

Can Modifying Health Perceptions Improve Physical Health?

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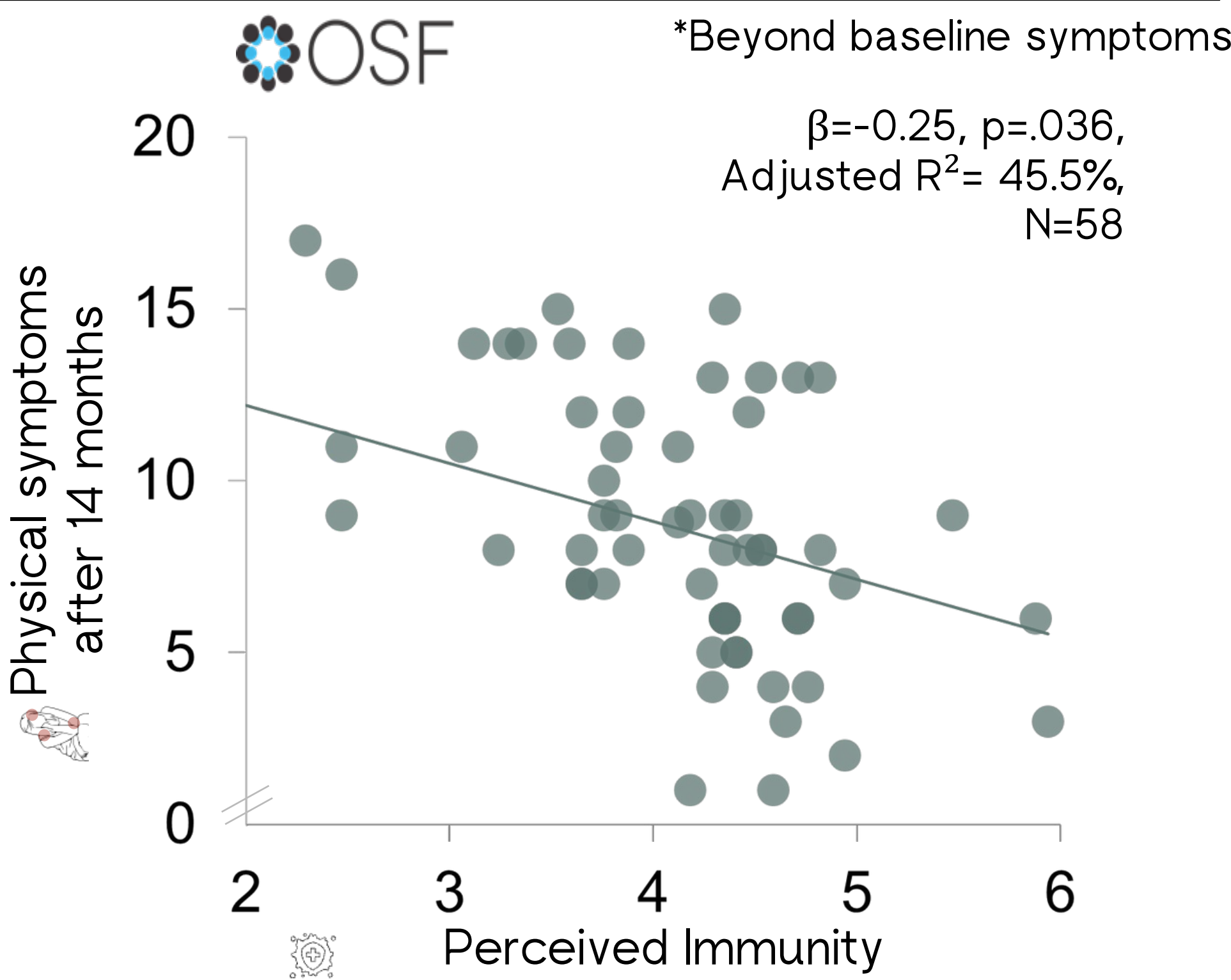
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Perceived Immunity: A Modifiable Health Perception That Predicts Daily Physical Health*

