-behavioral modification strategies have an important role in programmes to improve individuals' resources and potentials such as subjective well-being and optimism. We conducted different studies with more than 100 subjects. Our findings suggest that the way we conducted specific trainings, with cognitive-behavioral strategies, had a positive impact on the subjects in the experimental group. It is worth noting that positive psychology can also find a place in the cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy training courses.

Goldwurm, G.F., Baruffi, M. e Colombo, F.

(2004). *Qualità della vita e benessere psicologico. Aspetti comportamentali e cognitivi del vivere felice*. Milano: McGraw-Hill.

Goldwurm, G.F., Baruffi, M. e Colombo, F. (2006). Subjective well being training to increase happiness. In A. Delle Fave (ed.), *Dimensions of well-being* (pp. 441-454). Milano: Franco Angeli.

Goldwurm, G.F., Bielli D., Corsale B., Marchi S. (2006). Optimism training: methodology and results. *Homeostasis in health and disease*, 44, 27-33.

**Goldwurm, G.F., Bielli, D., Corsale, B. e Marchi, S.**

**Optimism training: methodology and results. *Homeostasis in health and disease*, 44, 27-33.**

According to the experimental studies of Seligman, the sense of helplessness, that is the inner perception of the ineffectiveness of one's acting, associated to a pessimistic explanation of the causes of negative events (pessimistic explanatory style), considerably elevates the risk of depression. Therefore, learning an optimistic vision of one's inner and outer world may have a preventive and therapeutic value towards the depressive syndrome; yet, the importance of such perspective is related not only to pathological conditions. In fact, optimism guarantees an improvement of psychological well-being also in healthy subjects, causing an increase in the immune system response and a better management of one's health, both physical and psychical. Our aim was therefore to evaluate the efficacy of the two months optimism training on non-pathological subjects. We chose as subjects the students of the four-year School of Cognitive and Behavioural Psychotherapy of Milan. The experimental group, that followed the training, was composed of the second and fourth year students; the control group of the first and third year students. All subjects completed twice, before and after two months, a battery of questionnaires: ASQ: Attributional Style Questionnaire (Seligman, 1990); SWLS: Satisfaction With Life Scale (Diener, 1985); HM: Happiness Measures (Fordyce, 1988). Authors will explain methodology and results of the training in terms of comparison between before and after the training and between the groups.

Goldwurm, G.F., Baruffi, M. e Colombo, F. (2004). *Qualità della vita e benessere psicologico*. Milano: McGraw-Hill.

Seligman, M.E.P. (1990). *Learned optimism. How to change your mind and your life*. New York: Free Press.

Seligman, M.E.P. (2002). *Authentic Happiness. Using the new Positive Psychology to realise your potential for*

*lasting fulfilment*. New York: Free Press.

**Magrin, M.E.**

**Stress and resilience in coronary heart disease patients (presentazione orale). *ICOH 2006 Satellite Symposium, "Cardiovascular diseases and work". Book of abstracts, p. 32. Varese, 16-18 giugno.***

The study of risk and resilience sprang from the observation that some individuals in populations exposed to incontrovertible adversity nevertheless achieve positive developmental outcomes. Individuals who achieve this better-than-expected outcomes have been labelled *resilient, stress-resilient* or even *invulnerable*, (Yates and Masten, 2004). Illness experience, especially in the case of chronic illness, is with no doubt one of this kind of adversity.

From a psychological point of view myocardial infarction (MI) occurs as an acute and critical event, causing an abrupt standstill in one's personal existence, in individuals who presumably were leading "normal" lives. Thus, disease can be looked upon as a transition period (Ruble and Seidman, 1996), which implies for the individual an unexpected work of Self-regulation in order to face the challenge of 'normalization', especially in the case of return to work.

Following the biomedical, dominant, model in health care, most of the interventions for the rehabilitation of MI patients take into consideration the negative fall-out from illness, such as denial, depression and anxiety, (Tylor, 2003).

When integrating the 'salutogenic' perspective to the biomedical model, we have to perform along with the assessment of the symptoms of maladaptive response to disease a careful evaluation of individuals' strengths. Those are indeed a sort of protective factor that foster human capacity for positive adaptation, which is something more than mere 'adjustment', (Magrin et al. 2006). The process of adaptation is one of the most critical factor of risk for CVD patients returning to work, that is to everyday life and unavoidable stressors.

Research on resilience in the late twentieth century drew attention to the topic of psychological response to the illness experience as well as to the process of recovery from illness with particular reference to CVD patients (Petrie et al., 1999; Helgeson and Fritz, 1999).

Research data coming from experience of resilience-based approach interventions of rehabilitation for CVD patients will be presented.

Petrie, K.J., Buick, D.L., Weinman, J. e Booth, R.J. (1999). Positive effects of illness reported by myocardial infarction and breast cancer patients. *Journal of*

*Psychosomatic Research*, 47,537-543.

Ruble, D. N. e Seidman, E. (1996). Social transition: windows into social psychological processes, in E. T. Higgins (Ed.), *Social psychology. Handbook of basic principles* (pp.830-856). New York: The Guilford press.

Yates, T.M. e Masten, A.S. (2004). Fostering the future: resilience theory and the practice of positive psychology, in P.A. Linley & S. Joseph (Eds.), *Positive psychology in practice* (pp. 521-539). New Jersey: Wiley.

**Magrin, M.E. e Scignaro, M.**

**Sense of comprehensibility, sense of manageability and supportive for basic needs work climate as factor of promotion of well-being in a sample of civil servants (poster).**

**7<sup>th</sup> Conference of the European Academy of Occupational Health Psychology. Proceedings, p. 375-376. Dublin (IRL), 8-10 novembre.**

Objectives. Moving from a salutogenic perspective, which posits that the dimension of meaning plays a crucial role in fostering well-being (Reker, Chamberlain, 2000; Magrin et al. 2006), the aim of this study is to verify the efficacy of some psychosocial dimensions considered as factors of promotion of well-being.

