



Top 10 Drug Court Best Practices and More!

What does the research tell us and how does it relate to the new national drug court standards?



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Overview

- **The Research**
- **Top 10 Best Practices for reducing recidivism**
- **Top 10 Best Practices for reducing costs**
- **The new standards developed by NADCP**



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

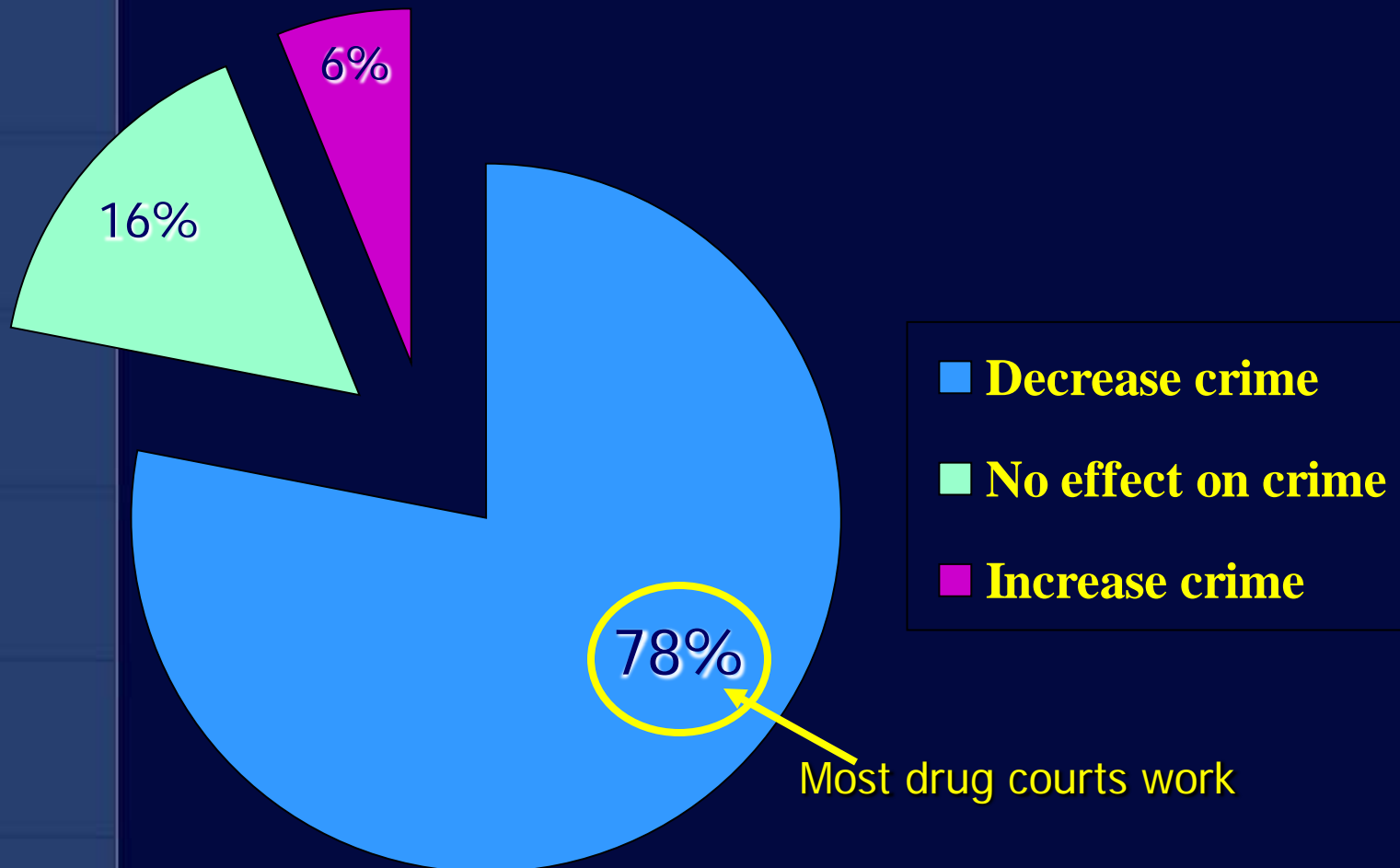
What We Already Know

Recidivism

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



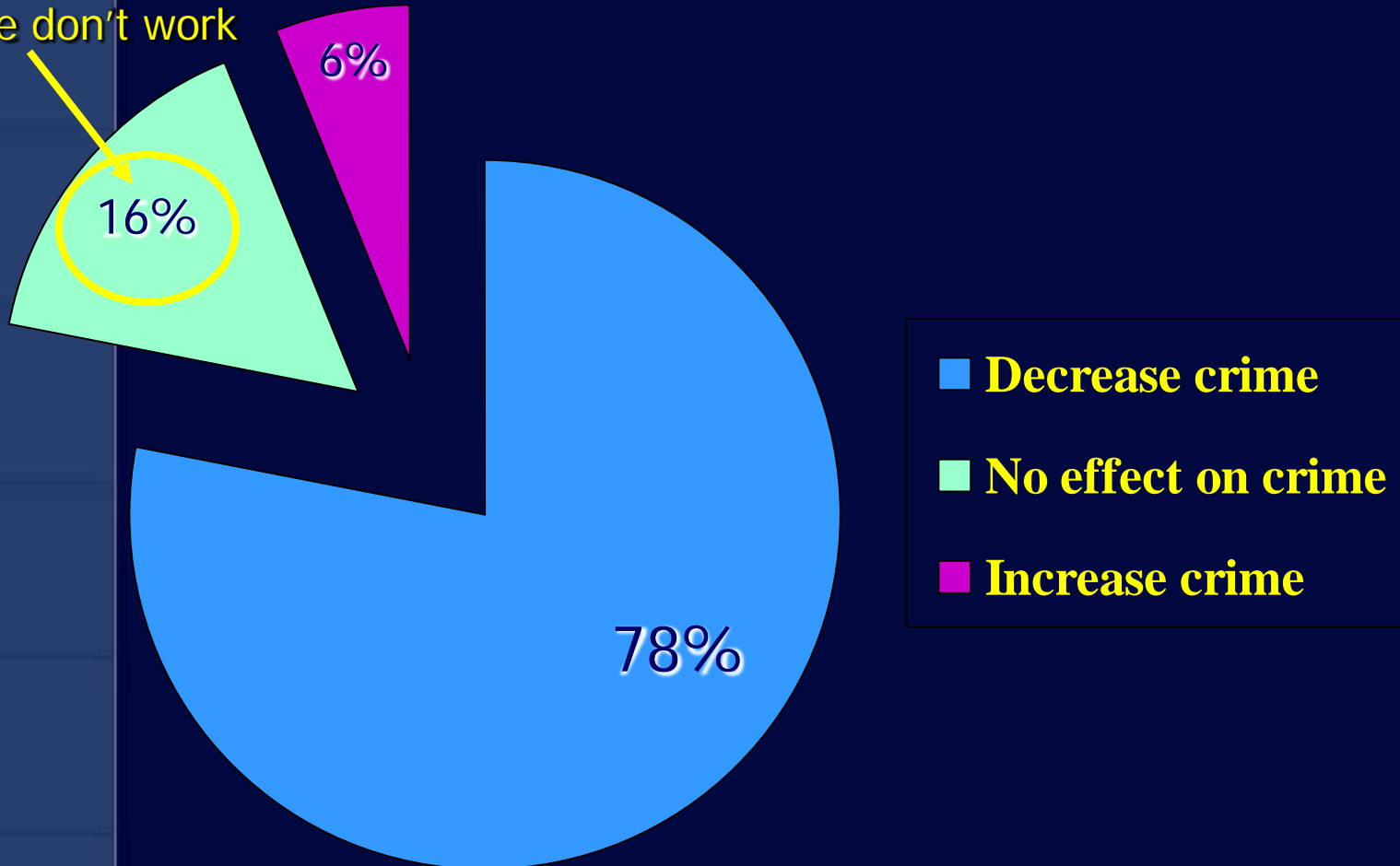
Variable Effects



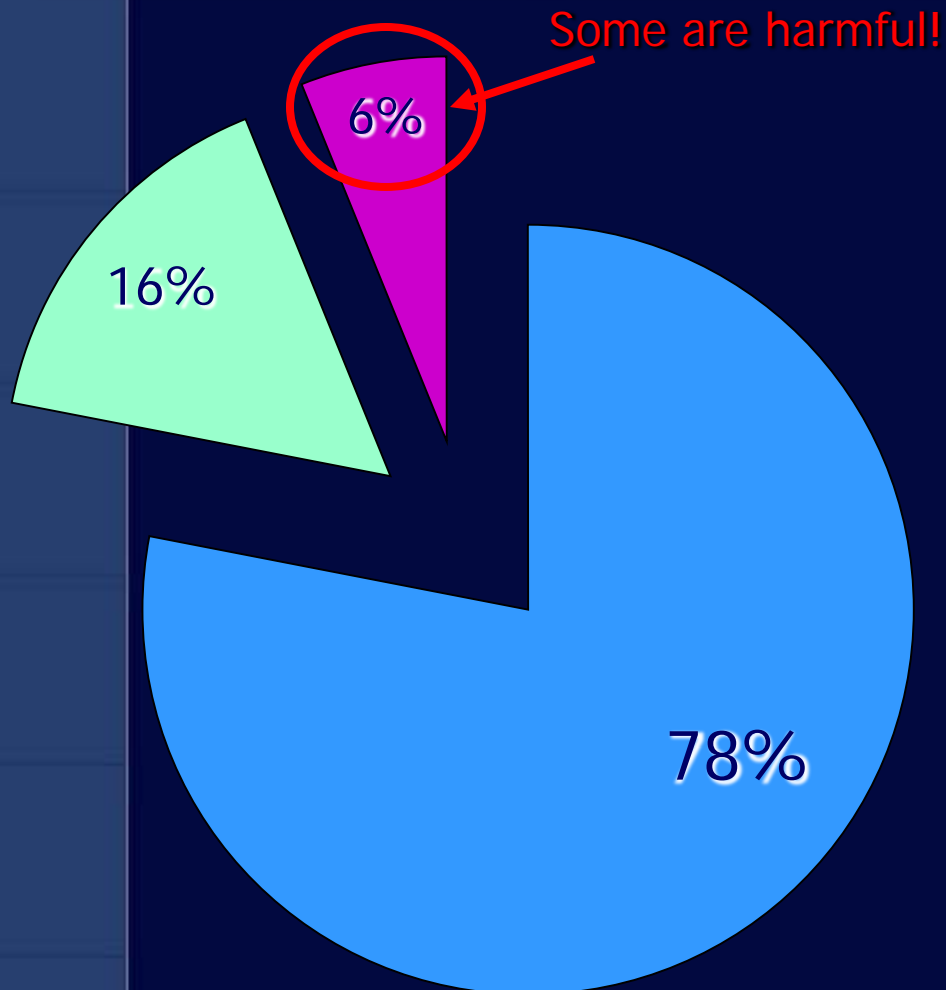
(Wilson et al., 2006; Lowenkamp et al., 2005; Shaffer, 2006)

Variable Effects

Some don't work



Variable Effects



Let's do the math:

2,734 drug courts (as of 6/30/12)
x .06
= 164 harmful drug courts!

- Decrease crime
- No effect on crime
- Increase crime

another 437 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)*

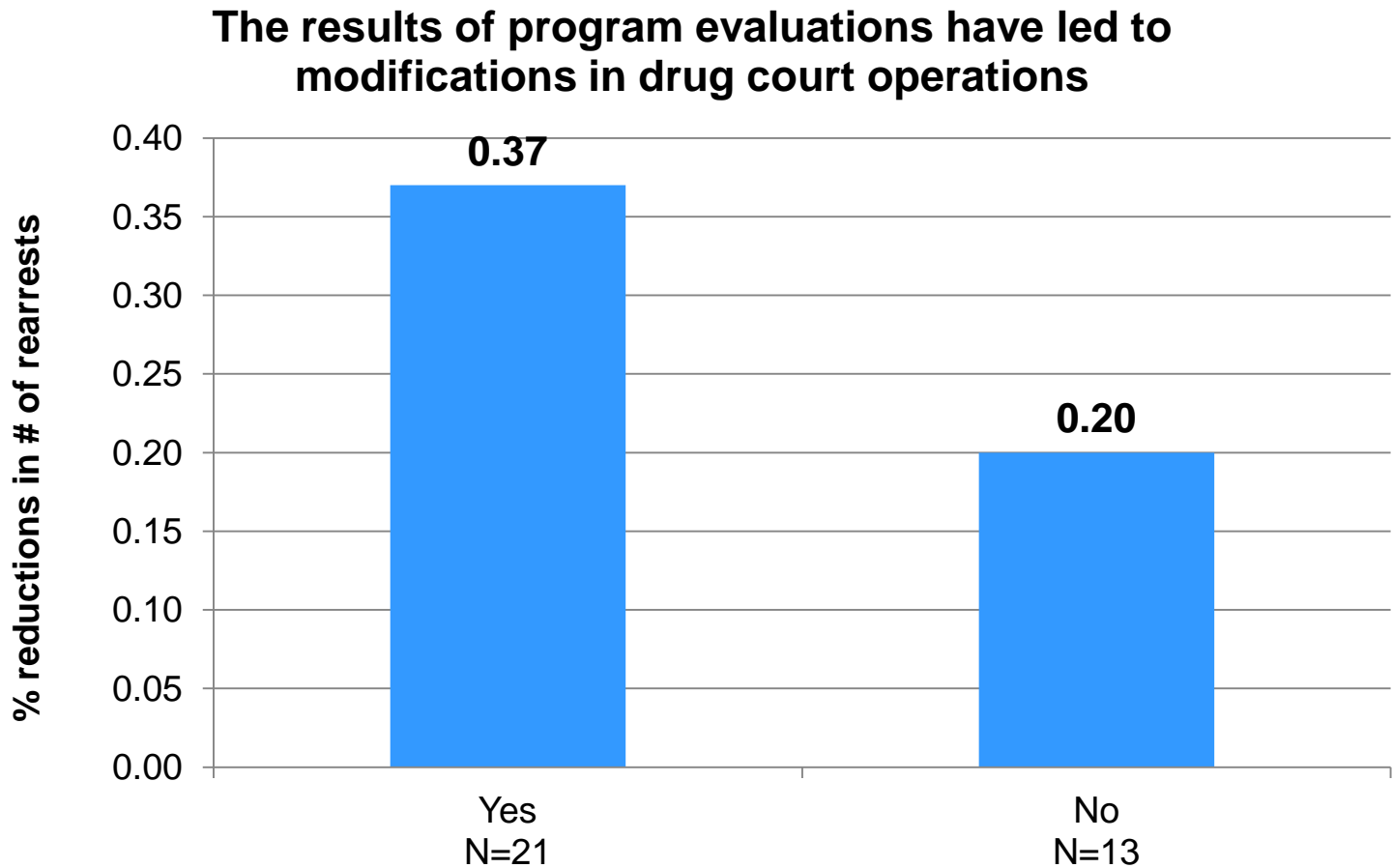


Drug Court Top 10

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 $p < .10$

BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR ADULT DRUG COURTS

Data and Evaluation Standard:

Use outside evaluation and self review of program data for program improvement

The program uses an electronic data collection (MIS) that provides relevant statistics on program performance....

