

# A Psychological Theory of Explainability

Scott Cheng-Hsin Yang\*, Tomas Folke\* & Patrick Shafto

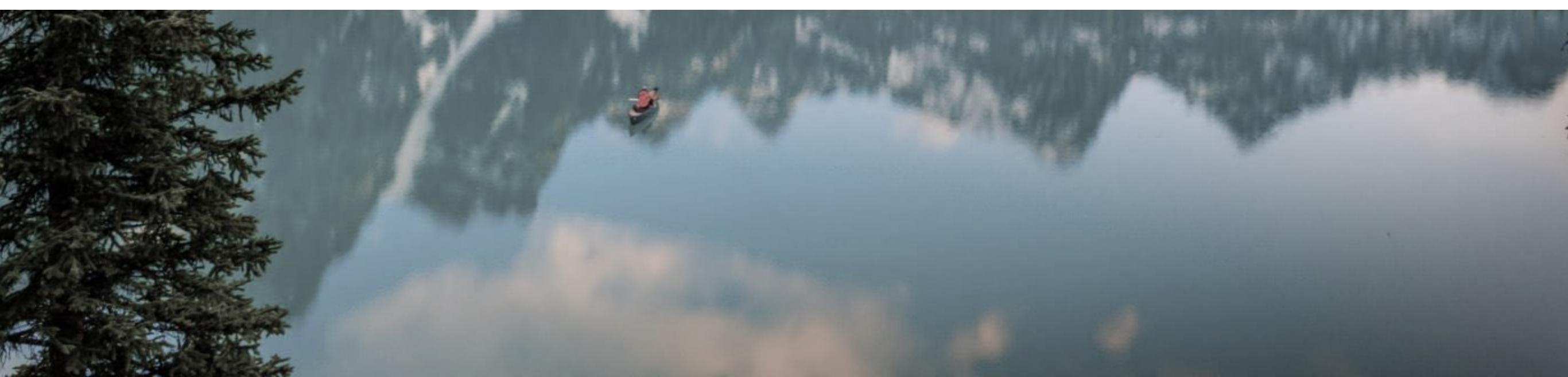
\*equal contribution

The goal of eXplainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) is to make AI decision **understandable to humans**.

- ✓ Techniques to generate explanations
- ✓ Analysis of the techniques
- ✓ Validation of the techniques
- ✗ How humans interpret the explanations given



**Humans project their beliefs onto the AI;  
thus, they interpret the explanation provided  
by comparing it to the explanations that  
they themselves would give.**



