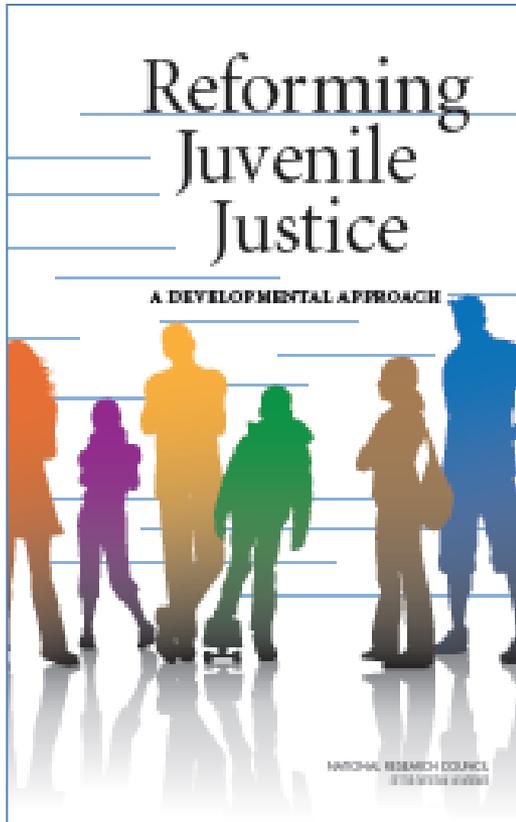


Juvenile Justice Research: Implications for Intervention and Policy

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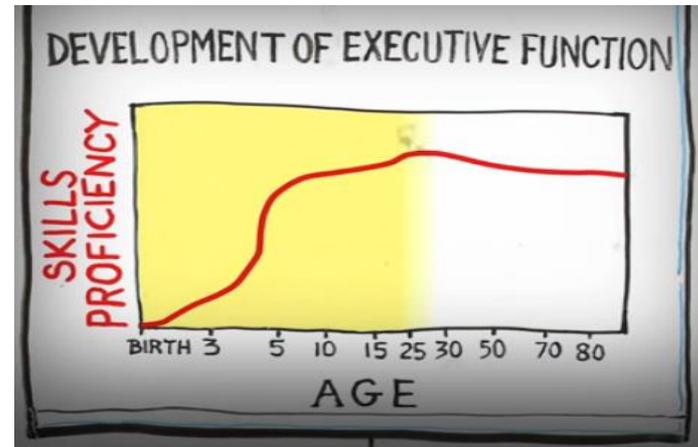
National Academy of Sciences

Reforming Juvenile Justice: A Developmental Approach

Committee Charge: To assess the implications of advances in behavioral and neuroscience research for the field of juvenile justice and the implications of such knowledge for juvenile justice reform.

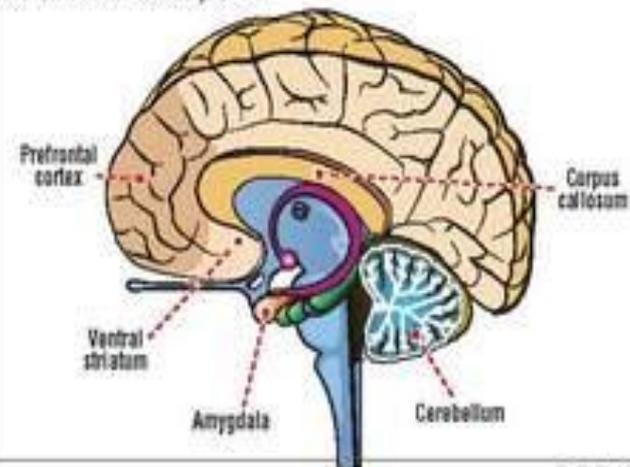
The Science

- Adolescence is a key period of development between childhood and adulthood characterized by:
 - Lack of mature capacity for self-regulation in emotionally charged contexts
 - A heightened sensitivity to proximal external influences such as peer pressure and immediate incentives
 - Less ability to make judgments and decisions that require future orientation



THE ADOLESCENT BRAIN

The prefrontal cortex often is called the 'executive brain.' But it is not at peak performance until young adulthood. In the meantime, the ventral striatum region makes teenagers extra sensitive to rewards while the less-active amygdala region leaves them less sensitive to punishment and emotional consequence.



