

Uncouth Youth? Building a profile of juvenile offenders in Perth Children's Court between 1994 and 2009

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Overview

- Background to 'Uncouth Youth?'
- Aims of the project
- Methodology & Analysis
- Results – a profile of young offenders in Western Australia
- Discussion



Background

- The Perth Children's Court deals with thousands of criminal offences
 - 2005/06 there were 4741 cases
 - 2006/07 there were 5253 cases
 - In 2009, from 1st January to 31st March, there were 2256 cases (cases included hearings for care and protection orders)
- Court Reports contain essential information on factors surrounding juvenile offenders. However, once individual reports are utilised by the sentencing Judge, they are archived and collectively their information is not collated or analysed.

Background

- **The Young Offenders Act 1994 (WA)**
- **School Education Act 1999 (WA) Compulsory school age**
 - **2005** –15 years
 - **2006-07** –16 years / approved further education/employment
 - **2008-13** –17 years / approved further education/employment

Aims

- Profile of young offenders in Western Australia
- Identify and understanding risk factors
- Identify trends between 1994 and 2009

Methodology

- Random selection of 200 Court Reports from Perth Children's Court from four 5-year periods: 1994, 1999, 2004, and 2009
- From the court reports, a de-identified, aggregated dataset was compiled
- No reports were permitted to leave the room at the Children's Court.

Analysis

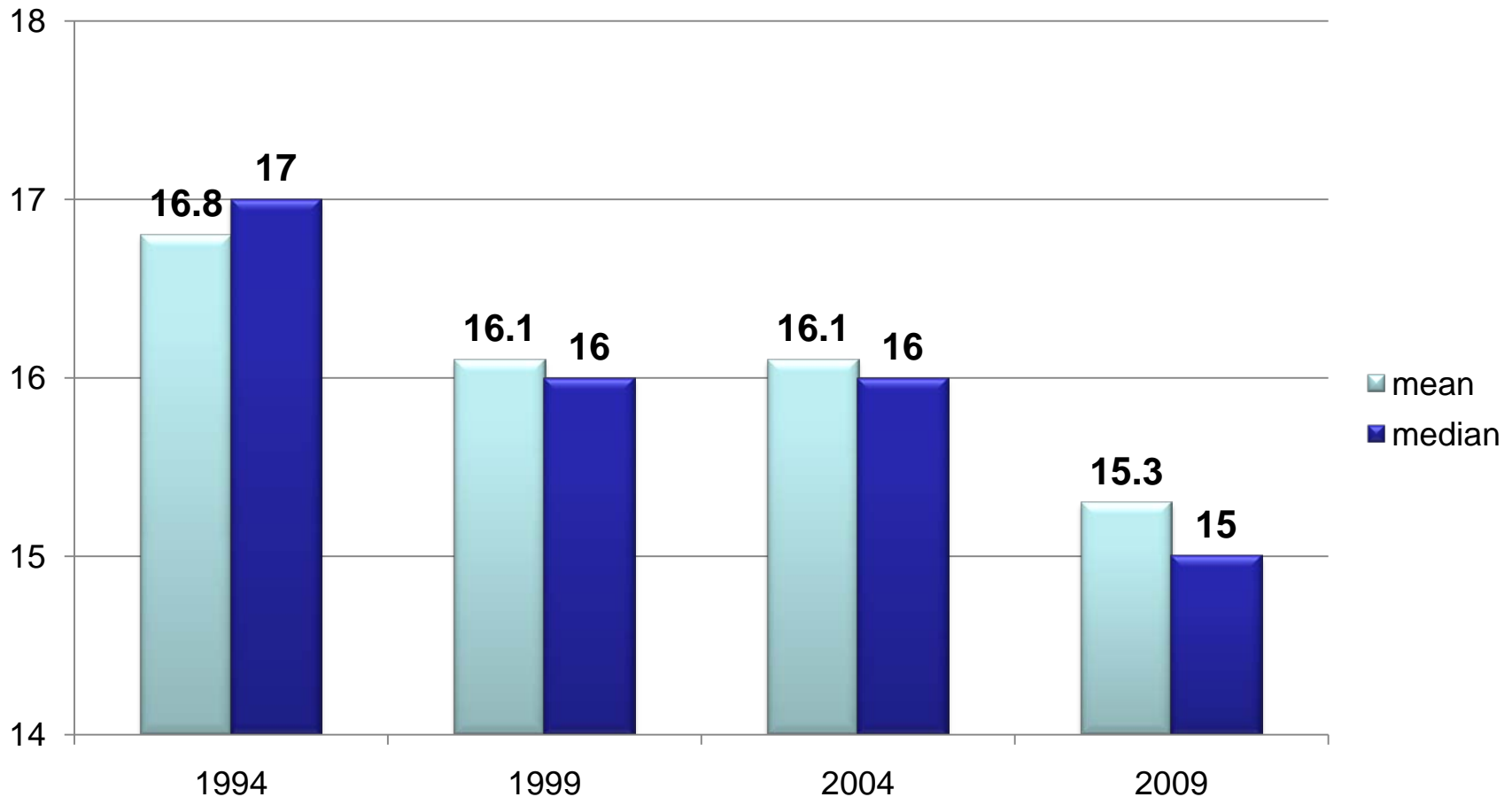
- Mixed-method approach
 - Content analysis
 - Parametric testing (ANOVA)
 - Non-Parametric testing (Chi Square)
- Limitations
 - Restricted to what was recorded on the court report
 - Some problems with missing data
 - Assumed that if data was not recorded, it was not present / not an issue for that young person (e.g. substance use)

Results

<u>1994</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2009</u>
Male (68%)	Male (70%)	Male (80%)	Male (78%)
16.8 years (med = 17 yrs)	16.1 years (med = 16 years)	16.1 years (med = 16 years)	15.3 years (med = 15 years) ★
Non-Indigenous (52%)	Non-Indigenous (66%)	Indigenous status not determined (64%)	Indigenous (54%) ★
Had legal representation (60%)	Had legal representation (92%)	Had legal representation (98%)	Had legal representation (98%) ★
Resides with mother (42%) / does not reside with either parent (34%)	Does not reside with either parent (44%) / Resides with mother (30%)	Does not reside with either parent (34%) / Resides with mother (30%)	Resides with mother (32%) / Resides with both parents (30%)
Has siblings (93%)	Has siblings (91%)	Has siblings (100%)	Has siblings (98%)
Obtained year 9 (med = yr 10)	Obtained year 9 (med = yr 9)	Obtained year 9 (med = yr 9)	Obtained year 8 (med = yr 9)