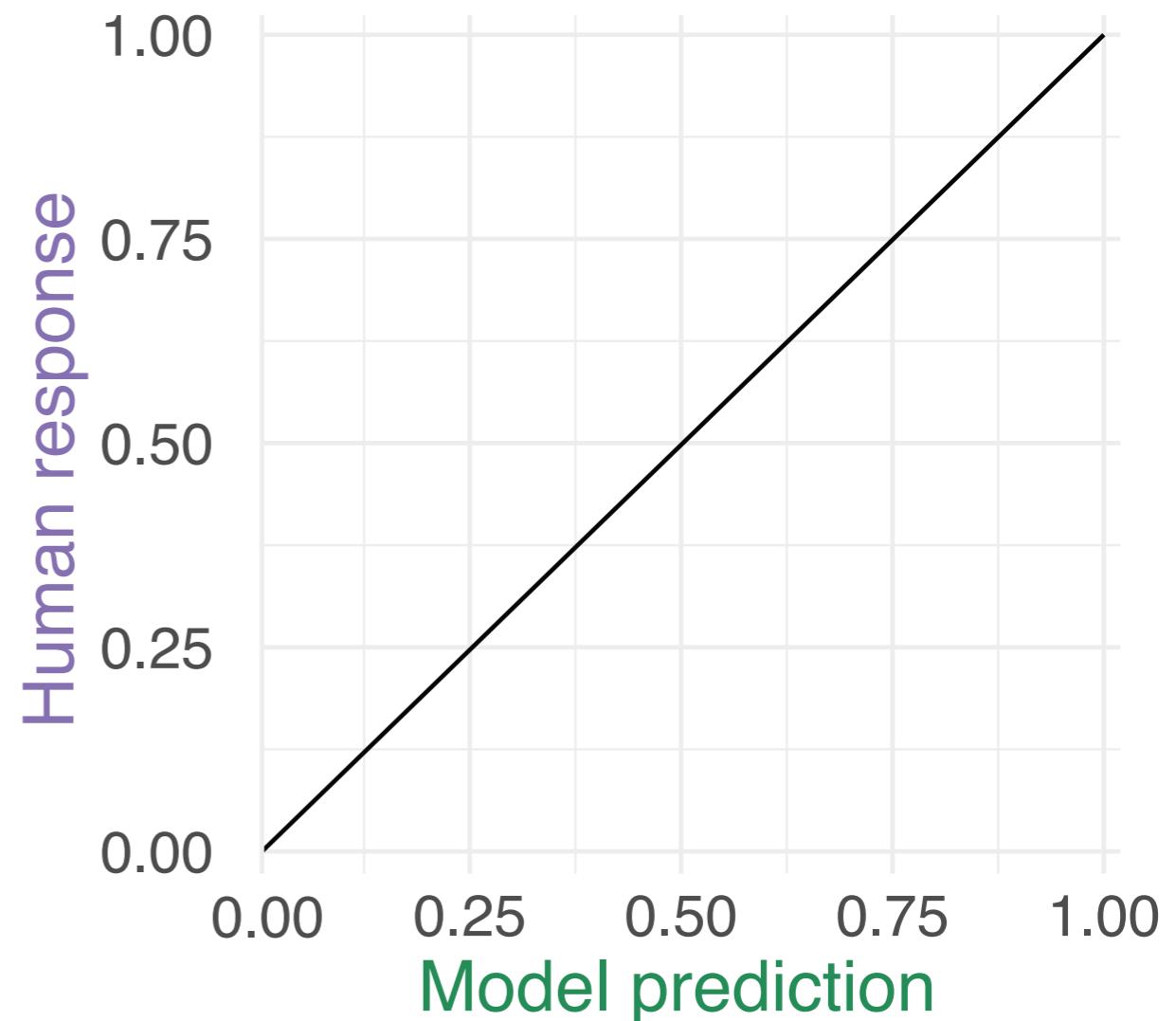
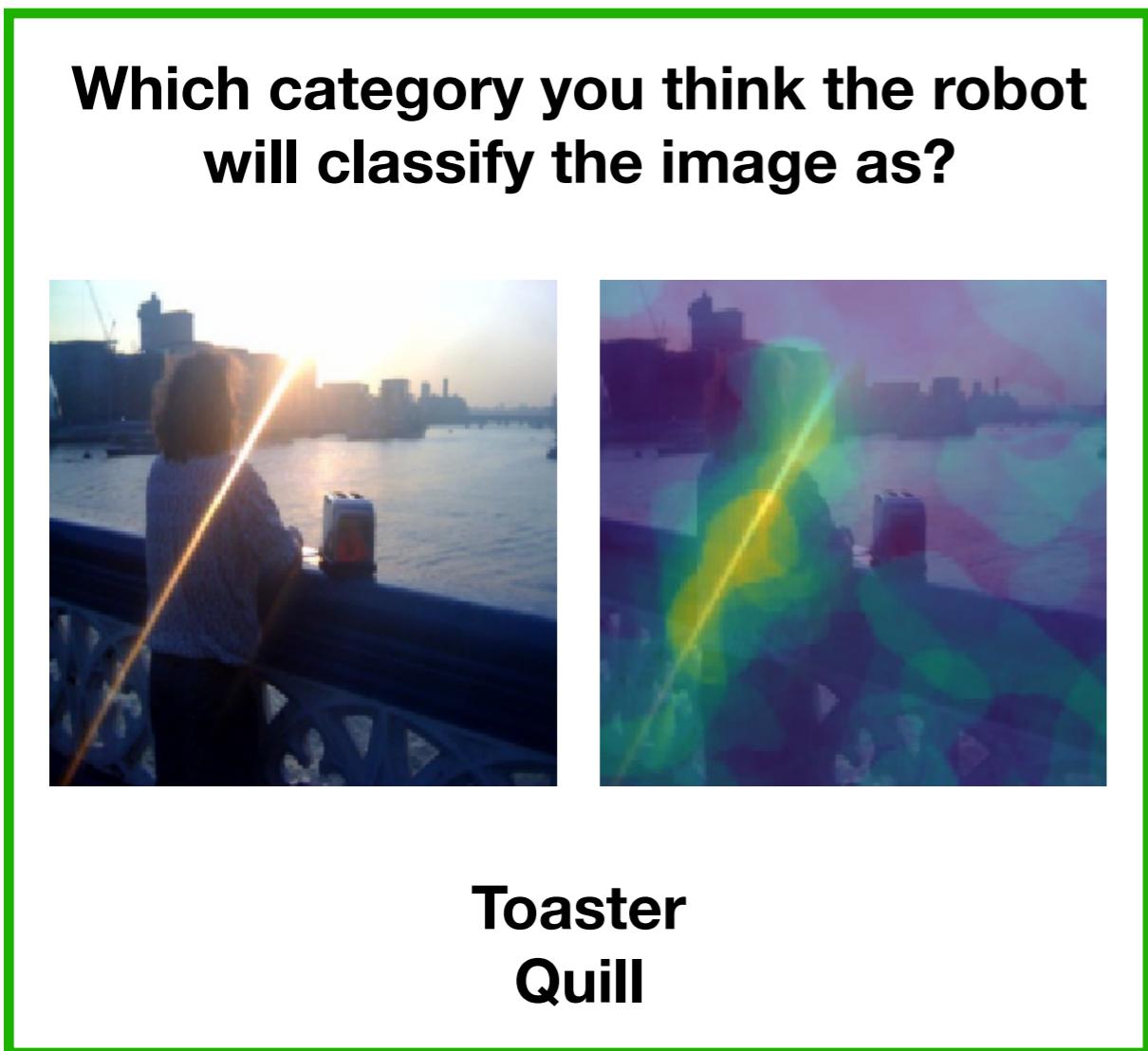
Example trial  
(Explanation condition)