Major Conclusions

- Being **held accountable** for wrongdoing and **accepting responsibility** in a **fair process** (perceived and real) **promotes healthy moral development and legal socialization.**
- Being held accountable and punished in **an unfair process** (perceived or real) **reinforces social disaffection and antisocial behavior.**
- Predominantly **punitive policies** and programs **do not foster prosocial development or reduce recidivism.**
- **No convincing evidence that confinement of juvenile offenders** beyond a minimum amount required to provide intense services **reduces likelihood of subsequent offending.**
- Pattern of **racial disparities** impede efforts to provide equitable services and **contribute to perceptions of unfairness.**

Proposed Goals of the System

Promoting Accountability

Ensuring Fairness

Preventing Re-offending

Other Key Research

Pathways to Desistance

About the study: Multi-site study that follows 1,354 serious adolescent offenders as they make the transition from adolescence into early adulthood through regular interviews over a seven year period.

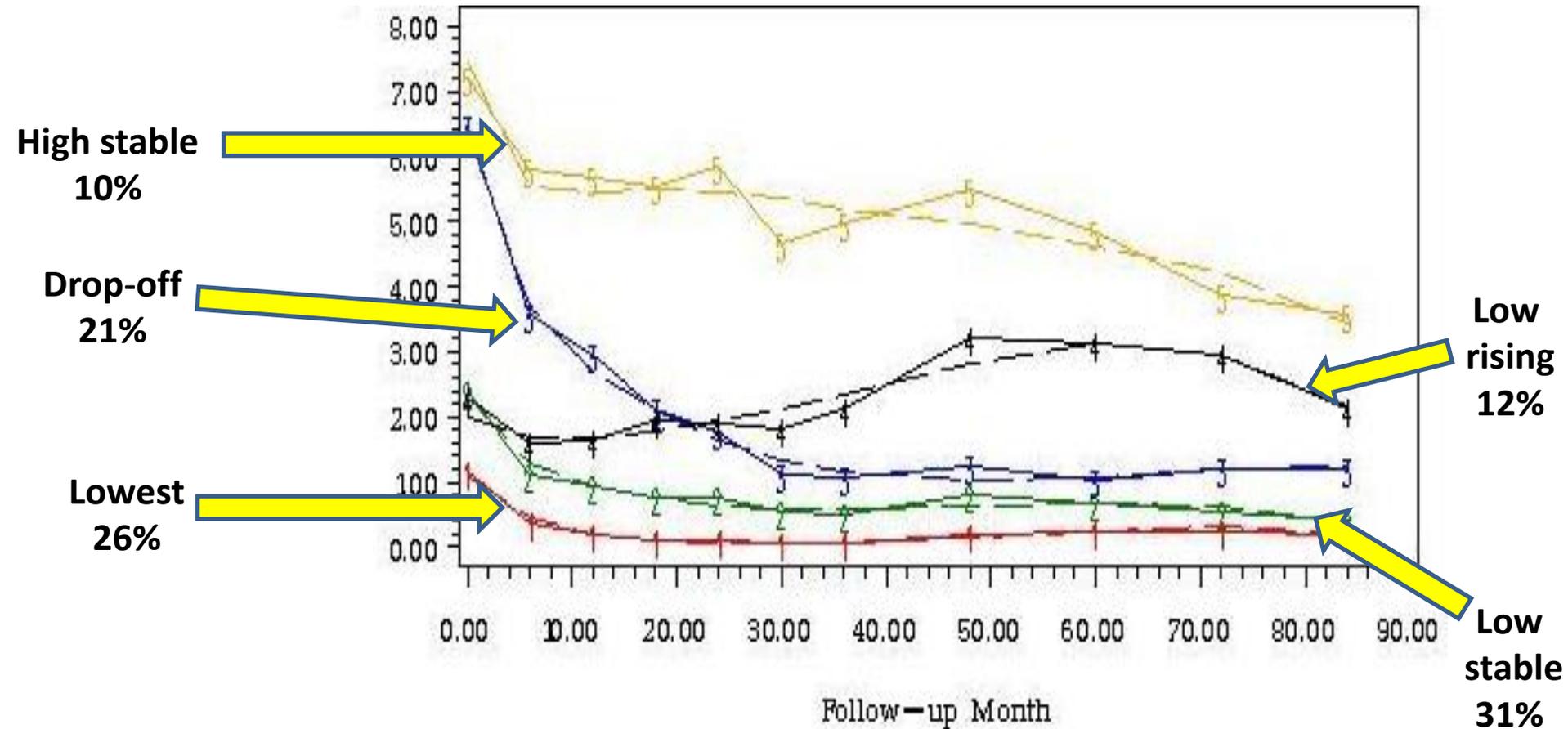


Patterns of Offending

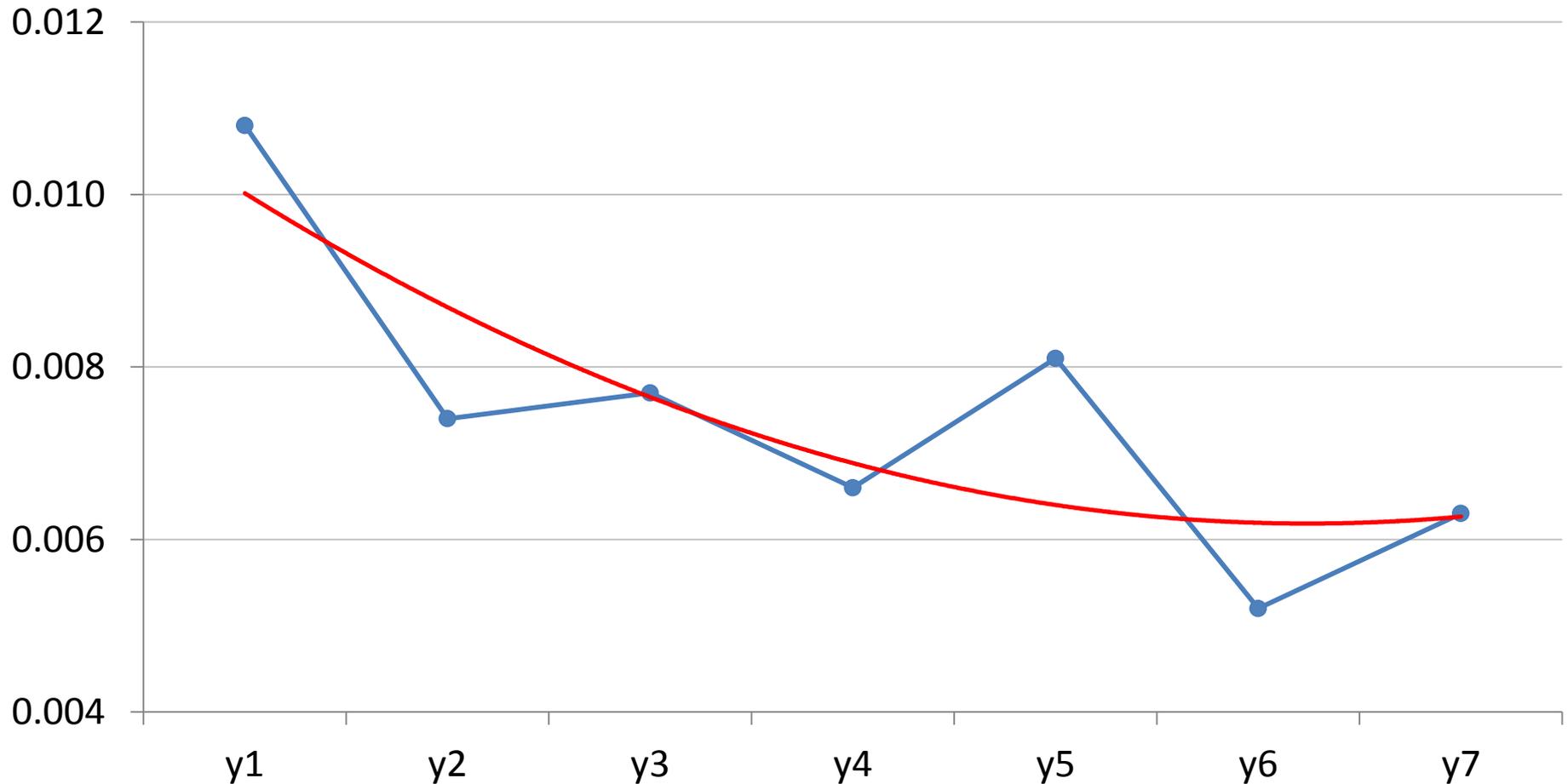
- **Finding:** Adolescents who have committed serious offenses are not necessarily on track for adult criminal careers.
 - Even among serious adolescent offenders,
 - there is considerable variability
 - the pattern is reduced offending
- **Implications:** To increase the impact of investments in justice interventions, it is important to promote decision frameworks or statutes that:
 - consider cumulative risk and addressable needs, and
 - target services to the highest risk offenders

