

Best Practices in Drug Courts

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Meta-Analyses

Citation	Institution(s)	No. Drug Courts	Crime Reduced
Mitchell et al. (2012)	U.S.F., G.M.U. & Penn. State	92	12%
Rempel et al. (2012)	Urban Institute, CCI & RTI	23	13%
Wilson et al. (2006)	Campbell Collaborative	55	14%
Latimer et al. (2006)	Canada Dept. of Justice	66	9%
Shaffer (2010)	University of Nevada	76	9%
Lowenkamp et al. (2005)	University of Cincinnati	22	8%
Aos et al. (2006)	Washington State Inst. for Public Policy	57	8%

Variable Effects



Let's do the math:

2,559 drug courts (as of 12/31/10)

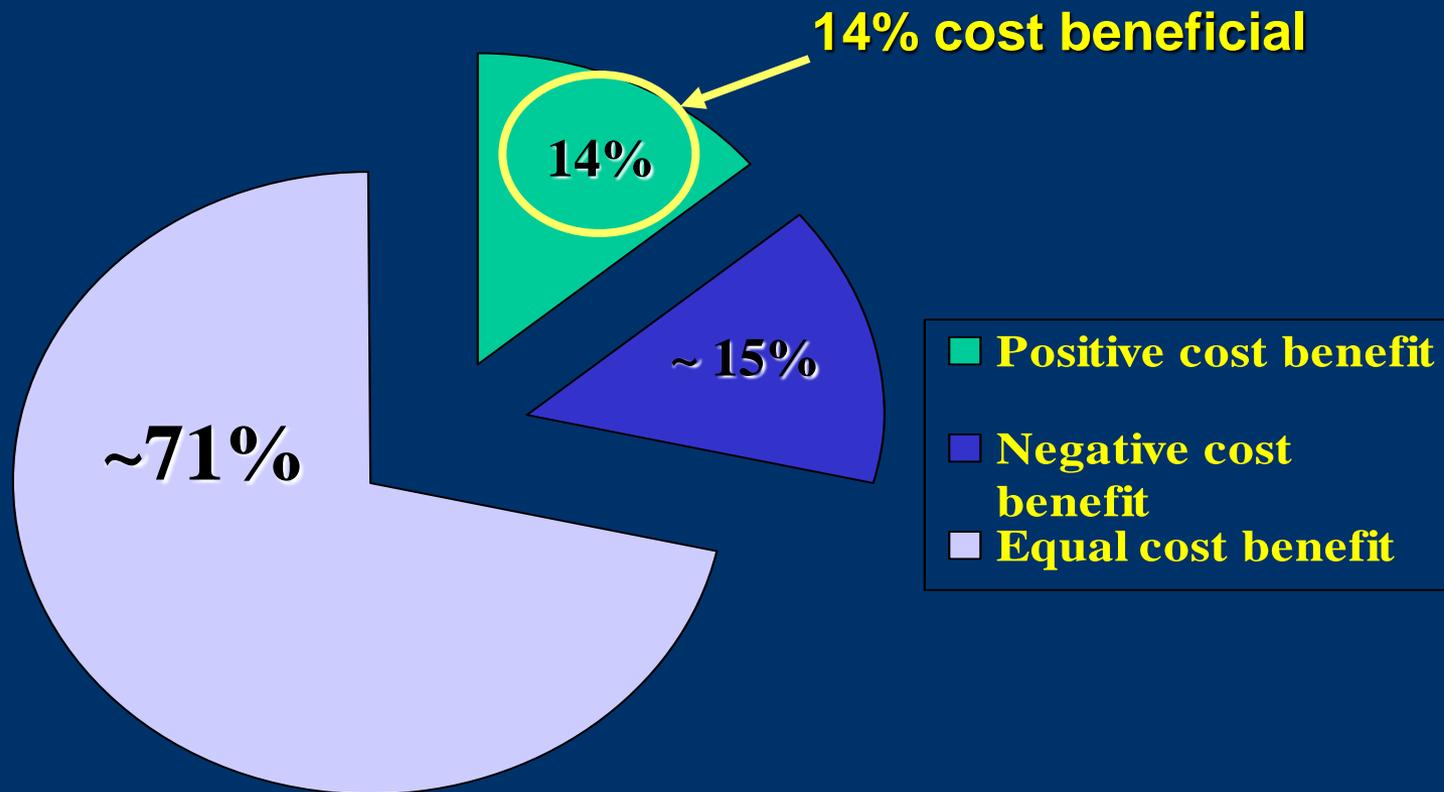
x .06

= 154 harmful drug courts

- Decrease crime
- No effect on crime
- Increase crime

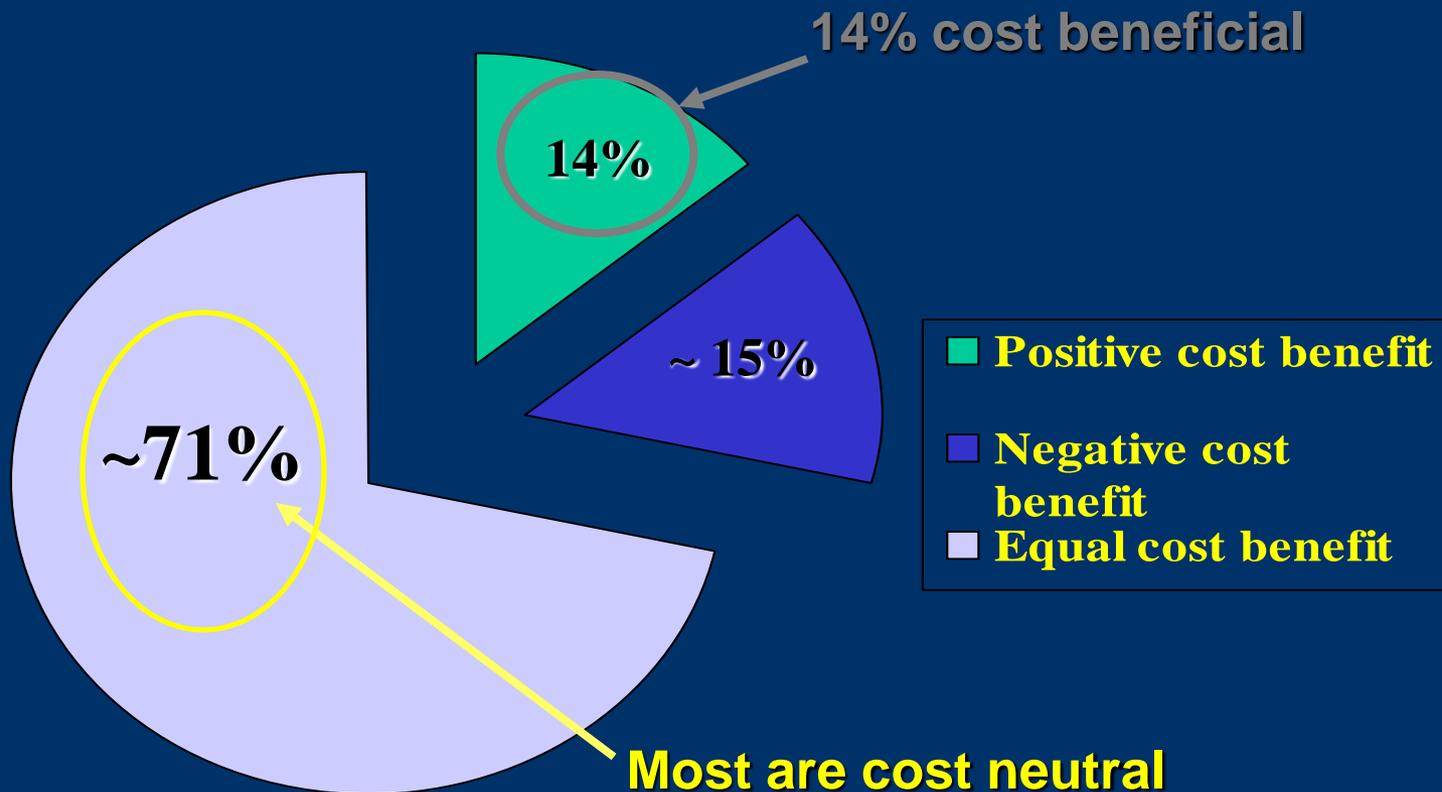
+ another 205 ineffective drug courts

Variable Cost Benefits



(Downey & Roman, 2010)

Variable Cost Benefits



(Downey & Roman, 2010)

Best Practices Research

Carey et al. (2012). What works? The 10 Key Components of Drug Courts: Research based best practices. *Drug Court Review*, 8, 6-42.

Zweig et al. (2012). Drug court policies and practices: How program implementation affects offender substance use and criminal behavior outcomes. *Drug Court Review*, 8, 43-79.

Carey et al. (2008). *Exploring the key components of drug courts: A comparative study of 18 adult drug courts on practices, outcomes and costs*. Portland, OR: NPC Research.

Carey et al. (2008). *Drug courts and state mandated drug treatment programs: Outcomes, costs and consequences*. Portland, OR: NPC Research.

Finigan et al. (2007). *The impact of a mature drug court over 10 years of operation: Recidivism and costs*. Portland, OR: NPC Research.

Shaffer (2010). Looking inside the black box of Drug Courts: A meta-analytic review. *Justice Quarterly*, 28 (3), 493-521.

Best Practices Research

Practices Presented Show Either:

- Significant reductions in recidivism
- Significant increases in cost savings
- or both

Key Component #1

*“Realization of these [rehabilitation] goals requires a **team approach**, including cooperation and collaboration of the judges, prosecutors, defense counsel, probation authorities, other corrections personnel, law enforcement, pretrial services agencies, TASC programs, evaluators, an array of local service providers, and the greater community.”*

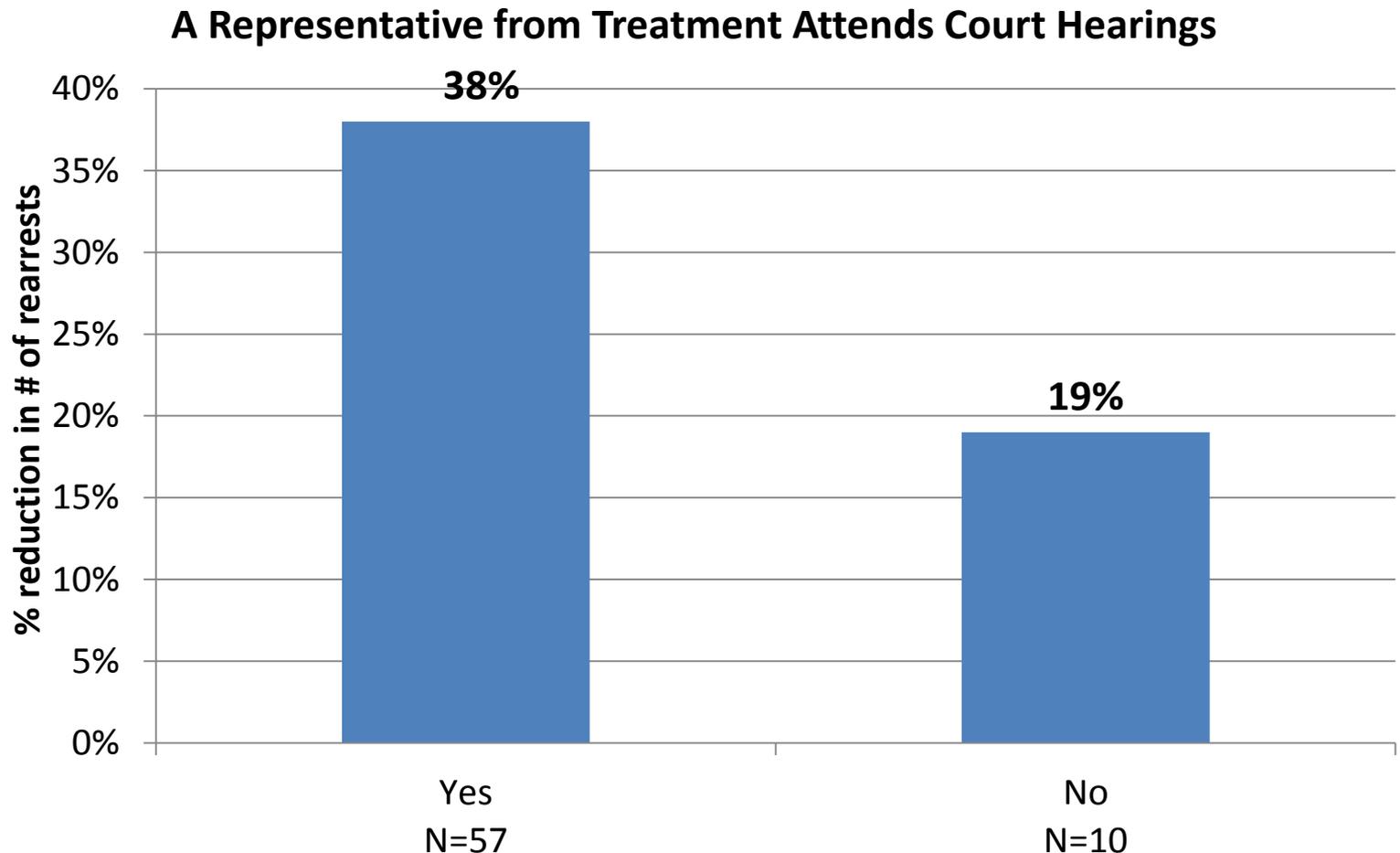
Team Involvement

- Does it matter if the treatment provider attends court sessions?



