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AR-011 Confidence: 75%

The Human-in-the-Loop Illusion

When Human Oversight of AI Agents Fails, and What to Build Instead

February 2026

v1.0

Florian Ziesche · Ainary Ventures

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CONTENTS

FOUNDATION

1 Executive Summary 3

2 Methodology 4

3 How to Read This Report 5

ANALYSIS

4 The Human-in-the-Loop Assumption 6

5 Automation Bias — Why Humans Stop Paying Attention 8

6 Alert Fatigue — The Boy Who Cried Wolf at Scale 11

7 Where HITL Works (and Where It Doesn't) 14

8 The Regulatory Gap — Mandating What Doesn't Work 17

ACTION

9 What to Build Instead 19

10 Predictions 22

11 Transparency Note 23

12 Claim Register 24

13 References 25

3. How to Read This Report

This report uses a structured confidence rating system to communicate what is known versus what is inferred. Every quantitative claim carries its source and confidence level.

RATING	MEANING	EXAMPLE
High	3+ independent sources, peer-reviewed or primary data	67% of security alerts ignored (Vectra 2023, n=2,000 analysts)
Medium	1–2 sources, plausible but not independently confirmed	30% response drop per reminder (Ancker 2017, single study)
Low	Single secondary source, methodology unclear	Industry survey without disclosed sample methodology

This report was produced using a **multi-agent research pipeline** with structured source verification and contradiction tracking. Full methodology details are provided in the Transparency Note (Section 11).

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1. Executive Summary

Human oversight is the default answer to AI risk — but the evidence shows it fails systematically at scale. The question isn't whether to keep humans in the loop, but where.

- **67% of security alerts are ignored** by human analysts because of volume overload — 4,484 alerts per day in large SOC teams[1]
- **Each additional reminder reduces response probability by 30%** — alert fatigue is measurable and predictable[2]
- **80–99% of clinical alarms are false positives** — creating desensitization that leads to 14% more medical errors[3][4]
- **96% of data breaches are disclosed by attackers, not defenders** — human-monitored security systems fail to detect threats before damage occurs[5]
- **The EU AI Act mandates human oversight for high-risk systems** (Article 14) — but does not specify how to prevent the empirically documented failure modes[6]
- **HITL works when intervention frequency is low, impact is high, and context is rich** — not when humans monitor high-volume, repetitive agent actions

Keywords: *Human-in-the-Loop, Automation Bias, Alert Fatigue, AI Oversight, Confidence-Based Routing, EU AI Act, Agent Design*

2. Methodology

This report synthesizes evidence from peer-reviewed medical and human factors research (alert fatigue, automation bias), cybersecurity practitioner surveys (Vectra, Verizon DBIR), regulatory frameworks (EU AI Act, NIST AI RMF), and industry reports on AI agent design (AuxilioBits, Stanford HAI, IBM). Sources span healthcare (clinical alarm systems), aviation (cockpit automation), cybersecurity (SOC alert management), and autonomous vehicles. The cross-domain approach reveals consistent patterns: HITL fails when humans are asked to monitor high-volume, low-variance tasks where the base rate of genuine intervention need is very low.

Limitations: Most HITL research is domain-specific (healthcare, aviation). Direct studies of HITL failure in AI agent oversight are limited because widespread agent deployment is recent. This report extrapolates from established human factors research to the agent domain — a reasonable but imperfect analogy. Real-world agent HITL failure data will emerge over the next 12–24 months as deployments scale.

Full methodology details, including confidence calibration and known weaknesses, are provided in the Transparency Note (Section 11).

4. The Human-in-the-Loop Assumption 80%

(Confidence: High)

When AI systems make mistakes, the default answer is always the same: put a human in the loop. The assumption is intuitive. Humans provide judgment, context, and accountability that machines lack. But the assumption rests on a premise that is empirically false: that humans remain attentive, calibrated, and effective when monitoring autonomous systems at scale.

Evidence

HITL is prescribed across domains:

- **EU AI Act (Article 14):** High-risk AI systems must be "subject to human oversight" — specifically, humans must be able to "fully understand the capacities and limitations" and "be able to correctly interpret the system's output."[6]
- **NIST AI Risk Management Framework:** Recommends "human-AI configuration" where humans retain decision authority for high-stakes outcomes[7]
- **FDA medical device guidance:** Autonomous diagnostic systems require "meaningful human oversight" — without defining what makes oversight meaningful[8]
- **FAA cockpit automation standards:** Pilots must monitor automated flight systems and intervene when necessary — a requirement tested catastrophically by the Boeing 737 MAX MCAS system[9]

The pattern is consistent: regulators and standards bodies mandate human oversight as the primary risk mitigation strategy. But none of these frameworks specify how to prevent the failure modes documented in the human factors research.

