

# WHAT DO SURVEY RESEARCHERS KNOW ABOUT INCLUDING OLDER ADULTS?

**RCCN Workshop:  
Inclusion of Older Adults in Clinical Research**

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**HRS** | HEALTH AND  
RETIREMENT  
STUDY

# SURVEY RESEARCH

- Recruit in the community, not in clinical settings
- Ideally, using probability sampling methods
  - Statistical methods to represent population of interest
- Usually, observational rather than intervention
- Federal statistical system
  - Census Bureau (American Community Survey, Current Population Survey)
  - NCHS (National Health Interview Survey, National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey)
- Academic survey research (usually grant-supported from, e.g., National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation)

# SURVEY RESEARCH AND OLDER ADULTS

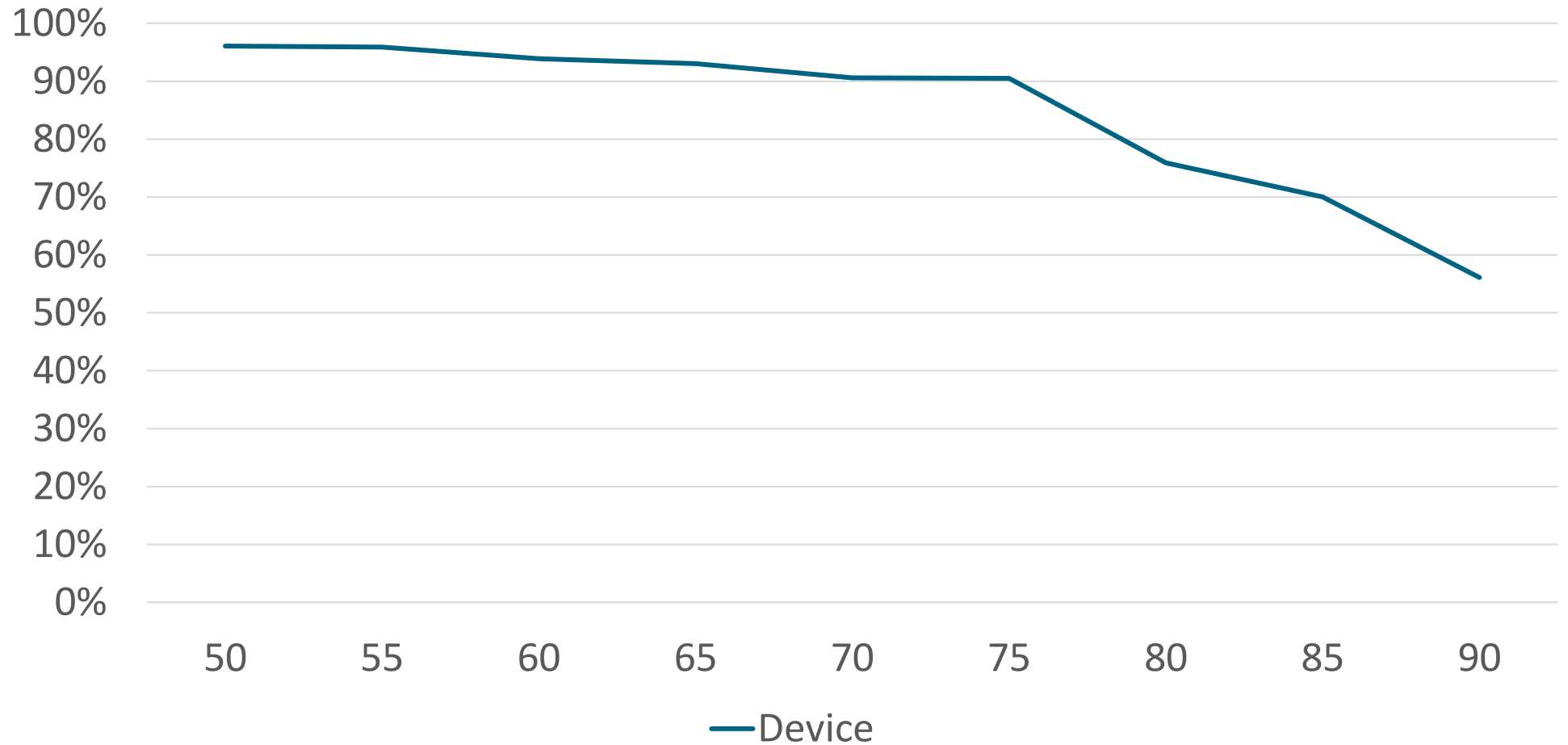
- Many population surveys represent the total population, including elders
- Some are targeted to specific age groups and concerns specific to those age groups
- Some follow cohorts over the life course
- The National Institute on Aging (NIA) sponsors several large population studies focused on older adults and most of these are longitudinal

# THE HEALTH AND RETIREMENT STUDY (HRS) AND SURVEY RESEARCH ON OLDER ADULTS

- HRS began in 1992; since 1998 it represents the full population 51 and older, with refreshment every six years to sustain it
- Oversamples of black and Hispanic Americans
- Longitudinal – follow through the end of life
- For today's topic, HRS can provide
  - Information about the older population relevant to its inclusion in research
  - Specific experience about barriers

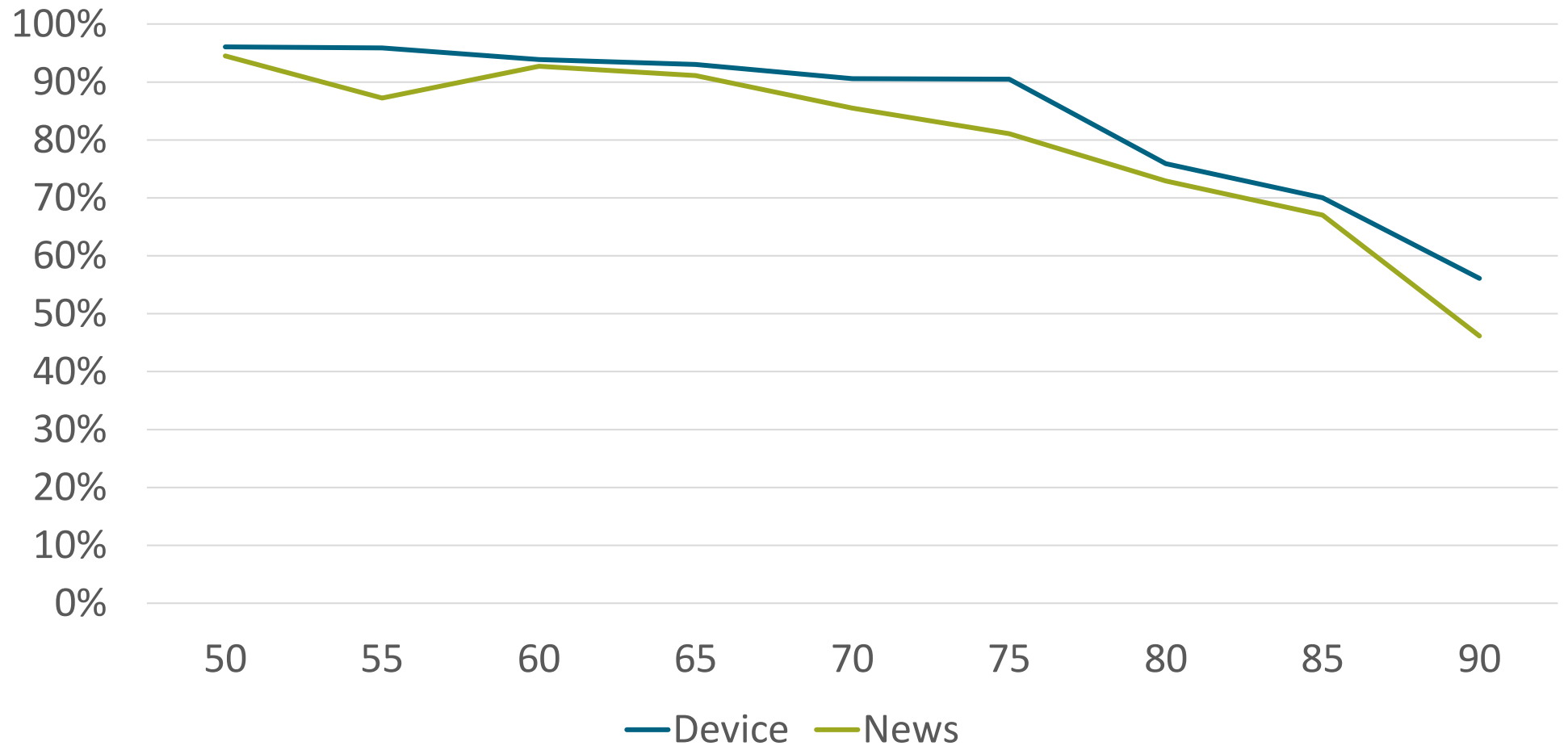
# COMMUNICATION TO OLDER ADULTS: WHAT ABOUT A REALLY NICE WEBPAGE OR PORTAL?

