

Empowering Interviewer Training (EIT[®]): Improving the quality of investigative interviews using *serious gaming*

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Current Challenges

- Low quality interviews → Structured protocols & continuous feedback
- Challenges
 - Cost of continuous feedback
 - Effects dissipate after feedback has been discontinued
 - No outcome feedback
 - Connection between open questions and truthful details indirect

Solution: Serious gaming?

- Games designed to teach something to someone
- Reproduce real life situations in a virtual and protected environment



Eurofighter E-ACPT 3
Enhanced A-trace Combat



Why not in psychology?



Empowering

Interviewer

Training

Solution: Serious gaming?

- Realistic simulation of interviews using avatars
 - Abuse and non-abuse scenarios
 - Predefined details in avatar memory
 - Research based algorithms determine avatar responses
 - Feedback on question types & outcome

Example algorithm

- Option-posing questions regarding details ***not*** in avatar memory (6-year-old child)

1st: “No”

2nd: “No”

3rd: “Yes”

Hypotheses

Validity of algorithms

Open questions:

Relevant details ↑

Wrong details ↓

Correct conclusions ↑

Closed questions:

Relevant details ↓

Wrong details ↑

Correct conclusions ↓

Effect of feedback

Open questions ↑

Closed questions ↓

Relevant details ↑

Wrong details ↓

Correct conclusions ↑

Participants ($N = 21$)

- 24.5 years ($SD = 1.6$)
- Feedback
 - Yes, $n = 10$
 - No, $n = 11$
- 4 interviews/participant
 - ➔ $N = 84$ interviews

Avatars ($N = 8$)

- Abuse
 - No, $n = 4$
 - Yes, $n = 4$
- Gender
 - Boys, $n = 4$
 - Girls, $n = 4$
- Emotional
 - No, $n = 4$
 - Yes, $n = 4$
- Age ← Different algorithms
 - 4 yrs, $n = 4$
 - 6 yrs, $n = 4$

Procedure

- Scenario given
- Interview (max. 10 min)
- Feedback (only in the feedback group)

Example scenario (Ilaria)

- Ilaria's (6 yrs) parents are divorced and she lives with her father, her brother Paolo (2 yrs) and her step-mother Sabrina. Ilaria's mother has a psychiatric problem.
- Ilaria's mother suspects sexual abuse and also claims that the stepmother is violent towards the children. The mother claims that Ilaria has reluctantly confessed to her that Sabrina forced her to do things that she did not like and that Ilaria was to keep secret.

Example of details in avatar memory (Ilaria)

- I was afraid that mom would be mad.
- I do not like to touch the bottom of Paolo.
- It is dirty.
- We have done things that mom would not like.
- Ilaria feels bad.
- Sabrina is a bad person who makes Ilaria do things Ilaria does not like to do.
- **We put a photograph of mom in the box.**



NO

NO

YES

(Int):Your Mom is out there

Feedback

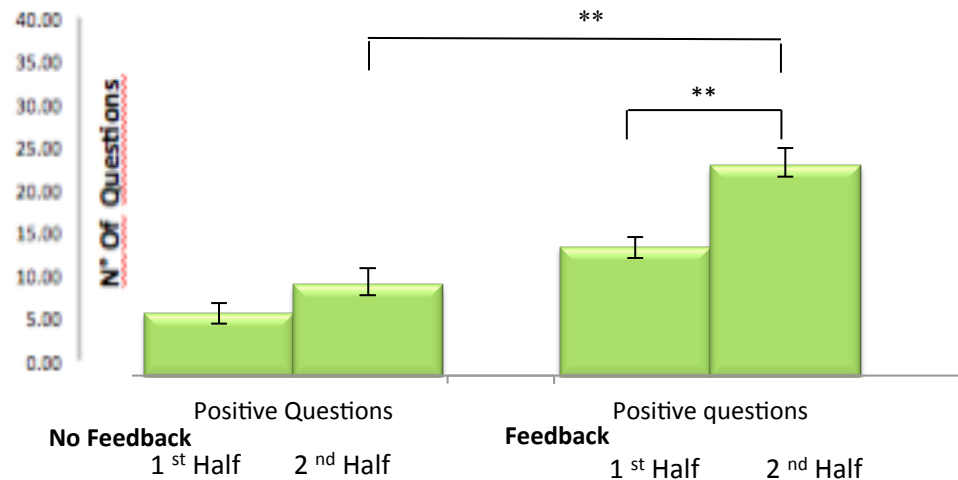
- On question types
 - ✘ On two first closed questions
 - ✓ On two first open questions
- On outcome

“Sabrina has not abused either Ilaria or Paolo. The secret was that they had put away the remaining objects that the mother had left in the house. Ilaria had sometimes assisted in taking care of Paolo but these events were not in any way abusive.”