Interpretation

The HITL assumption reflects a mental model where humans are failsafes. But humans are not passive components that activate reliably when needed. Attention is a limited resource. Trust calibration is dynamic. Vigilance decays predictably under monotonous monitoring conditions — a phenomenon studied extensively in aviation and industrial process control since the 1980s.

The assumption persists because HITL *feels* responsible. Removing humans from high-stakes decisions feels reckless. But "a human reviews it" is not the same as "a human catches the error." The gap between those two statements is where the failure modes live.

WHAT WOULD INVALIDATE THIS?

If longitudinal studies showed that human oversight of AI agents *does* remain effective at scale — specifically, that alert response rates and error detection do not degrade over time — the core thesis would be weakened. No such evidence exists. Every available study shows degradation.

SO WHAT?

When designing AI agents, do not default to HITL as a blanket risk mitigation strategy. Instead, ask: *What specific failure mode am I trying to prevent? Does adding a human monitoring step actually prevent that failure, or does it just create the appearance of control?* The next sections quantify where HITL breaks down.

5. Automation Bias — Why Humans Stop Paying Attention 85%

(Confidence: High)

Automation bias is the empirically validated tendency of humans to over-rely on automated systems, under-monitor their outputs, and fail to detect errors even when evidence is visible.

Evidence

The term **automation bias** was introduced in aviation human factors research in the 1990s. The phenomenon: when pilots monitor automated flight systems, they systematically miss errors that would be obvious in manual flight mode. The bias has two components:

1. **Omission errors:** Failing to take action because the automation didn't flag a problem (false negative)
2. **Commission errors:** Taking incorrect action because the automation suggested it (false positive compliance)

Documented cases:

Exhibit 1: Automation Bias Case Studies

CASE	DOMAIN	FAILURE MODE	OUTCOME
Boeing 737 MAX MCAS	Aviation	Pilots could not override automated system; inadequate understanding of automation behavior	346 deaths (2018–2019)
Uber Self-Driving Fatality	Autonomous Vehicles	Safety driver ignored system alerts; automation complacency	1 pedestrian death (2018)
Clinical Alert Overrides	Healthcare	Physicians routinely override medication warnings due to alarm fatigue	14% increase in medical errors[4]
SOC Breach Detection Failure	Cybersecurity	67% of alerts ignored; 96% of breaches disclosed by attacker	$4.45M average breach cost[1] [5]

Sources: NTSB [9], PMC11941973 [4], Vectra [1], Verizon DBIR [5], IBM Cost of a Data Breach 2024

The Boeing 737 MAX case is particularly instructive. The MCAS system (Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System) was designed with HITL oversight — pilots could override it. But the system activated based on faulty sensor data, and pilots were not trained to recognize the failure mode. When the automation behaved incorrectly, pilots did not have the context to intervene effectively. HITL was present on paper. It failed in practice.

Why It Happens

Automation bias is not laziness. It is rational adaptation to task structure:

- **Base rate problem:** If the automation is correct 99% of the time, monitoring for the 1% becomes cognitively exhausting and feels unproductive
- **Trust calibration:** Humans update their trust based on observed reliability — if the system works well initially, trust rises and vigilance drops

- **Cognitive offloading:** Monitoring automation is less engaging than performing the task directly — attention drifts
- **Mode confusion:** Complex automated systems have multiple modes and states that humans struggle to track mentally

In AI agent contexts, these factors compound. Agents operate faster than humans can monitor. Agent reasoning is opaque (even with chain-of-thought logging). Agents execute across multiple tools and data sources simultaneously. The human "in the loop" is often reviewing a summary *after* the agent has already acted — making oversight retrospective, not preventive.

CLAIM

Humans cannot reliably monitor high-frequency, high-reliability automated systems. Vigilance decays predictably when the base rate of genuine errors requiring intervention is low (<5%).

WHAT WOULD INVALIDATE THIS?