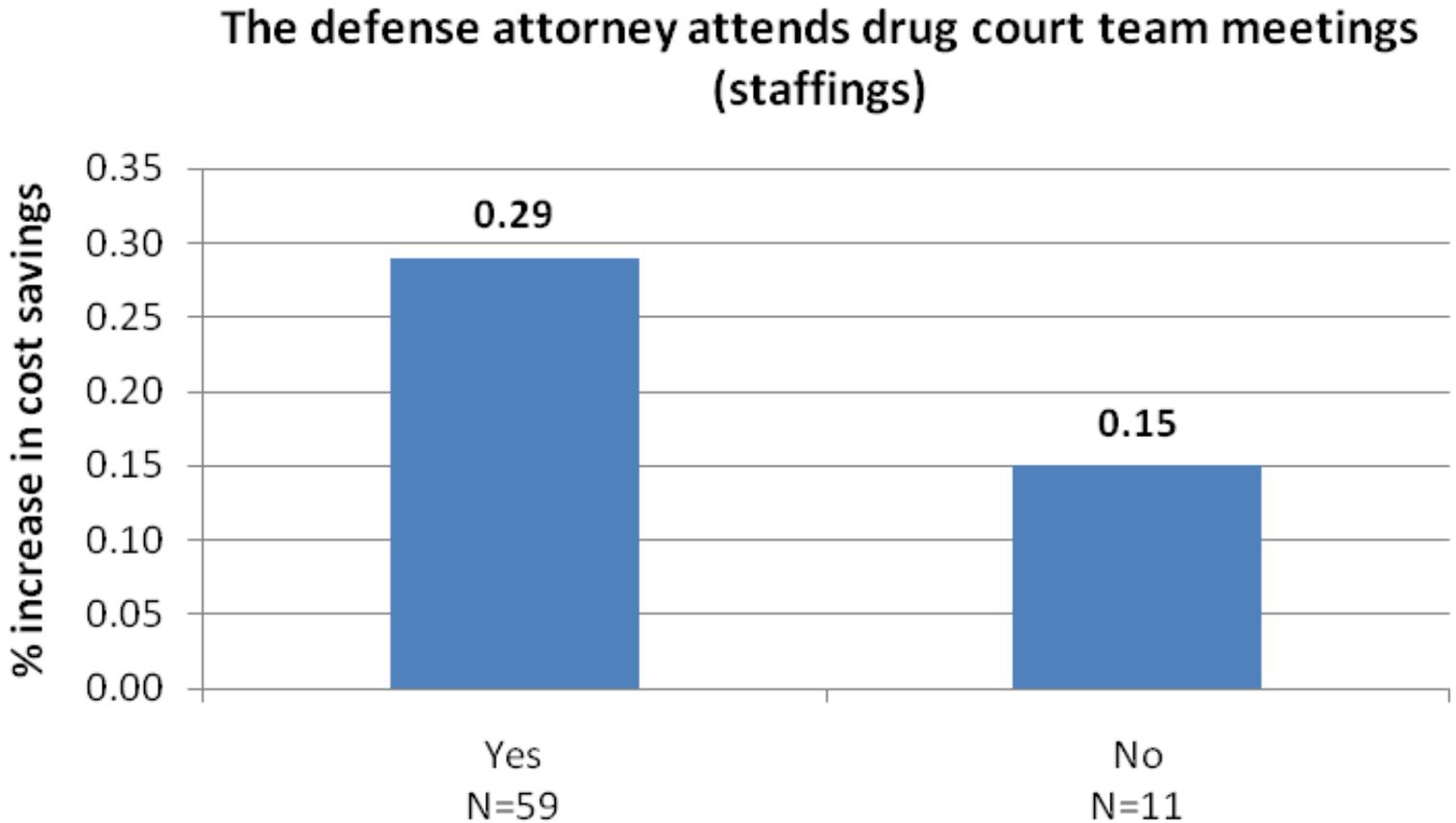
- Is it important for the attorneys to attend team meetings (“staffings”)?

Drug Courts That Required a Treatment Representative at Status Hearings had Twice the Reduction in Recidivism



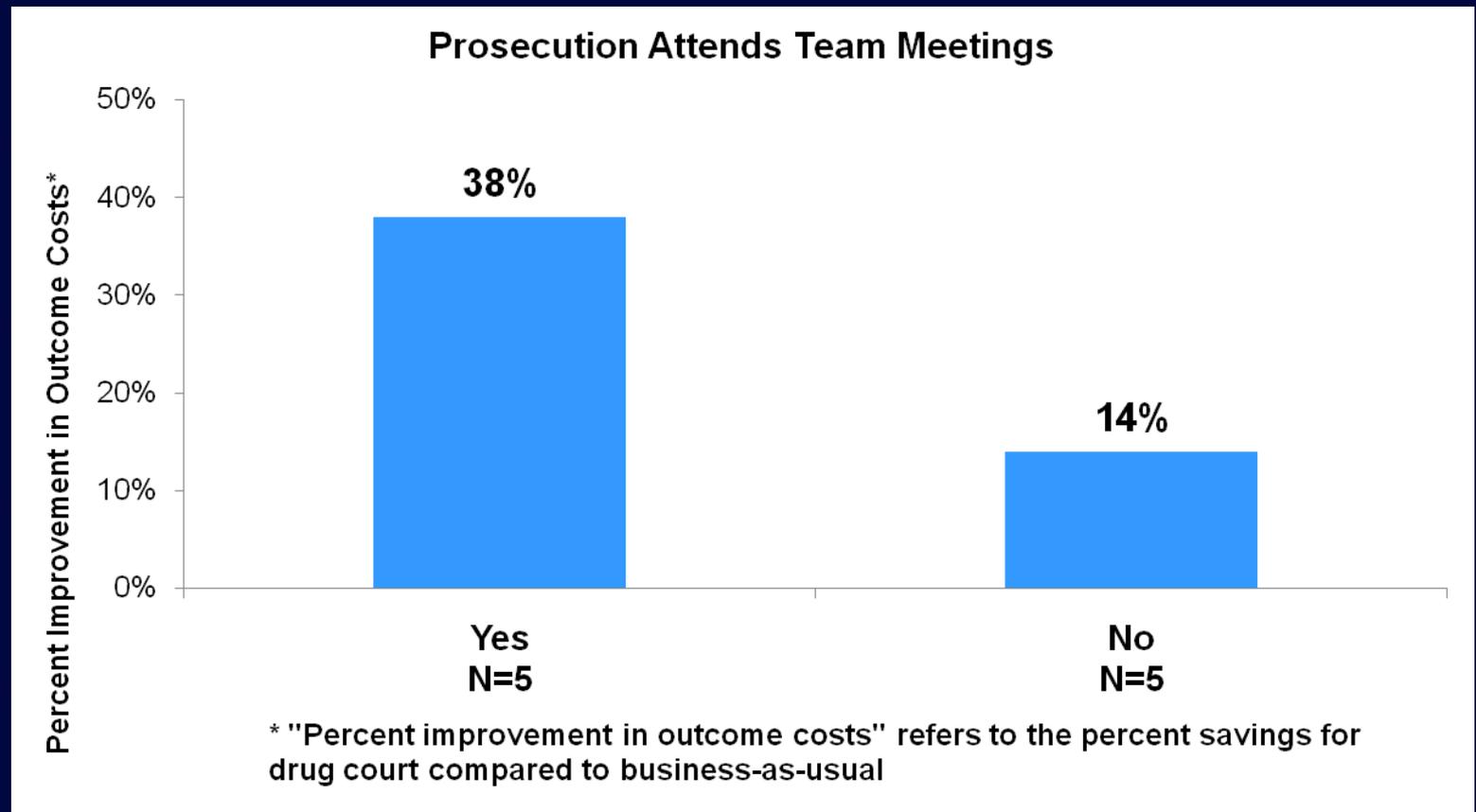
Note 1: Difference is significant at $p < .10$

Drug Courts That Expected Defense Counsel to Attend Team Meetings Had Twice the Cost Savings



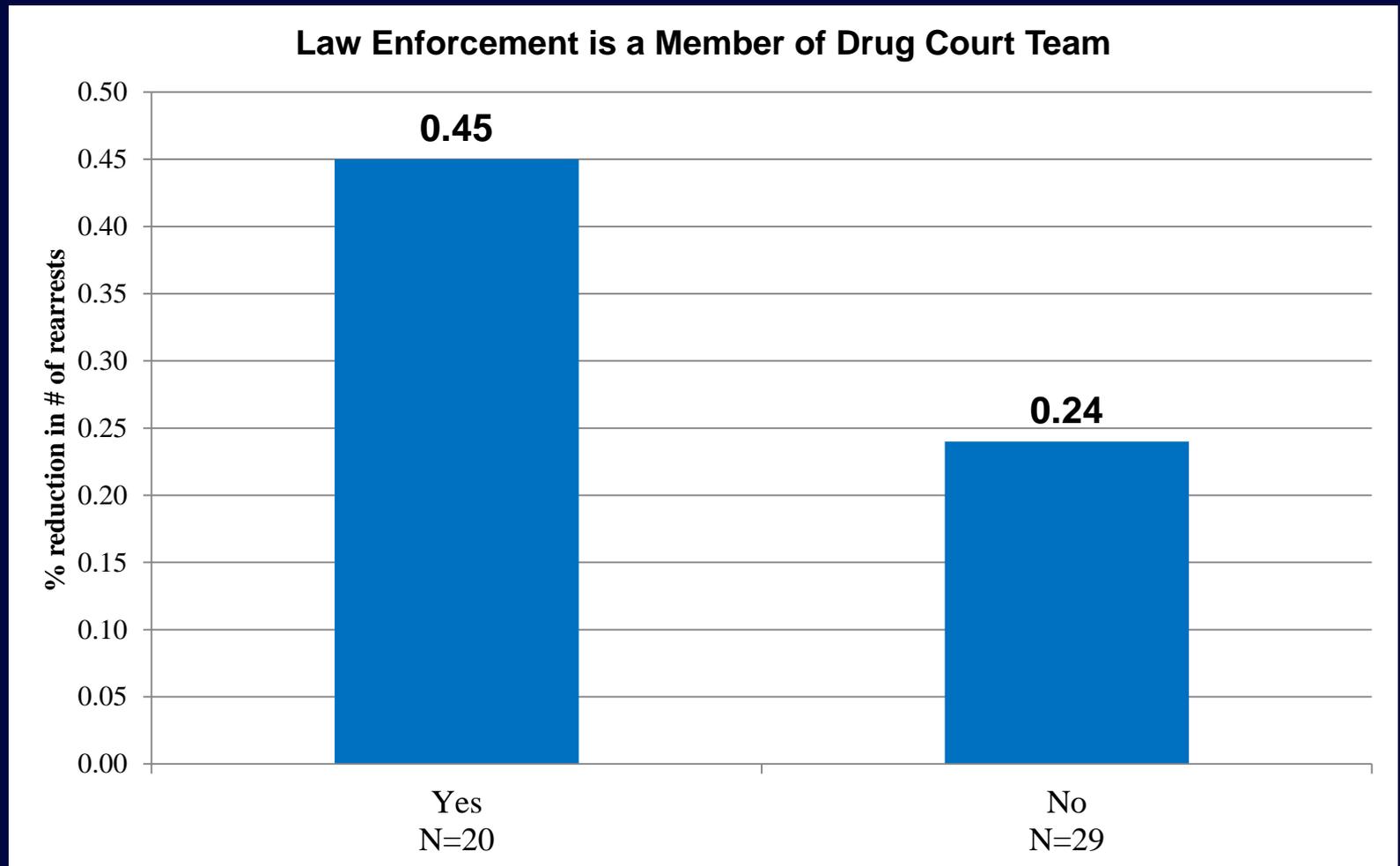
Note 1: Difference is significant at $p < .05$

Drug Courts That Expected the Prosecutor to Attend Team Meetings Had More Than Twice the Cost Savings



