



*Top 10 Drug Court Best Practices and More!*

*What works? New Findings From the Latest Research*



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*NADCP 2012*

*Nashville, TN*



# The Research

- In the past 15 years NPC has completed over 150 drug court evaluations and research studies nationally
- Adult, Juvenile, DWI/DUI and Family Treatment (Dependency) Drug Courts
- Including California, Guam, Idaho, Indiana, Florida, Michigan, Maryland, Missouri, New York, Nevada, Oregon and Vermont

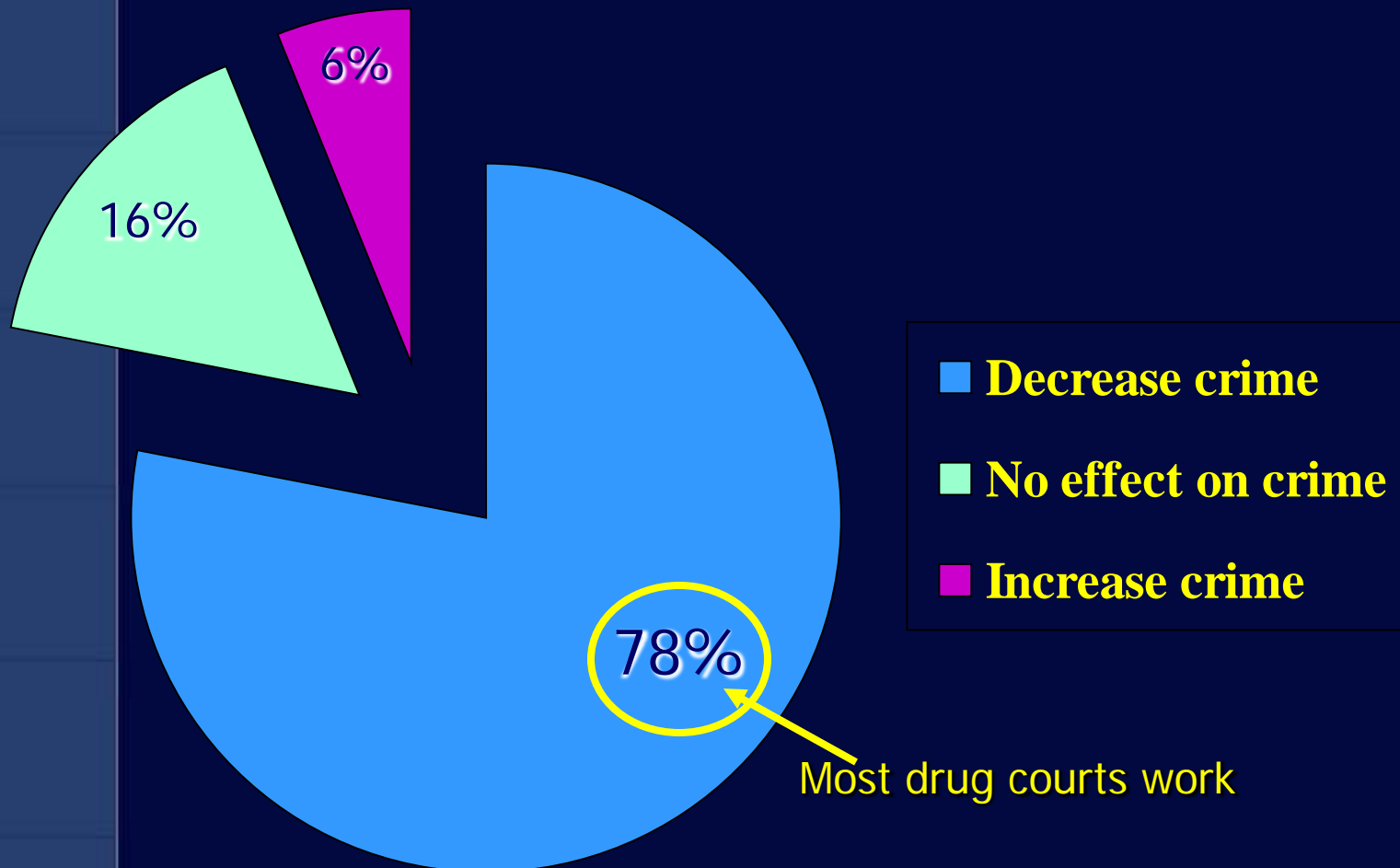
# What We Already Know

## Recidivism

- Drug Courts reduce recidivism
- Recidivism is decreased up to 14 years after participation
- Average reduction is about 18%
- Some courts more than 60%



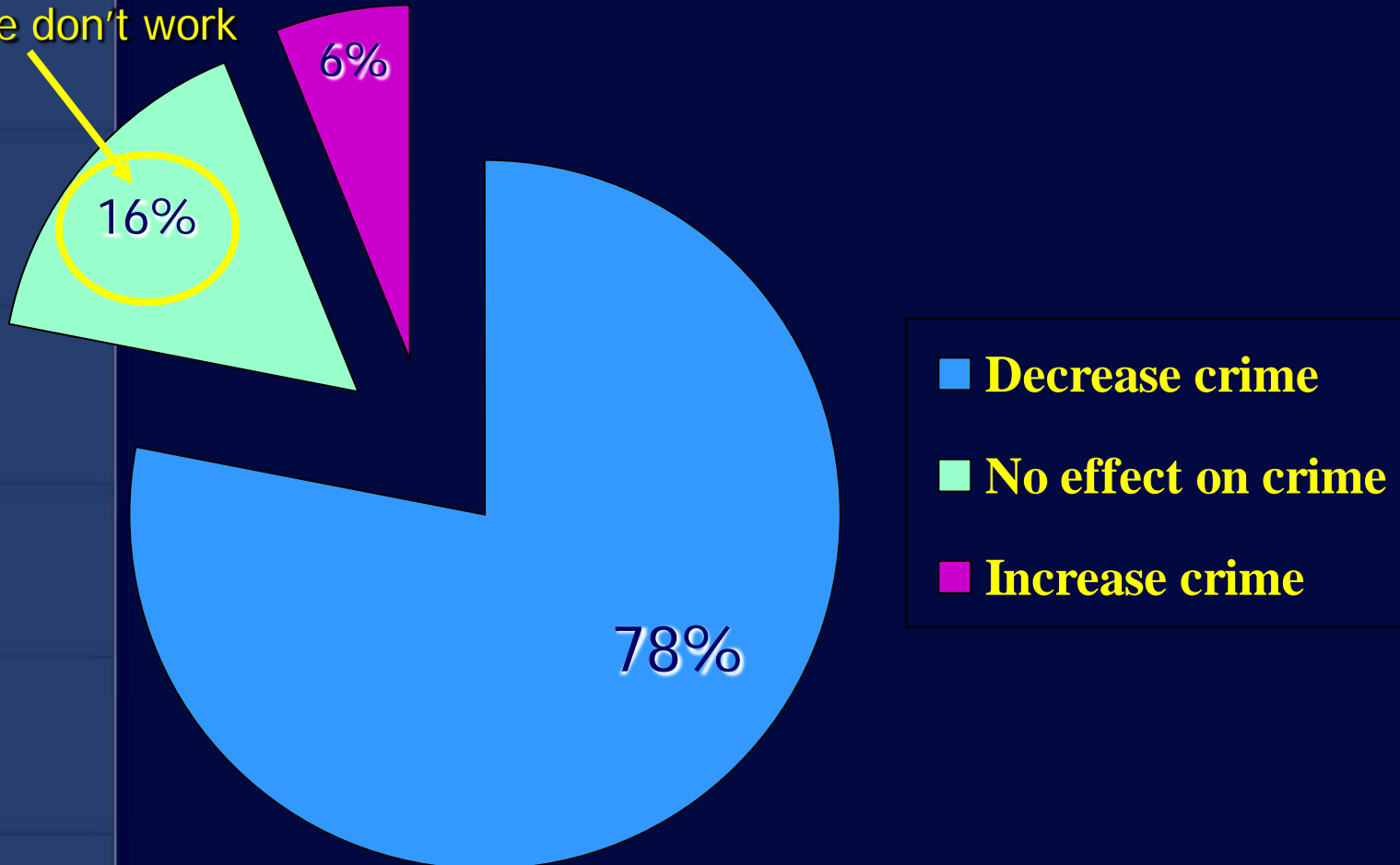
# Variable Effects



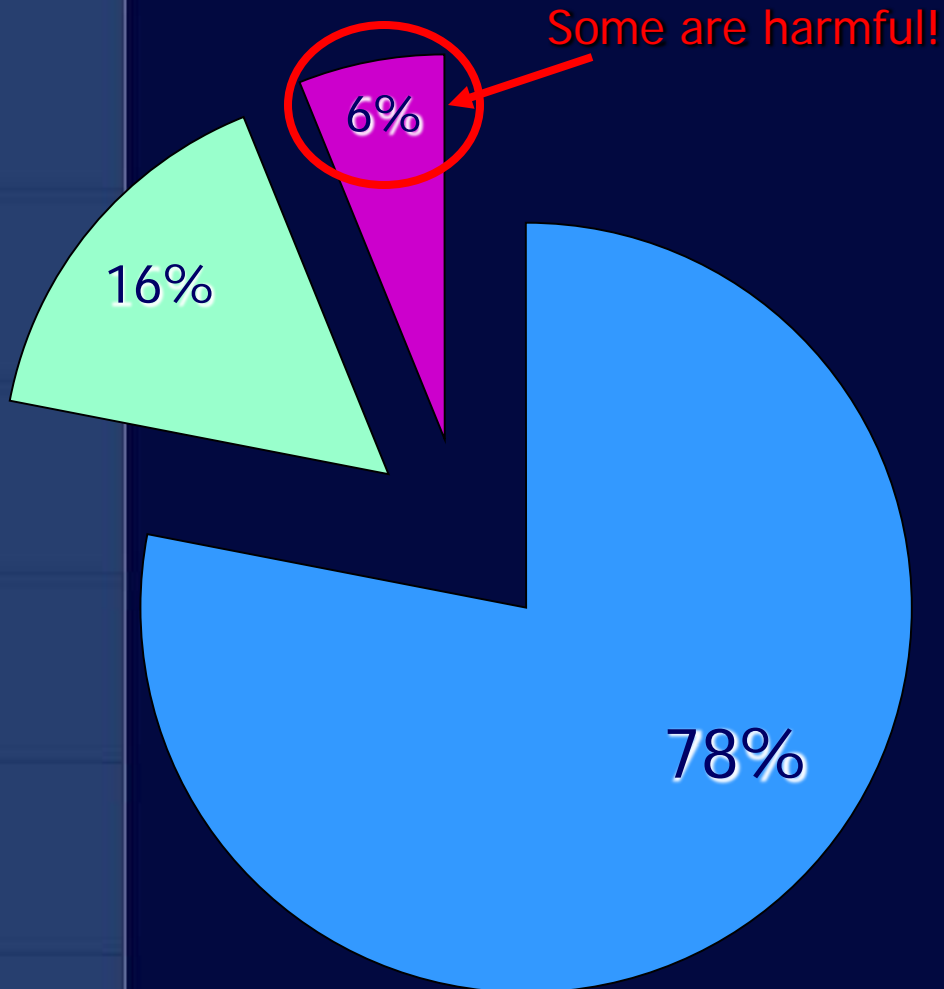
(Wilson et al., 2006; Lowenkamp et al., 2005; Shaffer, 2006)

# Variable Effects

Some don't work



# Variable Effects



Let's do the math:

2,559 drug courts (as of 12/31/10)  
x .06  
= 154 harmful drug courts!

- Decrease crime
- No effect on crime
- Increase crime

another 409 ineffective drug courts



# **What is Working?**

# What is Working?

- *Looked at 101 drug courts around the nation (detailed process studies/10 KC)*
- *69 included recidivism and cost evaluations*
- *In total, this study included 32,719 individuals (16,317 drug court participants and 16,402 comparison group members).*



# **What is Working?**

- *Trying to make the 10KC understandable in a much more specific way – through specific practices*
- *What are the best drug courts doing?*

Found over 50 practices that were related to significantly lower recidivism or lower costs or both



# **What is Working?**

## **Drug Court Top 10**

- *Top 10 Best Practices for Reducing Recidivism*
- *Top 10 Best Practices for Reducing Cost (Increasing Cost Savings)*

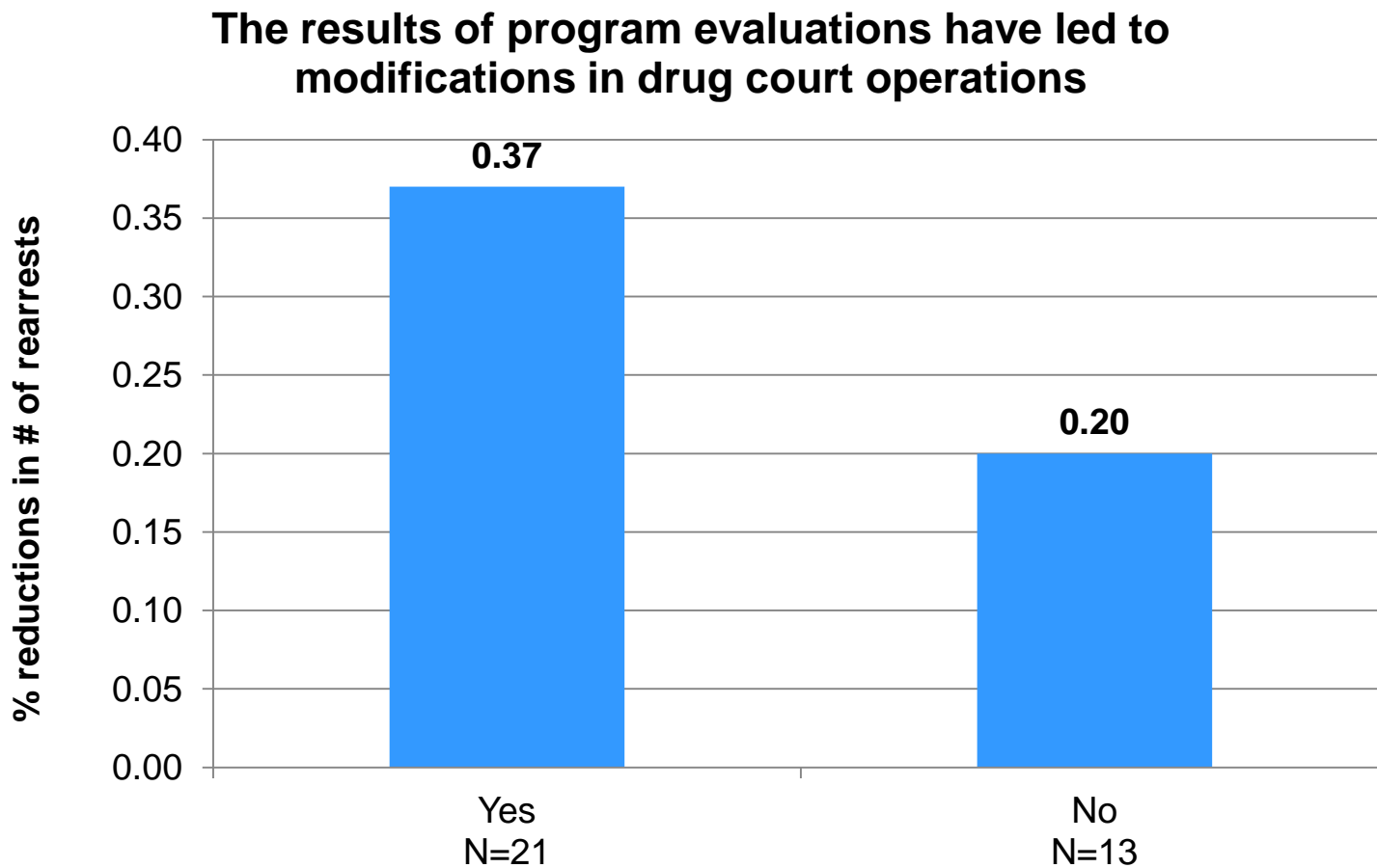


# Drug Court Top 10

## *\*Recidivism\**

- 10. The results of program evaluations have led to modifications in drug court operations*

## 10. Drug Courts that used program evaluations to make modifications in drug court operations had 85% greater reductions in recidivism



Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .10$

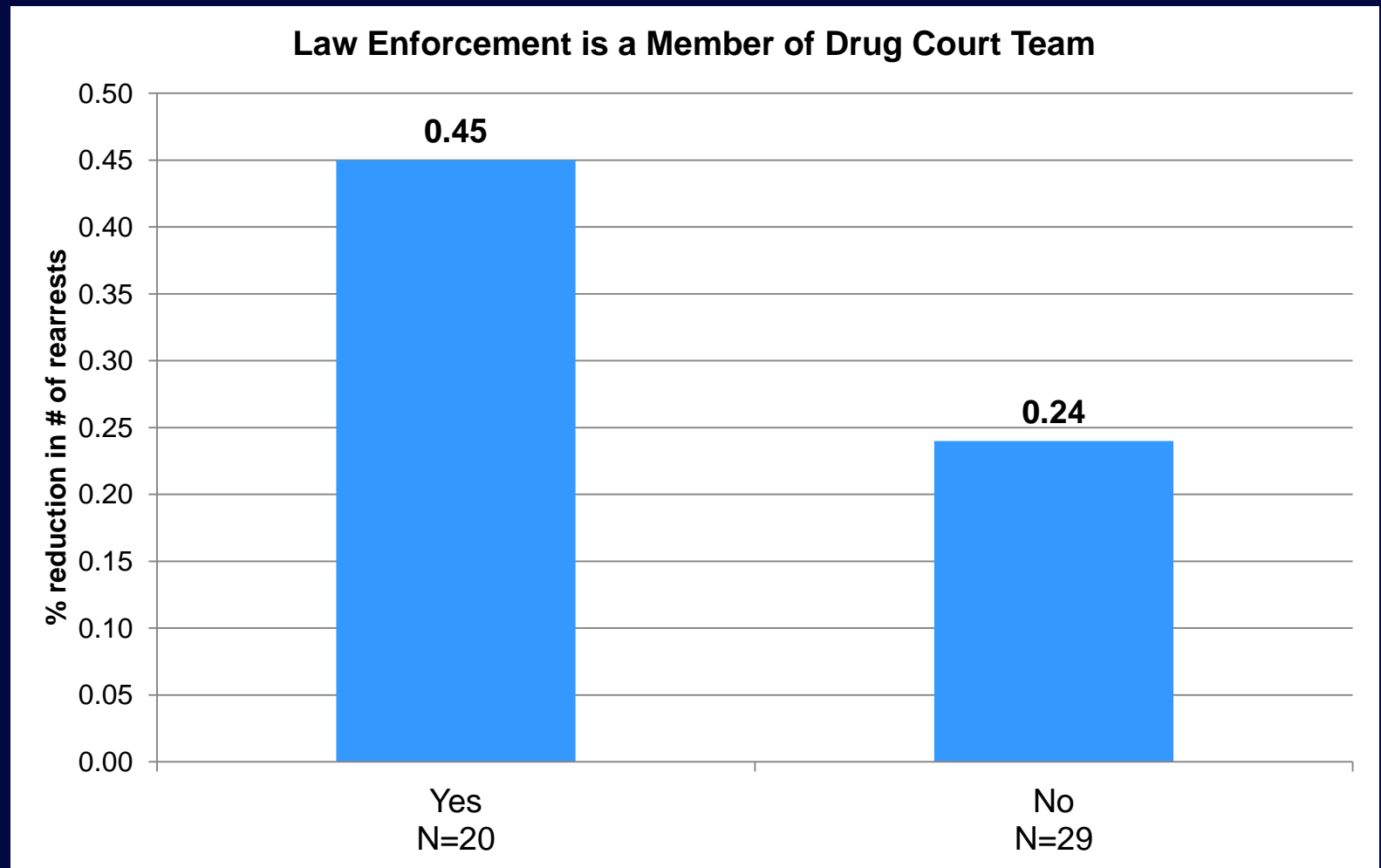


# Drug Court Top 10

## *\*Recidivism\**

- 10. The results of program evaluations have led to modifications in drug court operations*
- 9. Law Enforcement is a member of the drug court team*

## 9. Drug Courts where Law Enforcement is a member of the drug court team had 88% greater reductions in recidivism



Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .05$

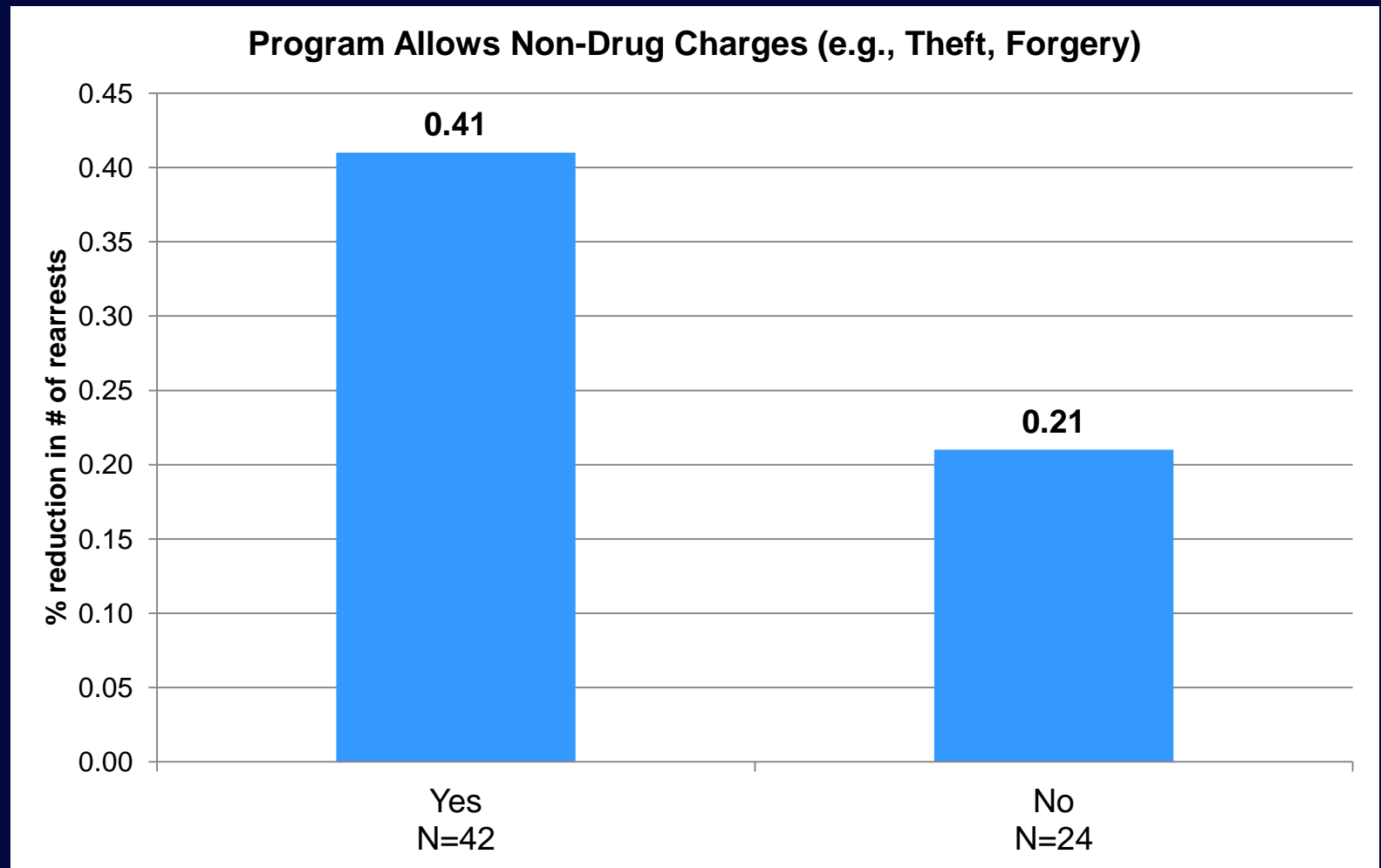


# Drug Court Top 10

## *\*Recidivism\**

- 10. The results of program evaluations have led to modifications in drug court operations*
- 9. Law enforcement is a member of the drug court team*
- 8. Drug court allows non-drug charges*

## 8. Drug Courts That Allow Non-Drug Charges had 95% greater reductions in recidivism



Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .05$



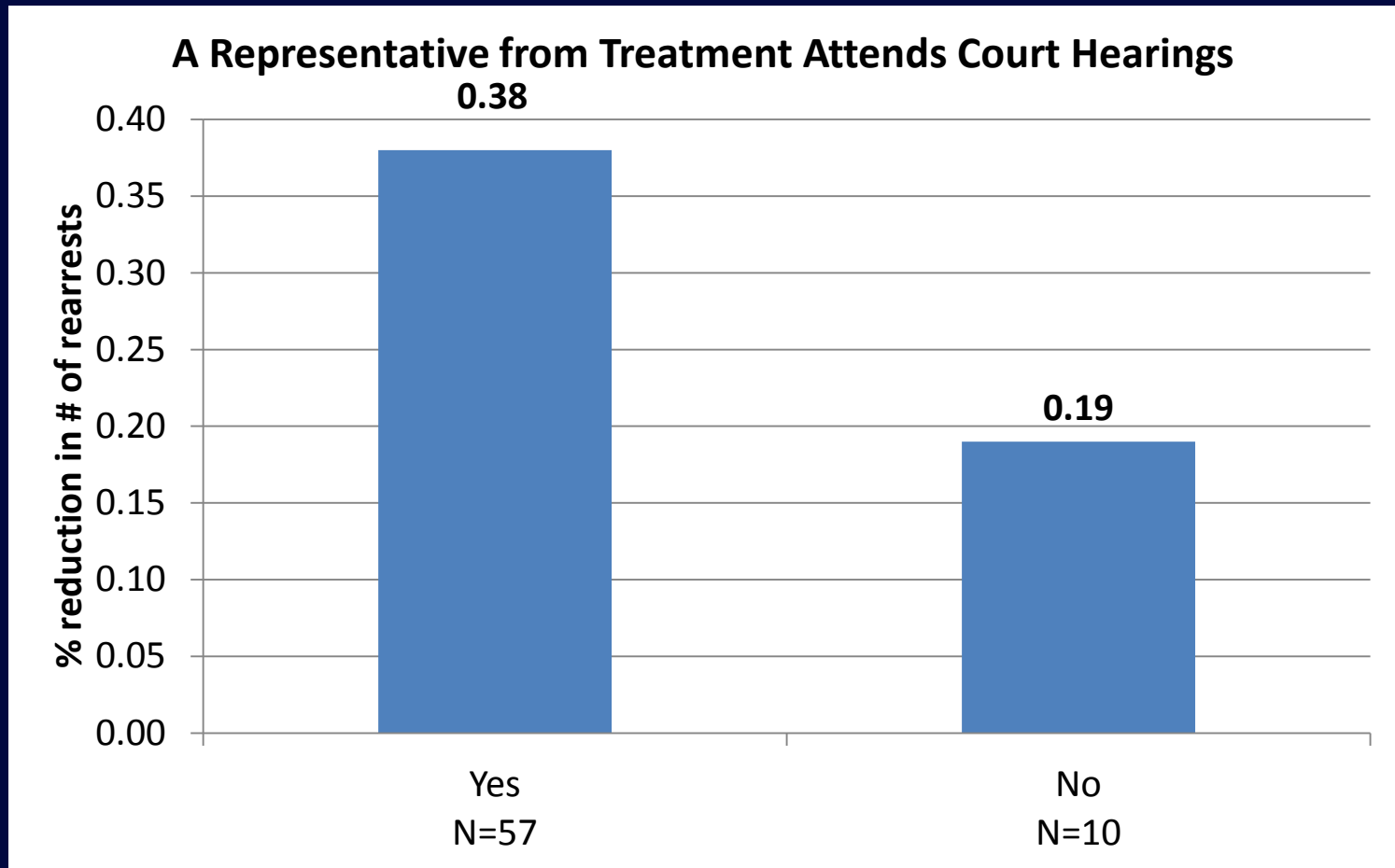


# Drug Court Top 10

## *\*Recidivism\**

- 10. The results of program evaluations have led to modifications in drug court operations*
- 9. Law Enforcement is a member of the drug court team*
- 8. Drug Court allows non-drug charges*
- 7. A representative from treatment attends court sessions*

## 7. Drug Courts Where a Treatment Representative Attends Court Hearings had 100% greater reductions in recidivism



**Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .10$**

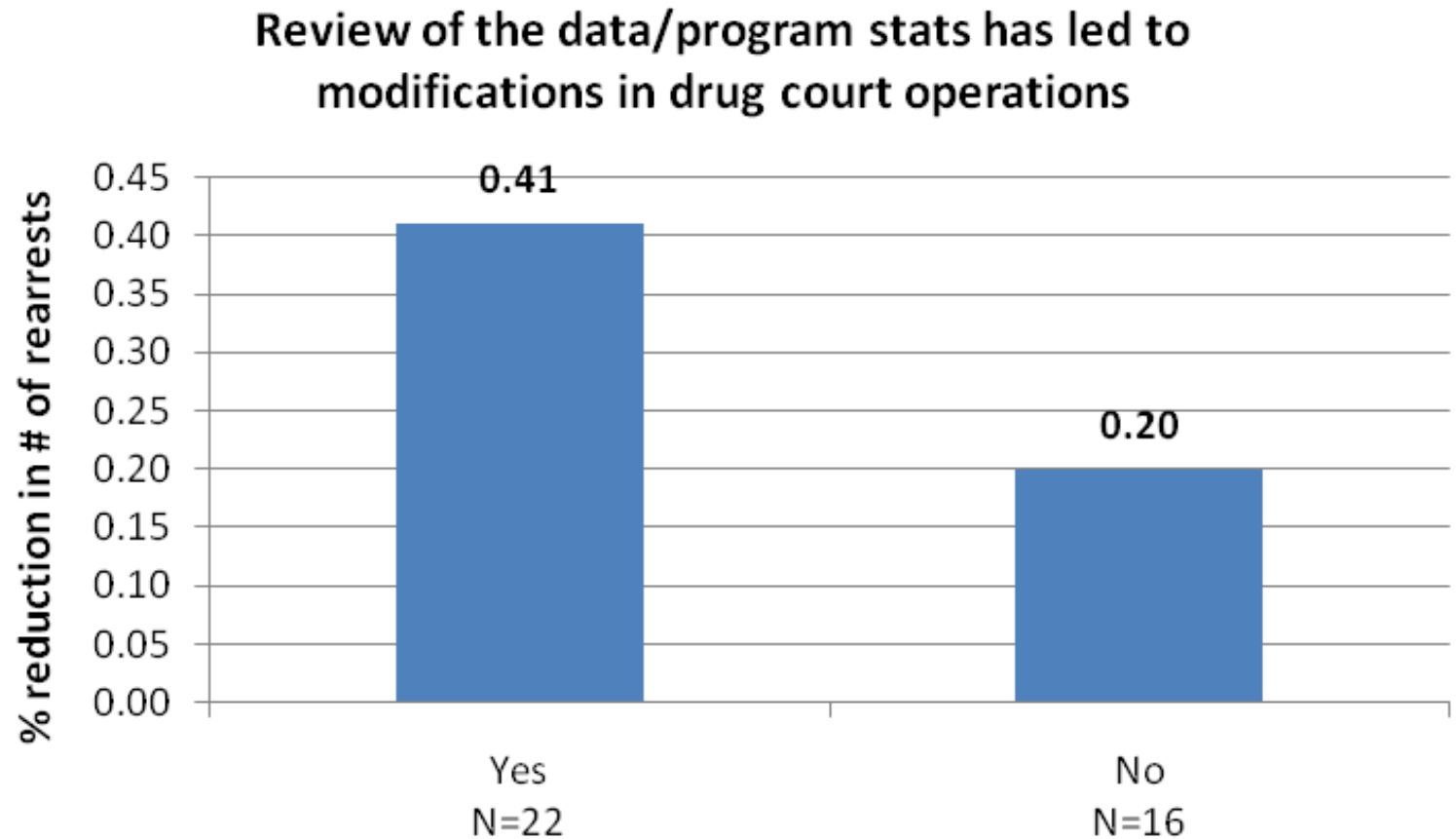


# Drug Court Top 10

## *\*Recidivism\**

- 10. The results of program evaluations have led to modifications in drug court operations*
- 9. Law Enforcement is a member of the drug court team*
- 8. Drug Court allows non-drug charges*
- 7. A representative from treatment attends court sessions*
- 6. Review of the data/program stats has led to modifications in drug court operations*

## 6. Drug Courts Where Review of the Data and/or Program Statistics Led to Modifications in Program Operations had 105% greater reductions in recidivism



Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .05$

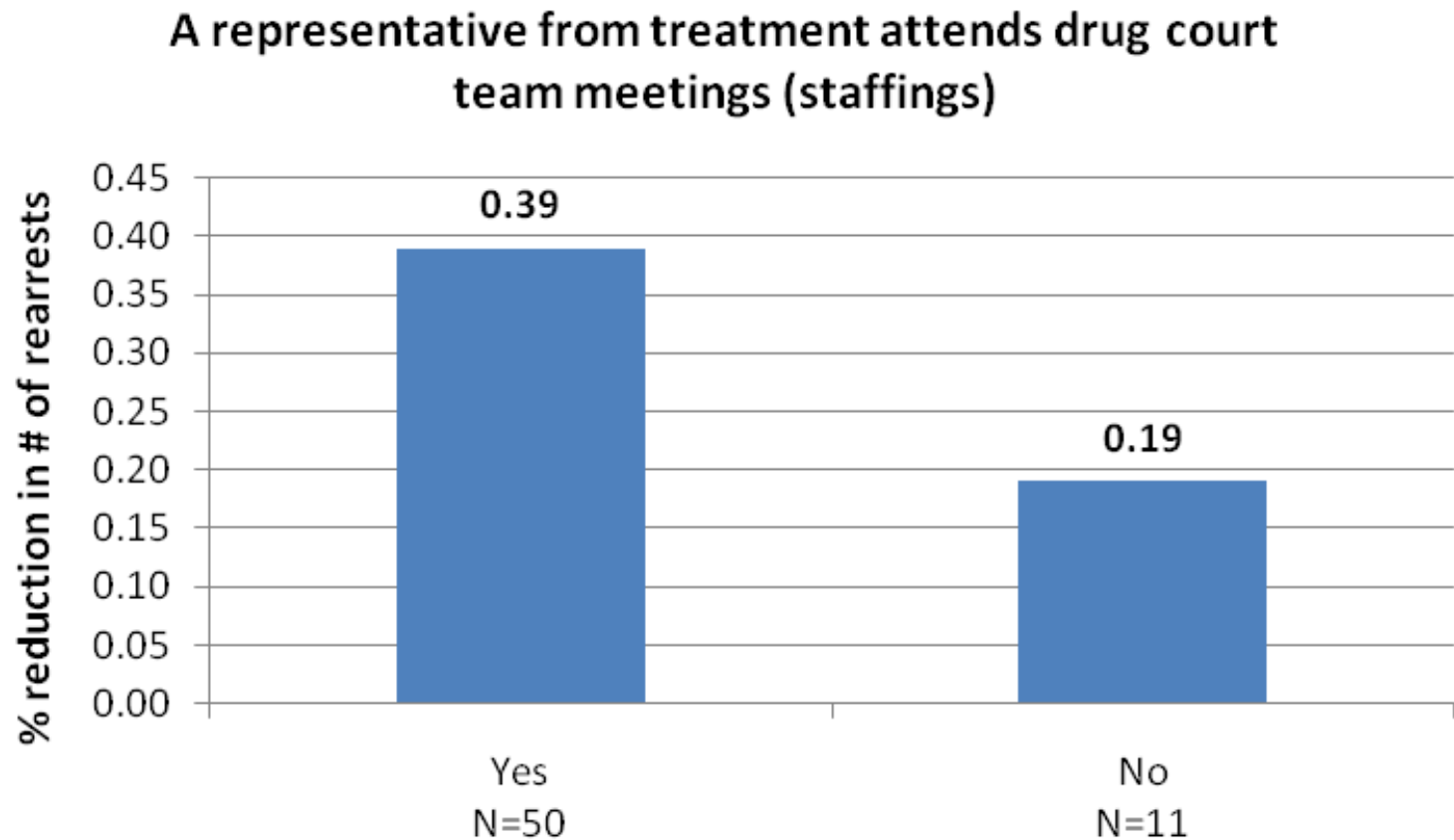


# Drug Court Top 10

## *\*Recidivism\**

5. *A representative from treatment attends drug court team meetings (staffings)*

## 5. Drug Courts Where a Representative From Treatment Attends Drug Court Team Meetings (Staffings) had 105% greater reductions in recidivism



Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .10$

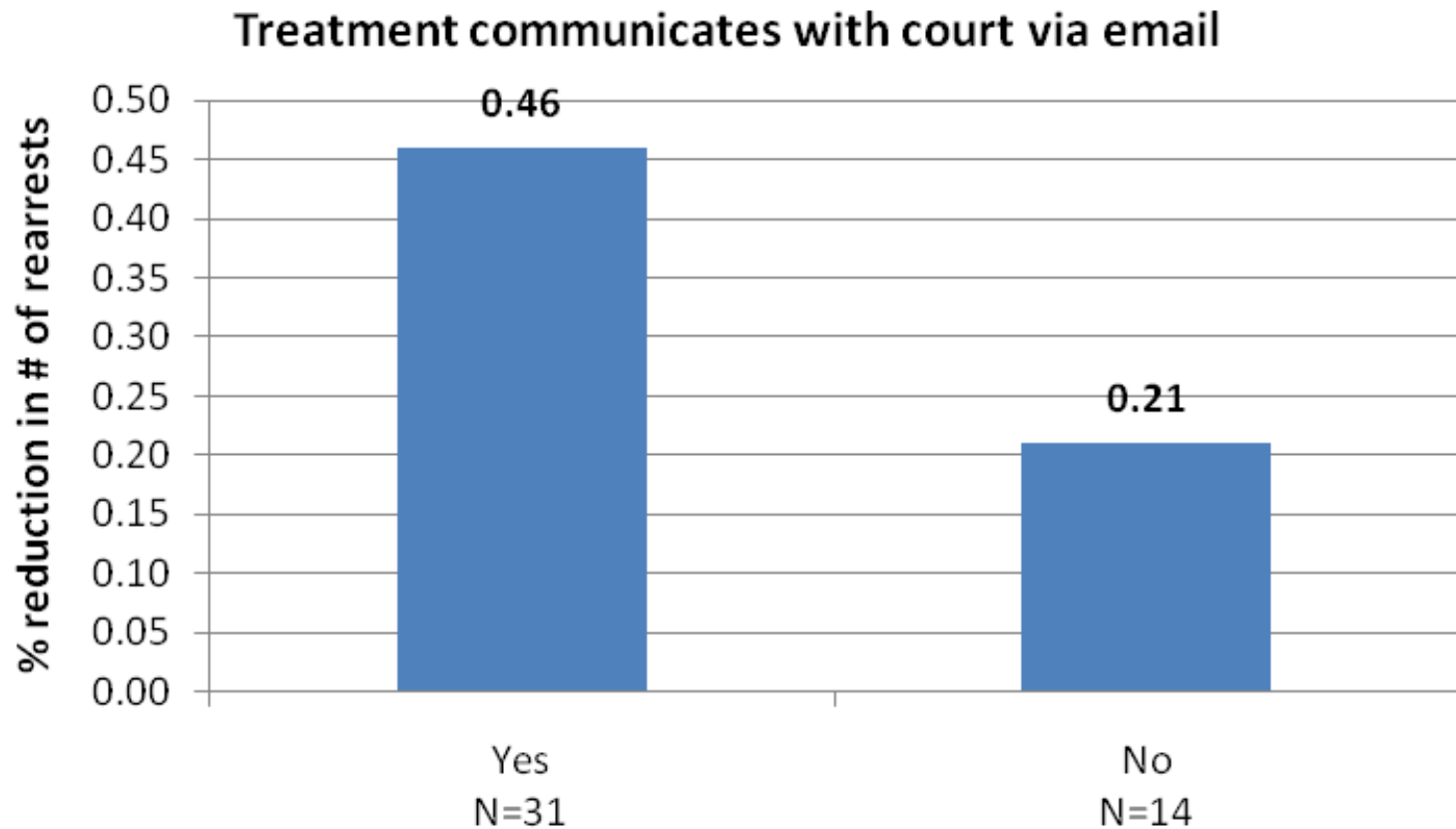


# Drug Court Top 10

## *\*Recidivism\**

5. *A representative from treatment attends drug court team meetings (staffings)*
4. *Treatment communicates with court via email*

#### 4. Drug Courts Where Treatment Communicates with the Court via Email had 119% greater reductions in recidivism



Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .10$



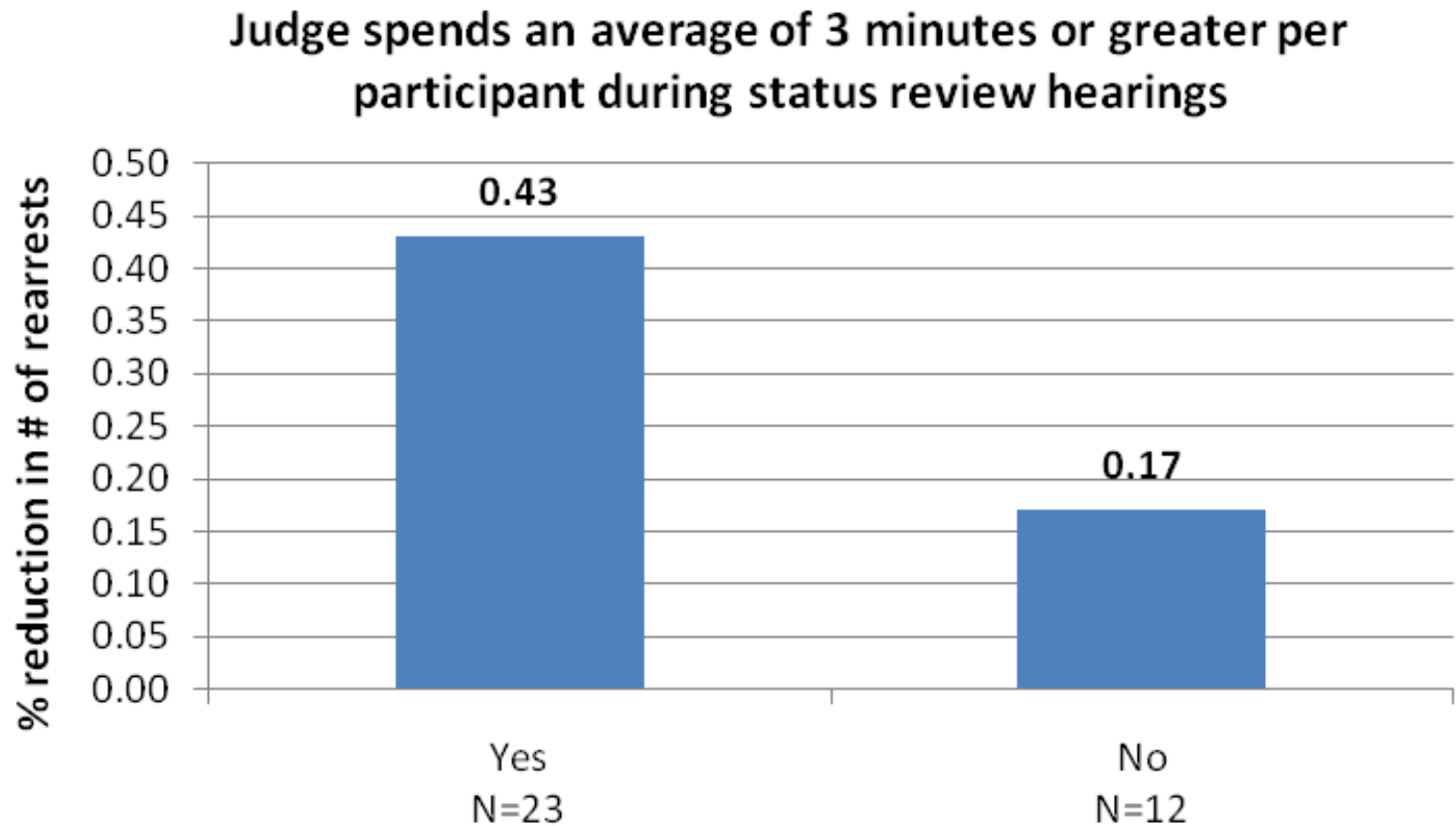


# Drug Court Top 10

## *\*Recidivism\**

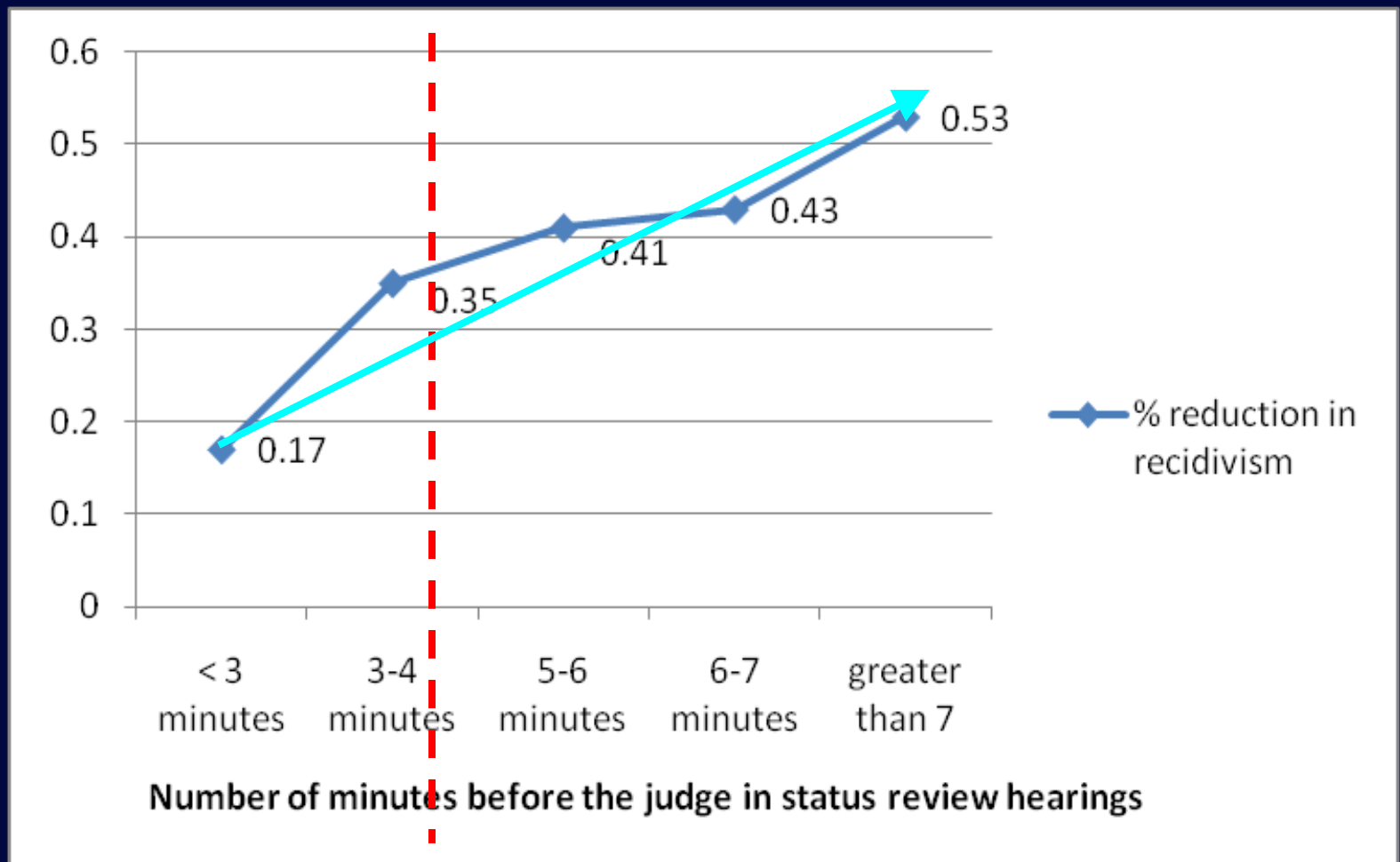
5. *A representative from treatment attends drug court team meetings (staffings)*
4. *Treatment communicates with court via email*
3. *Judge spends an average of 3 minutes or greater per participant during status review hearings*

### 3. Drug Courts Where the Judge Spends an Average of 3 Minutes or Greater per Participant During Court Hearings had 153% greater reductions in recidivism



Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .05$

# Drug Courts Where the Judge Spends an Average of 3 Minutes or Greater per Participant During Court Hearings had 153% greater reductions in recidivism



Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .05$

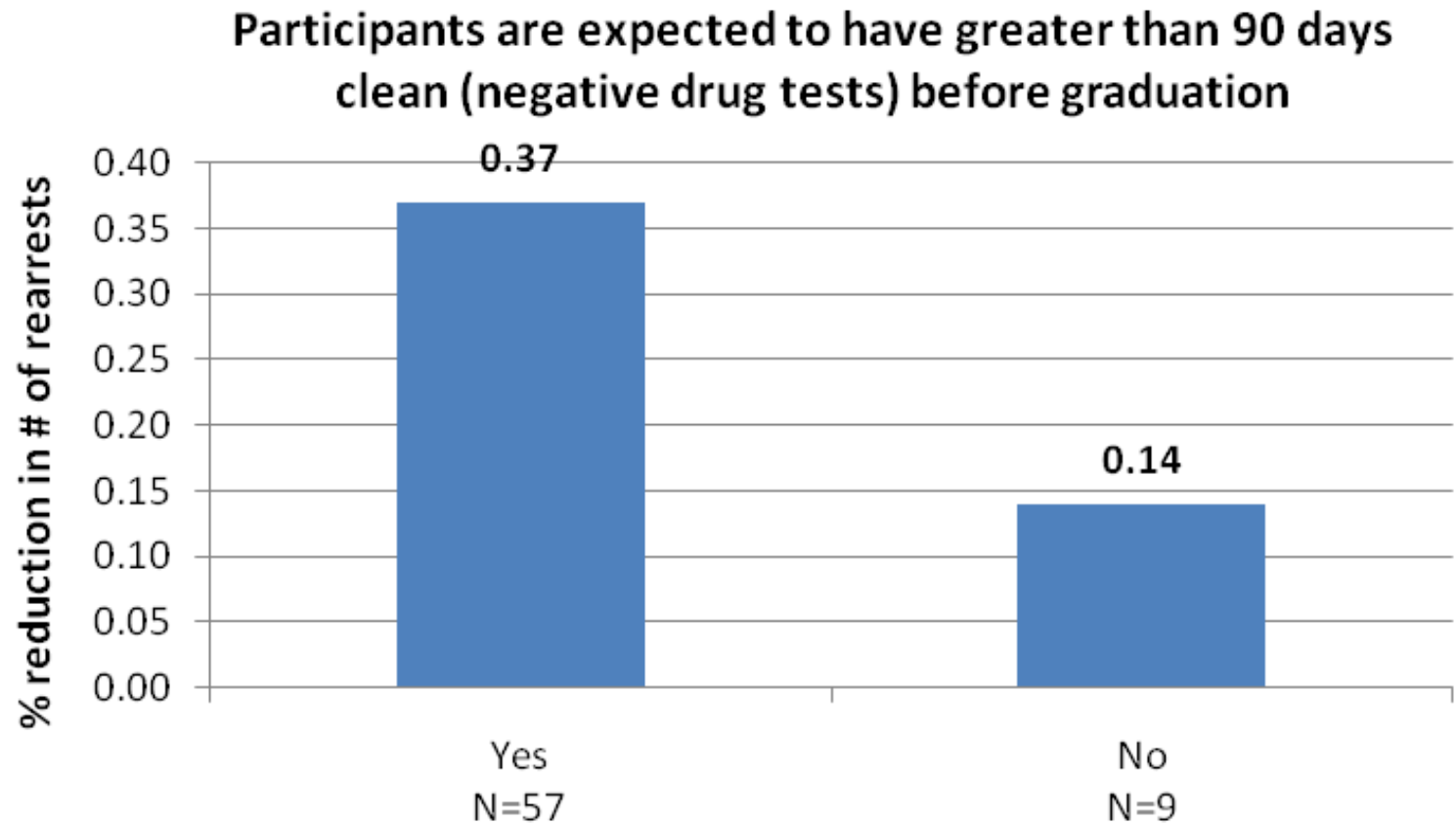


# Drug Court Top 10

## *\*Recidivism\**

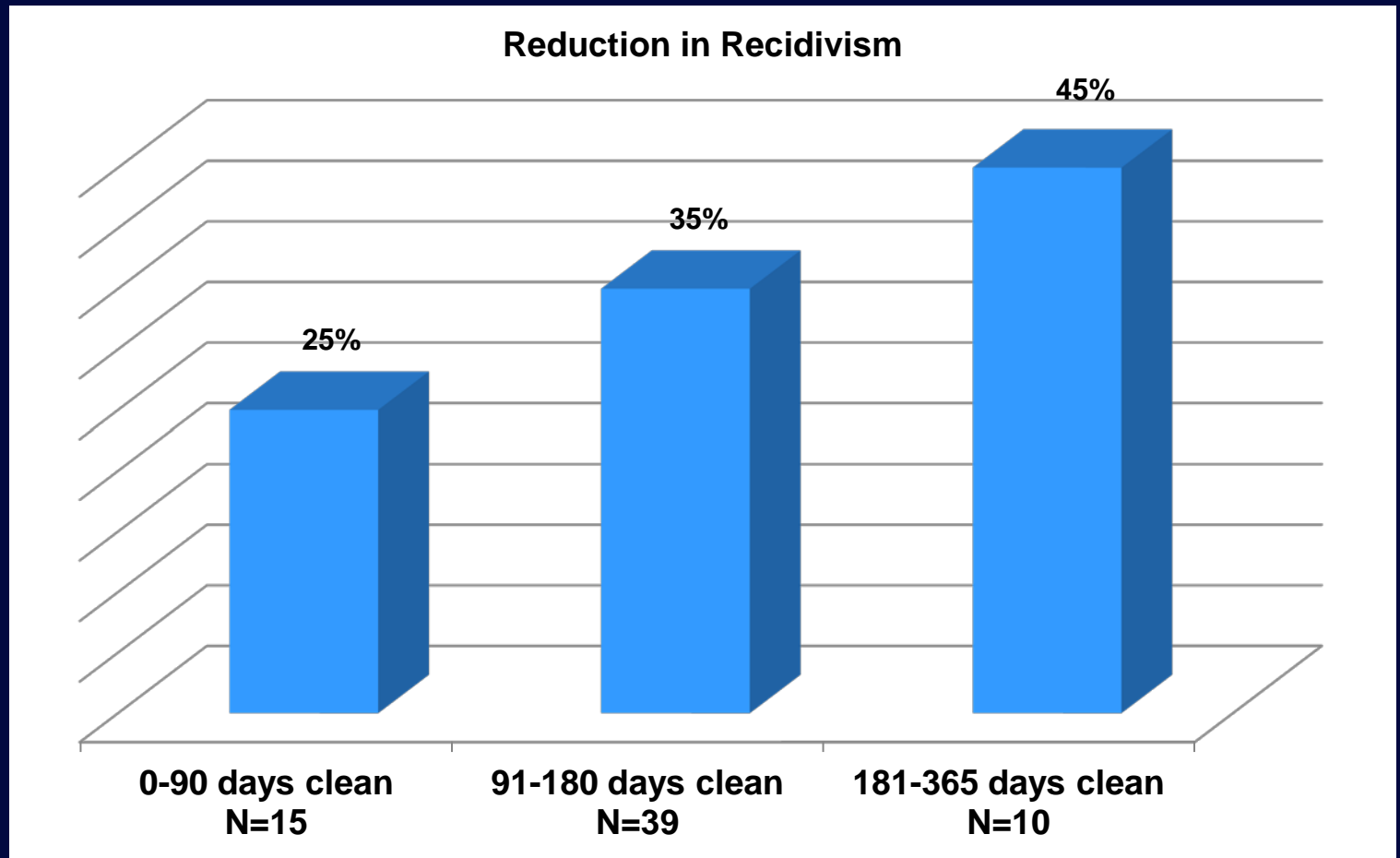
5. *A representative from treatment attends drug court team meetings (staffings)*
4. *Treatment communicates with court via email*
3. *Judge spends an average of 3 minutes or greater per participant during status review hearings*
2. *Participants are expected to have greater than 90 days clean (negative drug tests) before graduation*

## 2. Drug Courts Where Participants are expected to have greater than 90 days clean (negative drug tests) before graduation Had 164% greater reductions in recidivism



Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .15$  (Trend)

## 2. Drug Courts Where Participants are expected to have greater than 90 days clean (negative drug tests) before graduation Had 164% greater reductions in recidivism



Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .15$  (Trend)

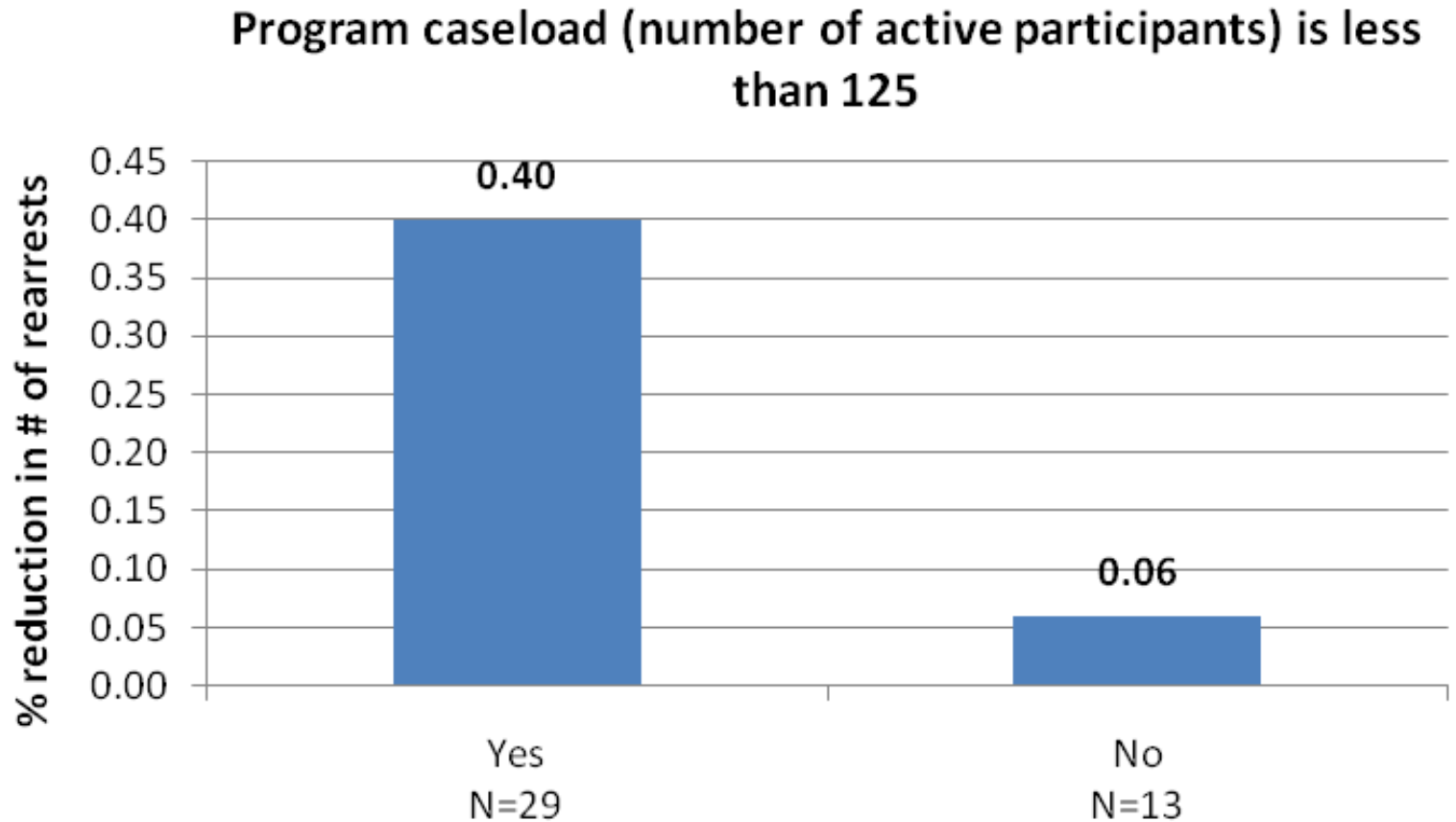


# Drug Court Top 10

## *\*Recidivism\**

5. *A representative from treatment attends drug court team meetings (staffings)*
4. *Treatment communicates with court via email*
3. *Judge spends an average of 3 minutes or greater per participant during status review hearings*
2. *Participants are expected to have greater than 90 days clean (negative drug tests) before graduation*
1. *Program caseload (number of active participants) is less than 125*

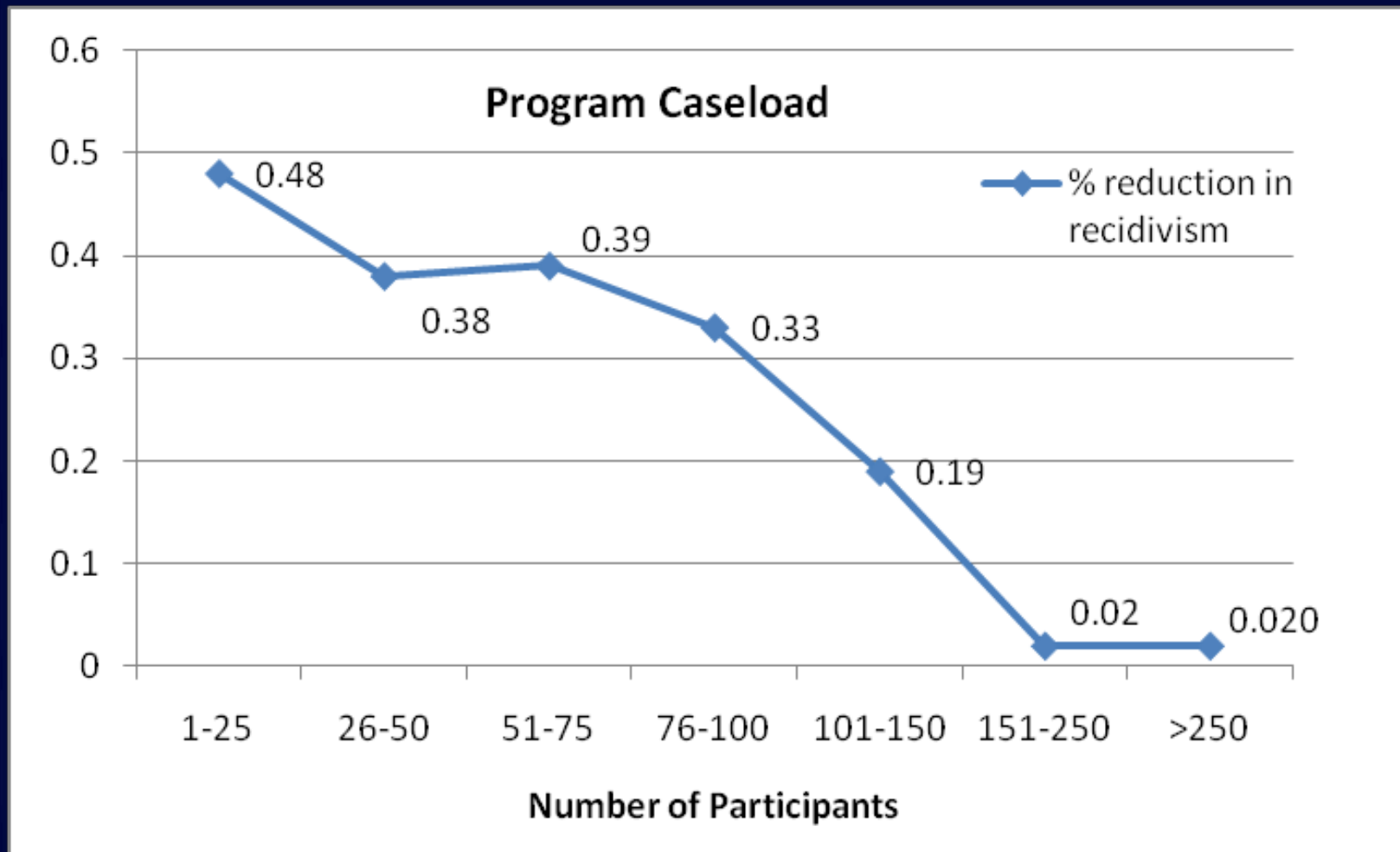
# 1. Drug Courts with a Program Caseload (Number of Active Participants) of less than 125 had 567% greater reductions in recidivism



Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .05$



# 1. Drug Courts with a Program Caseload (Number of Active Participants) of less than 125 had 567% greater reductions in recidivism



Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .05$



# **1. Drug Courts with a Program Caseload (Number of Active Participants) of less than 125 had 567% greater reductions in recidivism**

## **In larger drug courts:**

- **The Judge spent less time per participant in court (nearly half the time)**
- **Tx and LE were less likely to attend staffings**  
**(All team members were less likely to attend staffings)**
- **Tx and LE was were less likely to attend court hearings**
- **Tx was less likely to communicate with the court through email**
- **Greater number of Tx agencies (8 vs 3)**
- **Drug tests were less frequent**
- **Team members were less likely to be trained**