**Which category you think the robot  
will classify the image as?**



**Toaster  
Quill**

Example trial  
(Explanation condition)



**Posterior**

$$P(c | e, x)$$

**Prior**

$$P(c | x)$$

**Likelihood**

$$p(e | c, x)$$

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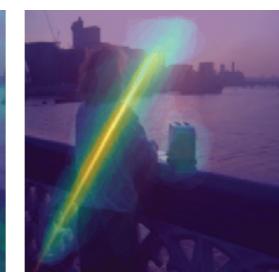
**Prior**

$$P(c | x)$$

**Likelihood**

$$p(e | c, x)$$

Obs  
map



Self  
map

$$sim[e(c, x), e'(c, x)] = \frac{\langle e, e' \rangle}{\|e\|_2 \|e'\|_2}$$

**Posterior**

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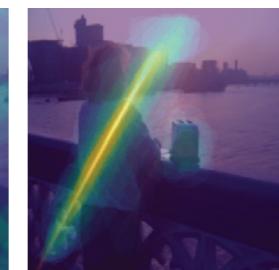
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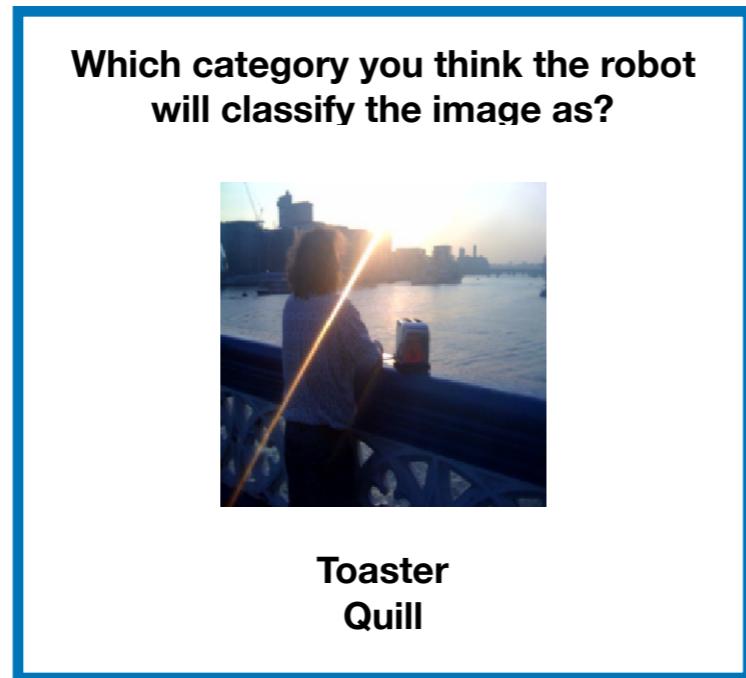
**Obs map**



**Self map**

$$sim[\mathbf{e}(c, x), \mathbf{e}'(c, x)] = \frac{\langle \mathbf{e}, \mathbf{e}' \rangle}{\|\mathbf{e}\|_2 \|\mathbf{e}'\|_2}$$

$$p(e | c, x) = \lambda \exp[-\lambda (1 - sim[\mathbf{e}(c, x), \mathbf{e}'(c, x)])]$$



**Posterior**

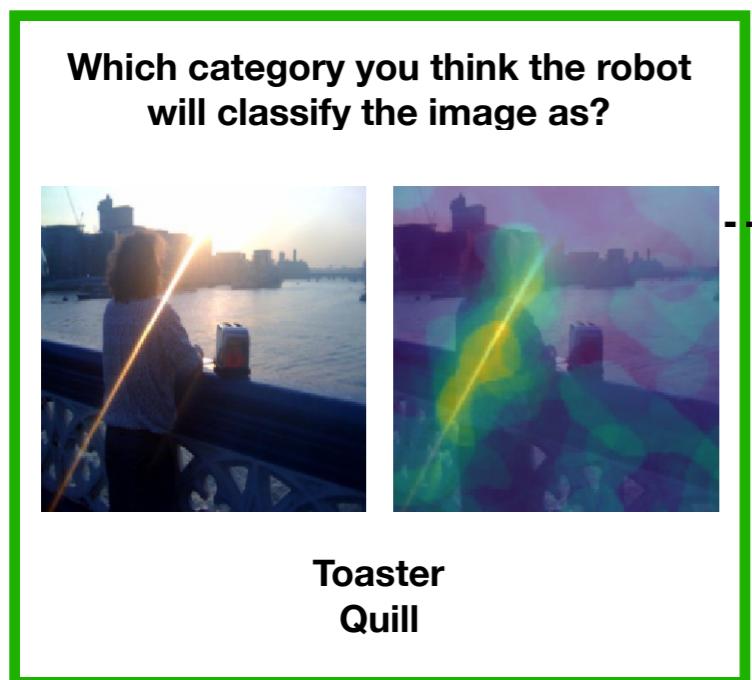
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**Prior**

