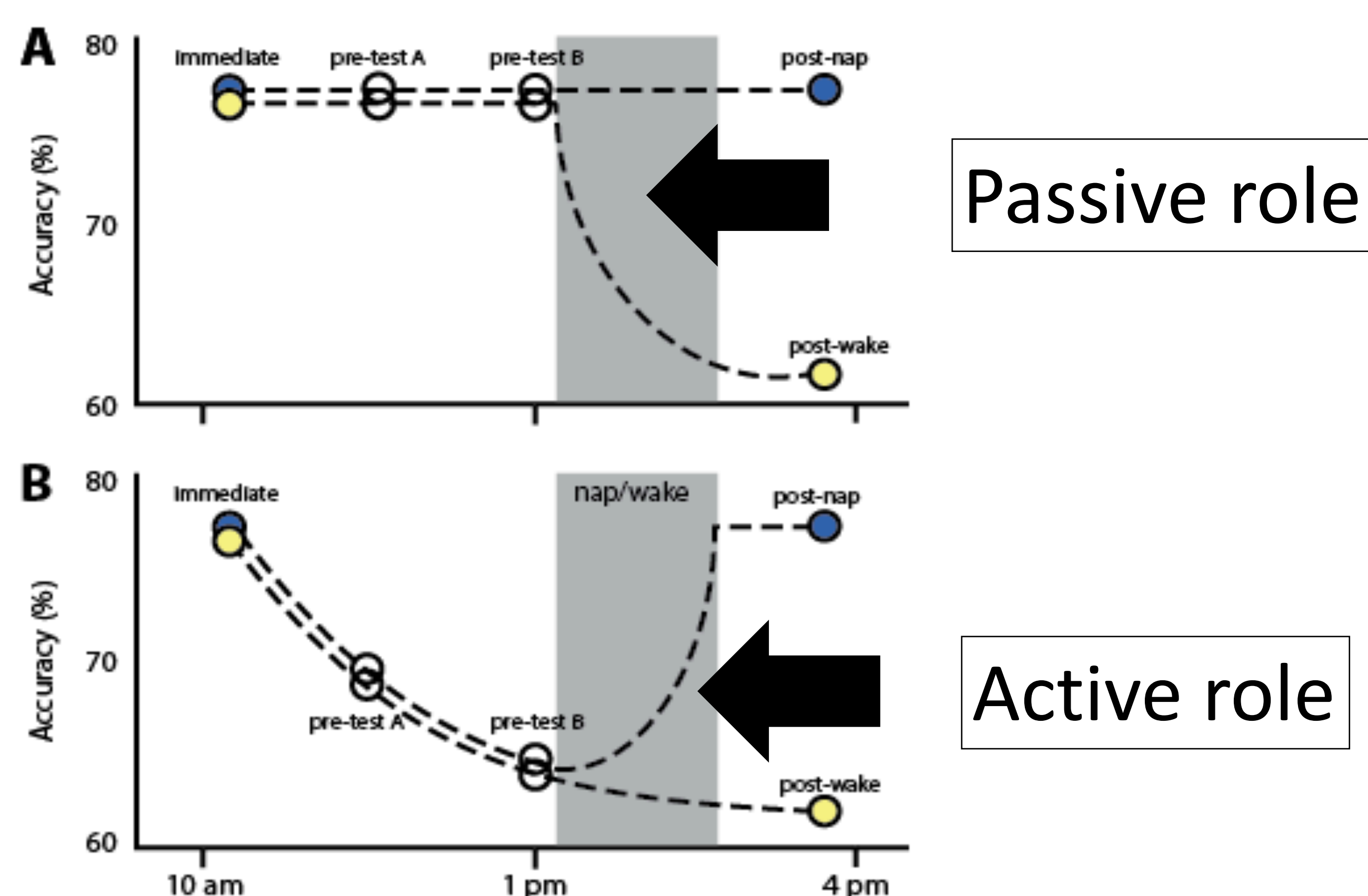


THE FUNCTION OF MID-DAY NAPS ON PRIOR DECLARATIVE LEARNING FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

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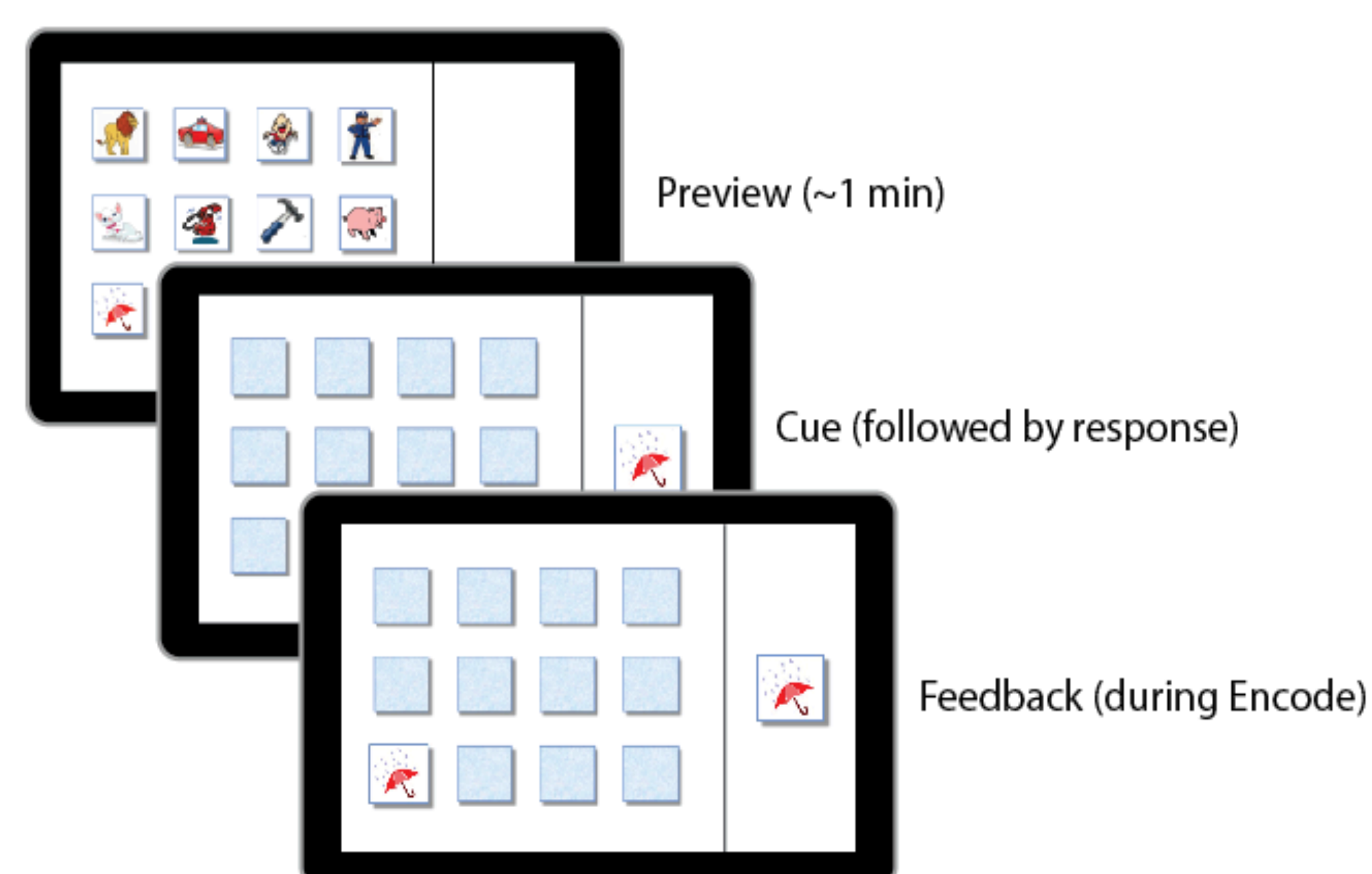
INTRODUCTION

Naps in preschoolers have been found to benefit declarative learning. Interestingly, inspection of these data also suggest that naps may recover from decay. That is, following an interval with >1hr awake followed by 2 hrs of sleep, performance was unchanged while accuracy declined if the 3hrs were spent awake (1). The present study tested whether memories indeed decayed over wake and were recovered by a delayed nap by including a probe of memory decay prior to the nap.

