



Research Center for
Human-Animal Interaction
University of Missouri

Offender Outcomes of Training Dogs in Prison: The Puppies for Parole Program

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Background & Significance

- “Puppies for Parole” is a rehabilitation program based on human-animal interaction (HAI) in the prison.
- The dogs from local animal shelters live with pairs of offender-trainers, and follow basic obedience training under the guidance of a certified dog trainer.
- Puppies for Parole aims to reduce the number of homeless canines by producing loving, obedient, and adoptable dogs.
- To date, over 4,000 dogs have been trained in the Puppies for Parole program and adopted.

Benefits:

- Inmates may gain skills to support successful rehabilitation and community reentry.
- Inmates provide a service to the community.
- Anecdotal reports show behavior improvement of inmates and better interaction with staff.

Research Questions

- To what extent is participation in a shelter dog obedience training program associated with:
 - inmates’ improved self esteem
 - a more internal locus of control
 - better inmates’ personal factors (e.g. self-perceived physical and mental health, requests for medical and mental services, conduct violations, and grievances filed).
- What are the inmates’ perceptions of their participation in the shelter dog obedience training program?

Instruments

- Demographic Questionnaire
- Self-Rated Physical & Mental Health questionnaire
- Rotter I/E Scale Locus of Control (LOC)
- Coppersmith Self-Esteem Inventory
- Dog Relationship and Perception Scale (SDT)
- DOC derived data: Request for medical and mental health services, conduct violations, grievances filed

Design and Methods

- Non-random (N=311), two-group experimental design with:
 - Treatment Group: Shelter Dog Training (SDT) (N=137)
 - Control Group: No Dog-contact (C) (N=174)
- Data collection at baseline, 8 weeks & 16 weeks, Inmates: Identified by Correction Center staff and meet inclusion criteria.