....that the team can use to

- garner insights into its performance
- guide improvements
- reveal areas where training is needed

BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR ADULT DRUG COURTS

There are resources for how to use data to improve practice in fields ranging from the child welfare system to adult literacy to non-profits of all types.

Drug courts are no exception!

(e.g., U.S.D.H.H.S., 2012; Pew Foundation, 2007; Levesque et al., 1996).

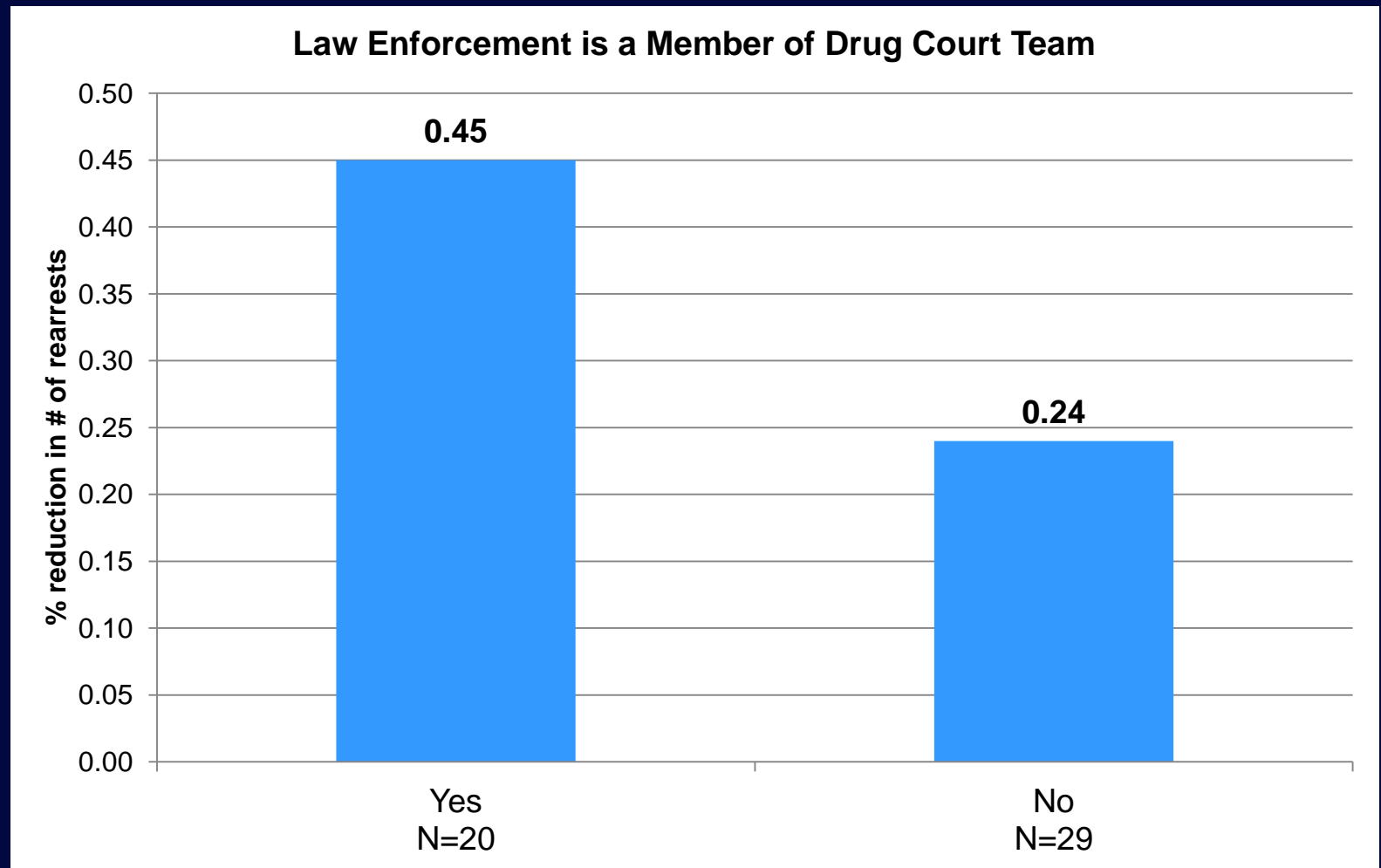


Drug Court Top 10

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 $p < .05$

BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR ADULT DRUG COURTS

A multidisciplinary team is in place and coordinates drug court processes.

Drug court is a collaboration between ALL members of a team. Participation from all partners contributes to the strength of the drug court model's success in engaging participants and changing behavior.

BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR ADULT DRUG COURTS

A multidisciplinary team is in place and coordinates drug court processes.

Team should include judge, a representative from treatment, a prosecutor, a defense attorney, a coordinator, community supervision officer, a law enforcement representative and any other community partners that work directly with participants

Participation = staffings, court sessions,
communication

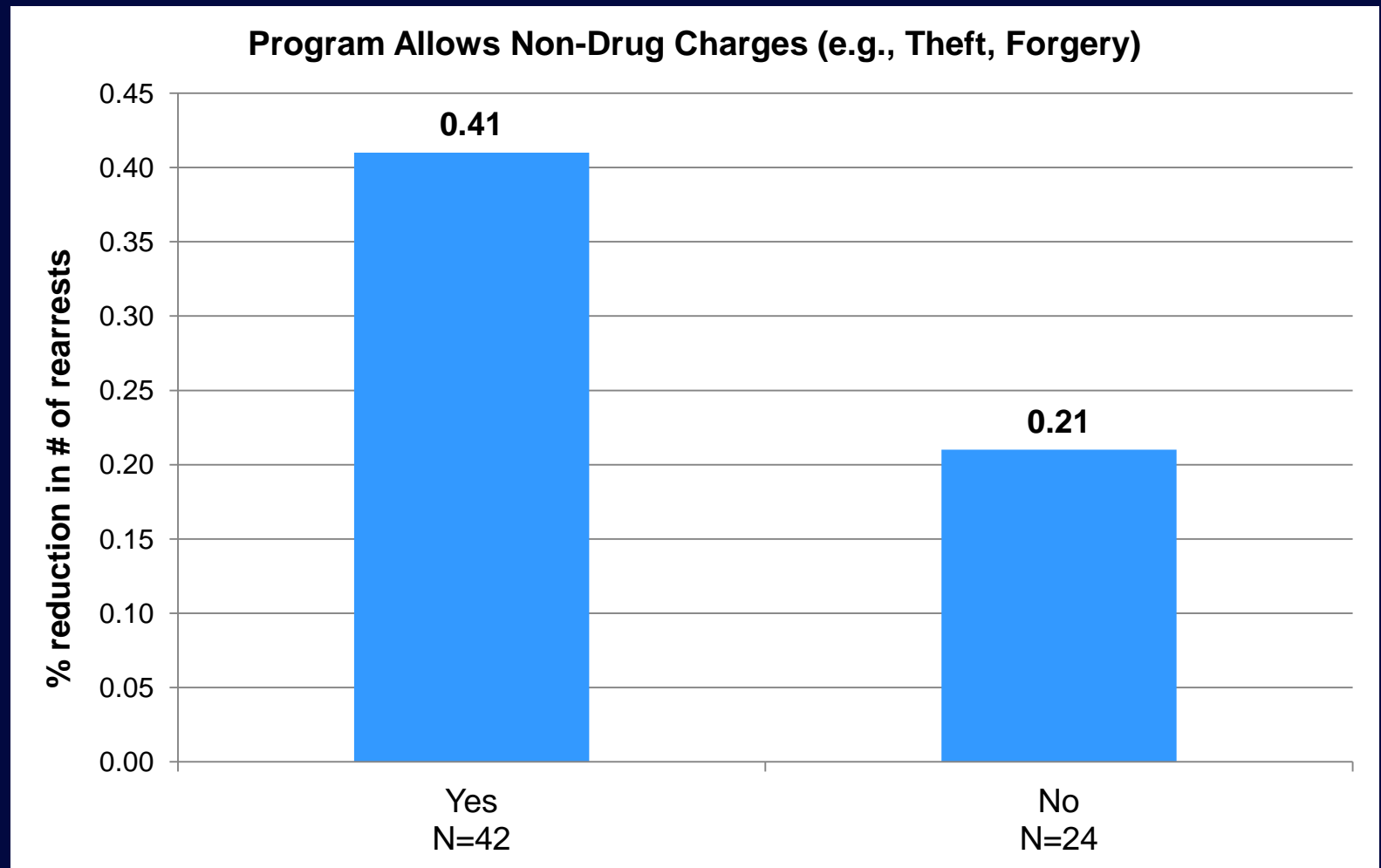


Drug Court Top 10

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 $p < .05$

BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR ADULT DRUG COURTS

Target Population. The appropriate target population is identified and admitted into the Drug Court using evidence-based assessment procedures.

A substantial body of research indicates which offenders are most in need of the full array of services embodied in Drug Courts. These are the offenders who

- (1) are dependent on illicit drugs or alcohol, and
- (2) have other negative risk factors for failure in less intensive rehabilitation programs.

BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR ADULT DRUG COURTS

Target Population. The appropriate target population is identified and admitted into the Drug Court using evidence-based assessment procedures.

Drug Courts that focus their efforts on *high risk / high need* offenders

- 1) Reduce crime approximately twice as much as those serving less serious offenders (Lowenkamp et al., 2005; Fielding et al., 2002),
- 2) Return approximately fifty percent greater cost-benefits to their communities (Bhati et al., 2008).

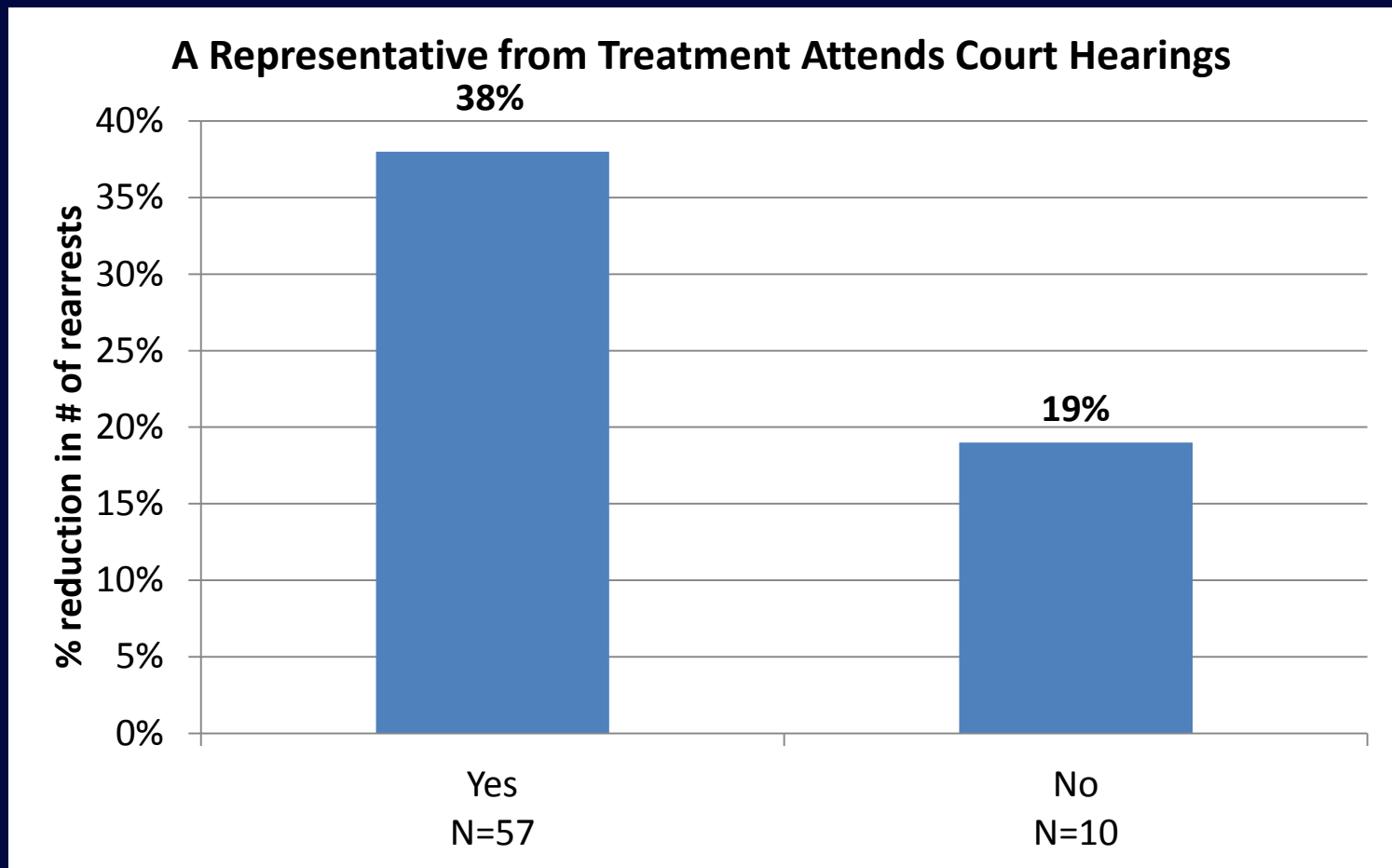


Drug Court Top 10

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 $p < .10$

BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR ADULT DRUG COURTS

A multidisciplinary team is in place and coordinates drug court processes.