If intervention design could maintain human vigilance without performance degradation over time — for instance, through rotation schedules, attention-refreshing task variety, or real-time cognitive load monitoring — automation bias would be mitigable. Some of these approaches exist in aviation (two-pilot cockpits, mandatory task cross-checks), but they do not scale to AI agents monitoring workflows where humans oversee dozens of agents.

SO WHAT?

Do not design agent oversight as continuous human monitoring. Humans are poor at sustained vigilance. Instead, design for **exception-based intervention** — surface only the cases where the agent's confidence is genuinely low or the stakes are genuinely high. More detail in Section 9.

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6. Alert Fatigue — The Boy Who Cried Wolf at Scale

90%

(Confidence: High)

Alert fatigue is the quantified phenomenon where humans stop responding to warnings because the volume overwhelms their capacity and the false positive rate destroys their trust.

Evidence

The numbers are stark:

4,484

Security alerts per day (large SOC teams)

Source: Vectra 2023 | Confidence: High

67%

Of alerts ignored due to volume

Source: Vectra 2023 (n=2,000 analysts) | Confidence: High

30%

Response rate drop per additional reminder

Source: Ancker et al. 2017 | Confidence: Medium

In healthcare, the problem is even more severe:

- **80–99% of clinical alarms are false positives** (nuisance alarms that do not require intervention)[3]
- **Alarm fatigue contributes to 14% more medical errors** when clinicians become desensitized[4]
- **Each additional reminder reduces the probability of a response by 30%** — repeated alerts train humans to ignore them[2]

In cybersecurity:

- **Organizations receive an average of 960 alerts per day** (enterprises with >20,000 employees receive >3,000)[10]
- **40% of alerts are never investigated**[10]
- **61% of security teams admitted ignoring alerts that later turned out to be critical**[10]
- **96% of data breaches are disclosed by the attacker, not the security team** — meaning monitoring failed to detect the threat before damage occurred[5]

Why Alert Fatigue Breaks HITL

Alert fatigue is not a training problem. It is a system design problem. The failure mechanism:

1. **Volume exceeds human processing capacity.** Security analysts cannot investigate 4,484 alerts per day. Triage becomes random or heuristic-based ("ignore everything below severity 8").
2. **High false positive rate destroys calibration.** When 95% of alerts are false positives, the rational response is to assume the next alert is also false. Trust erodes systematically.
3. **Repetition trains dismissal.** Each ignored alert reinforces the habit of ignoring. The 30% response drop per reminder is empirical evidence of learned helplessness.
4. **Critical alerts are indistinguishable from noise.** When everything is marked "urgent," nothing is. Genuine threats blend into the noise.

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Exhibit 2: Alert Fatigue Across Domains

DOMAIN	ALERT VOLUME	FALSE POSITIVE RATE	RESPONSE DEGRADATION	MEASURED IMPACT
Cybersecurity (SOC)	960–4,484/day	40% never investigated	67% ignored	96% of breaches disclosed by attacker
Healthcare (ICU)	Hundreds/day per patient	80–99%	30% drop per reminder	14% more medical errors
DevOps (Incident Mgmt)	High (no specific number)	Not quantified	30% operational toil despite AI	Burnout, slower incident response

Sources: Vectra [1], Ancker [2], PMC6904899 [3], PMC11941973 [4], Verizon DBIR [5], Runframe State of Incident Management 2025 [11]

Interpretation

Alert fatigue is the empirical death of naive HITL. If you design an AI agent to "alert the human when uncertain," and the agent is uncertain 100 times per day, you have built a system that trains humans to ignore it. The irony: adding HITL oversight *increases* risk if it is poorly designed, because it creates false confidence ("we have human oversight") while the humans have stopped paying attention.

WHAT WOULD INVALIDATE THIS?

If alert volume could be reduced to match human processing capacity *and* false positive rates could be driven below 10%, alert fatigue would diminish. This requires either (1) better agent calibration (only escalate when genuinely uncertain) or (2) hierarchical escalation (AI triages alerts before they reach humans). Both are feasible — and both are the opposite of "put a human in every loop."

SO WHAT?

Design for alert **scarcity**, not abundance. Every alert to a human should be high-signal. If your agent generates more than 5–10 human interventions per day per operator, you are building alert fatigue into the system. Automate more, escalate less, and escalate only when the agent's confidence is calibrated accurately. Section 9 covers how.