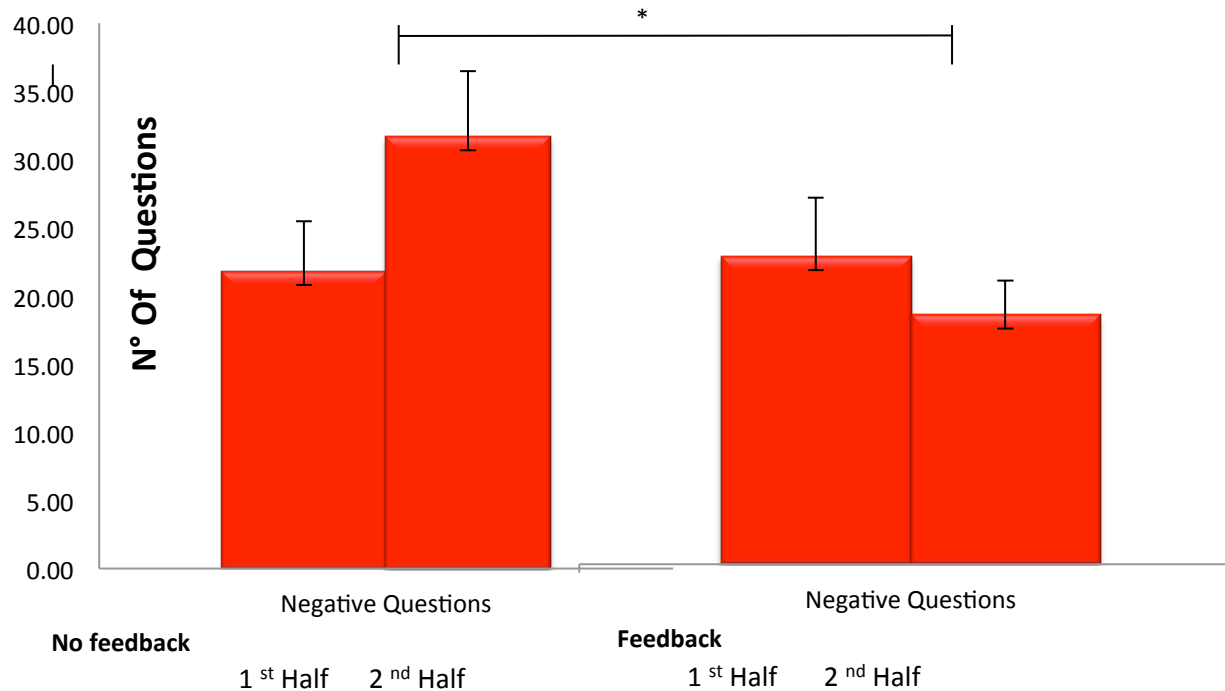
Validity of algorithms

	Open questions	Closed questions
Relevant details	.87**	-.16
Untrue details	-.16	.54**
Correct conclusion	.38**	-.09