Ownership of web-enabled devices has grown and is widespread up to age 80



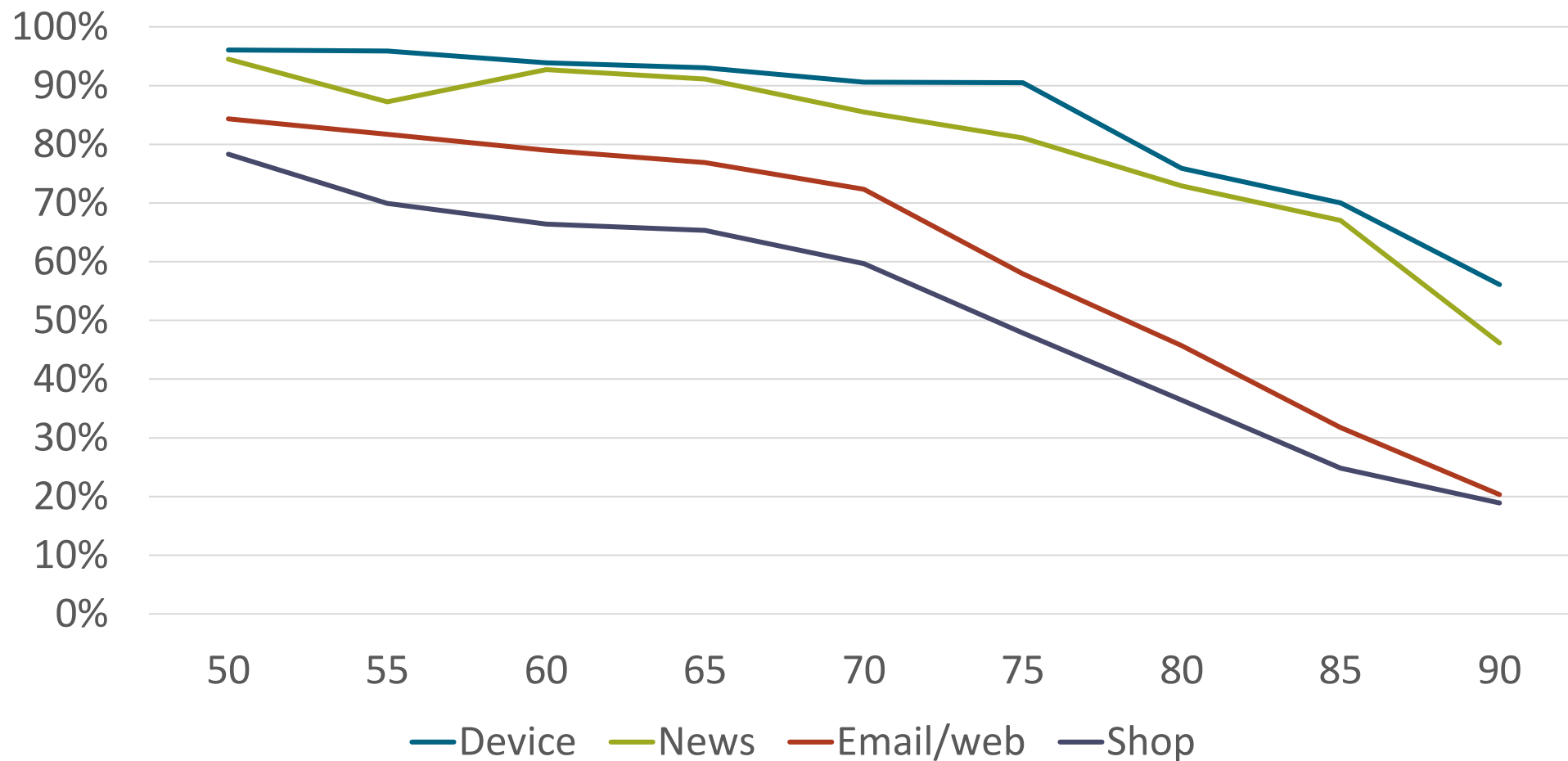
# COMMUNICATION TO OLDER ADULTS: WHAT ABOUT A REALLY NICE WEBPAGE OR PORTAL?