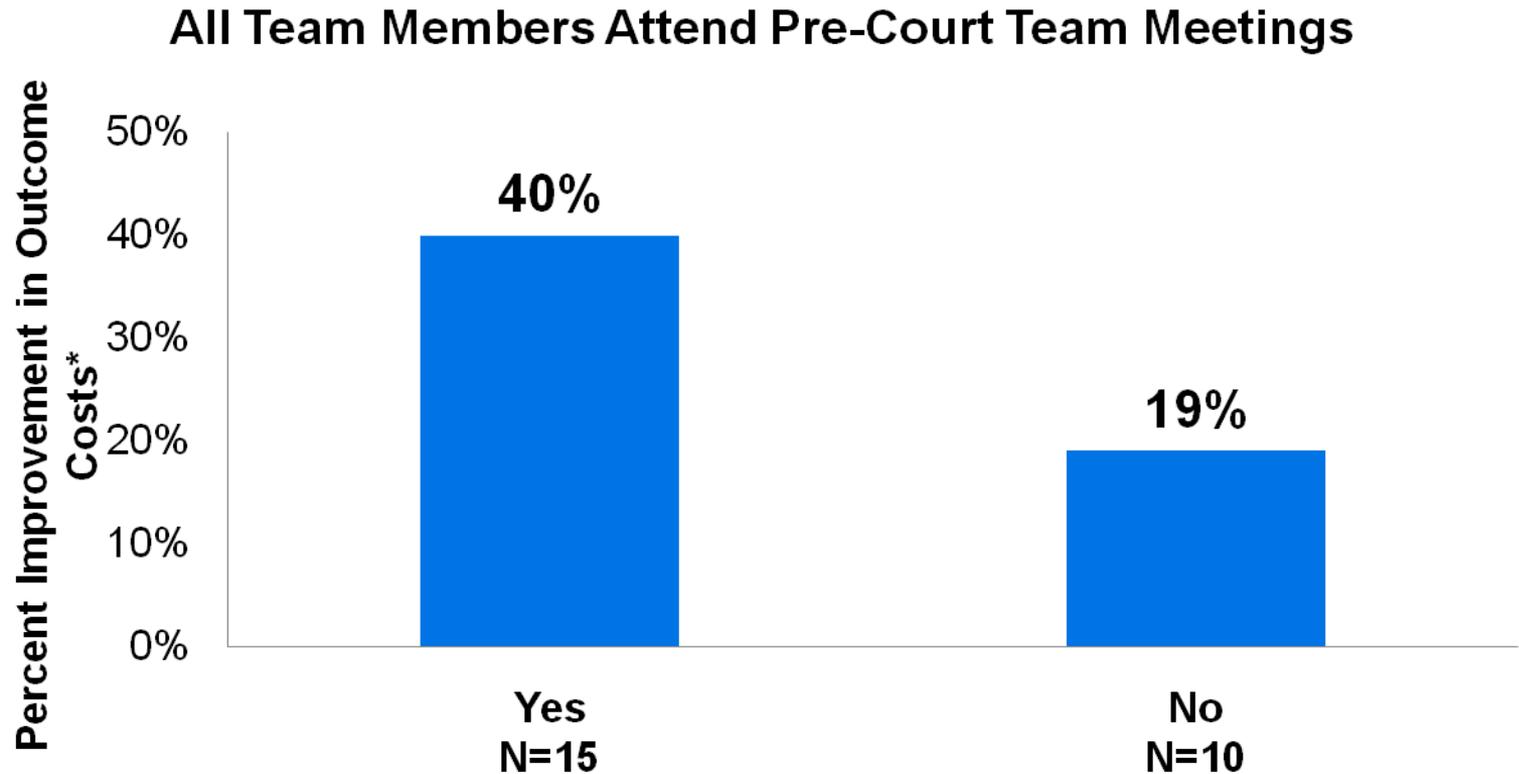
Note: Difference is significant at $p < .05$

Drug Courts That Included Law Enforcement on the Team Had Nearly Twice the Reduction in Recidivism



Note 1: Difference is significant at $p < .05$

Drug Courts That Required All Team Members to Attend Staffings Had Twice the Cost Savings



**"Percent improvement in outcome costs" refers to the percent savings for drug court compared to business-as-usual

Note 1: Difference is significant at $p < .05$

Note 2: "Team Members" = Judge, Both Attorneys, Treatment Provider, Coordinator

Key Component #3

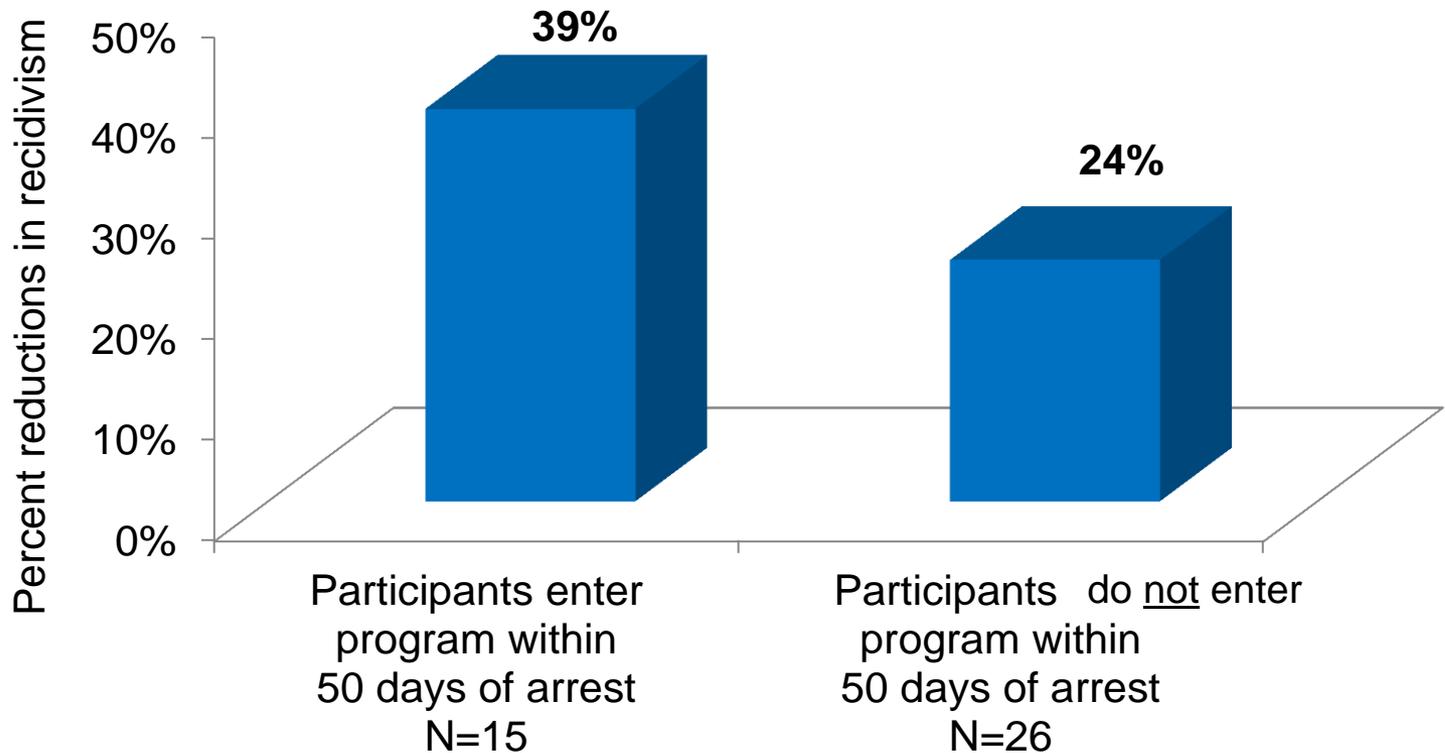
“Eligible participants are identified early and promptly placed in the drug court program.”

Prompt Treatment

- **Is it really important to get participants into the program quickly? And what is quickly?**



Drug Courts In Which Participants Entered the Program Within 50 Days of Arrest Had Greater Reductions in Recidivism



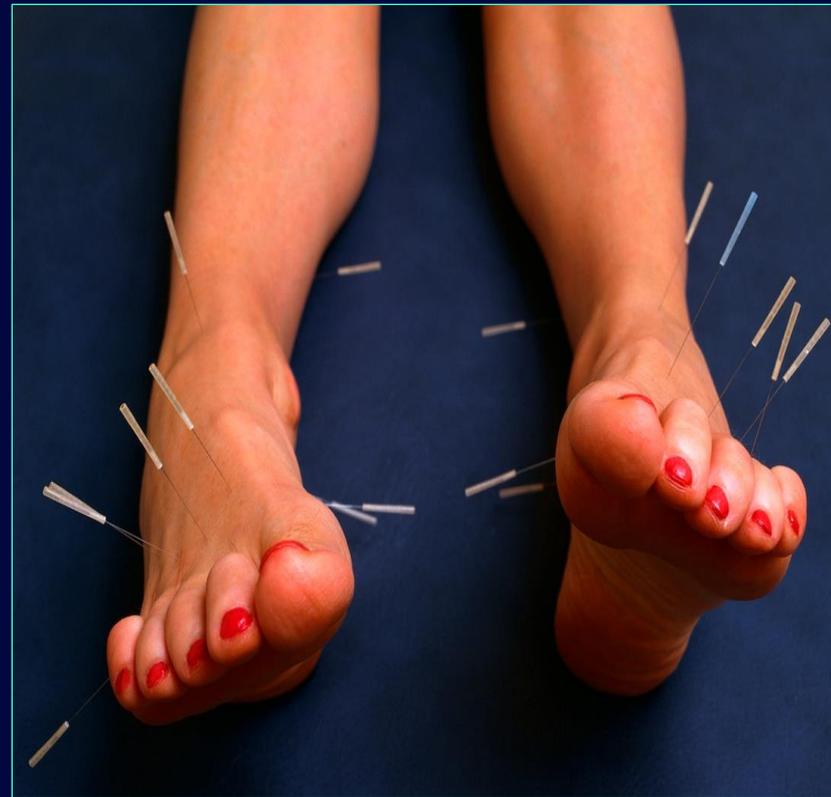
Note: Difference is significant at $p < .05$

Key Component #4

Drug courts provide access to a continuum of alcohol, drug, and other related treatment and rehabilitation services.

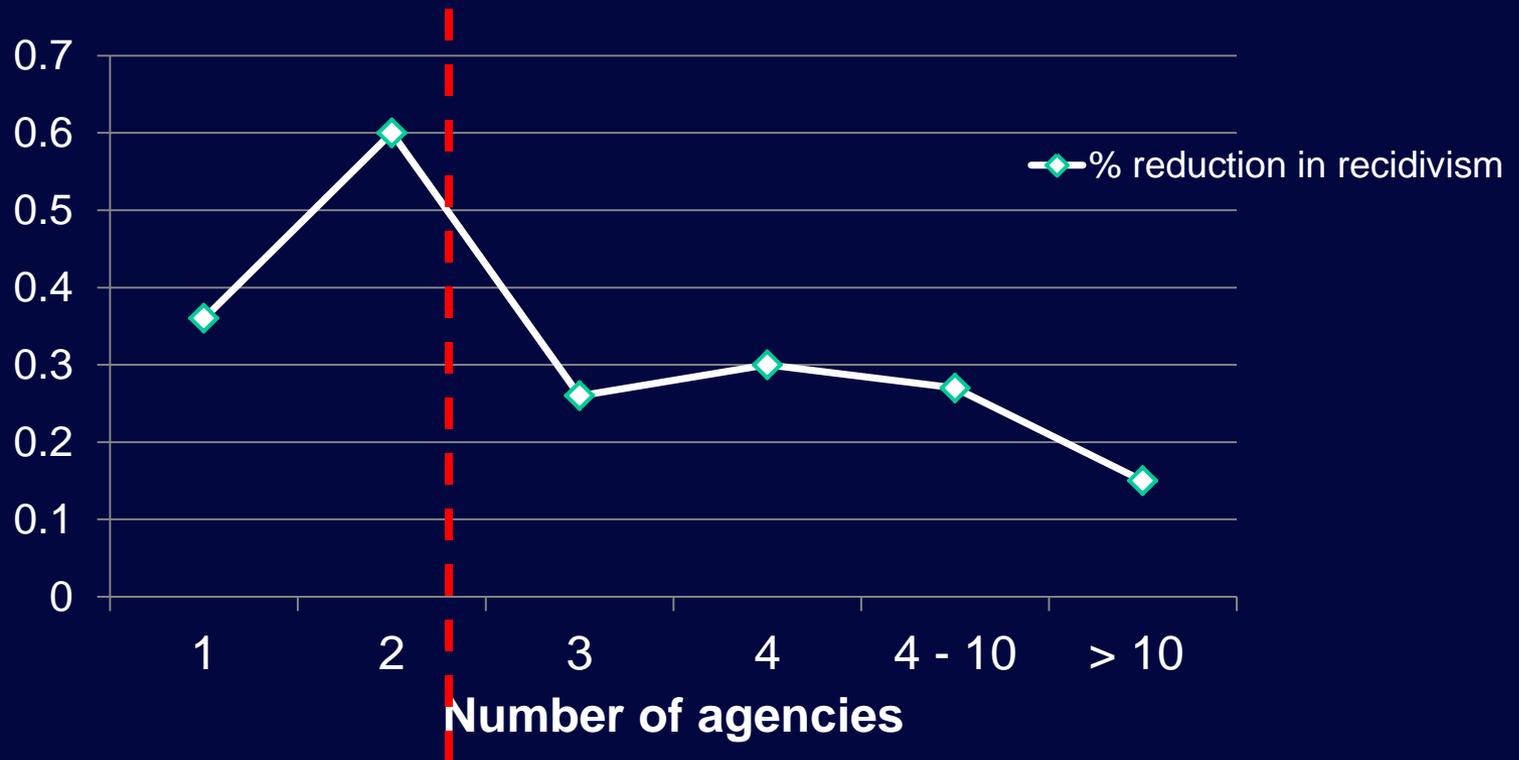
Effective Treatment

- **Is it better to have a single treatment agency or to have multiple treatment options?**
- **How important is relapse prevention?**



