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Testing the Effectiveness of an Advance Data Worksheet and Initial Hard-Copy Survey on Response Rates and Data Quality

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Disclaimer

Opinions are my own and not necessarily the views of U.S. government.



Overview

- Background
 - BJS
 - LECS
 - LEMAS, LEMAS PATOW
- Experiment
- Preliminary Findings

Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS)

Data Collection Status: Active

Frequency: Periodic

Latest Data Available: 2020

Data Experts: Elizabeth J. Davis, BJS Statistician

Sean E. Goodison, PhD, BJS Statistician

Collection Period:

1987, 1990, 1993, 1997, 1999 (limited scope), 2000, 2003, 2007, 2013, 2016, 2020

Conducted periodically since 1987, the Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) core collects data from over 3,000 general-purpose, county, and local law enforcement agencies, including all those that employ 100 or more full-time sworn officers and a nationally representative sample of smaller agencies. Data are obtained on agency responsibilities, operating expenditures, job functions of sworn and civilian employees, officer salaries and special pay, demographic characteristics of officers, weapons and armor policies, education and training requirements, computers and information systems, vehicles, special units, and community policing activities.

Beginning in 2016, the LEMAS survey adopted a core and supplement structure. Due to the breadth of the survey, detailed analysis of any specific law enforcement topic cannot be done with the LEMAS core. The LEMAS supplements are designed to fill this void by allowing for a more comprehensive examination on a key topic in law enforcement and are administered between core years. The 2016 LEMAS Body-Worn Camera Supplement is the first supplement administered under the new structure.

Methodology



Questionnaires





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What is BJS?

- The United States' **primary source** for criminal justice statistics and the **primary statistical agency** of the Department of Justice (DOJ)
- Our mission is to collect, analyze, publish, and disseminate information on crime, criminal offenders, victims of crime, and the operation of justice systems at all levels of government
- <https://bjs.ojp.gov/>

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Your Source for Criminal Justice Statistics

[Learn more about BJS](#)

New Releases

- [FY 2022 Current Solicitations](#)
- [Immigration, Citizenship, and the Federal Justice System, 2000-2020 – Supplemental Tables](#)
- [Incidence of Victimization at School and Away From School](#)
- [HIV in Prisons, 2020 – Statistical Tables](#)
- [Federal Criminal Case Processing Statistics Tool 2020 Update](#)
- [Federal Justice Statistics, 2020](#)
- [Trends and Patterns in Firearm Violence, 1993–2018](#)
- [Corrections Statistical Analysis Tool \(CSAT\) - Prisoners](#)

[View more new releases](#)

Immigration, Citizenship, and the Federal Justice System, 2000–2020 – Supplemental Tables

[New Release](#)



Immigration, Citizenship, and the Federal Justice System, 2000–2020 – Supplemental Tables

These tables supplement *Immigration, Citizenship, and the Federal Justice System, 1998-2018* (NCJ 253116), which BJS published in August 2019. That was the first BJS report to comprehensively describe the citizenship of suspects arrested



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What is LECS?

- Stands for **Law Enforcement Core Statistics** (LECS)
- Program started in 2015
 - BJS administers establishment surveys to law enforcement agencies as a **cohesive law enforcement data collection**
 - Fielded 7 national surveys to date under LECS awards
 - Maintains national listing of law enforcement agencies
 - Series of cooperative agreements with RTI International



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What is LEMAS?

- Stands for **Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics** (LEMAS) survey
- LEMAS has a **nationally representative** sample of 3,000-3,500 agencies historically
 - Since 2003, LEMAS survey focuses on general-purpose law enforcement agencies
 - Stratified random sample, with largest agencies selected with certainty
- Provides a **national snapshot** of law enforcement staffing, policies, and practices
 - Estimates through complex sample weighting and linearization with known population
- Collected periodically, with **11 waves since 1987** (next wave in January 2025)



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What is LEMAS PATOW?

- 2023 LEMAS [supplemental survey](#)
- **PATOW**: Post-Academy Training and Officer Wellness
 - **Post-academy training** is defined as law enforcement training provided to full-time sworn personnel with general arrest powers at any point in their law enforcement career following any academy or field training.
 - Intended to support FBI's Law Enforcement Suicide Data Collection by collecting agency-level information on [formal wellness programs](#)
- Publication anticipated during CY 2025



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Experiment



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Justification

- Era of **lower response rates**
- Significant resources expended for **data quality follow-up**
 - Especially important for key questions
- Evidence in literature of **pre-notification** value
 - Prior LEMAS suggested **limited applicability** for law enforcement agencies
- Focus groups note how LEMAS surveys **“passed around”** an agency
- Previous challenges, high error rates for **numeric questions**
- Submission spikes with **hard-copy survey waves**, even if submission still web-based



