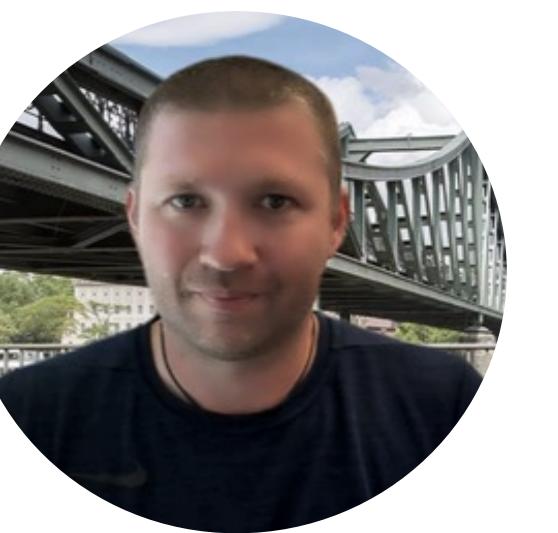


VOLI

# Screen or No Screen?

Lessons Learned from a Real-World Deployment Study of Using  
Voice Assistants With and Without Touchscreen for Older Adults



Chen Chen<sup>1</sup>

Ella T. Lifset<sup>2</sup>

Yichen Han<sup>6</sup>

Arkajyoti Roy<sup>3</sup>

Michael Hogarth<sup>5</sup>

Alison Moore<sup>5</sup>

Emilia Farcas<sup>4</sup>

Nadir Weibel<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Computer Science and Engineering, <sup>2</sup>Department of Biological Sciences, <sup>3</sup>Department of Mathematics,

<sup>4</sup>Qualcomm Institute, <sup>5</sup>School of Medicine, University of California San Diego 

<sup>6</sup>Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Carnegie Mellon University 

Email: [chenchen@ucsd.edu](mailto:chenchen@ucsd.edu)

Project Website: [voli.ucsd.edu](http://voli.ucsd.edu)



# Using Voice Assistants could be Challenging for Older Adults

RESEARCH-ARTICLE OPEN ACCESS



**Understanding Barriers and Design Opportunities to Improve Healthcare and QOL for Older Adults through Voice Assistants**

**Authors:** Chen Chen, Janet G Johnson, Kemeberly Charles, Alice Lee, Ella T Lifset, Michael Hogarth, Alison A Moore, Emilia Farcas, Nadir Weibel [Authors Info & Claims](#)

ASSETS '21: Proceedings of the 23rd International ACM SIGACCESS Conference on Computers and Accessibility • October 2021 • Article No.: 9 • Pages 1–16 • <https://doi.org/10.1145/3441852.3471218>

**Published:** 17 October 2021 [Publication History](#)

12 1,292



For healthcare uses

RESEARCH-ARTICLE



**"Alexa is a Toy": Exploring Older Adults' Reasons for Using, Limiting, and Abandoning Echo**

**Authors:** Milka Trajkova, Aqueasha Martin-Hammond [Authors Info & Claims](#)

CHI '20: Proceedings of the 2020 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems • April 2020 • Pages 1–13 • <https://doi.org/10.1145/3313831.3376760>

**Published:** 23 April 2020 [Publication History](#)

68 2,036



For generic uses

RESEARCH-ARTICLE OPEN ACCESS



**How do Older Adults Set Up Voice Assistants? Lessons Learned from a Deployment Experience for Older Adults to Set Up Standalone Voice Assistants**

**Authors:** Chen Chen, Ella T. Lifset, Yichen Han, Arkajyoti Roy, Michael Hogarth, Alison A. Moore, Emilia Farcas, Nadir Weibel [Authors Info & Claims](#)

DIS '23 Companion: Companion Publication of the 2023 ACM Designing Interactive Systems Conference • July 2023 • Pages 164–168 • <https://doi.org/10.1145/3563703.3596640>

**Published:** 10 July 2023 [Publication History](#)

0 94



For device setting ups

RESEARCH-ARTICLE PUBLIC ACCESS



**"Phantom Friend" or "Just a Box with Information": Personification and Ontological Categorization of Smart Speaker-based Voice Assistants by Older Adults**

**Authors:** Alisha Pradhan, Leah Findlater, Amanda Lazar [Authors Info & Claims](#)

Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction, Volume 3, Issue CSCW • Article No.: 214, pp 1–21 • <https://doi.org/10.1145/3359316>

**Published:** 07 November 2019 [Publication History](#)

88 3,554



For companionships



# Additional Touchscreen Allows Visual Output



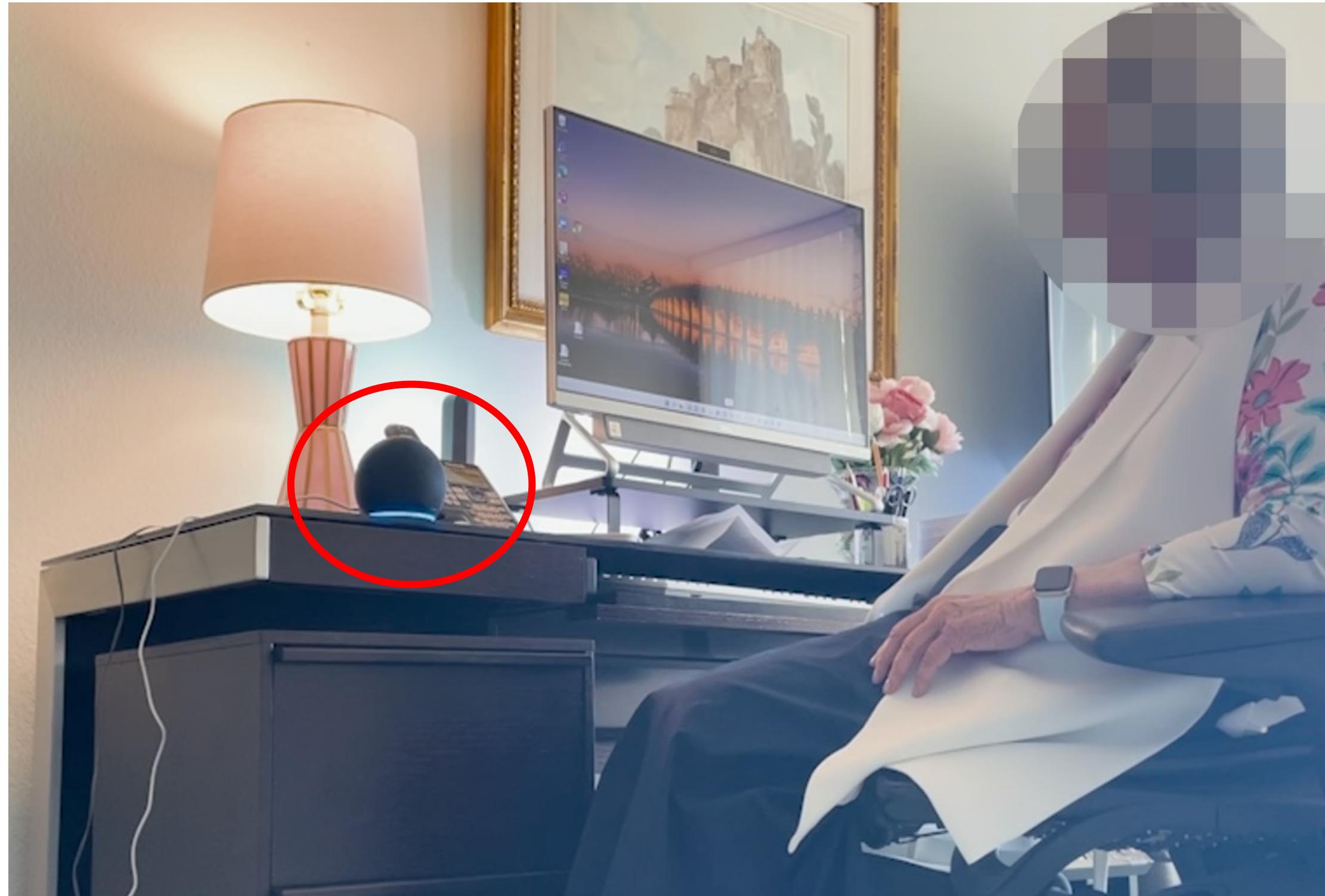
Example Device: Amazon Echo Show, 2<sup>nd</sup> Gen, 8" Smart Display, White

# Additional Touchscreen Allows Touch Input👉



Example Device: Amazon Echo Show, 2<sup>nd</sup> Gen, 8" Smart Display, White

# For Older Adults ☺, Screen or No Screen?



Example Device: Echo Dot



Example Device: Echo Show

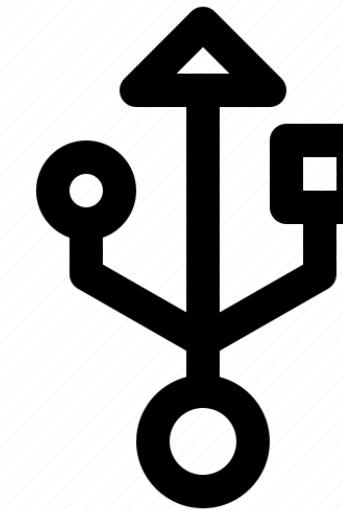
# Three Key Research Questions (RQs)

# RQ1: How does the built-in touchscreen affect older adults' experience on setting up the devices?

- Despite the help from caregivers, it is still important for older adults to complete many “last-mile” tasks.



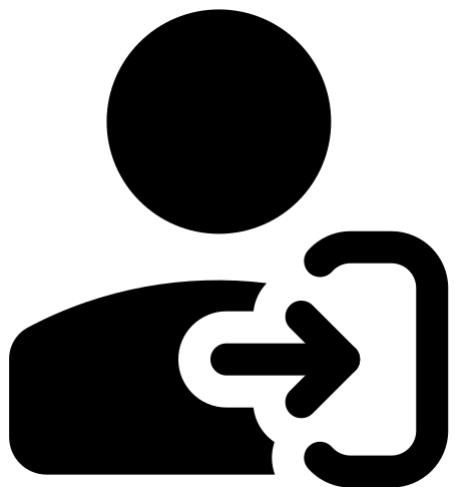
Reading Instructions



Hardware Connections



Finding the Alexa App



Signing In

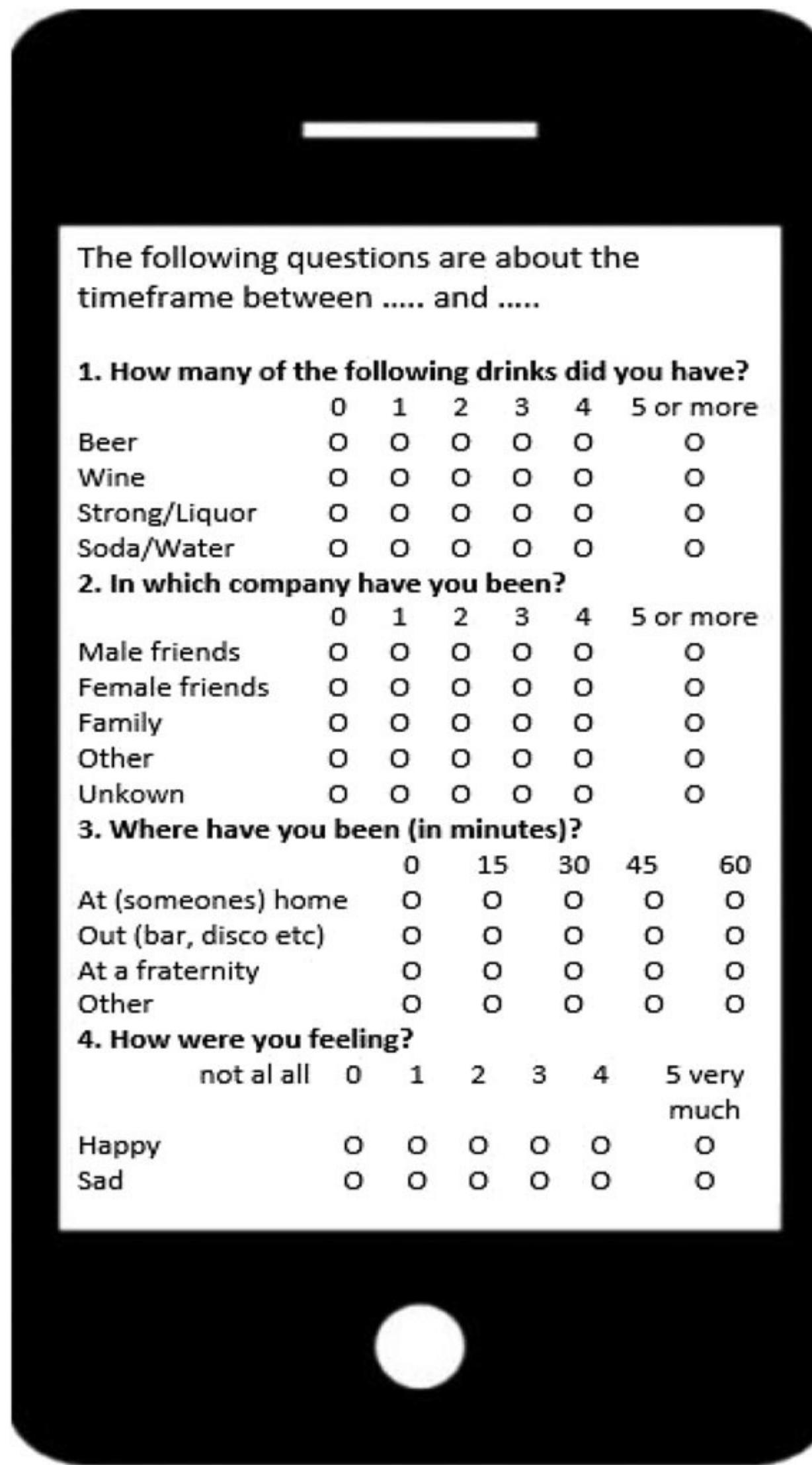


Hitting Setup Buttons



Connecting to WiFi

## RQ2: How does the built-in touchscreen affect older adults' experience on conducting self-report diary surveys?



RQ3: How does the built-in touchscreen affect older adults' experience on using VAs for general purposes?