Successful collaboration involves supporting a “culture of sharing,” openness to disparate disciplinary perspectives, and enthusiasm for learning about others’ expertise, and cultivating intellectual and personal relationships as well as “the extent of collaborative experience that team members have had with each other in the past.” (Stokol, 2008)

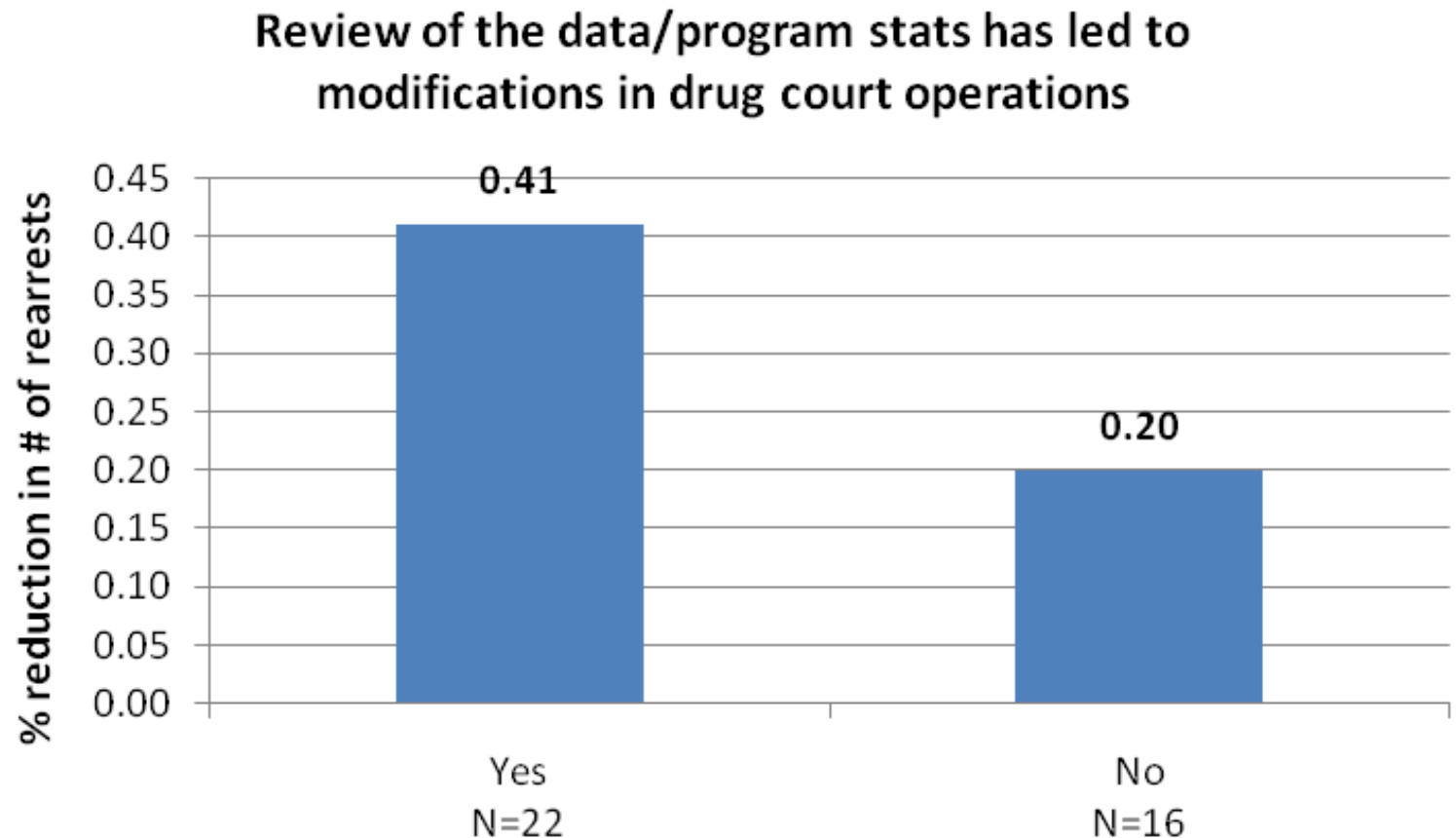


Drug Court Top 10

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 $p < .05$

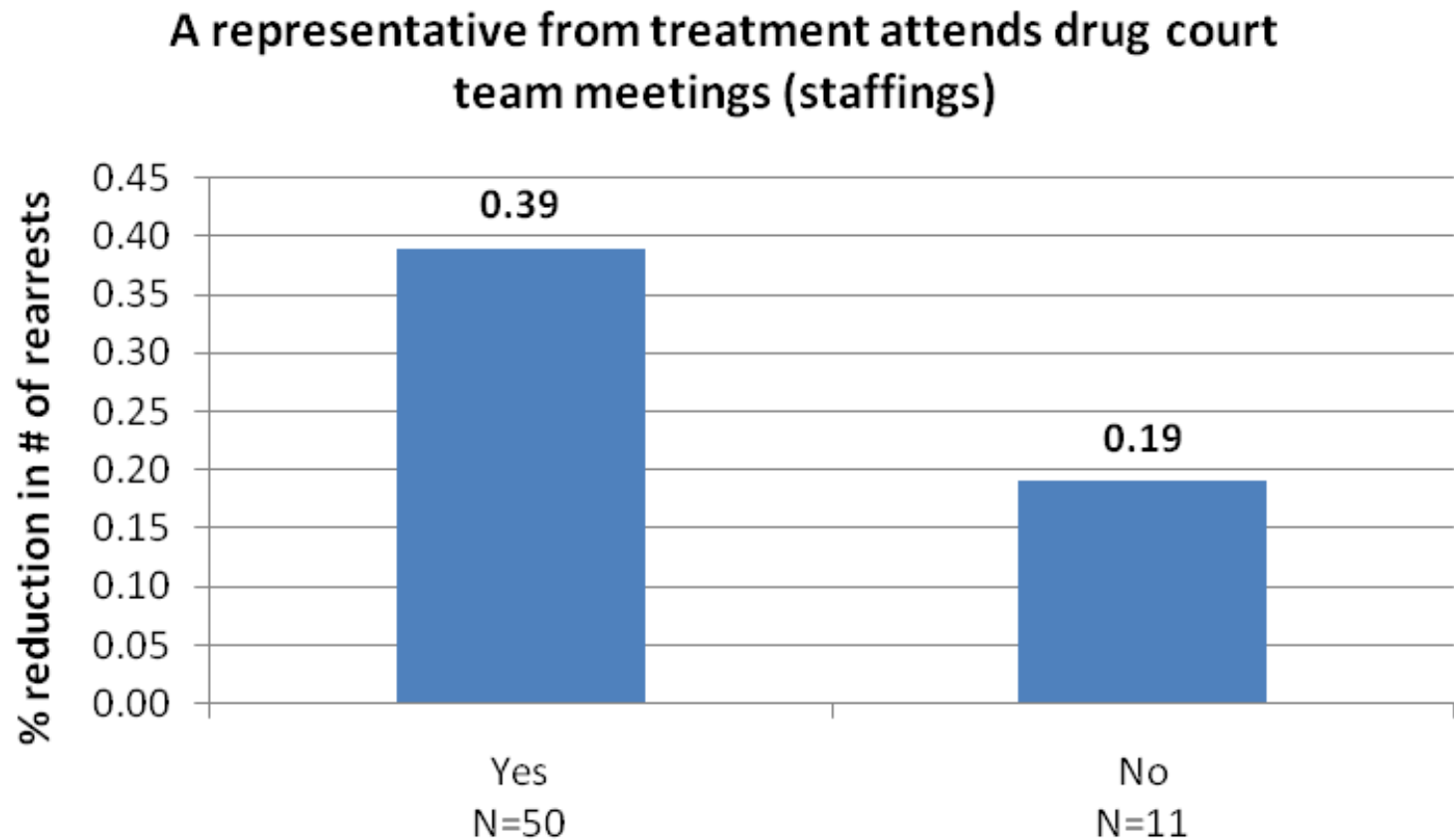


Drug Court Top 10

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 $p < .10$

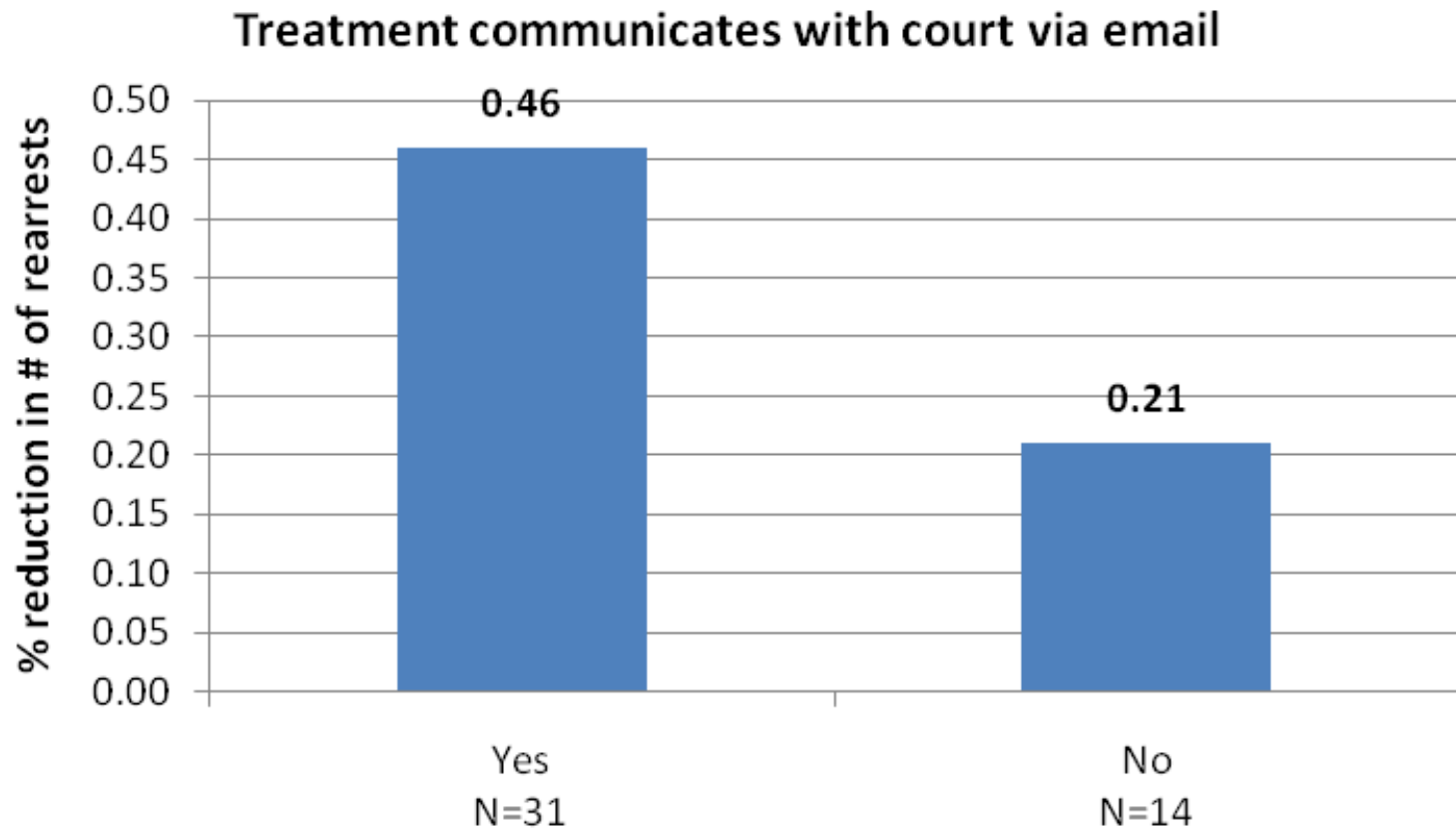


Drug Court Top 10

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 $p < .10$

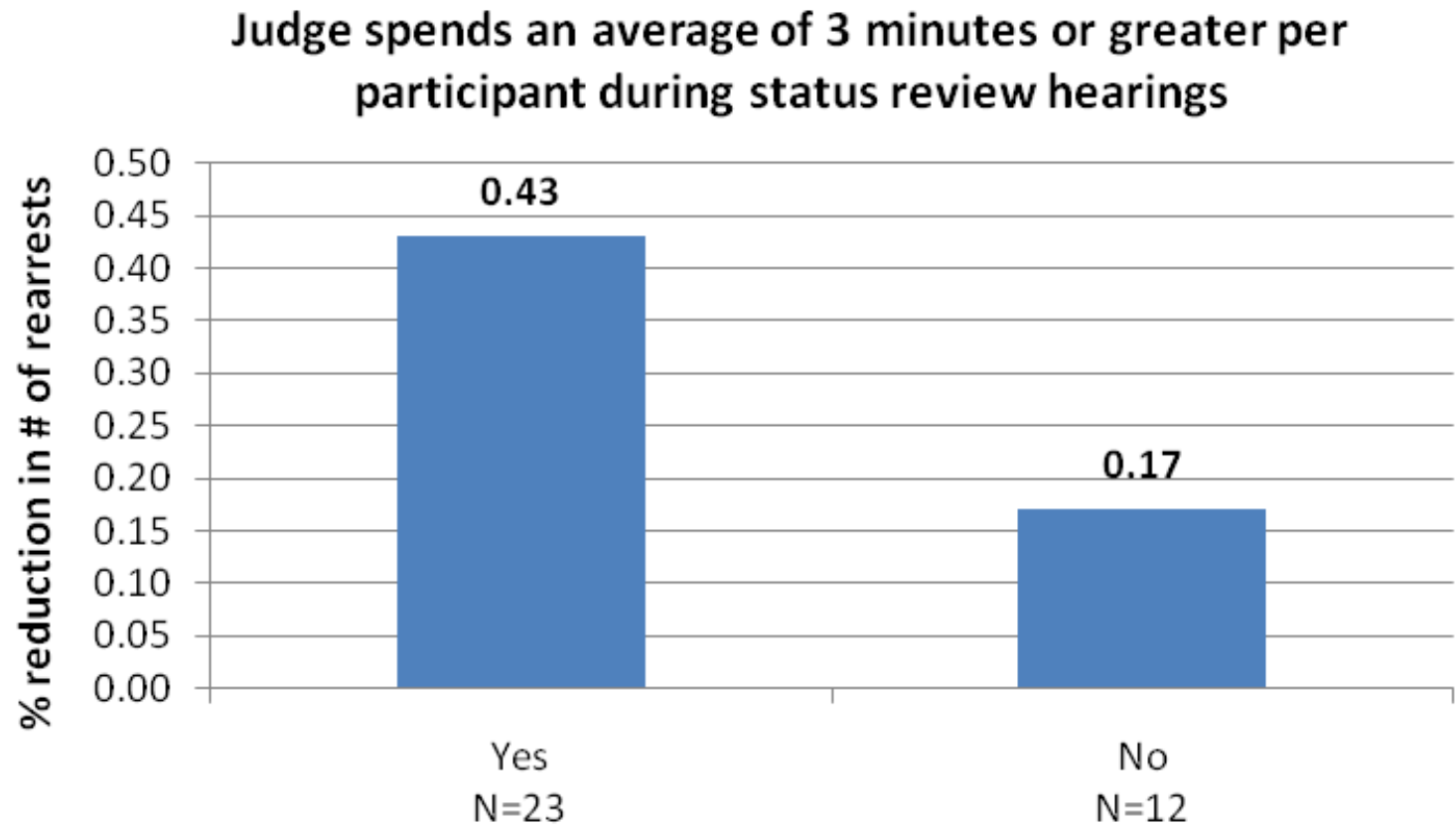


Drug Court Top 10

Recidivism

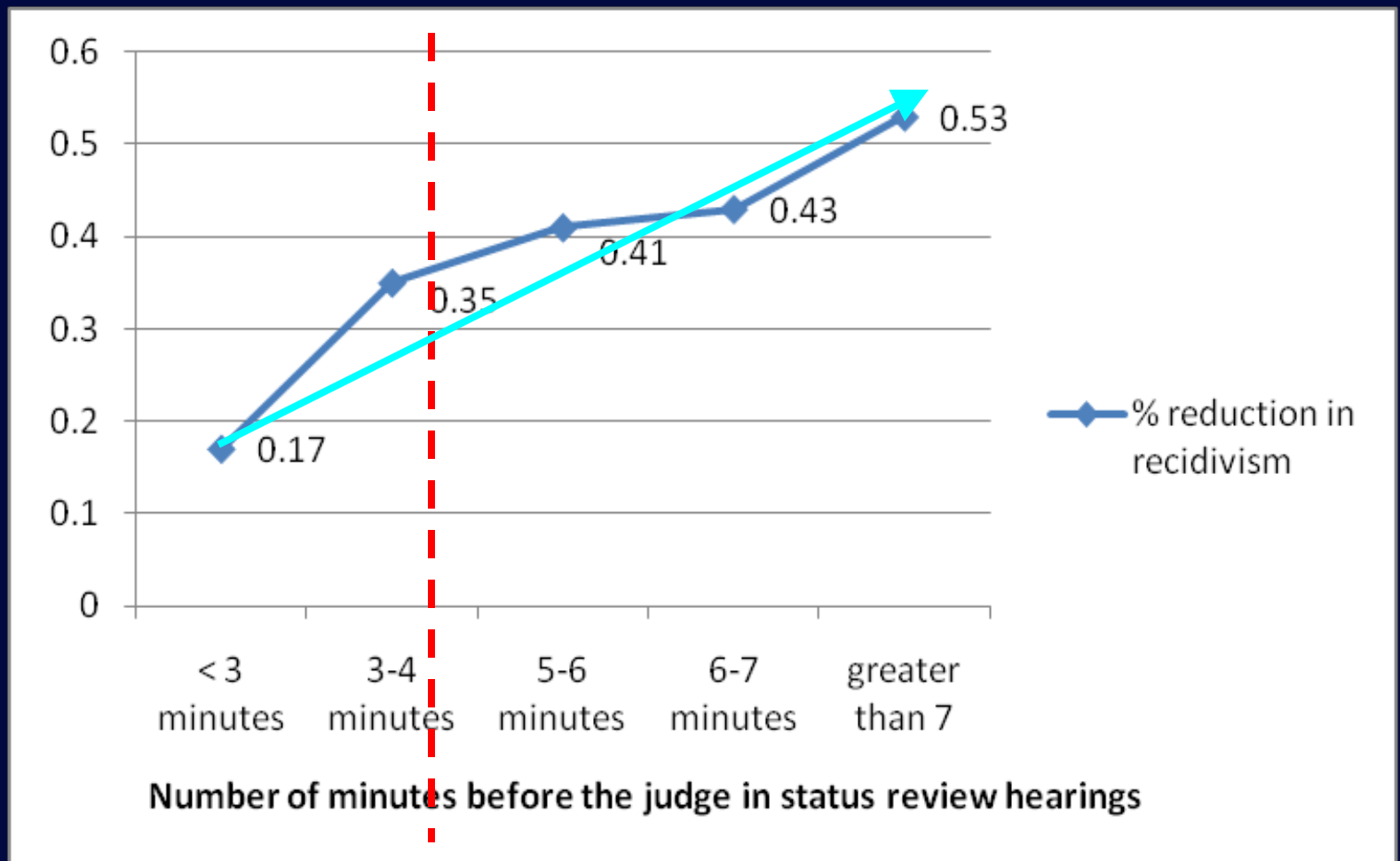
5. *A representative from treatment attends drug court team meetings (staffings)*
4. *Treatment communicates with court via email*
3. *Judge spends an average of 3 minutes or greater per participant during status review hearings*

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 $p < .05$

BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR ADULT DRUG COURTS

Roles and Responsibilities of the Judge

As the leader of the Drug Court team, the judge remains abreast of the latest research on best practices and evidence-based practices in Drug Courts, maintains a regular presence at all substantive proceedings for the program, and exercises independent judicial discretion after giving due consideration to the expertise and input of other team members.

BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR ADULT DRUG COURTS

Roles and Responsibilities of the Judge

- A. Professional Training
- B. Length of term
- C. Participation in staffings
- D. Frequency of status hearings
- E. Independent decision making/reliance on expertise
- F. Procedural Fairness
- G. Length of interaction in court

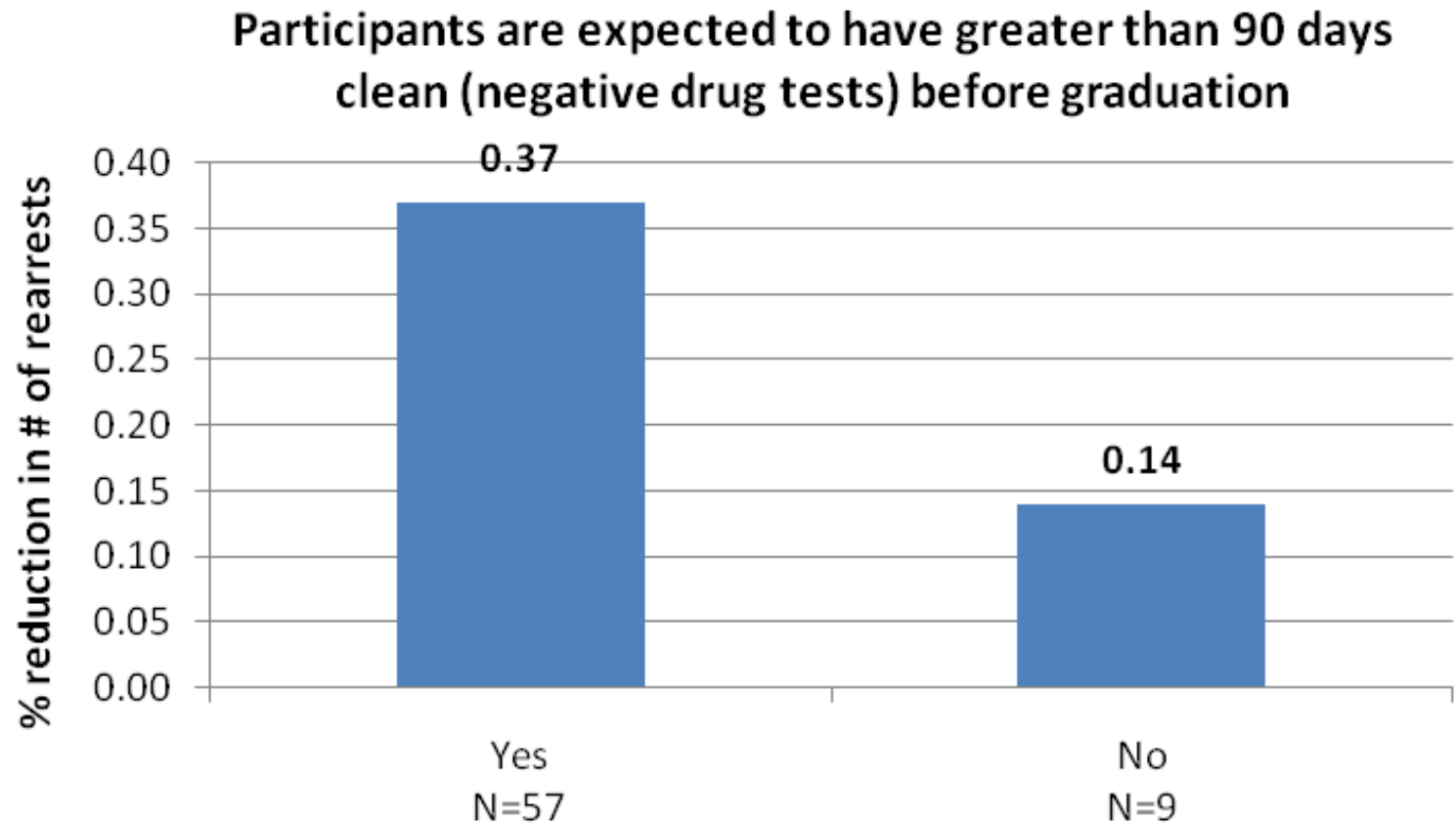


Drug Court Top 10

Recidivism

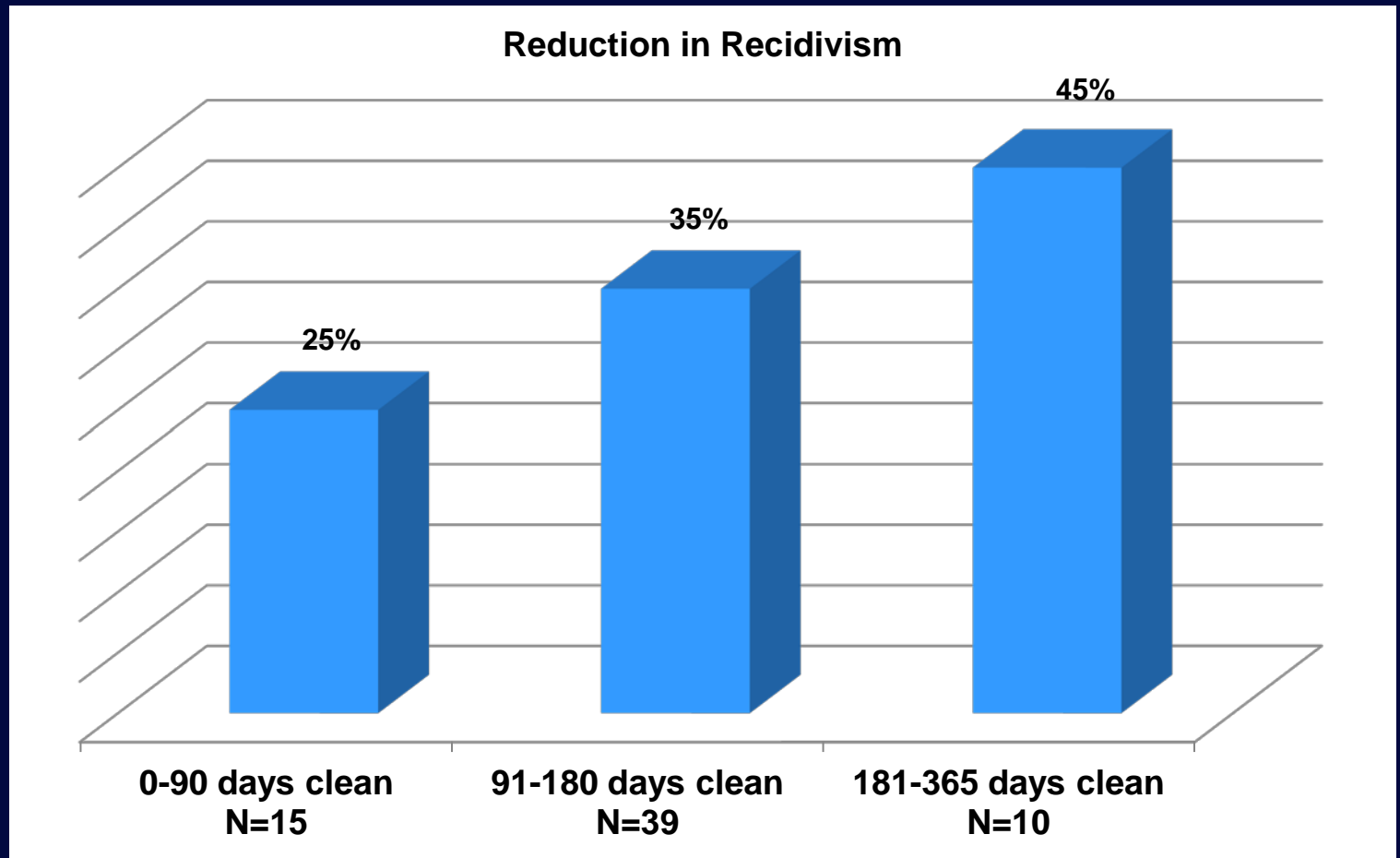
5. *A representative from treatment attends drug court team meetings (staffings)*
4. *Treatment communicates with court via email*
3. *Judge spends an average of 3 minutes or greater per participant during status review hearings*
2. *Participants are expected to have greater than 90 days clean (negative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

BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR ADULT DRUG COURTS

Graduation and Program Design

Graduation requirements must be met before a participant successfully completes the program and should be focused on conditions that support sustained recovery. The purpose of graduation requirements should be to support participants' ability to maintain the behavioral changes they have accomplished through participation in the program.

BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR ADULT DRUG COURTS

Graduation and Program Design

- A. Program length (min 12 months)
- B. Length of time clean (min 90 days)
- C. Stable and pro-social environment and activities (e.g., job or school, SF housing)
- D. An aftercare plan for graduation