Results

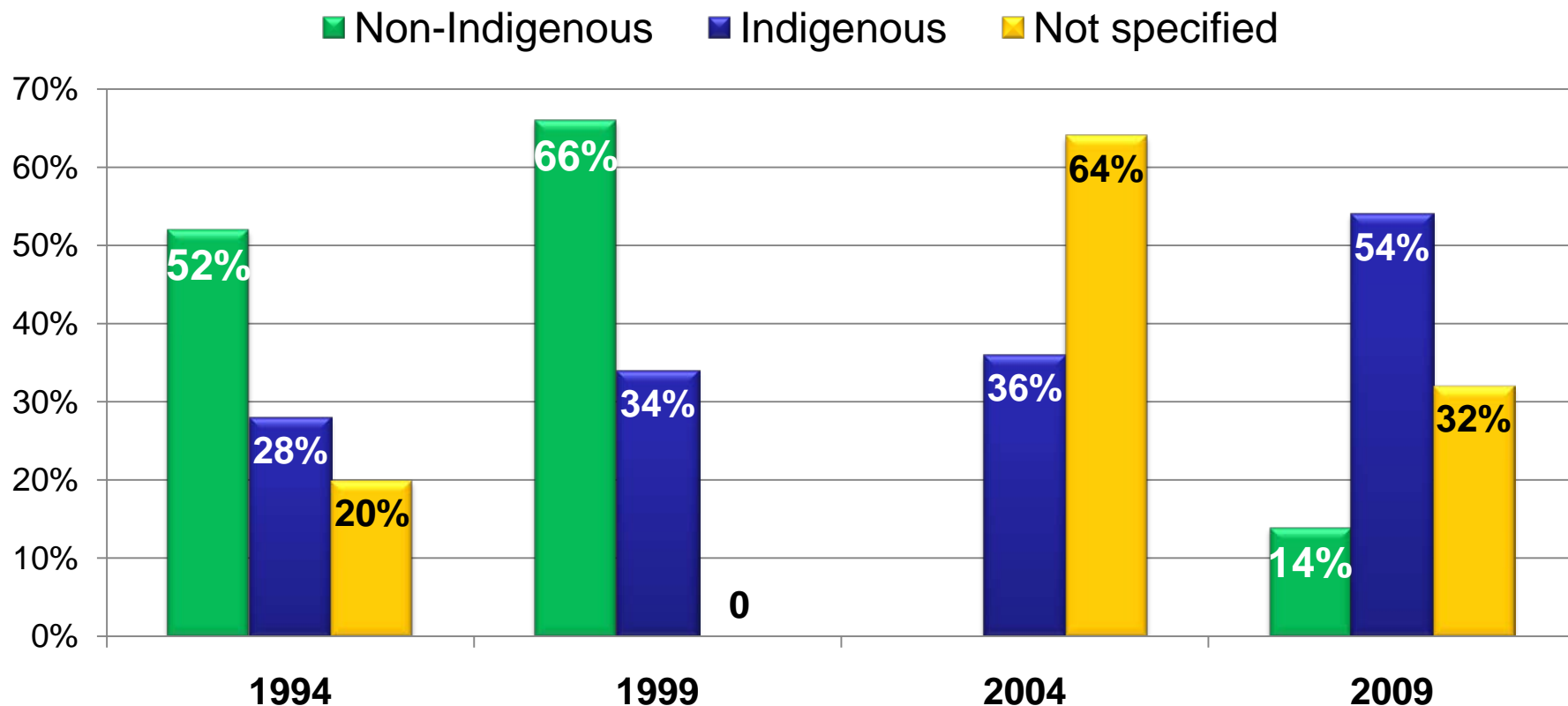
Age



Jonckheere's test revealed a significant trend in the data: as cohort year increased, the median age decreased ($J=4441$, $z = -7.15$, $r = -.51$).

Indigenous Status

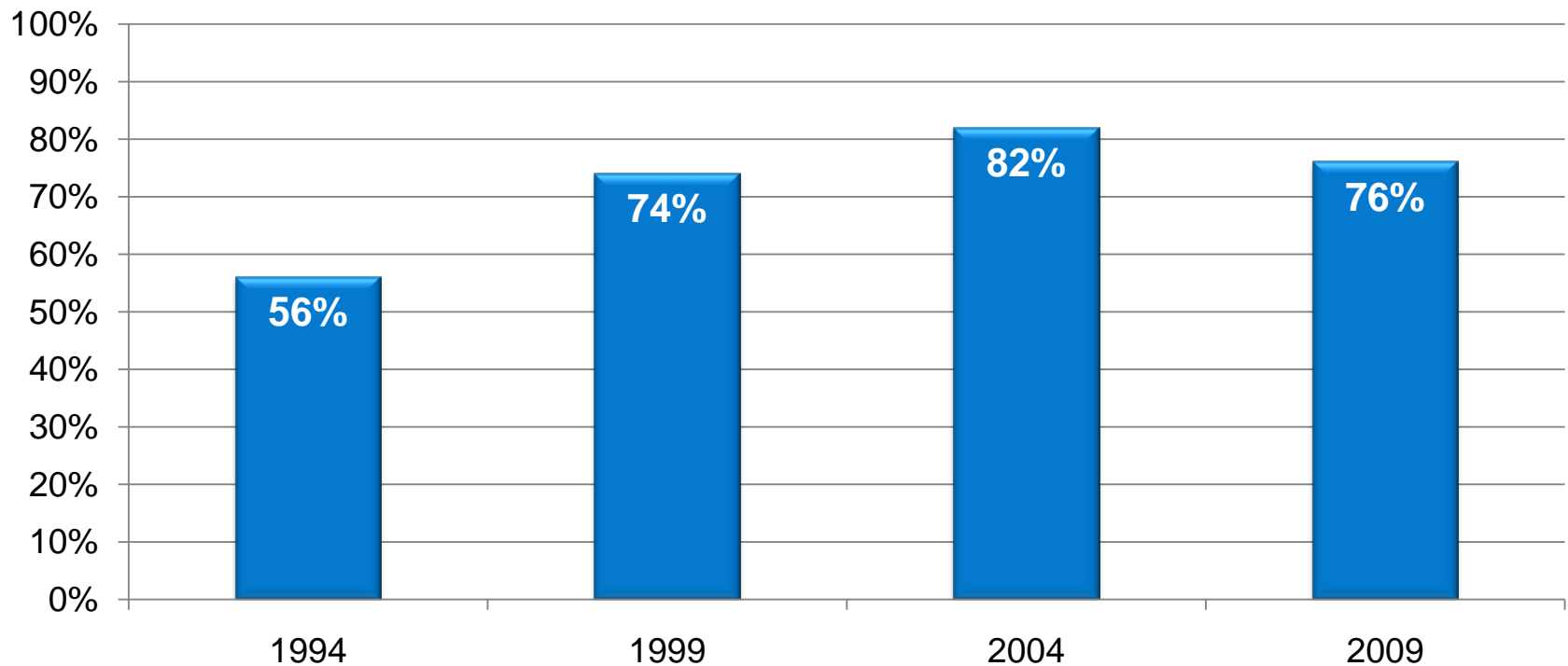
Indigenous status was significant across cohorts: ($\chi^2(1) = 14.67, p = .000$; Phi=.587) . Young people were 7.15 times more likely to be Indigenous in 2009 than those in 1999.