$$P(c | x)$$

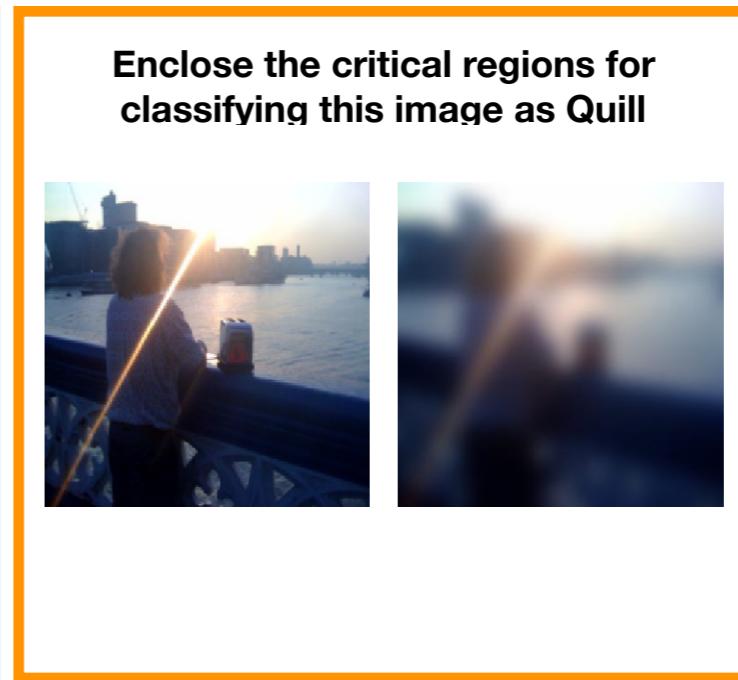
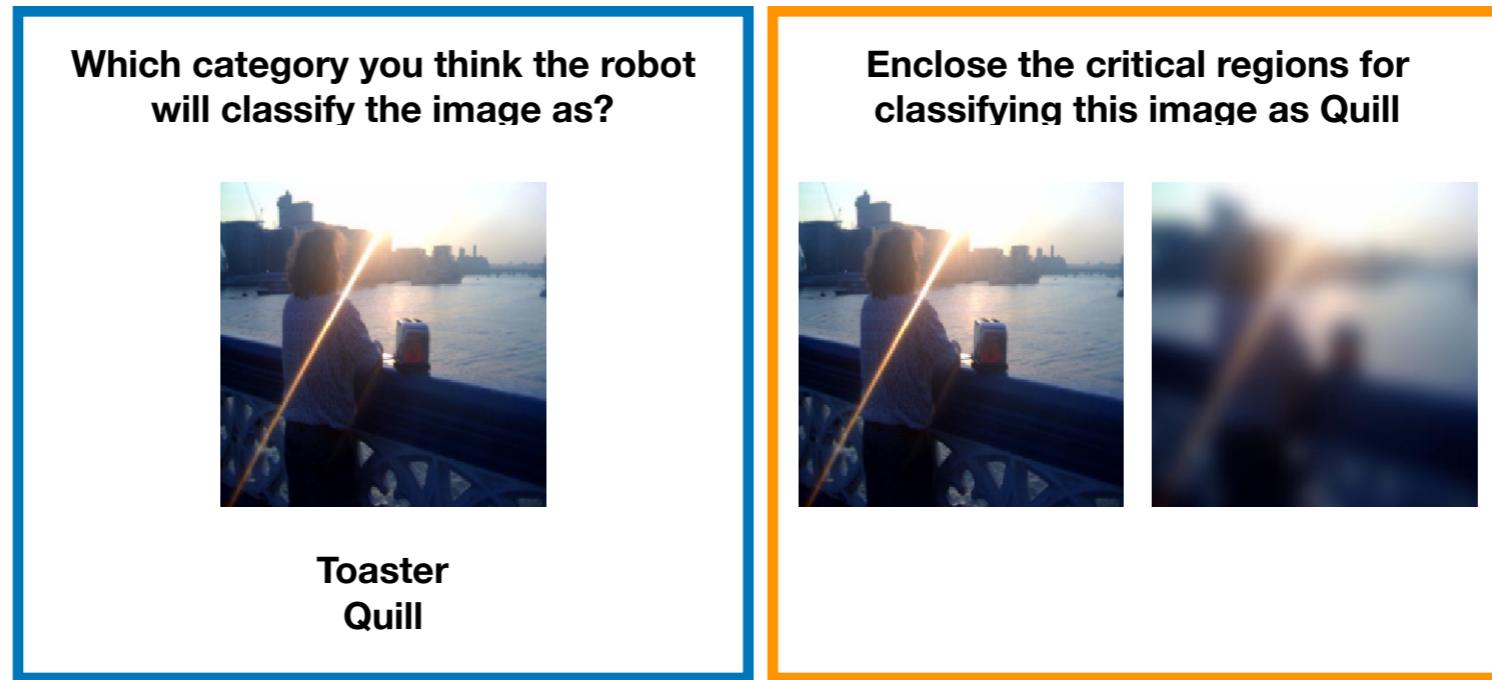
**Likelihood**

