



DOES CANDY INCREASE RESPONSE RATES IN SURVEYS?

- THE EFFECT OF AN UNCONDITIONAL SYMBOLIC INCENTIVE

Previous research

Unconditional incentive = incentive that does not require a counter performance

- Unconditional incentives generates greater response rates than conditional incentives.
 - Provokes reciprocal behaviours in respondents.
- The decision to respond is often based on quick impressions of costs and benefits of the respondent's effort to participate.

Previous experiments: 2019

Treatment group: incentive *conditioned* on participation in survey

Control group: incentive *regardless* of participation in survey

Conclusions:

- The unconditional incentive generated a greater response rate compared to the conditional incentive
 - The effect declined over time
- Type of incentive (lottery ticket or value check) on the other hand, did not matter to the respondents

The purpose of the experiment 2022

- Can a piece of candy affect the respondents' degree of participation in the survey?
 - Unconditional incentive → no counter performance needed!
 - All analysis and hypothesis are pre-registered

Assumption: the unconditional symbolic incentive will generate a higher response rate

Experimental design

Main sample: $N = 44\ 250$

- Probability based sampling
- Mixed mode
- Individuals between the ages 16 – 90, residing in Sweden

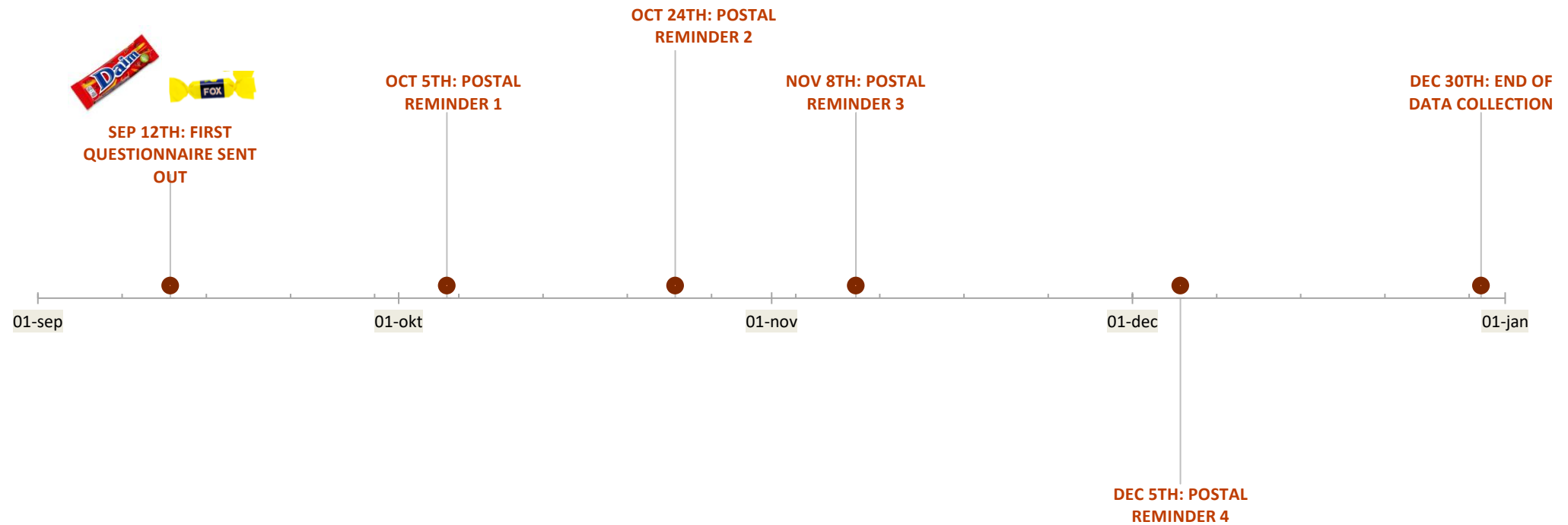
Treatment group: $n = 22\ 078$

Control group: $n = 22\ 172$





Data collection 2022

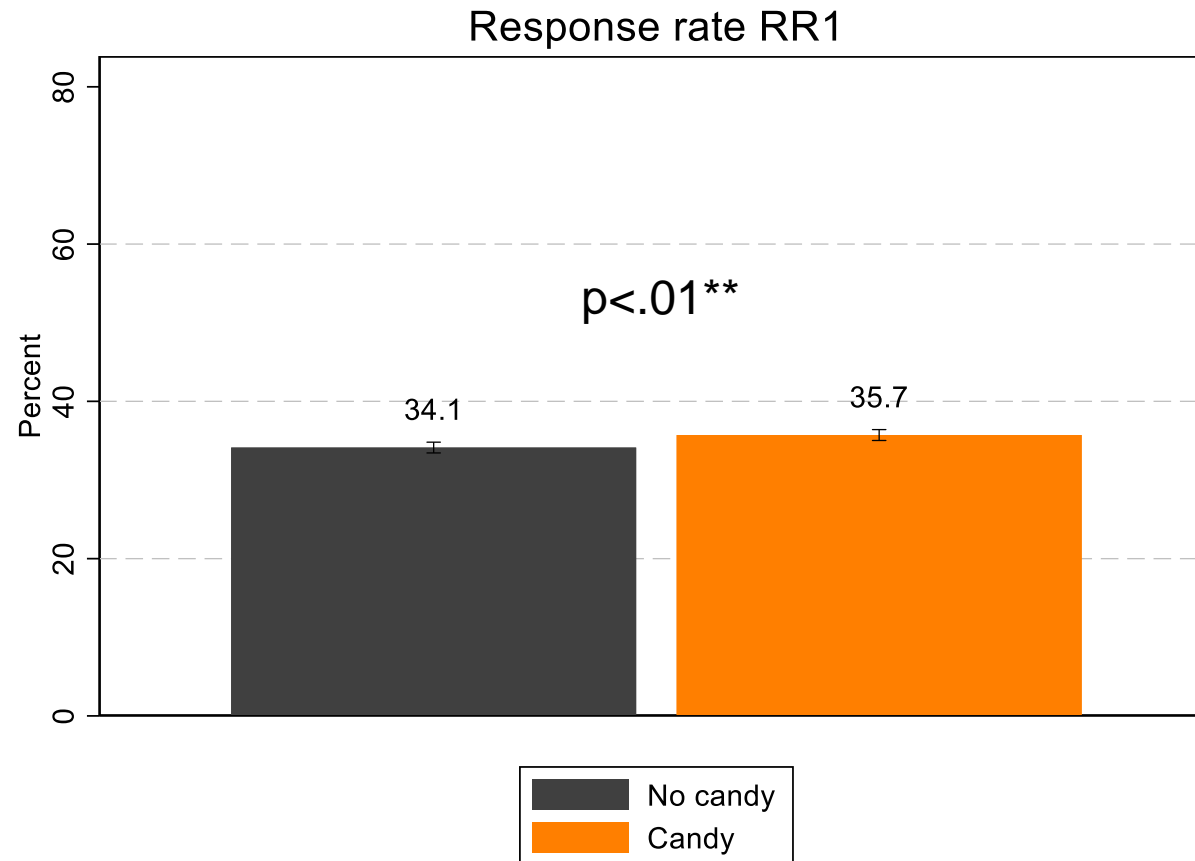




Effects prior to the first postal reminder



Effect of treatment on response rate

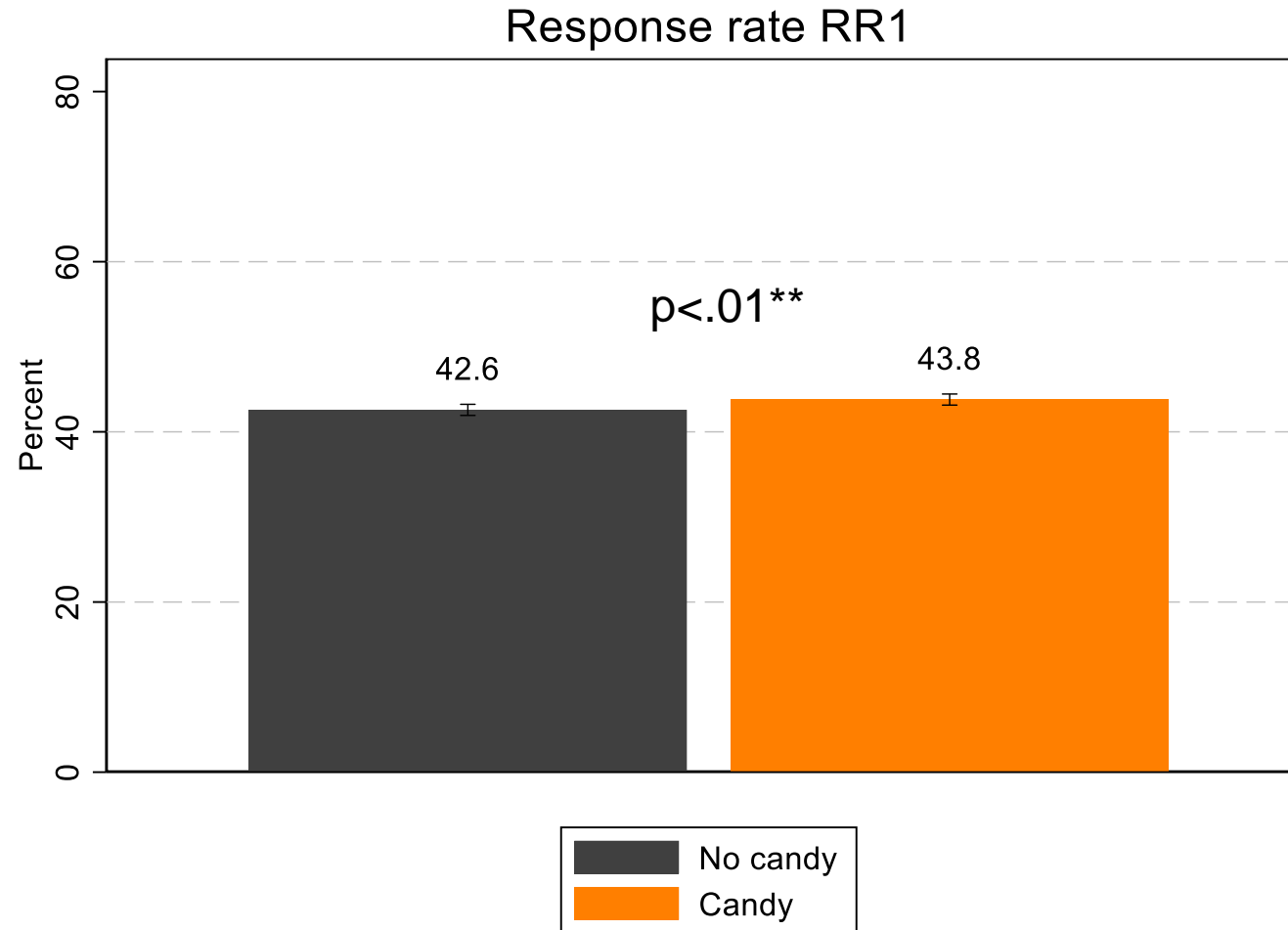