# Designing Voice-First Voice Assistants



*Need to take care of  
maintenance related tasks*

*Set up once & run and  
operate continuously*

# Participants

- 16 Participants (8 Females and 8 Males)
- Age:  $M = 82.5$ ,  $SD = 7.77$ , min. = 70, max. = 97
- Recruited through UCSD Health & The Vi @La Jolla
- 5 Participants self-reported the significant health issues:
  - Hand Tremors
  - Hearing Impairment
  - Chronic Back Pain
  - Speech Impairment
  - Mobility Impairment

# Study Design

- Phase 1: Pre-Study Questionnaires;
- Phase 2: Device Setup;
- Phase 3: Investigating VAs Uses for Conducting Self-Report Diary Surveys & General Uses;
- Phase 4: Focus Group;

# Phase 1: Pre-Study Questionnaires

- TechPH (Technophilia): Attitudes toward technologies
- MDPQ (Mobile Device Proficiency Questionnaires): Proficiencies toward smartphone devices
- CPQ (Computer Proficiency Questionnaires): Proficiencies toward desktop computer devices

## Phase 2: Device Setups (In-Person Within-Subject, N = 16)

Echo Dot (Voice Only)



Echo Show (Screen-Based Voice-First)



X 15

## Phase 3: Diary Journaling and Generic Uses (Within-Subject, N = 16)

- 15 days of using Echo Dot and Echo Show to complete:
  - A diary survey
  - And generic uses that could help with daily needs