Results



Figure 1. Self-Perceived Physical Health compared to one year ago

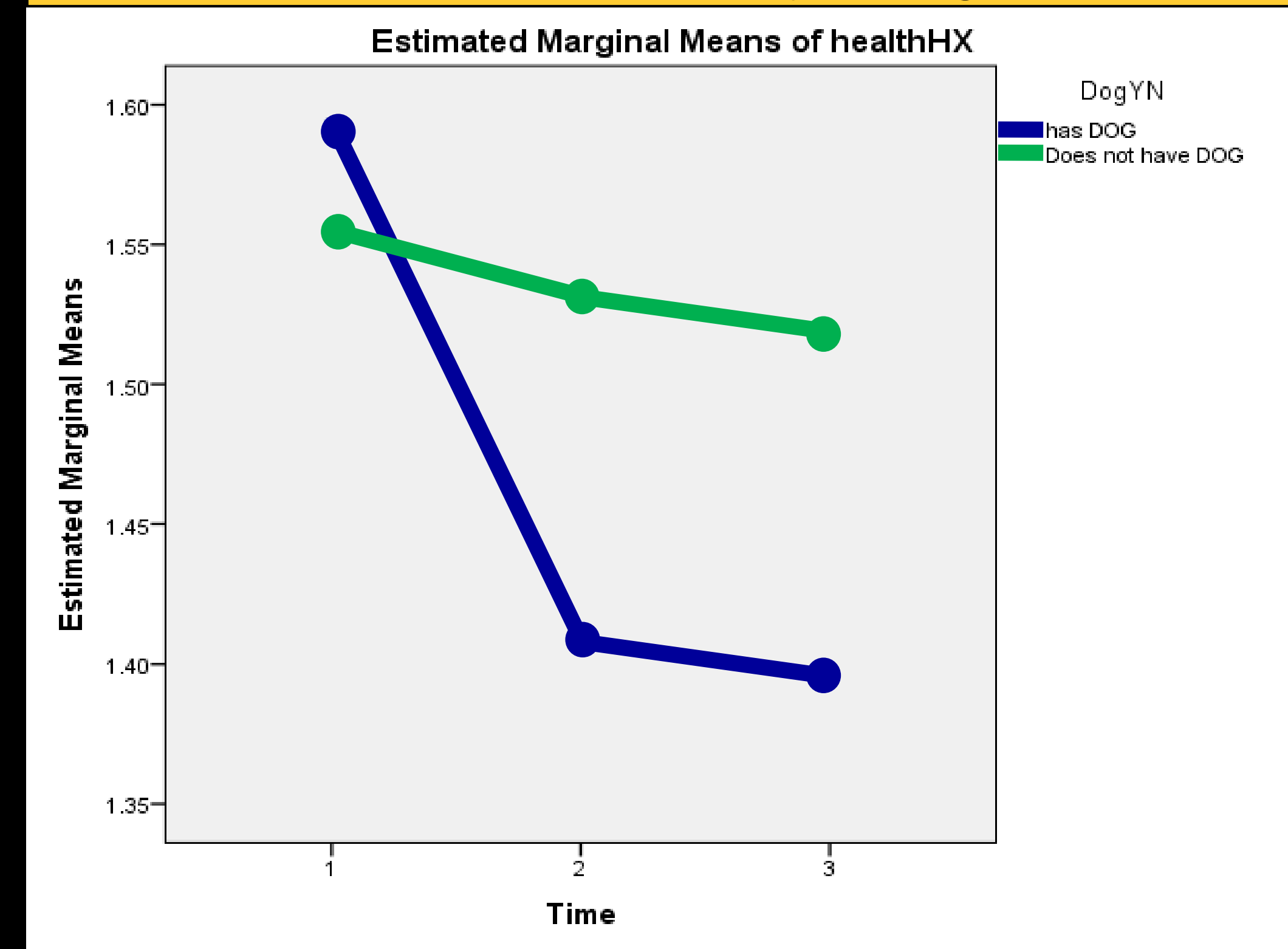


Figure 2. Self-Perceived Mental Health compared to one year ago