**\*All findings above were statistically significant ( $p < .05$ )**

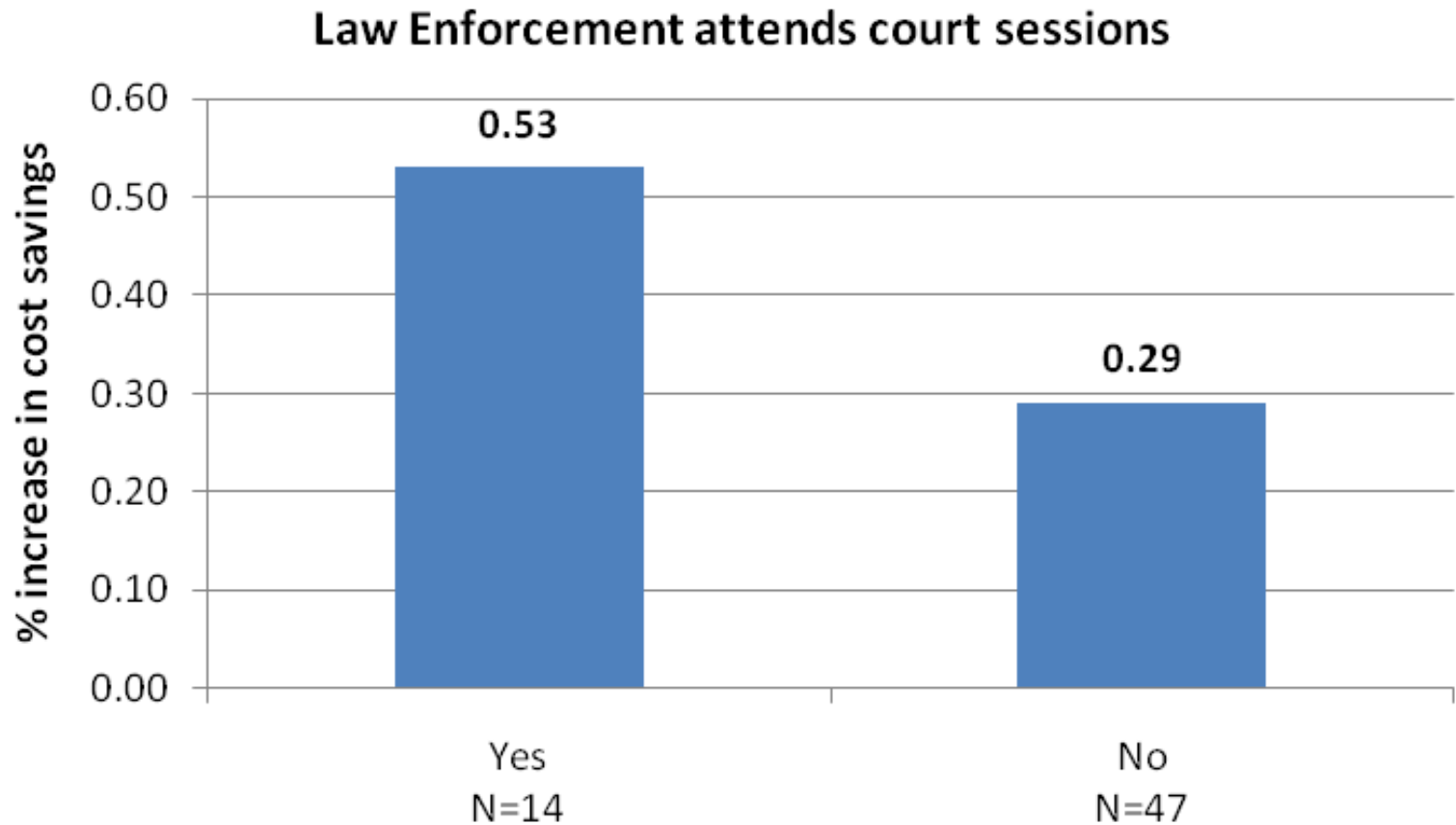


# Drug Court Top 10

## *\*Cost Savings\**

*10. Law enforcement attends court sessions*

## 10. Drug Courts Where Law Enforcement attends court sessions had 64% Higher Cost Savings



Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .05$

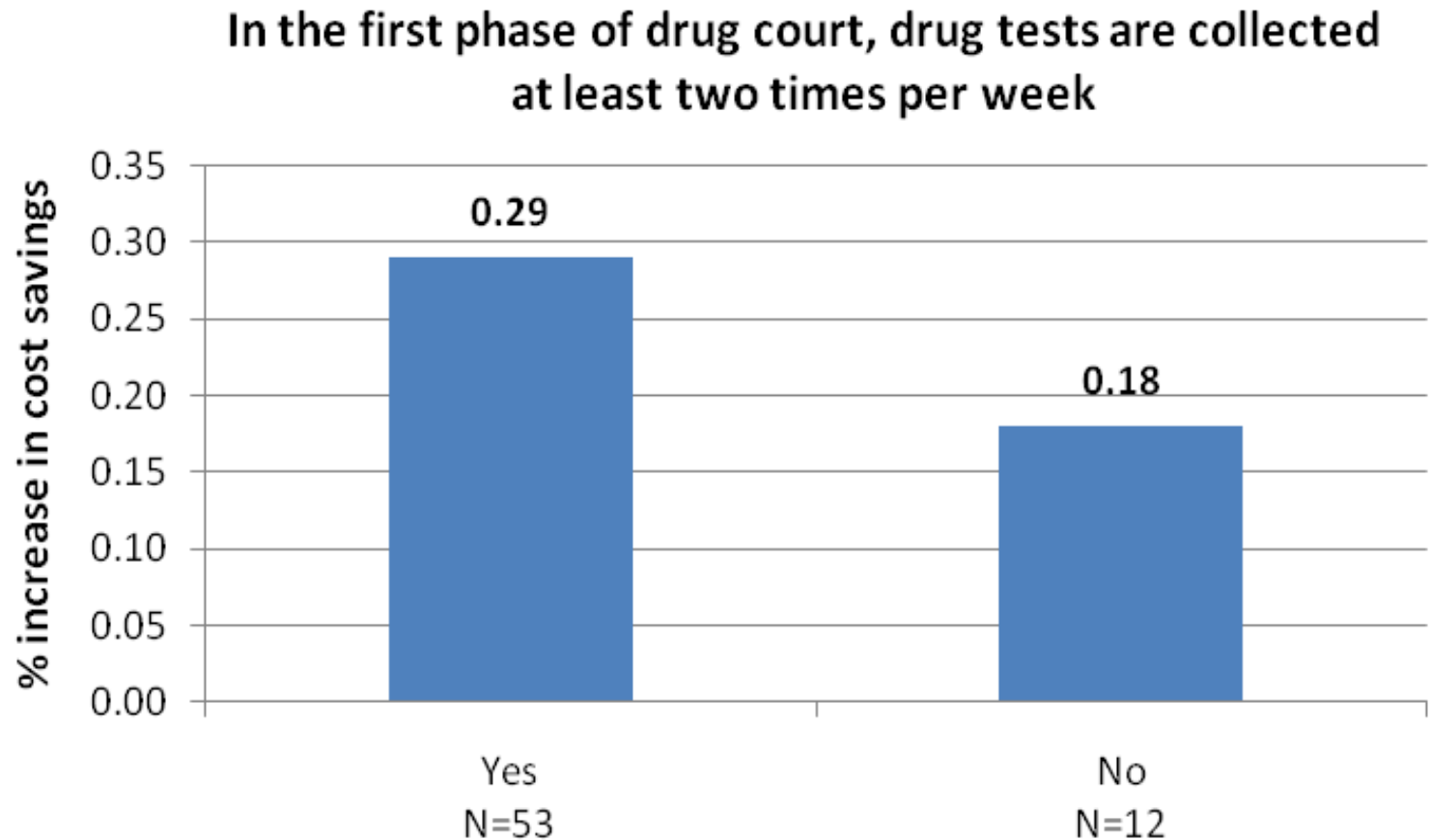


# Drug Court Top 10

## *\*Cost Savings\**

- 10. Law Enforcement attends court sessions*
- 9. In the first phase of drug court, drug tests are collected at least two times per week*

## 9. Drug Courts Where Drug Tests are Collected at Least Two Times per Week In the First Phase had 68% Higher Cost Savings



Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .15$  (Trend)

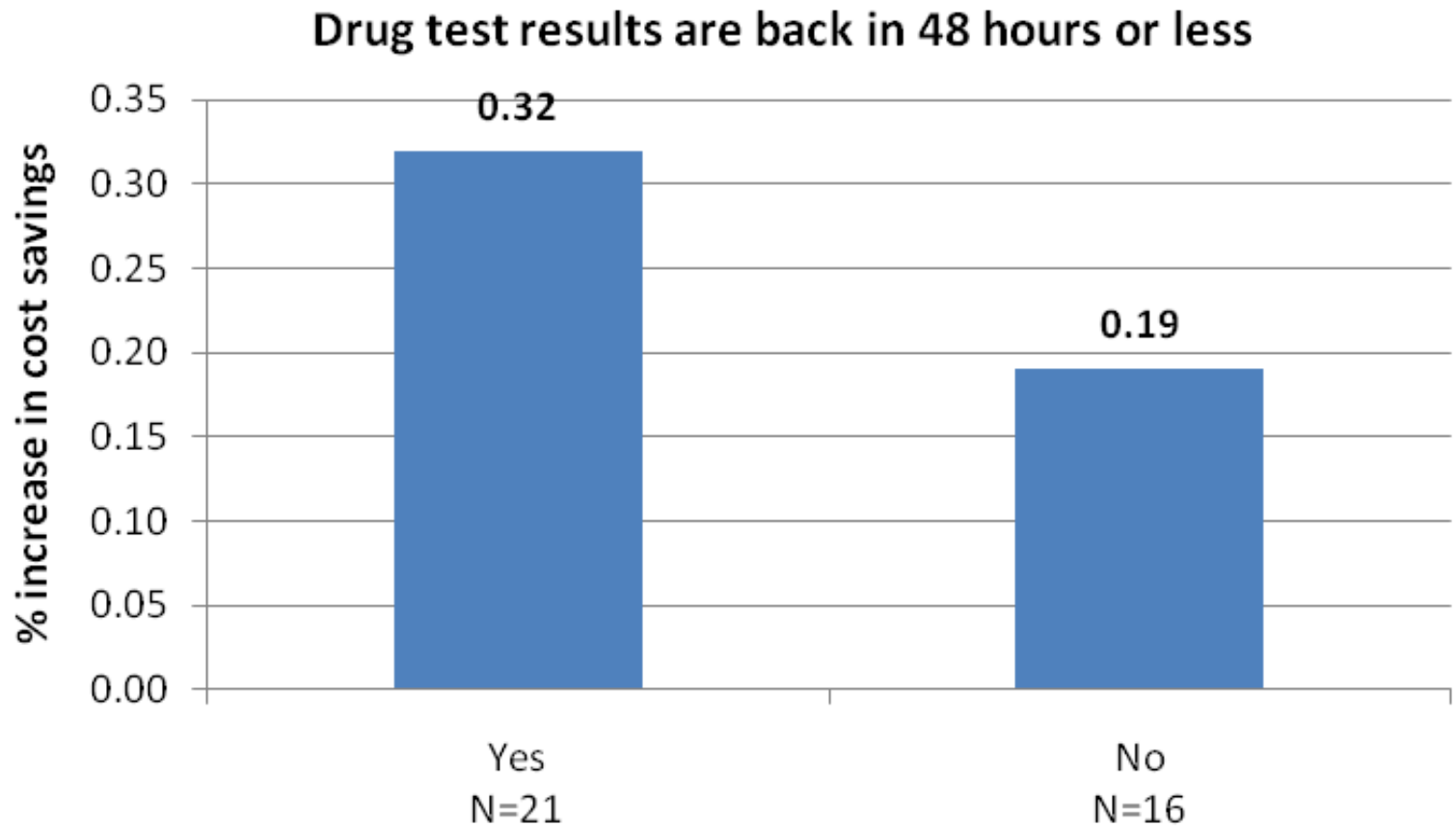


# Drug Court Top 10

## *\*Cost Savings\**

- 10. Law Enforcement attends court sessions*
- 9. In the first phase of drug court, drug tests are collected at least two times per week*
- 8. Drug test results are back in 48 hours or less*

## 8. Drug Courts Where Drug Test Results are Back in 48 Hours or Less had 68% Higher Cost Savings



Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .05$



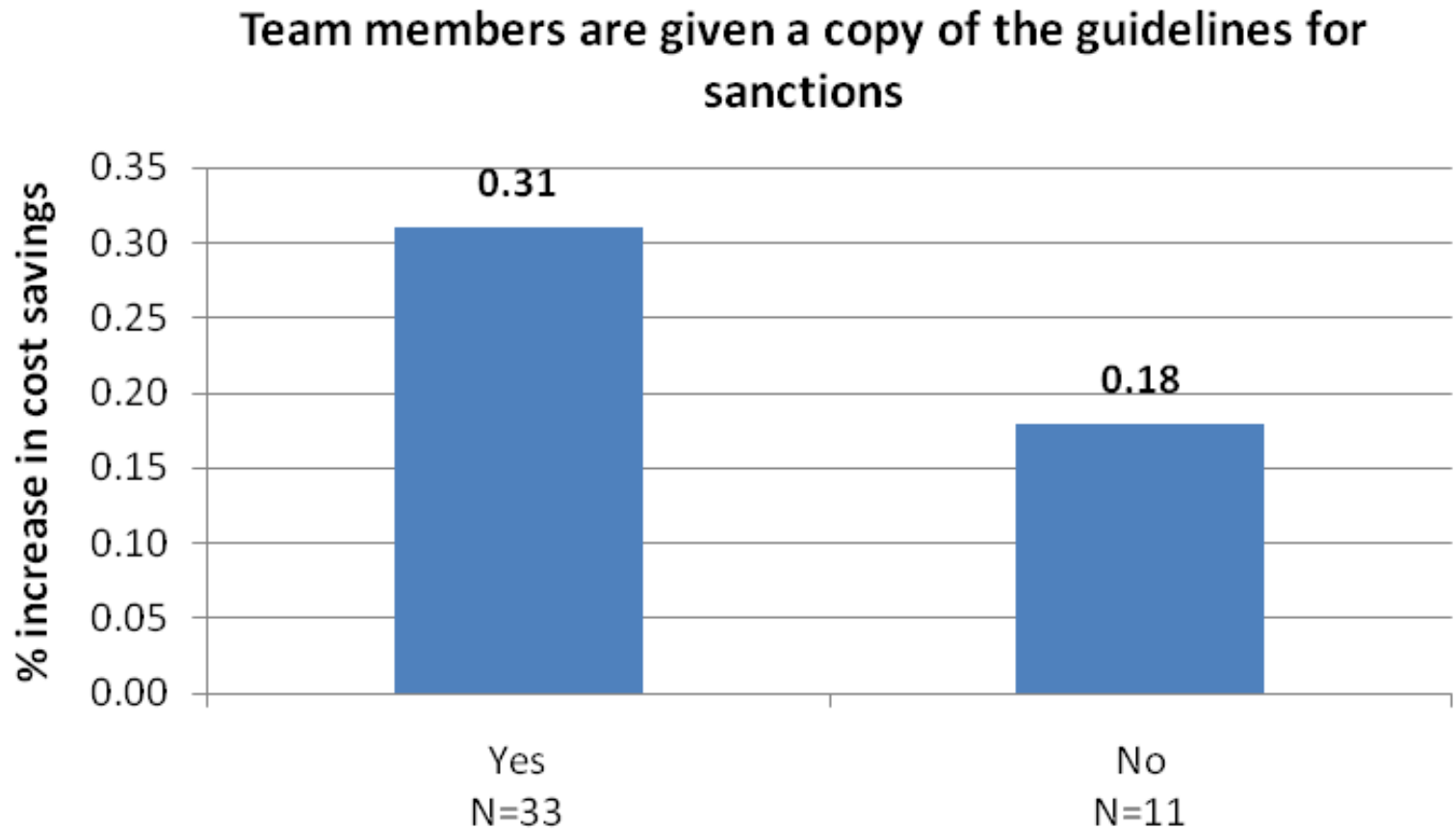


# Drug Court Top 10

## *\*Cost Savings\**

- 10. Law Enforcement attends court sessions*
- 9. In the first phase of drug court, drug tests are collected at least two times per week*
- 8. Drug test results are back in 48 hours or less*
- 7. Team members are given a copy of the guidelines for sanctions*

## 7. Drug Courts Where Team Members are Given a Copy of the Guidelines for Sanctions had 72% Higher Cost Savings



Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .15$  (Trend)

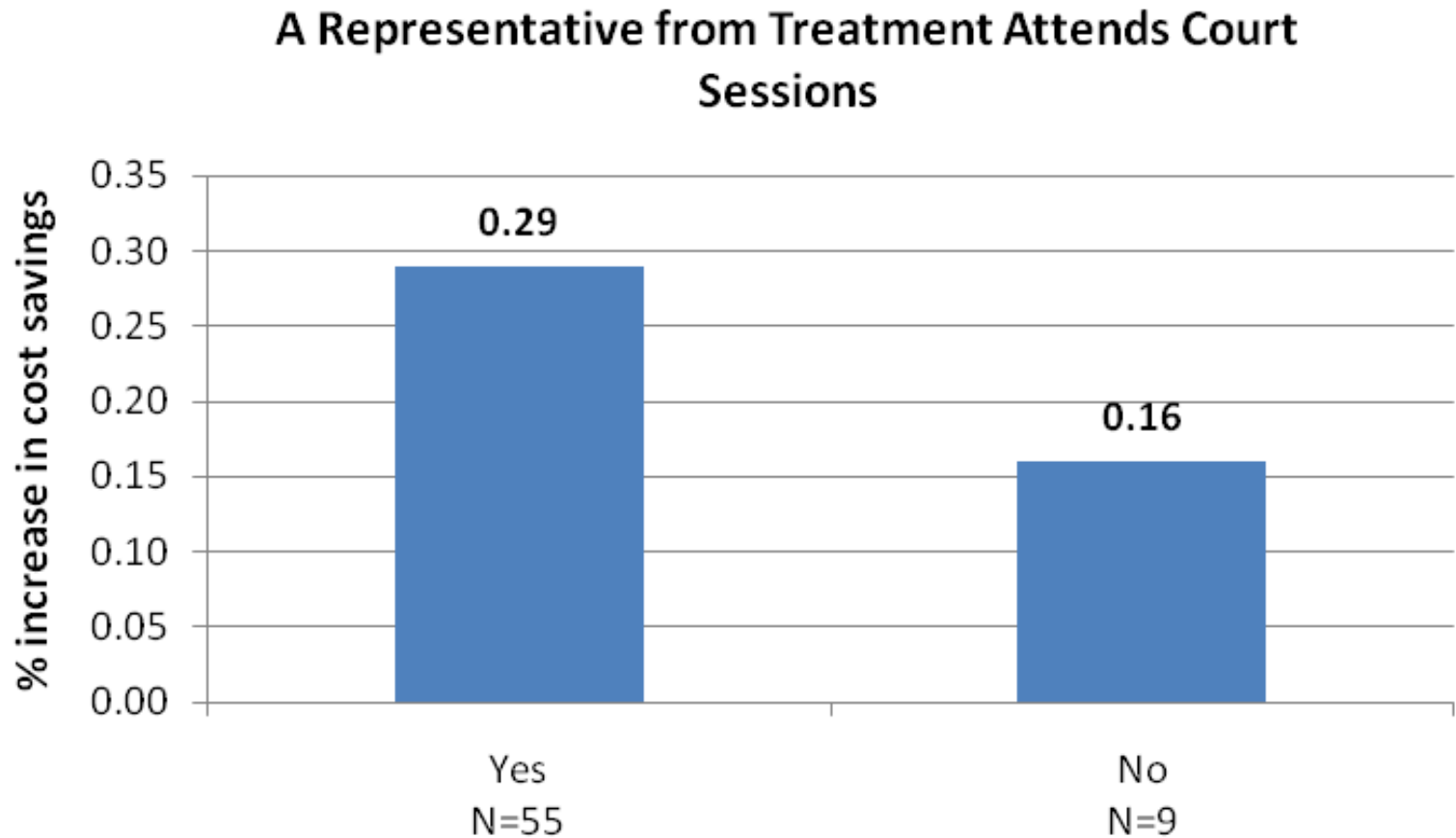


# Drug Court Top 10

## *\*Cost Savings\**

- 10. Law Enforcement attends court sessions*
- 9. In the first phase of drug court, drug tests are collected at least two times per week*
- 8. Drug test results are back in 48 hours or less*
- 7. Team members are given a copy of the guidelines for sanctions*
- 6. A representative from treatment attends court sessions*