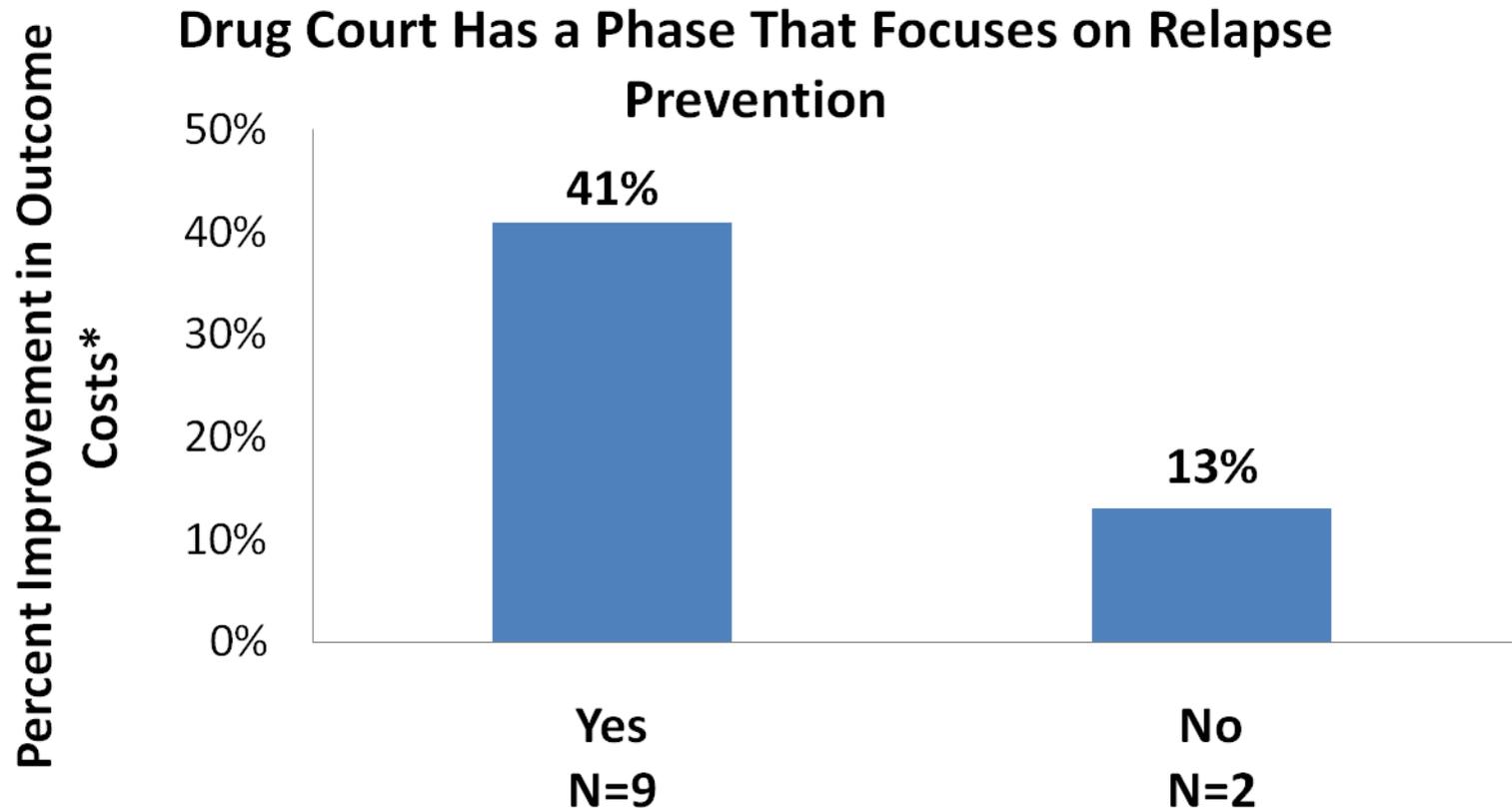
Drug Courts That Used One or Two Primary Treatment Agencies Had Greater Reductions in Recidivism

Fewer treatment providers is related to greater reductions in recidivism



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

Drug Courts That Included a Phase Focusing on Relapse Prevention Had Over 3 Times Greater Savings



* "Percent improvement in outcome costs" refers to the percent savings for drug court compared to business-as-usual

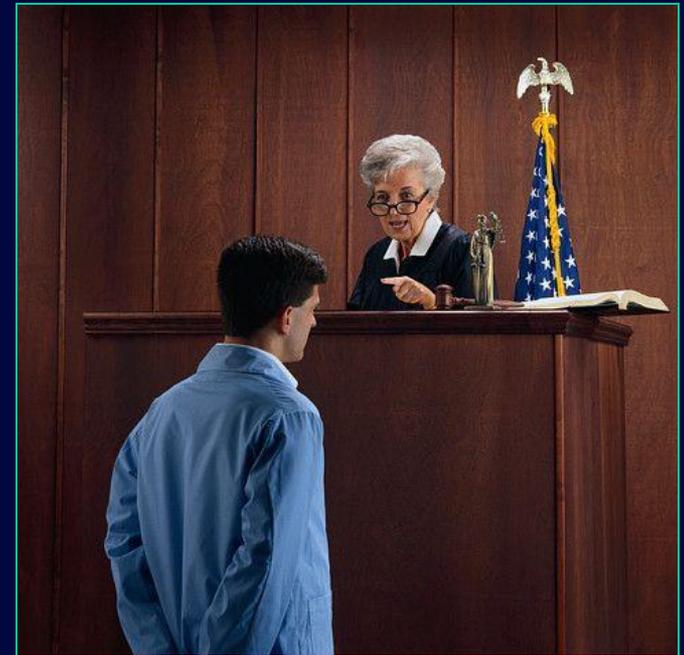
Note: Difference is significant at $p < .05$

Key Component #7

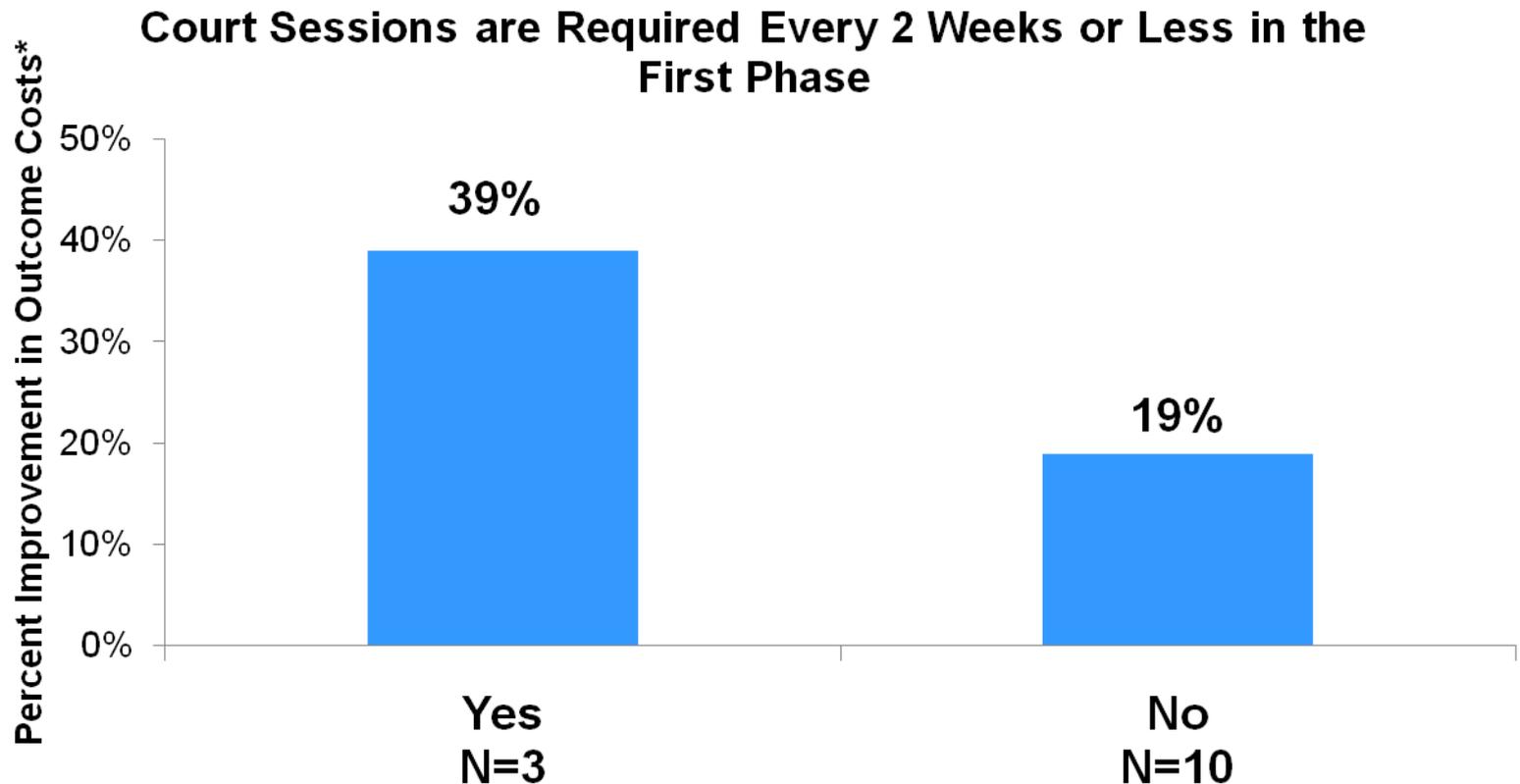
“Ongoing judicial interaction with each drug court participant is essential.”

The Judge

- How often should participants appear before the judge?
- How long should the judge stay on the drug court bench? Is longevity better or is it better to rotate regularly?



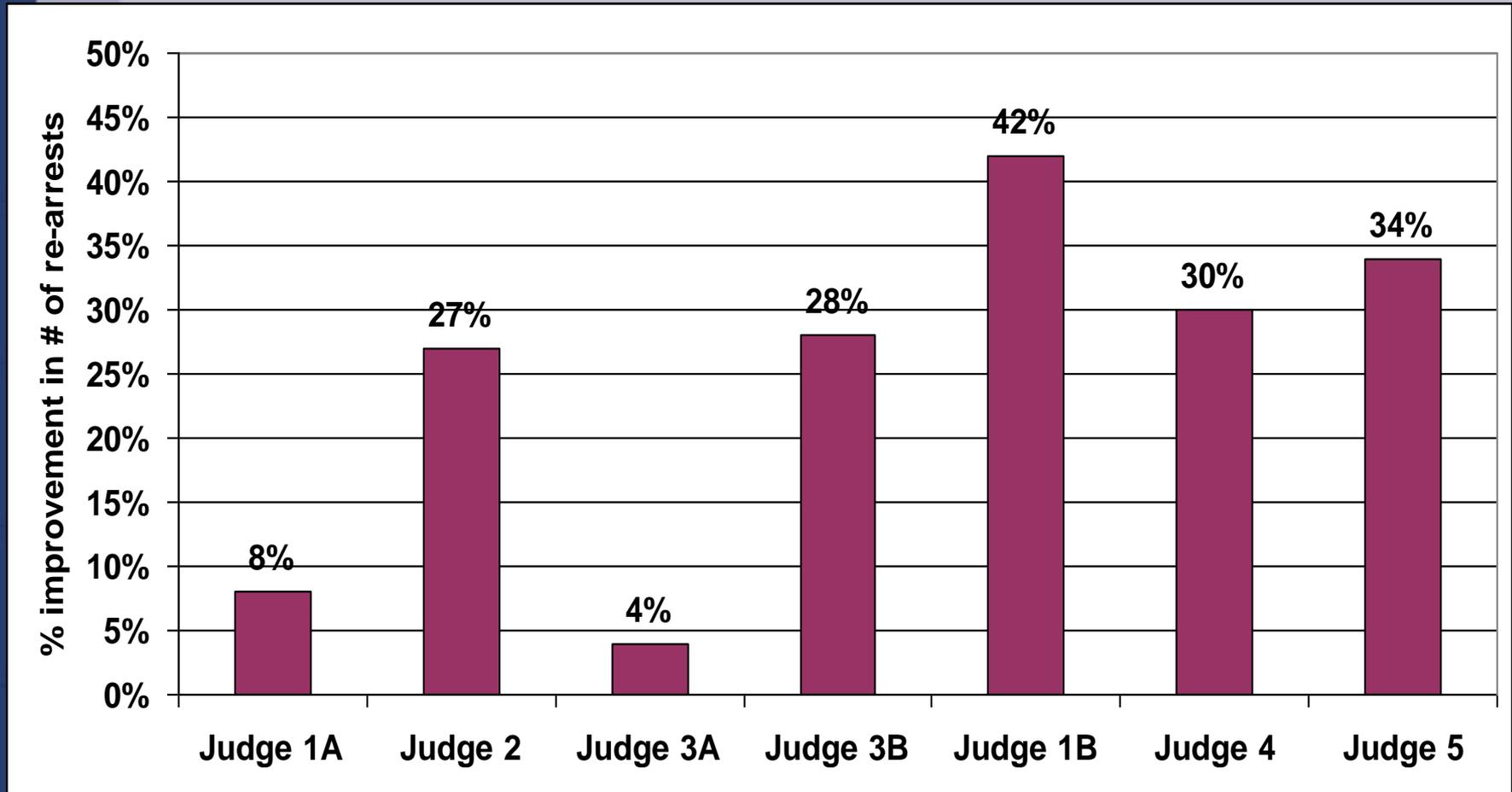
Drug Courts That Held Status Hearings Every 2 Weeks During Phase 1 Had More Than 2 Times Greater Cost Savings