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7. Where HITL Works (and Where It Doesn't) 75%

(Confidence: High)

HITL is not categorically broken — it works under specific conditions that are often absent in AI agent deployments.

Evidence

Research on human-AI collaboration identifies a clear framework for when HITL is effective[12][13][14]:

Exhibit 3: HITL Effectiveness Framework

MODE	WHEN TO USE	FAILURE RISK	AGENT FIT
Full Automation	High-volume, rule-based, repetitive tasks with low error consequence	Low — errors are cheap	High — most agent tasks
Human-in-the-Loop (HITL)	Complex, ethically sensitive, ambiguous decisions with high error consequence	Medium — depends on volume	Low — only for high-stakes exceptions
Human-on-the-Loop (HOTL)	Human monitors and intervenes only on anomalies; optimal when volume exceeds capacity	High — vigilance decays	Medium — requires good anomaly detection
Hybrid / Confidence-Based	Automate routine, escalate exceptions based on agent confidence + impact	Low — if calibration is good	High — this is the optimal design

Sources: AuxilioBits [12], Stanford HAI [13], IBM [14], thefix.it [15]

HITL works when:

- **Intervention frequency is low** — humans can give full attention to each case (e.g., <10 interventions/day)
- **Error consequence is high** — the cost of getting it wrong justifies human time (e.g., medical diagnosis, loan approval, legal advice)
- **Context is rich** — the human has access to the same information the AI used, plus domain expertise the AI lacks
- **Feedback is immediate** — the human can see the outcome of their intervention and learn

HITL fails when:

- **Volume is high** — humans cannot process every decision (alert fatigue kicks in)
- **Errors are low-consequence** — the cost of human review exceeds the cost of occasional mistakes
- **Context is opaque** — the human does not understand why the AI is uncertain (black-box models)
- **Feedback is delayed or absent** — the human never learns if their intervention was correct

Interpretation

Most AI agent tasks fall into the "high volume, low context" category where HITL fails. Consider a customer support agent that handles 500 queries per day. Asking a human to review every response is not feasible. Asking the agent to escalate "when uncertain" generates alert fatigue if the agent is uncertain 50 times per day. The better design: **automate the 90%, escalate the 3%** where confidence is genuinely low *and* impact is genuinely high.

Human-on-the-Loop (HOTL) is sometimes proposed as a middle ground — the human monitors dashboards and intervenes on anomalies. But HOTL suffers from the same vigilance decay problem as passive monitoring in aviation. Humans are poor at sustained attention to low-variance signals. HOTL works only when anomalies are rare, obvious, and consequential.

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CLAIM

The optimal design for AI agents is **confidence-based routing**: automate decisions where the agent's confidence is high and error cost is low; escalate to humans only when confidence is low or stakes are high. This minimizes alert fatigue while preserving human oversight for genuinely ambiguous cases.

WHAT WOULD INVALIDATE THIS?

If agents could not reliably estimate their own confidence (i.e., calibration is systematically poor), confidence-based routing would fail. Evidence suggests calibration is *imperfect but improvable* — models can be trained to output well-calibrated uncertainty estimates, especially with techniques like conformal prediction and Bayesian approximations. This is an active research area.

SO WHAT?

When building agents, do not default to "human reviews everything" or "human monitors a dashboard." Instead, implement **tiered escalation**: Tier 1 (auto-execute, high confidence + low stakes), Tier 2 (auto-execute with logging, medium confidence or medium stakes), Tier 3 (human approval required, low confidence or high stakes). Most agent actions should be Tier 1. Section 9 provides implementation details.

8. The Regulatory Gap — Mandating What Doesn't Work 70%

(Confidence: High)

The EU AI Act mandates human oversight for high-risk AI systems — but does not specify how to prevent the empirically documented failure modes of HITL at scale.

Evidence

The EU AI Act (enforcement for high-risk systems begins August 2026) requires that:

> *"High-risk AI systems shall be designed and developed in such a way, including with appropriate human-machine interface tools, that they can be effectively overseen by natural persons during the period in which the AI system is in use." — Article 14(1)*[6]

The Act specifies that human oversight means:

- Fully understanding the capacities and limitations of the AI system
- Being able to correctly interpret the system's output
- Being able to decide not to use the system or to override its output
- Being able to intervene in the operation of the system or interrupt it through a "stop" button

These are **capability requirements**, not **effectiveness requirements**. The Act mandates that oversight be *possible*, not that it actually *works* when volume scales or when humans are monitoring for extended periods.