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Scope and Methodology

- Total sample of **3,500** law enforcement agencies
- Divided into **3 groups** at initial mailing (invitation letter)
 - Control: standard LECS web-first focus, **no additional paper resources**
 - Treatment 1: letter + **paper LEMAS PATOW survey**
 - Treatment 2: letter + **paper worksheet of key questions**



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Worksheet

- Focus on items with **historically low data quality**
 - Numeric questions only
 - Data quality issues include previous item nonresponse
- Three categories:
 - **Budget**: operational, training, and wellness
 - **Personnel counts**: total, trainers, wellness
 - **Training hours**: prior LEMAS question with new high-priority items



2023 LEMAS PATOW Pre-Survey Worksheet

INSTRUCTIONS: This worksheet is NOT the survey.

You may find it helpful to prepare responses to these select survey questions in advance. The question numbers on this worksheet match the question number in the survey. We appreciate your careful effort to provide accurate information on these important statistics.

Budget

Question 2: Enter your agency's total operating budget for the fiscal year that included December 31, 2022.

- Include jail administration costs.
- Do NOT include building construction costs or major equipment purchases

Question 3: Enter your agency's total budget for post-academy training for the fiscal year that included December 31, 2022.

- Include staff salaries and overtime.
- Do NOT include building construction costs, major equipment purchases, and grants.

Question 59: Enter your agency's total budget for formal wellness programs for the fiscal year that included December 31, 2022.

Personnel Counts

Question 1: Enter the number of full-time and part-time paid agency employees for the pay period that included December 31, 2022.

- Count employees who were regularly scheduled to work less than 35 hours per week as part-time.

	Full-time	Part-time
a. Sworn personnel with general arrest powers		
b. Sworn personnel with limited or no arrest powers (e.g., jail or correctional deputies)		
c. Non-sworn/civilian personnel		
d. TOTAL number of employees (sum of rows a, b, and c)		

Question 8: For post-academy training that occurred in 2022, how many of the total number of personnel serving as trainers or instructors worked full-time or part-time in each category shown below?

- Full-time trainers or instructors are those regularly scheduled for 35 hours or more per week for the purpose of preparing and/or delivering training content.
- Please report each trainer or instructor only once.

	Full-time trainers or instructors	Part-time trainers or instructors
a. Sworn personnel employed by your agency		
b. Retired law enforcement personnel employed by your agency		
c. Non-sworn/civilian personnel employed by your agency		
d. Sworn personnel NOT employed by your agency		
e. Retired law enforcement personnel NOT employed by your agency		
f. Non-sworn/civilian personnel NOT employed by your agency		

2023 LEMAS PATOW Pre-Survey Worksheet

Personnel Counts *continued*

Question 60: How many total full-time agency personnel worked in wellness programs as their primary responsibility as of December 31, 2022?

	Personnel whose primary responsibility is wellness
Full-time Sworn	
Full-time Non-Sworn	

Training Hours

Question 5: Enter the minimum annual number of post-academy training hours that were required for your agency's full-time sworn personnel as of December 31, 2022.

	Hours
a. Hours mandated by State Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) or state law	
b. Hours mandated by local (e.g., county, city) law	
c. Additional training hours required, but not <i>mandated by law</i>	
d. TOTAL hours of training (sum of rows a, b, and c)	

In 2022, what was the minimum number of training hours required for full-time sworn personnel with general arrest powers on...

	Hours
Question 14: Use of force continuum/situational use of force	
Question 27: Peer intervention programs	
Question 39: De-escalation	

Question 51: For each of the following training topics, if the training is required on a regular basis, what is the minimum required number of training hours for each repeated occurrence of training?

	Minimum required number of training hours for each repeated occurrence
a. Civilian complaint process	
b. Criminal/constitutional law	
c. Firearms proficiency	
d. Martial arts training (e.g., ju-jitsu)	
e. Physical comply and control tactics	
f. Procedural justice	
g. Public order/protest management /mass demonstrations	
h. Substance use disorders (e.g., opioids, methamphetamines, hallucinogens)	
i. Racial profiling, unbiased policing, implicit bias	
j. Response to an active shooter	
k. Traffic enforcement safety/tactics	

INSTRUCTIONS: This worksheet is NOT the survey.

To complete your agency's survey, log in at <https://bjslecs.org/LEMASPATOW>. You can also download a paper version of the survey at this link, or request one be sent to you by contacting our Help Desk at 800-344-1394 or LEMASPATOW@rti.org.