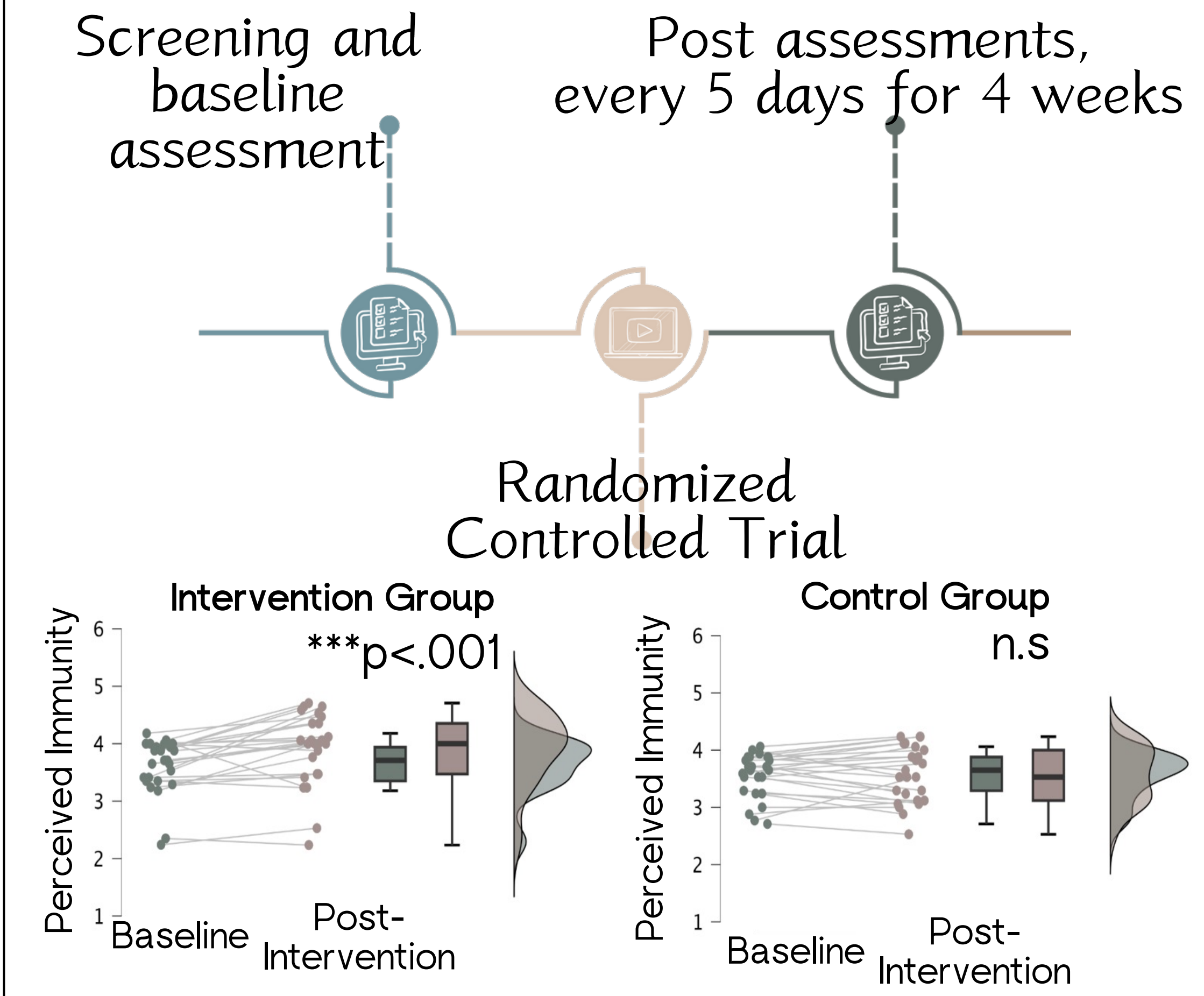
Perceived Immunity: The perceived ability of one's immune system to protect the body against diseases and cope with illness.