Compare this to the empirical evidence:

Exhibit 4: Regulatory Requirements vs. Empirical Failure Modes

EU AI ACT REQUIREMENT	EMPIRICAL FAILURE MODE	GAP
"Fully understand capacities and limitations"	Mode confusion in Boeing 737 MAX — pilots had access to manuals but could not interpret system behavior in real-time	Understanding ≠ effective intervention
"Correctly interpret output"	67% of security alerts ignored — analysts understand what alerts mean but cannot process volume	Interpretation ≠ response
"Decide not to use or override"	Automation bias — humans defer to AI even when override is possible	Capability ≠ usage
"Intervene or interrupt (stop button)"	Alert fatigue — stop button exists but is not pressed because humans are desensitized	Control ≠ vigilance

Sources: EU AI Act [6], NTSB [9], Vectra [1]

Interpretation

The regulatory gap is not malicious. Regulators face a dilemma: they cannot mandate *effective* oversight without specifying technical implementation details that would become outdated quickly. So they mandate *capability* — the human must be *able* to intervene. But capability without consideration of cognitive load, alert volume, and vigilance decay produces checkbox compliance, not real oversight.

The result: companies will implement "human oversight" by showing that a human *can* review agent actions — typically through dashboards, approval workflows, or alert systems. These implementations will technically comply with Article 14 while failing to prevent the HITL failure modes documented in this report.

WHAT WOULD INVALIDATE THIS?

If regulatory guidance evolved to include **effectiveness metrics** — e.g., "oversight mechanisms must maintain alert response rates above 80% over 6-month deployment periods" or "false positive rates in escalation systems must remain below 15%" — the gap would narrow. NIST is exploring this in the AI RMF (see CAISI RFI, January 2026[16]), but no binding regulation currently includes such metrics.

SO WHAT?

If you are building agents that must comply with the EU AI Act, do not settle for checkbox compliance. Implement oversight mechanisms that are empirically likely to work — confidence-based routing, low alert volume, rich context on escalation. Document your design rationale: "We chose escalation frequency X based on alert fatigue research showing response degradation above threshold Y." Regulators will eventually ask for this.

9. What to Build Instead

The solution is not "remove humans" or "more HITL" — it is designing intervention frequency, escalation triggers, and trust signals based on what actually works.

Scope: These recommendations apply primarily to autonomous AI agents with decision-making authority in production environments (customer support, data analysis, workflow automation). Single-use AI models with human-operated interfaces (e.g., retrieval tools, drafting assistants) have different design constraints.

Recommendations

1. Implement Confidence-Based Routing

Route agent decisions based on two dimensions: **agent confidence** (how certain the model is) and **decision impact** (cost of error).

Exhibit 5: Confidence-Based Routing Matrix

AGENT CONFIDENCE	LOW IMPACT	MEDIUM IMPACT	HIGH IMPACT
High (>90%)	Auto-execute	Auto-execute + log	Auto-execute + notify human
Medium (70–90%)	Auto-execute + log	Human approval required	Human approval required
Low (<70%)	Auto-execute + flag for review	Human decision required	Human decision required

Source: Author synthesis based on HITL research [12][13][14]

This matrix ensures that **most decisions are automated** (high confidence + low/medium impact) while **genuinely ambiguous or high-stakes cases escalate**.

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The key: calibration. If the agent's confidence estimates are poorly calibrated, the matrix breaks down. Invest in confidence calibration (see below).

2. Design for Alert Scarcity

Cap the number of human escalations per operator per day. Recommended threshold: **5–10 escalations/day** based on alert fatigue research. If your agent generates more, you have three options:

- Increase the confidence threshold for escalation (escalate only <60% confidence instead of <70%)
- Improve agent capability so fewer decisions fall into the uncertain range
- Add a secondary AI triage layer that filters escalations before they reach humans

Do **not** accept "we escalate 50 times per day" as a stable design. That is alert fatigue waiting to happen.

3. Build Trust Signals into the UX

When escalating to a human, provide:

- **Confidence score:** "The agent is 65% confident in this answer"
- **Reason for uncertainty:** "Conflicting information in sources A and B"
- **What the agent considered:** Chain-of-thought or reasoning trace
- **Suggested action:** "Recommend manual review of invoice line item 7"
- **Impact estimate:** "Error cost: ~$200; review time: ~3 minutes"

This is **progressive disclosure** — give the human enough context to make an informed decision without overwhelming them. Contrast this with typical alert design: "Action required: Review output" with no context. Humans ignore low-context alerts.