The study focuses on three sets of variables:

- SET1: *organizational and anamnestic variables*: age, sex, state whether single, married, or divorced, occupational grade, duties;

- SET2: *well-being promotion variables*:

a) attitudinal variables: the sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1991), as whole (Soc\_tot) and in its three components: comprehensibility (Soc\_co), manageability (Soc\_ma) and meaningfulness (Soc\_me)

b) motivational variables: the satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs at work, referred to the SDT of Deci and Ryan, (2000a), that comprises the needs for autonomy (Aut), competence (Comp), and relatedness (Relat)

c) contextual variable: the nature of the work climate, supportive vs. adverse, (Deci, Ryan, 2000b).

- SET3: *outcomes variables*: perceived well-being and distress.

Approach And Methods. Participants are 190 civil servants involved in a training programme.

The instrument is a questionnaire composed of the following scales:

- SET1: an anamnestic schedule

- SET2:

a) the Sense of Coherence questionnaire (SOC, 13 items)

b) the Basic Needs Satisfaction at

- Work questionnaire (BNSW, 21 items)
- c) the Work Climate questionnaire (WC, 15 items)
- SET3: the General Health questionnaire (GHQ, 12 items)

Data analysis have been performed by Pearson's correlation, linear regression models, and analysis of variance and covariance.

Results. Results show that:

- SET1 variables do not play a considerable role in promotion of well-being: in the model with perceived well-being as outcome none of these variables results statistically significant.

- SET2 variables show strong correlations to each other; the strongest between satisfaction of the basic psychological needs and the perception of a supportive work climate. The supposed factors of well-being promotion play different role in explaining the variability of the outcome: the components of manageability and comprehensibility of the sense of coherence together with the work climate explain about the 24% of the variance of perceived well-being ( $R^2=0.2378$ ,  $p<.0001$ ), with manageability ( $p<.001$ ) and work climate ( $p<.05$ ) playing the crucial role.

Conclusion. The attitudinal dimension – sense of coherence – prove to be the most important factor in promotion of well-being and resilience against stress.

The feeling of confidence that the stimuli deriving from one's internal and external environment in the course of living are structured, predictable and explicable (*comprehensibility*) as well as the confidence that the resources are available to one to meet the demands posed by the stimuli (*manageability*) jointly with a perception of supportive in satisfaction of basic psychological needs work climate, lead people to experiment a better psychological well-being.

Deci, E. e Ryan, R. (2000). The darker and brighter sides of human existence: Basic psychological needs as a unifying concept. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11, 319-338.

Magrin, M.E., Bruno, C., Gheno, S., Scignaro, M. e Viganò, V. (2006), The power of stress: a salutogenic model of intervention, in A. Delle Fave (Ed.), *Dimensions of well-being. Research and Interventions* (pp.470-488). Milano: Franco Angeli.

Reker, G.T. e Chamberlain, K. (2000). *Exploring existential meaning: optimizing human development across the life span*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

**Magrin, M.E., Scignaro, M. e Viganò, V.**  
**Resilience factors in mi-patients: the sense of coherence (poster).**

**3<sup>rd</sup> European Conference on Positive**

**Psychology, Book of abstracts, p. 43. Braga, Portugal, 3-6 luglio.**

The research moves from a salutogenic perspective (Antonovsky, 1987), which underlines the role of the dimension of sense (*sense of coherence; SOC*) as a resilience factors against ill-being and disease.

Likewise, several researches in last decades have outlined that existential meaning plays a crucial role in moderating the effects of stress on physical health and psychological well-being, and generally in enhancing feelings of well-being (Reker, 1997, Zika & Chamberlain, 1992).

Nevertheless, considering the population of patients who suffer from infarction, little attention has been devoted to the dimension of meaning; on the contrary more has been done on the study of illness representation: the Common Sense Model of Illness Representation, developed by Leventhal, Meyer ad Nerenz (1980), pointed out how illness representation affects patients' compliance with therapy and new lifestyle.

Coherently with these premises the aims of this study are:

to study the role that the sense of coherence, as a resilience factor, plays on psychological well-being

to verify if the dimension of meaning has a central role both in cognitive and emotional illness representation.

Participants are 14 patients affected by acute myocardial infarction, angina, or valvular defects, evaluated in post-acute phase.

Data collection is performed by three instruments:

1. a semi structured interview on stress and well-being (analysed by T-LAB and content analysis)
2. the MMPI-2 (567 items)
3. the Sense of Coherence Questionnaire (13 items) (Antonovsky, 1993).

Data show a positive correlation between high SOC scores, specifically in *manageability* subscale, and psychological well-adaptation (T scores <65).

Moreover the dimension of meaning plays a central role in participants' illness representations: data show a positive relation between high SOC scores and positive emotional representation; however data doesn't show any relation between SOC scores and cognitive illness representation.

Results confirm previously findings on the role of dimension of meaning in the management of the consequences of cardiovascular disease in post-acute phase.

They outline the resilience nature of sense of coherence against bad psychological adaptation and bad emotion connected to illness representation.

Finally, results suggest the opportunity to proceed in investigating the relation between sense of coherence and both cognitive and emotional aspects of illness representation.

Leventhal, H., Meyer, D. e Nerenz, D. (1980). *The common sense model of illness danger*. In Rachman S. (Ed.), *Medical Psychology*, vol. 2 (pp. 7-30). New York: Pergamon press.