* "Percent improvement in outcome costs" refers to the percent savings for drug court compared to business-as-usual

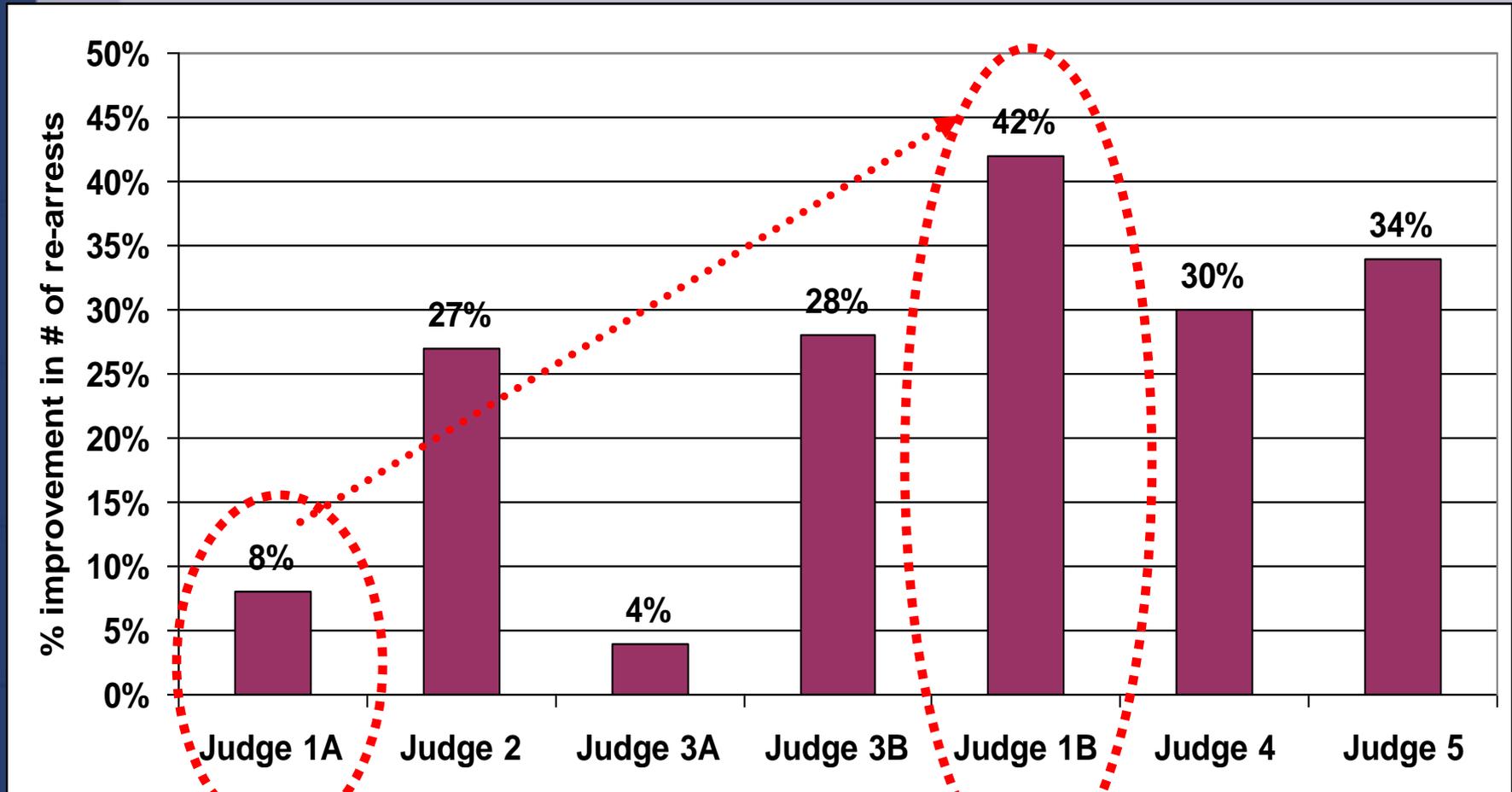
Note: Difference is significant at $p < .05$

The Longer the Judge Spent on the Drug Court Bench, the Better the Client Outcomes



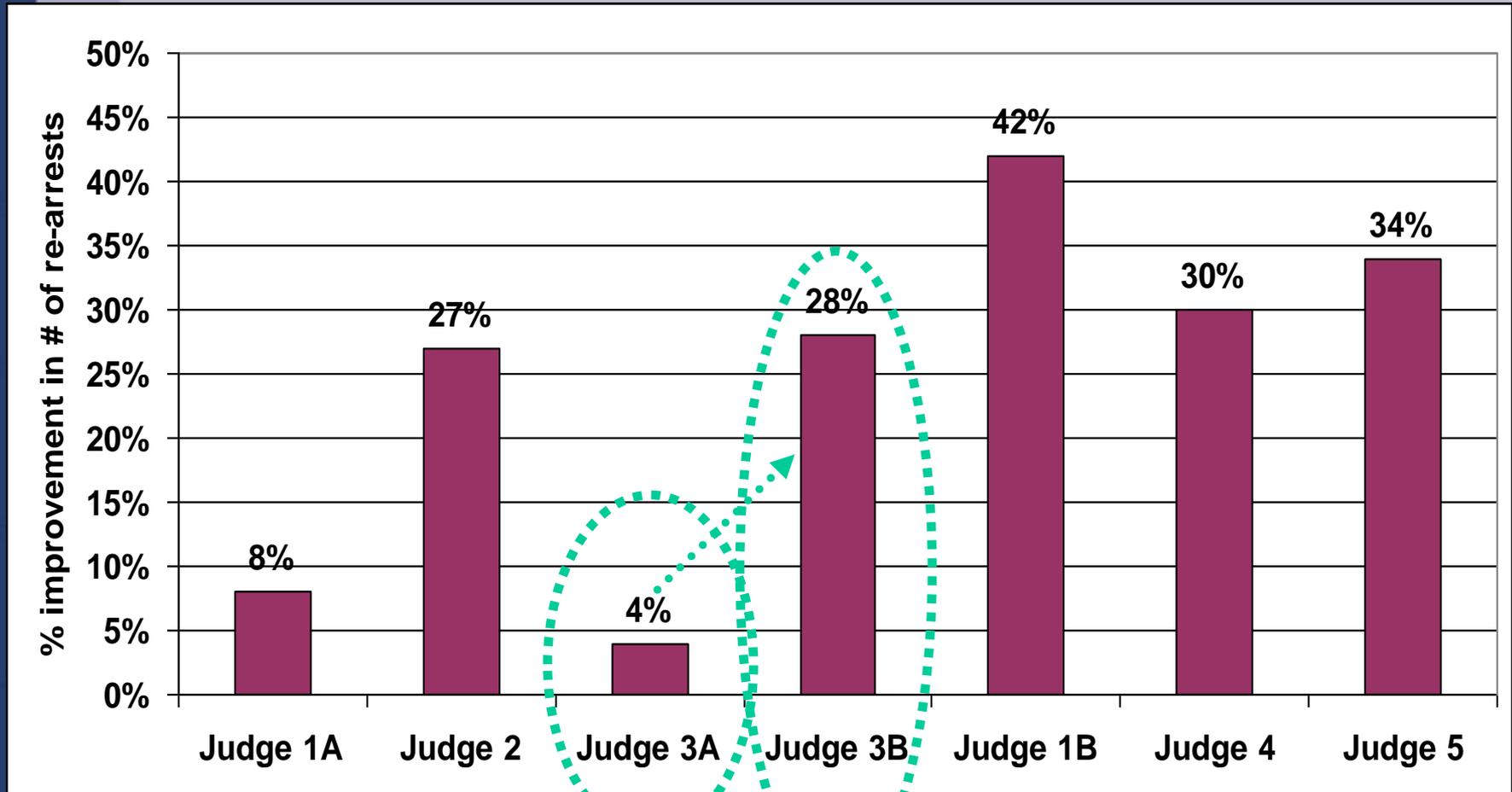
➤ **Different judges had different impacts on recidivism**

The Longer the Judge Spent on the Drug Court Bench, the Better the Client Outcomes



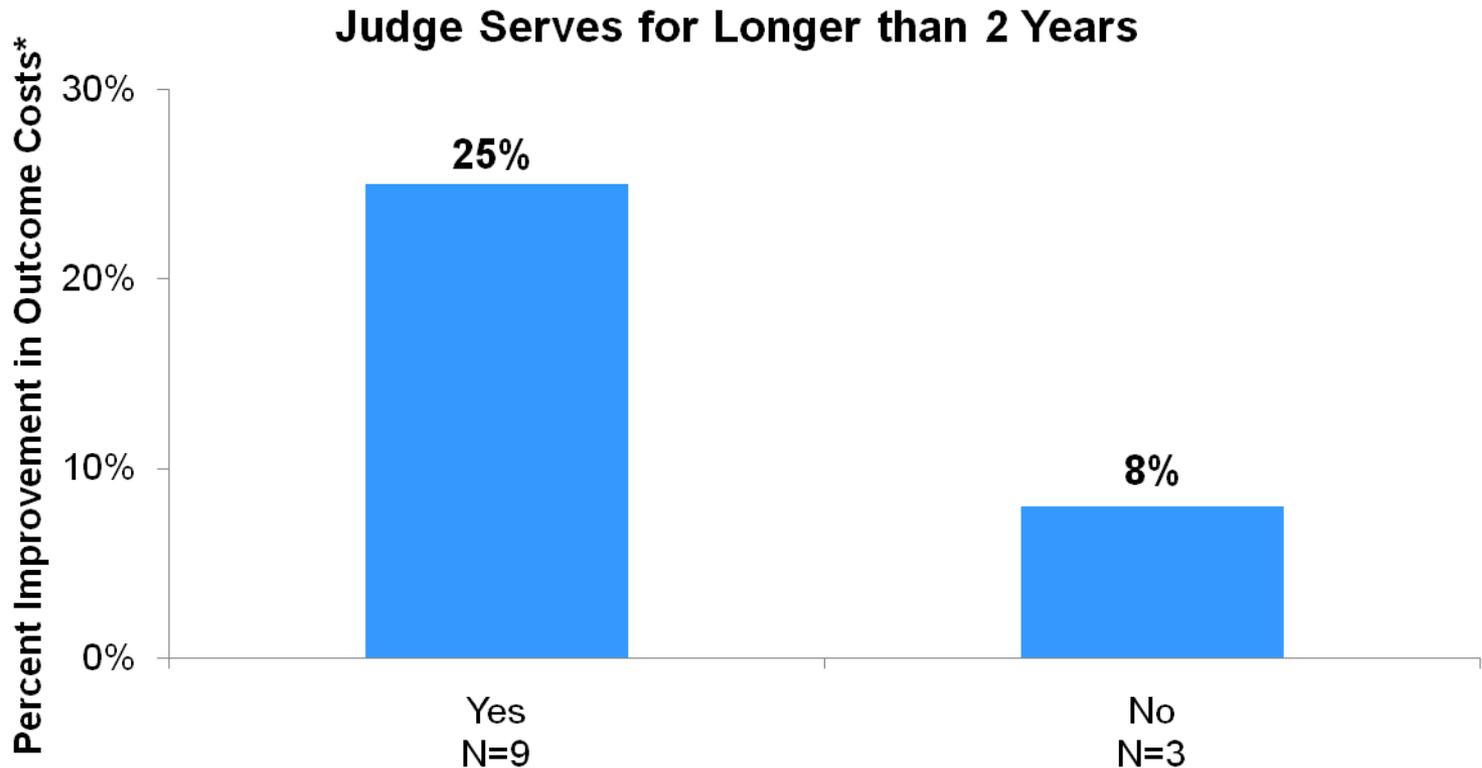
- Different judges had different impacts on recidivism
- **Judges did better their second time**