4. Calibrate Agent Confidence

Most LLMs are overconfident — they express high certainty even when wrong. Calibration techniques:

- **Conformal prediction:** Provides statistically guaranteed confidence intervals

- **Temperature tuning:** Adjust sampling temperature to align expressed confidence with actual accuracy
- **Ensemble methods:** Run multiple models or sampling passes and measure agreement (low agreement = low confidence)
- **Self-consistency checks:** Ask the model the same question multiple ways; divergent answers indicate uncertainty
- **External validation:** Compare agent output to known ground truth on a holdout set and calibrate confidence scores

Calibration is *not optional*. If your confidence scores are uncalibrated, confidence-based routing will escalate the wrong cases and auto-execute the wrong cases. Budget time for this.

5. Monitor Oversight Effectiveness (Not Just Compliance)

Track these metrics:

- **Escalation response rate:** What % of escalations are reviewed by a human within SLA? (Target: >90%)
- **Override rate:** When humans review agent decisions, how often do they override? (Target: 10–30% — if lower, you are escalating unnecessarily; if higher, agent confidence is poorly calibrated)
- **Alert fatigue indicator:** Response time trend over weeks/months (if response time increases, fatigue is setting in)
- **Error catch rate:** Of the errors the agent makes, what % are caught by human oversight before impact? (If this is low, oversight is not working)

These metrics measure *effectiveness*, not just *capability*. They will reveal when HITL is failing even if it is technically present.

SO WHAT?

The design principle: **Automate the many, escalate the few.** Invest in agent capability and confidence calibration to reduce the number of genuinely uncertain cases. When escalation is necessary, make it high-signal, low-volume, and context-rich. This is how you build HITL that works.

10. Predictions BETA

These predictions will be scored publicly at 12 months. This is version 1.0 (February 2026). Scoring methodology available at ainaryventures.com/predictions.

PREDICTION	TIMELINE	CONFIDENCE
At least one major AI agent platform (OpenAI, Anthropic, Google) ships built-in confidence calibration APIs for routing decisions	Q4 2026	60%
A high-profile HITL failure (agent with "human oversight" causes significant harm despite oversight being technically present) makes mainstream news	Q3 2026	70%
EU AI Act enforcement action cites inadequate human oversight effectiveness (not just capability) as a violation	Q2 2027	40%
At least one enterprise AI vendor markets "alert fatigue prevention" as a core product feature with empirical metrics	Q3 2026	75%
NIST AI RMF 2.0 includes explicit guidance on escalation frequency and vigilance decay in oversight design	Q1 2027	50%

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11. Transparency Note

This section discloses the methodology, limitations, and confidence basis for claims in this report. It is intended for readers evaluating the report's reliability and for researchers building on this work.

Overall Confidence	75% — High confidence in core empirical claims (alert fatigue, automation bias); medium confidence in regulatory interpretation and applicability to AI agents specifically (due to limited direct agent HITL research).
Sources	Peer-reviewed research (healthcare, aviation human factors): 4 sources | Industry surveys (cybersecurity, DevOps): 5 sources | Regulatory documents (EU AI Act, NIST): 3 sources | Practitioner frameworks (Stanford HAI, IBM, AuxilioBits): 4 sources | Total: 16 primary sources.
Strongest Evidence	Alert fatigue metrics (67% ignored, Vectra 2023, n=2,000; 80–99% false positives in healthcare, meta-review PMC6904899); Boeing 737 MAX and Uber self-driving as documented automation bias cases; EU AI Act Article 14 text (primary source).
Weakest Point	Direct evidence of HITL failure in AI agent deployments is limited because large-scale autonomous agent deployments are recent (2024–2026). Most evidence extrapolates from adjacent domains (healthcare alarms, cockpit automation, SOC monitoring). The analogy is strong but not perfect.
What Would Invalidate	Longitudinal studies showing that human oversight of AI agents does *not* degrade over time, or that alert fatigue can be fully mitigated through UX design. Evidence would need to be from production agent deployments at scale (>1,000 human-agent interactions/day sustained over >6 months).
Methodology	This report was created with a **multi-agent research system**. Phase 1: A research agent produced a brief on HITL failure patterns, synthesizing sources from healthcare (clinical alarms),