Reker, G. (1997). Personal meaning, optimism, and choice: Existential predictors of depression in community and institutional elderly. *The Gerontologist*, 37, 709-716.

Zika, S. e Chamberlain, K. (1992). On the relation between meaning in life and psychological well-being. *British Journal of Psychology*, 83, 133-145.

**Magrin, M.E., Scignaro, M. e Viganò, V.**  
**Fattori di resilienza e benessere psicologico: evidenze empiriche (presentazione orale).**  
**VII Congresso Nazionale di Psicologia della Salute "Promuovere Benessere con Persone, Gruppi, Comunità". Book of abstracts, p. 380. Cesena, 28-30 settembre.**

INTRODUZIONE. Coerentemente agli assunti teorici della *Positive Psychology* (Linley *et al.*, 2006), una promozione e prevenzione del benessere in ottica salutogenica (Lindström, Eriksson, 2005) richiede innanzitutto uno studio delle dimensioni psicologiche responsabili dello sviluppo e mantenimento di un funzionamento psicologico ottimale del soggetto (Ryff, 1995). All'interno di questa cornice lo studio dei fattori di resilienza definita come capacità del soggetto di mantenere un discreto livello di adattamento anche in condizioni di vita particolarmente sfavorevoli (Egeland, Carlson, Sroufe, 1993) ha accolto ampio consenso all'interno della Psicologia della Salute, specialmente in questi ultimi anni.

OBIETTIVI. Il presente lavoro propone una rassegna di diversi studi condotti con l'intento di verificare in primo luogo l'esistenza o meno di una relazione tra alcune dimensioni assunte quali fattori protettivi contro l'insorgenza di un distress psicologico e il benessere psicologico, ed in secondo luogo esplorare la direzione di tale relazione. Nello specifico le dimensioni considerate quali fattori di resilienza sono: il *Sense of Coherence* (Antonovsky, 1987), la *General Self-efficacy* (Scholtz *et al.*, 2002), i *Basic Psychological Needs* e il *Work Climate* (Deci e Ryan, 2000), specifici profili narrativi codificati attraverso le dimensioni di *Agency* e *Communion* (McAdams, 2001).

METODO. Gli strumenti utilizzati per la misurazione dei fattori di resilienza sono: il *SOC Questionnaire*, la *GSE Scale*, la *BNSW Scale*, il *WCQ* e la *Guided Autobiography*.

Per le misure di benessere psicologico si sono utilizzati il *GHQ* e il *Questionario SF36*.

RISULTATI E CONCLUSIONI. Verranno presentati i risultati di tre differenti indagini:  
- studio longitudinale su una popolazione di 300 ospedalieri

- ricerca-intervento su un gruppo di 88 soggetti colpiti da infarto miocardico  
- ricerca intervento su un gruppo di 200 impiegati comunali

I risultati ottenuti documentano il valore protettivo delle dimensioni considerate.

Egeland, B.R., Carlson, E., e Sroufe, L.A. (1993). Resilience a process. *Development and Psychopathology*, 5, 571-528.

Lindström, B. e Eriksson, M (2005), Salutogenesis, *Journal of Epidemiological Community Health*, 59, 440-442

Ryff, C.D. e Keyes, C.L.M. (1995), The structure of psychological well-being revisited. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69, 719-727.

**Pozzoli, S., Bassi, M. e Delle Fave, A.**

**The experience of detoxification: An ecological investigation (presentazione orale). 3<sup>rd</sup> European Conference on Positive Psychology. Book of abstracts, pp. 59-60. Braga, Portugal, 3-6 luglio.**

Research on addiction has primarily focused on the psychopathological and neurobiological aspects of addictive behavior, taking into consideration individuals' deviant life history or brain biochemistry and physiology. Recent studies however showed that, to shed light on a complex phenomenon like drug addiction, additional information should be gathered on the ongoing interaction of "drug, set and setting" from the perspective of the subjective agentive perception and quality of experience. Previous studies showed that individuals prominently select daily and long-term activities associated with optimal experience, characterized by a perceived balance between high challenges and high personal skills, engagement and enjoyment. These studies also showed that drugs can induce a mimetic optimal experience, characterized by positive affect but missing a crucial aspect: the perception of above-average challenges matched with adequately high skills.

The study aimed at a) describing addicts' daily time budget, and associated quality of experience, b) identifying sources of optimal experience in daily activities, and c) investigating the experience associated with drug intake.

The sample comprised 15 adolescents and young adults with a diagnosis of repeated substance dependence or abuse who were admitted for detoxification in a Public Service for Dependence Care. Participants were on treatment with substitute drugs and psychotherapy. They were administered (a) the Diagnostic Structured Clinical Interview (SCID-I and SCID-II) for psychiatric diagnosis according DSM-IV-tr, and (b) experience sampling method (ESM), providing on-line repeated sampling of daily events and experience for one week. The

quality of daily experience was analyzed through a model based on the subjective perception of environmental challenges and personal skills.

Participants' attention mainly revolved around drugs, both when they were taking drugs – in terms of thinking about, retrieving, taking them – and during treatment – in terms of trying not to think of or take drugs. As for the other daily domains, participants prominently spent time in passive leisure such as watching TV, and in maintenance such as eating. In most activities, including freely-chosen ones and working tasks, they perceived low opportunities for action and self-expression. Moreover, participants only seldom reported optimal experience in their daily life. Instead, apathy and relaxation prevailed. Apathy was characterized by below average challenges and skills, disengagement and disruption of attention; relaxation's main features were perceived below average challenges and above average skills, high control and low concentration.