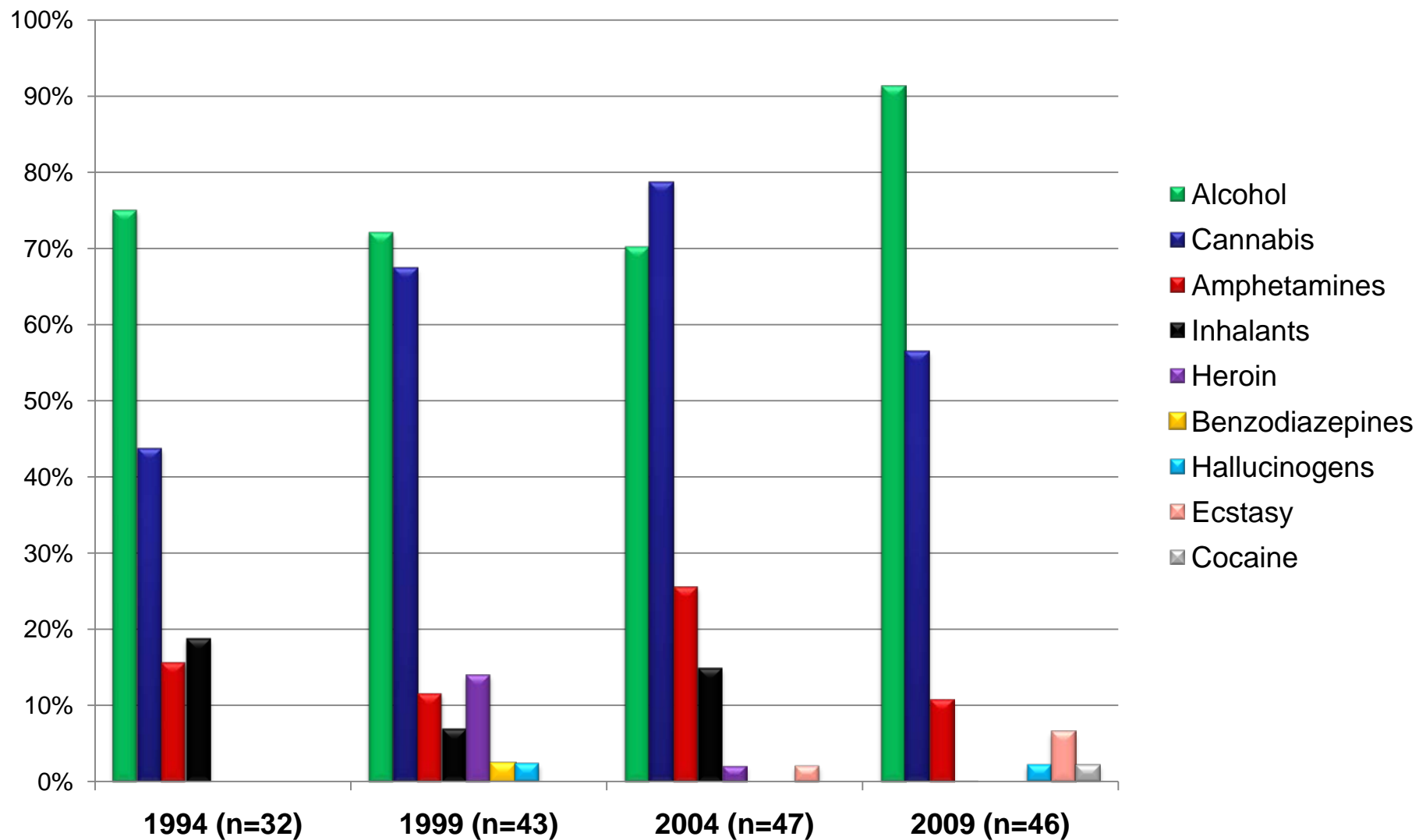
Current substance Use

- Substance use was significant across cohorts ($\chi^2(3) = 9.33, p = .025; \text{Phi} = .216$)
- 1994 and 2004 ($\chi^2(1) = 7.90, p = .005; \text{Phi} = .281$)
- 1994 and 2009 ($\chi^2(1) = 4.46, p = .035; \text{Phi} = .211$)