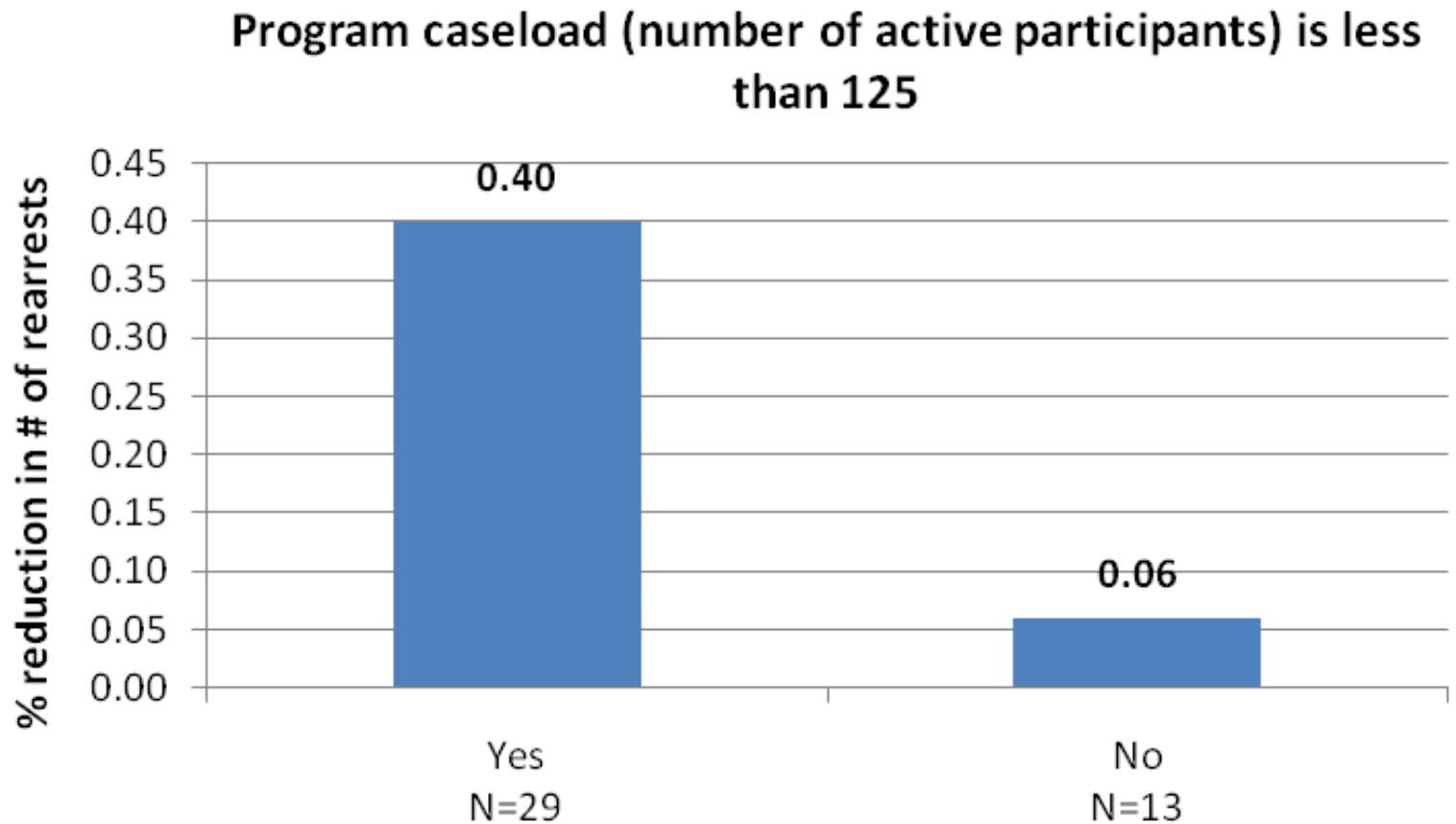


Drug Court Top 10

Recidivism

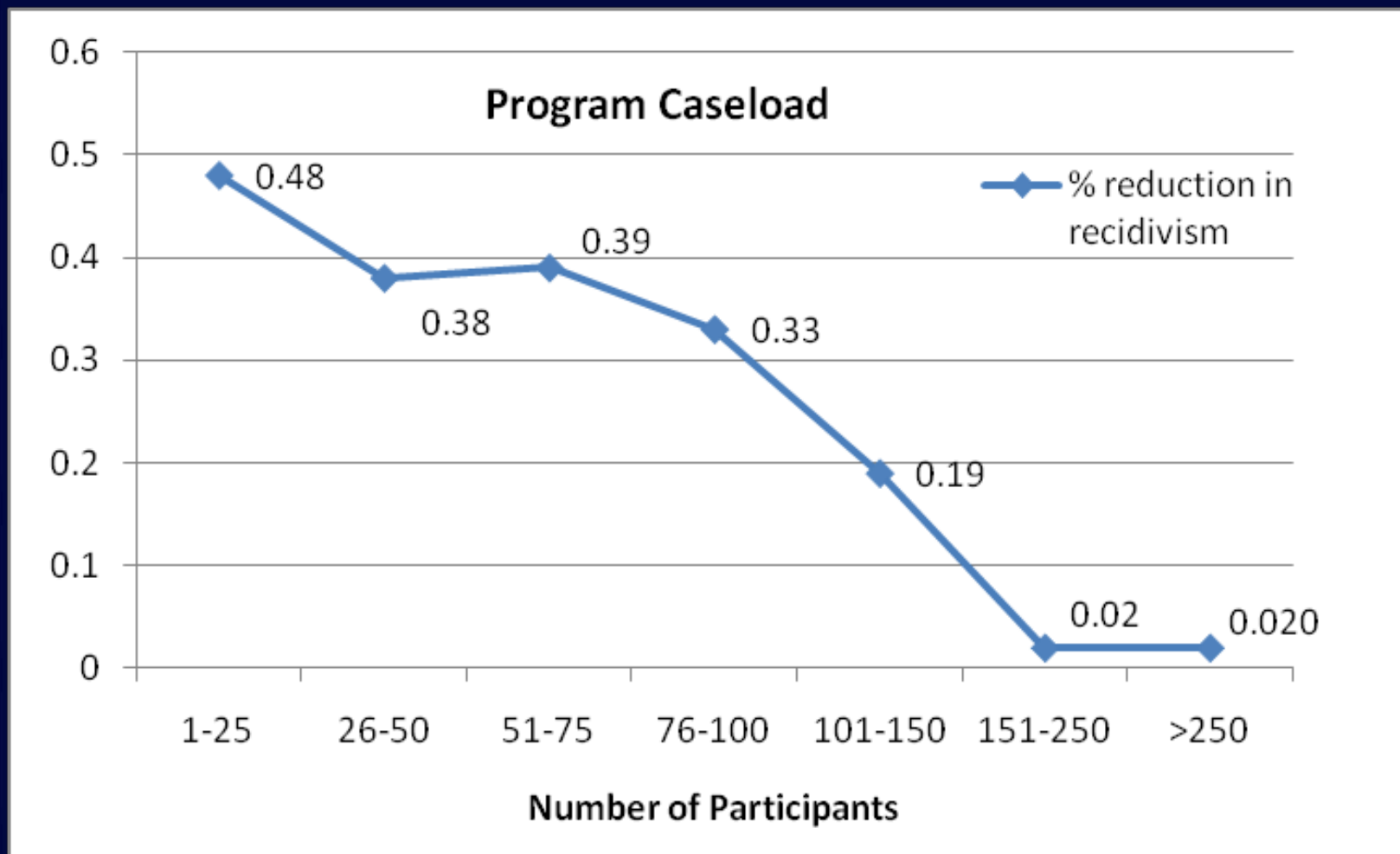
5. *A representative from treatment attends drug court team meetings (staffings)*
4. *Treatment communicates with court via email*
3. *Judge spends an average of 3 minutes or greater per participant during status review hearings*
2. *Participants are expected to have greater than 90 days clean (negative 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 ($p < .05$)**

BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR ADULT DRUG COURTS

Maintain Program Fidelity

As programs become more established (and “set in their ways”) and as they increase in size, it can be difficult to maintain the high level of supervision and other services provided to participant. As drug courts get larger, the staff needs to ensure that best practices are maintained.

Other standards address many of the practices important for maintaining program fidelity.

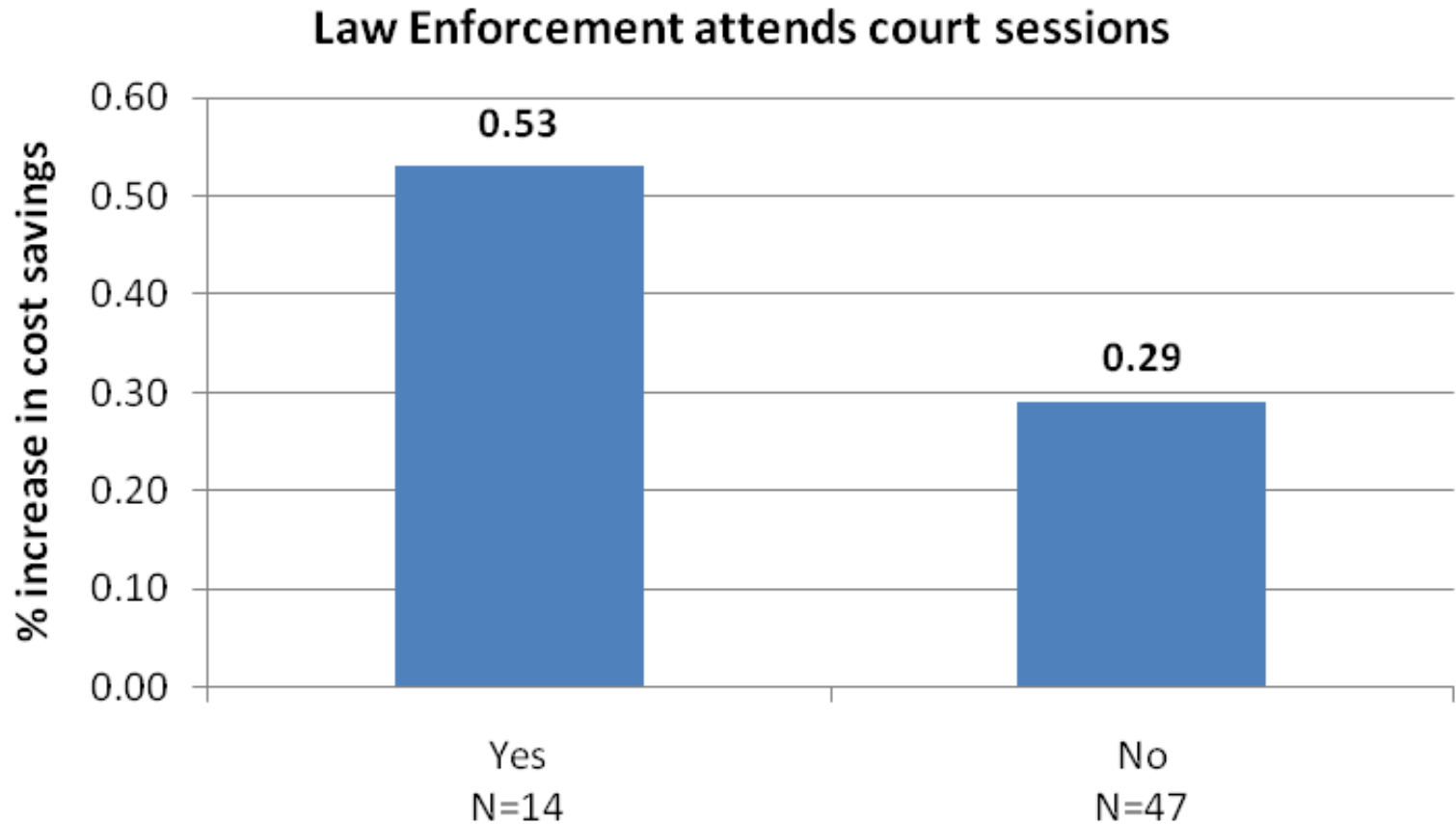


Drug Court Top 10

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 $p < .05$

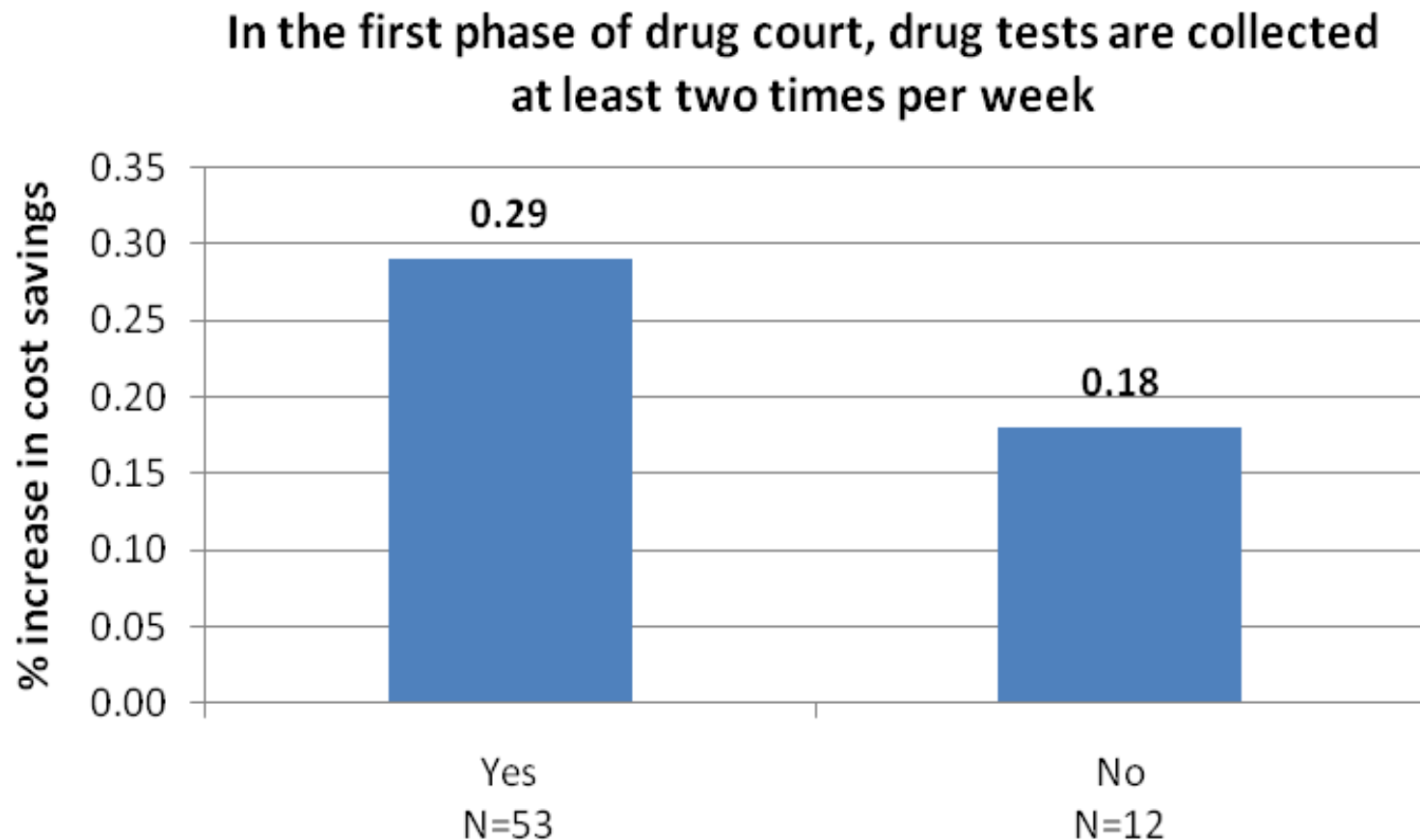


Drug Court Top 10

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)

BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR ADULT DRUG COURTS

Drug Testing

Abstinence is monitored by frequent alcohol and other drug testing

- a) Defining court expectations and compliance
- b) Specimen selection
- c) Random testing
- d) Frequency of testing
- e) Drugs to be tested
- f) Sample tampering detection
- g) Result interpretation