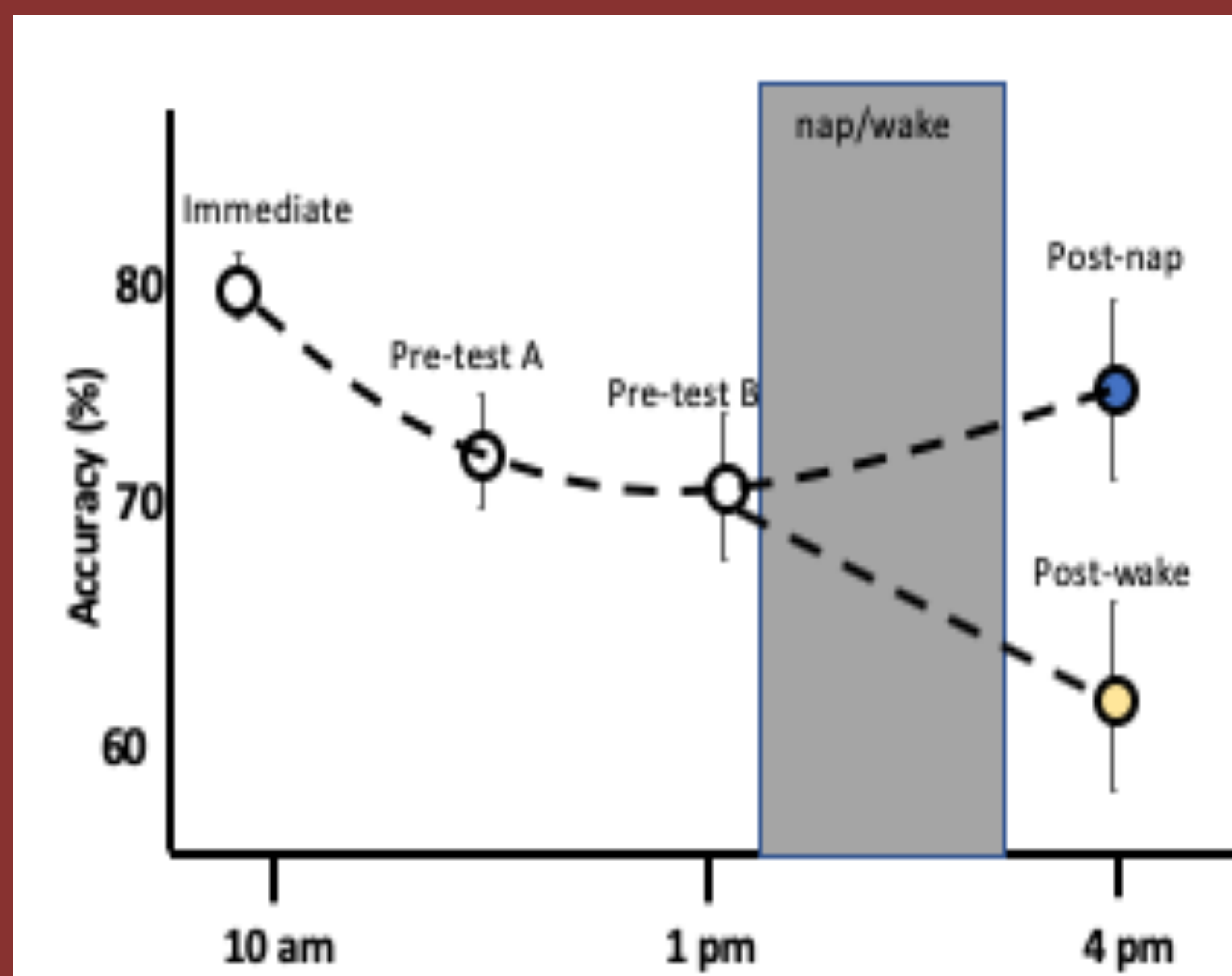


METHODS

Forty-seven preschool-aged children (M age = 51.9 mo, 54.5% female) learned a visuo-spatial memory task in the morning on two separate occasions separated one week apart, where on one occasion they napped and the other they did not.



Does sleep-dependent memory consolidation rescue memories from decay in early childhood?