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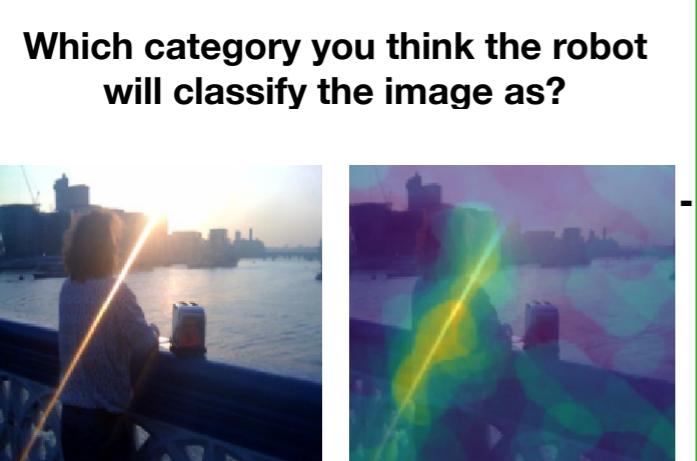
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**Likelihood**

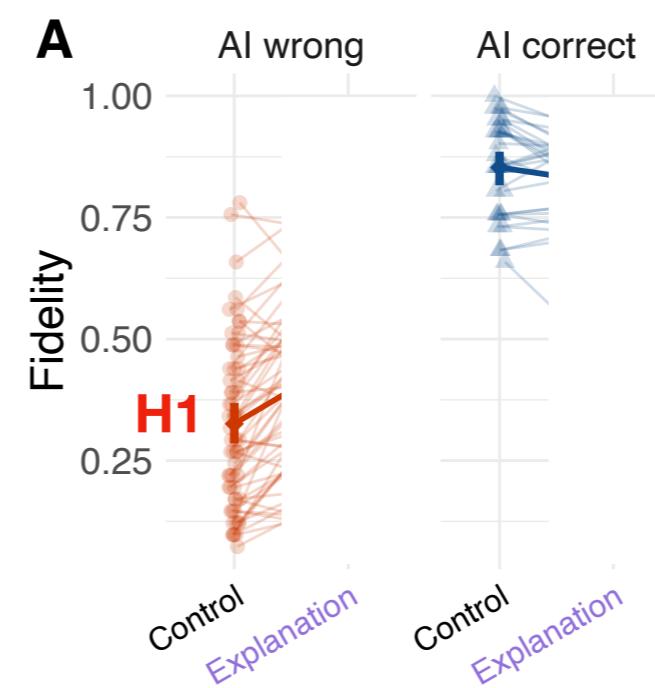