The ongoing ecological monitoring of addicts' everyday experience showed the prominence of apathy, as a sort of black hole absorbing participants' psychic energy, and thus representing a possible risk factor for relapse into drugs. Drugs were sources of surrogate positive experiences which however plunged individuals into physical dependence and annihilation. Findings suggested the importance of designing intervention programs tailored to individuals' needs, in which addicts can be involved as active agents of the therapeutic process. More specifically, providing them with opportunities for optimal experiences perceived as meaningful, and in which to actively invest their personal skills could represent a key component of intervention.

Delle Fave, A. (1996). Tossicodipendenza e qualità dell'esperienza: un fenomeno di mimetismo. In F. Massimini, P. Inghilleri e A. Delle Fave (a cura di), *La selezione psicologica umana - Teoria e metodo d'analisi* (pp. 635-652). Milano: Cooperativa Libreria IULM.

Delle Fave, A., Massimini, F. (2003). Drug addiction: the paradox of mimetic optimal experience, *Proceeding of 1st European Conference on Positive Psychology* (pp. 31-39). Winchester, UK.

Larson, R, Csikszentmihalyi, M. e Freeman, M. (1992). Alcohol and marijuana use in adolescent daily lives. In M. deVries (a cura di), *The experience of psychopathology - Investigating mental disorders in their natural settings* (pp. 180-193). Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.

**Pozzoli, S. e Delle Fave, A.**

**Tossicodipendenza e qualità dell'esperienza: la costruzione del benessere nella prospettiva soggettiva (presentazione orale).**

**VII Congresso Nazionale di Psicologia della Salute "Promuovere Benessere con Persone, Gruppi, Comunità". Book of abstracts, pp. 339-340. Cesena, 28-30 settembre.**

Oggi si avverte crescente necessità di acquisire informazioni, oltre che sugli aspetti psicopatologici e neurobiologici della tossicodipendenza, anche sulle sue dimensioni ecologiche, e sulla qualità dell'esperienza che i tossicodipendenti riportano nel quotidiano. Ricerche basate su rilevazioni in tempo reale hanno evidenziato la fluttuazione dell'esperienza quotidiana attraverso specifici stati, in relazione al livello percepito di opportunità d'azione e di capacità personali: noia, ansia, apatia ed esperienza ottimale, quest'ultima caratterizzata da stato affettivo positivo, rilassamento, concentrazione, motivazione intrinseca e controllo. E' stato inoltre evidenziata l'associazione tra assunzione di droga ed un'esperienza definita pseudo-ottimale, caratterizzata da stato affettivo positivo ed eccitazione, ma da bassi livelli di motivazione intrinseca, controllo e rilassamento.

Al fine di elaborare interventi di promozione del benessere centrati sull'utente e sulla sua prospettiva soggettiva, lo studio indaga a) il vissuto quotidiano di giovani tossicodipendenti, ed in particolare gli stati esperienziali più frequenti b) le attività associate alle esperienze ottimali.

A 15 giovani adulti tossicodipendenti sono stati somministrati SCID-I-II per la diagnosi dei disturbi psichiatrici ed Experience Sampling Method (ESM), che permette il campionamento ripetuto in tempo reale di eventi quotidiani ed esperienze associate.

I risultati evidenziano a) la prevalenza di attività quotidiane passive e poco strutturate, come guardare la TV e ascoltare musica b) la predominanza degli stati esperienziali di noia ed apatia c) la bassa frequenza di esperienze ottimali, associate inoltre ad attività di scarsa complessità e rilevanza per lo sviluppo e l'integrazione sociale dell'individuo.

La percezione di scarse opportunità d'azione e di coinvolgimento nel quotidiano e la prevalenza di stati esperienziali negativi e destrutturati espongono i tossicodipendenti al rischio di ricadute nell'abuso. In questa ottica i programmi di recupero dovrebbero essere più centrati sull'utente, a partire dalla valutazione della sua qualità di vita percepita. Ciò favorirebbe il coinvolgimento attivo della persona nella individuazione e coltivazione di competenze ed attività sia soggettivamente associate ad esperienze ottimali, che socialmente significative.

Delle Fave, A. (1996). Tossicodipendenza e qualità dell'esperienza: un fenomeno di mimetismo. In F. Massimini, P. Inghilleri e A. Delle Fave (a cura di), *La selezione psicologica umana - Teoria e metodo d'analisi* (pp. 635-652). Milano:

Cooperativa Libreria IULM.

Delle Fave, A. e Massimini, F. (2003). Drug addiction: the paradox of mimetic optimal experience, *Proceeding of 1st European Conference on Positive Psychology* (pp. 31-39). Winchester, UK.

Larson, R, Csikszentmihali, M. e Freeman, M. (1992). Alcohol and marijuana use in adolescent daily lives. In M. deVries (a cura di), *The experience of psychopathology - Investigating mental disorders in their natural settings* (pp. 180-193). Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.

**Sessa, D., Intini, S., Zagato, P., Cortinovi, I., Basso, P., Cavallo, M. e Delle Fave, A.**  
**Diversity as opportunity: Quality of life and psychological well-being of people with achondroplasia (presentazione orale).**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> European Conference on Positive Psychology. Book of abstracts, pp. 62-63. Braga, Portugal, 3-6 luglio.**

In the International Classification of Functioning (ICF, WHO 2001), disablement is conceptualized as a variation of human functioning within a dynamic interaction between individual and environmental features. As for people with chronic disease, recent studies emphasized the relevance of the subjective perspective to overcome the related constraints, and to build an effective coping strategy. Regardless of their health conditions, individuals can be more or less successful in exploiting the environmental opportunities for action. Cross-cultural research highlighted the individuals' active role in differentially selecting and replicating activities, relationships, and values – a process defined psychological selection, and guided by the quality of experience subjectively associated with daily events and social interactions. In particular, individuals get preferentially involved in activities associated with optimal experience, characterized by high perceived challenges, adequate personal skills, engagement, and enjoyment. Optimal experience influences the identification and pursuit of the lifelong goals each person preferentially cultivates, thus directing psychological selection. Reinforcement of knowledge in the area of chronic rare diseases, as concerns a) the quality of daily experience, b) the perception of opportunities for action and self growth in the occupational, social and recreational domains c) the role of family and social context in supporting autonomy and integration. This study particularly focuses on achondroplasia, a type of dwarfism which affects 1:15.000/1:40.000 individuals.