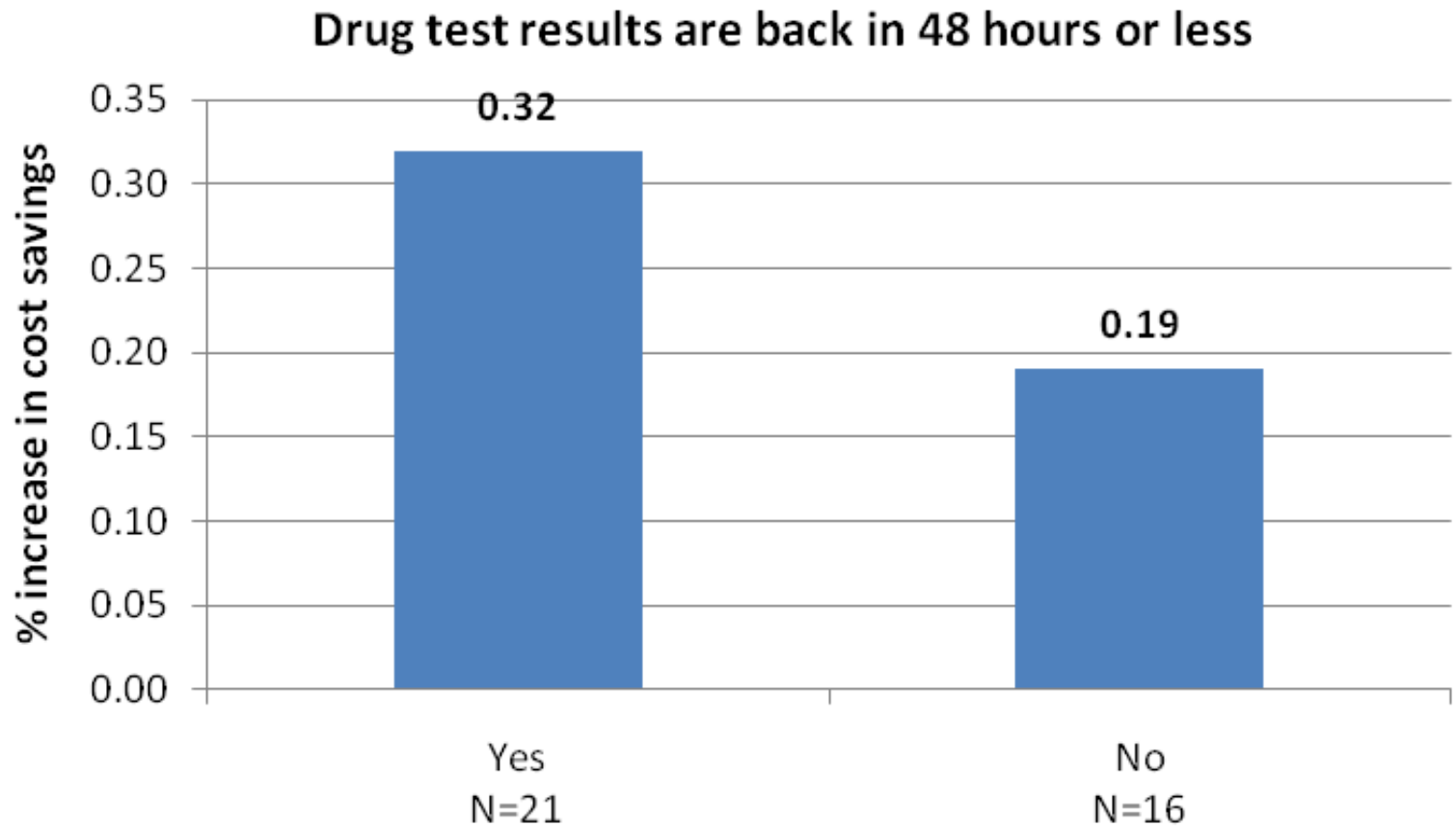


Drug Court Top 10

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 $p < .05$

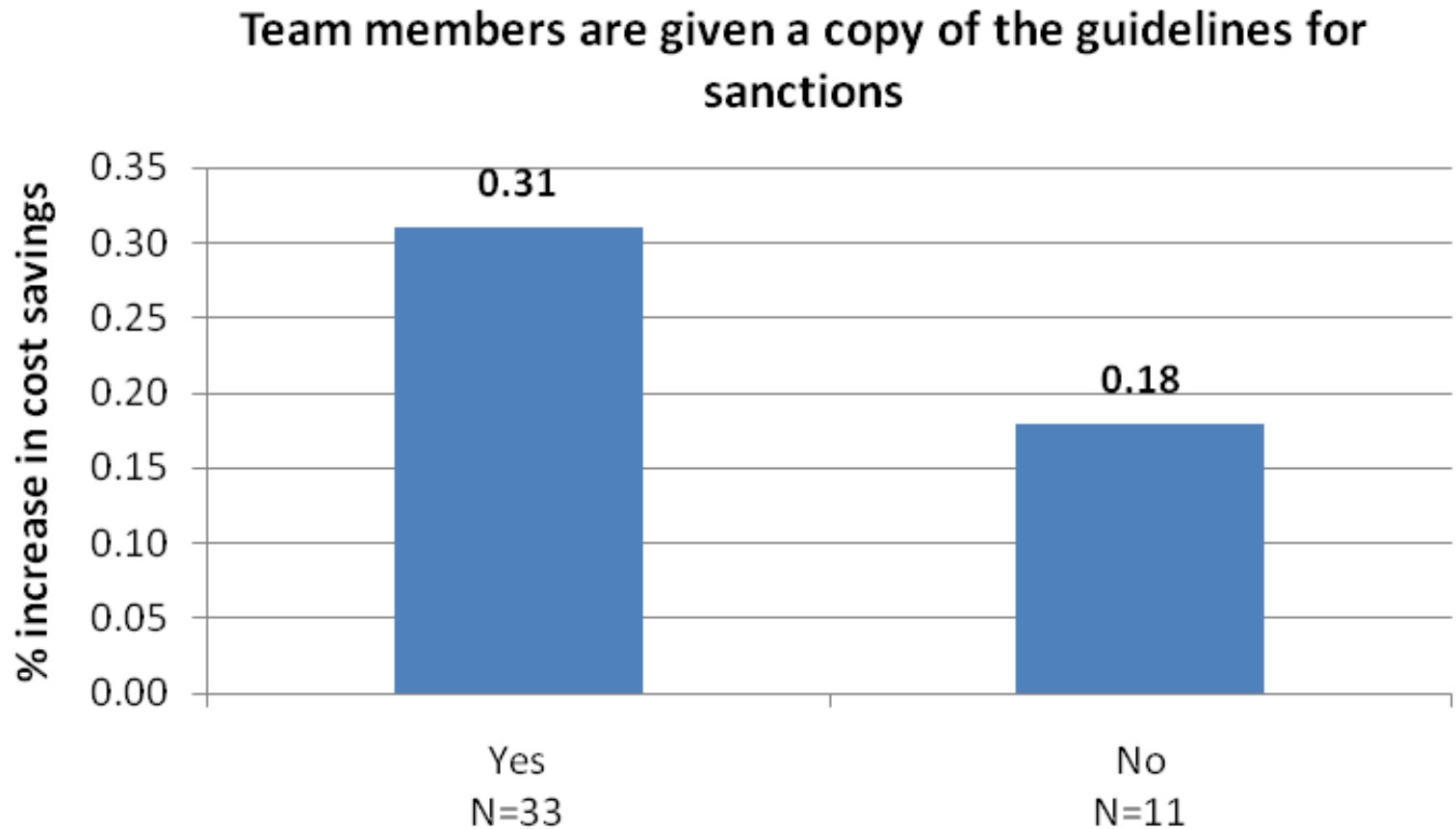


Drug Court Top 10

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)

BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR ADULT DRUG COURTS

Incentives, Sanctions, and Therapeutic Responses

Consequences for participants' behaviors are predictable, fair, consistently applied, and administered in accordance with effective principles of behavior modification.

- a) Procedural Fairness
- b) Consistency
- c) Dignity and respect
- d) Therapeutic responses
- e) Jail sanctions