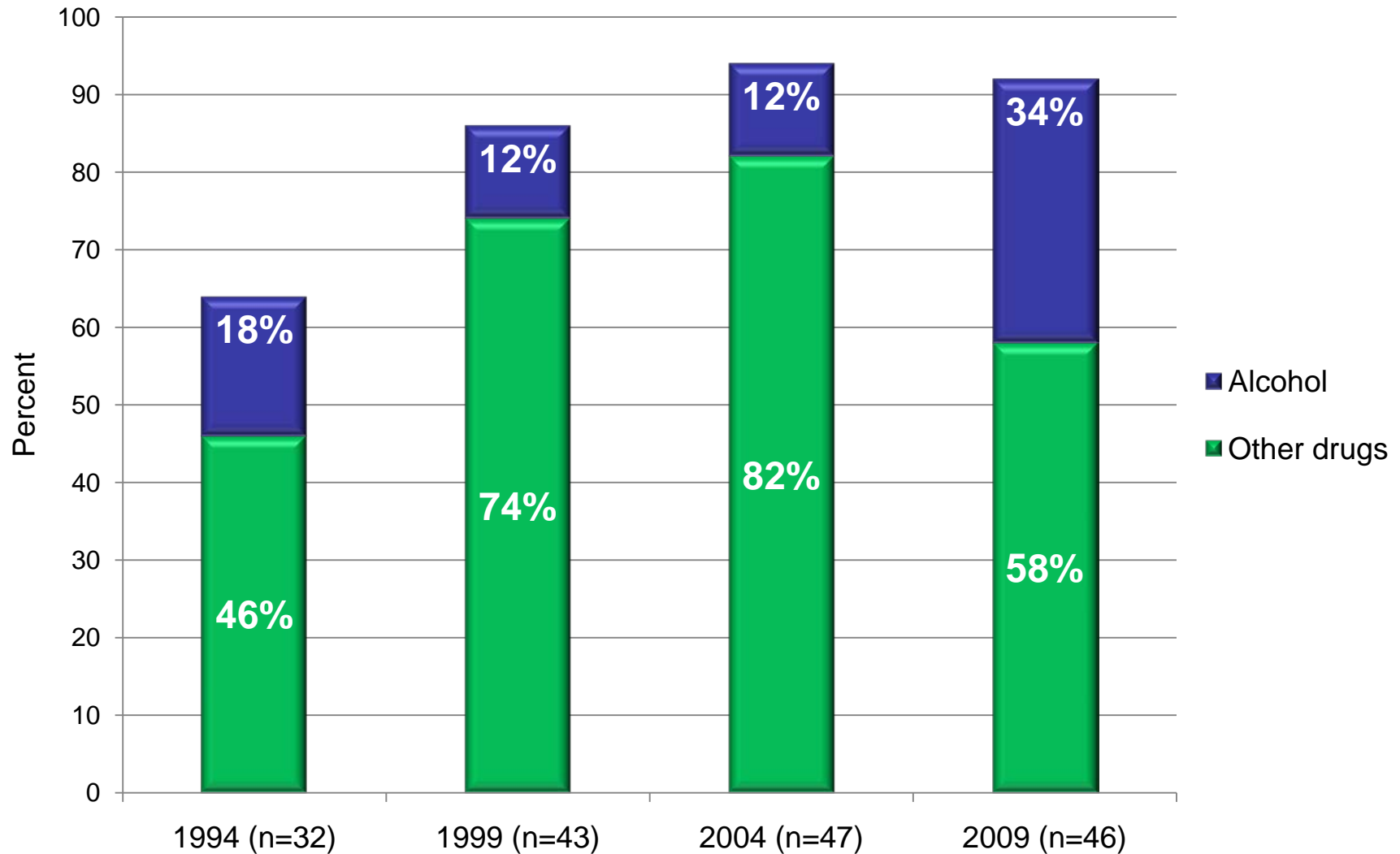
Results

Substances used (past and present)



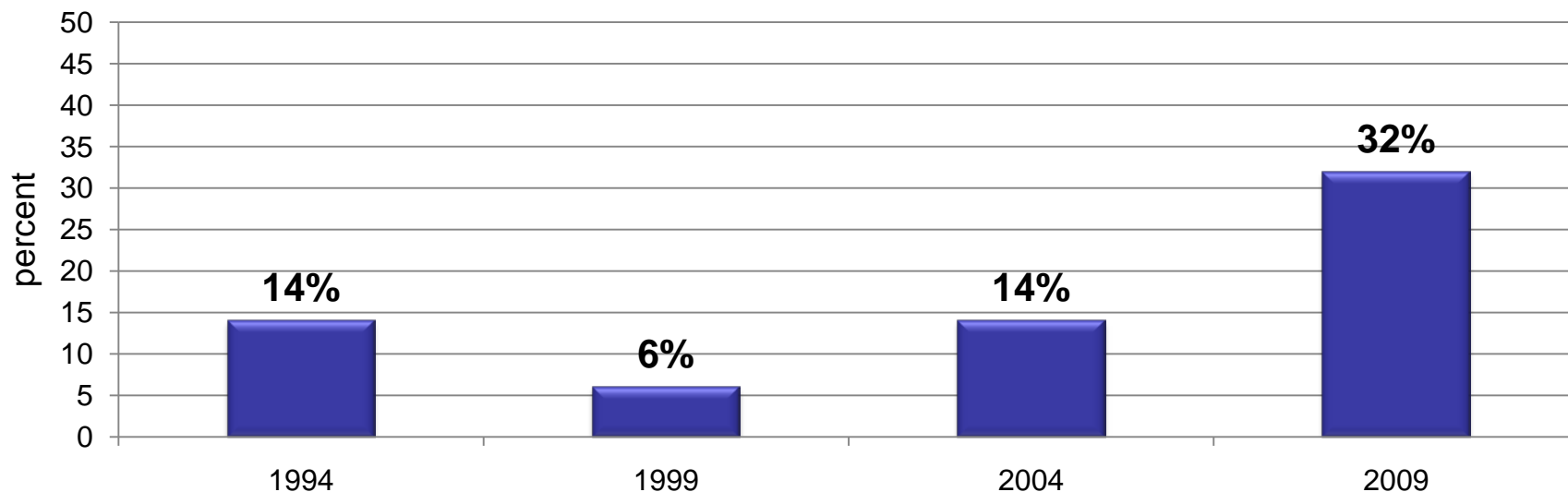
Results

Alcohol and Other Drug Use (past and present)



Results

Family drug or alcohol abuse present



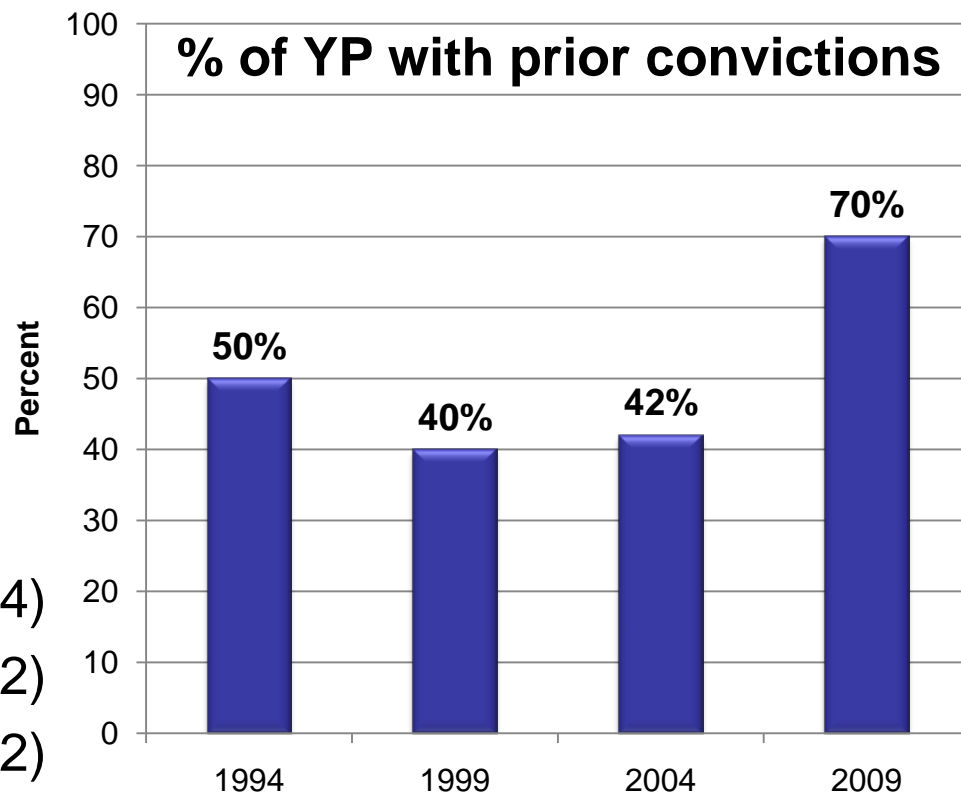
	1994 (n=7) 7 YP	1999 (n=4) 3 YP	2004 (n=9) 7 YP	2009 (n=20) 16 YP
Family member	Father (85.7%)	Mother (75%)	Mother (44.5%) / Father (33.3%)	Mother (40%) Step parent (25%)
Substance type	Alcohol (86.7%) Cannabis (100%)	Cannabis (100%)	Alcohol (55.5%)	Alcohol (45%)

