



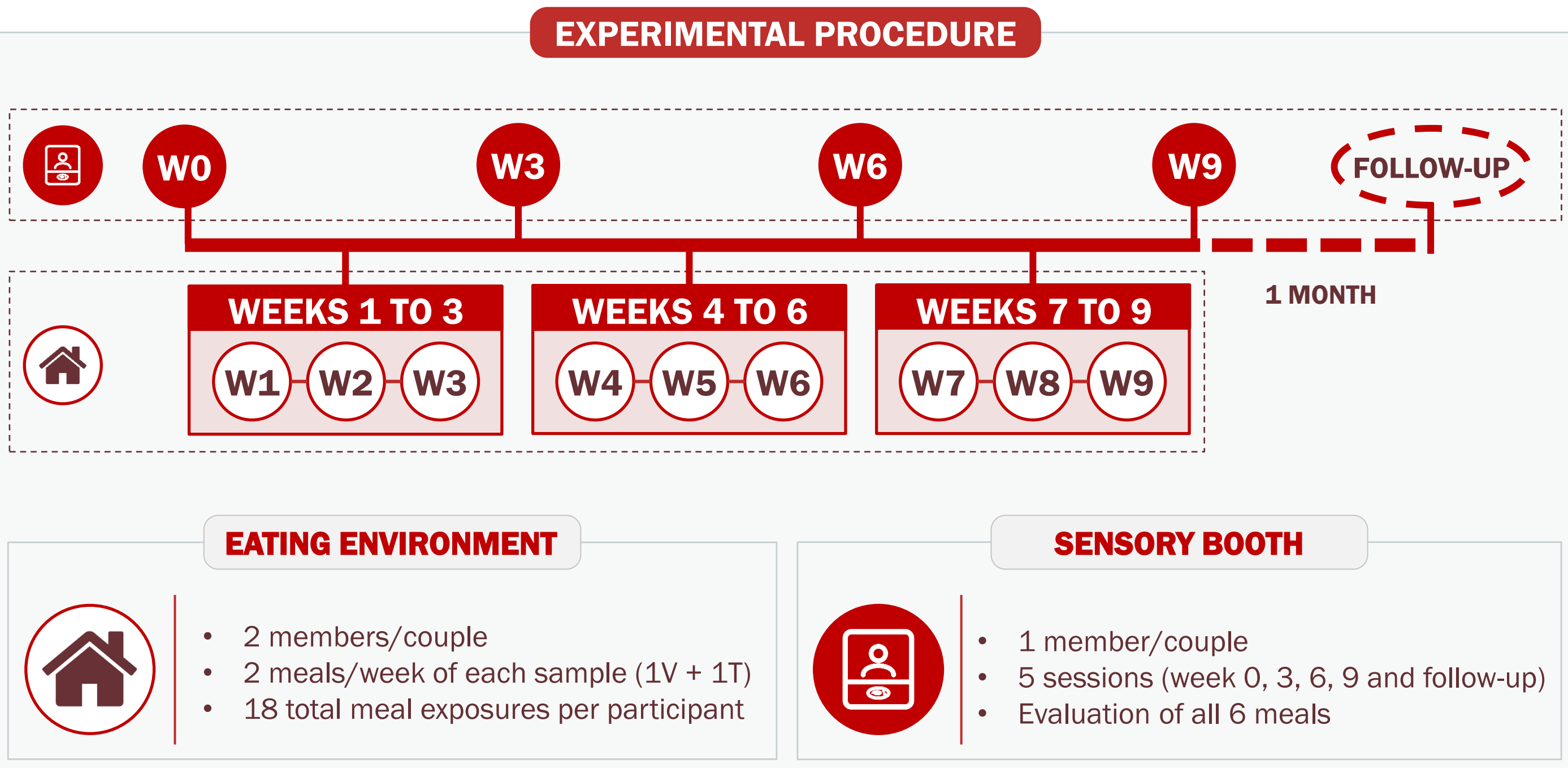
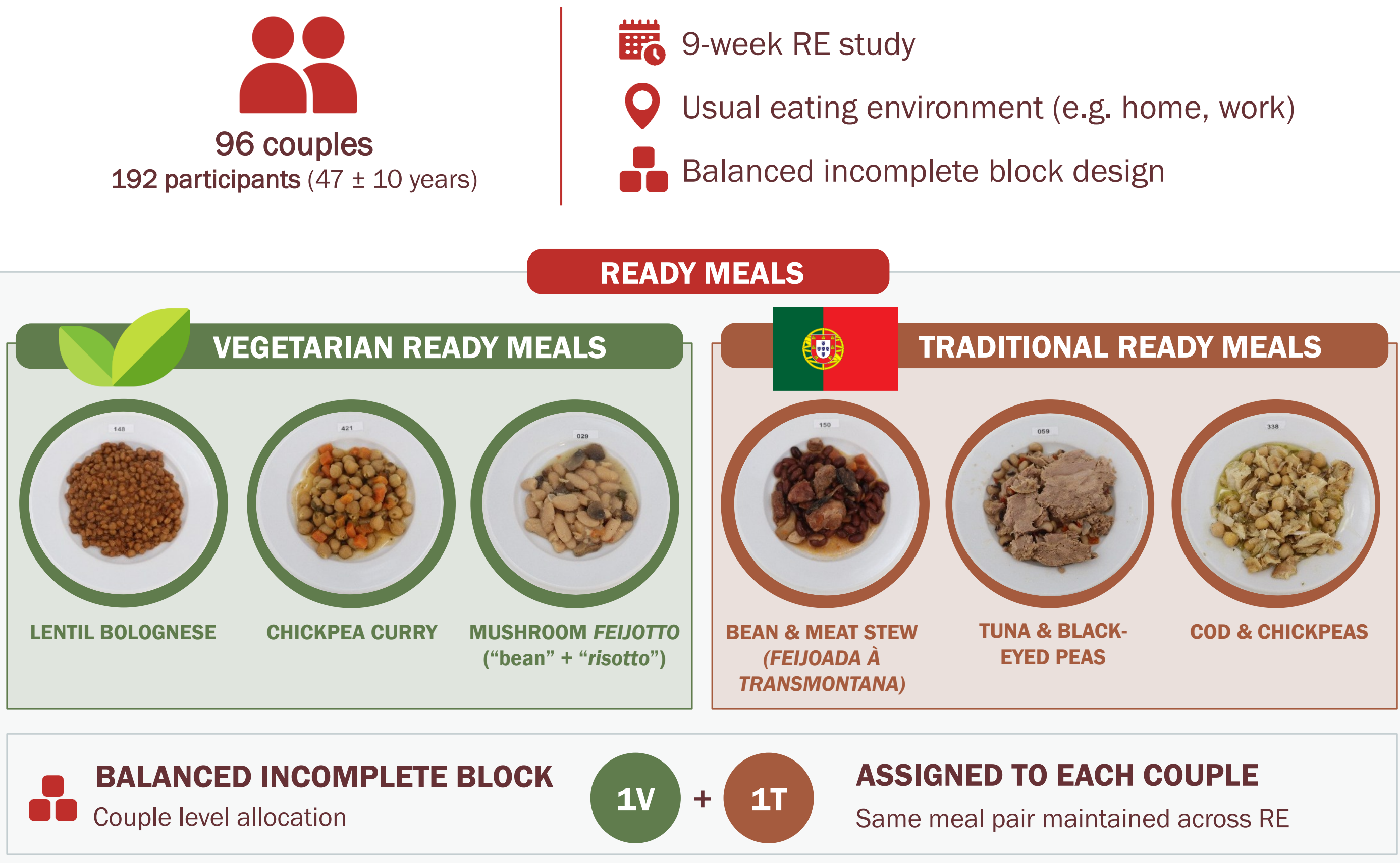
Between Tradition and Innovation: Consumer Responses to Portuguese Traditional and Vegetarian Ready Meals During Repeated Exposure