Self-reported offending

7 year follow-up period – only males – controlling for time on street

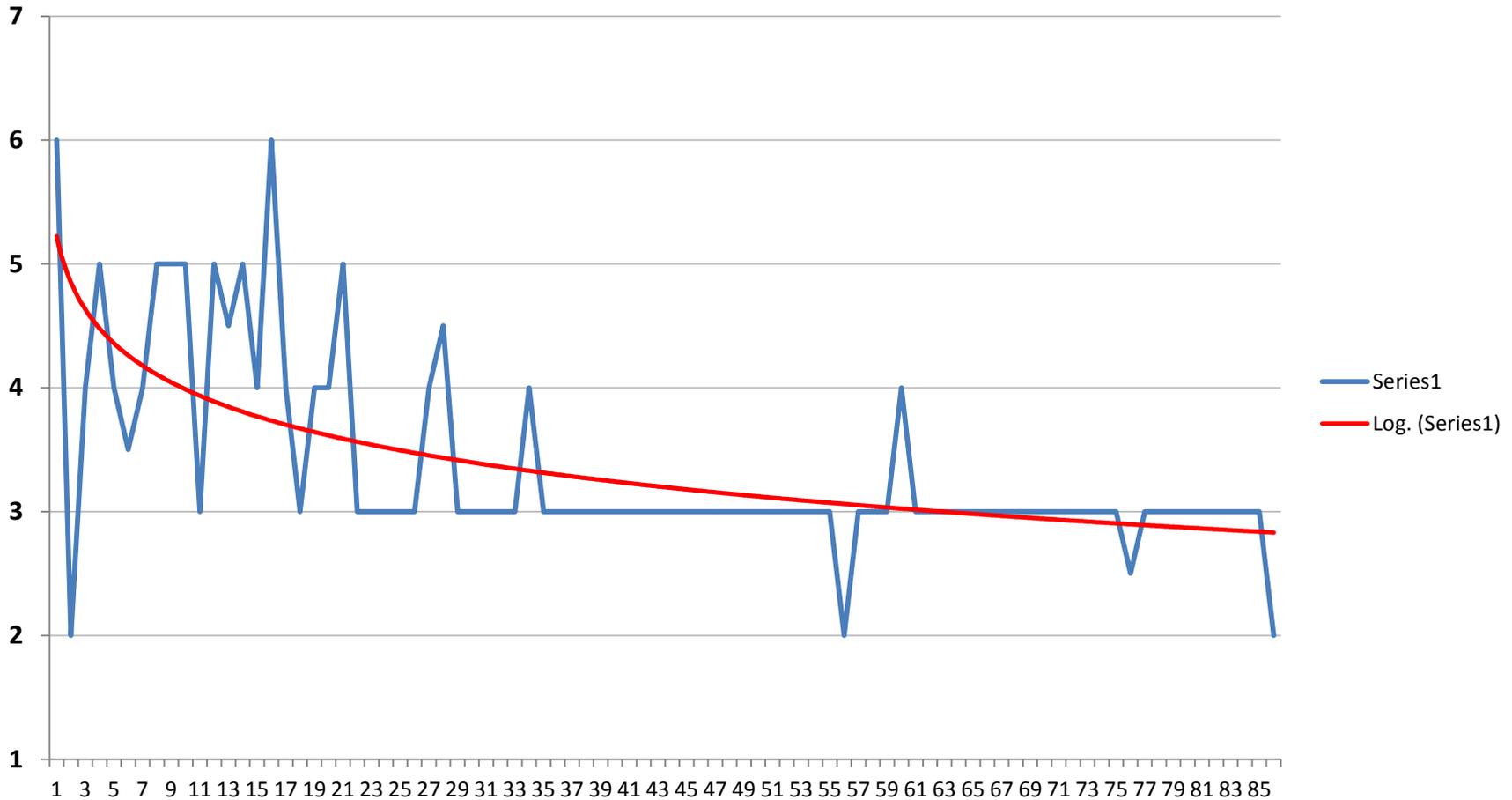


Mean rate of re-arrests in each wave



Number of arrests per days in the community. Ex: 1 arrest in 121 days in community = .008, 1 arrest in 65 days in the community = .015, 3 arrests in 183 days in community = .016

Median severity ranking for arrests across time (within month)



1 = status offense, 2=misdemeanor, 3 = possession of narcotics (excluding glue and marijuana), 4 = felony, not part 1, 5=major property felonies, 6=burglary, 7=drug felony, 2nd degree sex offense, 8 =felonious assault, felony w/ weapon 9 =murder, rape, arson

Institutional Placements/Experiences

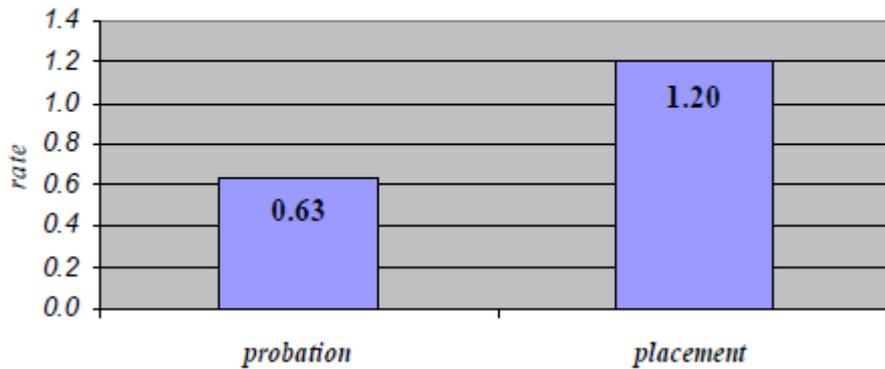