Most older adults with web devices can use them for news or sports info



# COMMUNICATION TO OLDER ADULTS: WHAT ABOUT A REALLY NICE WEBPAGE OR PORTAL?

Percent who  
are truly  
web-  
proficient is  
much lower

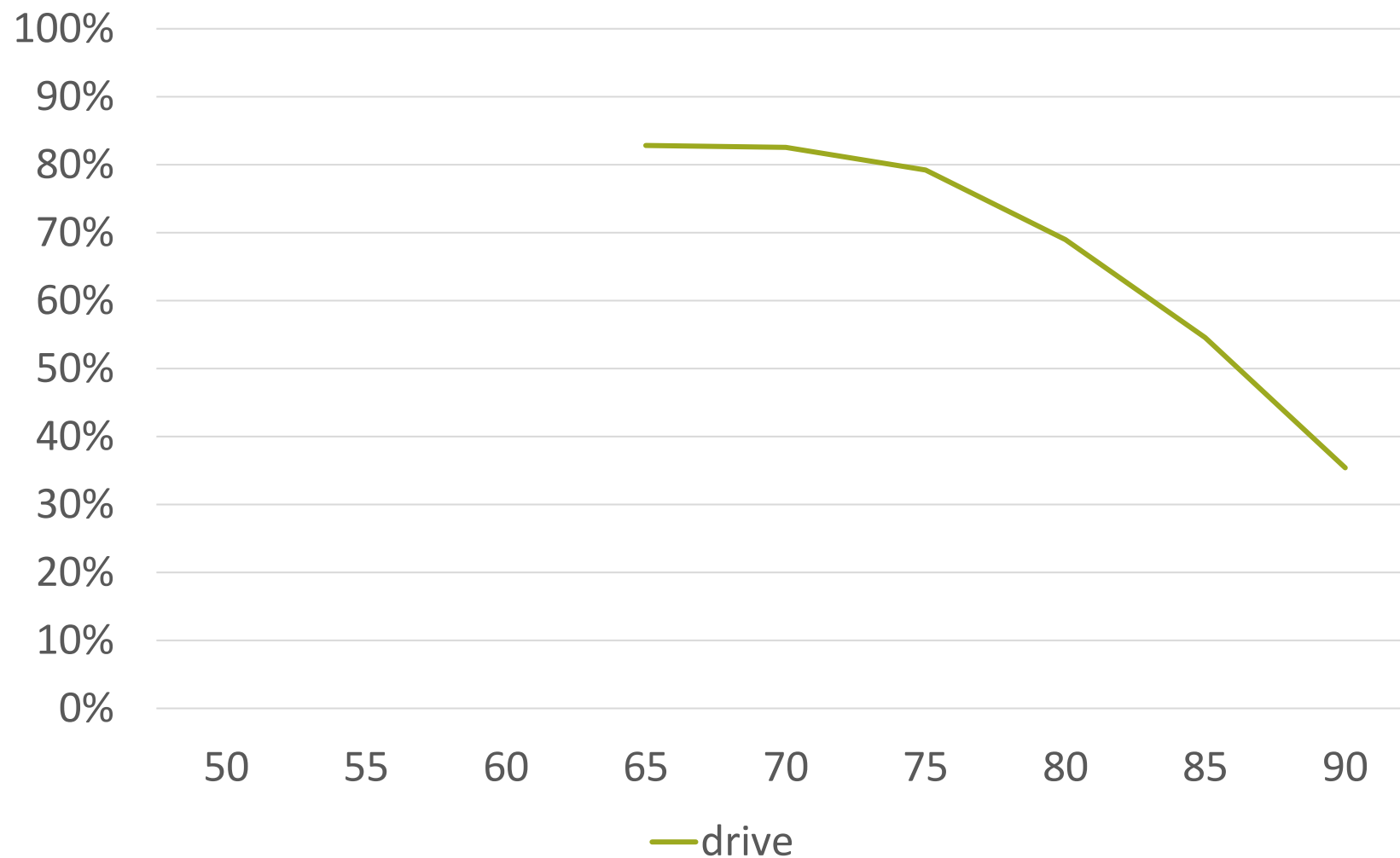


# WHAT DO SURVEY RESEARCHERS KNOW ABOUT INCLUDING OLDER ADULTS?

1. Don't rely exclusively on web for communication around recruitment, follow-up or maintaining engagement

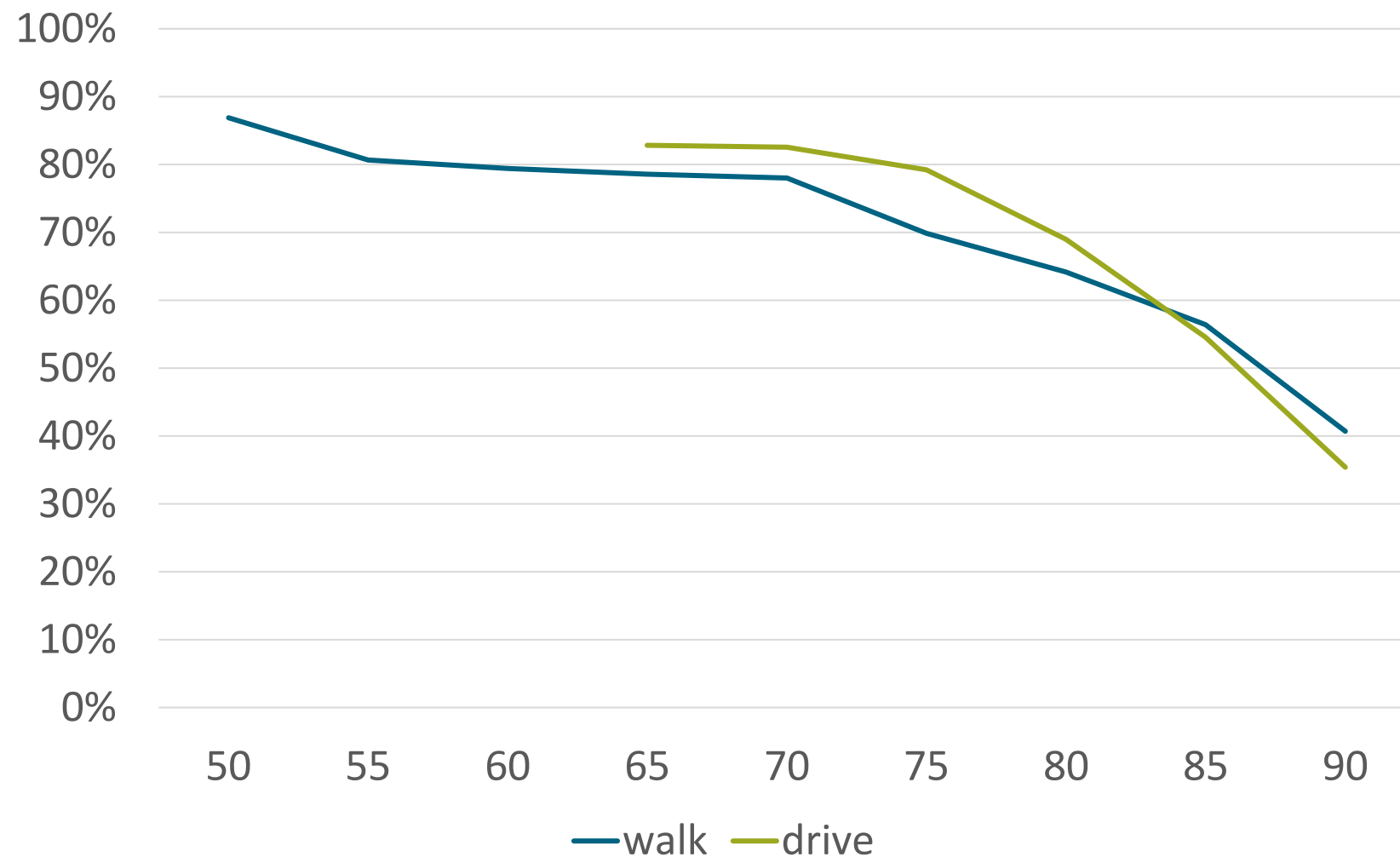
# MOBILITY AND OLDER ADULTS

Ability to drive, even locally, declines rapidly after age 80



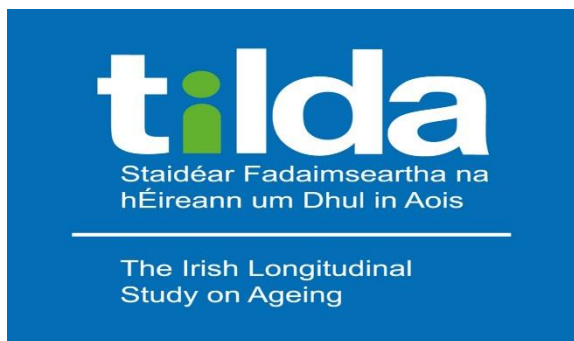
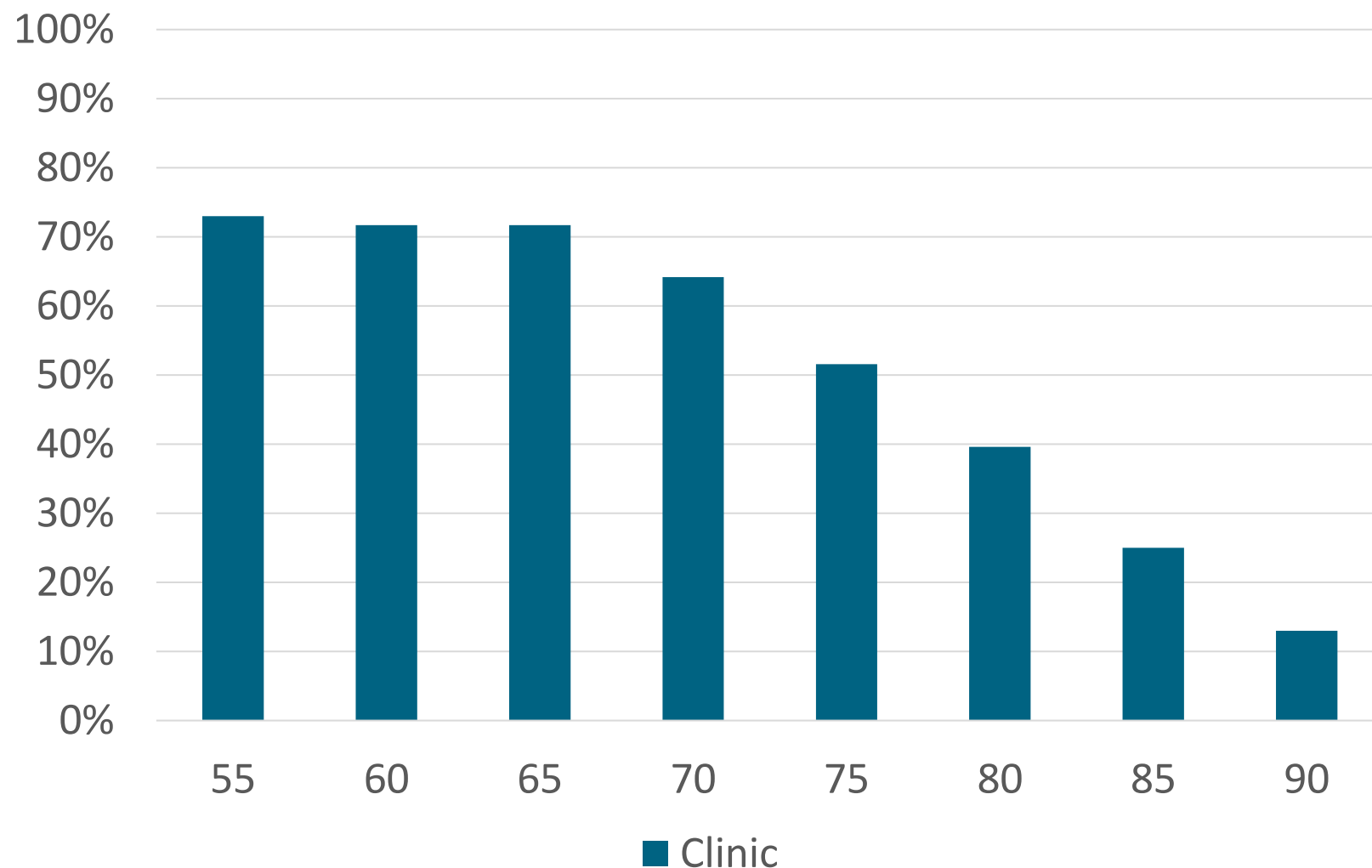
# MOBILITY AND OLDER ADULTS