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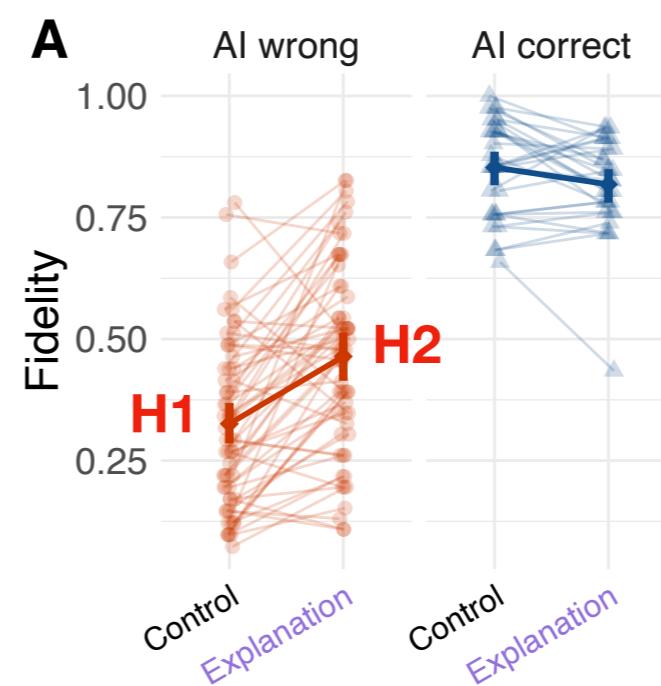
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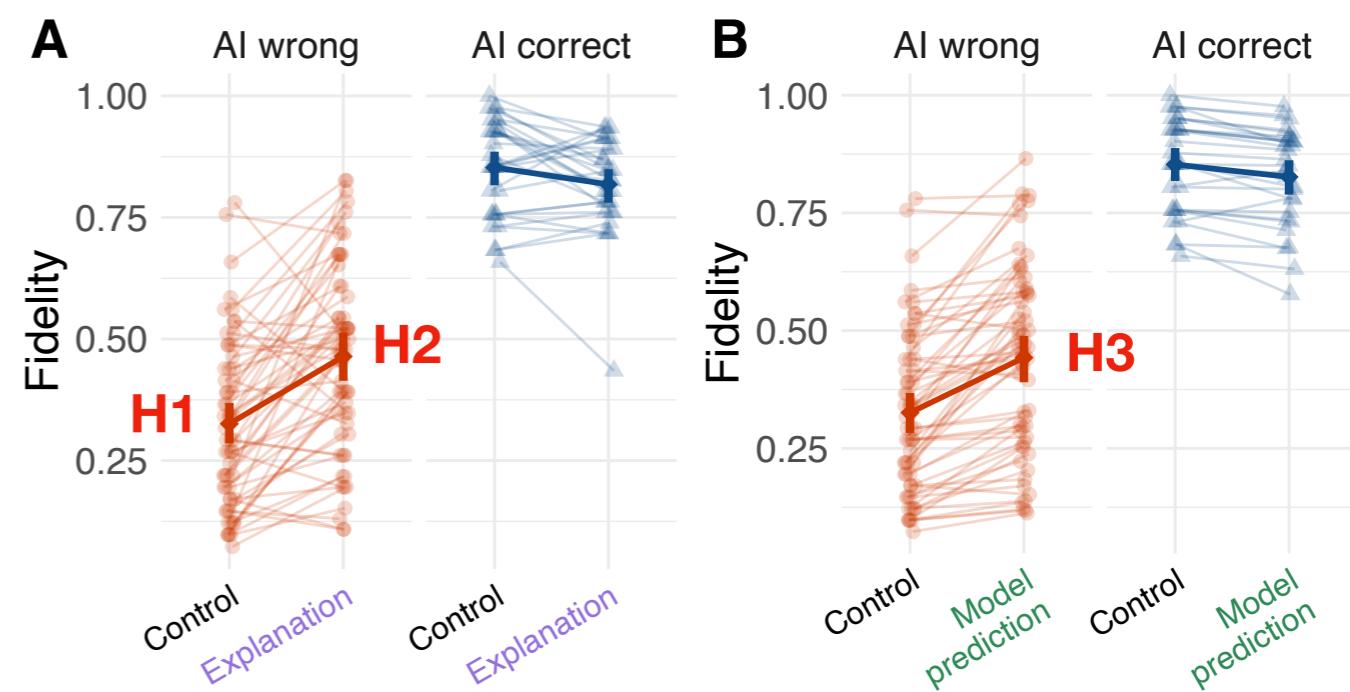
