LIFESAVING SPORT AND MENTAL DISABILITY
Andreana Giuseppe, Magini Valter, Pitarresi Marco, Dapretto Luciana, Robert Pietro
(University Institute for Movement Science – Rome., Italy)

Introduction
People with disabilities can be involved in lifesaving programs according to their level of disability.
This concept has been supported by the experience acquired in lifesaving activities since 2003 at the Department of Human Movement and Sport Sciences, University Institute for Movement Science in Rome.
Lifesaving as sport is an activity which aims to train lifesavers in rescue operations, through specific competitions.
In order with mental disabled people we introduce lifesaving as the water safety sport. Currently, in literature, nothing has been written about lifesaving sport practising with mental disabled people.

Materials and methods
Almost 20 athletes with mental disabilities belonging to two relevant Italian national organisations involved in Sport activities (swimming) for mental disable people as C.I.P (Italian Paralympics Committee) and S.O.I. (Special Olympics – Italian branch) were observed. These athletes and people showed different levels of mental disability.
Different specific events were proposed in order as: 25 and 50 M swimming with obstacles (horizontal and vertical ones) and 25 and 50 M object and heavy-bag (0.3 – 1.0 – 2.0 and 3.5 Kg) carry.
The training period lasted six months, from October 2006 to March 2007.

Results
All the athletes completed successfully the distances in both events: 25 and 50 M swimming with horizontal and vertical obstacles and object and heavy-bag (0.3 – 1.0 – 2.0 and 3.5 Kg) carry.

Discussion and Conclusion
The experience showed how all the athletes, involved in this programme had reacted with extreme interest to the lifesaving sport activities; moreover, it has been accepted by the group (included trainers, instructors and relatives) with great satisfaction.
This study has been extremely useful for its social impact: as a matter of fact, it has increased water self confidence and water safety for all the athletes and people involved.
This project demonstrates that lifesaving as sport activity should be considered, in relation to these two events, and integrated with the swimming programme, can be offer for people with mental disabilities.

References
Keywords: Lifestyle, Chronic Diseases, Sport Opportunities