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- Different judges had different impacts on recidivism
- **Judges did better their second time**

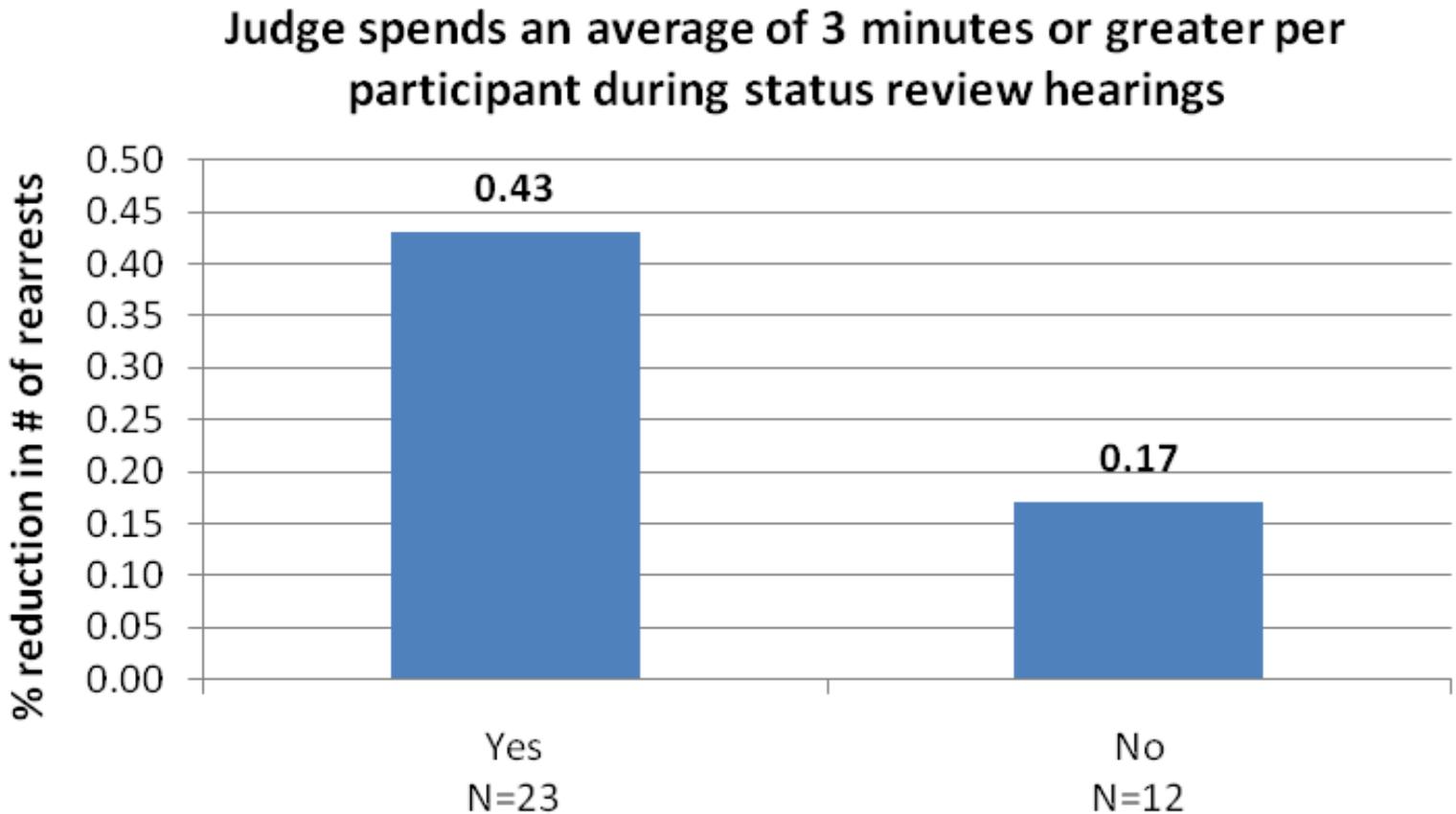
Drug Courts That Have Judges Stay Longer Than Two Years Had 3 Times Greater Cost Savings



* "Percent improvement in outcome costs" refers to the percent savings for drug court compared to business-as-usual

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

Judges Who Spent at Least 3 Minutes Talking to Each Participant in Court Had Substantially Greater Cost Savings



Note 1: Difference is significant at $p < .05$

Key Component #5

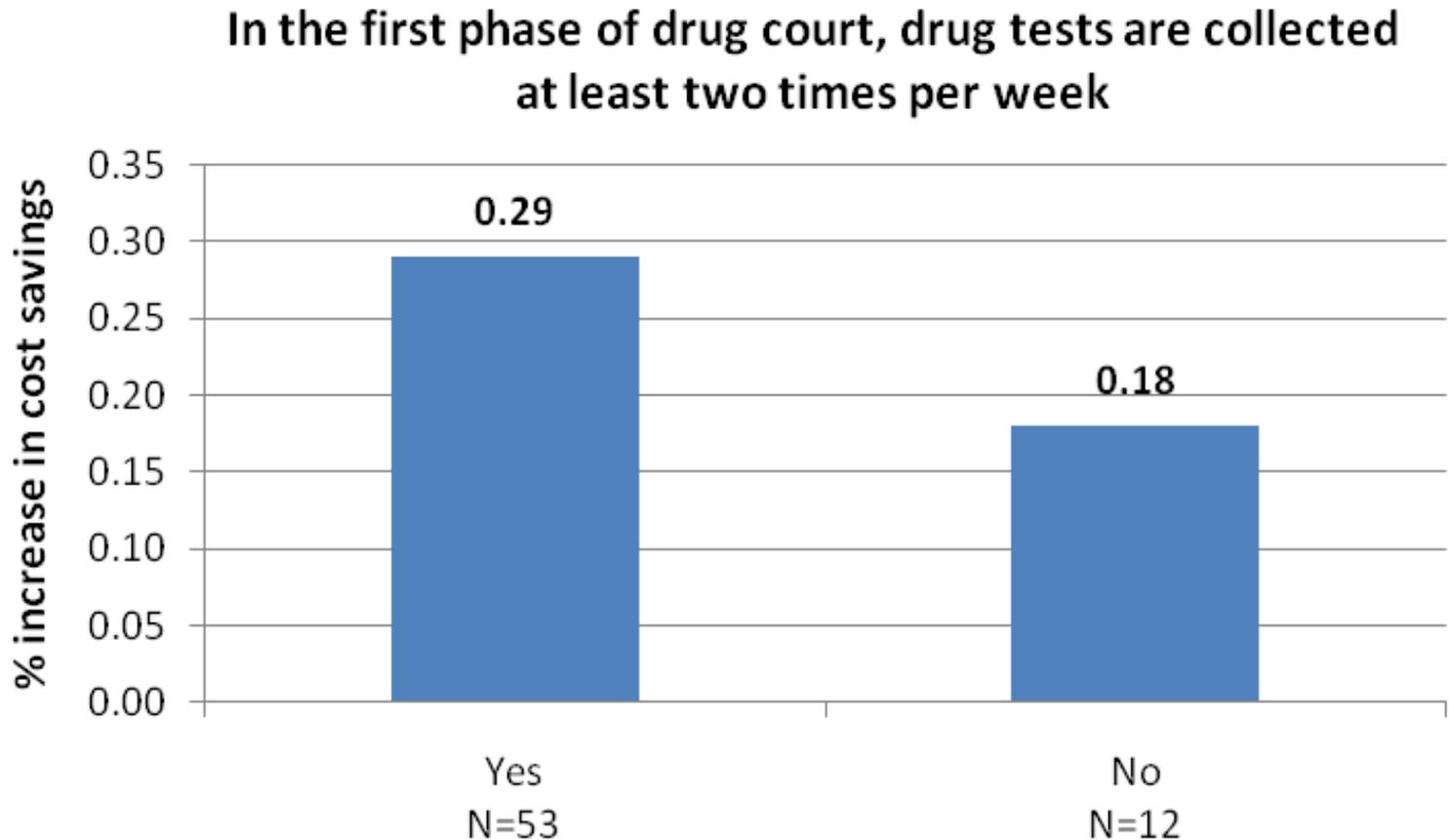
“Abstinence is monitored by frequent alcohol and other drug testing.”

Drug Testing

- How frequently should participants be tested?
- How quickly should results be available to the team?
- How long should participants be clean before graduation?

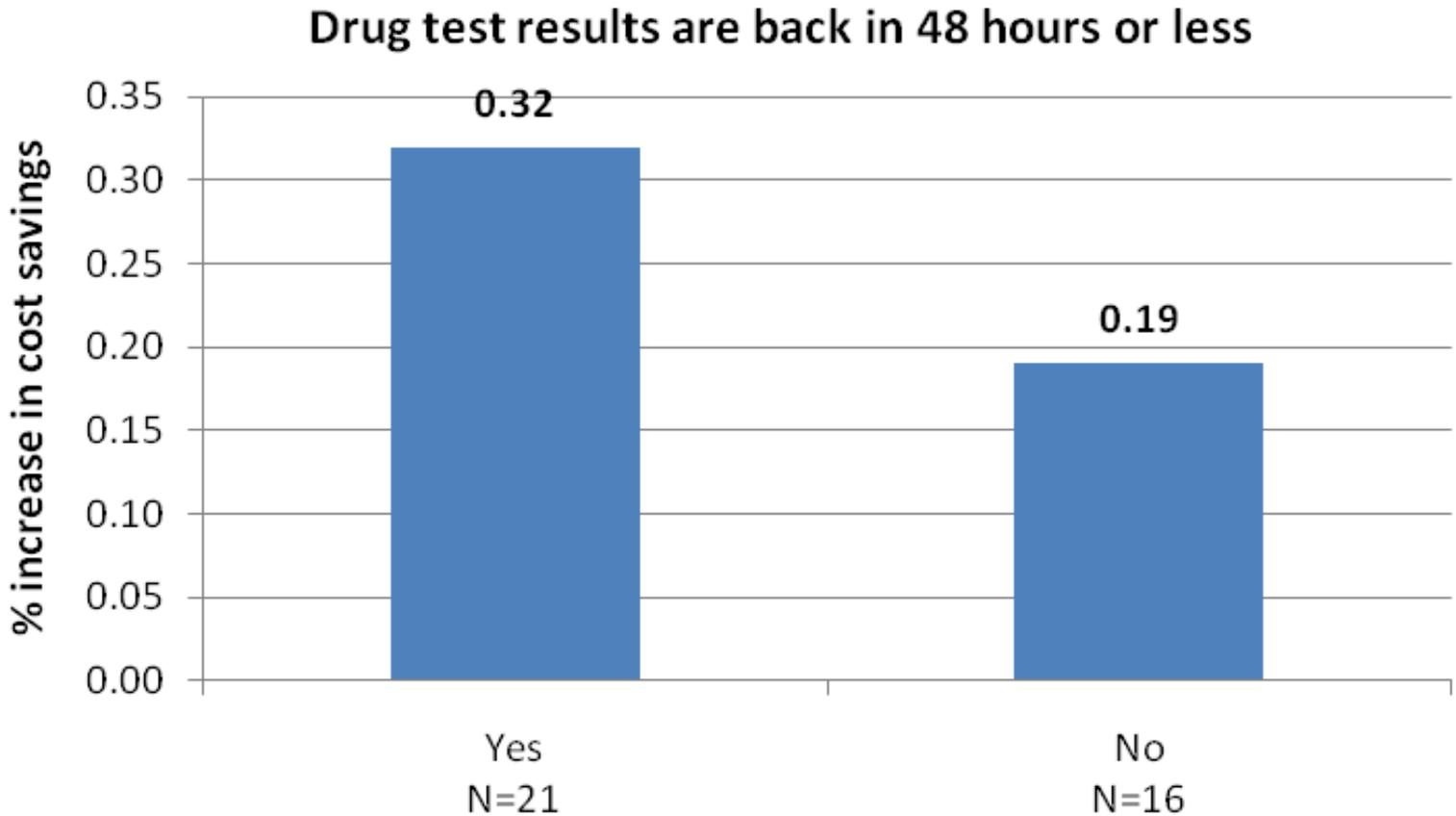


Drug Courts That Performed Drug Testing Two or More Times Per Week Had Greater Cost Savings



Note 1: Difference is significant at $p < .15$ (Trend)

Drug Courts That Received Drug Test Results Within 48 Hours Had Greater Cost Savings



Note 1: Difference is significant at $p < .05$

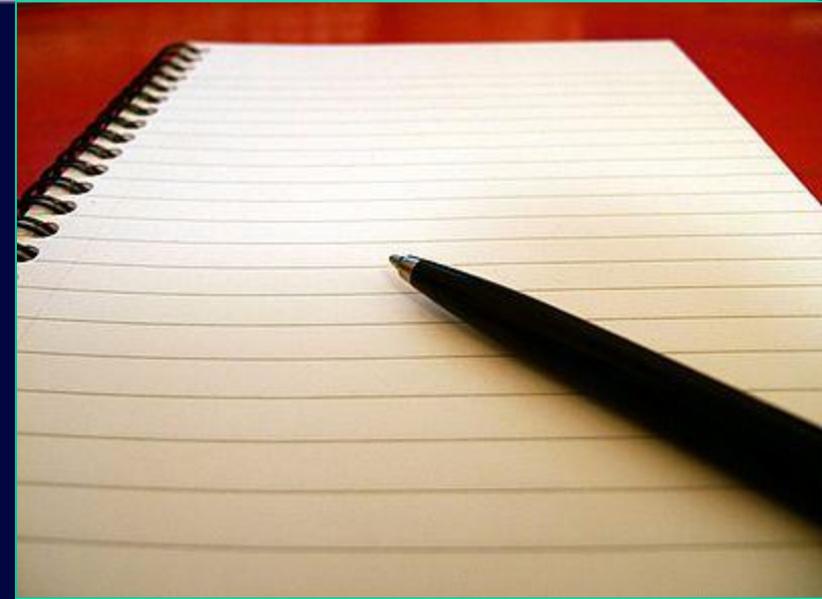
Key Component #6

“Drug courts establish a coordinated strategy, including a continuum of responses, to continuing drug use and other noncompliant behavior . . .