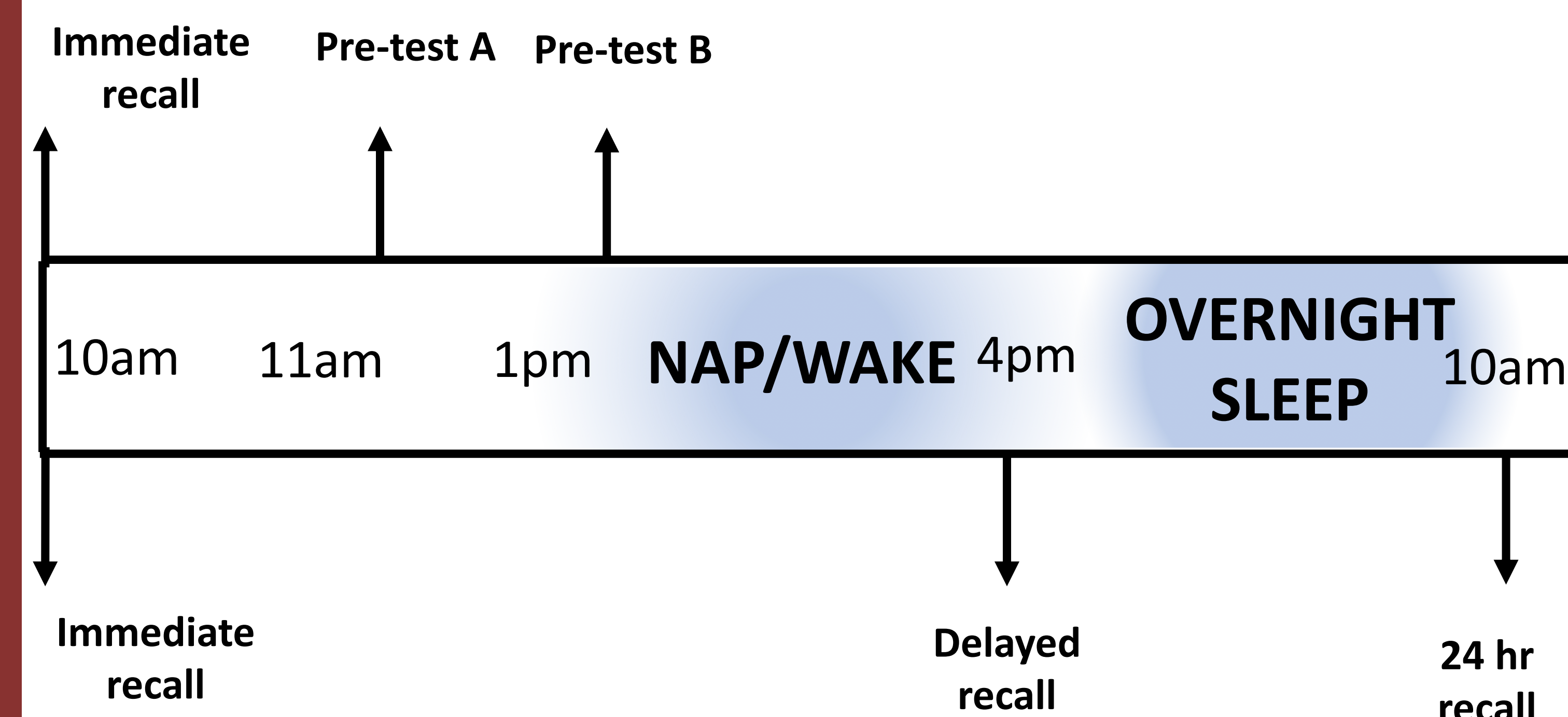
Naps may recover memories from decay



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METHODS CONTINUED

Recall was tested immediately after encoding, and after the afternoon nap/wake interval. Additionally, performance was probed either 1hr (pre-test A) or 2hrs (pre-test B) after immediate recall.



RESULTS

- Accuracy decayed between immediate recall and pre-test A ($p=0.010$; $n=27$)
- Accuracy further decayed between immediate recall and pre-test B ($p=0.005$; $n=20$).
- Data from an additional 6 participants replicated previous findings that learning was protected following the nap compared to immediate recall. However, it appears that the memories continued to decay over this later wake period as well. ($p=0.038$).

DISCUSSION

Our data support the hypothesis that memory decays over wake, consistent with classic memory decay curves illustrating rapid initial forgetting (2). Sleep-dependent memory consolidation is thought to reflect the transfer of memories from short-term hippocampal stores to long-term cortical storage (3). Future analysis will include more participants to further explore the role of mid-day naps in preschool aged children.

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