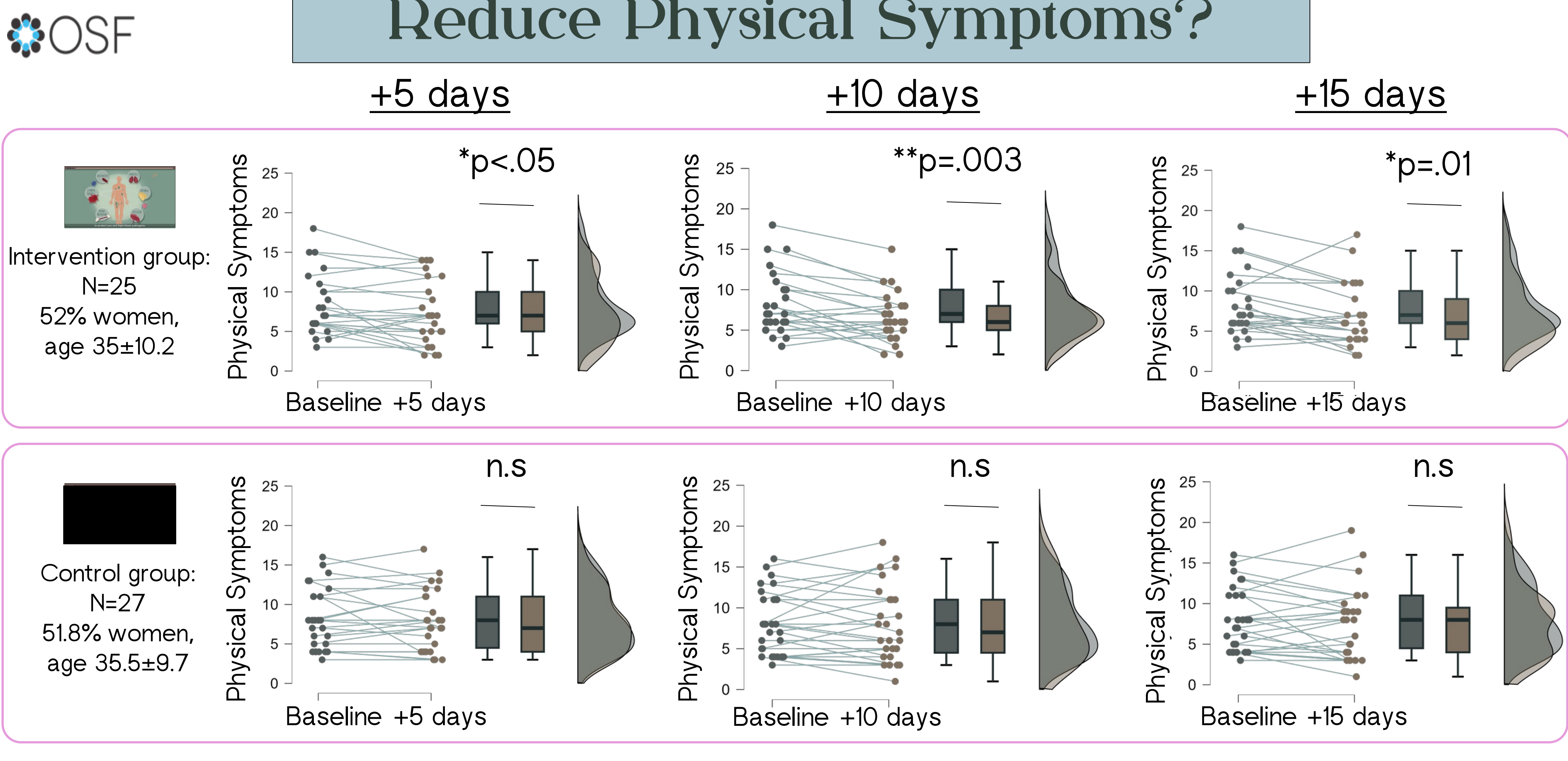
Mizrachi, Kube, Rozenkrantz, 2025



Intervention Increases Perceived Immunity



Does Increased Perceived Immunity Reduce Physical Symptoms?