Results

<u>1994</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2009</u>
May/may not have prior convictions (50%) (x = 7; med = 5)	Do not have prior convictions (60%) (x = 6; med = 3)	Do not have prior convictions (58%) (x = 5; med = 3)	Has prior convictions (70%) (x = 9; med = 5)

Prior Convictions

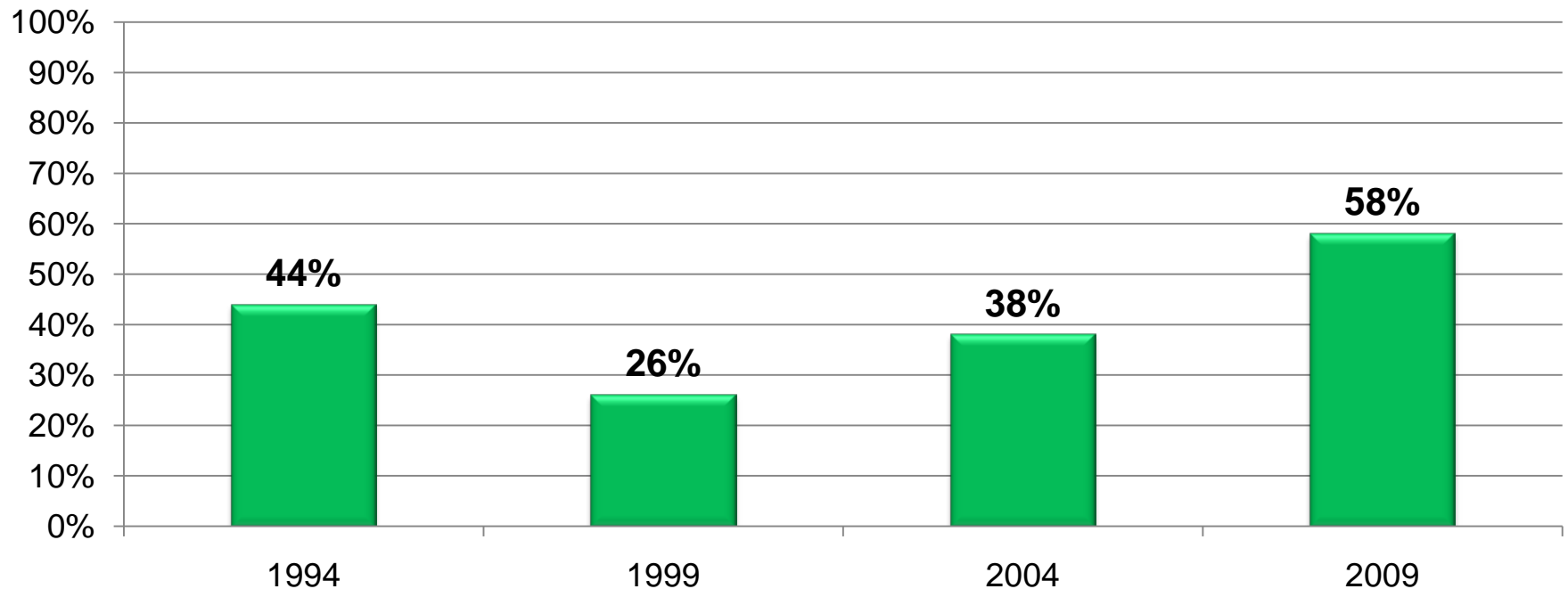
- The presence of prior convictions was significant across cohorts
($\chi^2(3) = 11.99$, $p = .007$;
Phi = .319)
- 1994 and 2009 ($p=.041$, Phi=.204)
- 1999 and 2009 ($p=.003$, Phi=.302)
- 2004 and 2009 ($p=.005$, Phi=.282)