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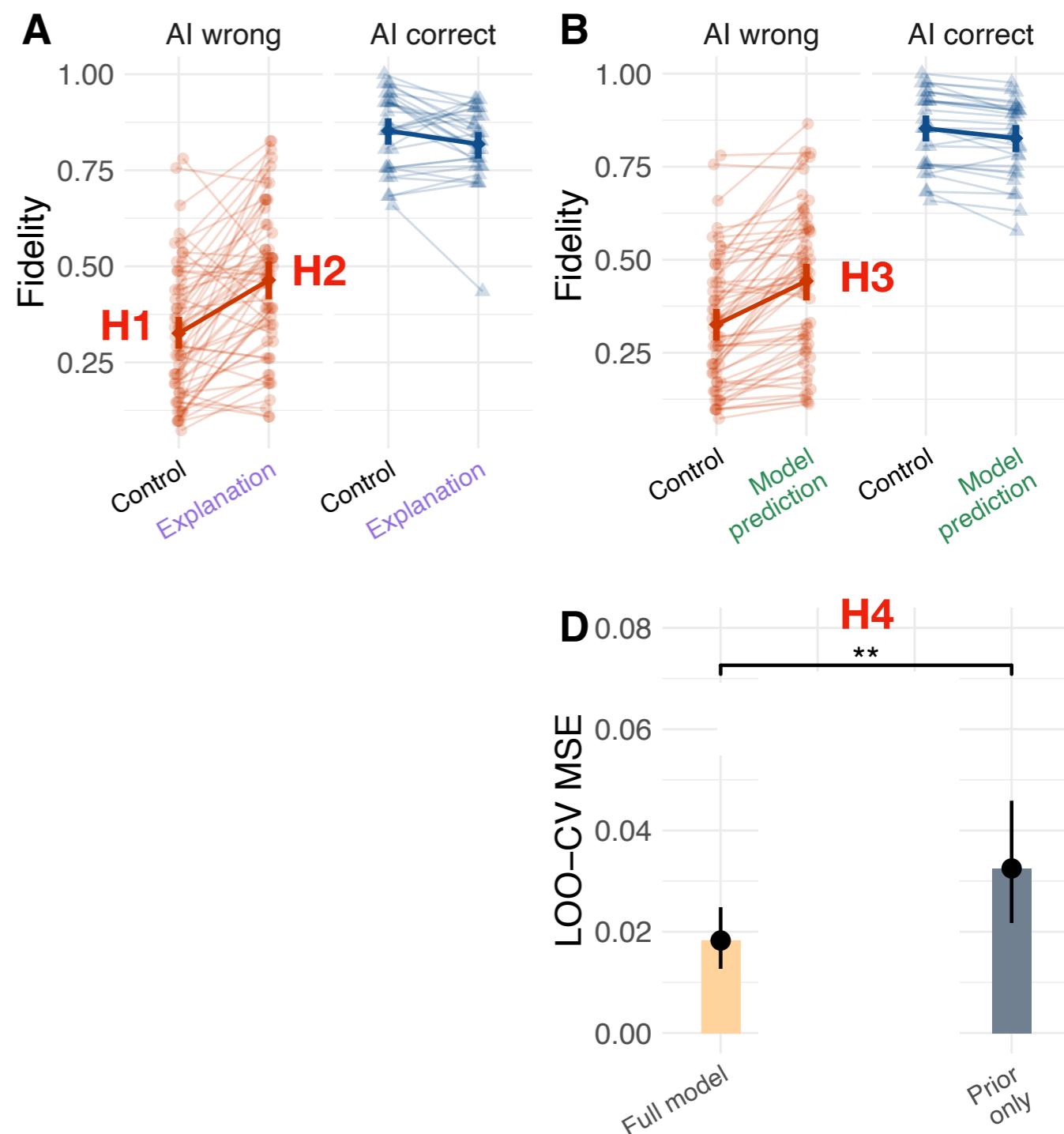
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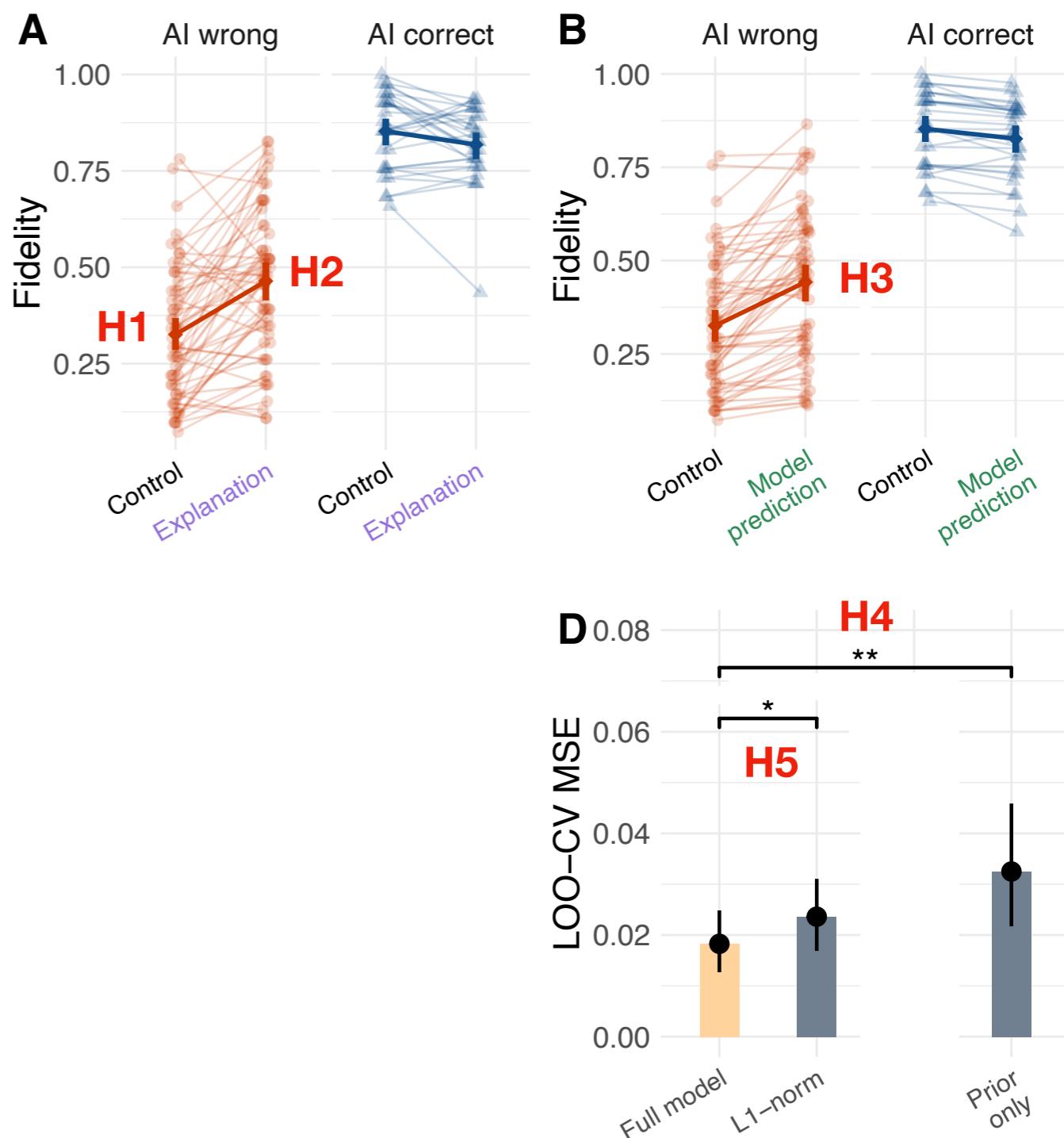
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