

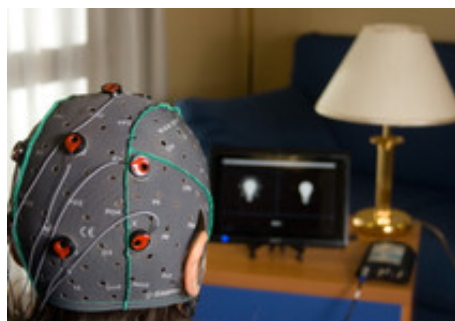
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ANSA English

Italian researchers find 'control room' in brain

Study could help with rehabilitation for stroke victims

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(ANSA) - Rome, September 26 - Italian researchers have published a report saying that they have pinpointed the part of the brain that controls the ability to give directions and communicate information to others.

Neurologists Andrea Marini and Cosimo Urgesi, researchers at the University of Udine, said in a study published in the *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) that the 'switchboard' controlling complex cognitive processing resides in the left hemisphere of the brain. "To give information, well-formed language skills are not enough. One needs to have a global, clear coherence of narratives produced, as they are being told," Marini said.

The researchers studied the brain activity of volunteers as they listened to four stories being presented in the form of cartoons and then identified a precise relationship between the functioning brain area and the ability to select relevant words in a context. The tests were performed under three different conditions, researchers said.

"First we inhibited the left hemisphere with electromagnetic pulses, then the right hemisphere was inhibited and finally, neither," Marini said. When the left hemisphere was briefly halted, the ability to describe the stories in a clear and accurate way was significantly reduced.

Researchers believe that the study will help shed light on what makes individuals effective and eloquent communicators.

"This better understanding of how information is organized and communicated could help with innovations in rehabilitation therapies for patients with neurological disorders, such as traumatic brain injury or stroke victims," Marini said.

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