For Conducting Self-Report Diary

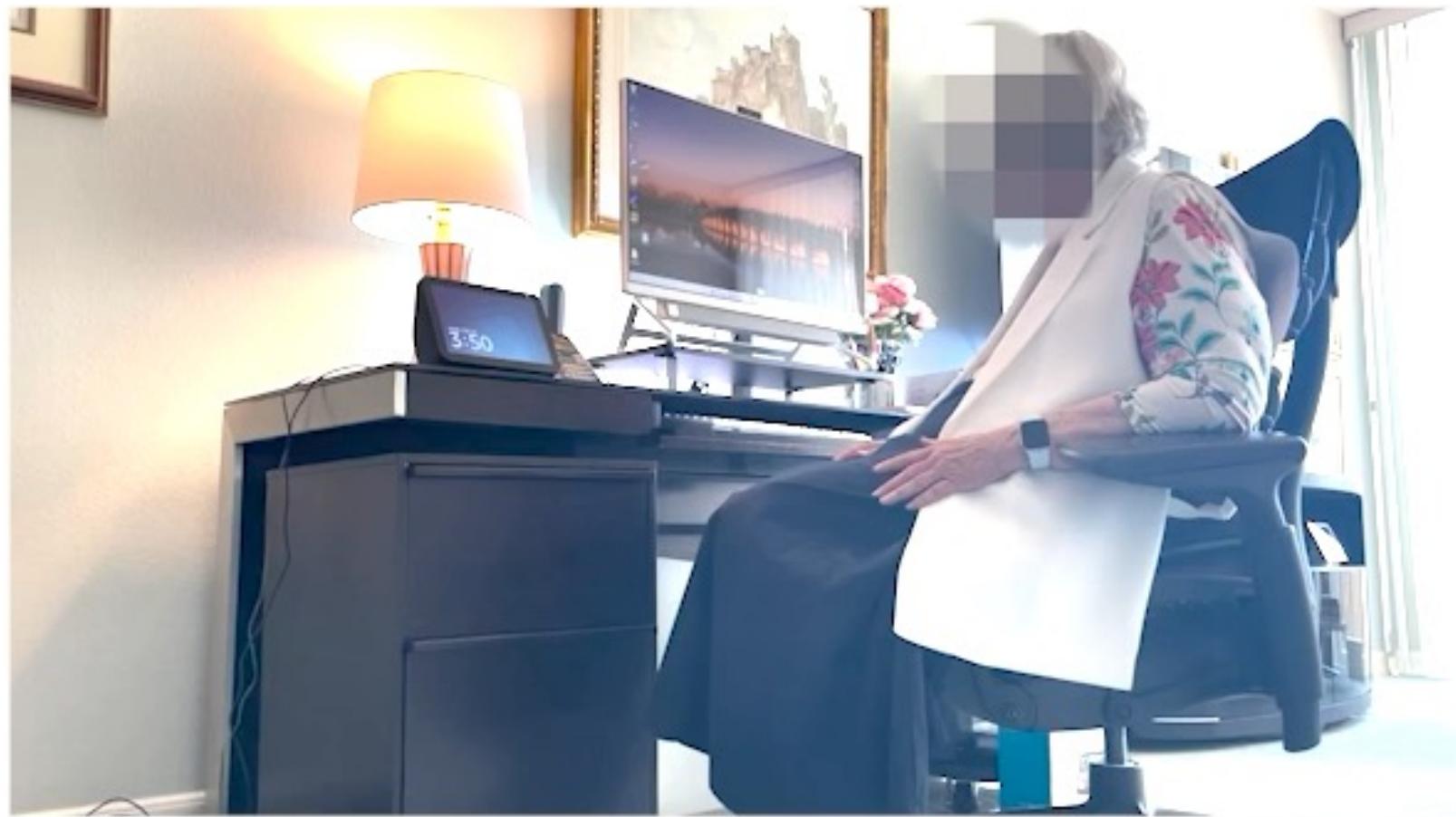




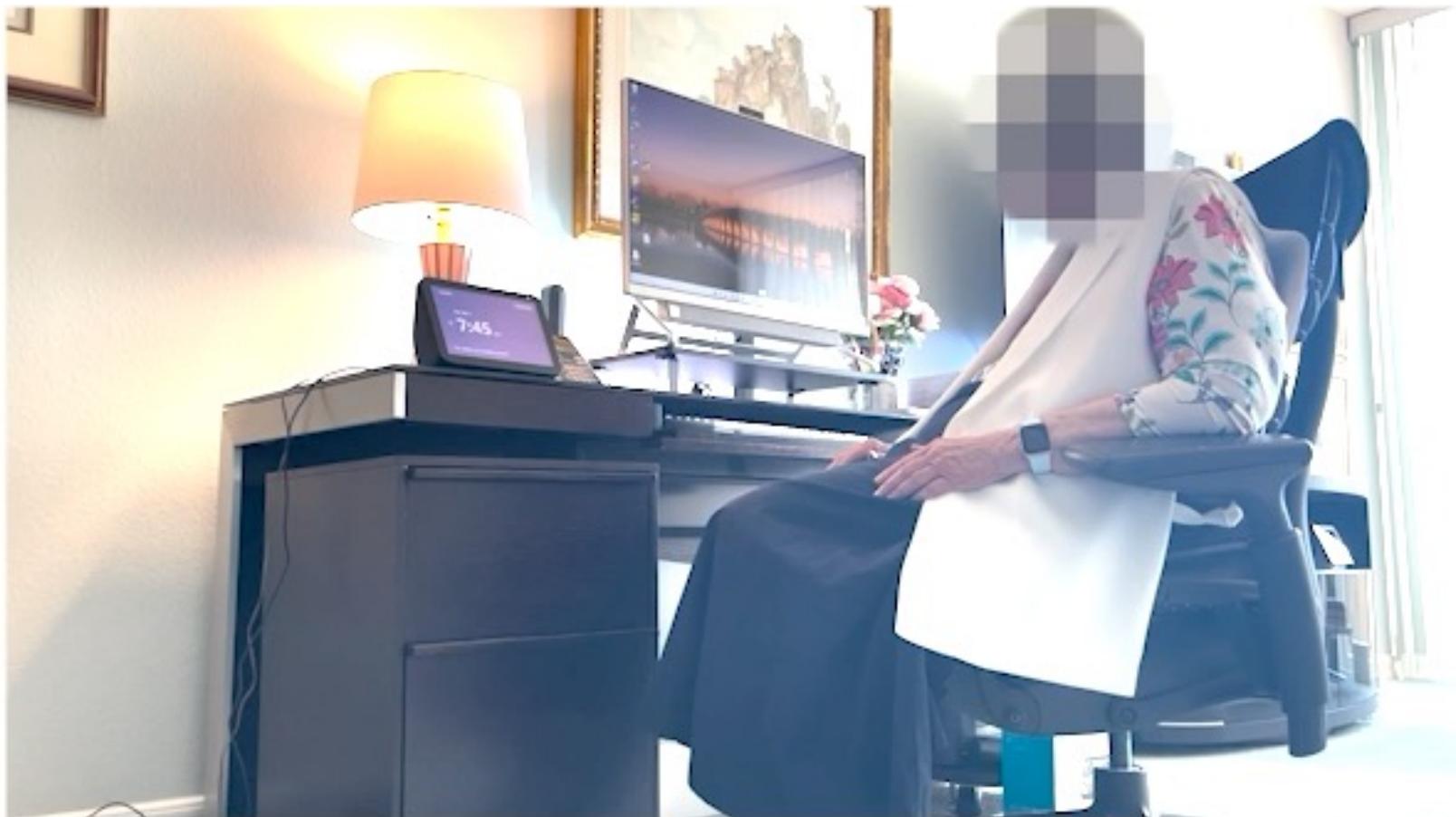


# For Generic Uses with Echo Show

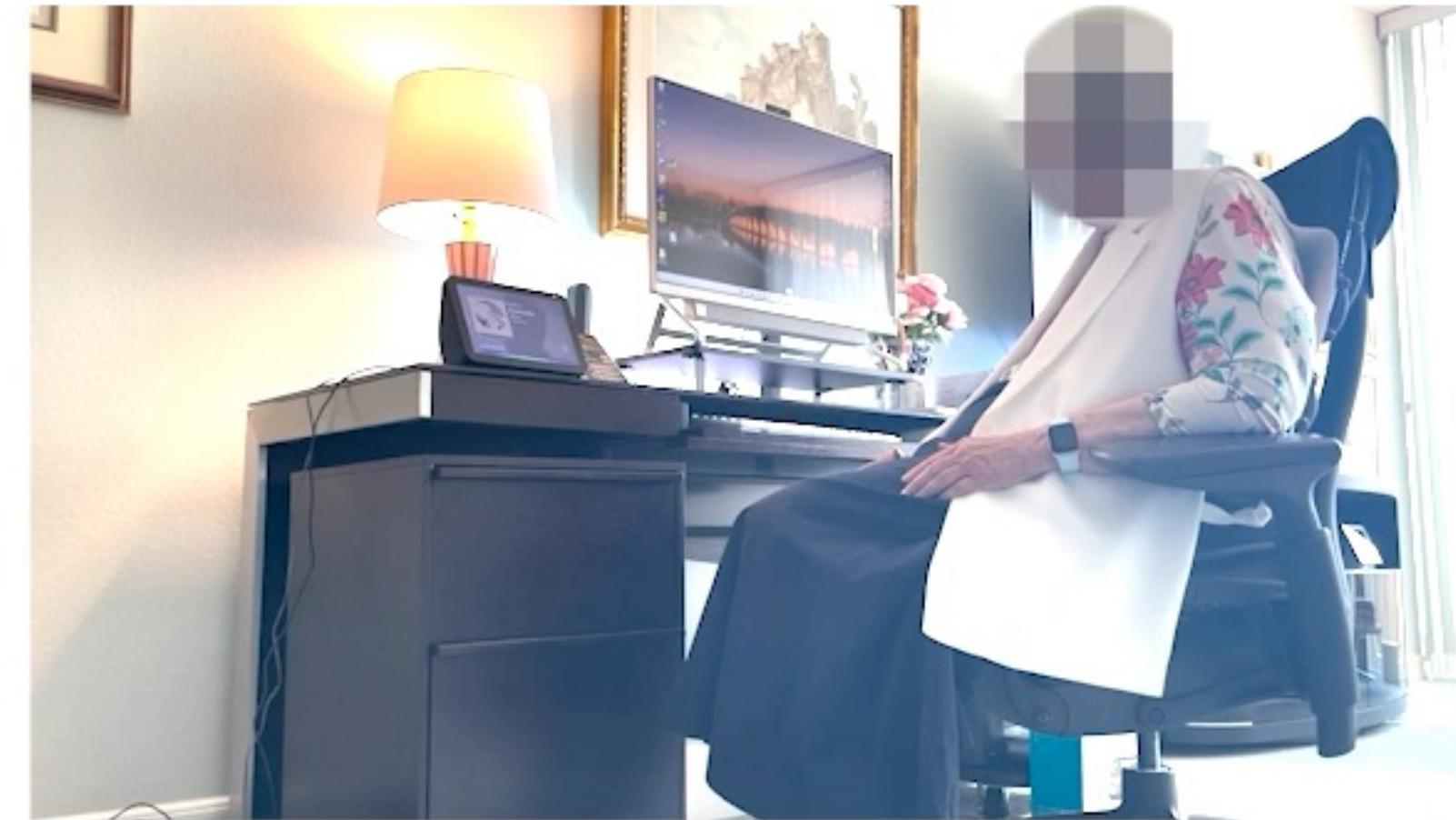
Querying Weather



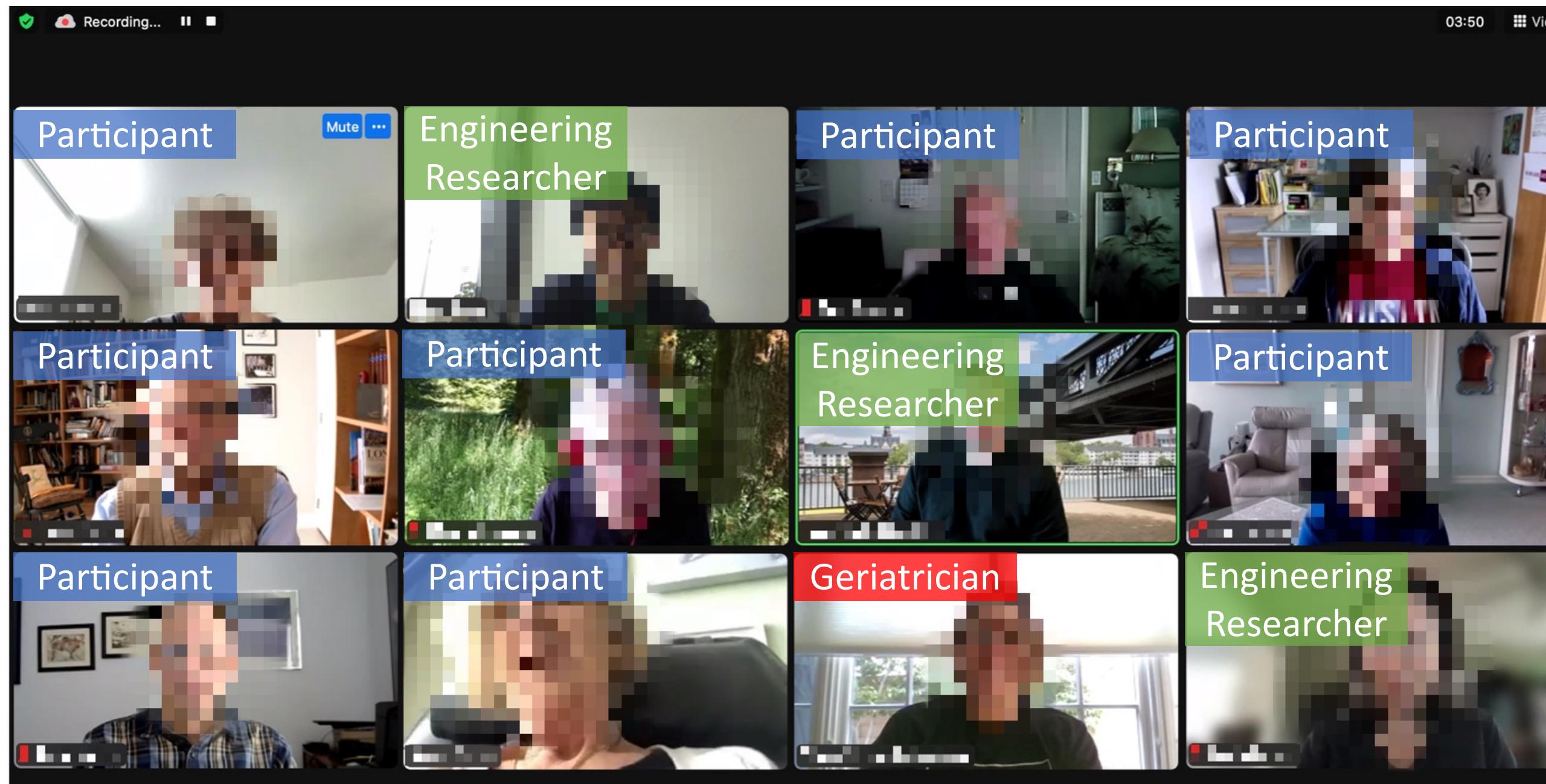
Enjoying Music



Listening to News

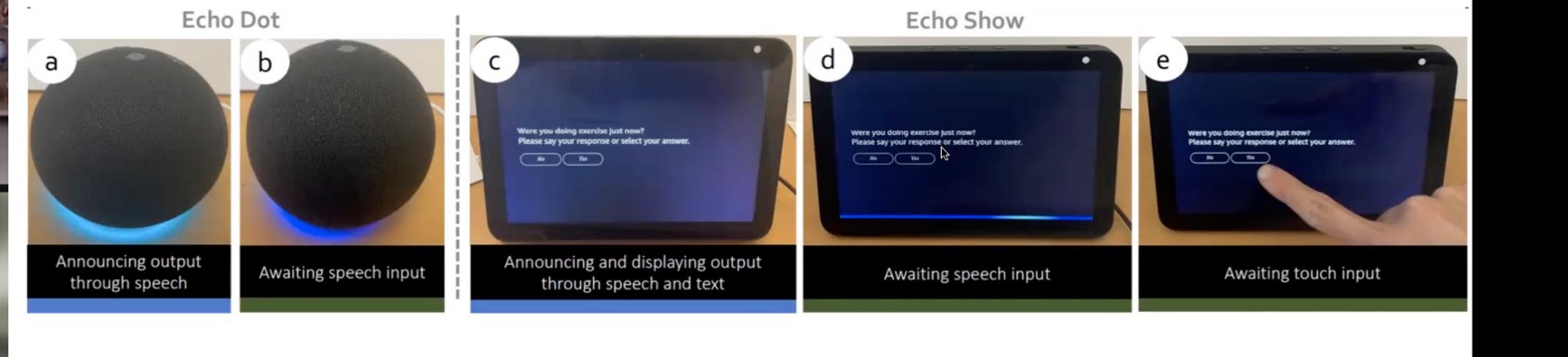


# Phase 4: Online Focus Groups



Input responses by “Touching” and “Speaking”

Which one would you prefer? And Why?



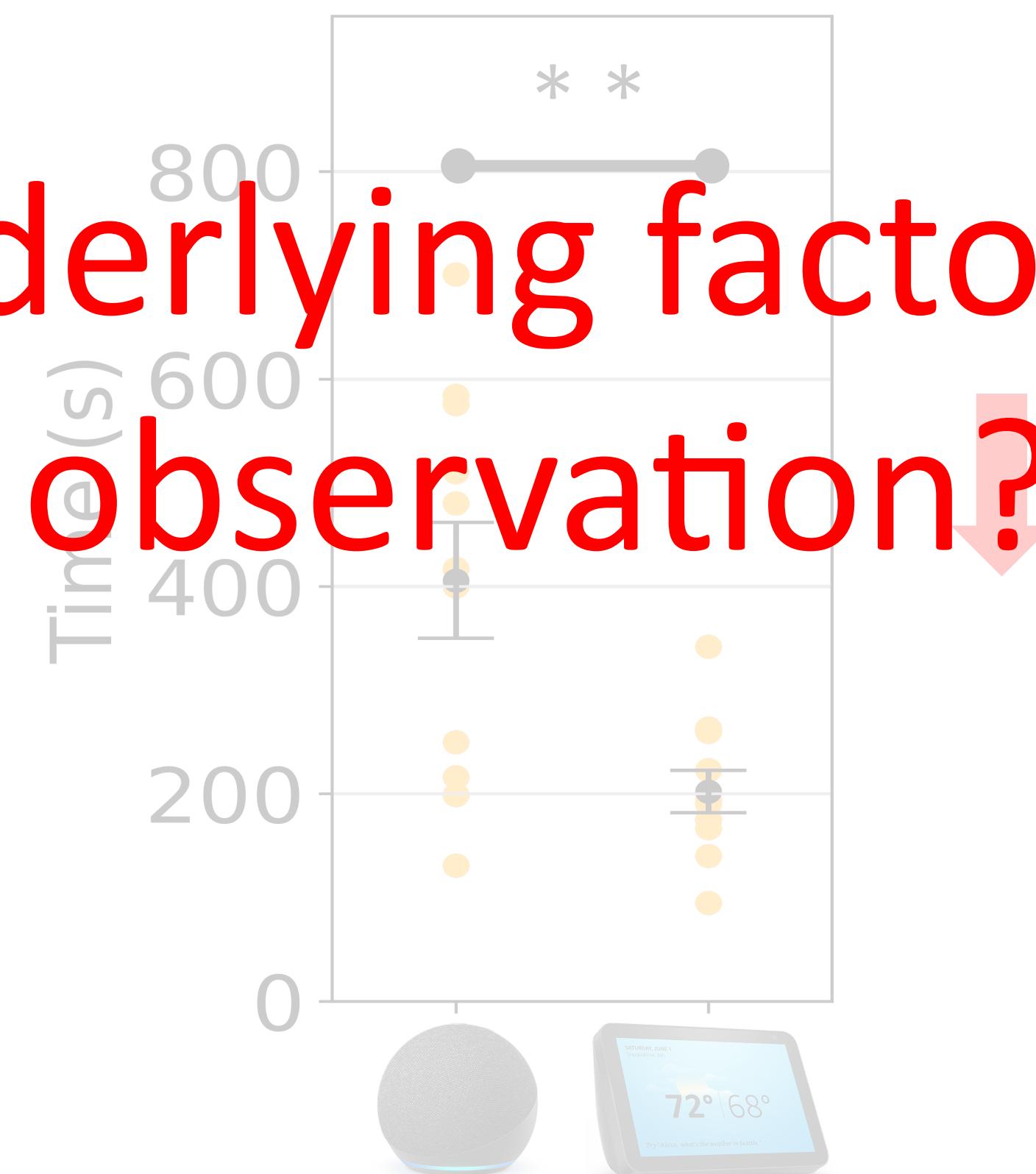
# Key Findings

RQ1: How does the touchscreen affect the older adults' experience of setting up devices?

The built-in touchscreen enables a faster standalone VA setups

What are underlying factors driving this observation?

