

BACKGROUND

- Increased scam susceptibility may represent an **early functional vulnerability** in pathological aging and has been linked to **mild cognitive impairment (MCI)¹** and **Alzheimer’s disease (AD) pathology²**
- However, elevated scam susceptibility also occurs in older adults without cognitive impairment, raising questions about when such vulnerability emerges along the AD continuum

OBJECTIVE

- Examine **differences in scam susceptibility across cognitive status groups**, including cognitively normal (CN), objective subtle cognitive difficulties (Obj-SCD), and MCI

METHODS

Participants

- 158 older adults without dementia (aged 51-87 years)

Measures

Scam Susceptibility

- Five-item self-report measure developed by the Rush Alzheimer’s Disease Center³

Cognitive Classification

- Memory, attention/executive functioning, and language were assessed using NACC UDS v3.0 and CVLT-II measures

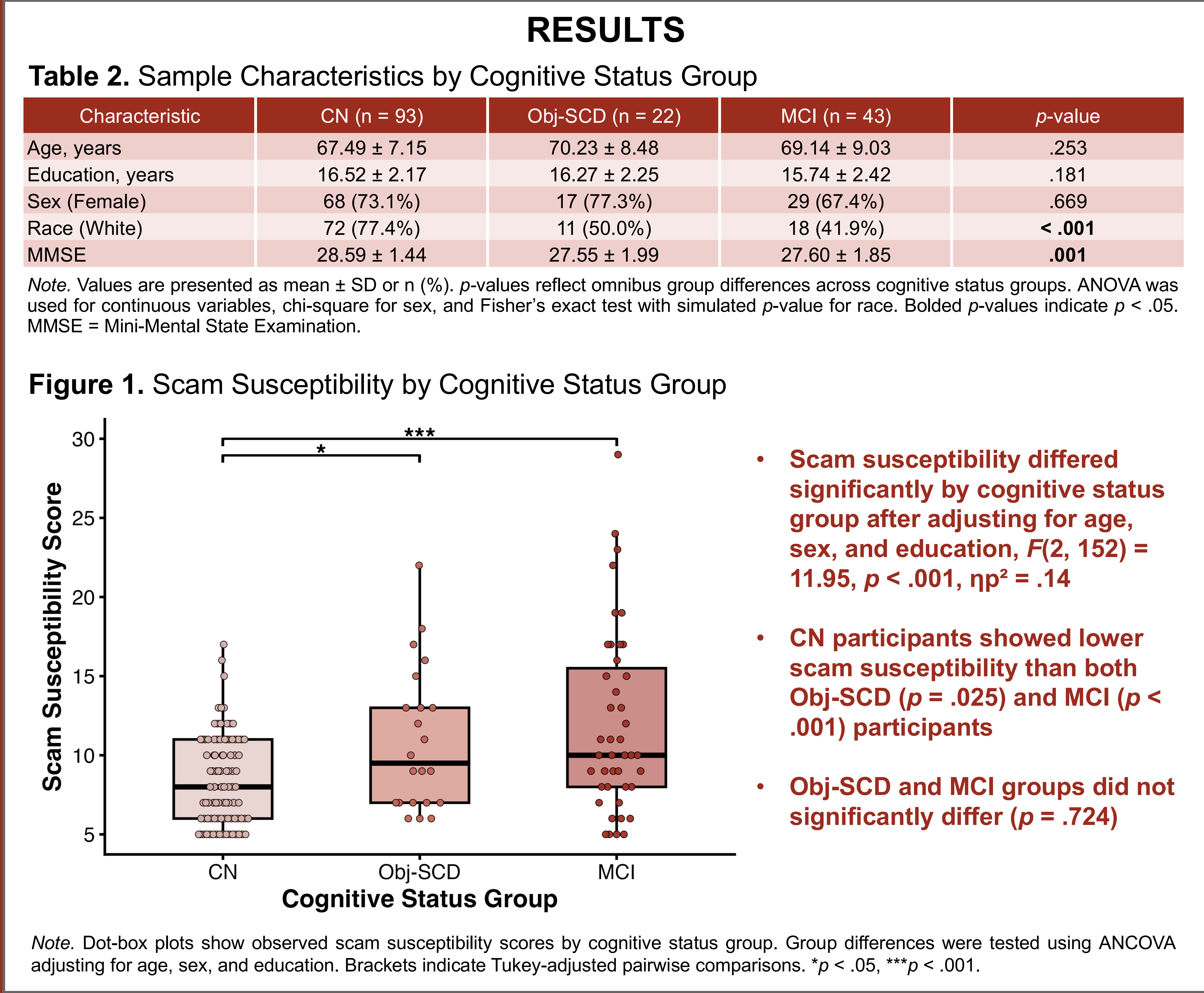
Table 1. Cognitive Status Classification Criteria

Group	Criteria
CN	Did not meet criteria for Obj-SCD or MCI
Obj-SCD	1 impaired total score in two domains; OR 1 impaired total score + 1 impaired process score; OR 2 impaired process scores
MCI	≥2 impaired total scores within 1 domain; OR 1 impaired total score in each of the three domains

Note. Cognitive status was classified using actuarial criteria based on total and process scores⁴. Impairment was defined as >1 SD below normative expectations.

Analyses

- ANCOVA tested group differences in scam susceptibility, adjusting for age, sex, and education. Tukey-adjusted post hoc comparisons examined pairwise group differences



DISCUSSION

- Scam susceptibility was elevated in Obj-SCD and MCI groups relative to CN participants**
- Comparable scam susceptibility in Obj-SCD and MCI suggests this vulnerability may emerge alongside **subtle cognitive changes prior to overt cognitive impairment**
- Identifying early scam susceptibility may help inform detection of cognitive decline and guide interventions to protect older adults