Results

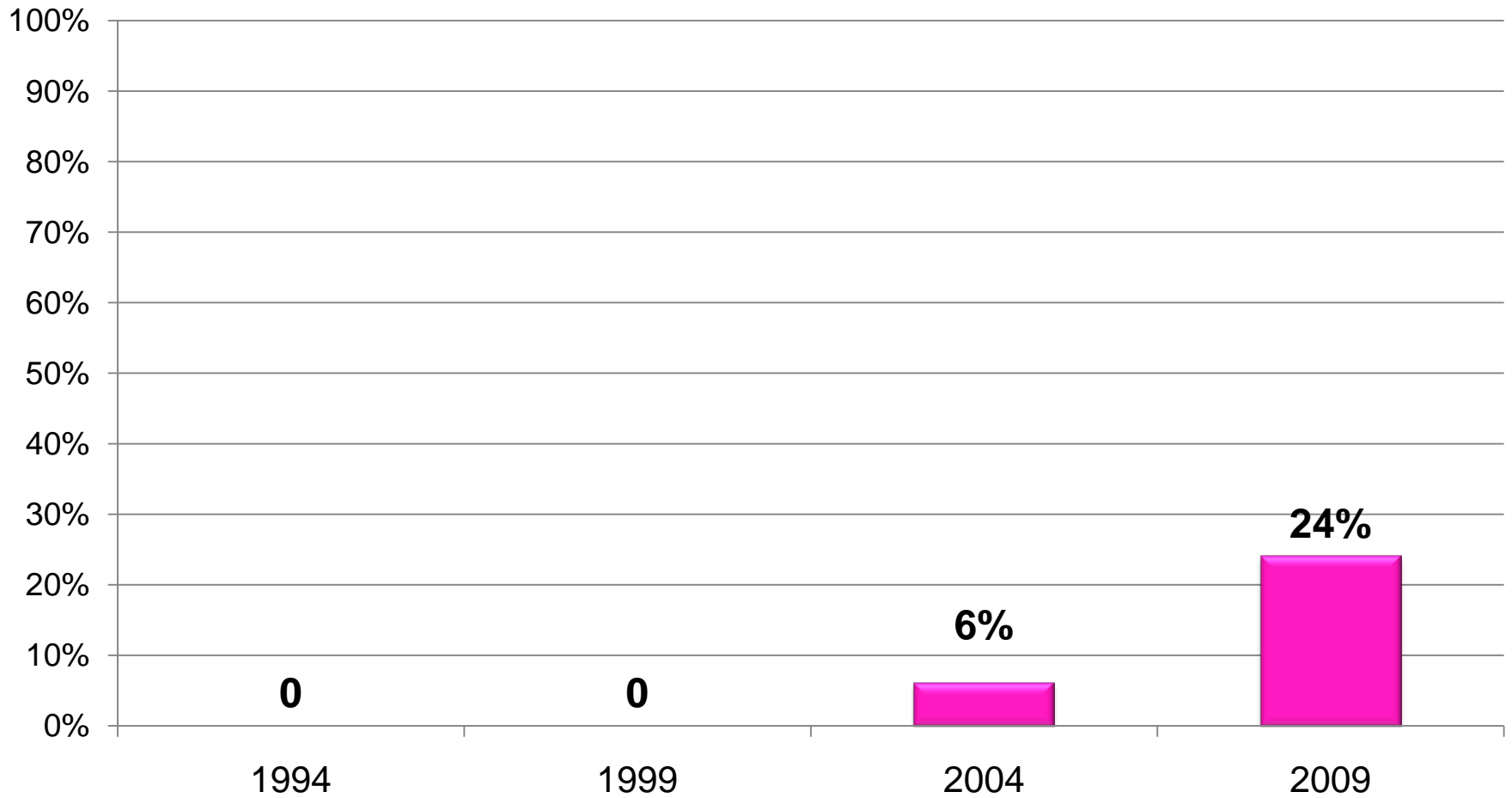
Prior Supervision Order

- Presence of a prior supervision order was significant across cohorts ($\chi^2(3) = 10.94, p = .012; \text{Phi} = .234$)
- Specific significance was between:
 - 1999 and 2009 ($\chi^2(1) = 10.51, p = .001; \text{Phi} = .324$)
 - 2004 and 2009 ($\chi^2(1) = 4.01, p = .045; \text{Phi} = .20$).



Results

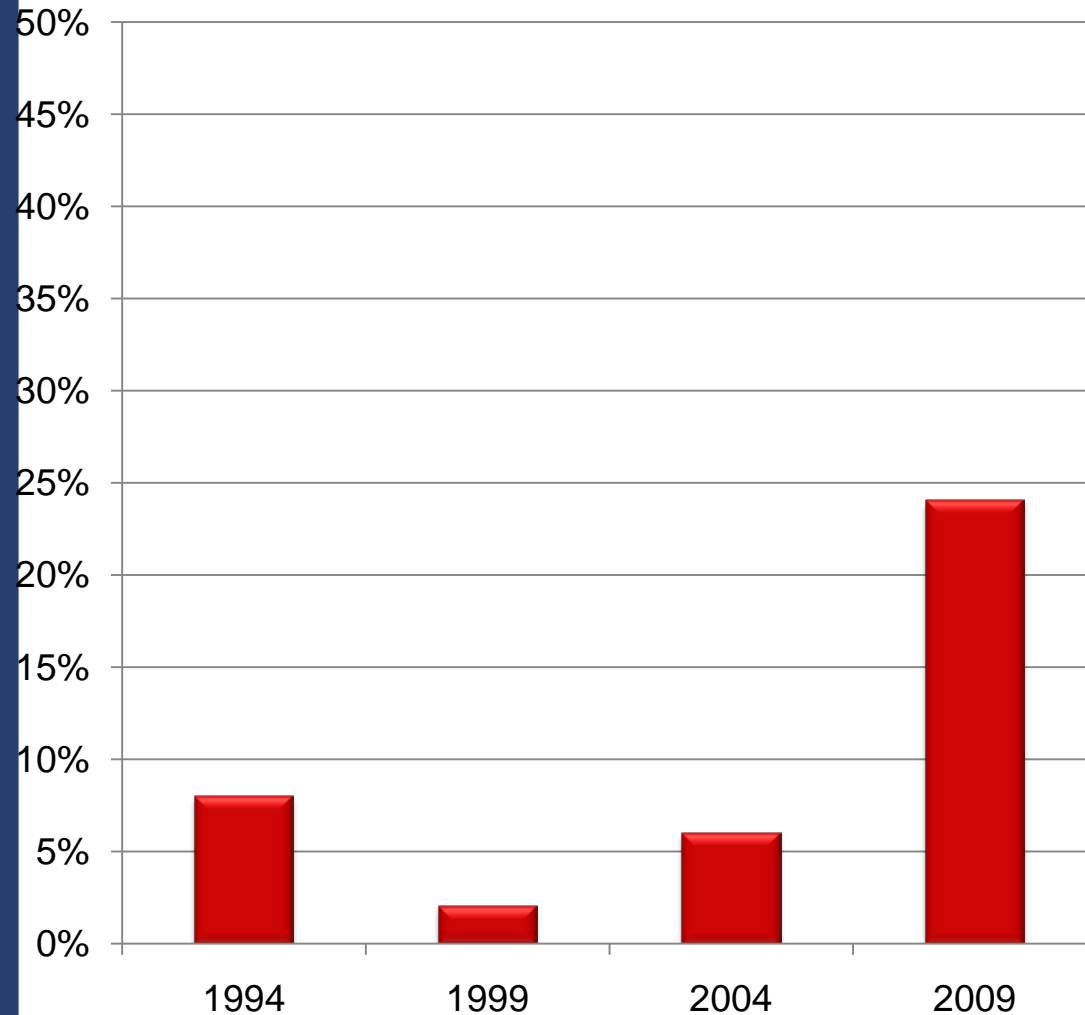
Parent Incarcerated



$\chi^2(1) = 27.89, p = .000; \text{Phi} = .373$

Results

Grief



Grief & Cohort:

