

Is group-housed horses less reactive?

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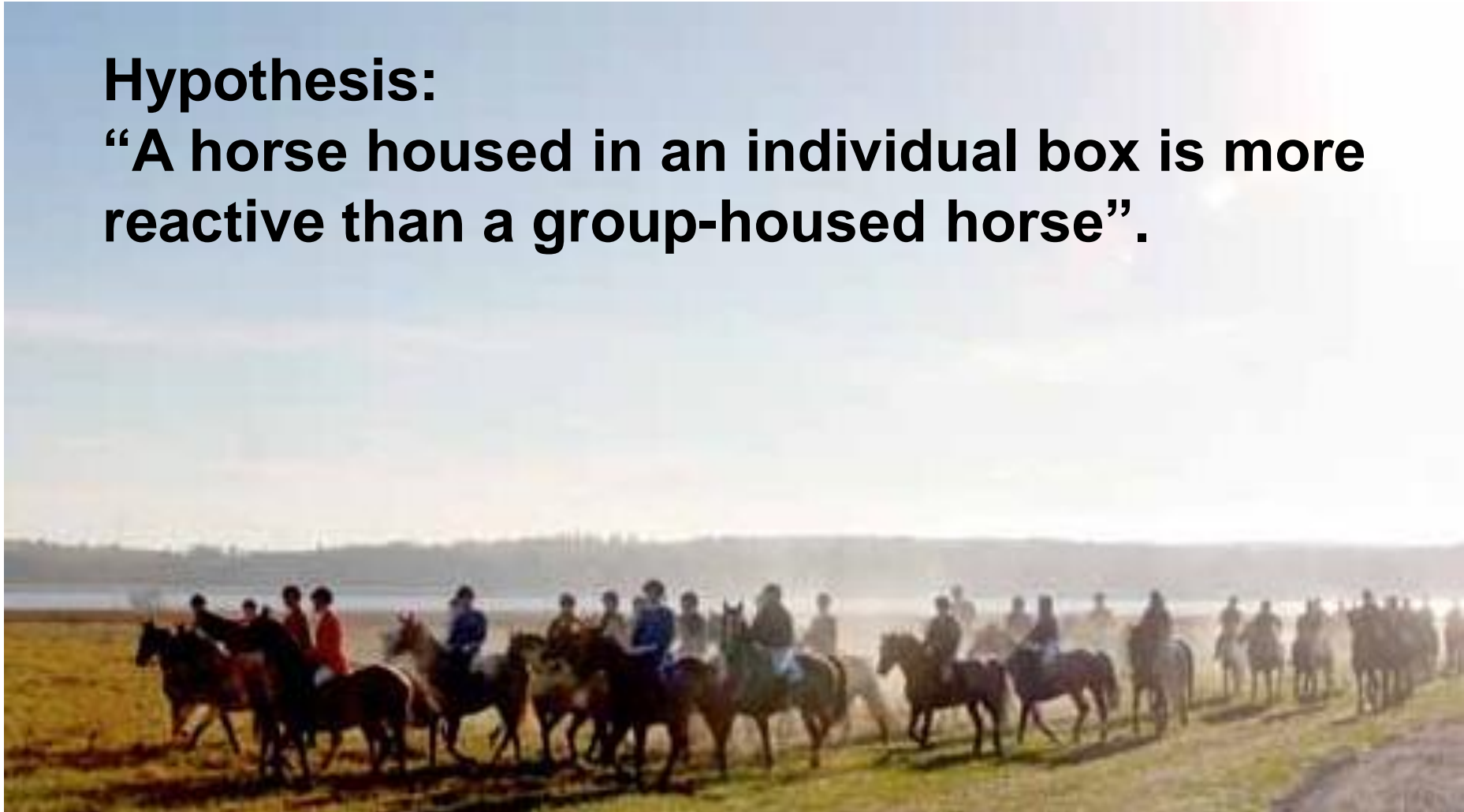
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THE AIM was to study if the horse's reactivity relates to the housing system.

Hypothesis:

“A horse housed in an individual box is more reactive than a group-housed horse”.

