

A Summary Overview of Moving to Opportunity: A Random Assignment Housing Mobility Study in Five U.S. Cities

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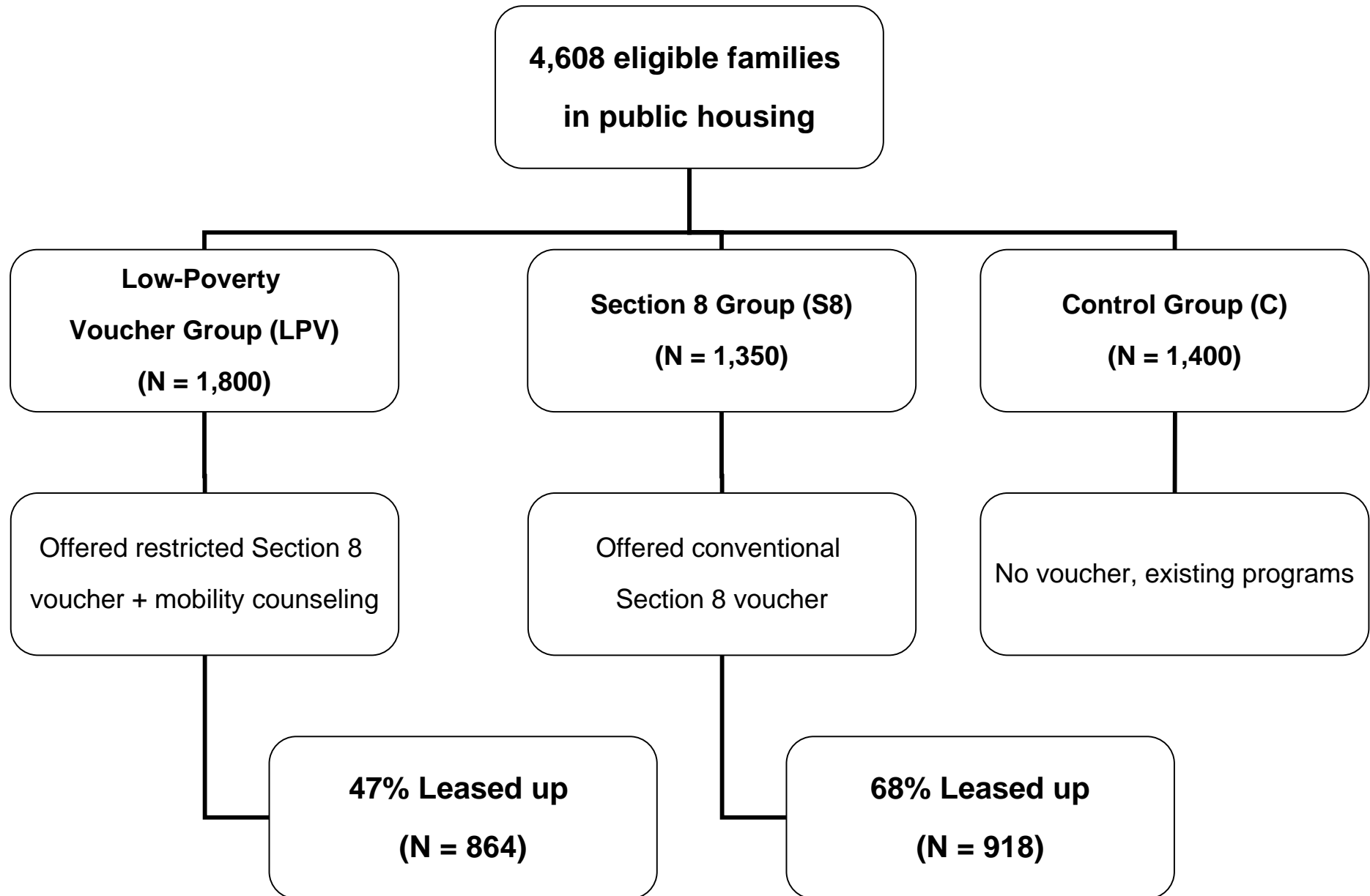
Prepared for Colloque DARES