We investigated these issues through the Experience Sampling Method (ESM). Twenty-nine participants with achondroplasia (12 men and 17 women, aged 22 to 68) carried for one week an electronic device, sending random acoustic signals during daytime. At

each signal receipt, participants filled out a self-report, evaluating the ongoing external context and the associated quality of experience.

No major difference in the quality of daily experience was detected, in comparison with other samples examined with ESM. Participants' experience fluctuated according to the level of challenges perceived in the situation, consistently with theoretical expectations and empirical findings. In particular, participants reported various opportunities for optimal experience, prominently associating it with social interactions, both in the work and in the free time domains. Relationships play a key role in promoting well-being, autonomy, and integration. Nevertheless, for the examined participants they mostly involved parents and siblings. Only two women were married, and few participants reported to be involved in a stable couple relationship. This suggests that, despite the balanced quality of daily experience, and the integration in the productive world (all participants were either students or workers), they daily have to cope with relational constraints, only partially dependent on their behaviour and expectations.

Subjective experience can be usefully treated as an indicator of quality of life from the person's perspective. More specifically, on-line sampling procedures can help develop a classification of individual typologies based on daily experience fluctuation patterns, overcoming criteria such as health conditions, SES, or gender. This can allow for a better interpretation of individual differences in perceived quality of life, and for the development of tailored intervention programs.

Delle Fave, A., (2005). Le dimensioni psicologiche e culturali della salute: esperienza ottimale e riabilitazione. *Ricerche in psicologia, I*, 29-40.

Delle Fave, A. e Massimini, F. (2003). Making disability into a resource: The role of optimal experience. *The Psychologist, 16*, 9-10.

Delle Fave, A. e Massimini, F. (2004). The cross-cultural investigation of optimal experience. *Ricerche in psicologia, I*, 27, 79-102.

**Vigano, V., Cesana, G.C., Magrin, M.E. e Scrinario, M.**

**Resilience factors against stress: the sense of coherence (poster).**  
**28<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Occupational Health. Book of abstracts, p. 332. Milano, 11-16 giugno.**

From several years our team is performing scientific research in the field of occupational stress. Our focus, specifically, is to identify resilience factors, or 'salutogenic' factors

against the pathological effects of stress. These factors can help subjects to face both psychological and physical stressors as they reduce their pathogenic nature. Moreover salutogenic factors may turn sources of stress in agents of health promotion. Several investigations in last decade have outlined that the most relevant factor in the moderation of the effect of stress on psychophysiological health and broadly on personal well-being is sense dimension (Reker & Chamberlain, 2001).

The present study focuses on the dimension of sense of coherence: a global orientation that expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive enduring though dynamic feeling of confidence that life is comprehensible, manageable and meaningful (Antonovsky, 1987).

We will present results from a study performed at the Department of Evaluation and Management of Occupational Stress, at the San Gerardo Hospital, on a population of workers affected by cardiovascular disease. The main aim of the study is to verify the existence of a relationship between the level of sense of coherence – measured with the administration of the sense of coherence questionnaire (Antonovsky, 1993) – and perceived health status – measured with the administration of the GHQ12 questionnaire – and psychological well-being – measured with the administration of MMPI, an inventory of personality –.

First analyses show the existence of a positive relationship between assumed resilience factor – the sense of coherence – and psychological well-being.

Antonovsky, A. (1987). *Unraveling the mystery of health – how people manage stress and stay well*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Antonovsky, A. (1993). The structure and properties of the sense of coherence scale. *Social Science & Medicine, 36*, 725-733.

Reker, G.T., Chamberlain, K. (2001). *Exploring existential meaning*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

**Vigano, V., Magrin, M.E. e Scrinario, M.**  
**Stressful life-events: narrative profiles and well-being (poster).**

**3<sup>rd</sup> European Conference on Positive Psychology, Book of abstracts, p. 41. Braga, Portugal, 3-6 luglio.**

The theoretical background of this study is the Salutogenic Perspective (Antonovsky, 1987) which aims at identify the origin of health and well-being rather than the origin of ill-being. Salutogenic perspective postulates that the dimension of meaning (*sense of coherence*) (Antonovsky, 1979) is at the core of well-being.

Moreover at the core of the concept of well-being, we find a question related to being and

thus fundamentally to the problem of human beings' identity: in an eudaimonic perspective well-being, in fact, consists in realizing one's true nature (Deci & Ryan, 2001).

Moving from these premises the study aims at verify the possibility to identify 'salutogenic narrative profiles', that are protective against the manifestation of psycho-physiological stress-correlates.

In particular we consider the population of MI-patients, as cardiovascular disease, and in particular MI, are nowadays one of the most prevalent causes of mortality; hence it will be useful to identify protective factors against these forms of disease.