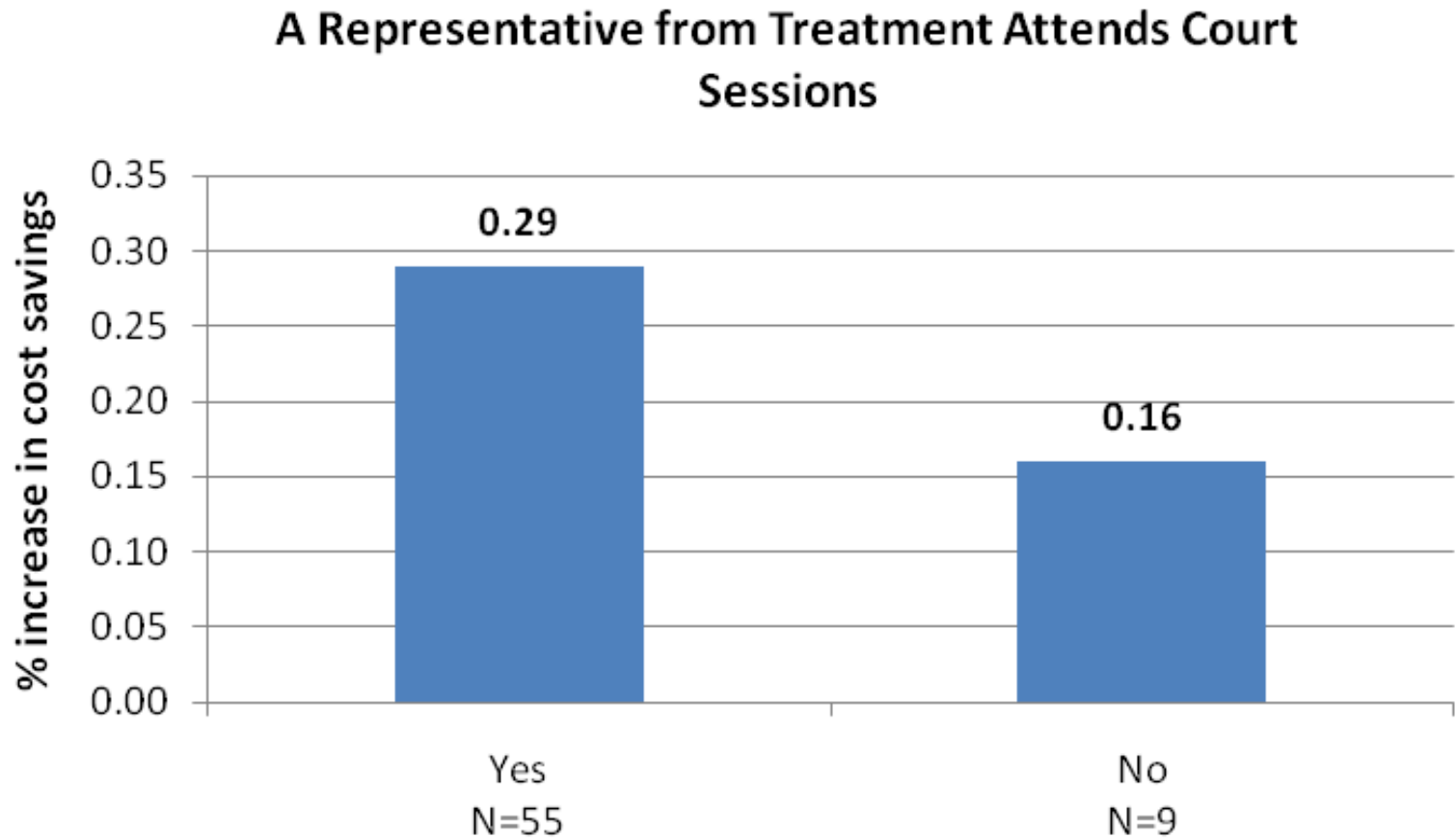


Drug Court Top 10

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 $p < .10$

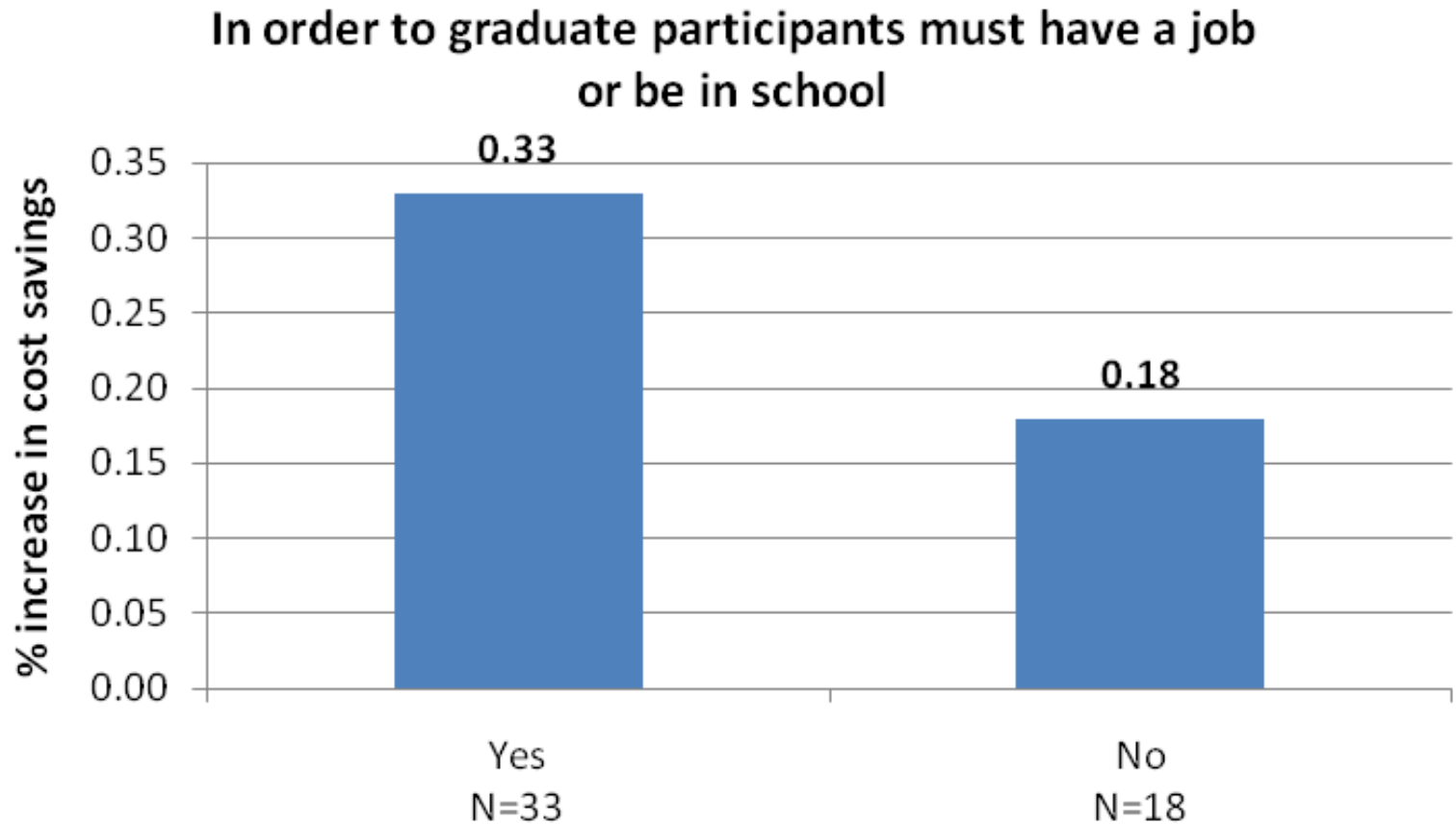


Drug Court Top 10

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 $p < .05$

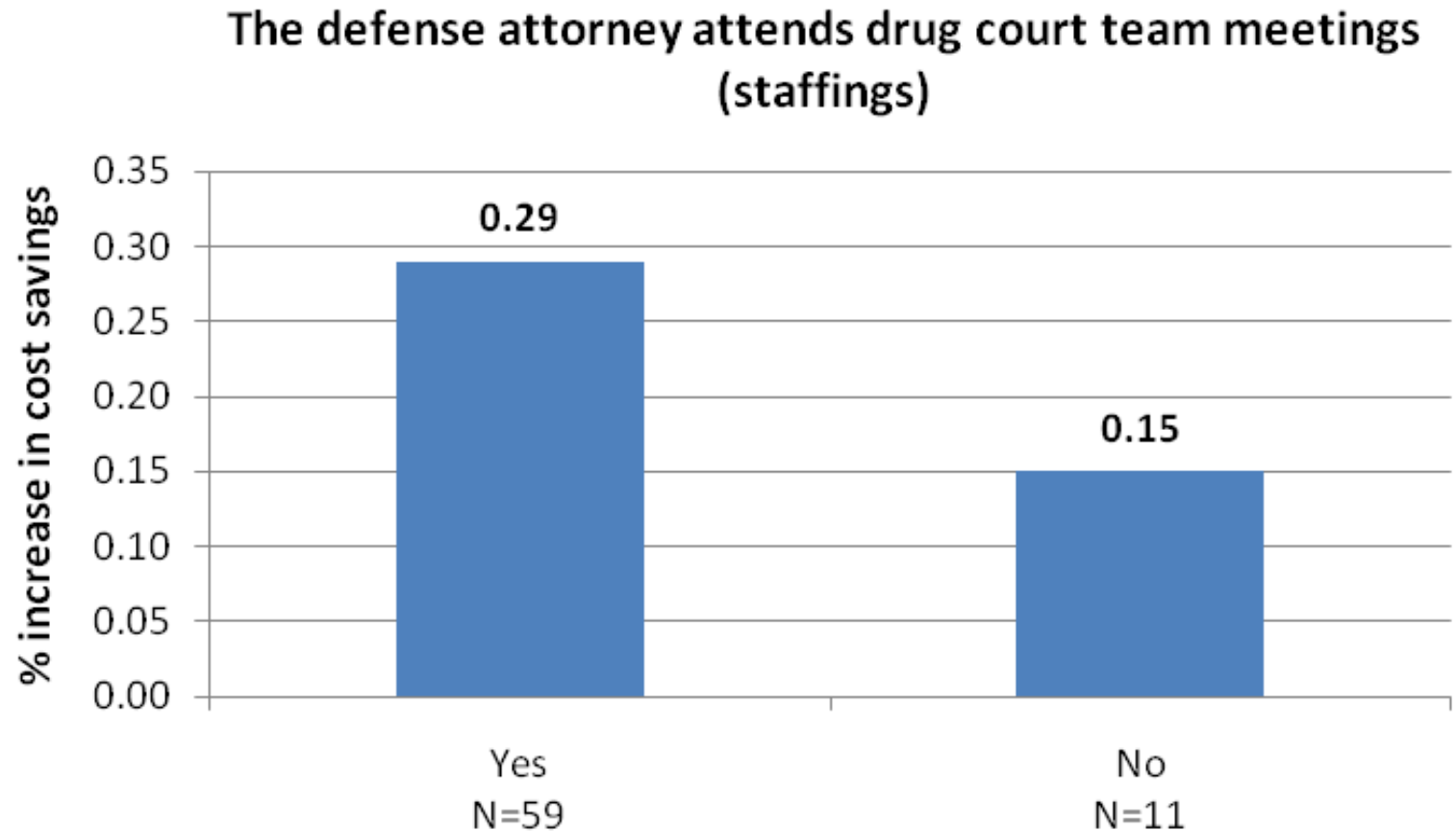


Drug Court Top 10

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 $p < .05$

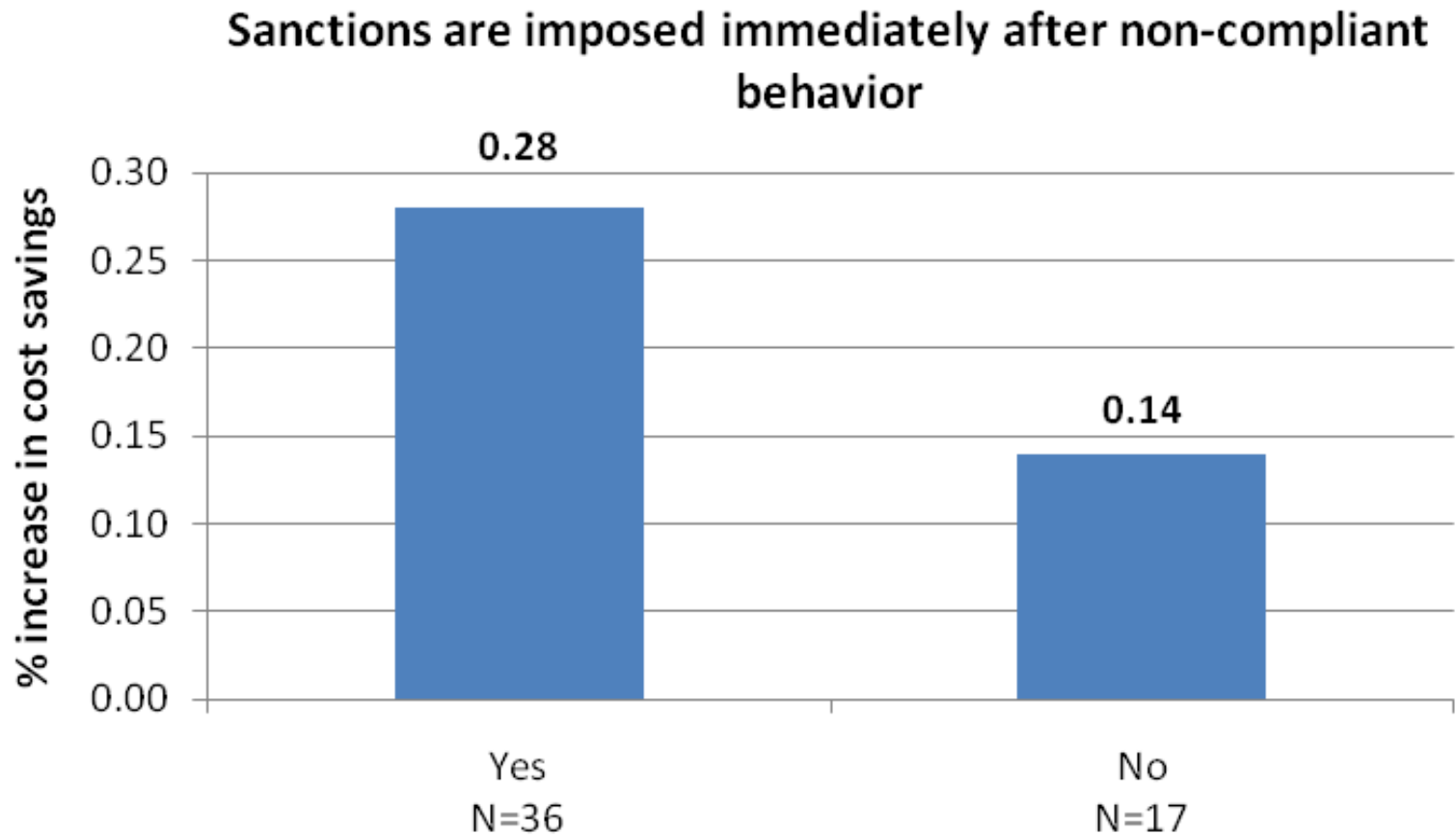


Drug Court Top 10

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 $p < .05$

BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR ADULT DRUG COURTS

Incentives, Sanctions, and Therapeutic Responses

Consequences for participants' behaviors are predictable, fair, consistently applied, and administered in accordance with effective principles of behavior modification.

- a) Procedural Fairness
- b) Consistency
- c) Dignity and respect
- d) Therapeutic responses
- e) Jail sanctions
- f) **Immediacy**

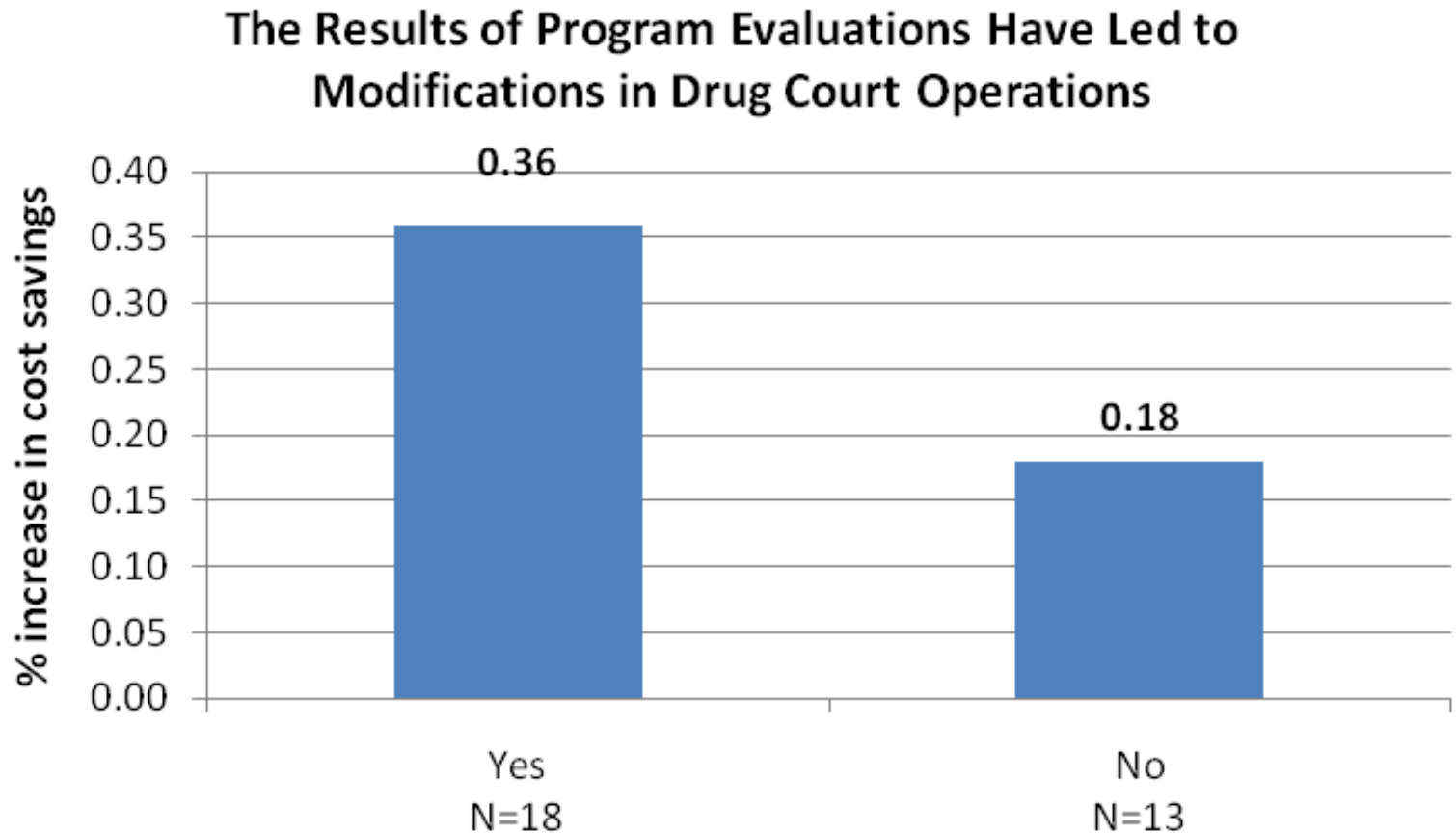


Drug Court Top 10

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 $p < .05$

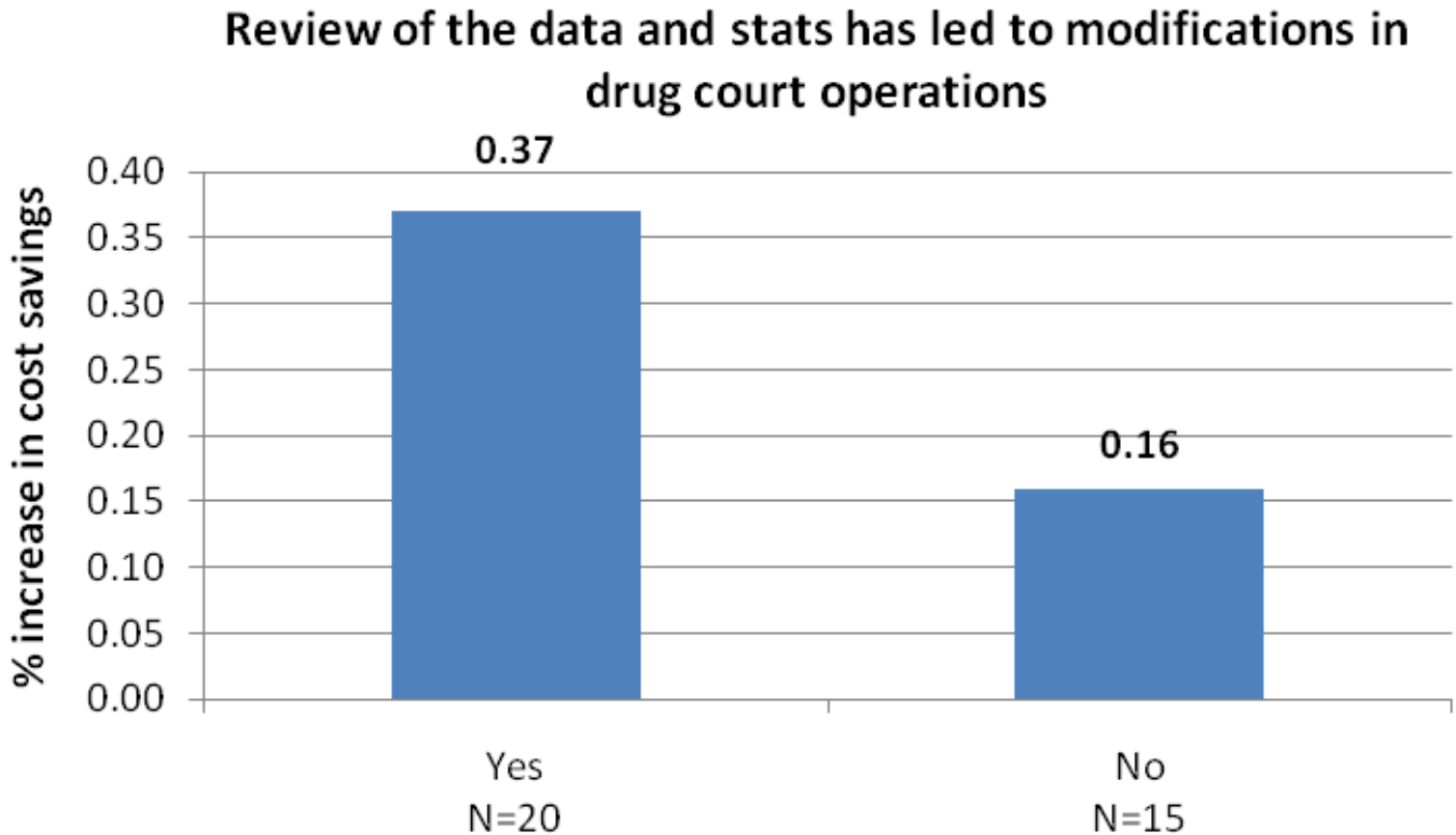


Drug Court Top 10

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*

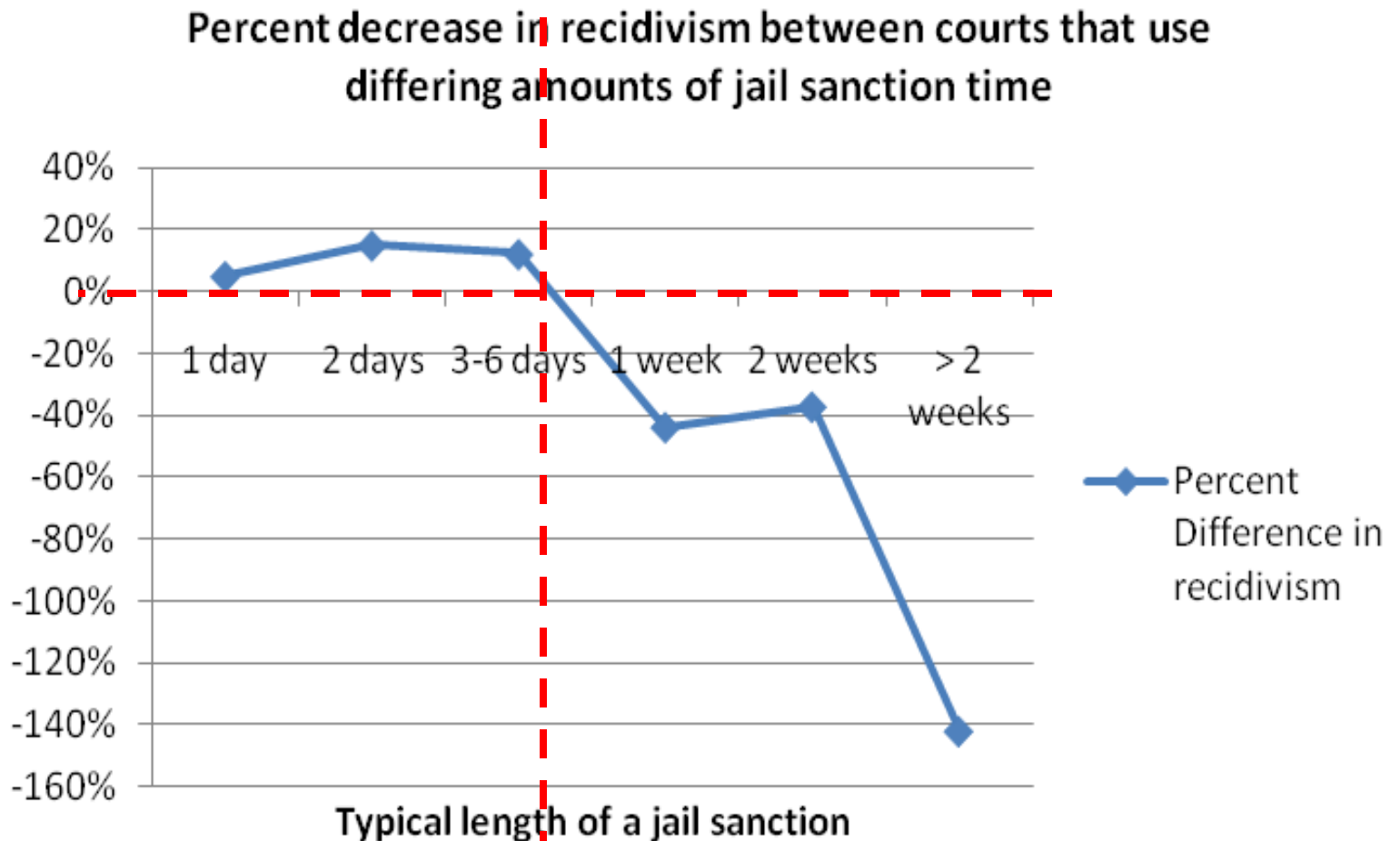
1. Drug Courts Where Review of The Data and Stats Has Led to Modifications in Drug Court Operations had 131% Higher Cost Savings