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MTO: A Housing Mobility Experiment

- Operated from 1994 to 1998
- Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York
- Eligible families with children living in:
 - public housing
 - high-poverty neighborhoods (poverty rate \geq 40%)

Random assignment to 3 groups



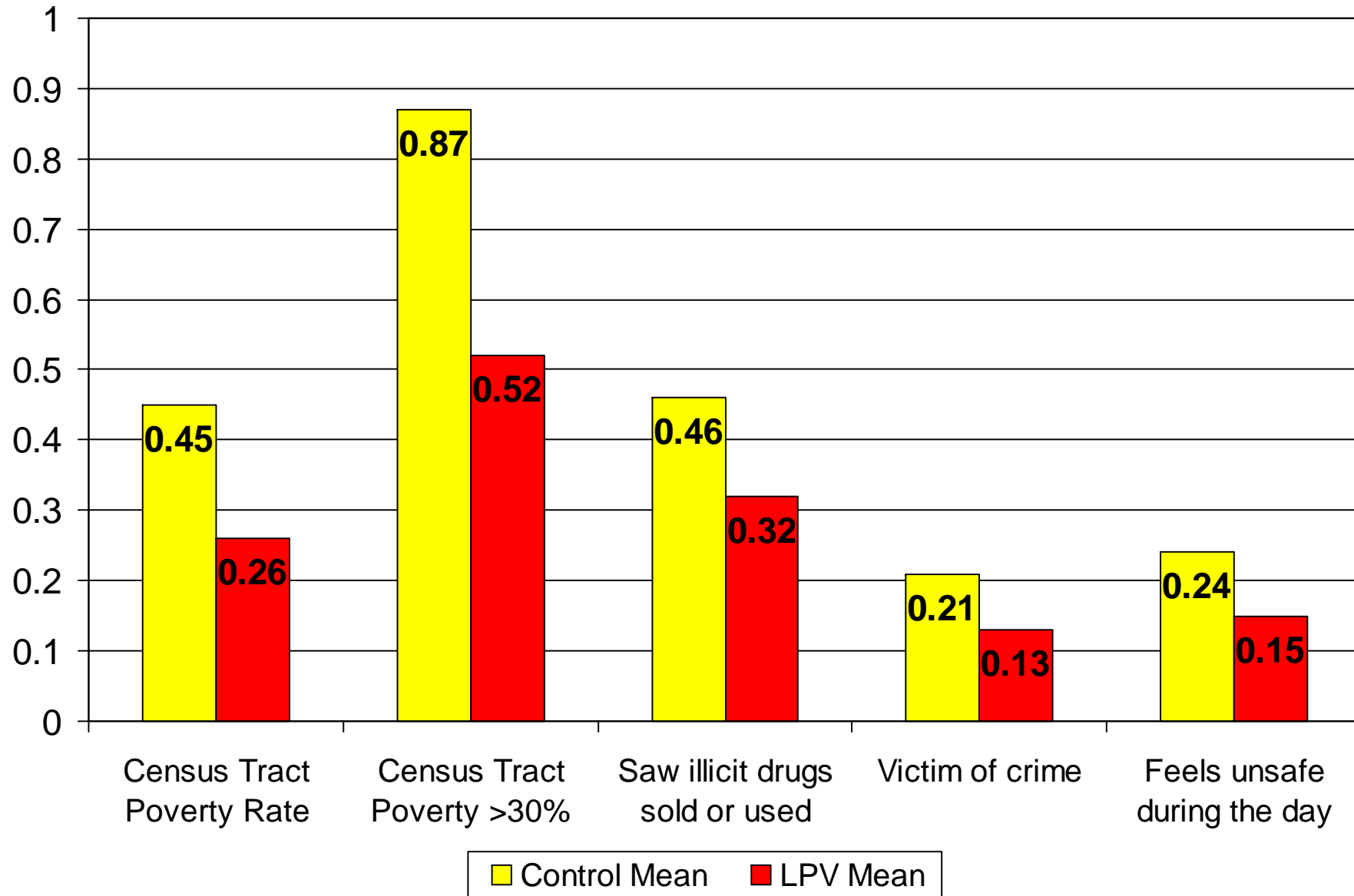
Selected Characteristics of MTO Households

- 22 percent of household heads were employed at baseline.
- 87 percent single-parent female-headed households
- Baltimore and Chicago samples are almost 100 percent black.
- LA, and NY are roughly 50 percent black, 50 percent Hispanic.
- About 20 percent of the sample in Boston is nh-white or Asian.