- **Finding(s)**: Institutional placements and longer stays do not necessarily reduce juvenile reoffending and may increase recidivism for certain youth.
- **Context**:
 - There are about 40% – 50% fewer adolescents in institutional care than there were about seven years ago
 - The system will still rely on institutional care
 - Keeping adolescents longer may not increase success
 - The quality of these environments relates to later community adjustment
 - Re-entry is a key challenge
- **Implications**: It is possible to reduce the rate and duration of institutional placements for certain offenders and increase the level of community-based services while protecting public safety.

Effect of placement on re-arrest

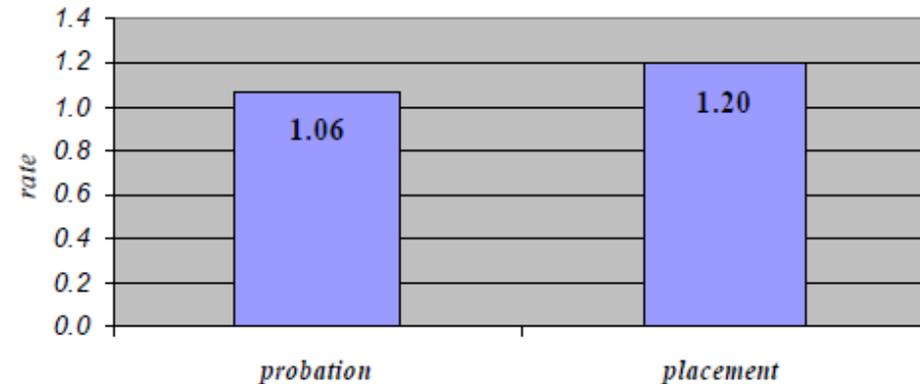
Comparing placement and probation without controls

Treatment effect of placement after propensity score matching on 66 baseline variables