From a methodological point of view the study refers to McAdams' Life Story Model of Identity (McAdams, 2001), which asserts that people provide their lives with unity and purpose by constructing internalized and evolving narratives of the self. The central idea of the model is that identity is a life story resonates with a number of important themes. In particular McAdams identifies some fundamental themes in narrations sequences: on one hand the themes of *agency* (self-oriented motivation) and the themes of *communion* (other-oriented motivation); on the other hand the sequences of *redemption* (a bad event that turns into a positive result) and *contamination* sequences (a beautiful event that turns into a bad result).

The sample is composed of 90 patients affected by cardiovascular disease: acute myocardial infarction, angina and defected valve, evaluated in post-acute phase.

For data collection on narrative profiles the instrument is an adapted version of Guided Autobiography by McAdams (1997); and for data collection on well-being the instrument is the Health Survey SF36.

Preliminary analysis shows a positive correlation between narrative profiles and well-being.

In particular the presence of theme of agency and of sequences of redemption are significantly linked to a better psychological adaptation.

Results stressed the importance of a work on identity and meaning as a way to promote well-being.

Deci, E.L. e Ryan, R.M. (2001). The "what and "why" of goals pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behaviour. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11, 227-268.

McAdams, D.P. (1997). *Guided autobiography*, <http://www.sesp.northwestern.edu>

McAdams, D.P. (2001). The psychology of life stories. *Review of General Psychology*, 5, 100-122.

### **Faith as the core of psychological selection: Religious practice and optimal experience (poster).**

**3<sup>rd</sup> European Conference on Positive Psychology. Book of abstracts, pp. 38-39. Braga, Portugal, 3-6 luglio.**

Cross-cultural studies highlighted the active role of the individual in selecting and replicating cultural information. Optimal experience – characterized by the perception of high challenges and high personal skills, engagement, enjoyment, and intrinsic motivation – is a key element in this process. More specifically, it contributes to shape individual psychological selection, that is the preferential lifelong cultivation of interests, activities, and values.

To investigate the role of religious practice as an opportunity for optimal experience; to analyze its psychological features, the environmental and personal factors supporting its long-term cultivation, and its influence on psychological selection and identity building.

The study involved 166 participants, aged 18 to 59: 70 practising Catholic lay people (52 women and 18 men); 54 nuns and novices belonging to different congregations; 18 seminarists and priests; and 24 members of religious orders (Dominicans and Jesuits). They were administered three inventories: Flow Questionnaire investigated the occurrence of optimal experience in participants' life, its psychological features, and associated activities; Life Theme Questionnaire explored past influences, present challenges and future goals; Order/Disorder Questionnaire analyzed perceived order and disorder at the psychological level and in the daily domains. Optimal experiences were reported by 97% of the participants. The most frequently associated domains (labelled optimal activities) were religious practice (28%) and structured leisure (18%), followed by media (mostly reading), studying, and work. However religious practice, and more specifically individual prayer, was associated by 49% of the participants with the most intense and pervasive optimal experiences. In association with most activities, optimal experience shared basic psychological features: high concentration and control, high challenges and skills, enjoyment and intrinsic motivation. However, peculiarities were detected for praying: participants reported high self-consciousness, concentration effort, and challenges higher than personal skills. This can be related to the intrinsic structure of the activity, requiring a sustained focus of attention on internal cues, and the interaction with a transcendent dimension exceeding human resources and abilities. As concerns life theme, participants prominently quoted religion among the positive influences (34%), and reported it among the present challenges, and among future goals together with

interpersonal relationships and social commitment. Rather exceptionally, in comparison with the samples previously examined, 16,7% of the participants did not report any negative life influence. Finally, the perception of order and disorder was mostly related to the continuous endeavour to pursue coherence and consistency between thoughts and beliefs, on the one hand, and actions, on the other hand.

Participants' psychological selection unfolded around two major topics: a) the personal relationship with God; b) the attention to the neighbour, through the involvement in social activities. Faith represented a unifying perspective to interpret life events and to build one's own identity. Participants also showed a globally positive attitude towards life: by referring any event to the divine dimension, they were able to positively evaluate ordinary daily tasks and interactions, and to attach developmental relevance and meaning to negative experiences as well.

Massimini, F. e Delle Fave, A. (1991). Religion and cultural evolution. *Zygon*, 1, 27-47.

Delle Fave, A. e Bassi, M. (2004). Immigrati africani in Italia: qualità dell'esperienza e pratica religiosa. In M. Aletti e G. Rossi (a cura di), *Identità religiosa, Pluralismo, Fondamentalismi* (pp. 269-278). Torino: Centro Scientifico Editore.

Emmons, R. A. (2006). Spirituality. In M. Csikszentmihalyi e I. Csikszentmihalyi (a cura di), *A life worth living. Contributions to Positive Psychology* (pp. 62-81). New York: Oxford University Press.

### **Finsterle, G.**

#### **The "mirror effect" in sound's fusion time: the integration of two specular sound fields in one mental-virtual holophonic sound field. Phenomenology and applications (poster).**

**International CIANS Conference on Neuro-Psycho-Physiological and social research and interventions from an interdisciplinary point of view. Book of abstracts, pp. 28-29. Milano, 17-18 giugno.**

In 1996 a new audio reproducing system was developed (EU Pat., US Pat., Int. Pat.), which promotes the mental integration of two specular stereophonic sound fields, emitted by two pairs of speakers sending almost identical acoustic information to the listening point, in a unified holophonic field.

This integration solves the information's paradox expressly produced by the system structure itself. As a matter of fact, taking into account the physical and acoustic dimensions only, it would be impossible to distinguish the front sound emission from the rear one. However, the listener's mind is able to reconstruct a three-dimensional space experience and thus to distinguish between front and rear sound fields.

We hypothesize that the capability to fusing and reconstructing sound information in a

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“virtual” holophonic field is related to a peculiar way to elaborate the space experience, which is also active during dreams. Dreams exist in a specific dimension of mental experience, that we define Primary Mental Space.