	cybersecurity (SOC alerts), aviation (automation bias), and regulatory frameworks. Phase 2: A gap research process identified missing evidence areas (direct agent HITL studies, calibration techniques). Phase 3: A writer agent drafted sections following an evidence-first structure (claim → evidence → interpretation → invalidation → so what). Phase 4: A QA agent verified claim-source mapping and confidence calibration. The system reduced research time from ~40 hours (manual) to ~6 hours (agent-assisted), with human oversight on synthesis and interpretation.
Contradictions	Alert volume varies by source (960/day vs. 4,484/day) due to different sample populations (all organizations vs. large SOC teams only). Both numbers are directionally consistent (volume overwhelms capacity). No contradictions identified that change core thesis.
Known Gaps	Optimal escalation frequency thresholds (recommended 5–10/day based on qualitative frameworks, not RCTs); A/B test data on trust signal UX effectiveness (practitioner consensus exists, but limited controlled experiments); direct agent HITL failure case studies (will emerge as deployments scale).

12. Claim Register

Every quantitative and qualitative claim in this report, with source and confidence rating. This register enables independent verification and identifies which claims carry the most/least evidential support.

#	CLAIM	VALUE	SOURCE	CONFIDENCE	USED IN
1	SOC teams receive 4,484 alerts/day (large orgs)	4,484/day	Vectra 2023 (n=2,000)	High	Sec 6
2	67% of security alerts are ignored	67%	Vectra 2023	High	Sec 1, 6
3	Each reminder reduces response by 30%	30%	Ancker et al. 2017 (PMC5387195)	Medium (single study, 2017)	Sec 1, 6
4	80–99% of clinical alarms are false positives	80–99%	PMC6904899 (meta-review)	High	Sec 1, 6
5	Alert fatigue → 14% more medical errors	14%	PMC11941973 (2025)	Medium-High (single study)	Sec 1, 6
6	96% of breaches disclosed by attacker	96%	Verizon DBIR 2025	High	Sec 1, 6
7	Organizations receive 960 alerts/day (avg)	960/day	AI SOC Market Landscape 2025	Medium (methodology unclear)	Sec 6

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8	40% of alerts never investigated	40%	AI SOC Market Landscape 2025	Medium	Sec 6
9	61% of teams ignored critical alerts	61%	AI SOC Market Landscape 2025	Medium	Sec 6
10	EU AI Act mandates human oversight (Article 14)	Legal requirement	EU AI Act (Regulation 2024/1689)	High (primary source)	Sec 1, 4, 8
11	Boeing 737 MAX — 346 deaths, automation oversight failure	346 deaths	NTSB, public record	High	Sec 5
12	Uber self-driving fatality — safety driver ignored alerts	1 death	NTSB Report 2019	High	Sec 5
13	Automation bias causes omission and commission errors	Qualitative	Aviation human factors lit (1990s–present)	High (established phenomenon)	Sec 5
14	HITL works when frequency low, impact high, context rich	Framework	Stanford HAI, AuxilioBits, IBM (consensus)	High (practitioner consensus)	Sec 7

15	Confidence-based routing optimal for agents	Design recommendation	Author synthesis from [12][13][14]	Medium (no direct RCT)	Sec 7, 9

Top 5 Claims — Invalidation Conditions:

- **Claim 2 (67% ignored):** Invalidated if replication studies with similar sample size show significantly lower ignore rates (<40%) in production SOC environments.
- **Claim 4 (80–99% false positives):** Invalidated if systematic reviews of modern (2024+) clinical alarm systems show false positive rates consistently <50%.
- **Claim 6 (96% attacker-disclosed):** Invalidated if future DBIR reports show defender detection rates >50% for a sustained period (3+ years).
- **Claim 14 (HITL framework):** Invalidated if controlled experiments show HITL effectiveness is *not* sensitive to frequency, impact, or context — i.e., works equally well under all conditions.
- **Claim 15 (confidence-based routing):** Invalidated if production deployments show that confidence-based routing does *not* reduce alert fatigue or that calibration is too unreliable to be practical.

13. References

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Citation for this report:

Ainary Research. (2026). *The Human-in-the-Loop Illusion: When Human Oversight of AI Agents Fails, and What to Build Instead*. AR-011.

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