Mean Yearly Rate of Re-Arrest,
by Placement Status



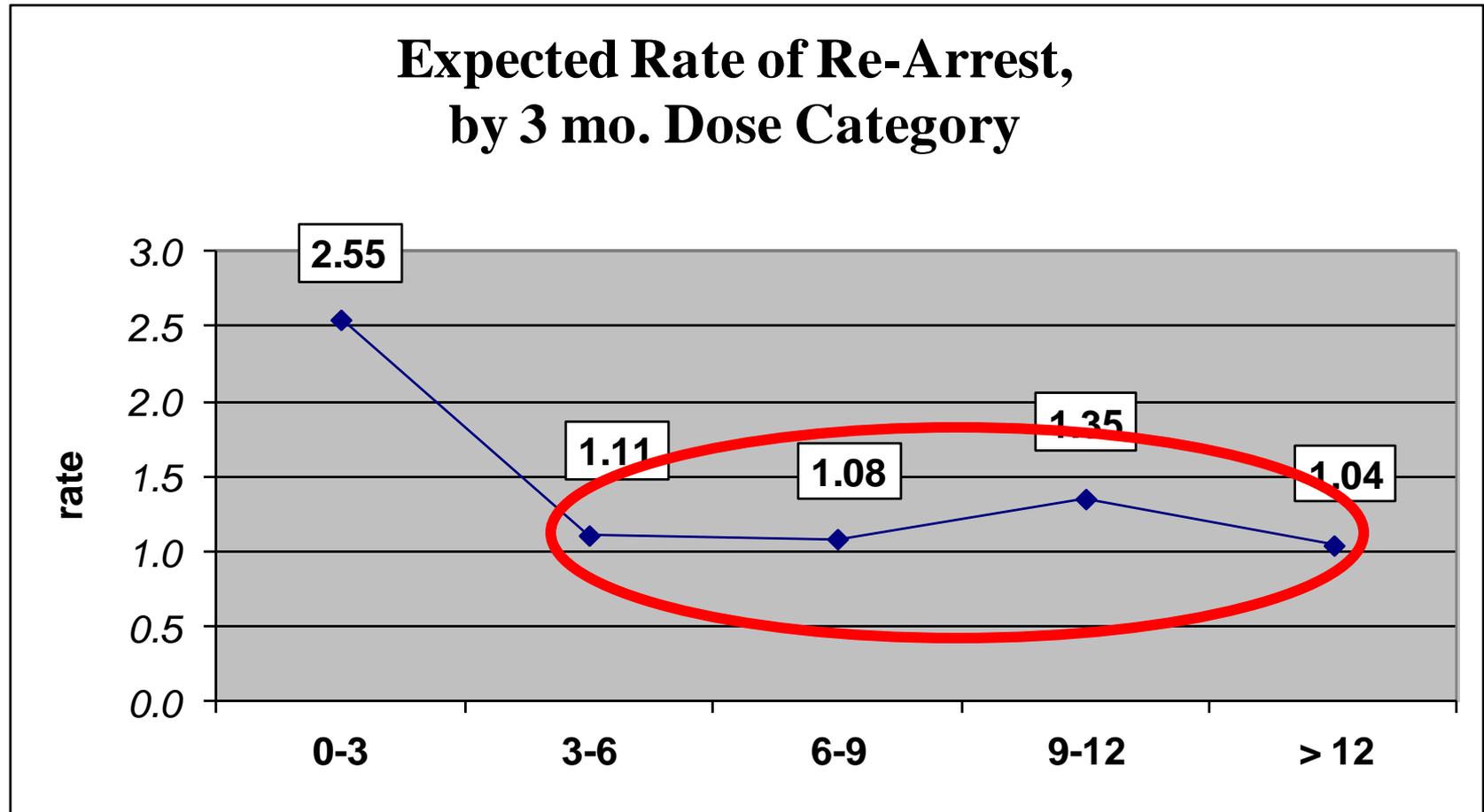
Mean Yearly Rate of Re-Arrest,
by Placement Status After Matching



Finding: Overall, *no effect* of placement on rate of re-arrest (if anything, it may increase re-arrest).