Ability to walk a block and climb a flight of stairs declines even earlier



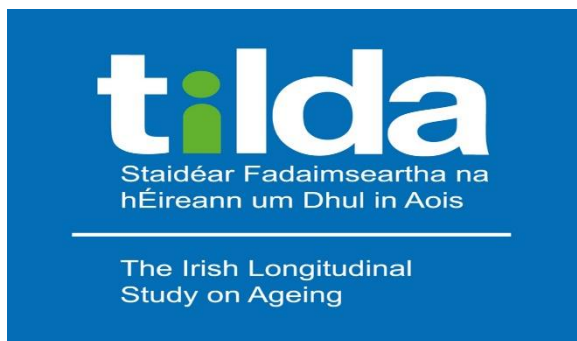
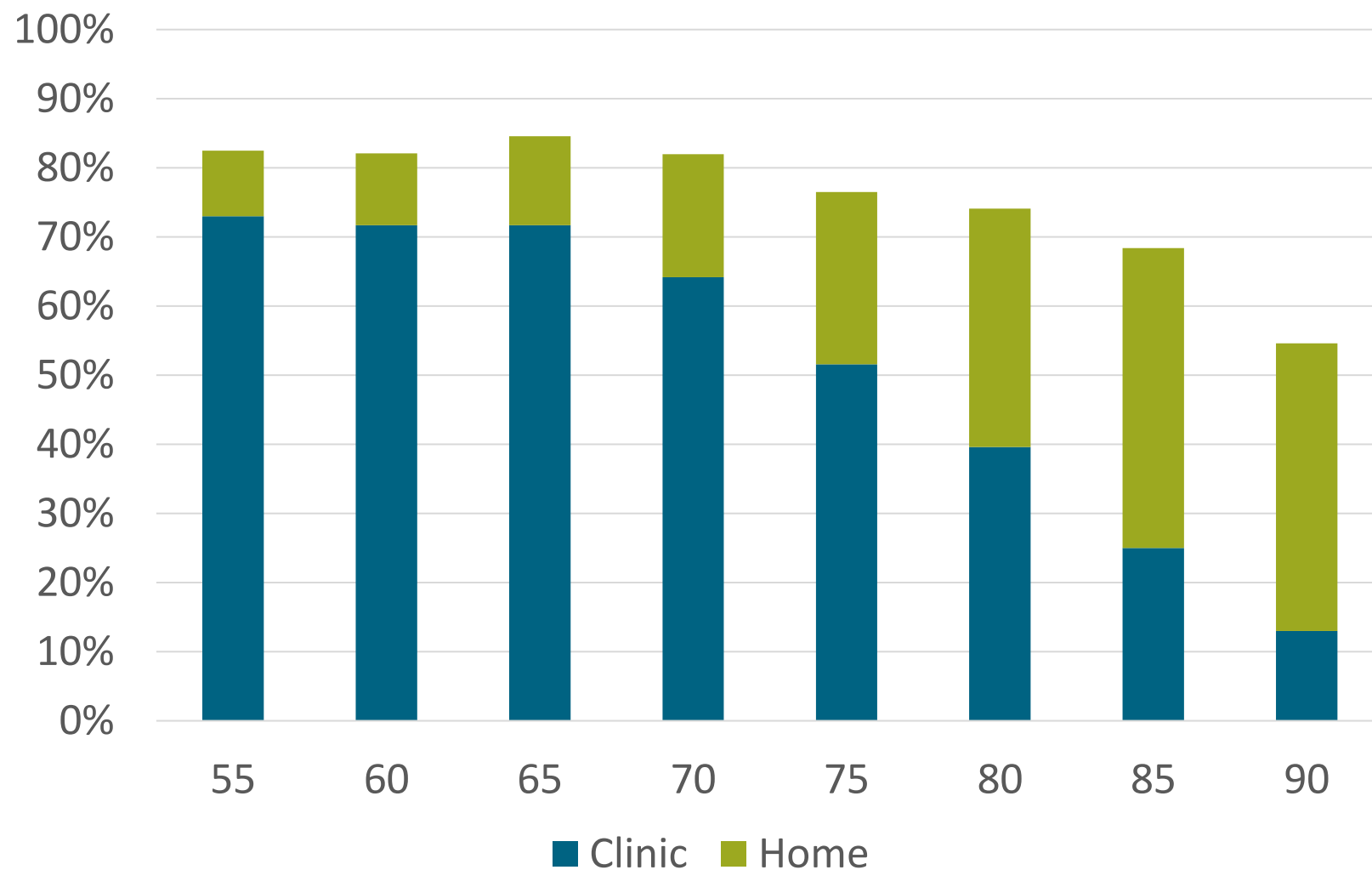
# ASSESSMENT CONTACT WITH OLDER ADULTS: WILL THEY COME TO CLINIC?

The Irish equivalent of HRS invites people to clinic in Dublin for a health assessment