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INTRODUCTION

- Repeated exposure (RE) is widely recognized mechanism shaping how consumer acceptance of foods evolves over time [1-3];
- RE is especially relevant for vegetarian meals, which, despite being promoted for their environmental and health benefits, still face difficulties being integrated into everyday diets, with consumers continuing to favour animal-based meals [4,5];
- This study investigated changes in consumer evaluations of vegetarian and Portuguese traditional ready meals during a 9-week RE period involving couples, complemented by five laboratory sessions in which one member of each couple evaluated all meals.

STUDY DESIGN



CONCLUSION

- RE maintained high acceptance in the usual eating environment but did not increase acceptance of vegetarian meals or narrow their preference gap relative to traditional meals;
- The decline observed for repeatedly exposed meals in the sensory booth, particularly in willingness to eat, suggests temporary and context-dependent product fatigue;
- Despite vegetarian meals showing relatively high overall liking scores, RE alone appears to be insufficient to overcome established meal-type perceptions and the continued acceptance of Portuguese traditional meals.

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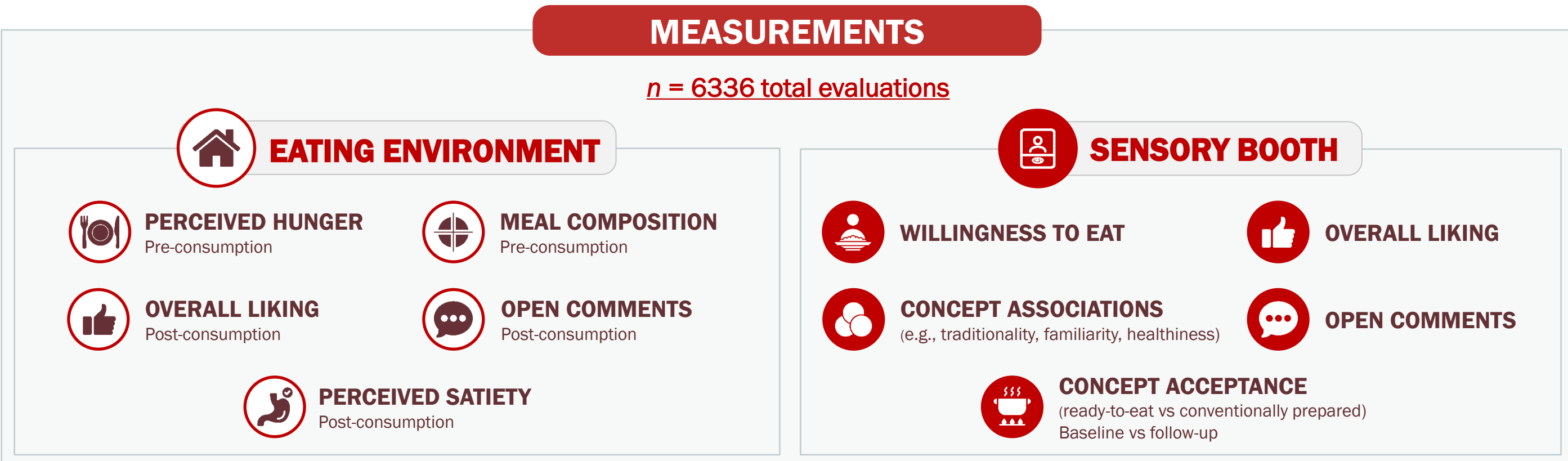
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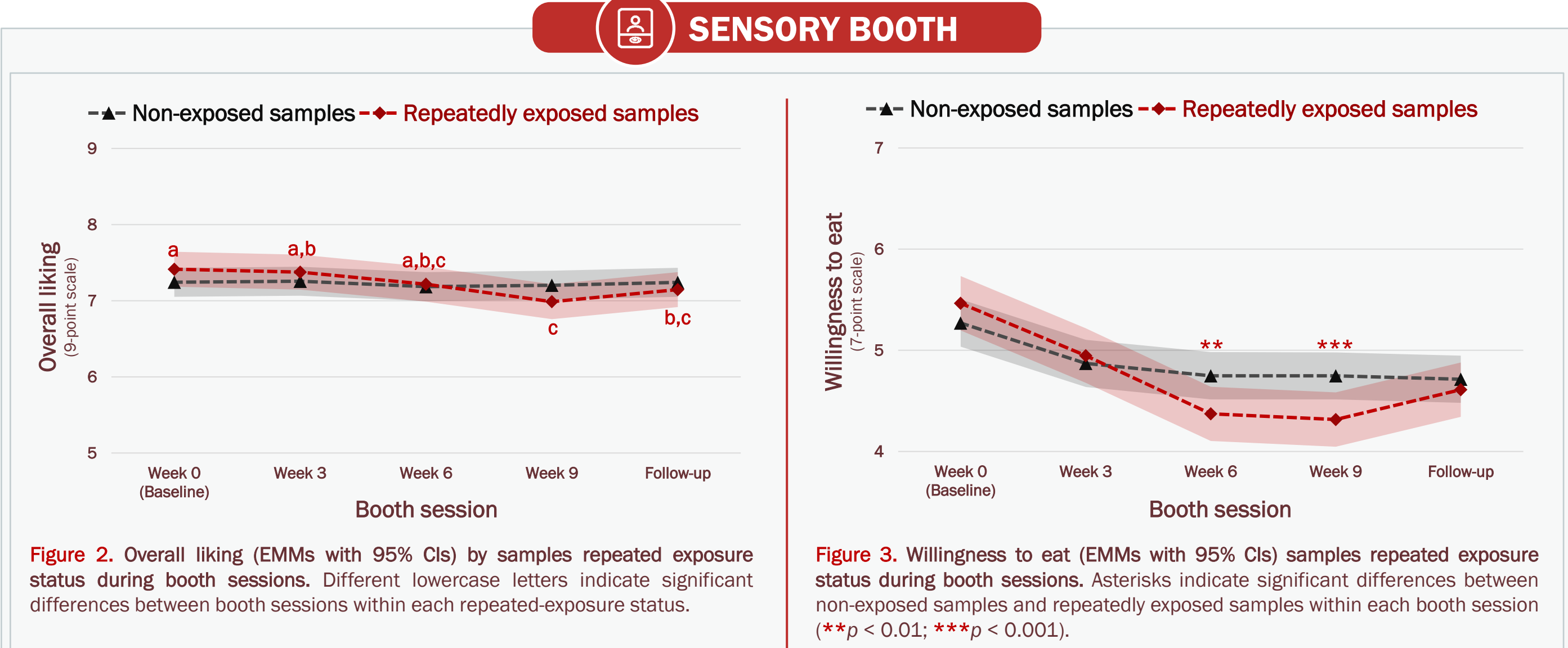
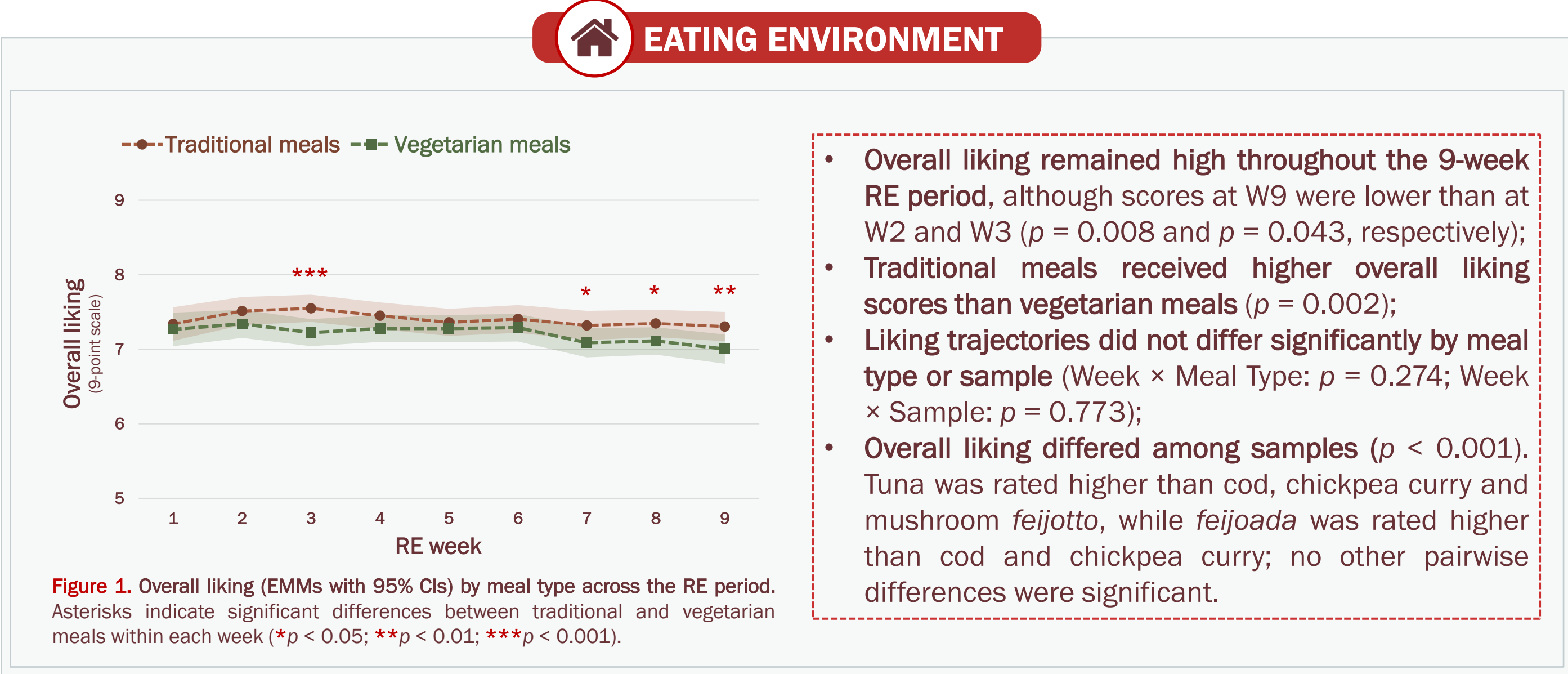
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RESULTS



- Overall liking remained high across booth sessions; non-exposed samples remained stable, whereas repeatedly exposed samples declined over time (*p* < 0.001), although no differences between exposure conditions emerged within any session (all *p* ≥ 0.059);
- Willingness to eat decreased across booth sessions, with a stronger decline for repeatedly exposed samples (Session × Exposure: *p* < 0.001);
- Repeatedly exposed samples received lower willingness to eat scores comparatively to non-exposed samples at Week 6 and W9 (*p* = 0.002 and *p* < 0.001, respectively), but not at follow-up (*p* = 0.388).