Effects at the end of the data collection

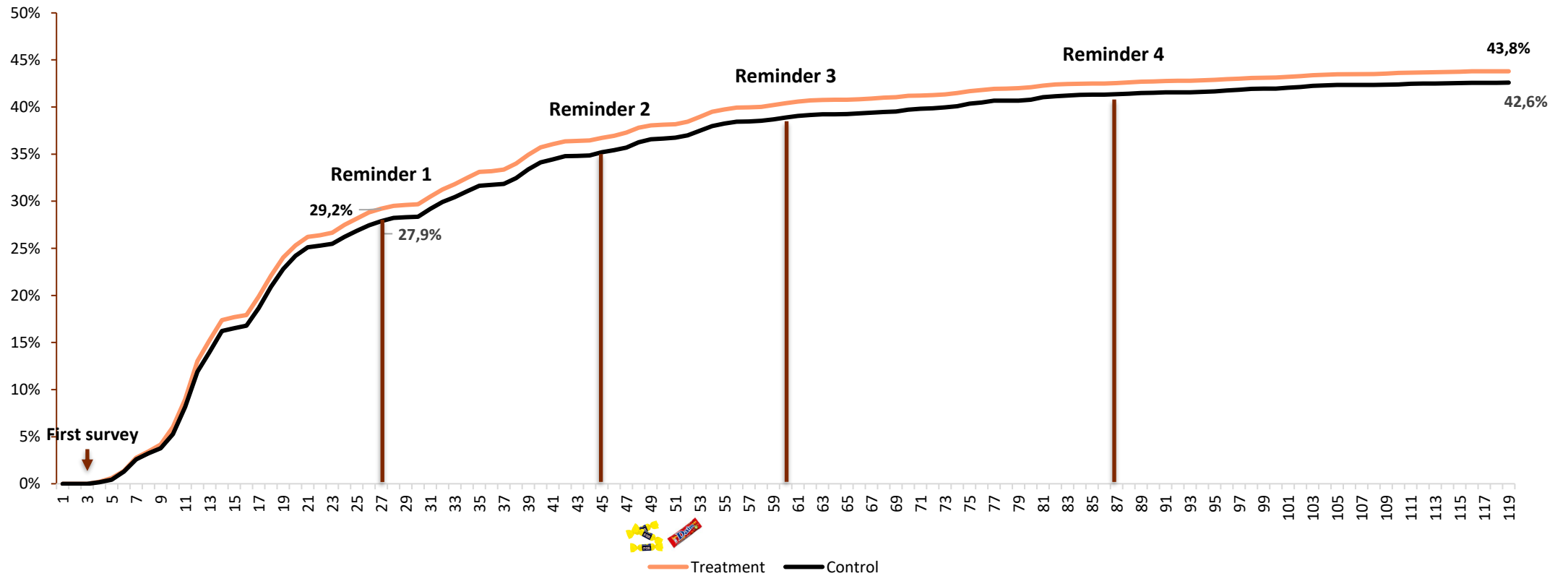


Effect of treatment on response rate

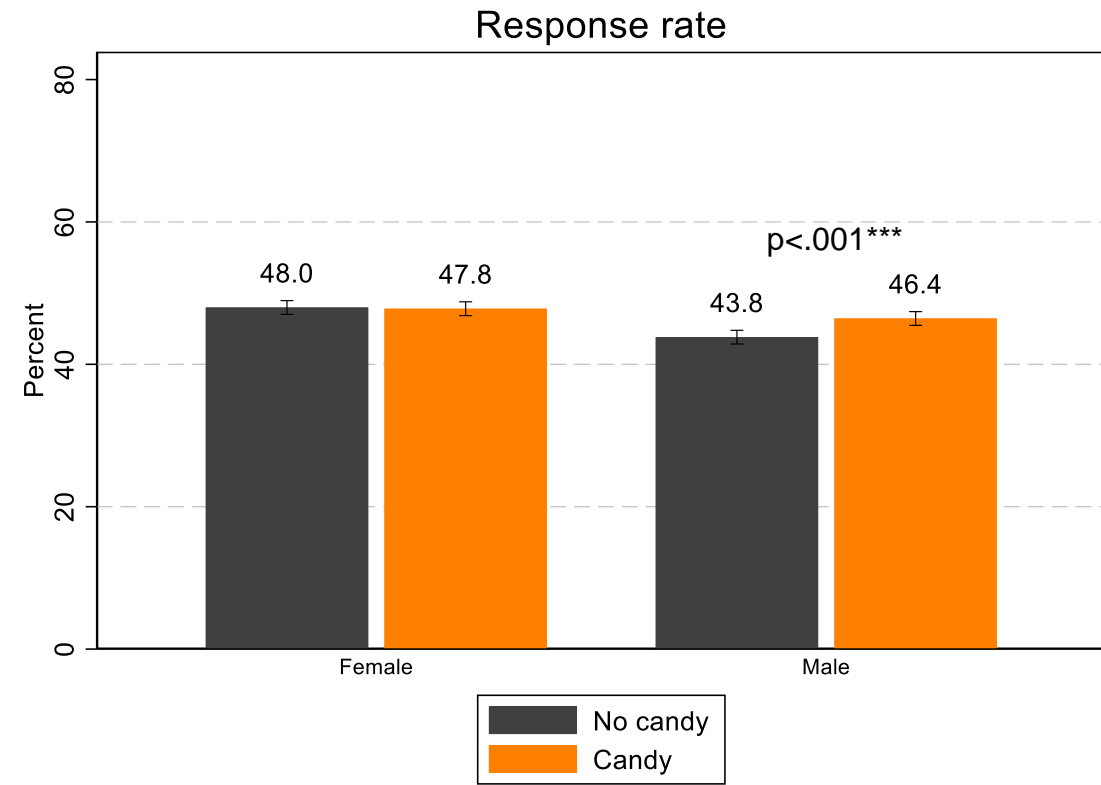




Cumulative inflow 2022



Effects of treatment across gender on response rate





Conclusions

- The unconditional symbolic incentive (piece of candy) generated a greater response rate.
 - The effect stayed significant throughout the data collection period
- The incentive had a greater effect on response rate among men.
- Replication in 2023!



Thank you for listening!