# ASSESSMENT CONTACT WITH OLDER ADULTS: WILL THEY COME TO CLINIC?

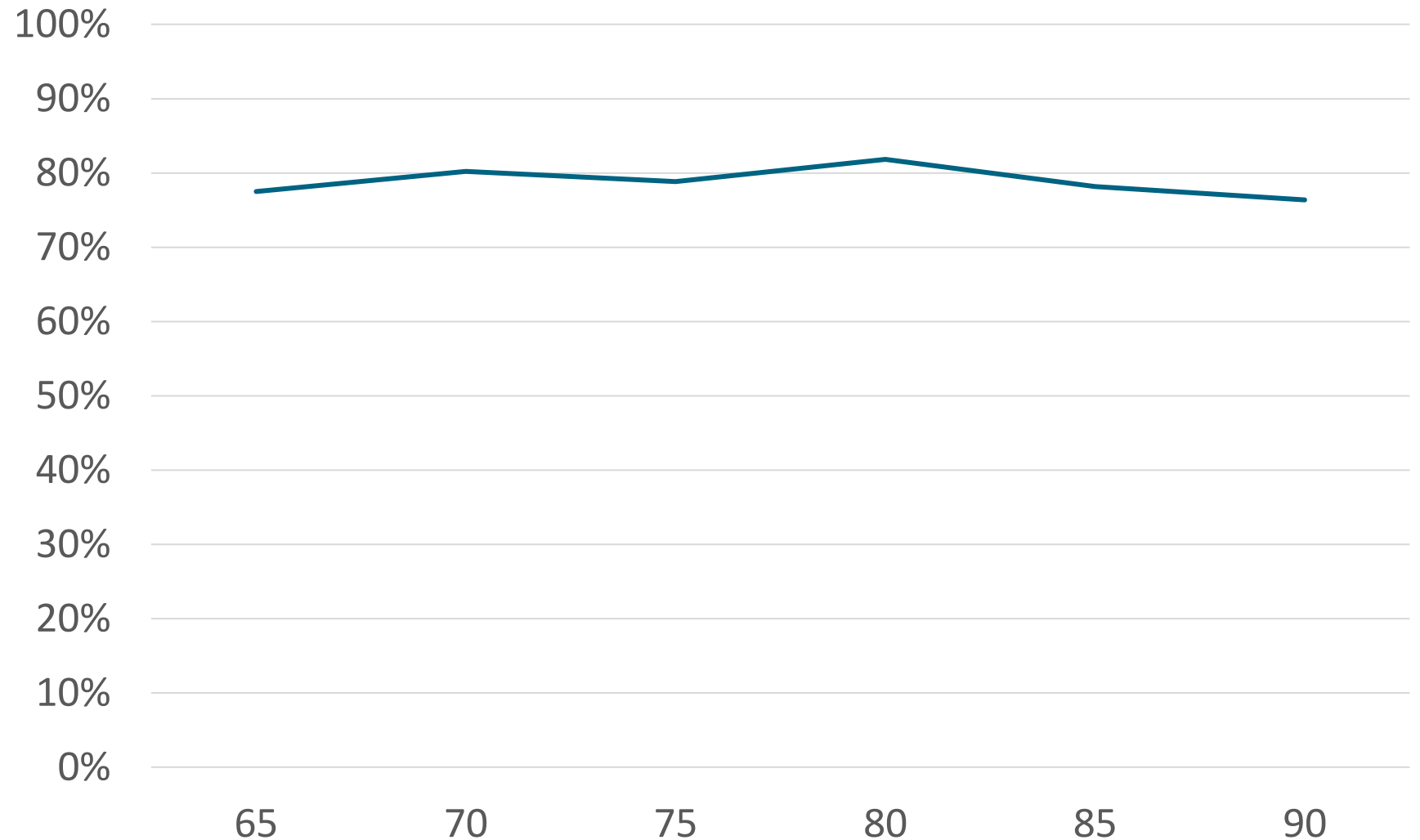
Home-based  
alternative adds  
greatly to  
coverage of the  
health  
assessment



# YOU CAN DO A LOT IN HOME VISITS: DEMENTIA ASSESSMENT

HRS does a one-hour in-home cognitive assessment with the 65+

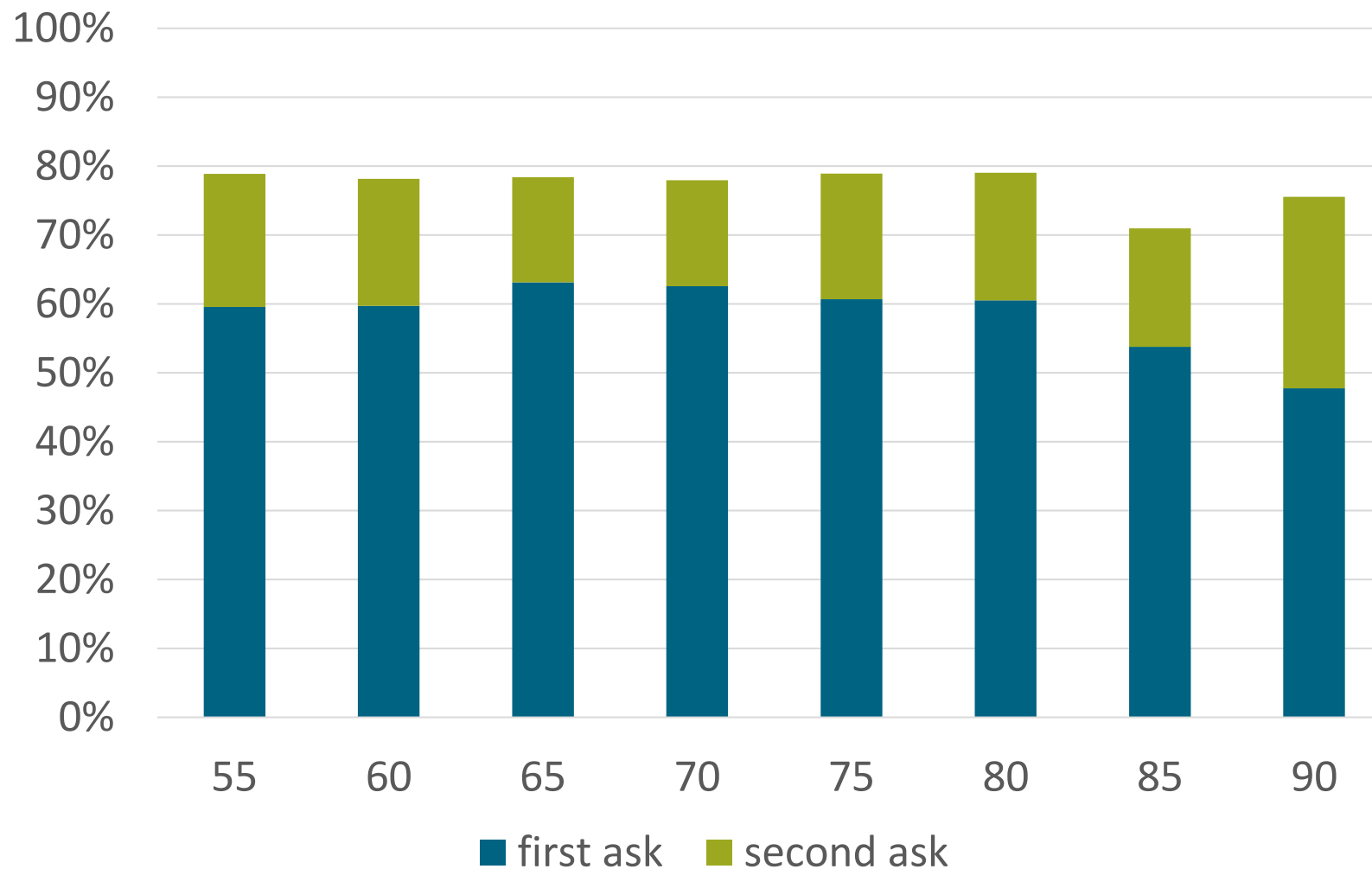
Harmonized Cognitive Assessment Protocol (HCAP)



# YOU CAN DO A LOT IN HOME VISITS: PHLEBOTOMY

HRS does home-based phlebotomy (50ml, 7 tubes)