HUD's 5-Year Evaluation

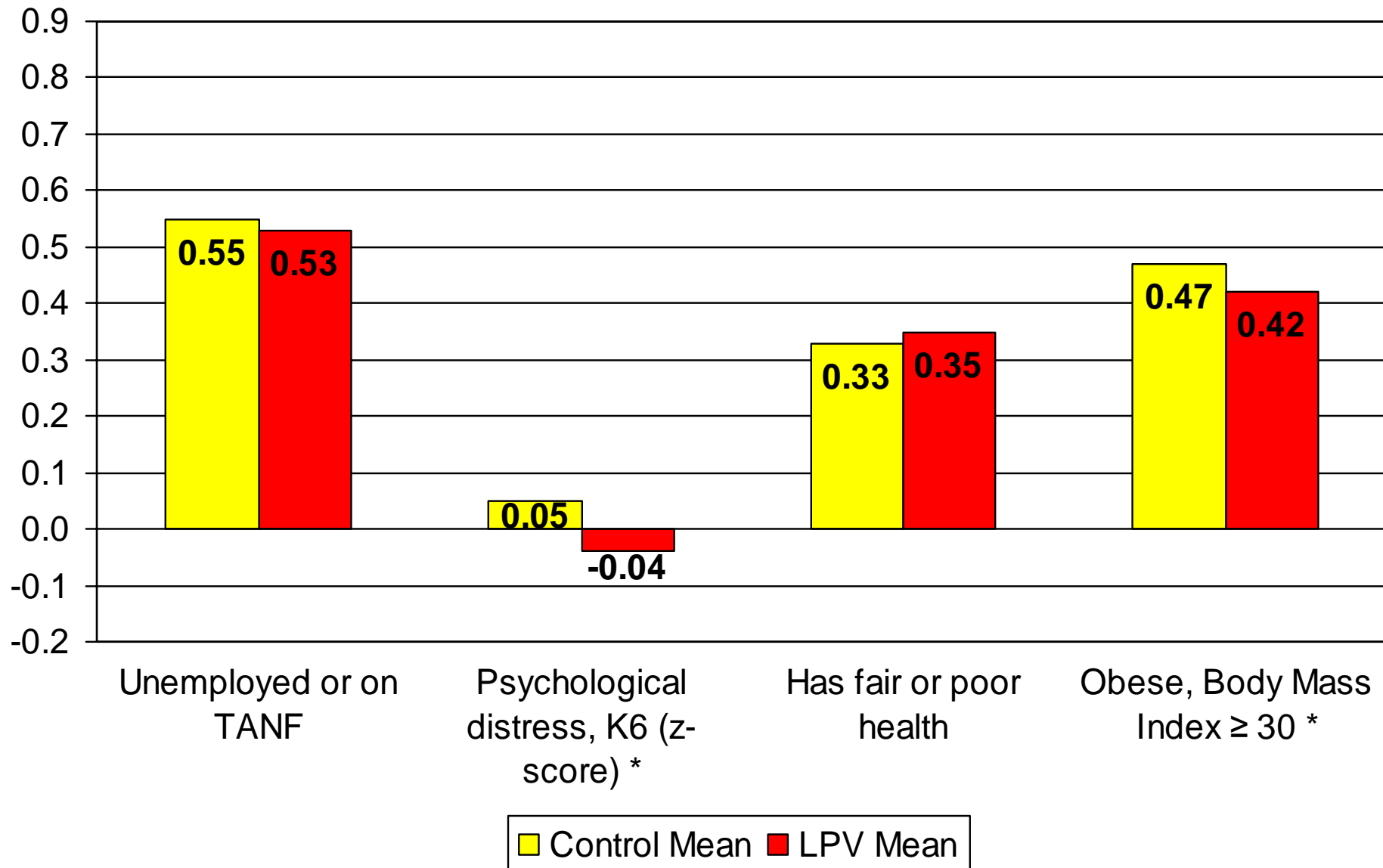
- **Qualitative Studies:** Popkin, Harris, and Cunningham; Also Edin, Clampet-Lundquist
- **Quantitative Study:**
 - Abt (Feins and Orr)
 - NBER (Kling, Liebman, Katz, Sanbonmatsu)
 - Also Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, Ludwig, Whitaker, Psaty
- **Surveys** of household heads, youth ages 12 to 19, and children ages 5 to 11
- **Administrative Data:** earnings, AFDC/TANF and Food Stamps; involvement with criminal justice system (Ludwig)