In order to verify whether, in the absence of recognizable sound structures and with closed eyes (Setting  $\alpha$ ), the mind is able to produce any structure in the primary mental space, we utilized a correlated, fractalic structured sound (1/f, Pink Noise). An autopoietic mind's property emerged, producing images and sounds (different from the stimulus) with a degree of realism close to the perception of reality, in a statistically relevant number of subjects (25% during a single listening session, 80% throughout six listening sessions).

The phenomenology of mind's autopoietic productions suggests an increase of information exchange between neocortical areas and older ones.

EEG's analysis allowed us to observe during listening sessions a brain's tendency to produce synchronizations in all the bands ( $\alpha, \beta, \delta, \gamma$ ) and in all the cortical areas. Although a direct relation between cortical synchronizations and mind's autopoietic productions cannot be presently demonstrated, we hypothesize that the increased performances of both mind and body reported by most subjects (insight experiences *during* and *after* the session; physical activation *after* the listening session) could be related to an increased plasticity of neural paths induced by these general synchronizations.

The phenomenology of the autopoietic experiences should be further investigated from the perspective of the human tendency towards meaning making, independently of conscious intentionality.

Finsterle, G. (2003). Recording and play – back two channel system for providing a holophonic reproduction of sounds, in *The NASA Astrophysics Data System* (pp. 1-7). Harvard, USA.

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**Finsterle, G.**

**Modulating the state of consciousness through induced microsynchronization of sound waves. Phenomenology of the experience and application potentials (poster).**

**3<sup>rd</sup> European Conference on Positive Psychology. Book of abstracts, p. 70. Braga, Portugal, 3-6 luglio.**

Recent studies (Trzopek, 2002) detected a direct relationship between the listening of

particular sound waves and the synchronizing of cortical waves on these signals.

Moving from this premise, we developed an audio technology based on a holophonic sound field obtained through the microsynchronization of two sound fields, which is a “virtual” reconstruction by an electro acoustic system of one sound field that is perceived as existing potentially all around the listener. The specific listening setting used for this study – labelled as “Setting  $\alpha$ ” – involves the use of a fractalic structured sound stimulus ( $a = 1/f$ ), which is perceived as a noise deprived from any recognizable form, thus resulting always identical in time and neutral in relation to mental events.

The phenomenology of the experience associated with this particular kind of listening session can be described as a diversion of attention and consciousness events, from “external” phenomena (the sound stimulus, the perception of the body), to an “internal” field created by the mind itself that has reality evidence for the subject, as happens in dreams.

The fact that participants are awake and conscious allows for a precise phenomenological description of the event, that reveals some structural regularities:

- the sound stimulus tends to disappear while forms begin to arise in the mental space. This transition of the state of consciousness is often perceived as normal and “obvious”;
- a contemplative dimension of the experience is reported, where participants observe without being involved by the emotions related to the scenes that unfold in the mental space;
- the events produced by the mind are usually related to specific personal issues; similarly to insight experiences, participants often get new ways to combine information in order to find answers and solutions, reporting a feeling of wonder;
- after the session, participants feels deeply relaxed and awake, with a spontaneous tendency to smile.

The existence of two neural circuitries – a high pathway and low pathway – involved in transmitting sound related bioelectrical information to the sensorial cortex and to amygdale and hippocampus, respectively (LeDoux, 1998), can provide a neurophysiologic basis to this experience, also considering the increased amount of general cortical synchronizations during the session.

The microsynchronization of sound waves has proved useful in preliminary clinical applications for the treatment of affective disorders.

Aiello, G. e Finsterle, G. (2005). Modulazione dello stato di coscienza mediante l'ascolto di una stimolazione sonora a struttura casuale in un campo olofonico: fenomenologia dell'esperienza, ipotesi teoriche e prime analisi

elettroencefalografiche. Articolo presentato al *XIII Congresso Nazionale AIAMC, Vivere in una società a rischio*. Book of abstracts, pp. 4-5. Milano.

LeDoux, J. (1998). *Il cervello emotivo*. Milano: Raffaello Cortina Editore.

Trinka, E., Unterrainer, J., Luthringshausen, G., Iglseder, B., Ladurner, G., Loew, T., Trzopek, H.G. (2002). An auditory electrophysiological intervention in migraine: a randomized placebo controlled add-on trial. *Journal of Neurotherapy*, 6, 21-30.

**Preziosa, A., Bassi, M., Villani, D., Gaggioli, A. e Riva, G.**

**Monitoring daily life using mobile phones. The Experience Sampling Method (presentazione orale).**

**11th Annual Cybertherapy 2006 Conference: Virtual Healing- Designing Reality. Book of abstracts, p. 116. Gatineau, Canada, 12-15 giugno. Abstract published in CyberPsychology and Behavior (2006), 9, 711-712.**