Asking twice boosts coverage

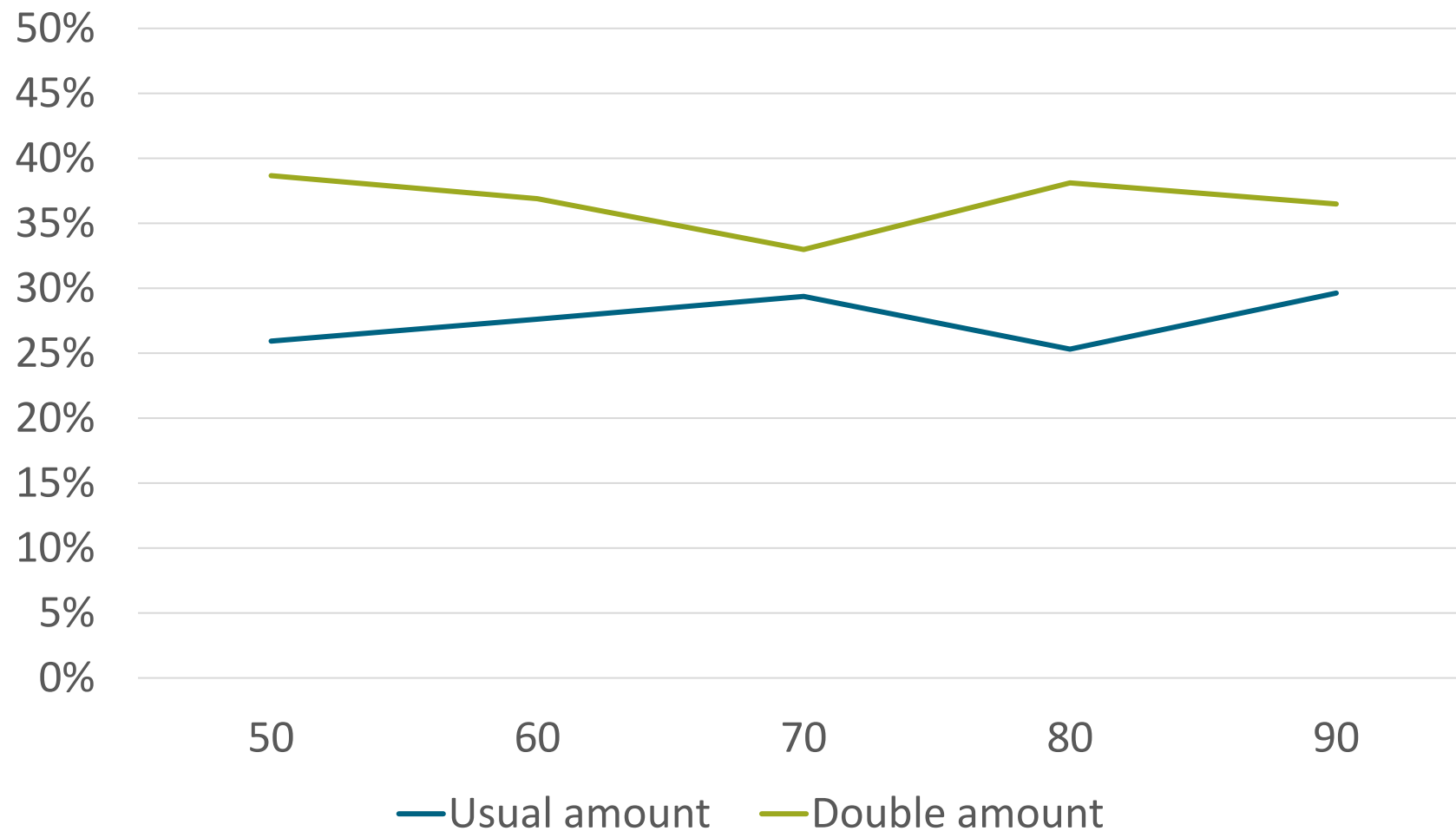


# WHAT DO SURVEY RESEARCHERS KNOW ABOUT INCLUDING OLDER ADULTS?

1. Don't rely exclusively on web for communication around recruitment, follow-up or maintaining engagement
2. Don't rely exclusively on clinic visits for contact and assessment

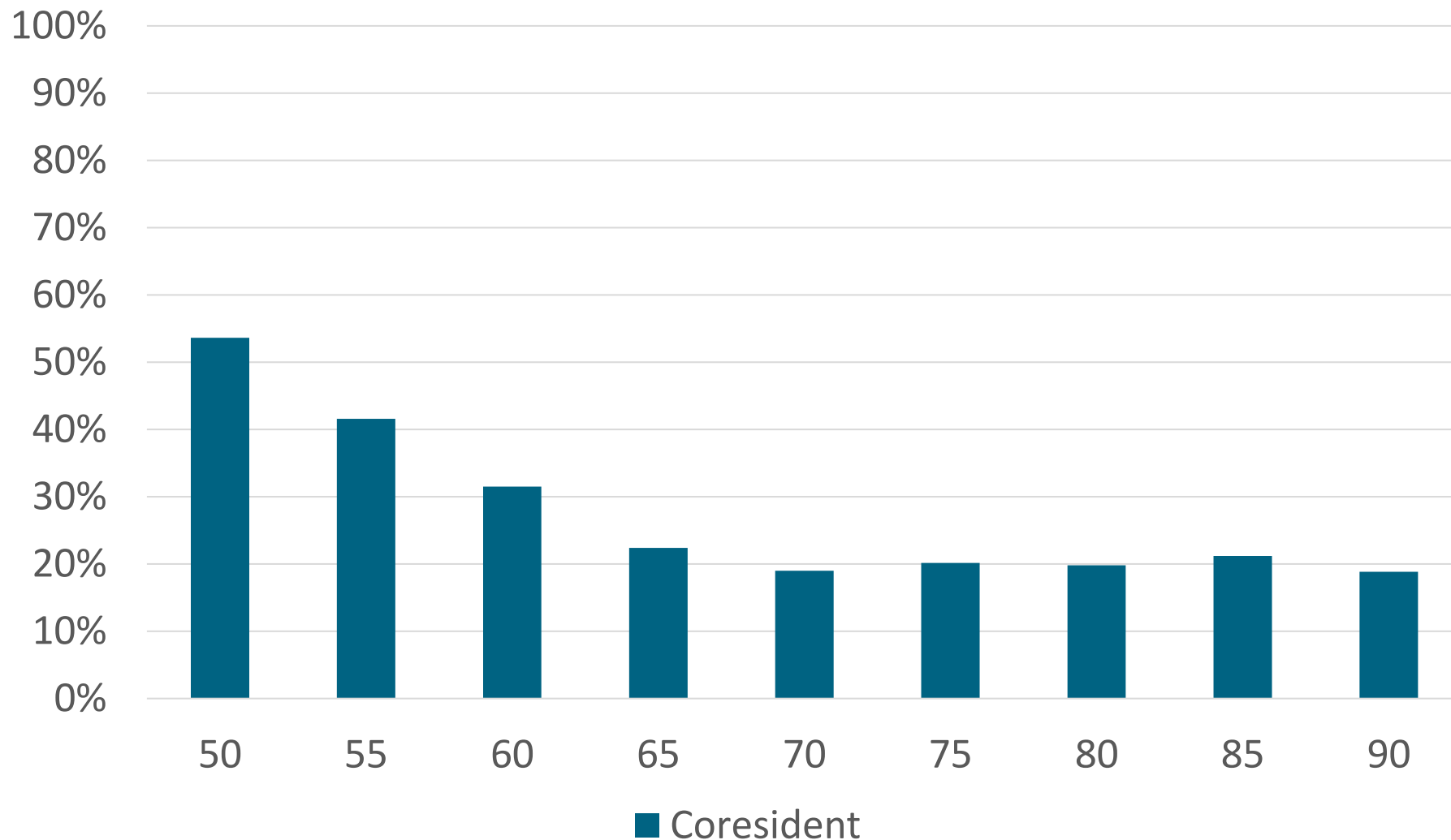
# MONEY CAN HELP AT ANY AGE

HRS sometimes offers extra financial incentives at the end of a wave to induce response. Here, some got offered a double amount.