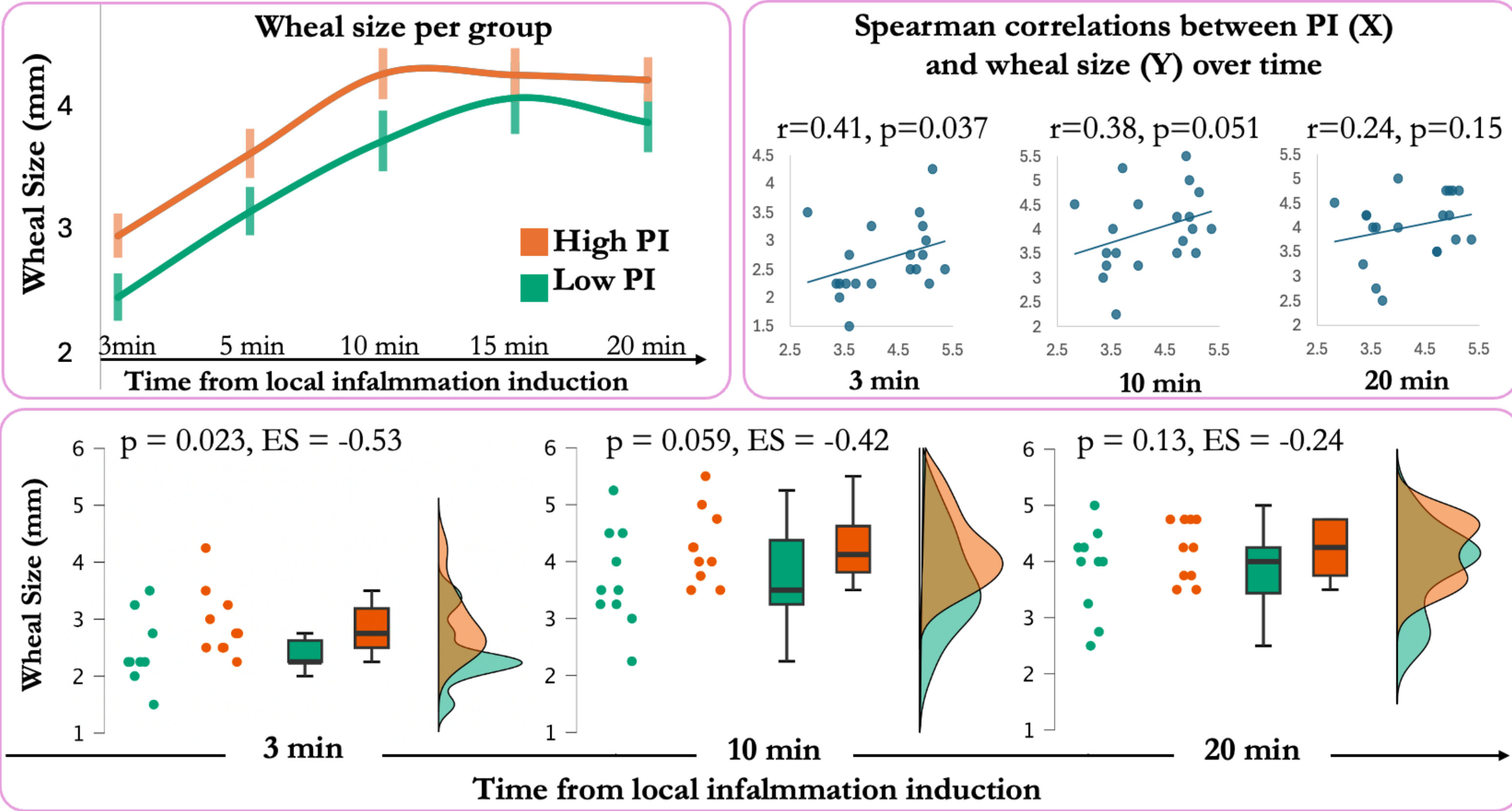
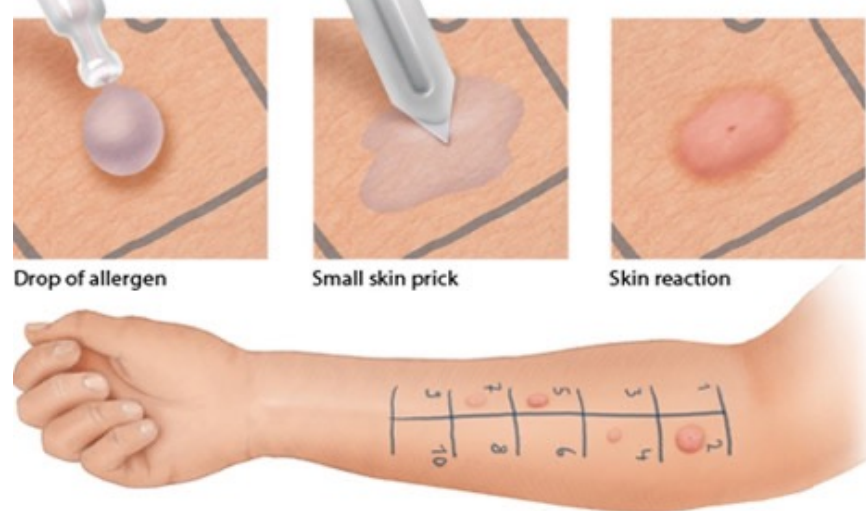


Possible Mechanism? High and Low-PI Groups Display Different Immune Response to Local Inflammation