MTO Interim: Improved Neighborhood Outcomes (ITT)



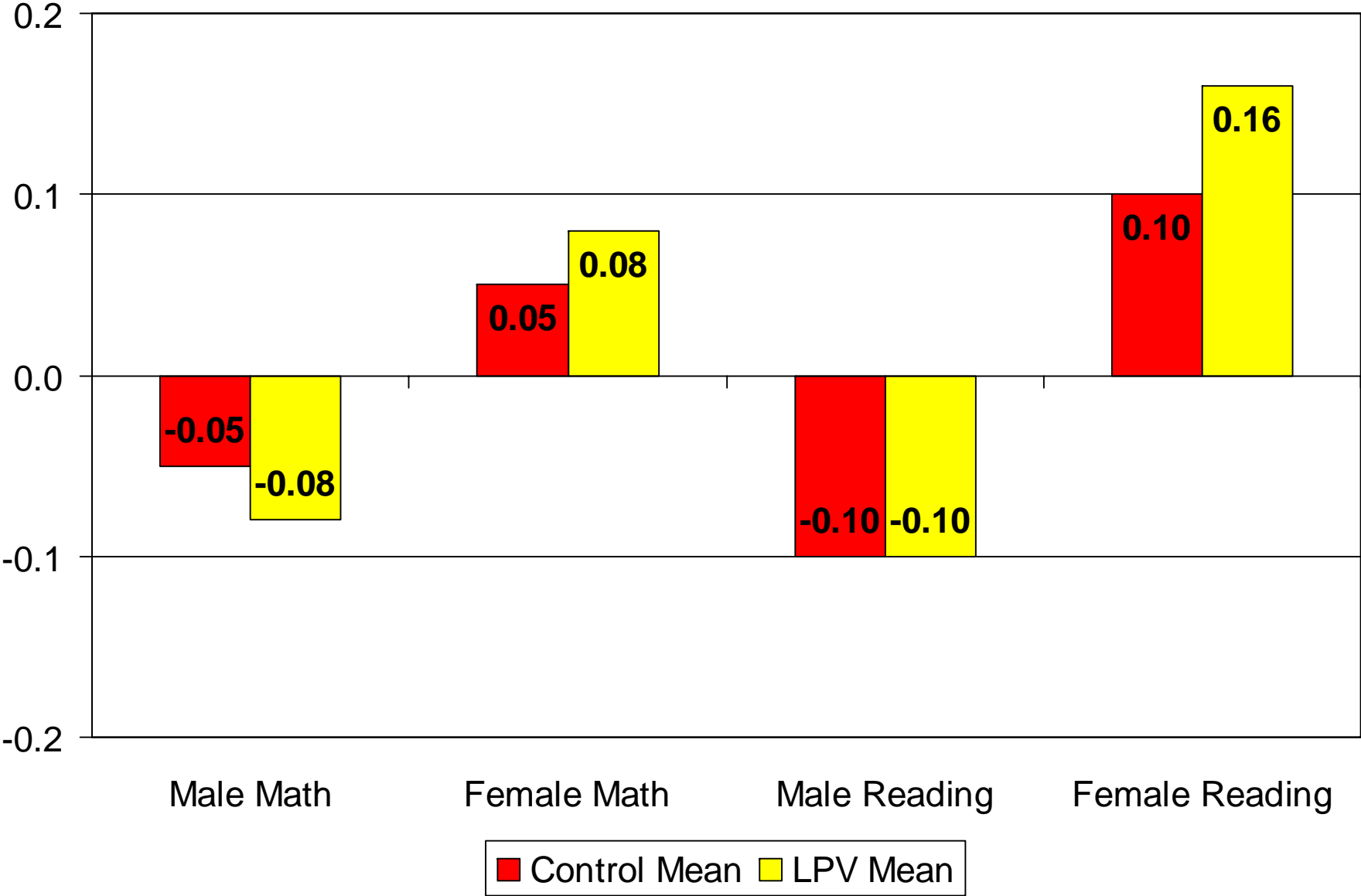
All differences in outcome levels between the LPV group and the control group are statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