Effect of length of stay on re-arrest

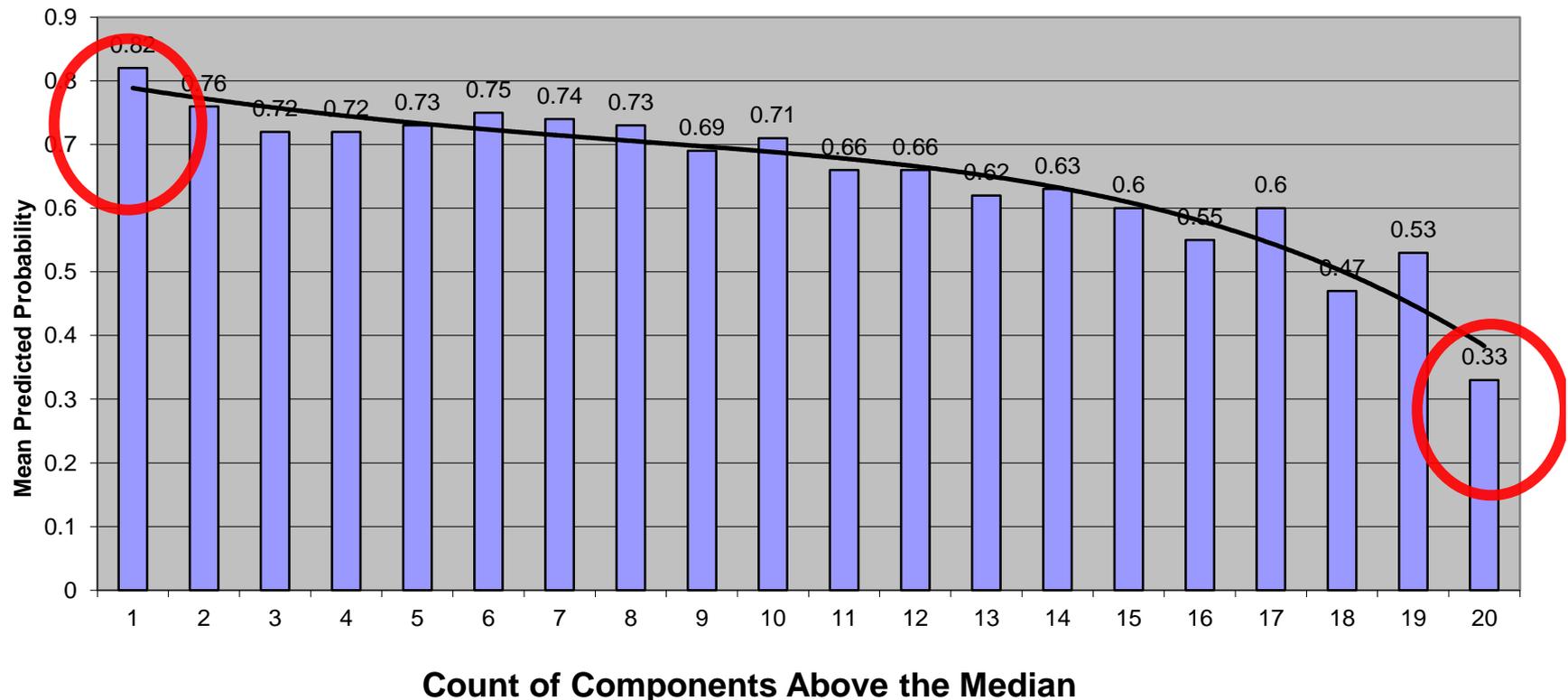
3 month intervals as doses



Finding: For intermediate lengths of stay (i.e., 3-13 months), there appears to be no marginal benefit in terms of re-arrest for longer lengths of stay.

Is a generally more positive institutional experience related to better outcomes?