## 6. Drug Courts Where a Representative from Treatment Attends Court Sessions had 81% Higher Cost Savings



Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .10$

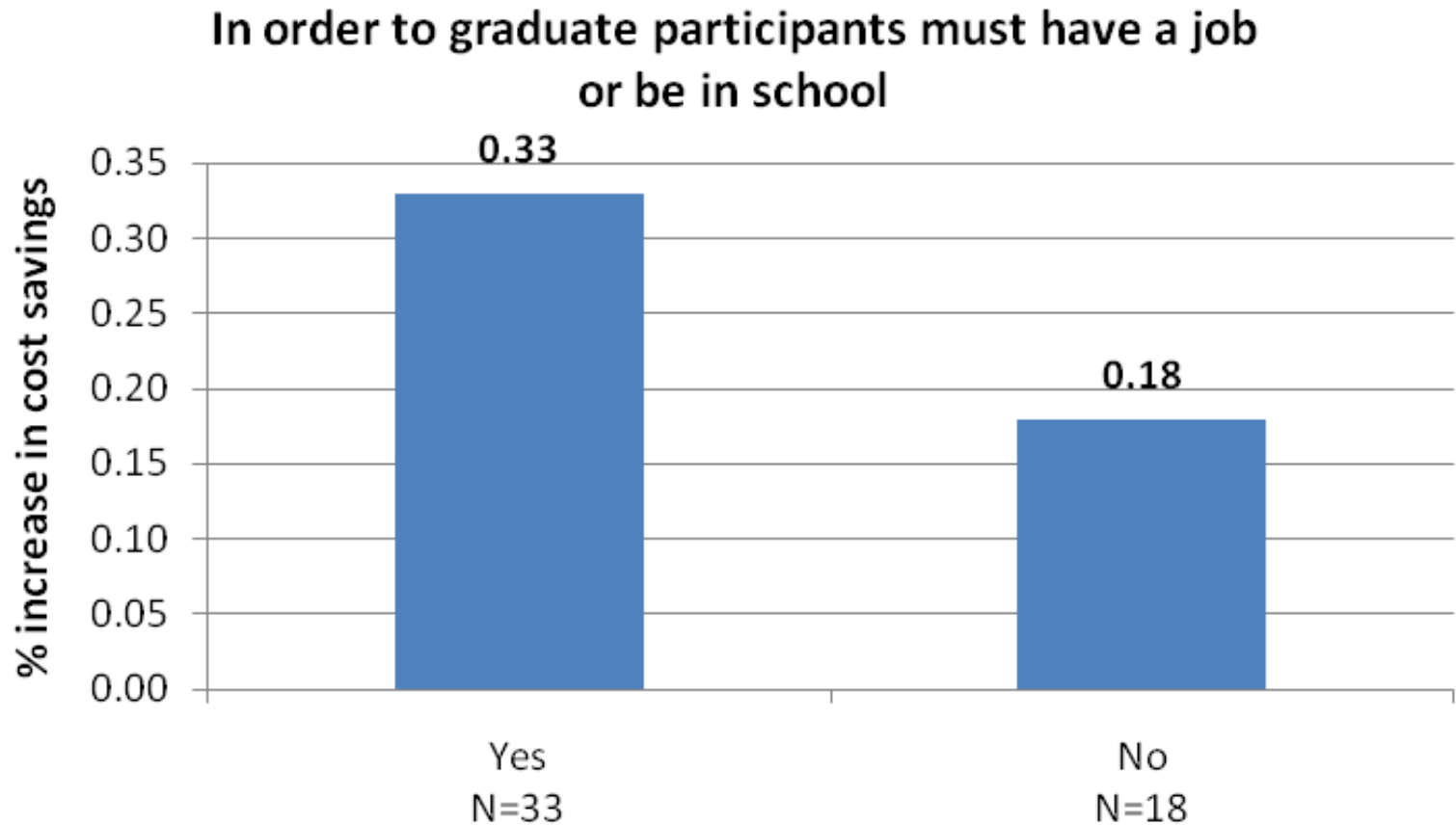


# Drug Court Top 10

## *\*Cost Savings\**

- 5. In order to graduate participants must have a job or be in school*

## 5. Drug Courts Where in Order to Graduate Participants Must Have a Job or be in School had 83% Higher Cost Savings



Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .05$

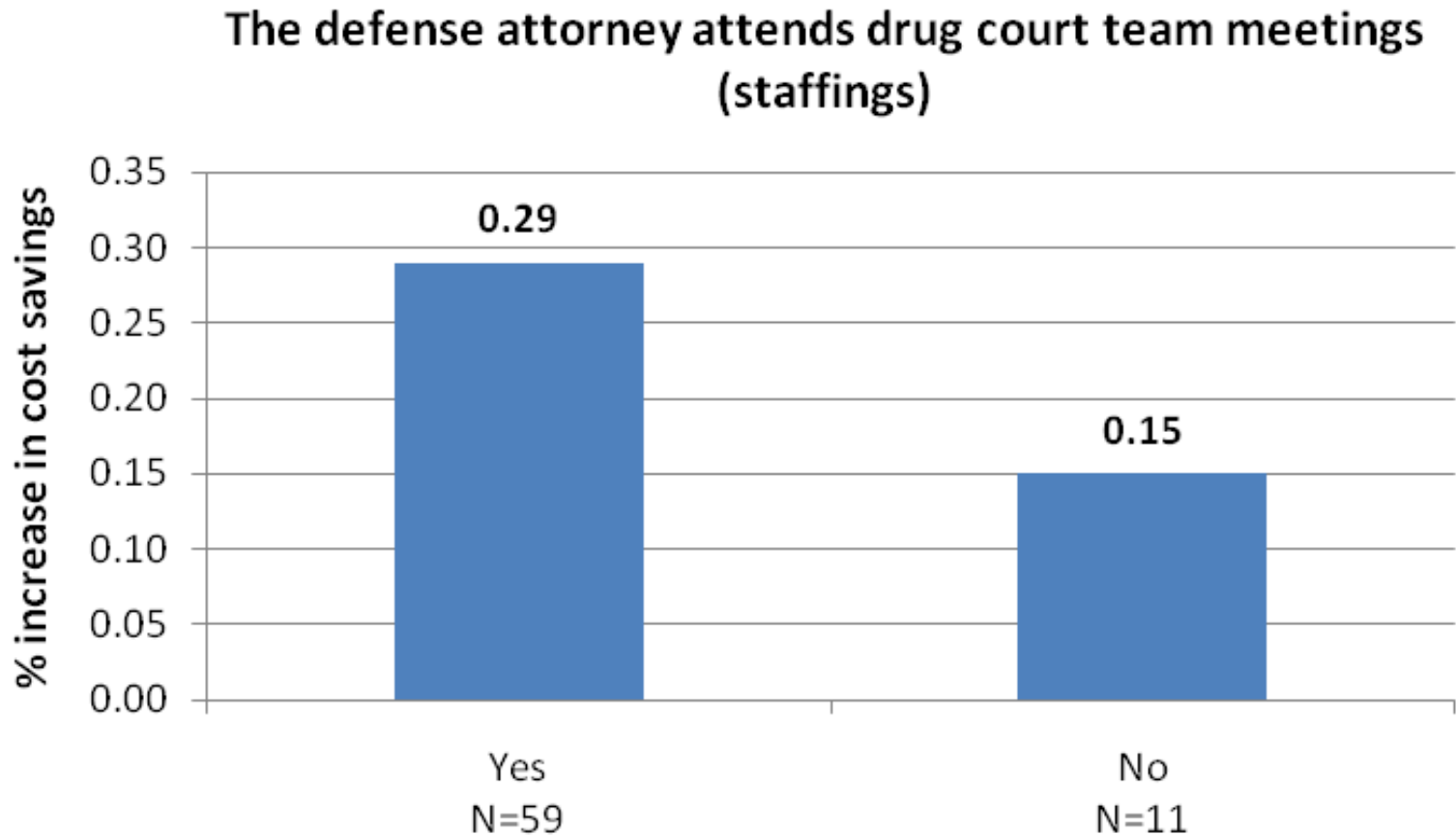


# Drug Court Top 10

## *\*Cost Savings\**

5. *In order to graduate participants must have a job or be in school*
4. *The defense attorney attends drug court team meetings (staffings)*

#### 4. Drug Courts Where the Defense Attorney Attends Drug Court Team Meetings (Staffings) had 93% Higher Cost Savings



Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .05$



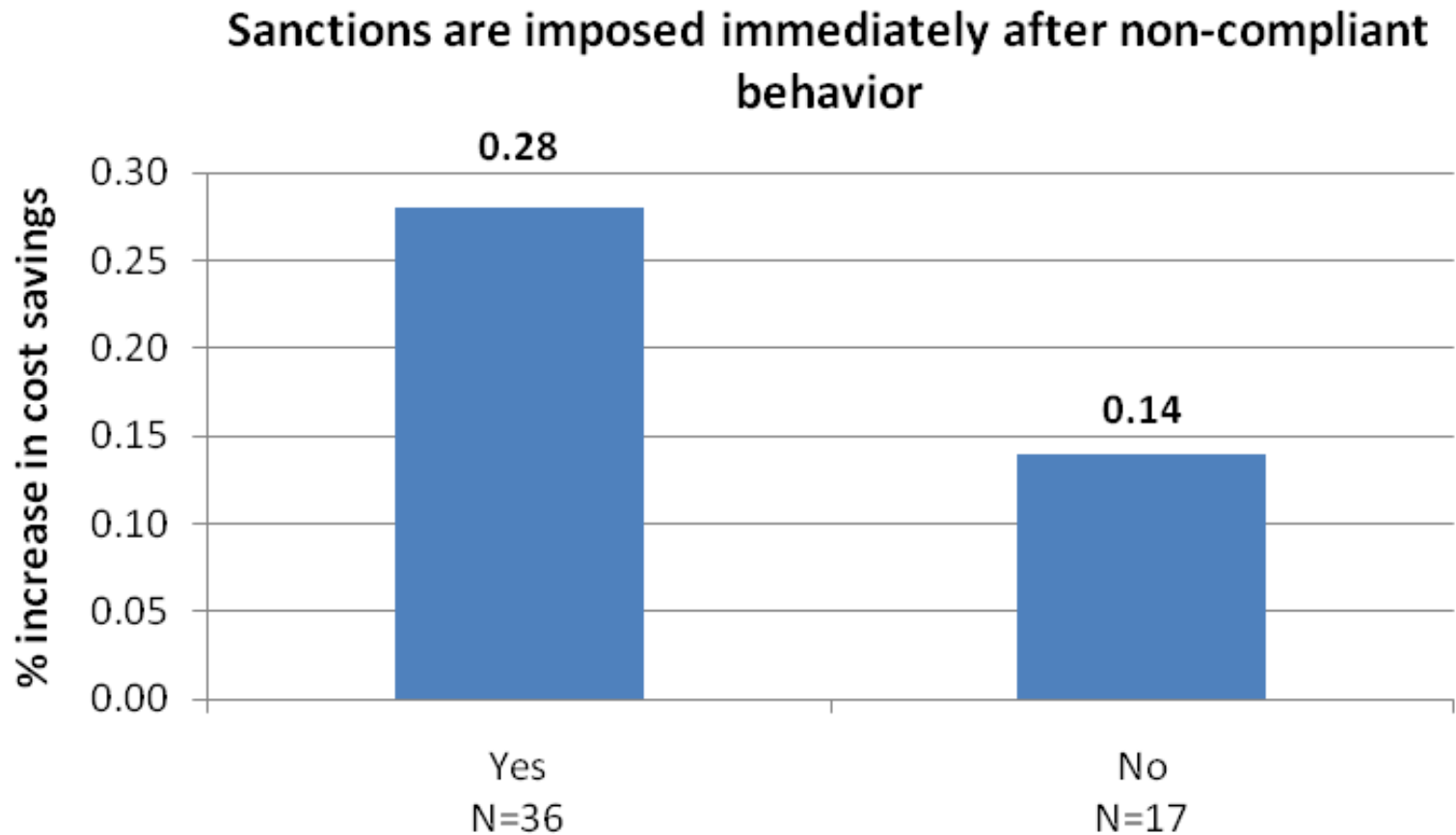


# Drug Court Top 10

## *\*Cost Savings\**

5. *In order to graduate participants must have a job or be in school*
4. *The defense attorney attends drug court team meetings (staffings)*
3. *Sanctions are imposed immediately after non-compliant behavior (e.g., in advance of a client's regularly scheduled court hearing)*

### 3. Drug Courts Where Sanctions Are Imposed Immediately After Non-compliant Behavior had 100% Higher Cost Savings



Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .05$

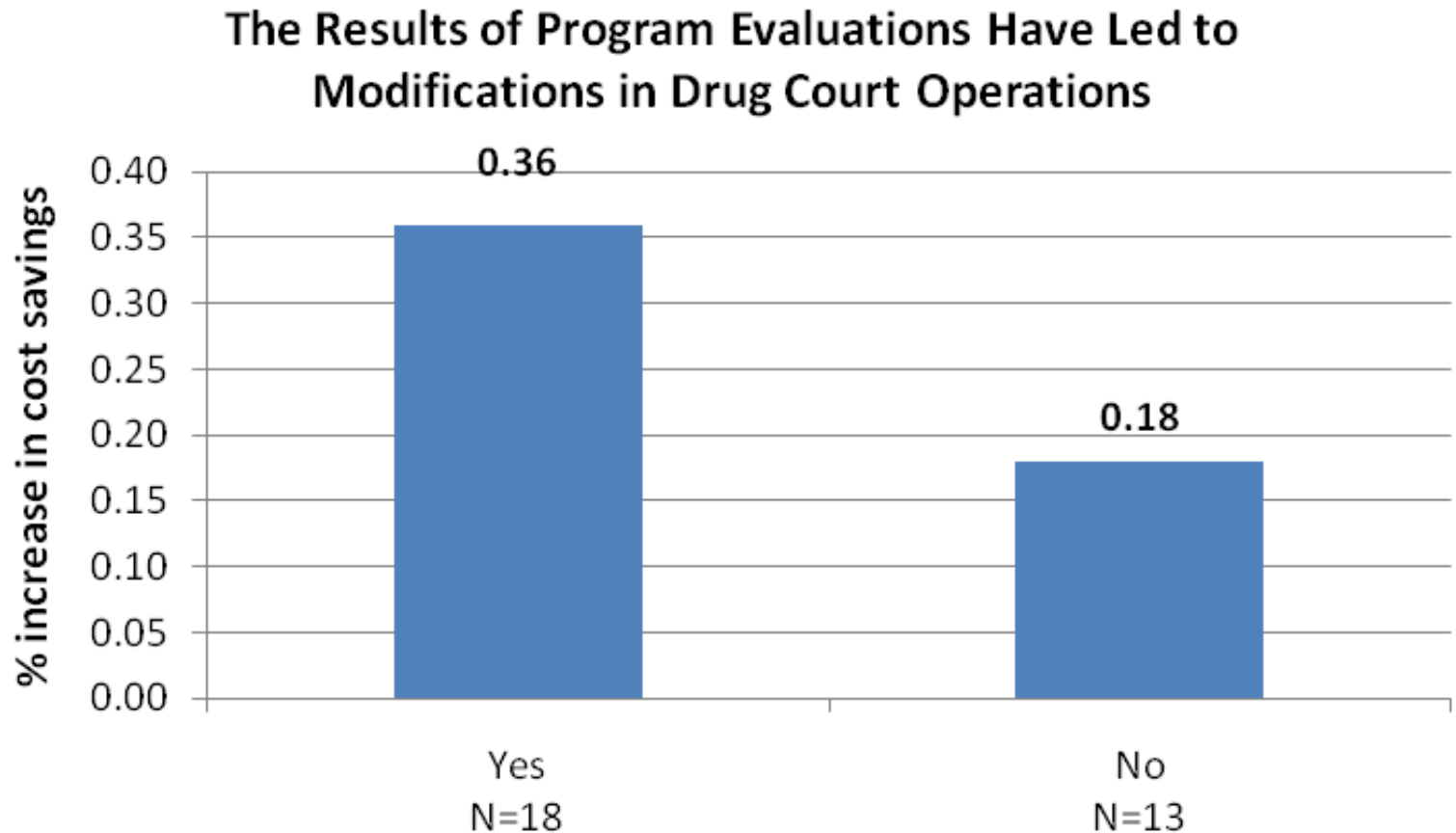


# Drug Court Top 10

## *\*Cost Savings\**

5. *In order to graduate participants must have a job or be in school*
4. *The defense attorney attends drug court team meetings (staffings)*
3. *Sanctions are imposed immediately after non-compliant behavior (e.g., in advance of a client's regularly scheduled court hearing)*
2. *The results of program evaluations have led to modifications in drug court operations*