Overall Task Completion Time



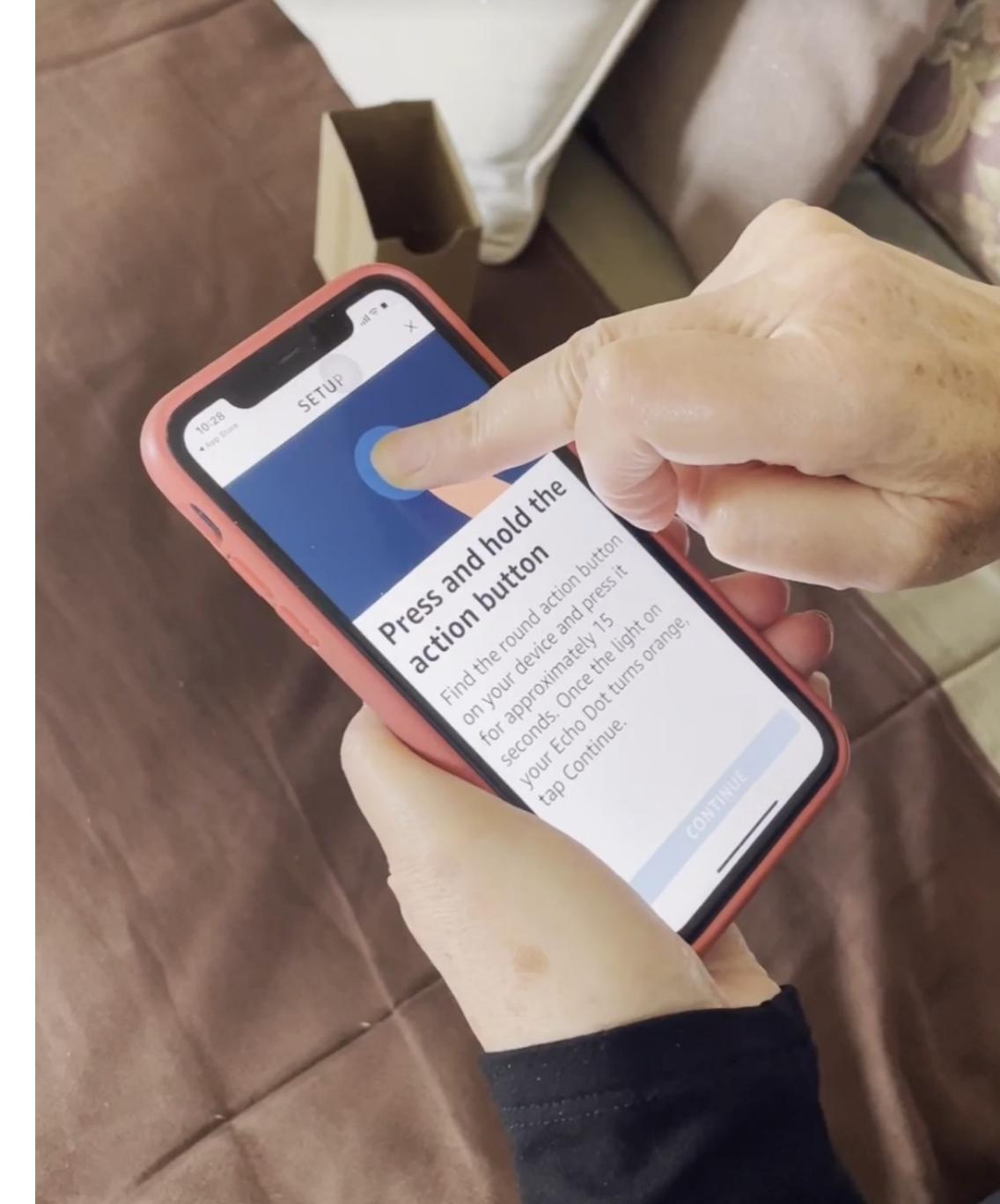
# The built-in touchscreen enables a faster standalone VA setups

- Immediate and In-Situ Visual Feedback on Built-In Touchscreen is Helpful and Indispensable

This is Correct 😊



This is Incorrect 😞

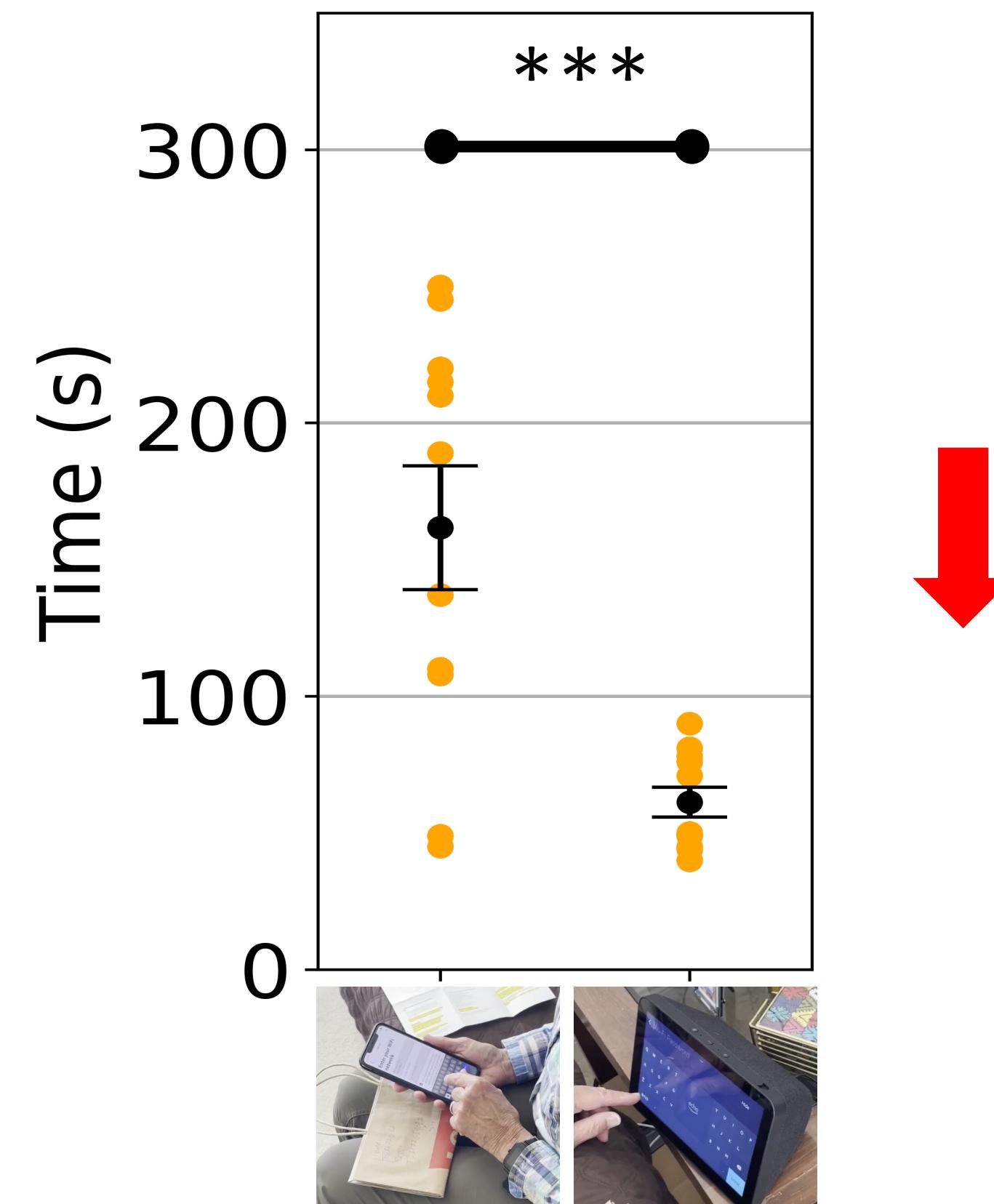


This is Incorrect 😞



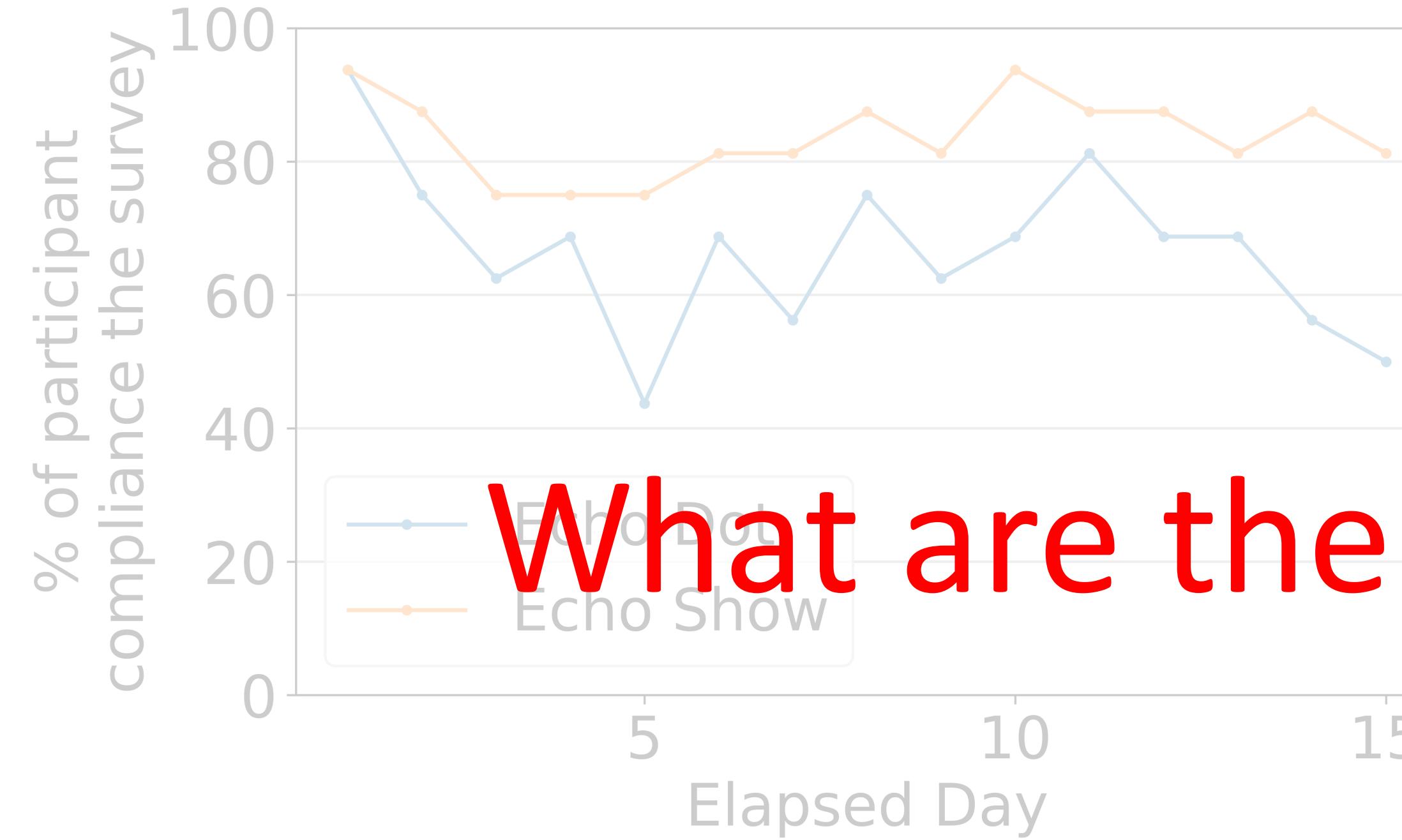
# The built-in touchscreen enables a faster standalone VA setups

- Immediate and In-Situ Visual Feedback on Built-In Touchscreen is Helpful and Indispensable
- Typing login credentials on built-in touchscreen is faster than smartphone

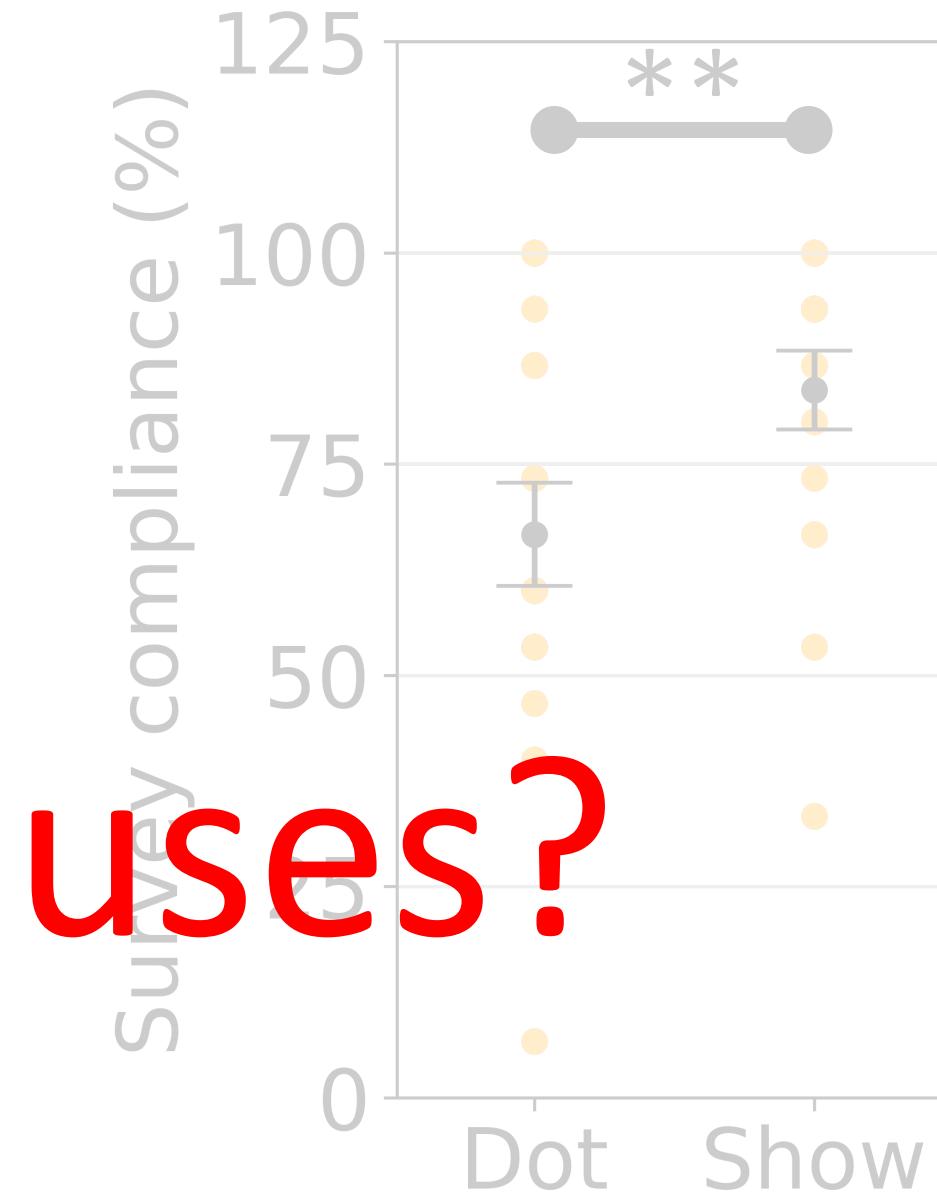


RQ2: How does the touchscreen affect the older adults' experience while conducting self-report diary survey?