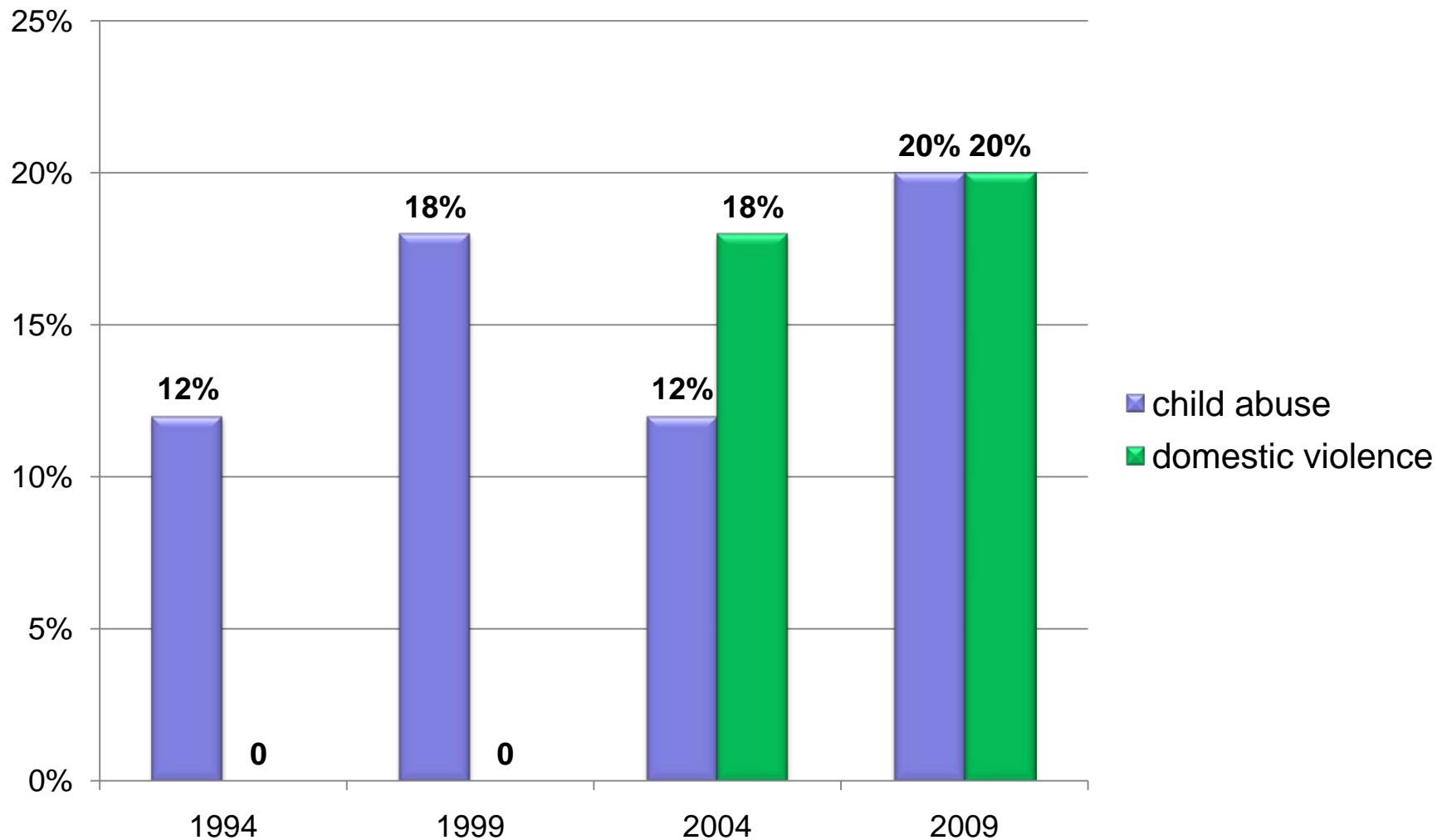
($\chi^2(1) = 15.56, p = .001;$
Phi=.279)

Additional chi square tests
determined a significant
association between:

- 1994 and 2009 ($\chi^2(1) = 4.76, p = .029;$ Phi=.218)
- 1999 and 2009 ($\chi^2(1) = 10.70, p = .001;$ Phi=-.327)
- 2004 and 2009 ($\chi^2(1) = 6.35, p = .012;$ Phi=-.252).