## 2. Drug Courts Where The Results Of Program Evaluations Have Led to Modifications In Drug Court Operations had 100% Higher Cost Savings



Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .05$

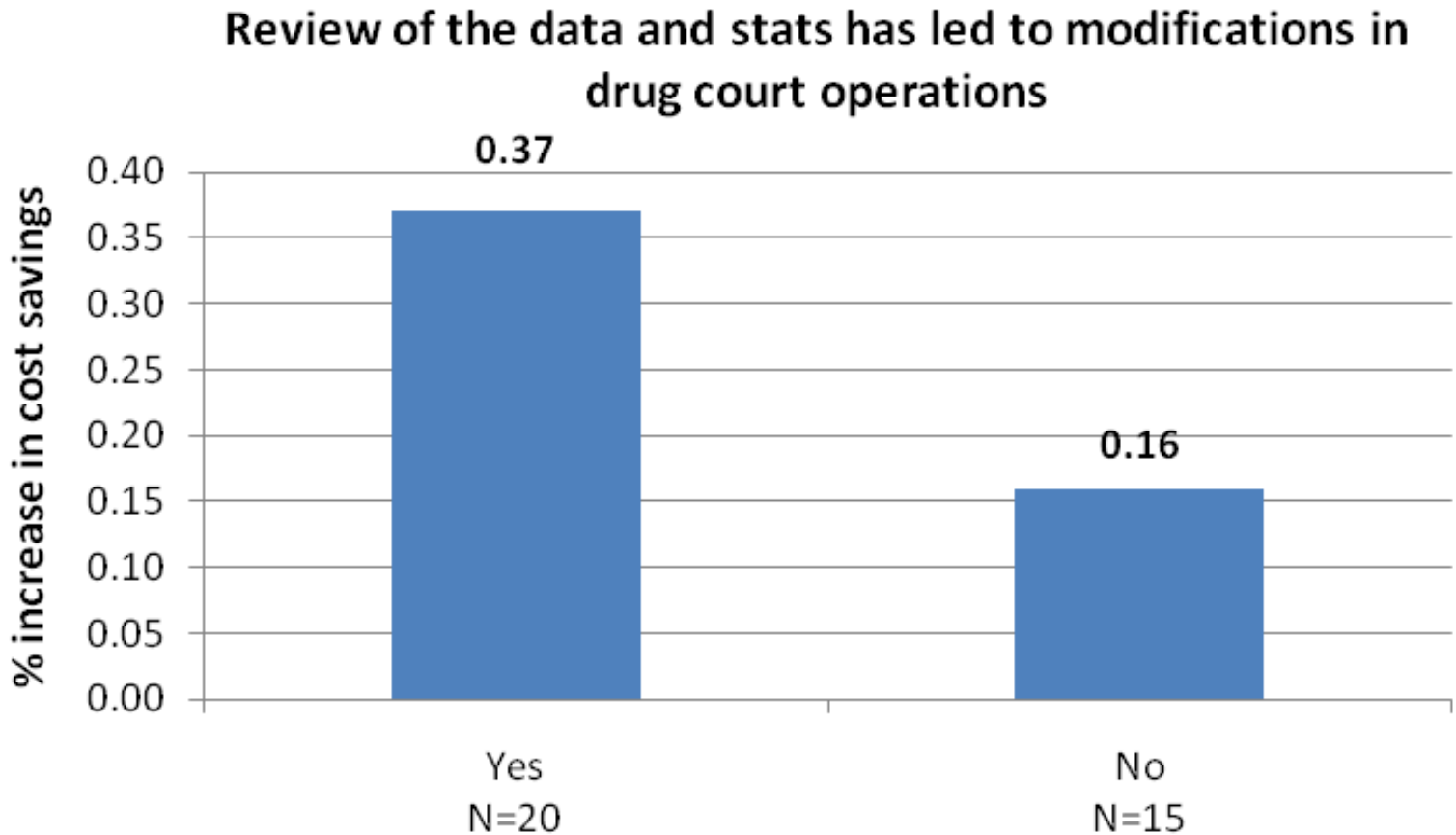


# Drug Court Top 10

## *\*Cost Savings\**

5. *In order to graduate participants must have a job or be in school*
4. *The defense attorney attends drug court team meetings (staffings)*
3. *Sanctions are imposed immediately after non-compliant behavior (e.g., in advance of a client's regularly scheduled court hearing)*
2. *The results of program evaluations have led to modifications in drug court operations*
1. *Review of the data and stats has led to modifications in drug court operations*

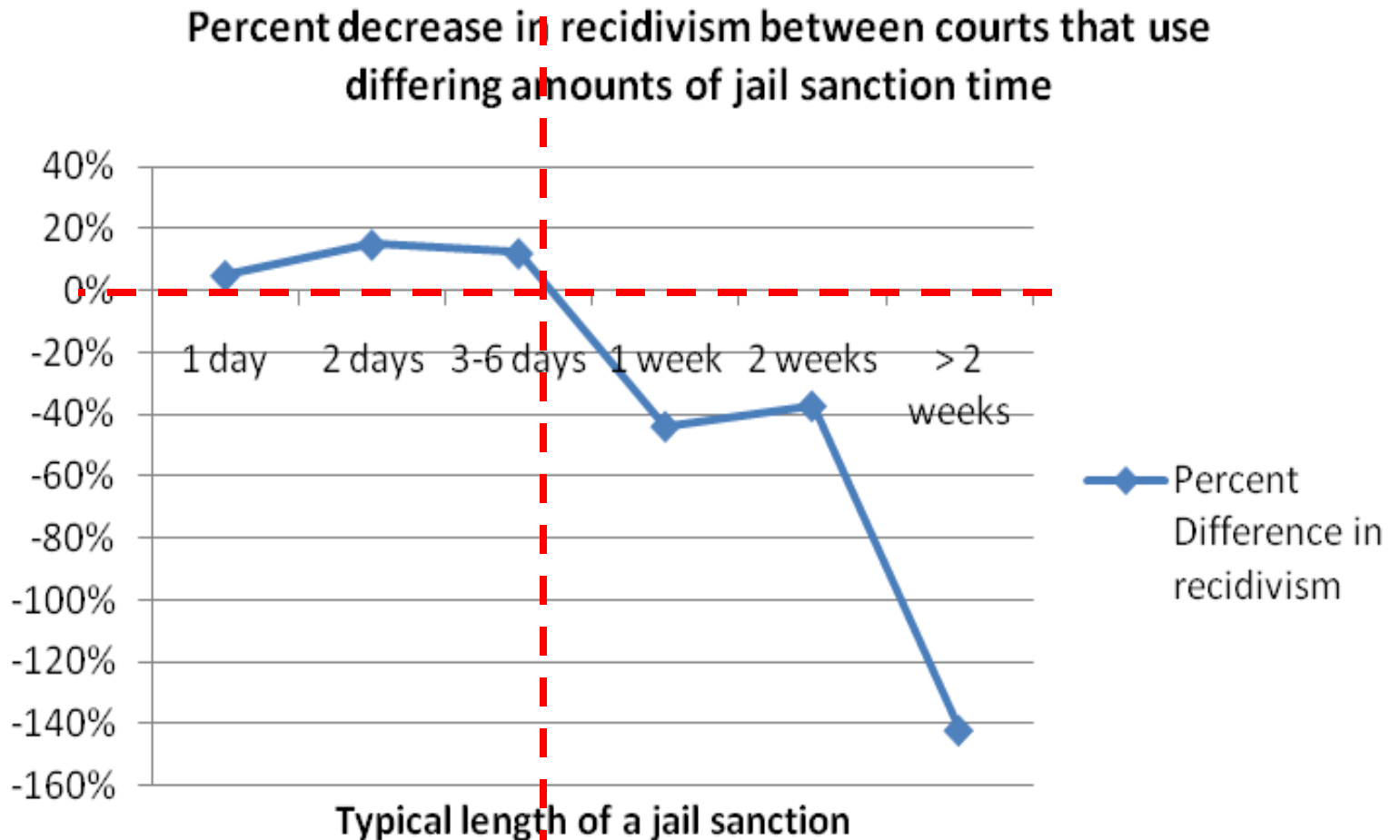
# 1. Drug Courts Where Review of The Data and Stats Has Led to Modifications in Drug Court Operations had 131% Higher Cost Savings



Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .05$

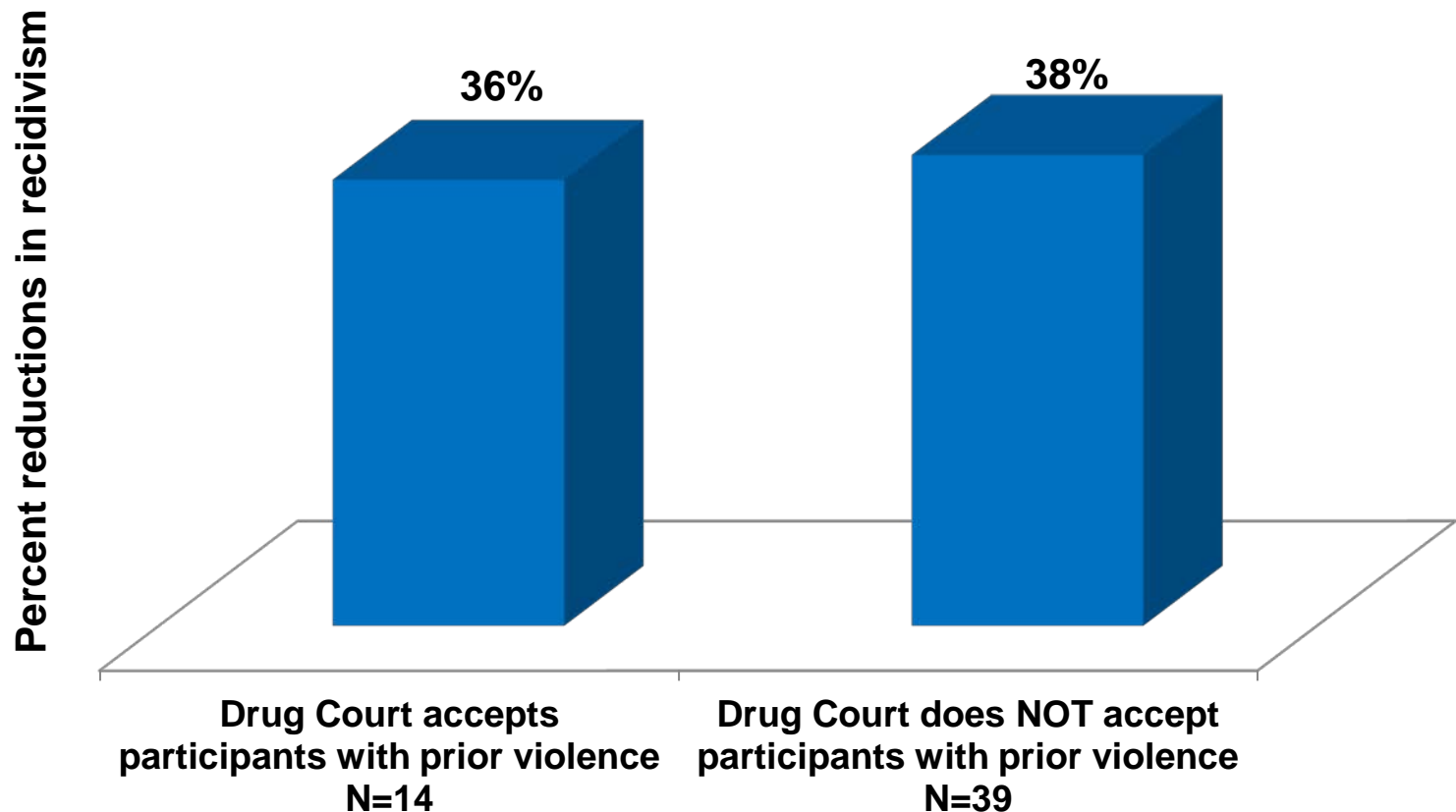
# Additional Best Practices of Particular Interest