# The built-in touchscreen increase the survey compliances



**What are the causes?**



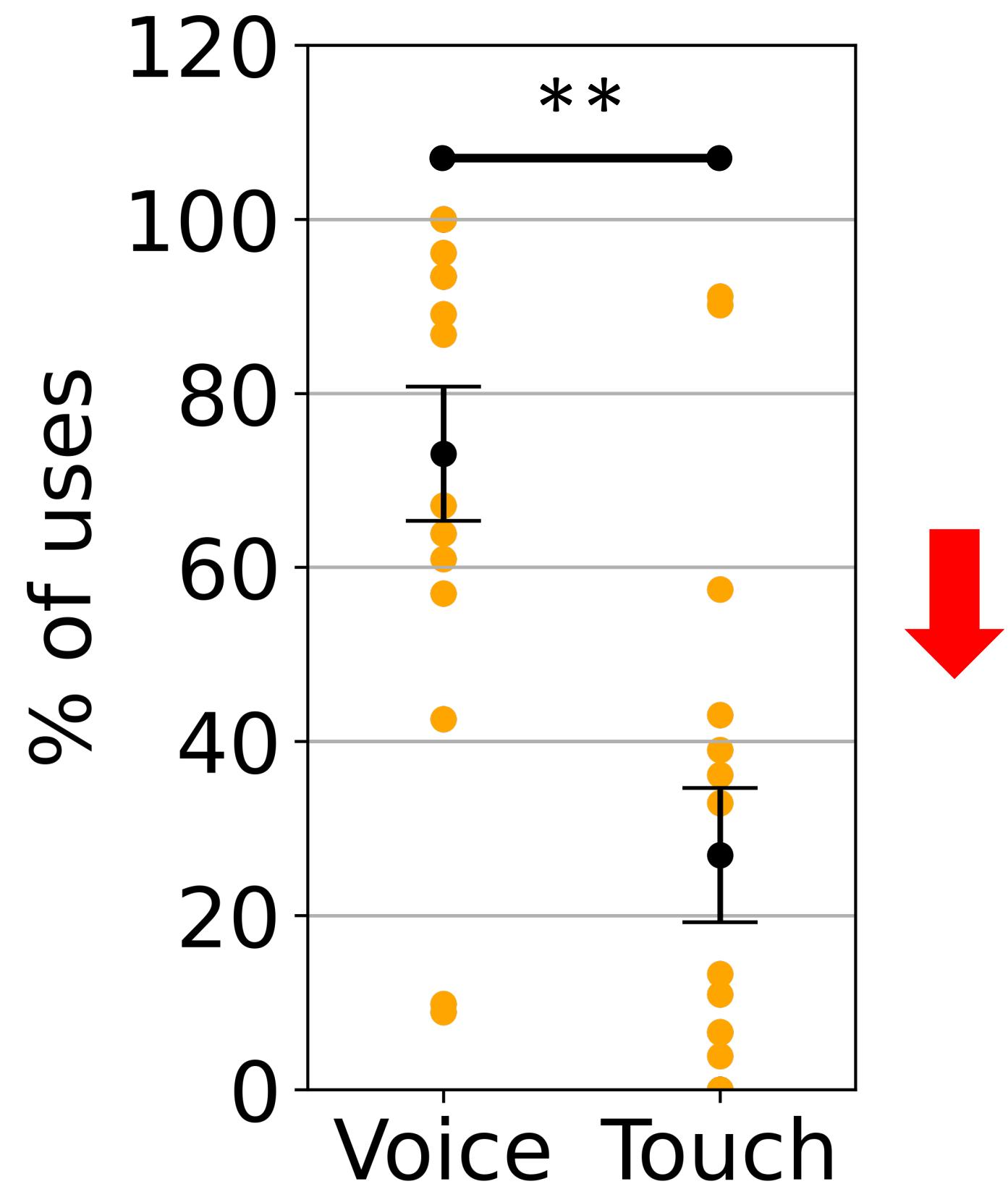
*“I just put my [Echo Show] on the desk and I usually [completed the daily diaries] as long as I saw it. But there were couple of days missing when my desk was super messy and had my Echo Dot covered up by papers” (P13)*

Touch input is faster than speech input

Is the user experience of touch input truly superior to that of speech input?



# Voice input was still preferred than touch

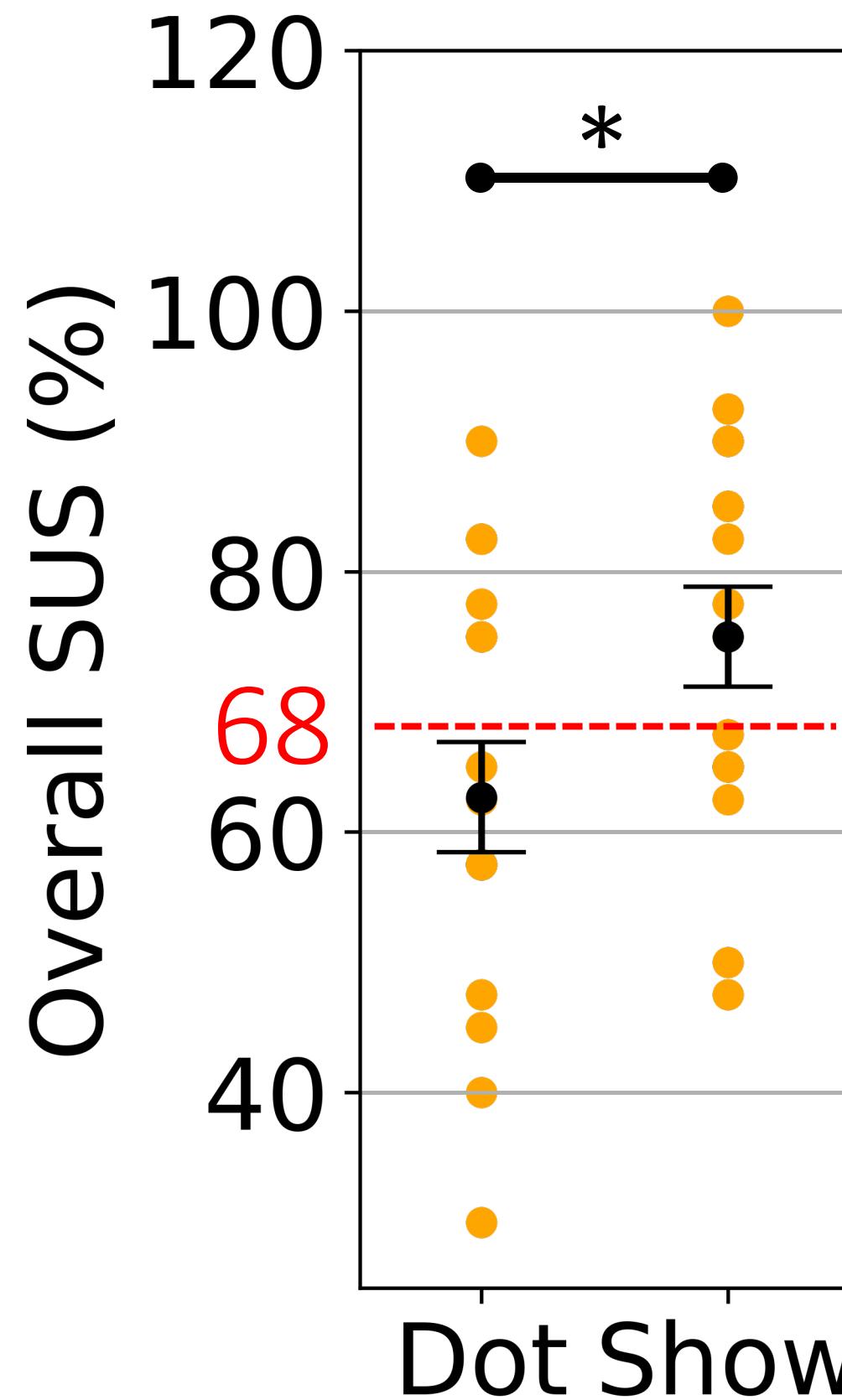


- Out of arms' reach & inconveniences caused by mobility impairment
- Unpleasant visual experience caused by discernable splotches with touch

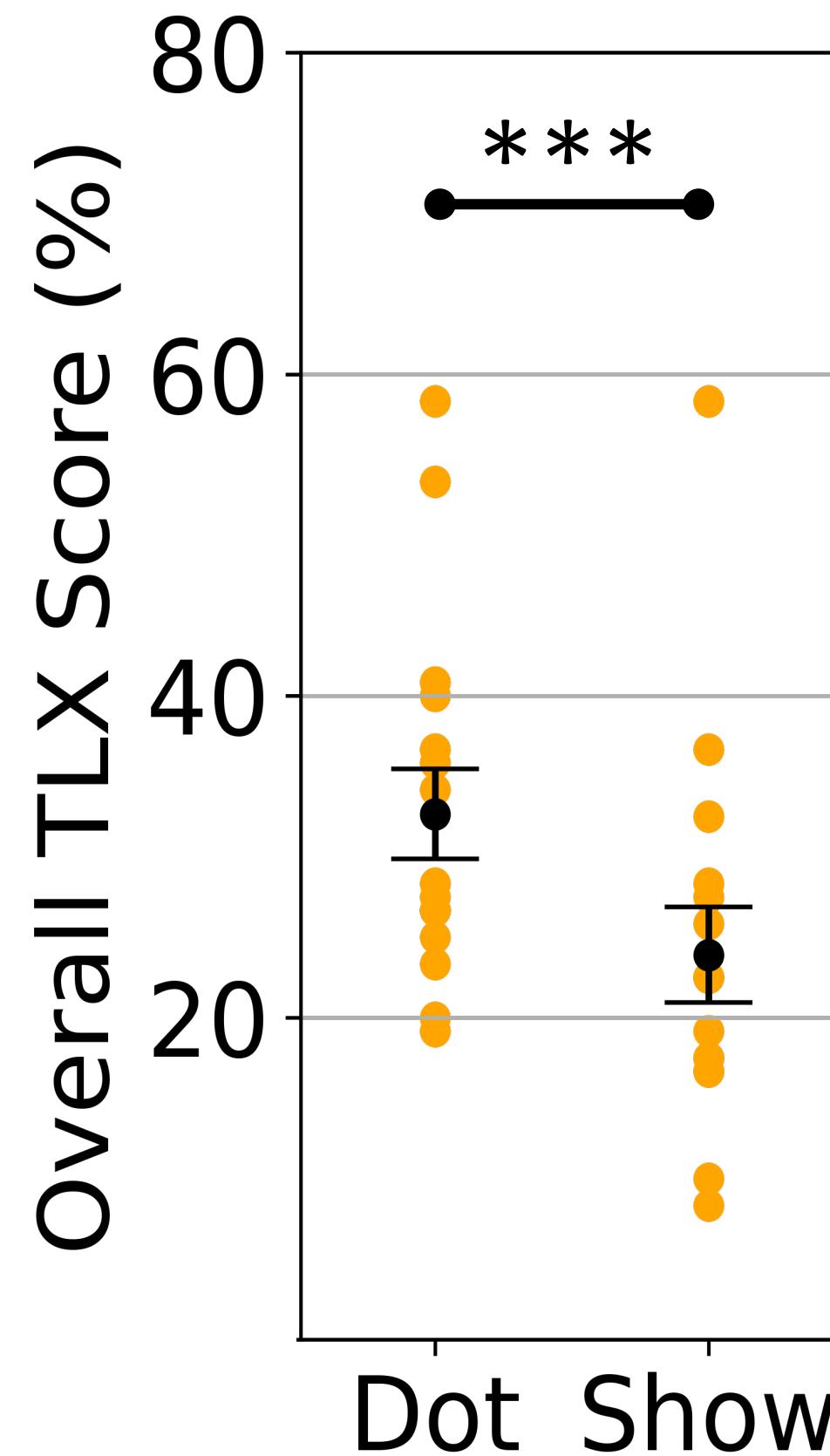
RQ3: How does the touchscreen affect the older adults' experience of general uses?