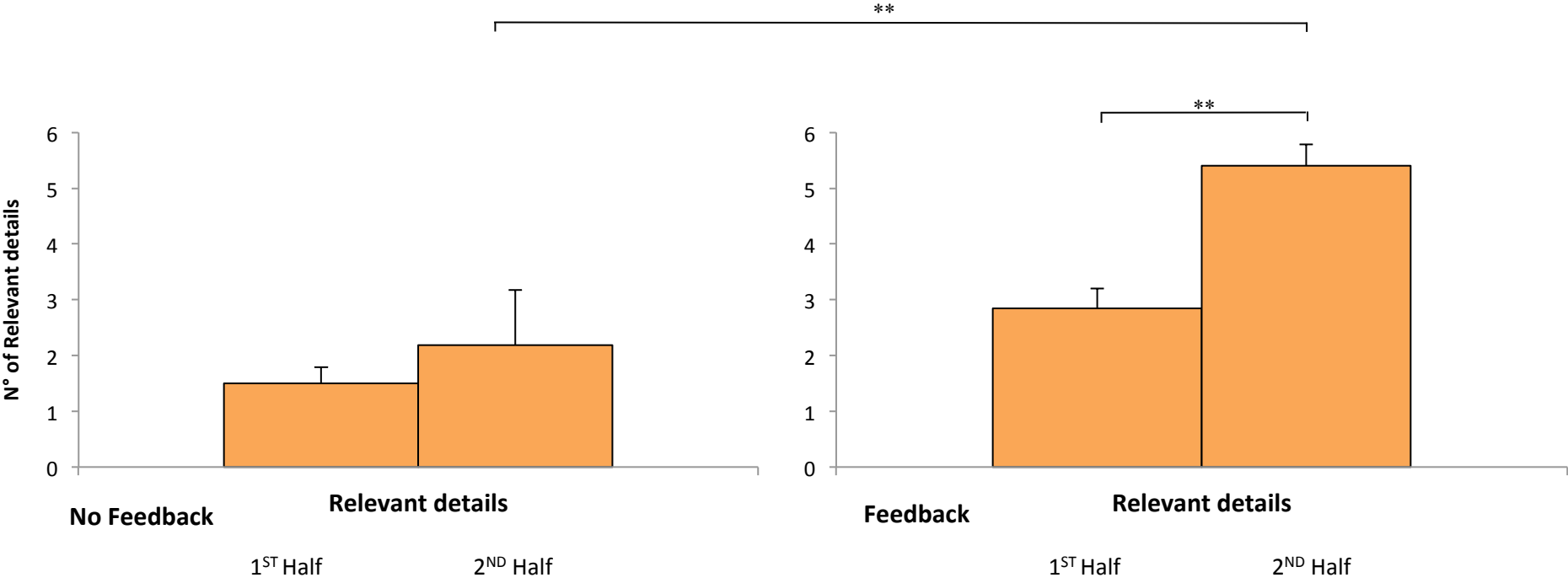
Effect of feedback on Positive Questions



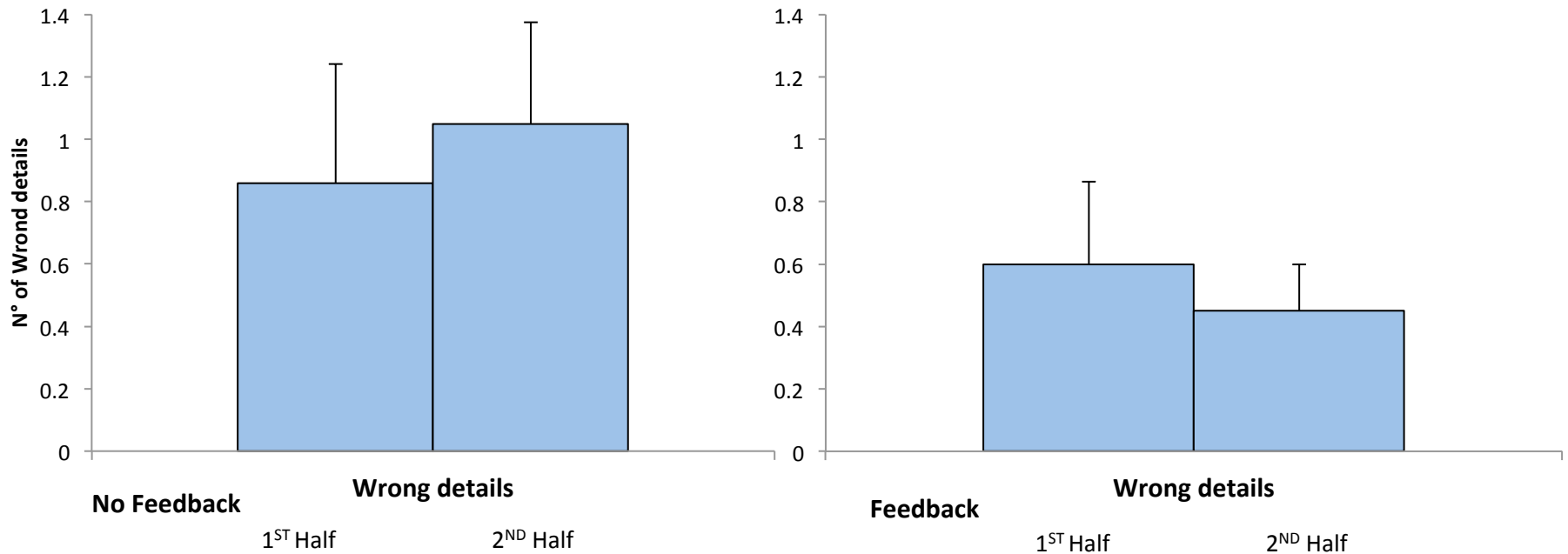
Effect of feedback on Negative Questions