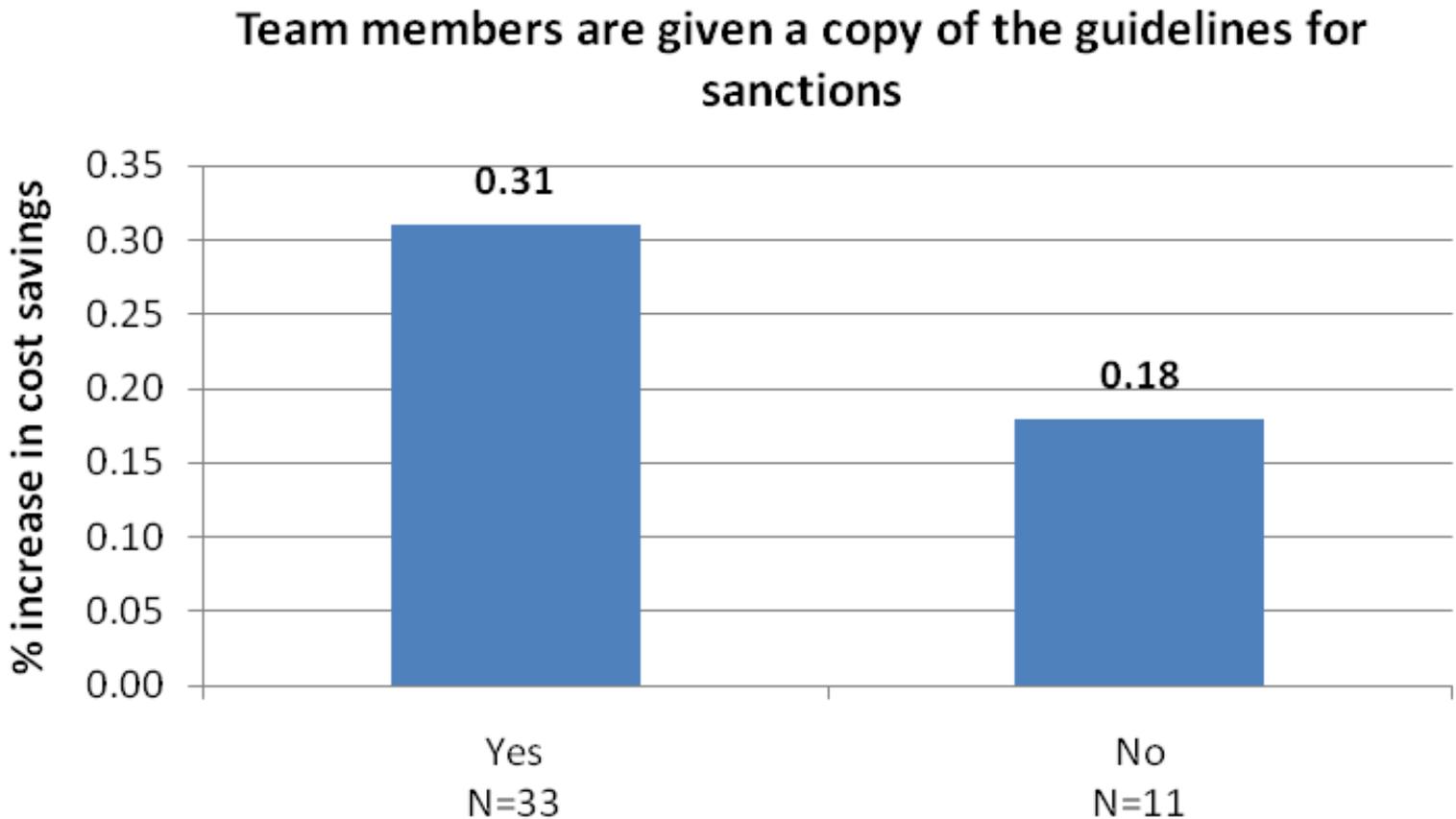
Reponses to or sanctions for noncompliance might include . . . escalating periods of jail confinement”

Sanction and Incentive Guidelines and Prompt Responses

- Do your guidelines on team responses to client behavior really need to be in writing?
- How important are swift responses?
- How much jail is effective?

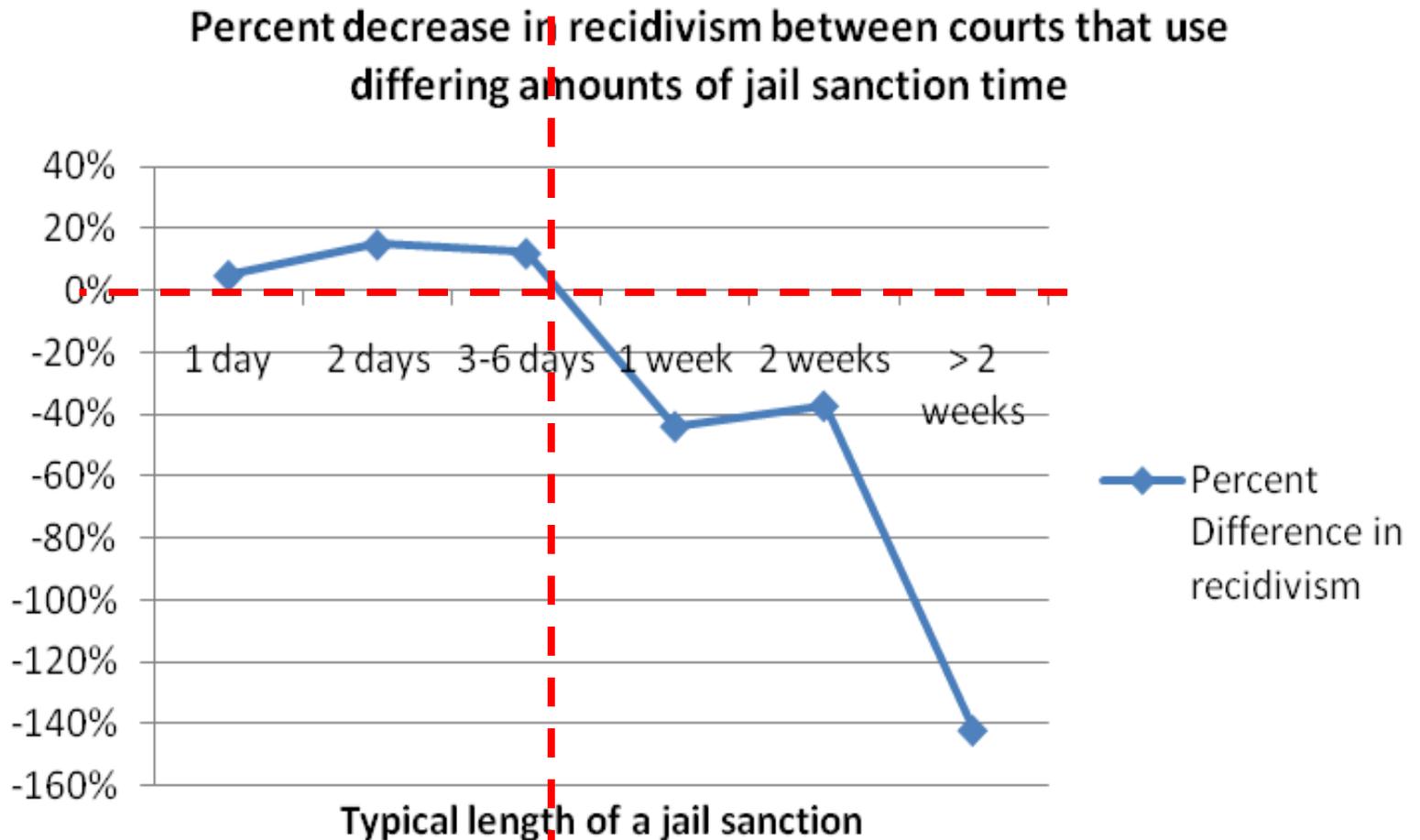


Drug Courts That Had Written Rules for Team Responses Had Greater Cost Savings



Note 1: Difference is significant at $p < .15$ (Trend)

Drug Courts That Tend to Impose Jail Sanctions Longer Than 6 Days Had Higher Recidivism



Key Component #9

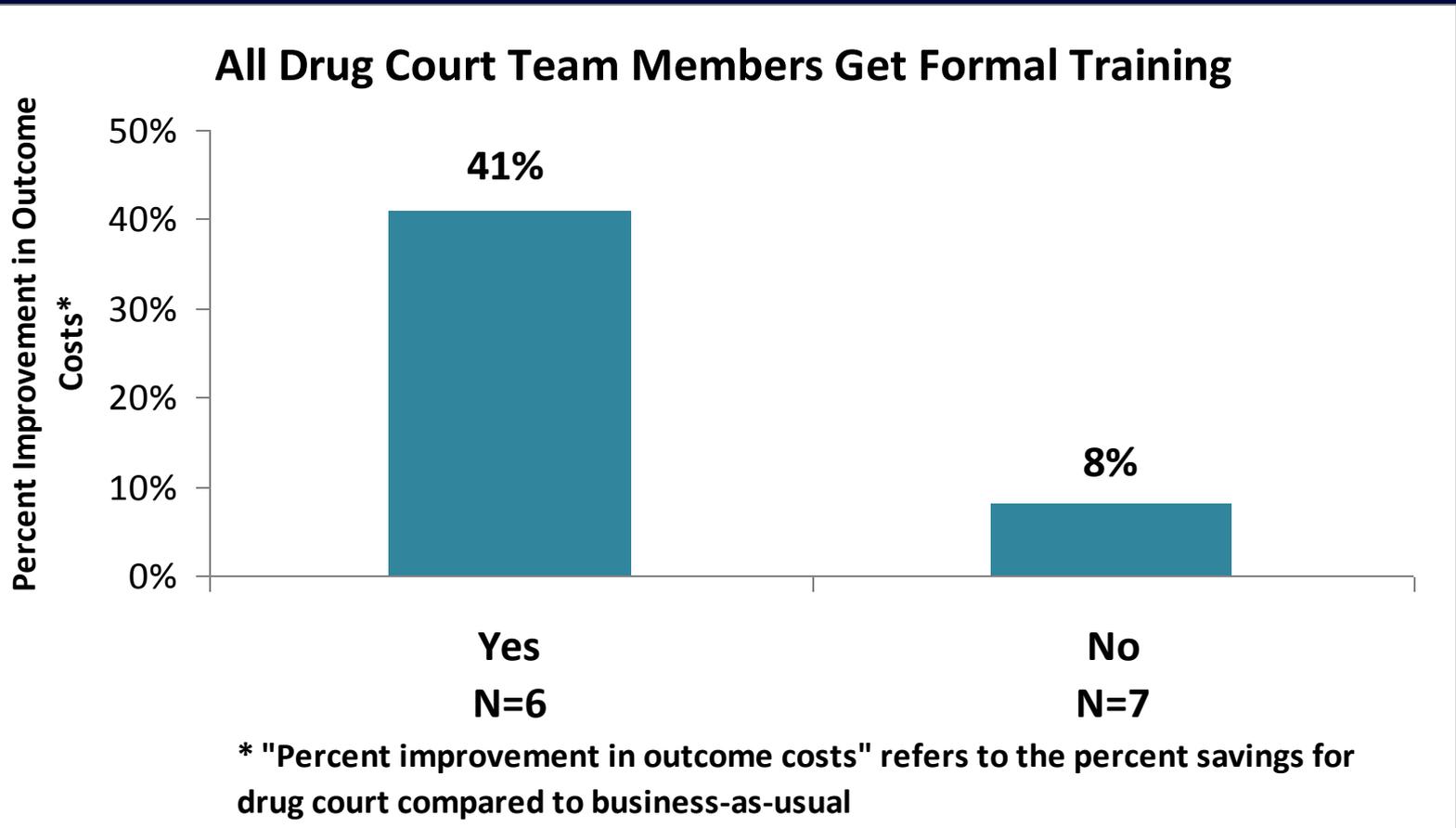
“Continuing interdisciplinary education promotes effective drug court planning, implementation, and operations.”