Overall, the built-in touchscreen was preferred for general uses

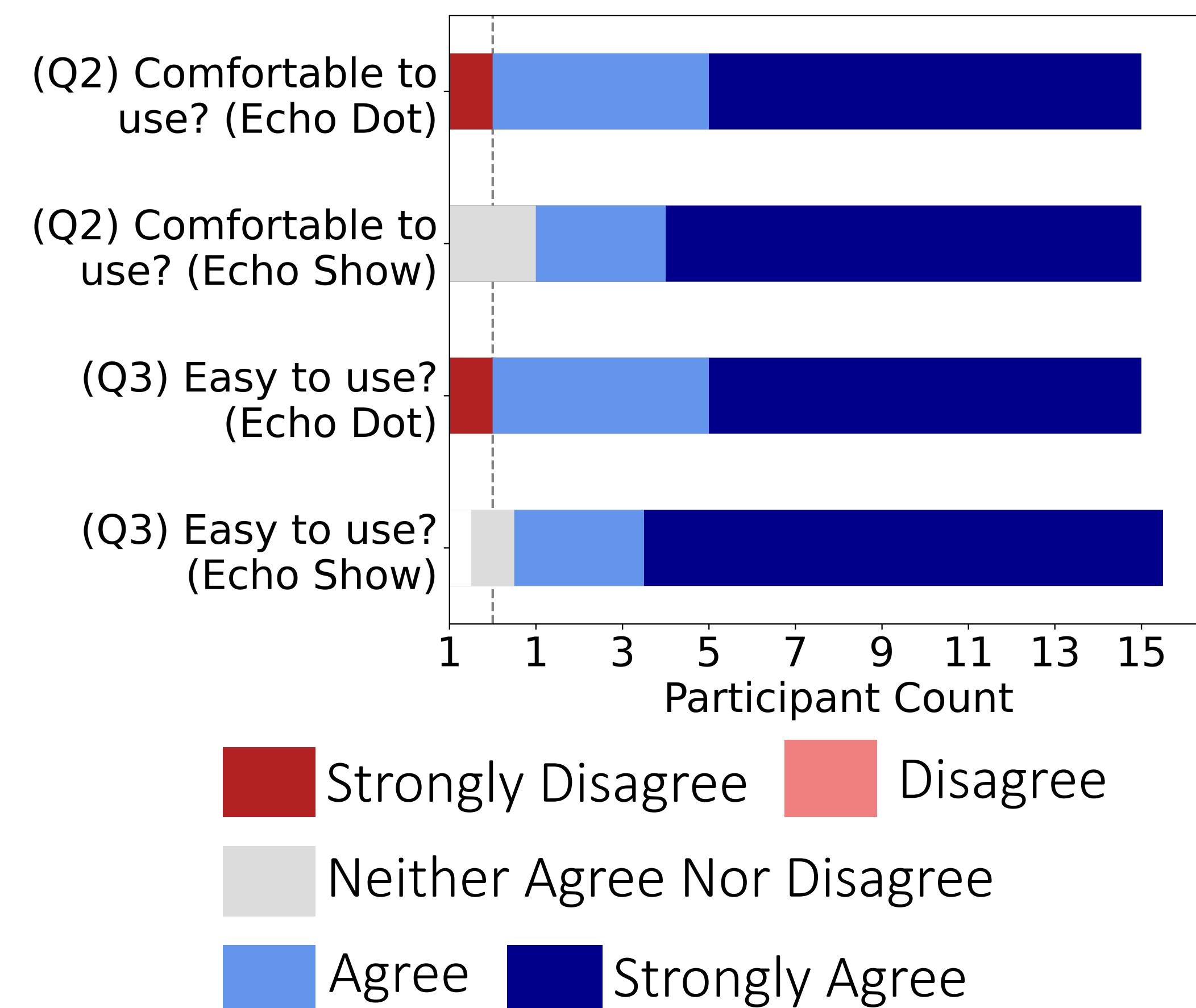
System Usability



Cognitive Workload



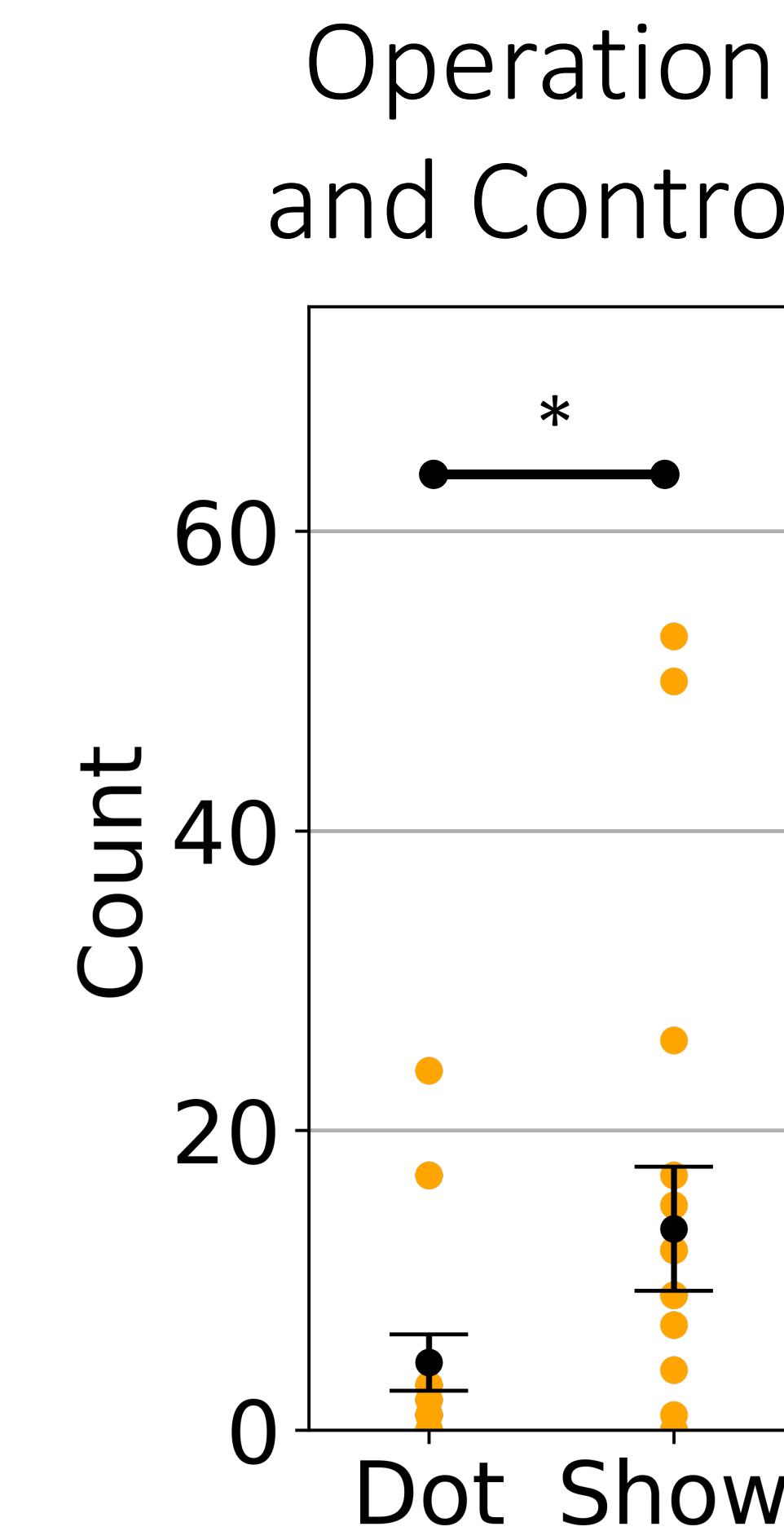
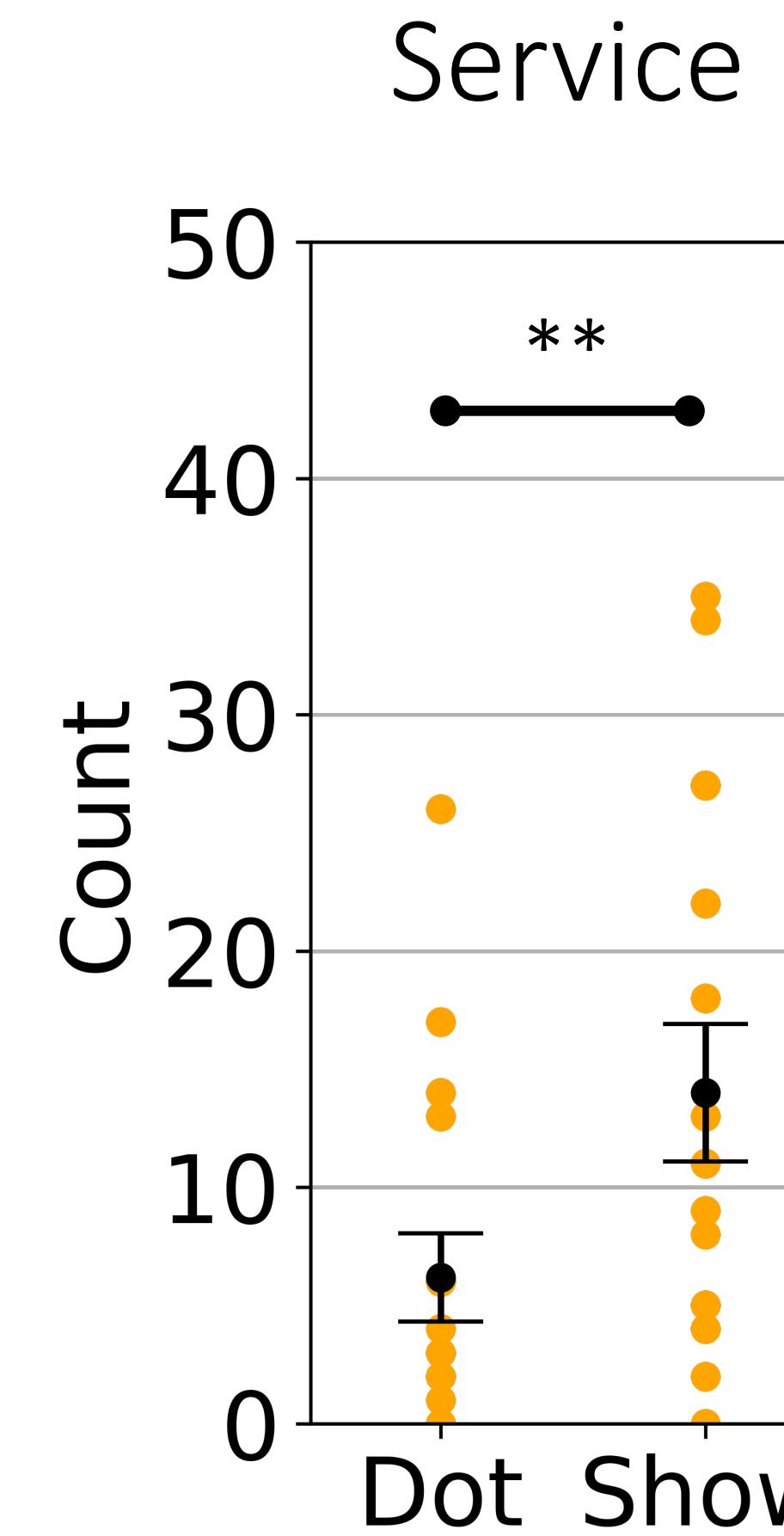
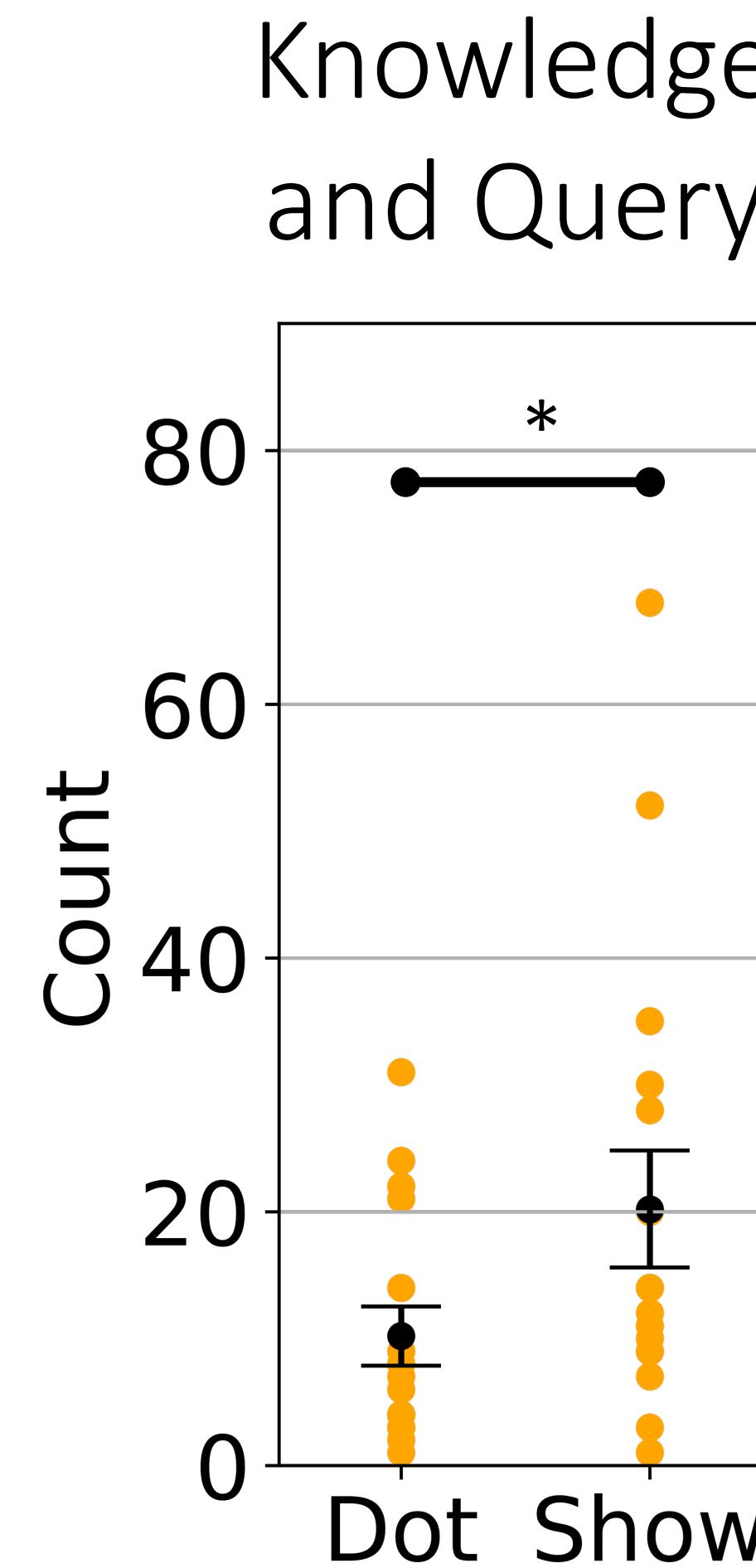
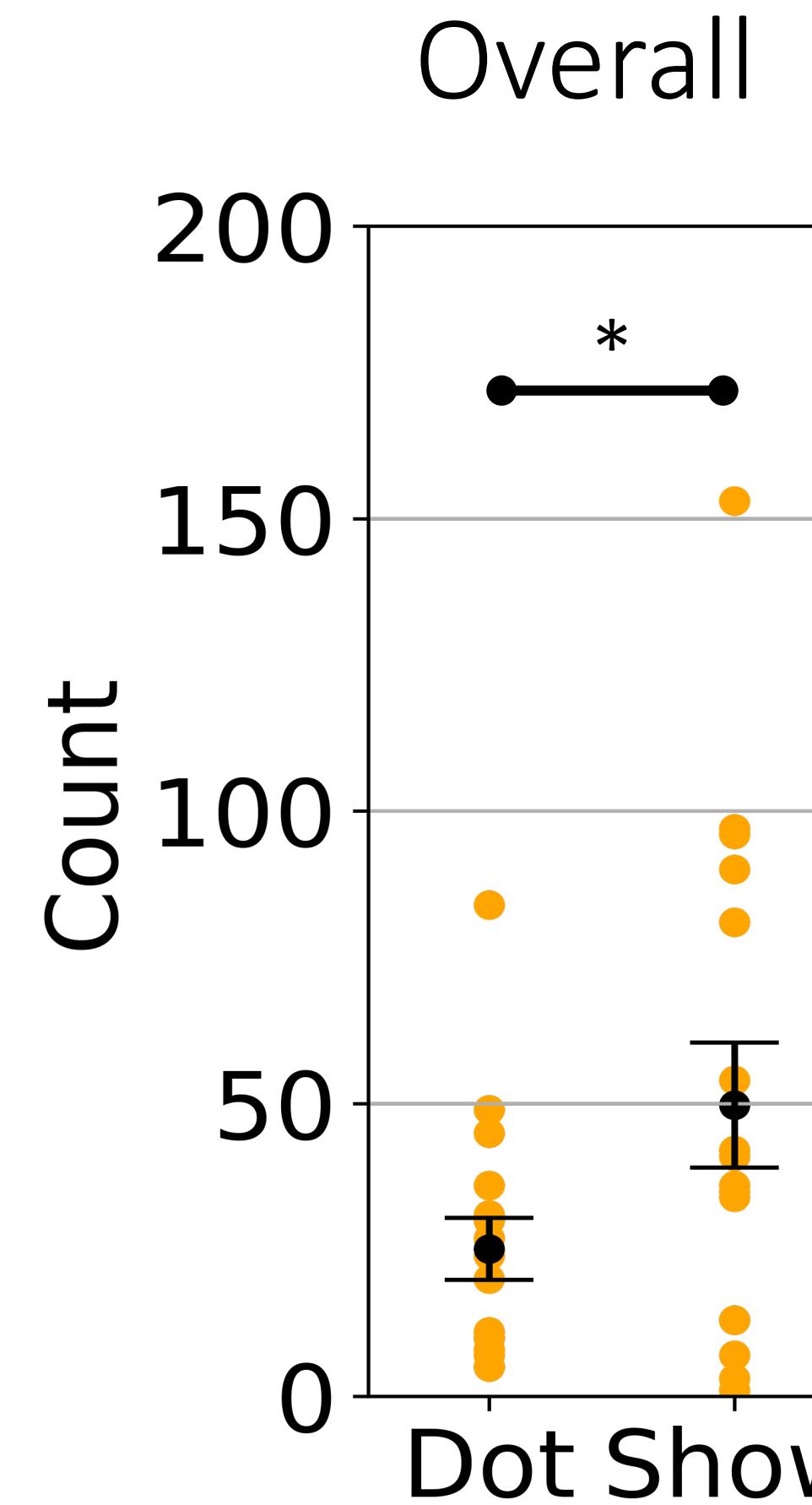
Comfortability and Ease of Use