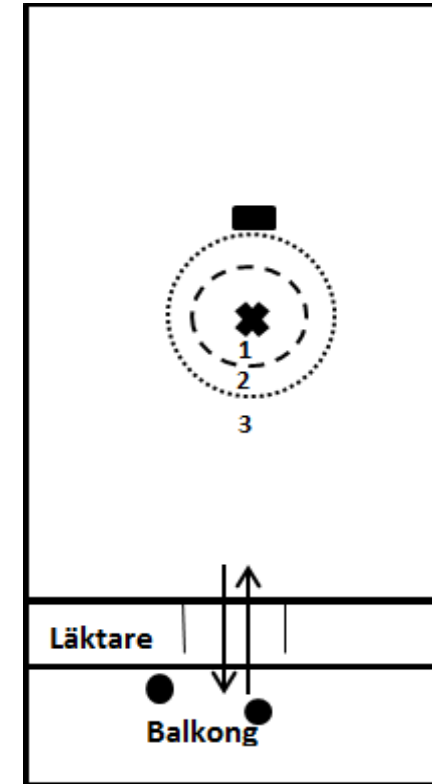


HIT Active Stable



Material and Methods

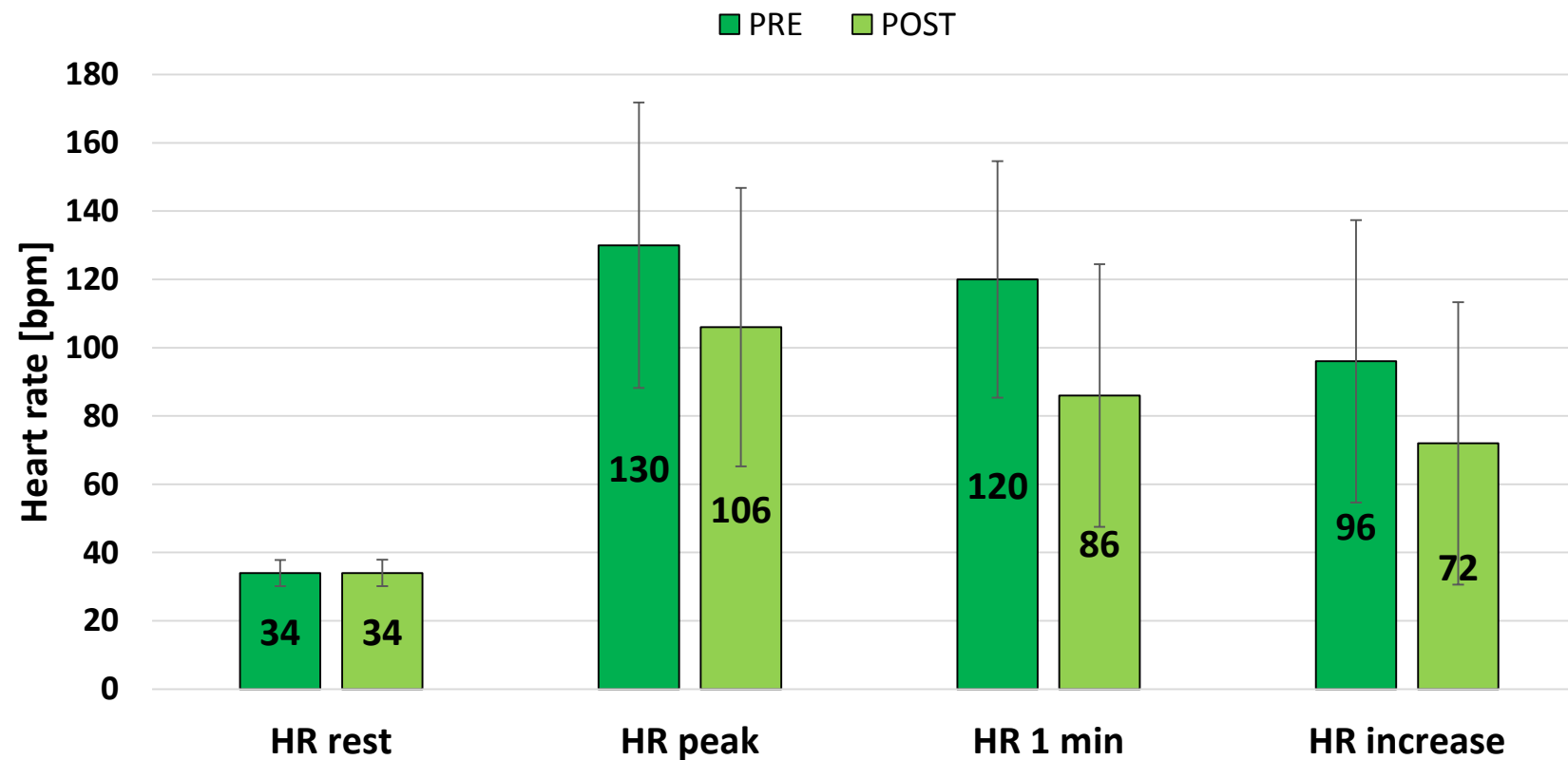
- 14 + 14 SWB-geldings (8-19 yrs)
- Pre-trial – 8 weeks – post-trial
- Novel Object Test
- Heart rate and behaviours
 - feeding,
 - standing still,
 - walk,
 - “trot & canter”,
 - head position (high/low).
- **Statistics:**
 - 2-way RM ANOVA
 - post-hoc test Holm-Sidak.