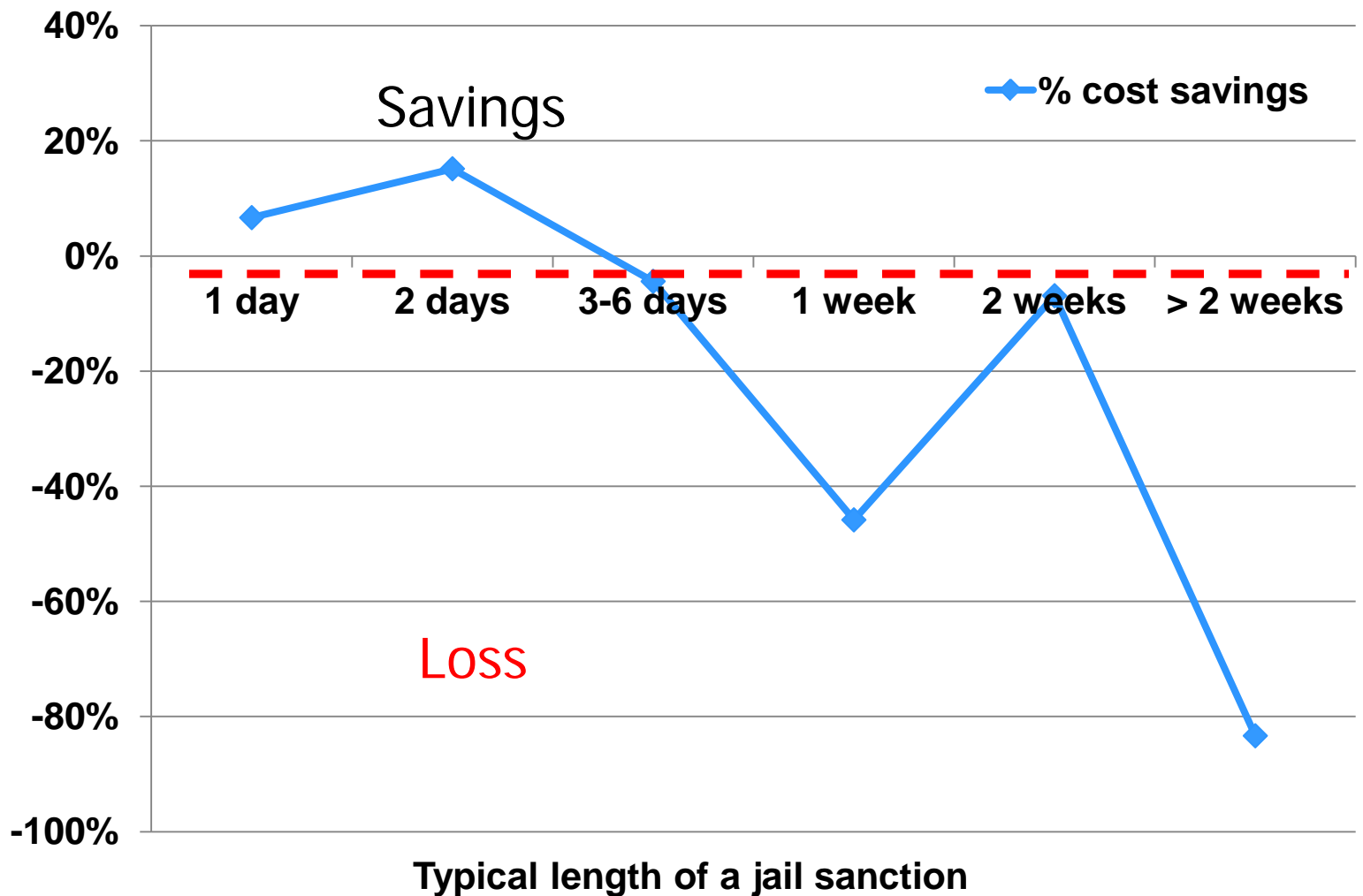
Note: Difference is significant at $p < .05$

Additional Best Practices of Particular Interest

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



More jail time is related to higher costs



BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR ADULT DRUG COURTS

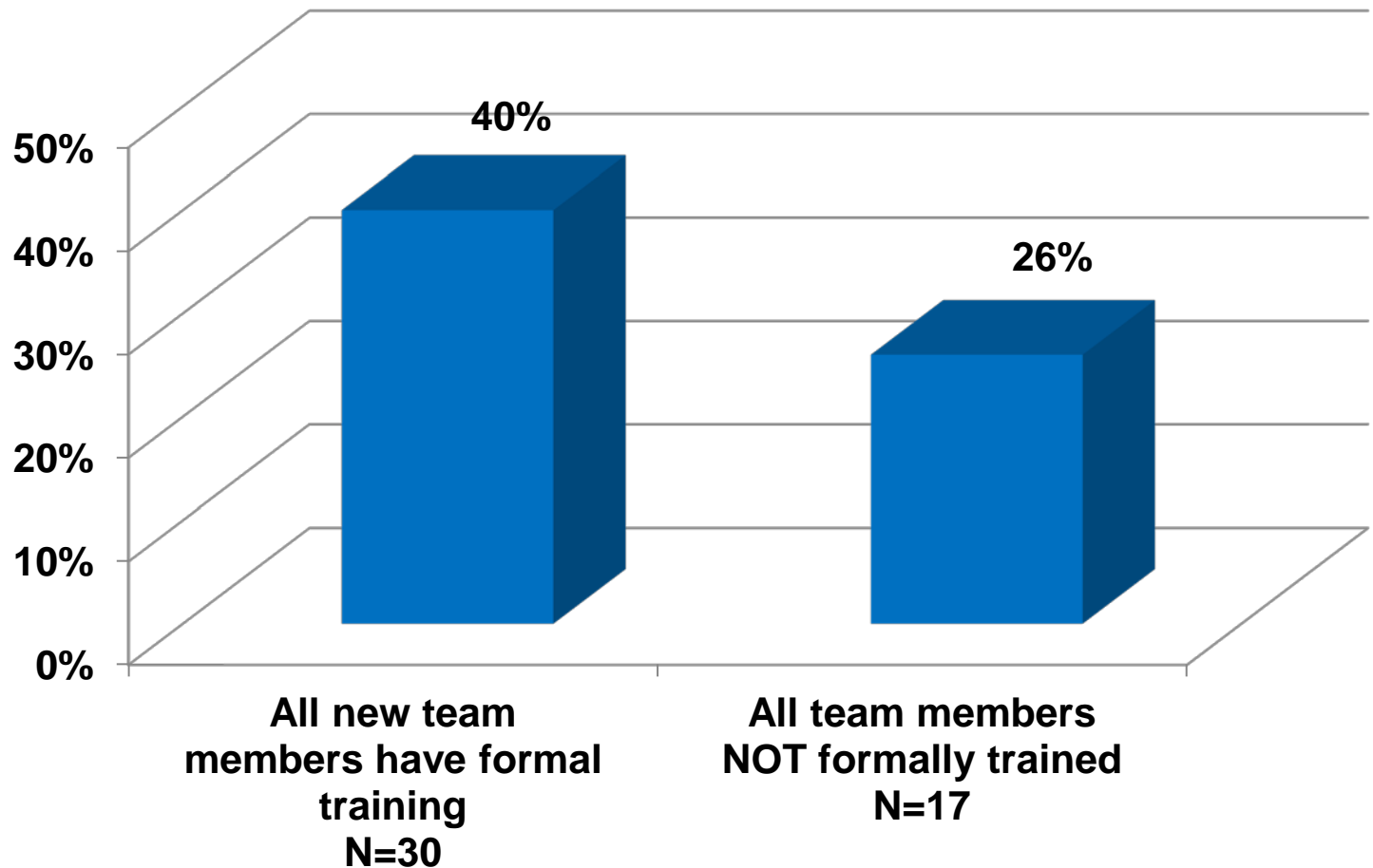
Incentives, Sanctions, and Therapeutic Responses

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- a) Procedural Fairness
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- c) Dignity and respect
- d) Therapeutic responses
- e) Jail sanctions



Drug Courts That Provided Formal Training for ALL New Team Members Had 57% Greater Reductions in Recidivism



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



Drug Courts That Provided Formal Training for ALL New Team Members Had 57% Greater Reductions in Recidivism

Other research in the criminal justice field revealed that

Without proper support, oversight and training, criminal justice practitioners are likely to “filter” the program or their assigned work to best fit their personal beliefs, needs and resources

(Lipsky, 1980; Latessa & Lowenkamp, 2006; Melde, Esbensen & Tusinski, 2006; Rhine, Mawhood & Parks, 2006; Crea, Usher & Wildfire, 2009; Murphy & Lutze, 2009)



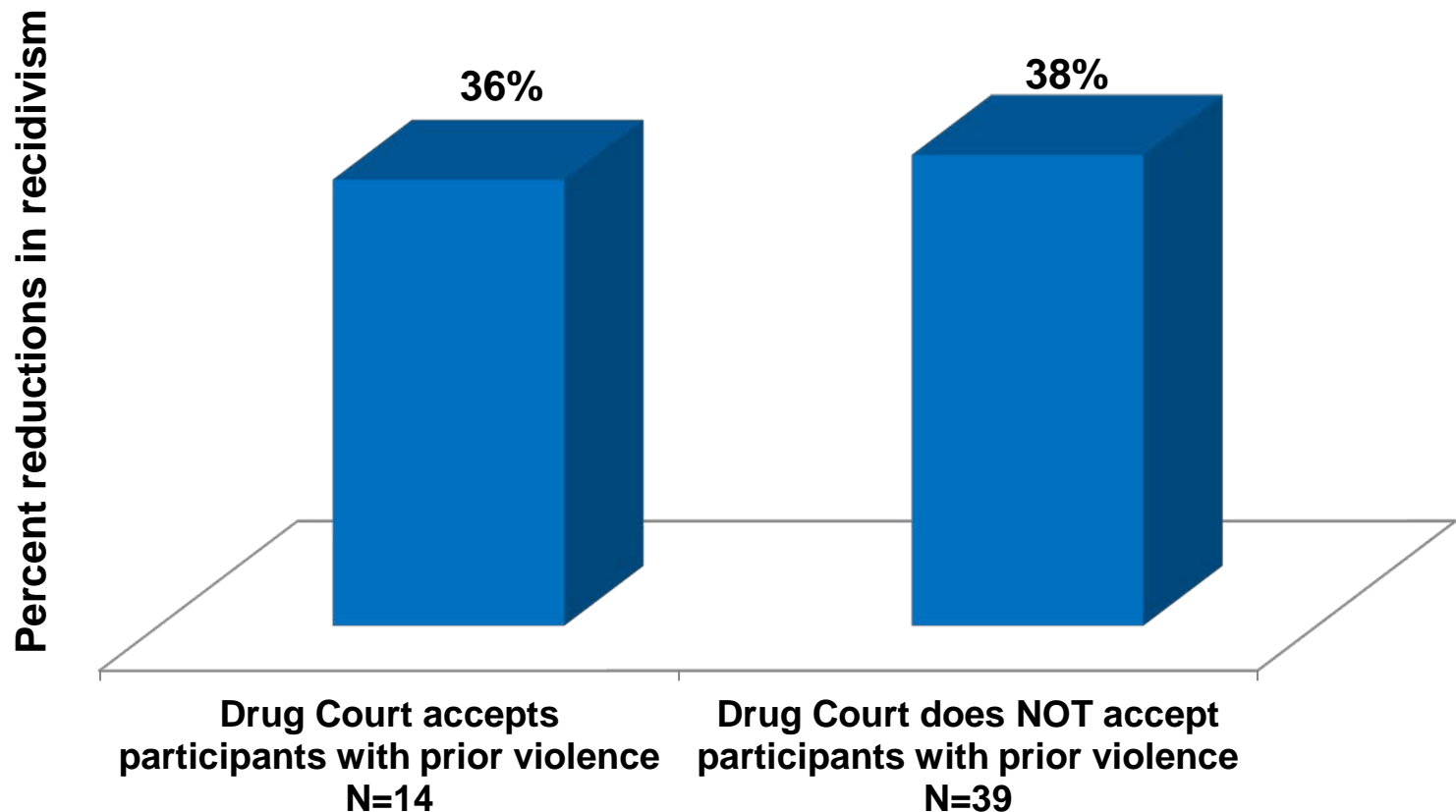
Drug Courts That Provided Formal Training for ALL New Team Members Had 57% Greater Reductions in Recidivism

Other research in the criminal justice field revealed that

Criminal justice professionals with a natural orientation towards on-going education are more likely to adopt effective program practices

(Barnoski, 2004; Andrews and Bonta, 2010)

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



Note: Difference is NOT significant

BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR ADULT DRUG COURTS

Target Population. The appropriate target population is identified and admitted into the Drug Court using evidence-based assessment procedures.

“There appears to be little empirical justification for excluding drug dealers (Marlowe et al., 2008) or offenders with violence histories from participation in Drug Court (Carey et al., 2008; Saum & Hiller, 2008; Saum et al., 2001),
assuming the offenders are dependent on illicit drugs or alcohol and otherwise eligible for a community-based disposition”

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*

Conclusion:



Before DC



After DC



Questions?



Contact Information

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Acknowledgements

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