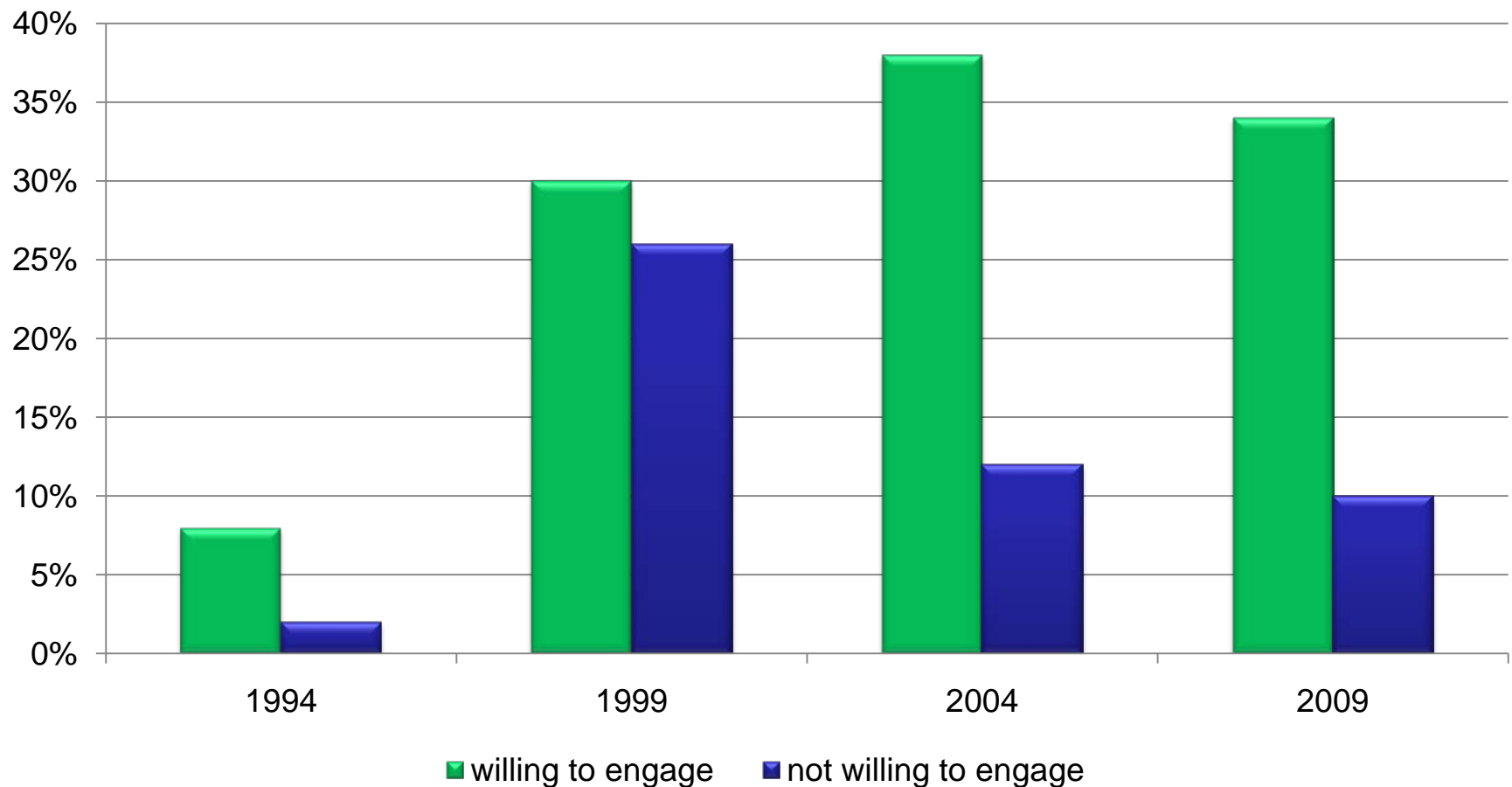
Results

Child abuse and presence of domestic violence



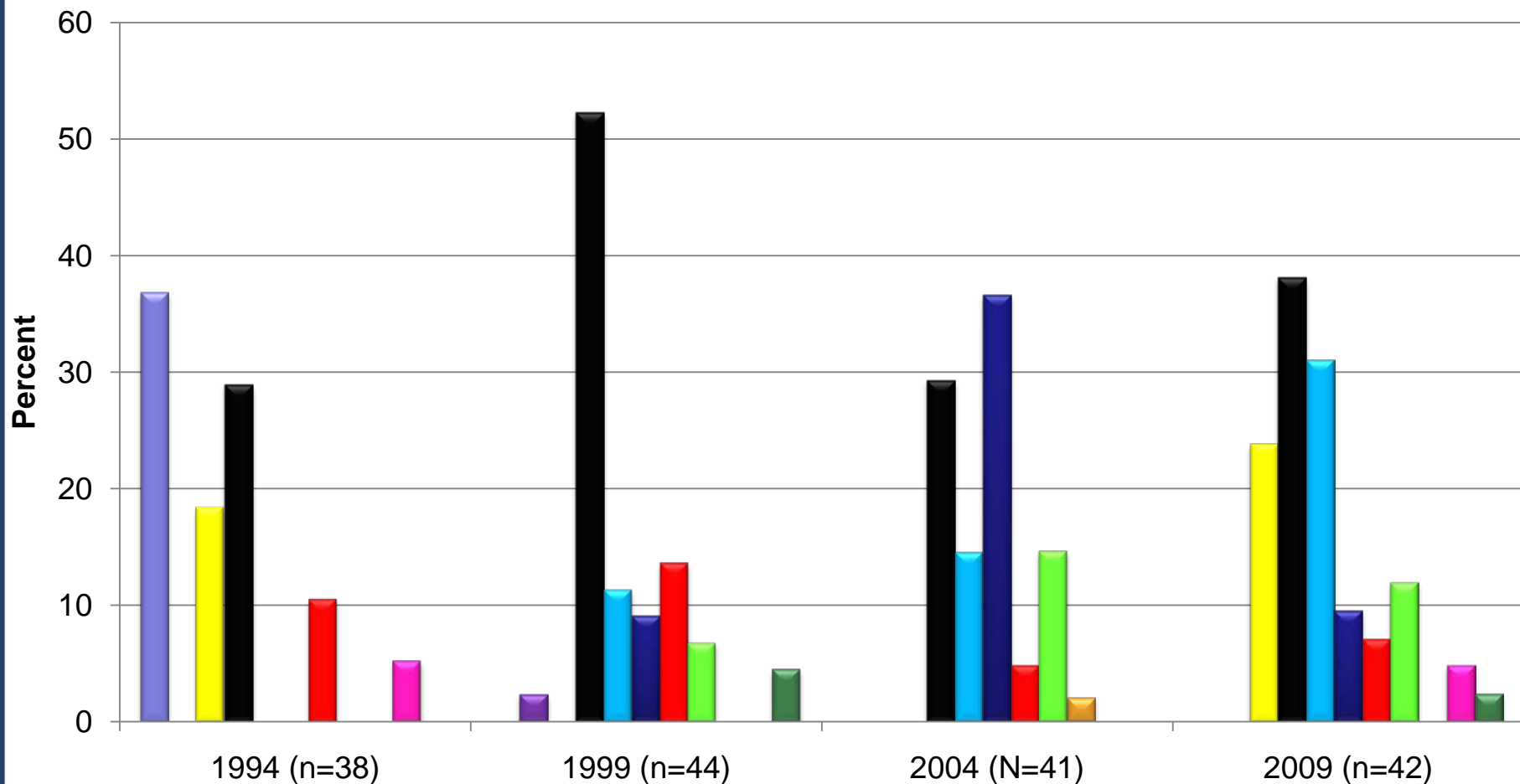
Results

- No significant mental health problems
- General willingness to engage with the recommended intervention



Results

- Probation order
- YCBO
- GBB
- Imprisonment
- Fine
- IYSO
- Diversion
- Dismissal
- CRO
- IYSO-D
- Suspended Imprisonment



Summary / Conclusion

- Between 1994 and 2009 there has been a significant decrease in the age of young people coming through Perth Children's Court
- YP were also significantly more likely to:
 - Be Indigenous in 2009 than previous cohort years
 - Have legal representation in all cohorts compared to 1994
 - Currently use substances including alcohol in later compared to earlier cohorts
 - Have prior convictions in 2009 compared to earlier cohorts
 - Have a previous supervision order in 2009 compared to earlier cohorts
 - Have an incarcerated parent in 2009 compared to 2004