MTO Interim: No effect on adult labor market outcomes but improved mental and physical health (ITT)



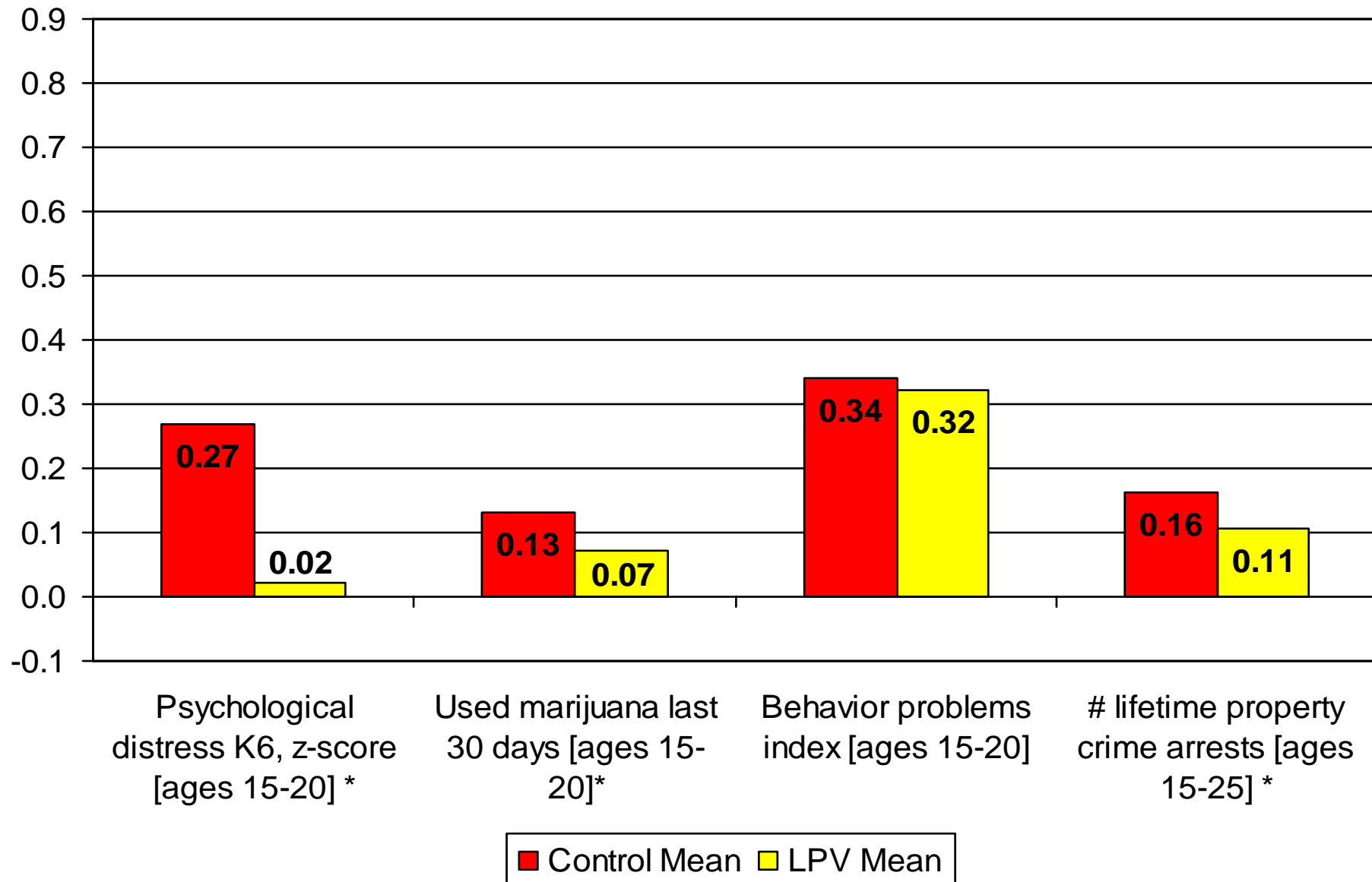
* Difference in outcome levels between the LPV group and the control group is statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