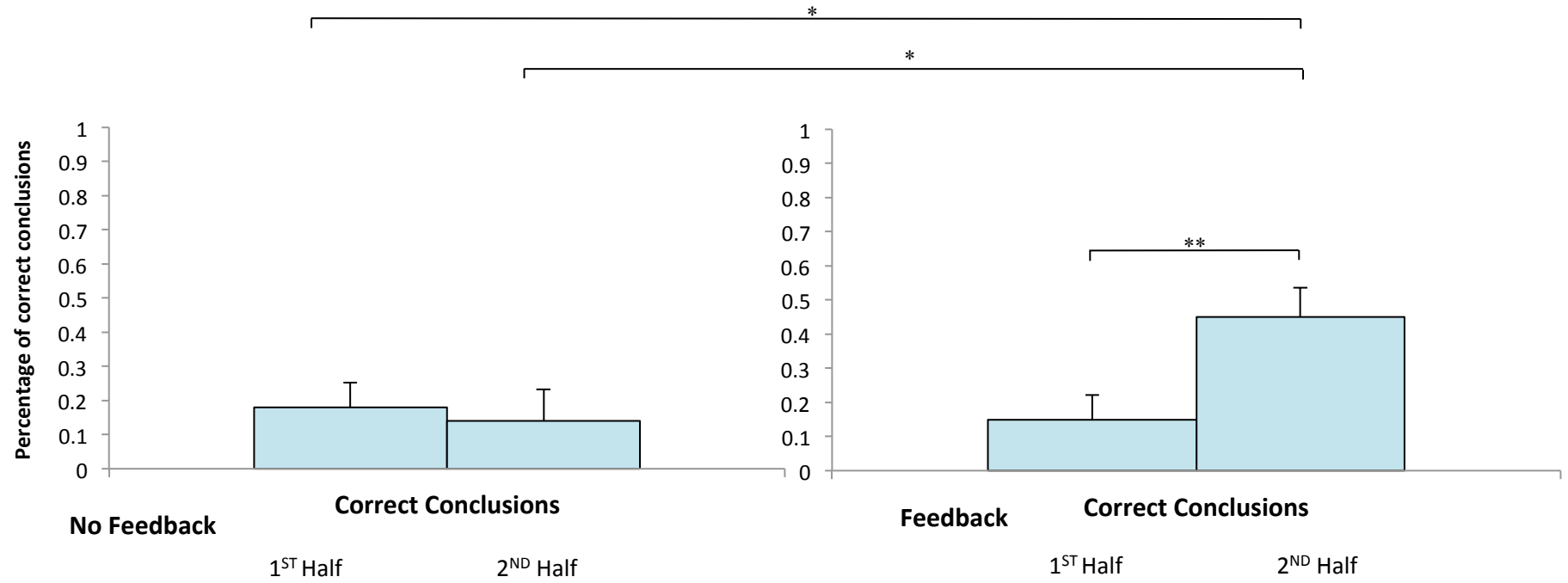
Effect of Feedback on Relevant Details



Effect of Feedback on Wrong Details



Effect of Feedback on Correct Conclusions



Conclusions

- Feedback had the expected effects (although not sig for wrong details)
 - Drastic changes in interview quality in 1 h!
 - Drastic changes in finding out what happened!

First intensive training course at CrimeLAB, Turin, concluded

- **Next:** improved avatars, generalisability studies, continuous and immediate feedback, implementing NICHD

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