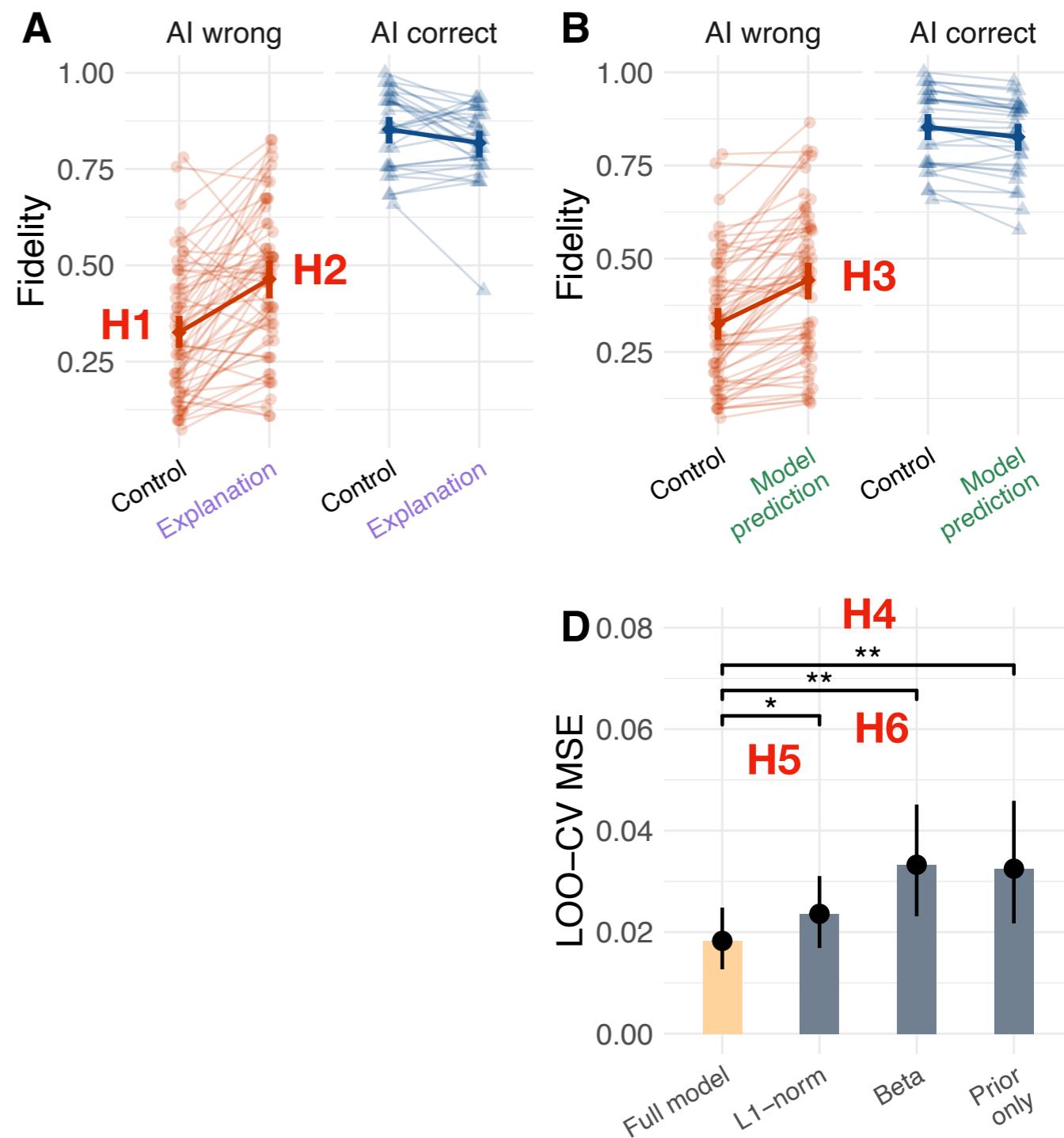
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7. The theory predicts human response well across a wide range of stimuli, classes, and explanations.