MTO Interim: No effect on youth achievement



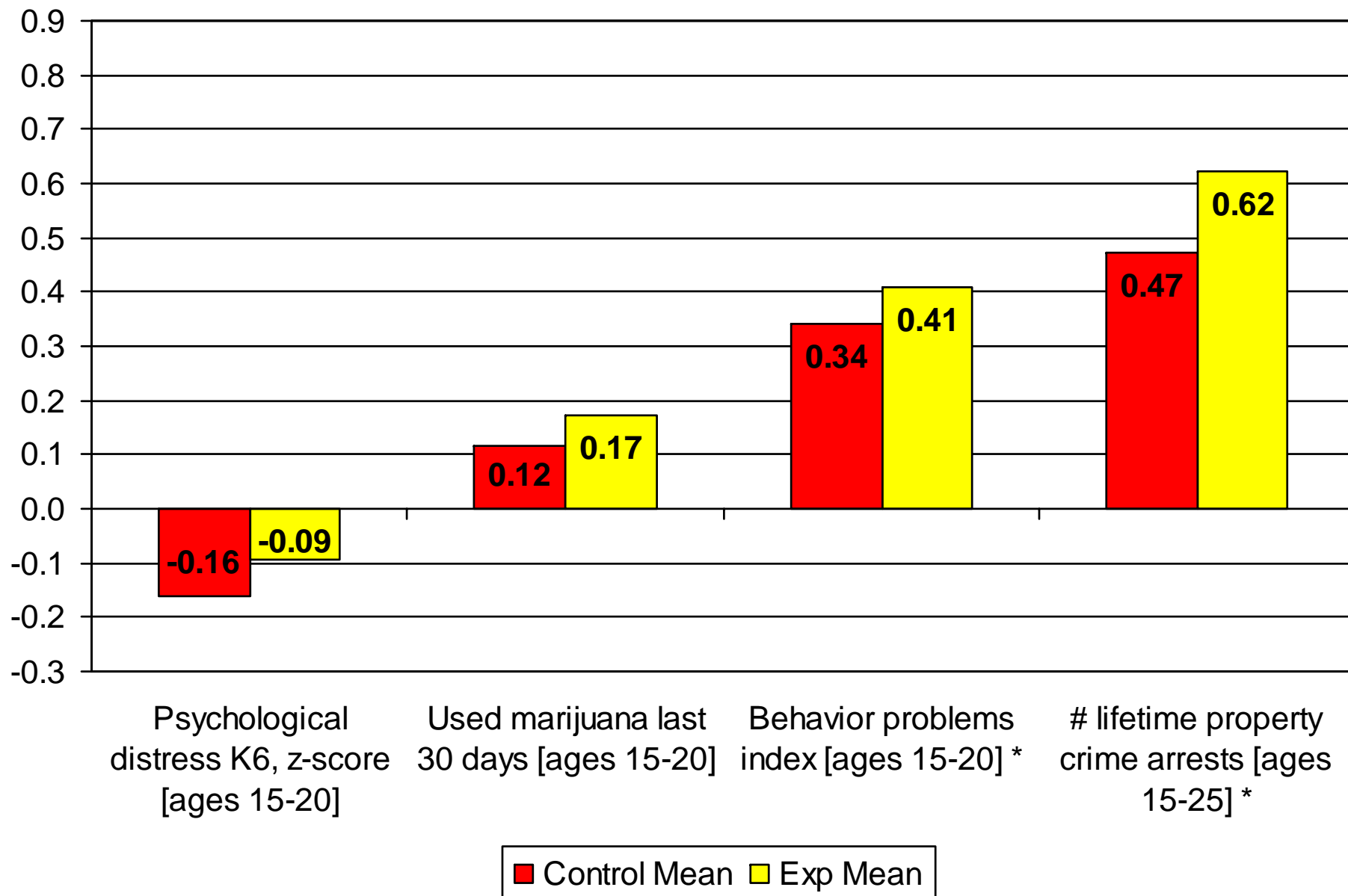
Graph displays Woodcock-Johnson Revised Scale Scores for MTO youth ages 6-20