# Touchscreens foster a greater inclination among older adults to explore and utilize voice assistants more frequently

Theme	Code
Chat	Greetings, Jokes and Fun Questions Weather and Temperature, Time and Date, Spelling, Defining Terms, Restaurant, Use of Devices, Sports, Shopping, Travel, Cooking, Books, Stock & Investment, Health Information, City & Public Services, Entertainment Related Questions, Interactive Games, Others
Knowledge Query	
Service	Alarm, Music, Movies and Videos, News, Shopping List, Reminder, Calendar, Timer, Calling
Operation and Control	Device Control, Pinging, Repeat, Other Operation and Control Queries

Touchscreens foster a greater inclination among older adults to explore and utilize voice assistants more frequently



# Benefits of visual output enabled by built-in touchscreen

- Auxiliary elements that are not announced by the voice output
- Feature suggestions delivered visually
- Persistent visual information such as time and weather
- Explicit visual output for creating a sense of companionship

# Key Takeaways

- During device setup, inputting information through built-in touchscreen is favored due to immediate and *in situ* feedback, as well as larger physical size for typing support.
- During long-term uses, although older adults favor visual output, speech input remains the preferred method of interaction.
- While speech input + visual output is promising for supporting older adults to conduct self-report diary surveys, designing integrated reminders are essentials for standalone voice assistants.



# Special Acknowledgement

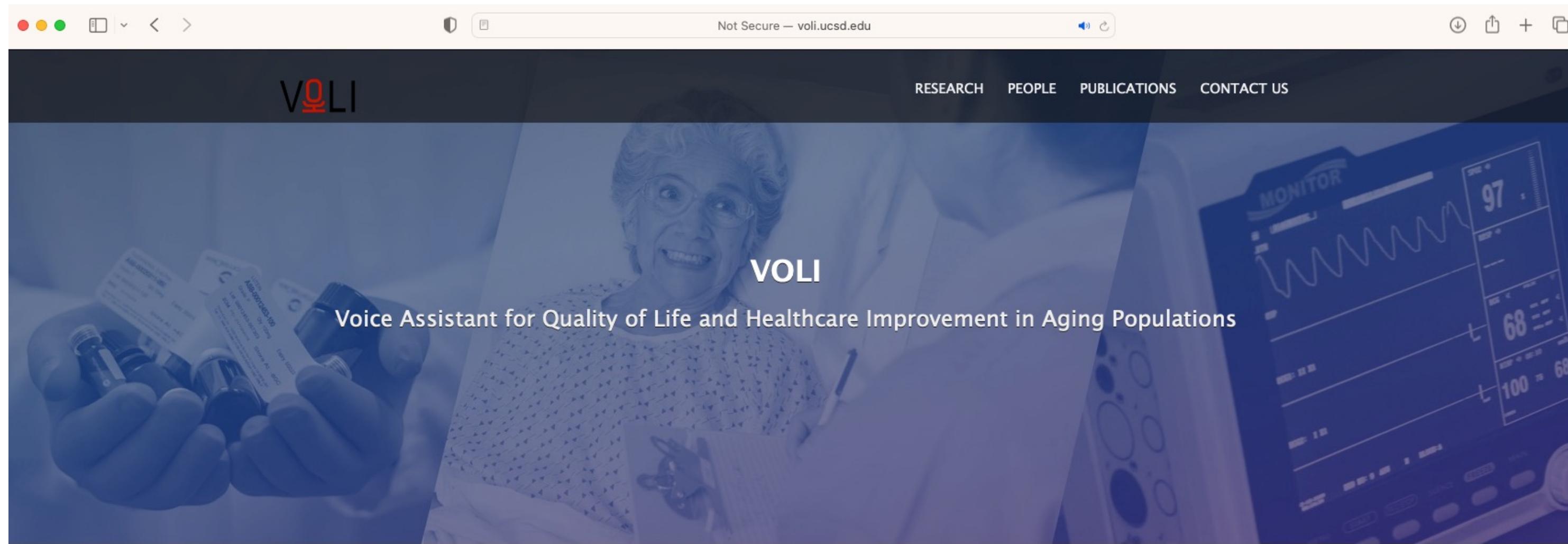


Mary Draper, MPA



For More Detail, Please Refer to Our Paper!