Research studies oriented to enhance knowledge about social, psychological, and physiological processes within everyday situations can greatly benefit from the contribution of Ecological Momentary Assessment (EMA) instruments, which repeatedly examine ongoing experiences through self-reports. Among them, Experience Sampling Method (ESM), developed at the University of Chicago in 1976, has been successfully applied in both psychological and medical areas. The main purpose of ESM is to examine the human beings' internal experiences (thoughts, feelings), and their contingent behaviours and context, catching the complexity of daily life. For a given time span, usually one week, participants carry an electronic device emitting acoustic signals 6-8 times a day during waking hours. At signal's receipt, participants are asked to fill out a questionnaire sheet, reporting on their current activities, location, social context, associated subjective experience, in terms of motivational, affect and cognitive components. Through this procedure, ESM overcomes some of the disadvantages of standard approaches because it does not rely on retrospective recall or data reconstruction, but rather involves on-line access and accurate reporting of information. ESM has been extensively validated in different cultures and contexts. Starting from the original format characterized by paper questionnaire supported by signalling equipment, the ESM was thoroughly implemented on electronic devices (PDA) that bring in one all the necessary instruments for the assessment. Further ESM was assessed on the web, and using voice recorders. Each type of data collection has

several advantages but also some limits. In this study, we propose mobile phones as a valid alternative technology to palmtop and hand-held computers, promoting ubiquitous and mobile computing applications. In this mobile version, we followed the original ESM protocol. An acoustic signal reminds participants to fill in a standard ESM questionnaire 6-8 times per day for one week. Respondents are asked to fill out the questions using the phone's keyboard. The study assesses the usability of the ESM implementation on mobile phones. The sample is composed by 20 general population subjects, 10 males and 10 females. All respondents are tested in two sessions: one with a version of the ESM based on paper & pencil, and one with a version of the ESM implemented on 6680 Nokia mobile phones (display resolution:176x220). The order of presentation is randomized, with one group of participants starting with the paper and pencil version, and the other one with the mobile phone version. The sample is also administered the Questionnaire for User Interface Satisfaction (Italian version), and takes part in a structured interview to discuss the features of both approaches, as well as to appraise their user's satisfaction.

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Csikszentmihalyi, M., Hektner, J. e Schmidt, J. (2006). *Measuring the quality of everyday life. The ESM Handbook*. New York: Sage.

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#### JOURNALS (SPECIAL ISSUES)

##### JOURNAL OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY Volume 1, Number 1 / January 2006

- R. A. Emmons. Editorial.
- P. A. Linley, S. Joseph, S. Harrington, A. M. Wood. Positive psychology: Past, present, and (possible) future.
- C. Peterson, N. Park, M. E. P. Seligman. Greater strengths of character and recovery from illness.
- A. H. S. Harris, C. E. Thoresen. Extending the influence of positive psychology interventions into health care settings: Lessons from self-efficacy and forgiveness.
- K. A. Shogren, S. J. Lopez, M. L. Wehmeyer, T. D. Little, C. L.

Pressgrove. The role of positive psychology constructs in predicting life satisfaction in adolescents with and without cognitive disabilities: An exploratory study.

- K. M. Sheldon. Book reviews.

##### JOURNAL OF HAPPINESS STUDIES

##### Volume 7, Number 3 / September, 2006 - Special Issue: Strengths of Character and Happiness

- C. Peterson. Strengths of Character and Happiness: Introduction to Special Issue.
- R. Biswas-Diener. From the Equator to the North Pole: A Study of Character Strengths.
- S. Shimai, K. Otake, N. Park, C. Peterson and M. E. P. Seligman. Convergence of Character Strengths in American and Japanese Young Adults.
- N. Park, C. Peterson. Character Strengths and Happiness among Young Children: Content Analysis of Parental Descriptions.
- E. L. Polak, M. E. McCullough. Is gratitude an alternative to materialism?
- K. Otake, S. Shimai, J. Tanaka-Matsumi, K. Otsui, B. L. Fredrickson. Happy People Become Happier through Kindness: A Counting Kindnesses Intervention.
- B. Schwartz, K. E. Sharpe. Practical Wisdom: Aristotle meets Positive Psychology.

##### PASSAGGI – Rivista Italiana di Scienze Transculturali 11/ 2006 - Numero monografico: La Psicologia Positiva, pp. 4-127.

- R. Terranova-Cecchini, P. Inghileri. Presentazione.
- F. Massimini. La psicologia positiva.
- S.K. Kiran Kumar. Felicità e benessere nella tradizione indiana.
- A. Delle Fave. Selezione psicologica ed esperienza ottimale: applicazioni ed implicazioni transculturali.
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- A. Fianco, A. Delle Fave. Donne migranti e qualità dell'esperienza soggettiva: uno studio con experience sampling method.

##### IL PENDOLO

##### Aprile 2005, Anno IV, n. 6 - Numero monografico sulla Psicologia Positiva

- S. Lenzi. Prospettive di narrazione e regolazione emotiva nei resoconti di esperienze negative.
- L. Fortunati, F. Giommi, G. Graus. Mindfulness e psicoterapia cognitiva: Dal professionale al personale.
- G.F. Goldwurm, M. Baruffi, F. Colombo. Aumentare il benessere psicologico attraverso il Subjective Well-being Training.
- F. Galassi. Il ruolo delle emozioni in psicoterapia cognitiva.
- C. Di Berardino. Training meditativo e processi di autoregolazione emotiva.

##### RICERCHE DI PSICOLOGIA

##### 2004, Vol. 27, n. 1 - Special issue: Positive Psychology

- A. Delle Fave. Editorial. Positive psychology and the pursuit of complexity.
- C. Pléh. The tradition of positive psychology in Europe.
- E. L. Deci, M. Vansteenkiste. Theory and basic need satisfaction: Understanding human development in positive psychology.
- D. Galati, I. Sotgiu. Happiness and positive emotions.
- M. E. P. Seligman, N. Park, C. Peterson. The Values In Action (VIA) classification of character strengths.
- A. Delle Fave, F. Massimini. The cross-cultural investigation of optimal experience.
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- J. Henry. A comparison of strategies for achieving well-being in non-clinical populations.
- C. Ruini, G. A. Fava. Clinical implications of psychological well-being.
- S. Joseph, P. A. Linley. Adversarial growth and positive change following trauma: Theory, research, and practice.
- M. Cesa Bianchi, C. Cristini, G. Cesa Bianchi. Positive aging. ©

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