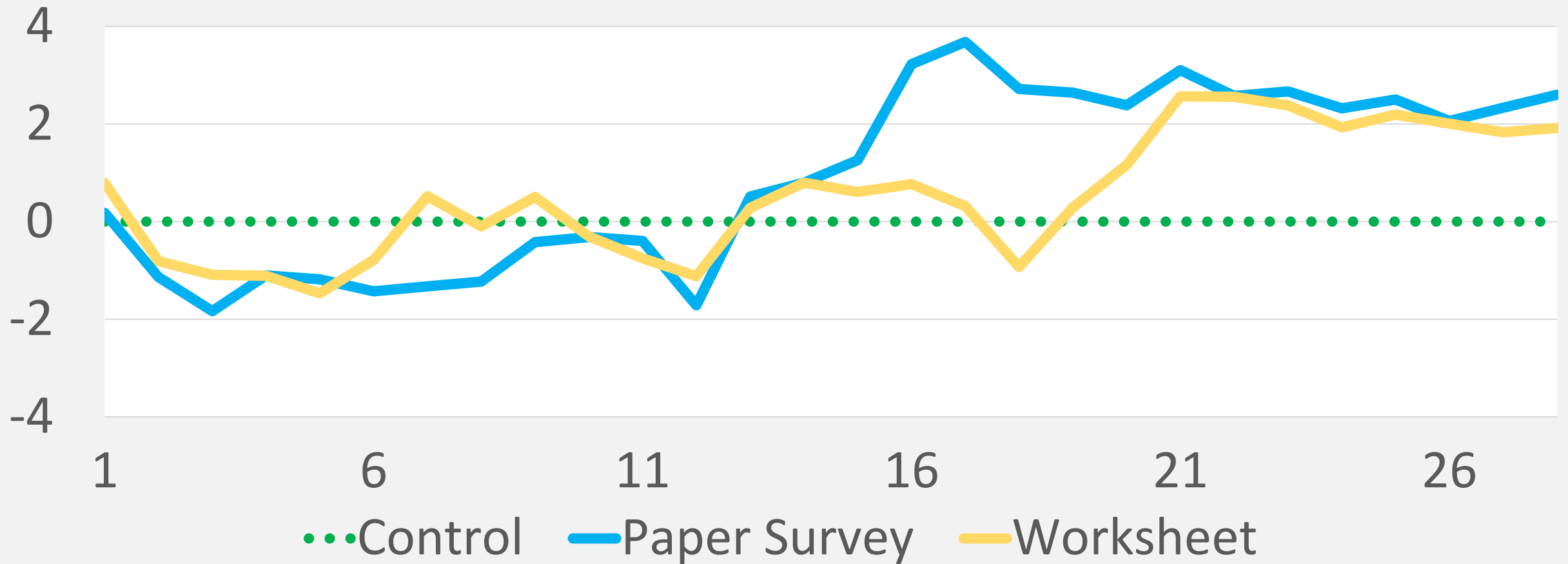


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Preliminary Findings

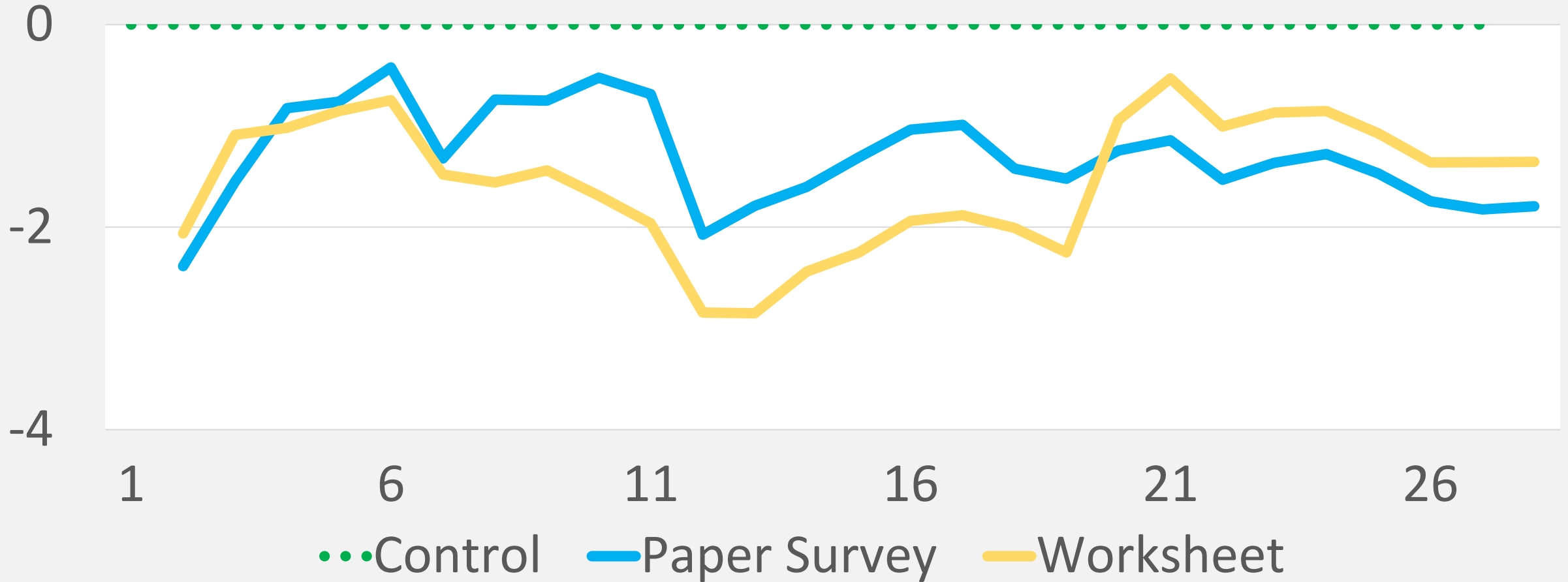


- Treatment groups with lower submission rates initially, but higher later in collection (difference in submission %, by week of response)



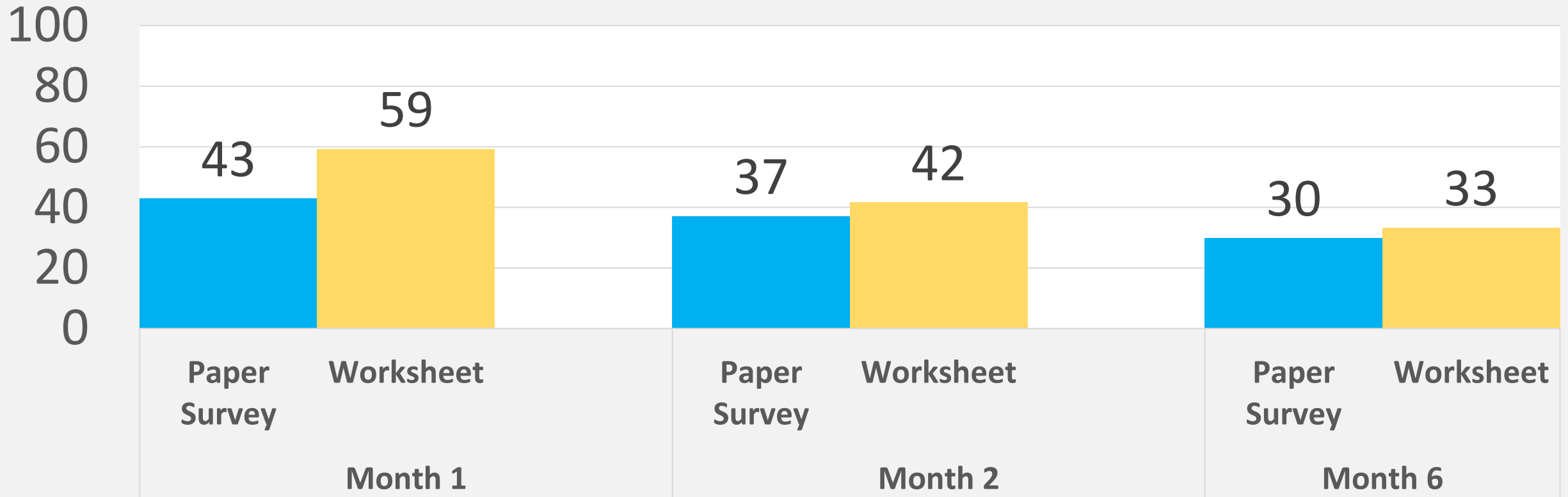


- Treatment groups with lower average data quality flags (difference in average edit check failures post-submission, by week of response)





- Use of paper materials throughout survey fielding (% of agencies reporting use before submitting online, by month of response)





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Summary

- Experiment to test viability of additional paper items to a primarily web-based establishment survey of law enforcement agencies
- Preliminary results suggest potential modest improvements to response and data quality trends, though likely nothing “game changing”
- Final assessment in coming months to capture significant differences, lessons learned, incorporation into future surveys as warranted

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