# Project Website: VOLI.UCSD.EDU

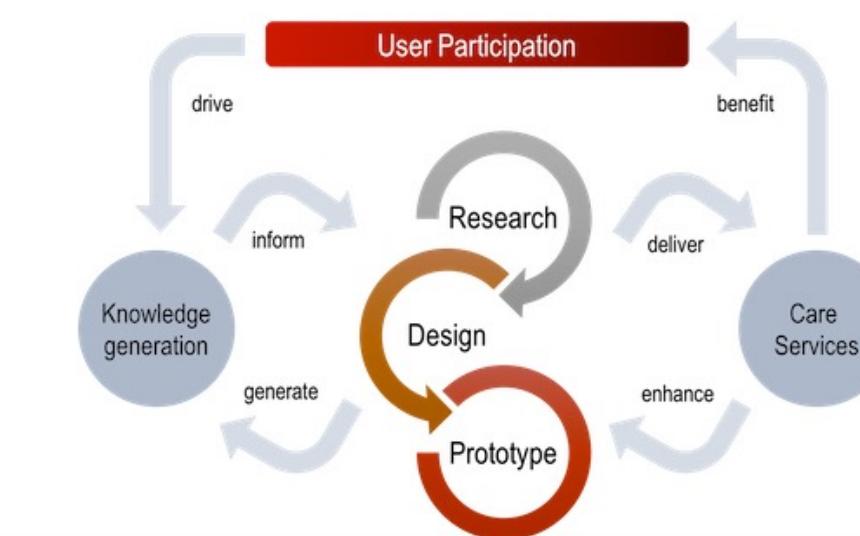


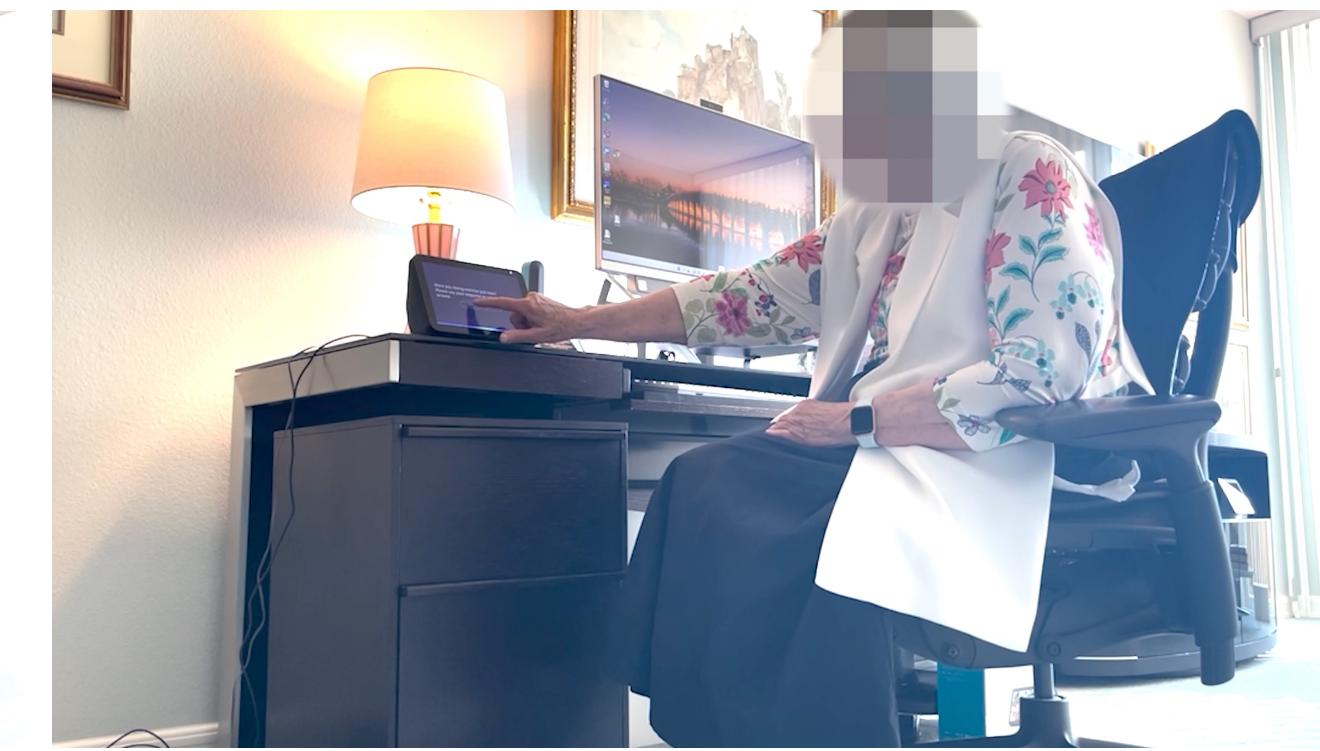
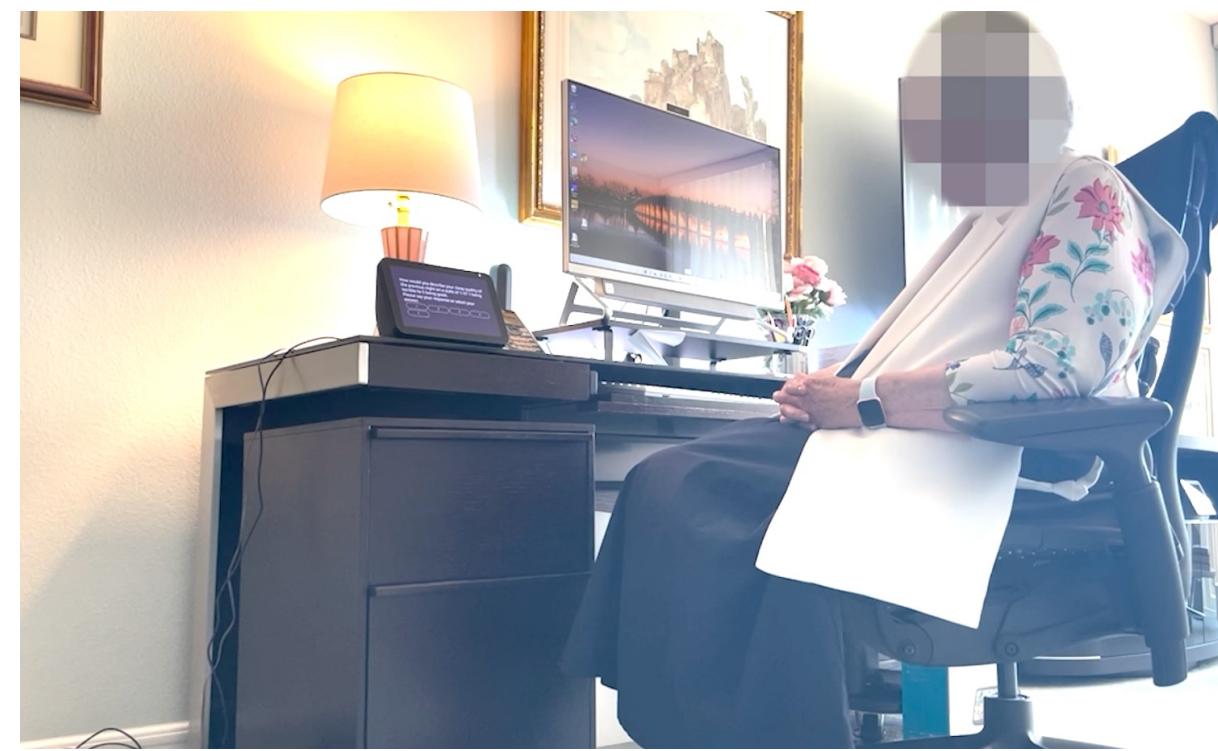
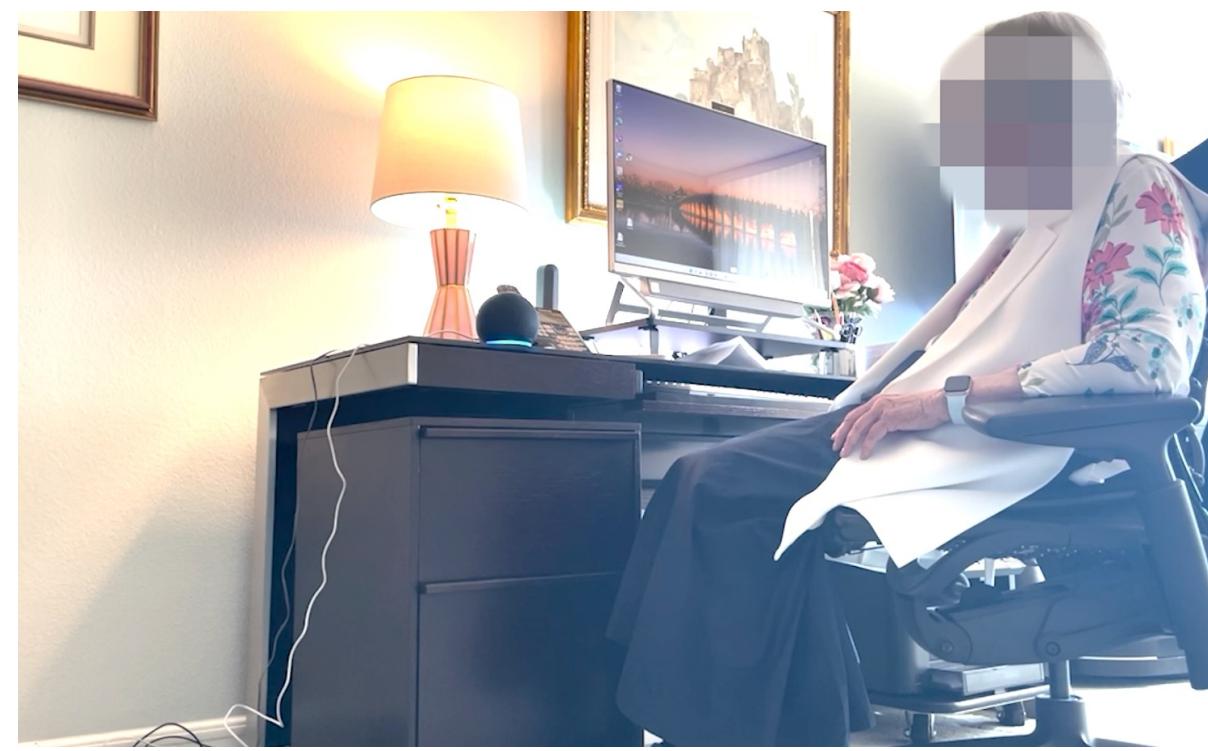
## Research

According to the latest US Census Bureau predictions, by 2035 older people are projected to outnumber children for the first time in US history. This brings significant societal challenges based on their unique living and health-related conditions stemming from reduced sensory, motor, and cognitive capabilities, as well as multiple chronic conditions. Technology can play a pivotal role in meeting the needs of older adults in ways that preserve their independence. *Voice* represents a natural choice for interaction between an aging individual and their caregivers, social networks, and healthcare providers, and it becomes key for those with visual or mobility impairment.

We are working on a *personalized and context-aware* voice-based digital assistant to improve the quality of life and the healthcare of older adults, and consequently, to reduce caregiving burden and optimize the interactions with healthcare and service providers.

We strive for innovations in natural language understanding, deep learning, and human-computer interfaces that leverage information from EHRs, clinical ontologies, and novel patient-level terminologies to support among others the clinical use case of detecting symptom changes and medication side effects.





Manuscript 



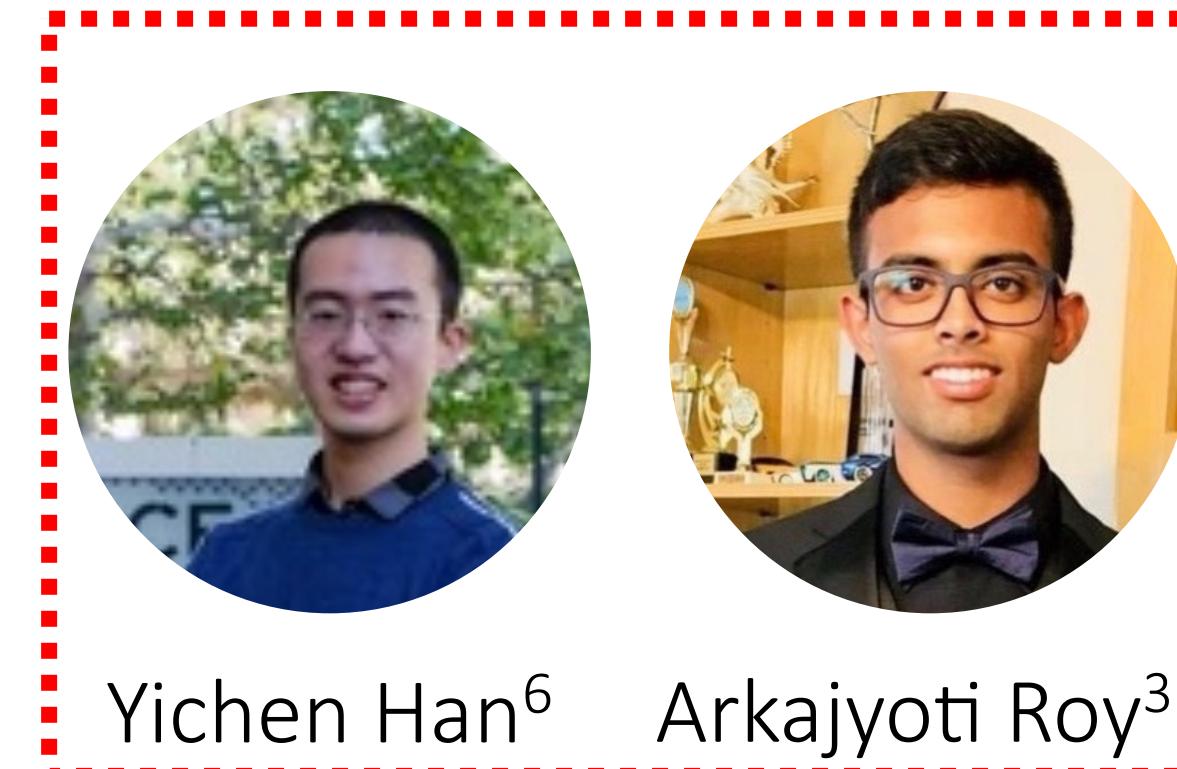
# Screen or No Screen?

Lessons Learned from a Real-World Deployment Study of Using Voice Assistants With and Without Touchscreen for Older Adults



Chen Chen<sup>1</sup>

Ella T. Lifset<sup>2</sup>



Yichen Han<sup>6</sup>

Arkajyoti Roy<sup>3</sup>



Michael Hogarth<sup>5</sup>



Alison Moore<sup>5</sup>



Emilia Farcas<sup>4</sup>



Nadir Weibel<sup>1</sup>

Email: [chenchen@ucsd.edu](mailto:chenchen@ucsd.edu) Project Website: [voli.ucsd.edu](http://voli.ucsd.edu)

I will be graduating in Summer '25. Feel free let me know for any potential full-time job opportunity!

Yichen Han: [yichenha@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:yichenha@andrew.cmu.edu)  
Arka Roy: [aroy@ucsd.edu](mailto:aroy@ucsd.edu)