A pilot between-subject study design, high- and low-PI groups

N = 20 (preliminary):
Low PI: 3.5±0.34 High PI: 5±0.2

Induction of Local Inflammation:
Histamine Skin Prik Test



Conclusions

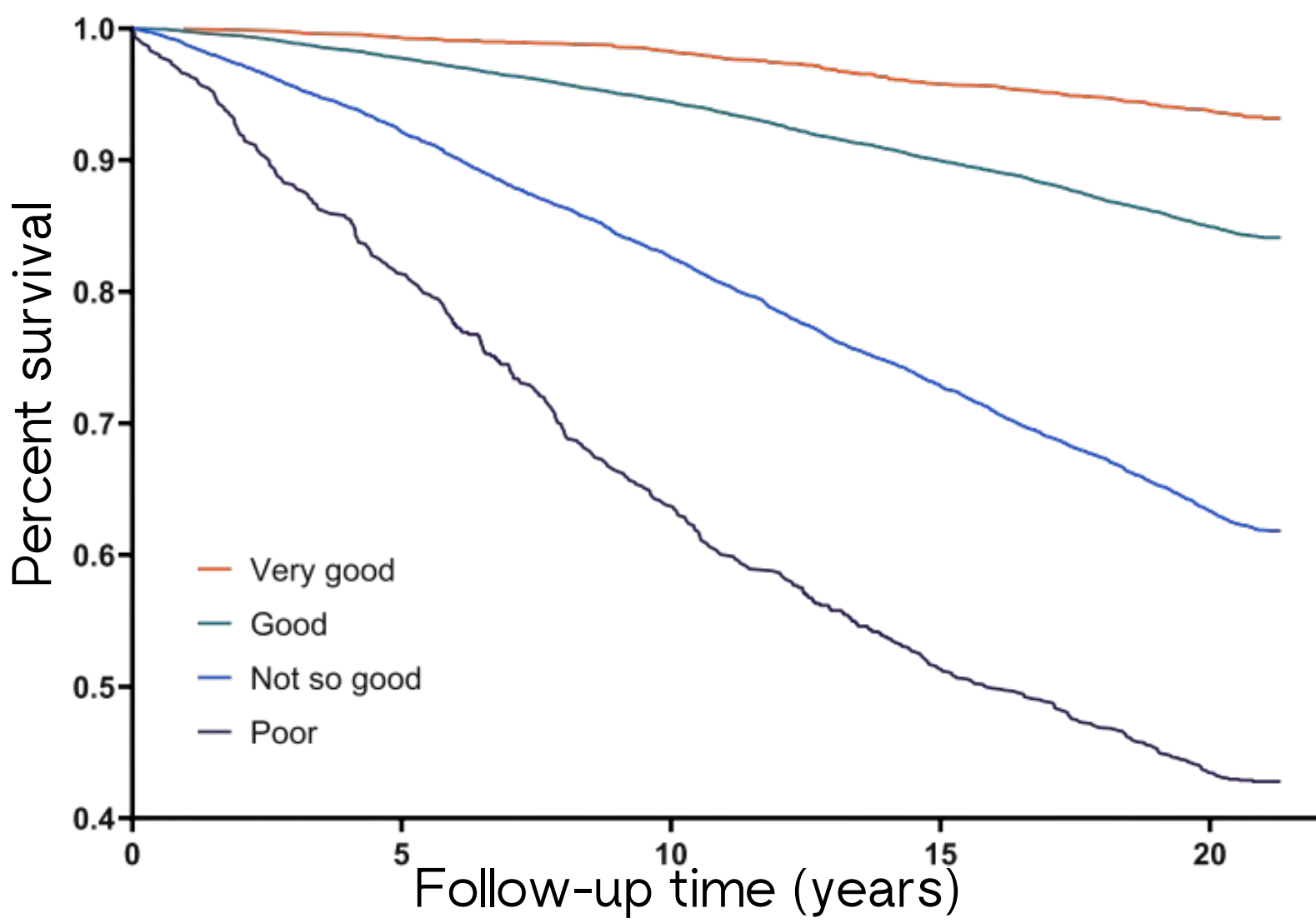
This study provides the first causal evidence for the long-established link between health perception and physical health outcomes.

We identified a novel health perception and developed an intervention to modify it. A short, 2-min videoclip successfully increased perceived immunity and further reduced physical symptoms over time.

Possible mechanisms include altered immune responsivity and should be tested in future studies.

Background & Research Question

For decades, subjective health perceptions have been found to predict health outcomes, over and above objective parameters, such as health status or sociodemographic factors.



Is this link causal?
Can we improve physical health by changing mal-adaptive health perceptions?

Intervention Development

A 2-min animated videoclip conveying evidence-based message about immune system effectiveness in protecting the body.

Clarity and interest validated in N=144.

| Box 1. Key Moment of the Intervention Video-Clip | | |
|--|---|------|
| | Examples of situations in which our body is attacked by pathogens. | 0:00 |
| | Definition and components of the immune system. | 0:19 |
| | The skin as a first layer of defense. | 0:35 |
| | Macrophages as an example of immune cells. | 0:45 |
| | Symptoms indicate the immune system is actively fighting pathogens, with example. | 1:04 |
| | Summary: We can trust our immune system in both health and illness. | 1:31 |