Heart rate Results

Pre- vs Post-trial



HR_{peak} (p=0.013),

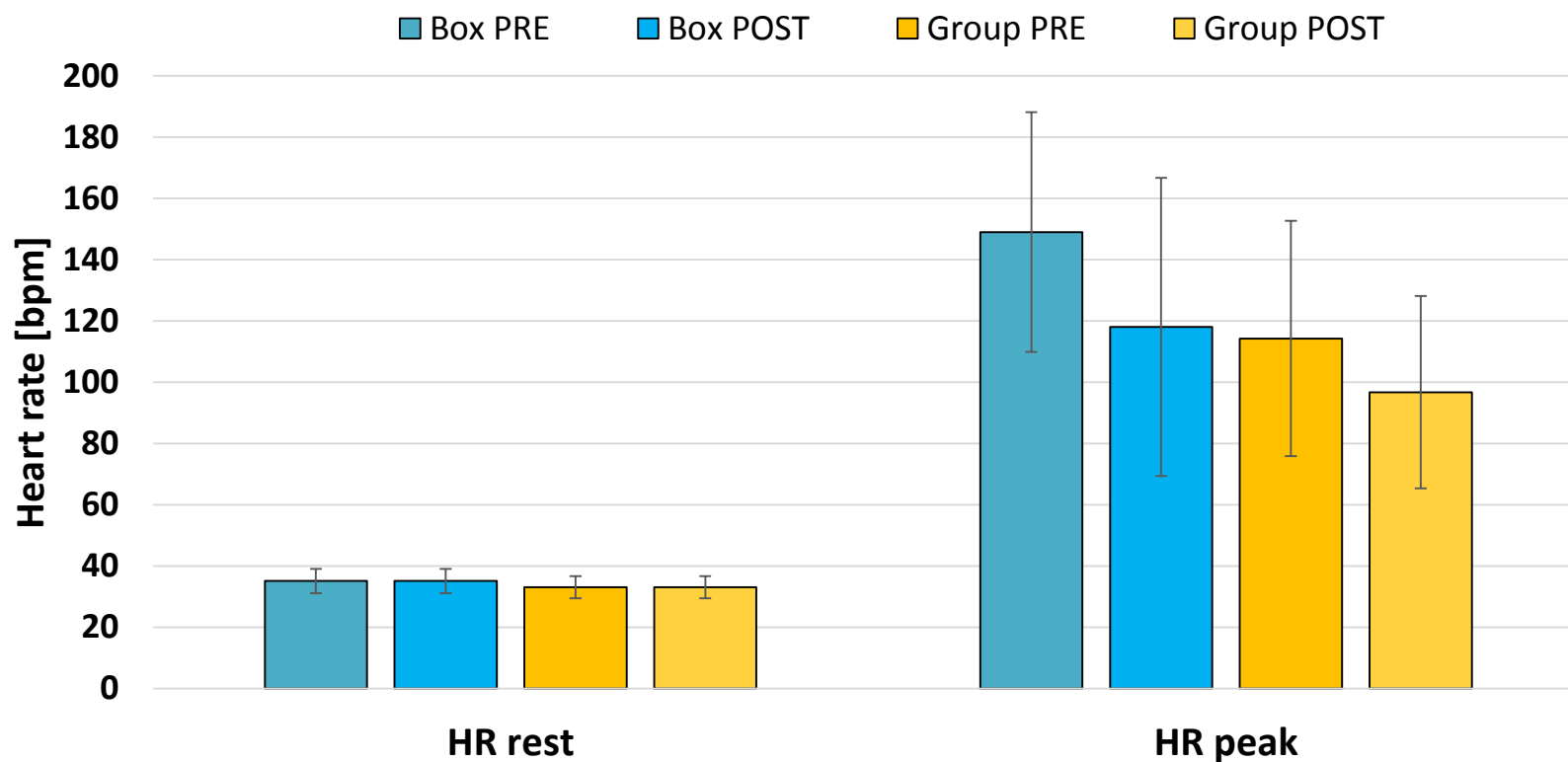
HR_{1 min} (p<0.001)

HR_{increase} (p=0.013).



Heart rate Results

Box vs Group-housed



HR_{peak} (p=0.049)

Box 134 bpm

vs

Grouped 105 bpm



Behaviour

Results

- **WALK ($p=0.052$)**
Box (mean 20% \pm std 20%) vs
Group-housed (mean 10% \pm std 16%).

- **No other significant differences.**

Conclusions

1. The horses got accustomed to Novel Object Test from the pre- to post-trial. (HR)
2. The hypothesis couldn't be accepted. (behaviour).
3. Further studies are needed.