Training

- How important is formal training for team members?
- Who should be trained?
- *When* should team members get trained?

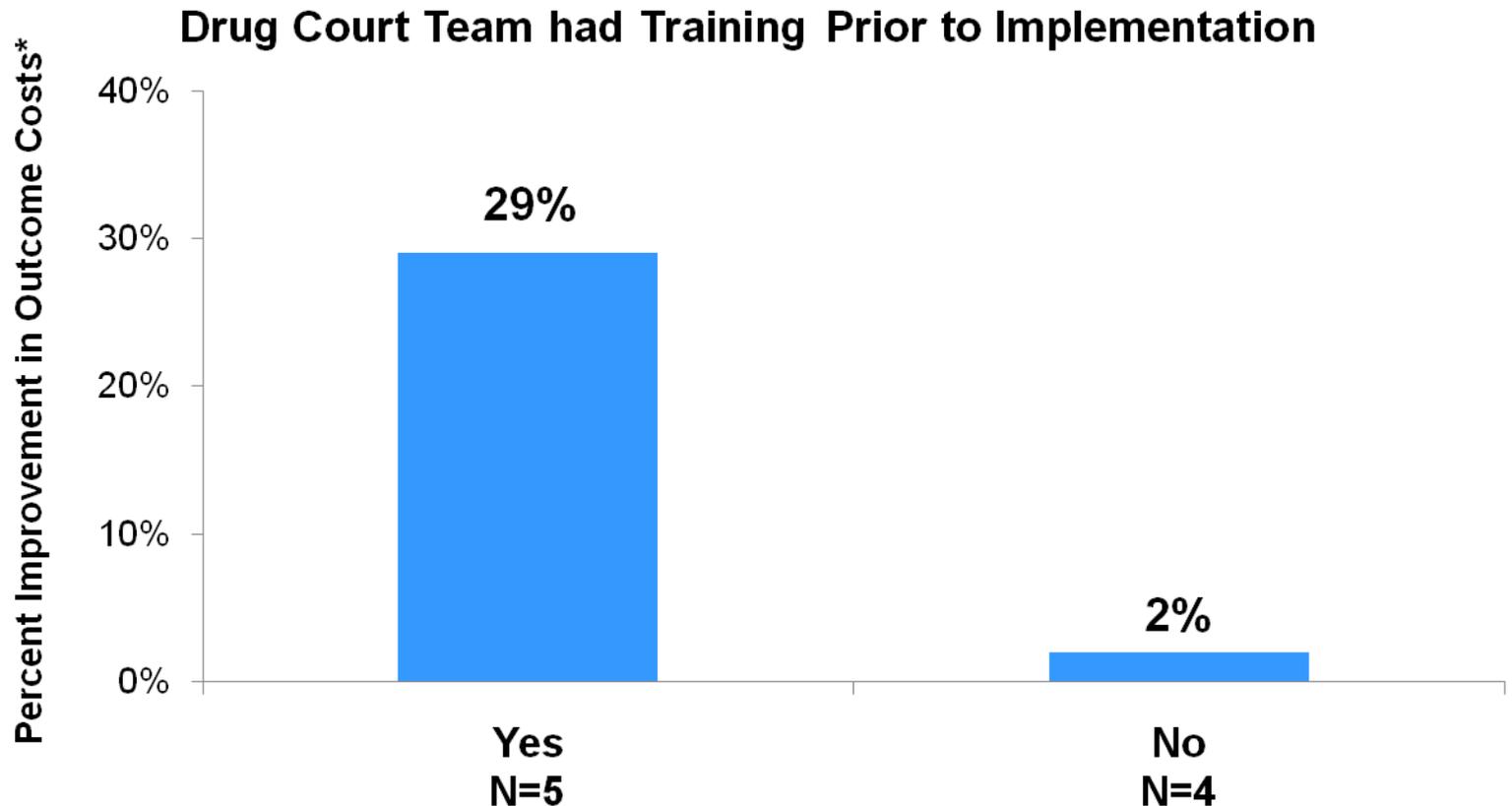


Drug Courts That Provided Formal Training for All Team Members Had 5 Times Greater Savings



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

Drug Courts That Received Training Prior to Implementation Had 15 Times Greater Cost Savings



* "Percent improvement in outcome costs" refers to the percent savings for drug court compared to business-as-usual

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

Key Component #8

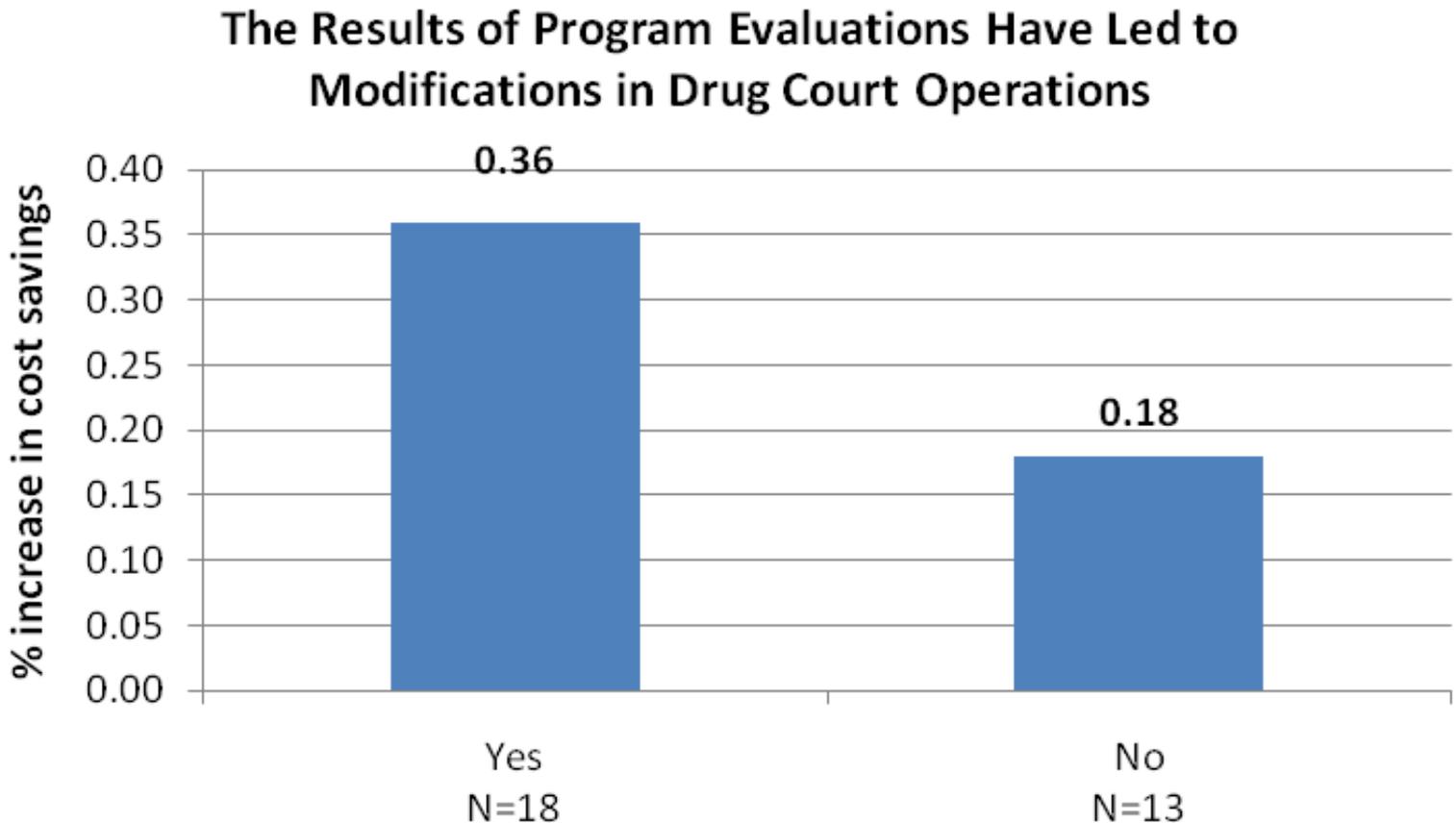
“Monitoring and evaluation measure the achievement of program goals and gauge effectiveness.”

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Does it matter whether data are kept in paper files or in a database?
- Does keeping program stats make a difference?
- Do you really need an evaluation? What do you get out of it?



Drug Courts That Used the Results of Program Evaluations to Modify Their Operations Had Twice the Cost Savings



Note 1: Difference is significant at $p < .05$

Key Component #10

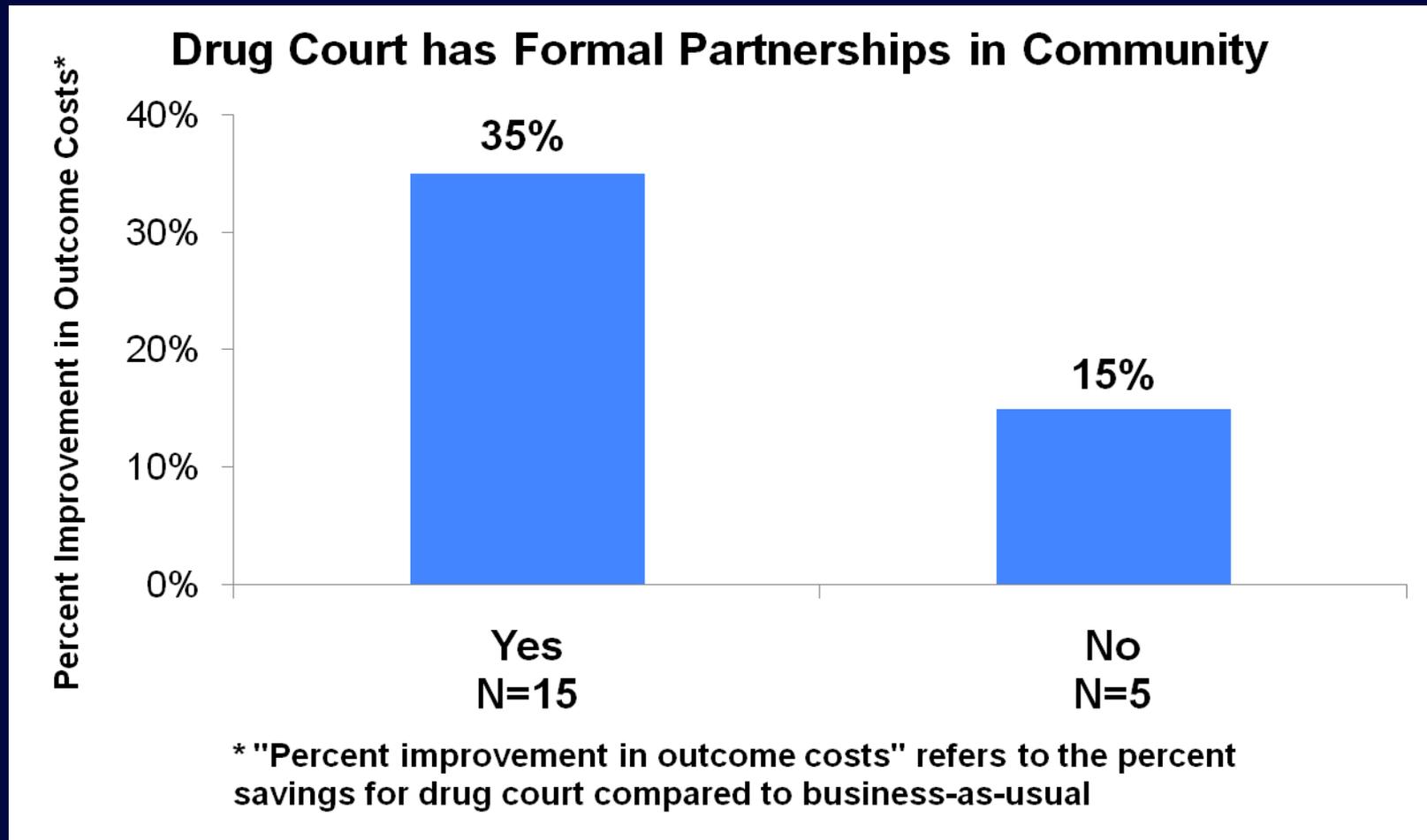
“Forging partnerships among drug courts, public agencies, and community-based organizations generates local support and enhances drug court program effectiveness.”

Community Partnerships

- **How important are partnerships in the community for your drug court?**



Drug Courts That Had Formal Partnerships with Community Organizations Had More than Twice the Savings



Note: Difference is significant as a trend at $p < .15$