MTO Interim: Less psychological distress & fewer behavior problems for female teens (ITT)



* Difference in outcome levels between the LPV group and the control group is statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

MTO Interim: Increased risky behavior among male teens (ITT)



* Difference in outcome levels between the LPV group and the control group is statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level.

Summary of MTO interim findings

(and, by extension, moving to low poverty):

- improved housing
- increased safety
- lowered adult depression
- lowered rates of adult obesity
- was good for female teens
- was not so good for male teens
- had little effect on employment or income
- had little effect on children's achievement or schooling

The MTO Final Evaluation: Measuring Impacts 10 to 12 years after random assignment

The TEAM: National Bureau of Economic Research team:
Lawrence Katz (PI), Jens Ludwig (project director), Greg
Duncan, Lisa Gennetian, Ronald Kessler, Jeffrey Kling, Lisa
Sanbonmatsu

Survey data collection by the Institute for Survey Research at
University of Michigan, Nancy Gebler as project director

The FUNDERS: HUD, CDC, NSF, NICHD, NIMH, NIA, the
Institute for Education Sciences; and, the MacArthur, Gates,
Annie Casey, and Smith Richardson Foundations.

MTO Final Evaluation: Key Questions

- **What are the long term effects and how do these evolve over time?**

- **What are the long-term effects of MTO on those who were young children at baseline?**
 - Children who grow up in low-poverty areas from infancy and early childhood can be expected to show greater effects than those who move at age 10 or 15.

- **What are the mechanisms? Especially for youth by gender?**
 - Hypotheses include: retaining social ties, reducing victimization, differences in institutional responses, parental investment, adaptation and decision making, role models

MTO Final Evaluation Design

- **Administrative data matching:** Unemployment Insurance, TANF/Food Stamp, Arrest and educational achievement data from state agencies, assisted housing receipt from HUD
- **Surveys** for female adult caregivers and youth aged 10 to 20 (as of December 2007)
- **Biometric data** for adults: height, weight, waist measurement, blood pressure and blood
- **Achievement assessments** for youth
- **Audio-taping** for language assessments
- **Interviewer observations** of residence & neighborhood

MTO Final Evaluation Outcomes

- **Education:** Includes reading & math achievement tests using assessments developed for ECLS-K
- **Employment**
- **Social program participation & income**
- **Mental and physical health** (expansions)
- **Risky / delinquent behavior**
- **Housing / neighborhood conditions**
- **Mediating measures** (expansions)
 - Try to better understand youth gender difference in MTO impacts
 - Learn more about neighborhood integration by class vs. race

MTO Final Evaluation: Timing

- **First survey pre-test in November 2007; Second survey pre-test with small sample of MTO families in February 2008**
- **Survey interviews from June 2008 to September 2009**
- **Administrative data agreements and matching happening now**
- **Reports and papers coming out in 2010 and 2011**

Why is MTO Important?

- **Potentially significant policy implications, informing poverty de-concentration policies**
- **Broad general appeal: People want to know how important neighborhood is.**
- **Platform for contributing to scientific research on the causal influences of neighborhoods on children and families. See**
 - www.hudusers.org
 - www.mtoresearch.org