# Courts that use jail greater than 6 days have **worse** (higher) recidivism



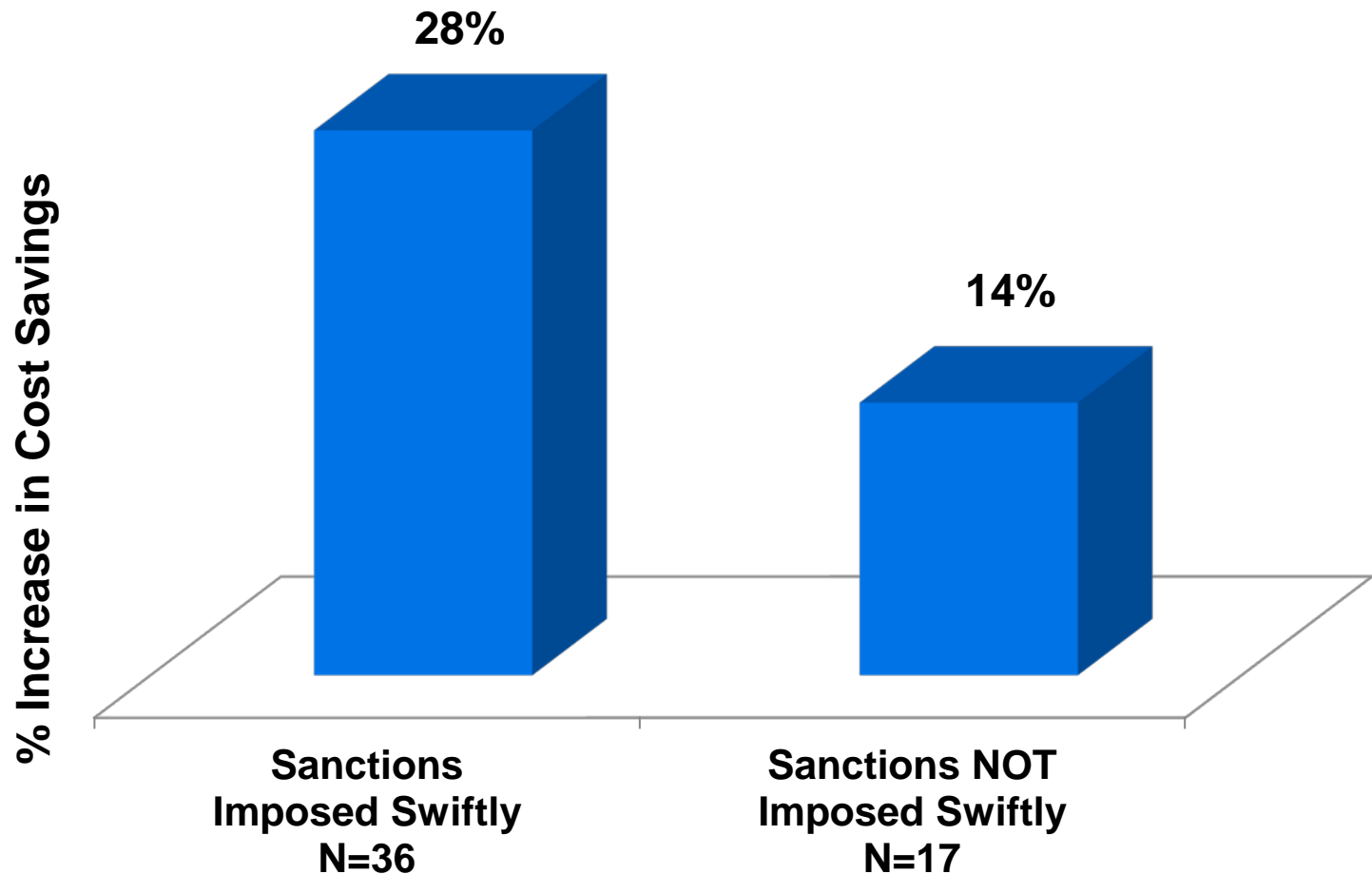


## Drug Courts that accepted participants with prior violence had equal reductions in recidivism



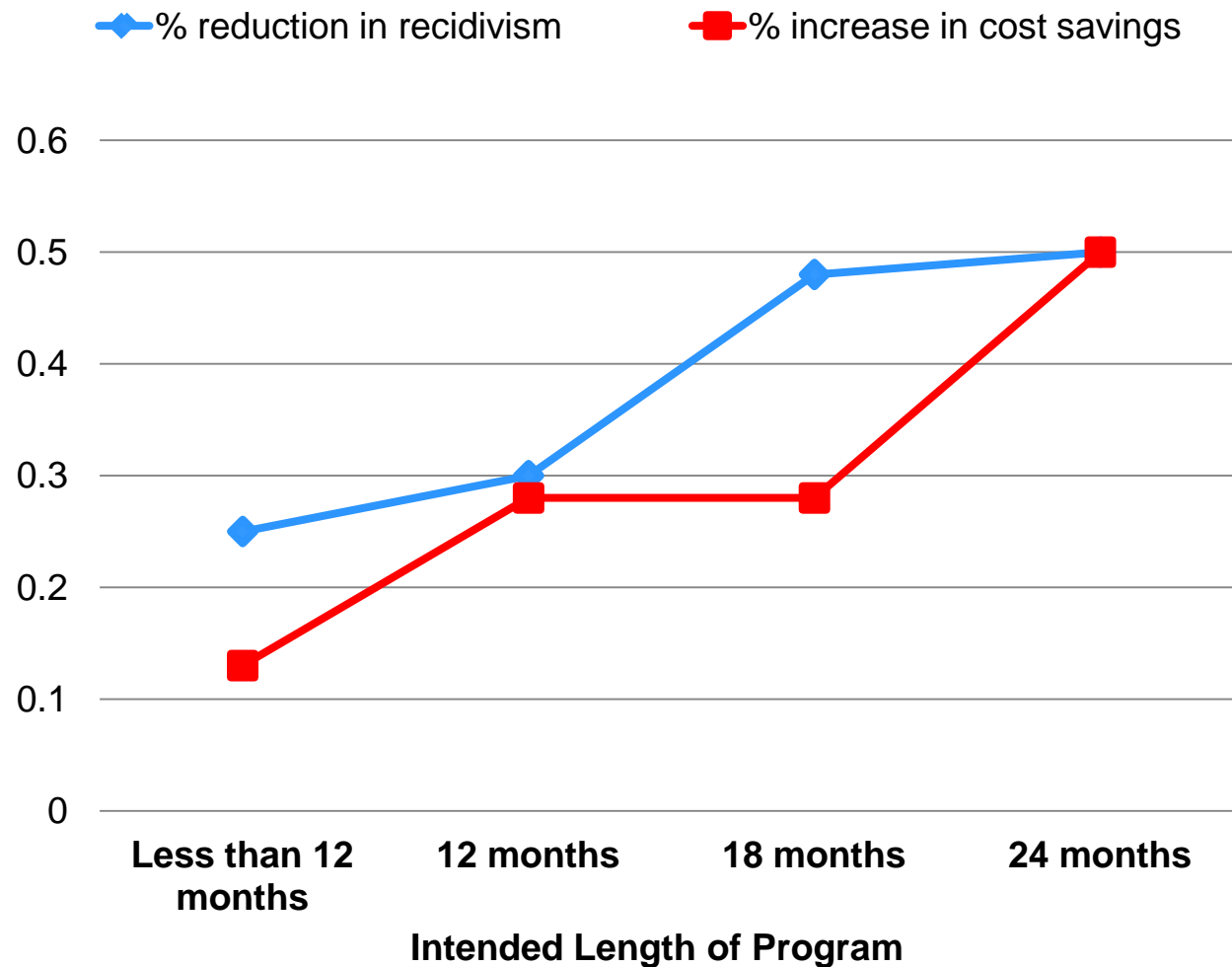
**Note: Difference is NOT significant**

## Drug Courts where sanctions were imposed in advance of a regularly scheduled court hearing had double the cost savings

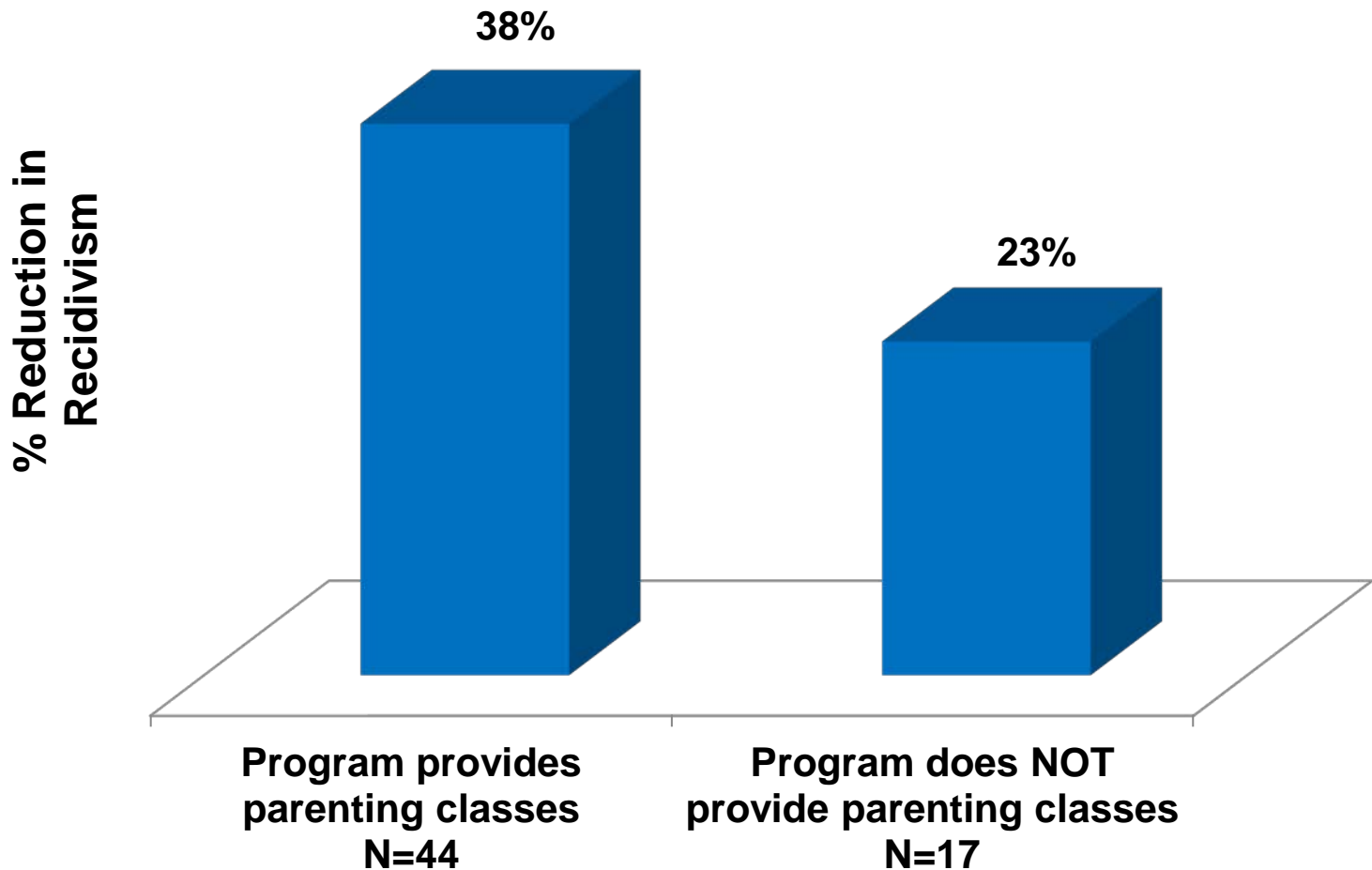


Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .05$

# Drug Courts where the minimum length of the program was 12 months or more had 57% greater reductions in recidivism

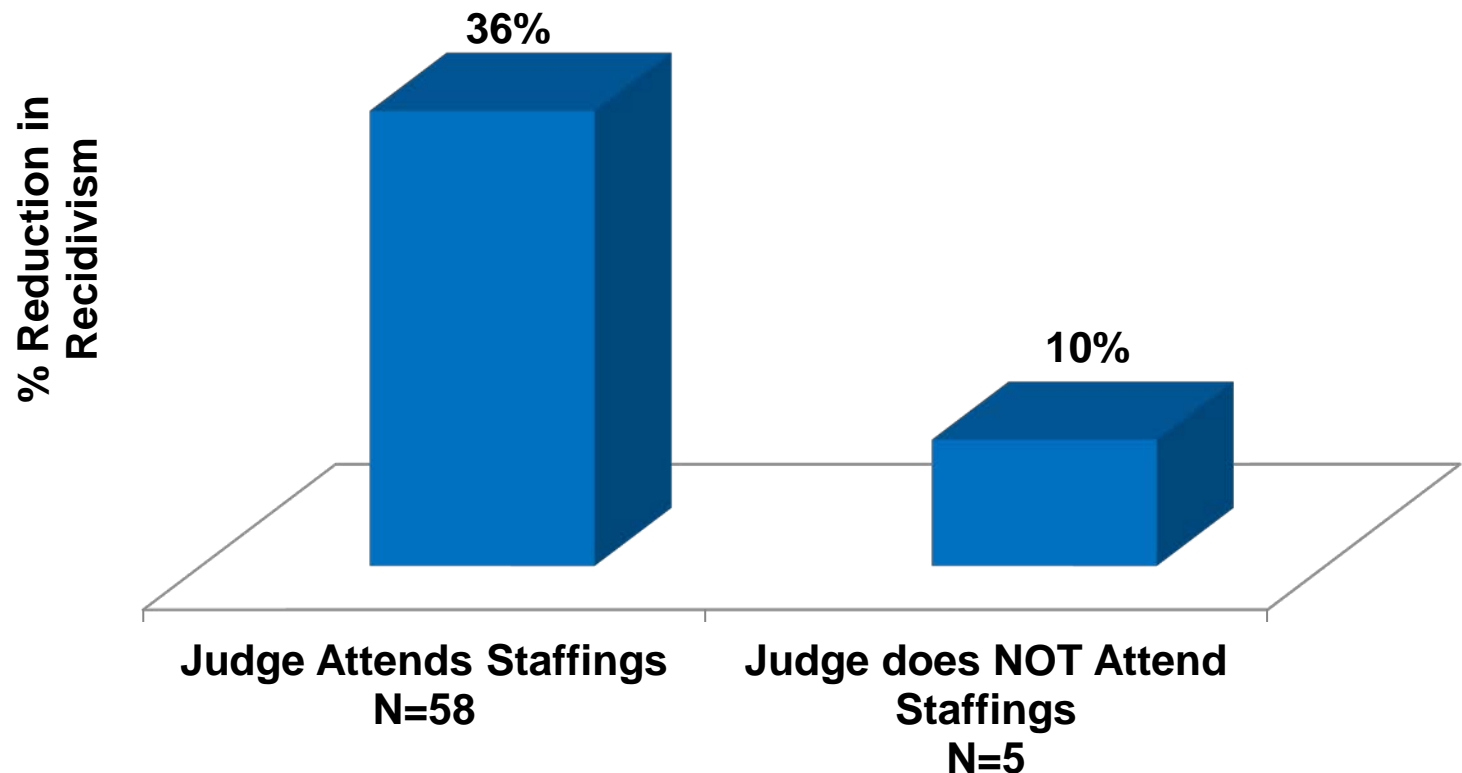


# Drug courts that offer parenting classes had 68% greater reductions in recidivism and 52% greater cost savings



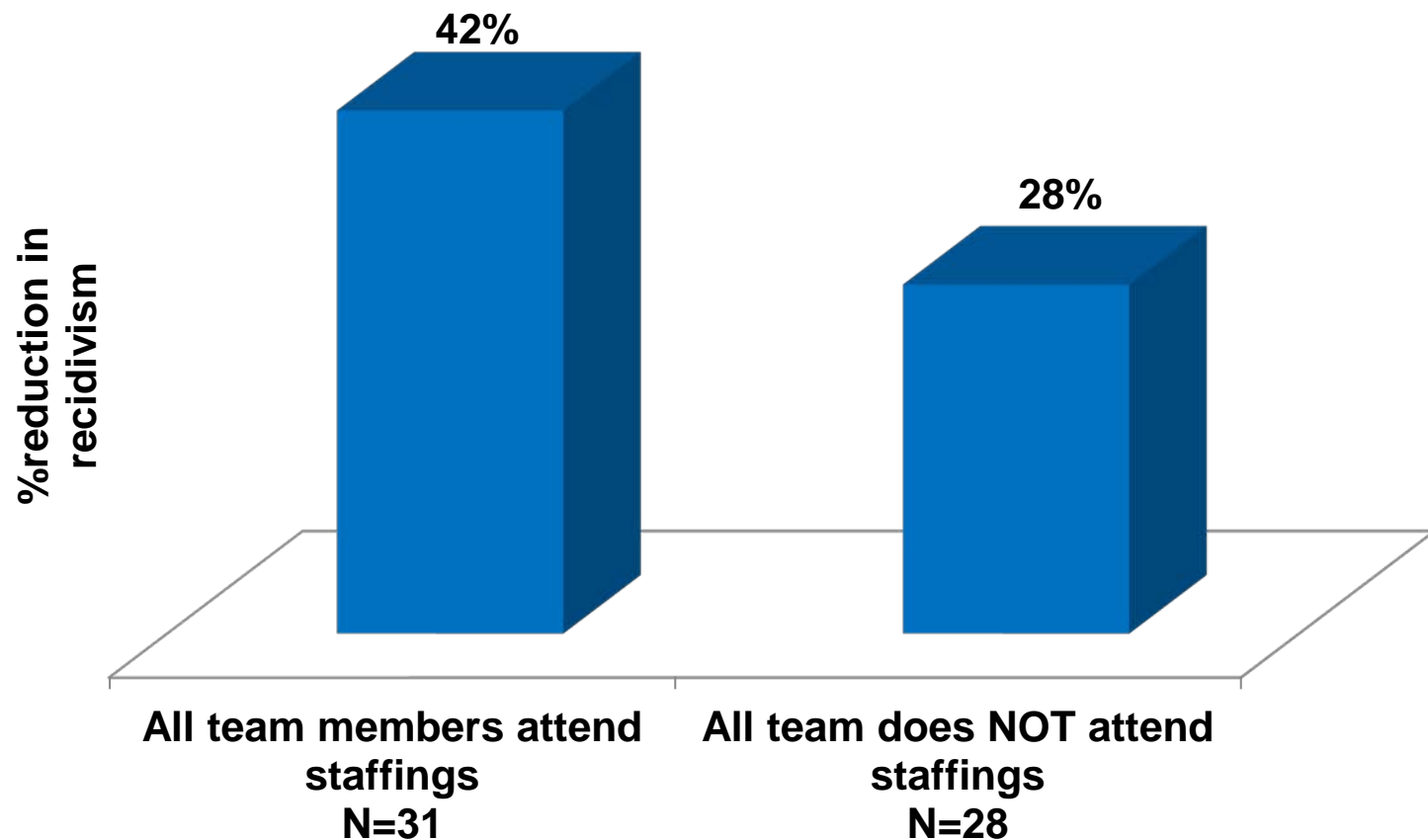
✓ True in adult, family, juvenile

# Drug courts where the Judge attends staffings had 3.5 times greater reductions in recidivism



Note: Difference is significant at  $p < .05$

## Drug Courts where all team members attended staffings had 50% greater reductions in recidivism



Note : "Team Members" = Judge, Both Attorneys, Treatment Provider, Coordinator, Probation



# Themes in the Top 10

- *Teams Sink or Swim Together*
- *Relationships Matter*
- *Wraparound and Habilitation Services Are Key*
- *Structure and Consistency Are Crucial*
- *Participants Must Be Set Up for Success*
- *Continuous Program Improvement Leads to Positive Outcomes*
- *The Drug Court Model Is Effective with Difficult Populations*



# Questions?





# Coming Up

*Article in Drug Court Review 2012*

*Presentation and handout on our Web site at*

[www.npcresearch.com](http://www.npcresearch.com)

*Look under “What’s New” or  
“Publications and Resources”*

# Conclusion:



**Before DC**



**After DC**



# Contact Information

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To learn more about NPC or more about drug court evaluations, including cost-benefit evaluations, see:  
[\*\*www.npcresearch.com\*\*](http://www.npcresearch.com)



# Acknowledgements

Thank you to the judges, coordinators and staff at numerous drug courts who welcomed us to their program, answered our un-ending questions and helped us find and collect mountains of data!