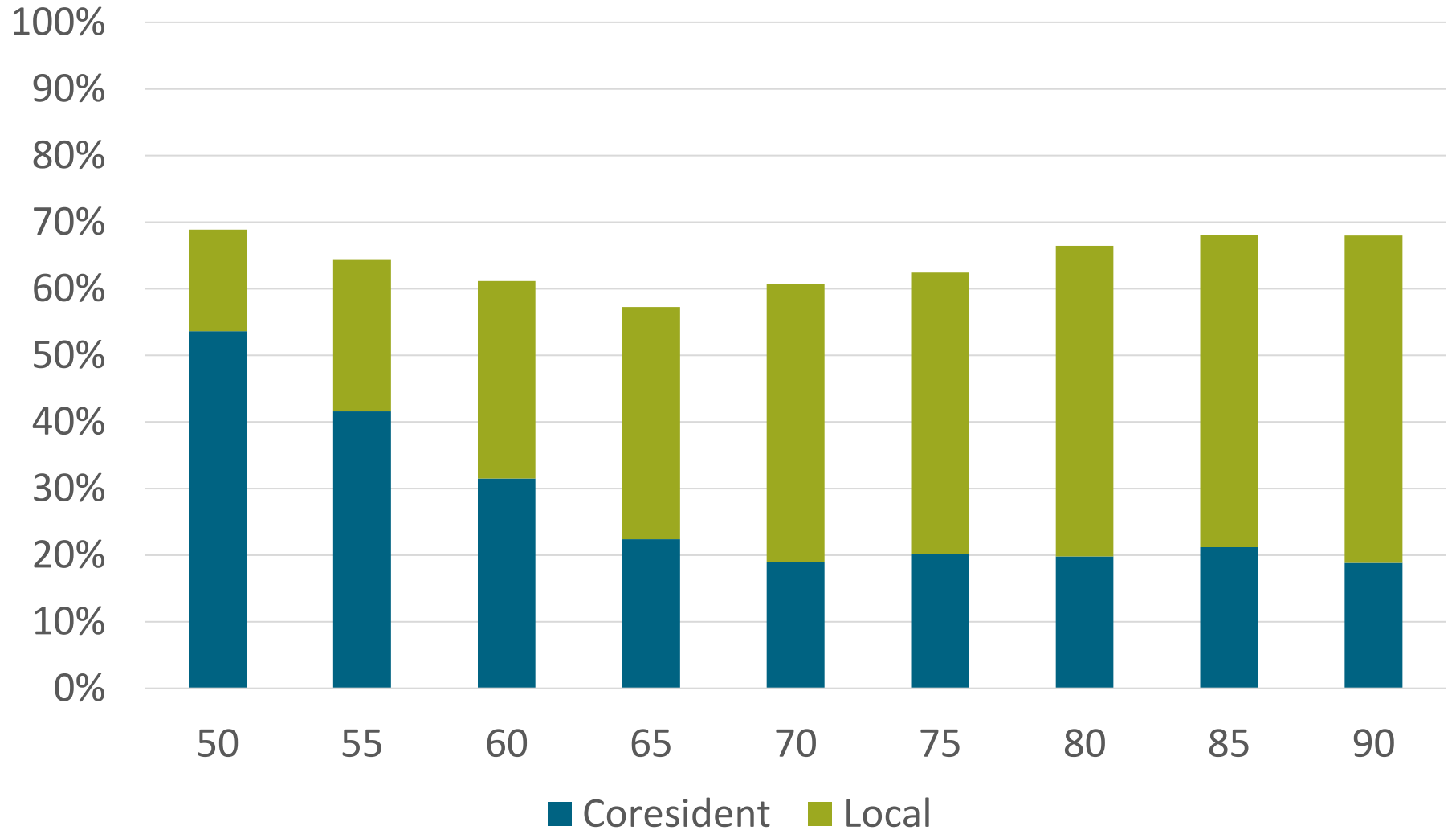
# PROXIMITY OF CHILDREN

Most older adults live independently, even at advanced ages



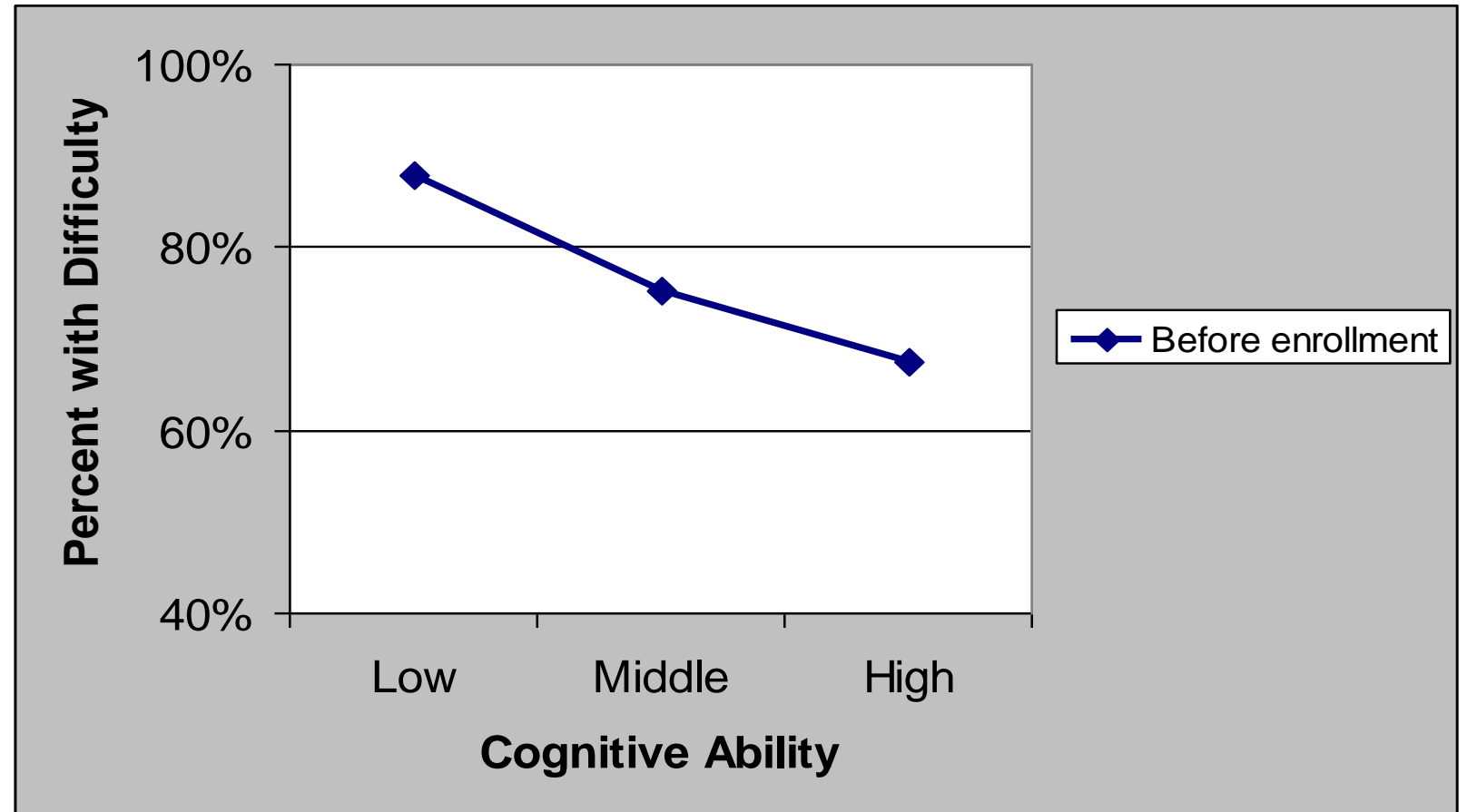
# PROXIMITY OF CHILDREN

Most older adults have a child who lives within 10 miles



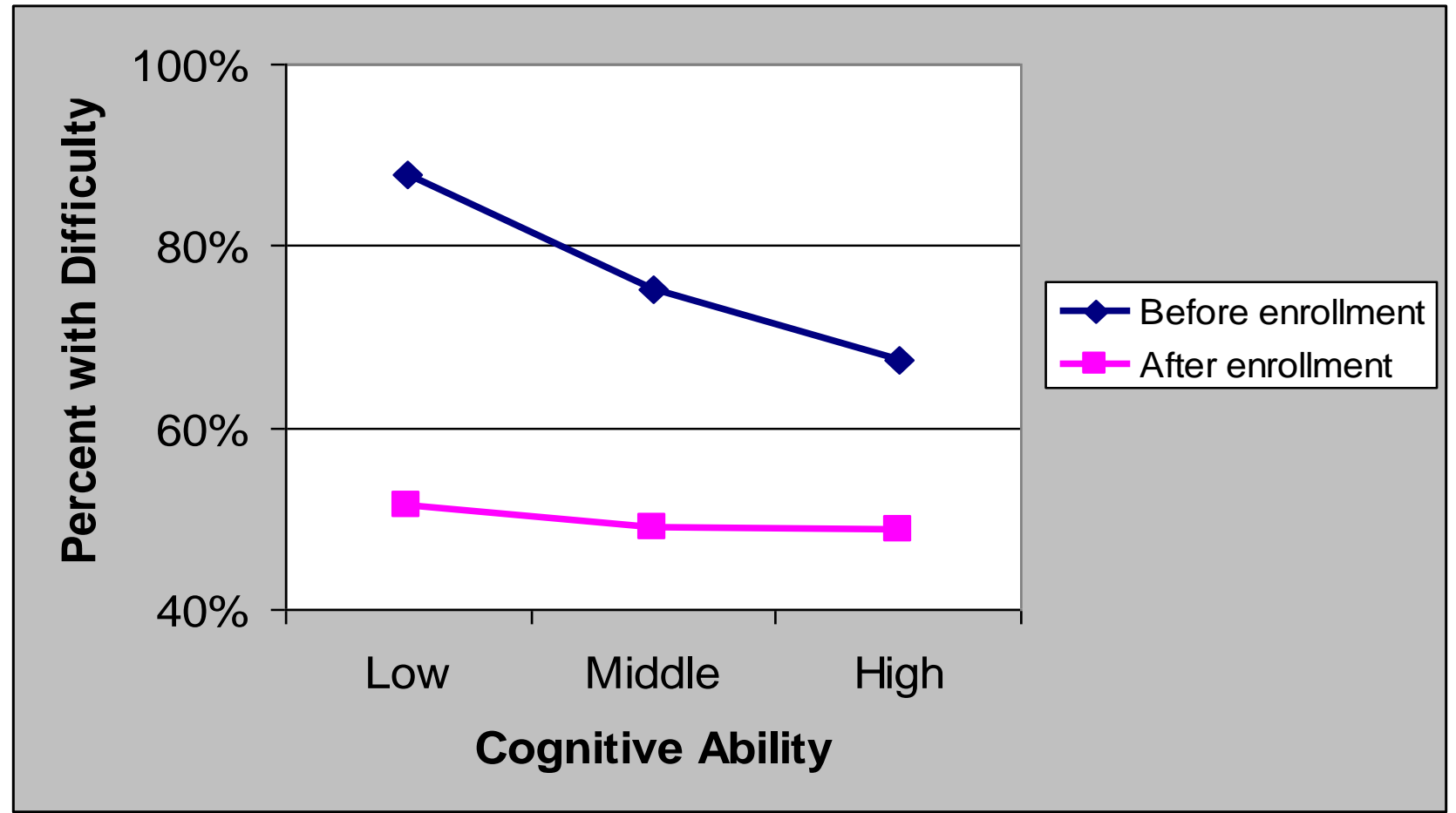
# AN EXAMPLE: MEDICARE PART D PLAN CHOICE

A cognitively demanding task. Prior to enrollment, high levels of anxiety about decision. Especially for groups low on cognitive ability



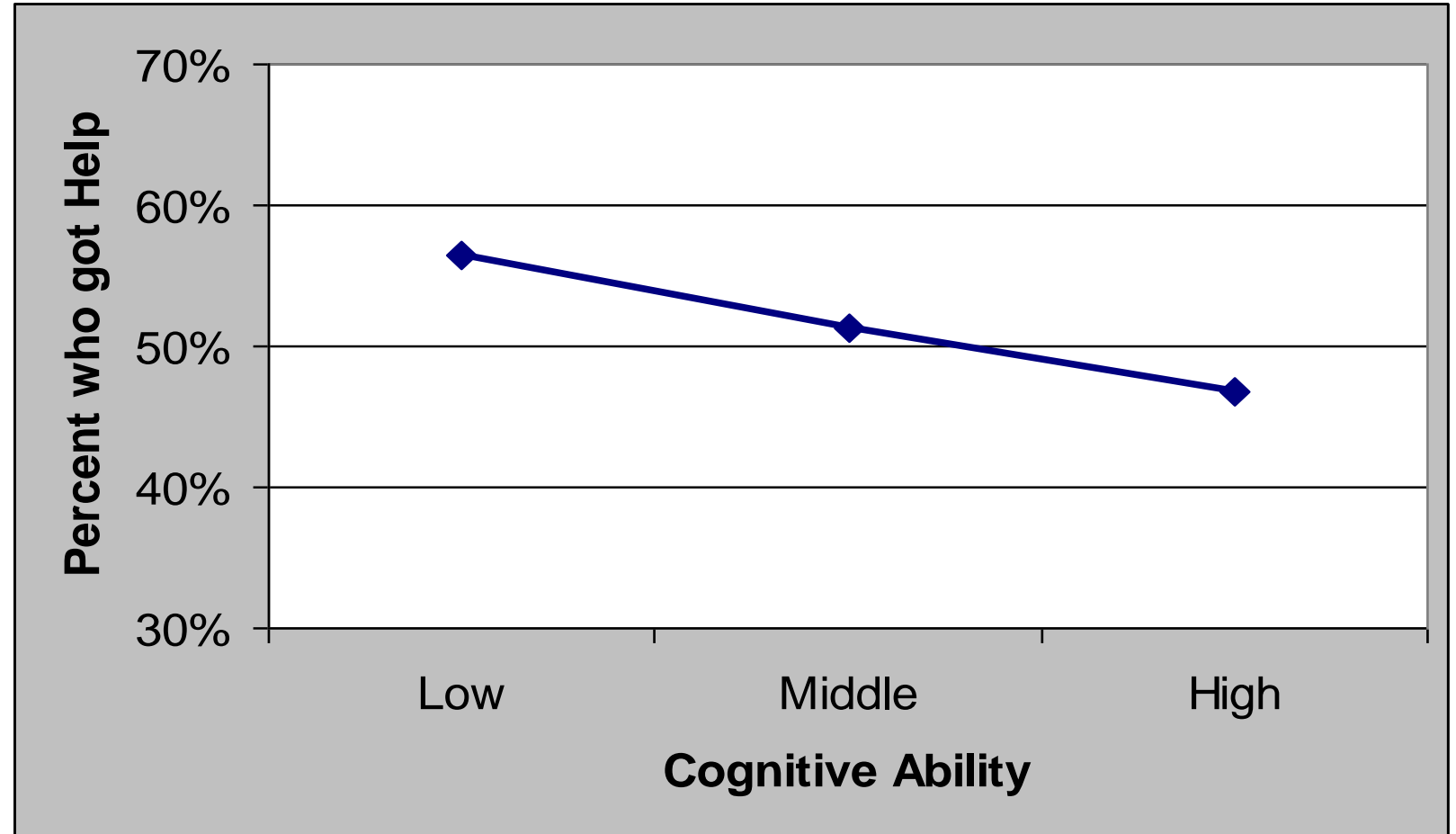
# AN EXAMPLE: MEDICARE PART D PLAN CHOICE

After enrollment, fewer people reported difficulty, especially for groups low on cognitive ability



# WHAT HAPPENED? PEOPLE GOT HELP

- It's the network!
- Not the 'net
- The internet magnifies cognitive inequality
- Adaptive strategies in real life typically involve social networks
- Use of social contacts reduces impact of cognitive inequality



# WHAT DO SURVEY RESEARCHERS KNOW ABOUT INCLUDING OLDER ADULTS?

1. Don't rely exclusively on web for communication around recruitment, follow-up or maintaining engagement
2. Don't rely exclusively on clinic visits for contact and assessment
3. Financial incentives can help
4. Engage with children or other supporters, even if the need is not obvious

# THANK YOU!

<https://hrsonline.isr.umich.edu/>



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