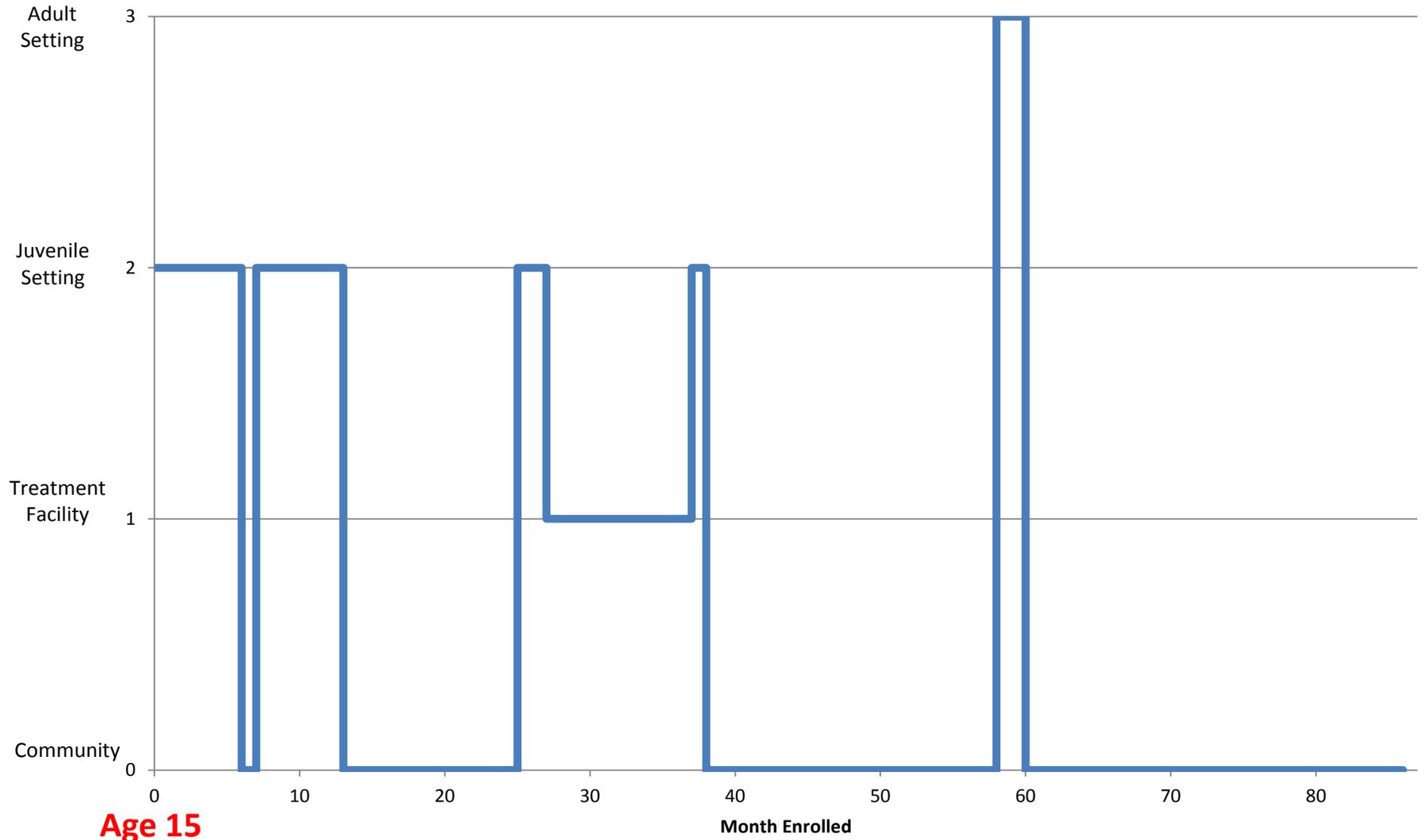
System Involvement Outcome



Finding: Even after controlling for background characteristics, there is a 35%-49% reduction in the probability of system involvement in the next year

Institutional placements over 84 months

Subject 691



Access to Appropriate Services

- **Finding(s)**: Community-based services can reduce reoffending and improve other outcomes, but...
 - many with identifiable problems (e.g., substance abuse problems) linked to their offending do not receive services
- **Implications**: Increase the provision of services (mental health, substance abuse, etc.) to adolescent offenders in both institutions and in the community, ensuring that the services are of adequate intensity and that they involve family members.

Are these adolescents getting substance use services?

Looking at those adolescents with a diagnosed substance use problem*

	Adult Setting	Juvenile Setting	Community
% with service	55%	61%	30%
Average intensity of sessions	1 every 13 days	1 every 3 days	1 every 47 days

* Diagnosed at baseline as present in the past year