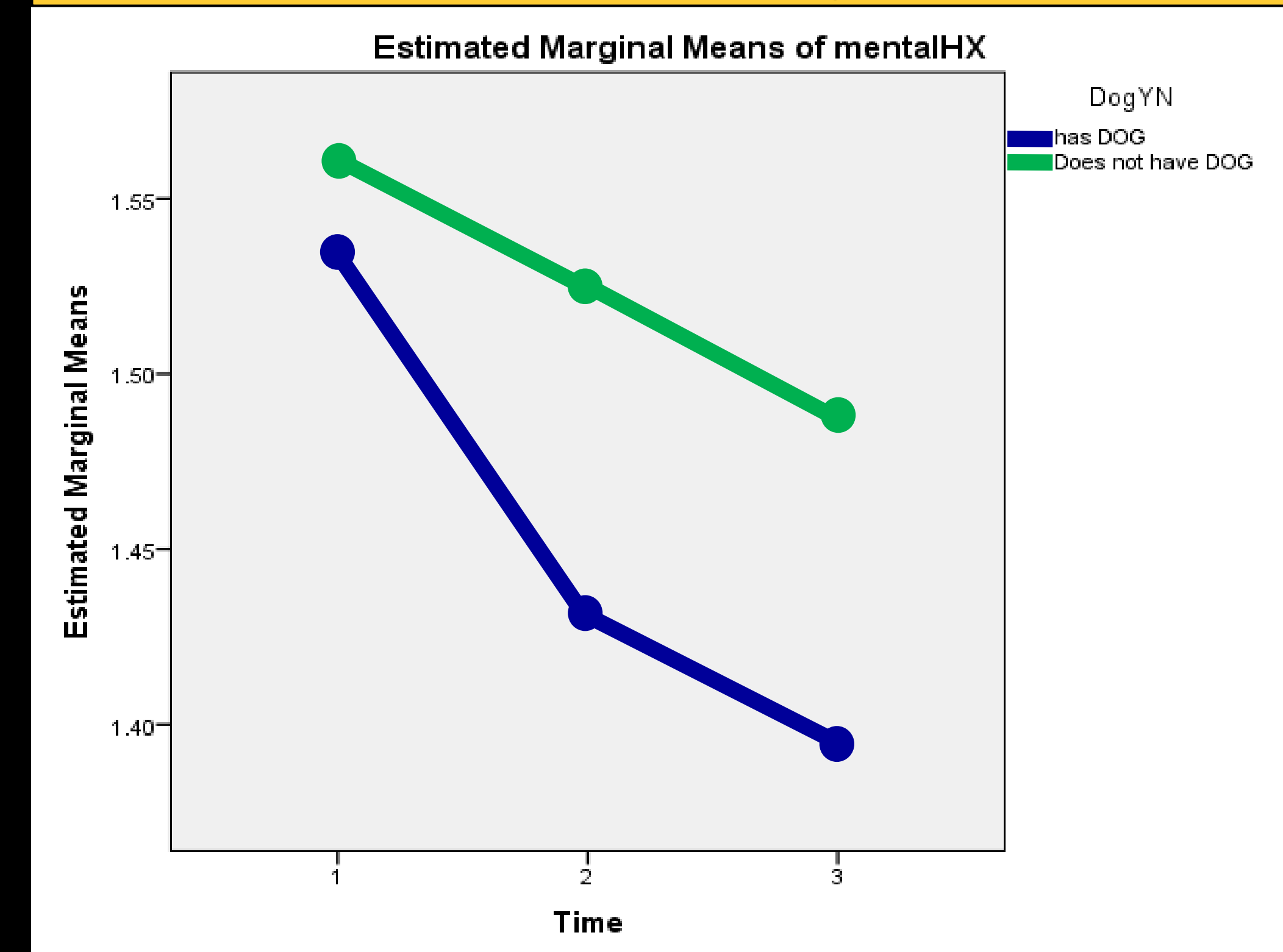


Figure 3. Medical Service Requests

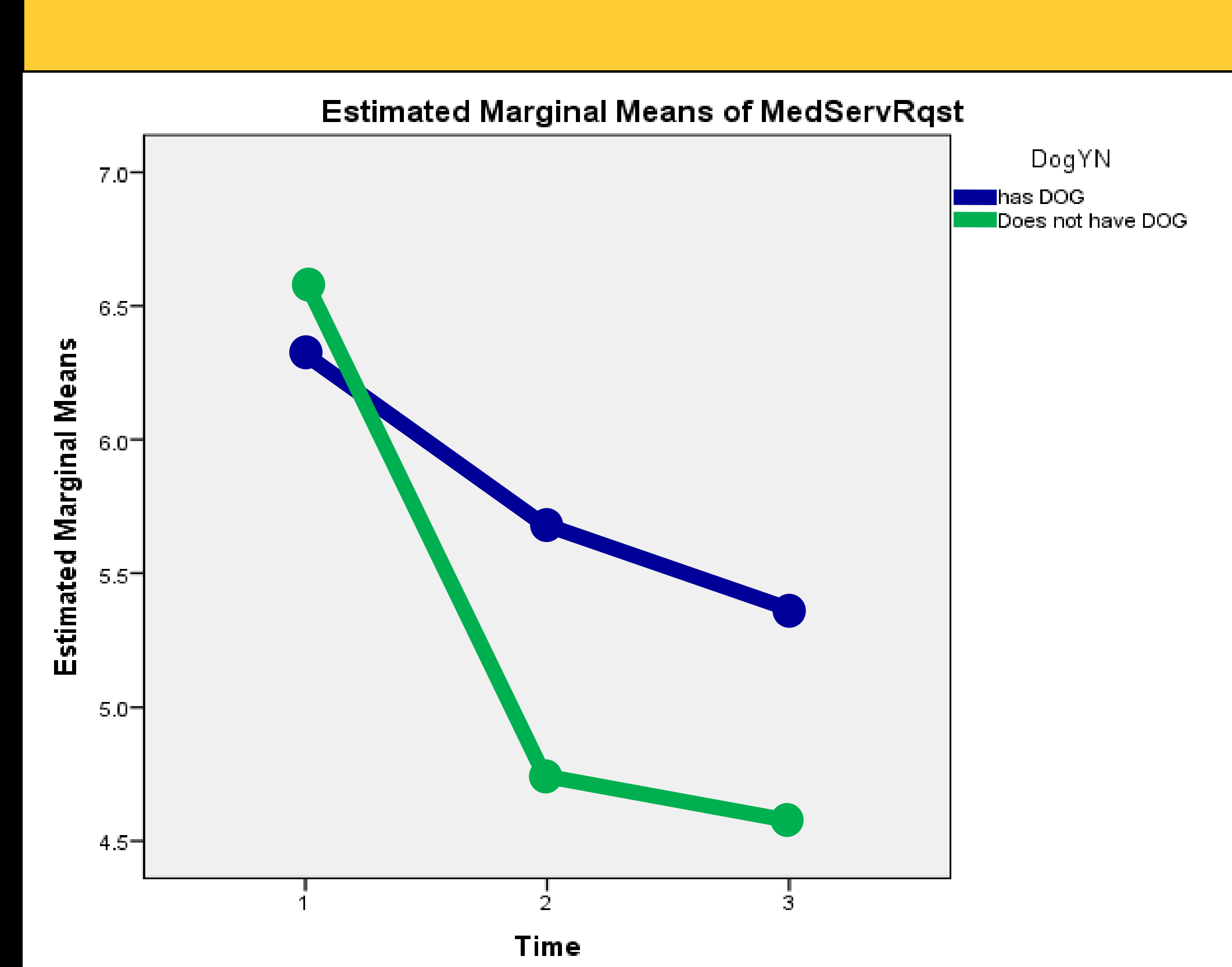


Figure 4. Mental Health Service Requests

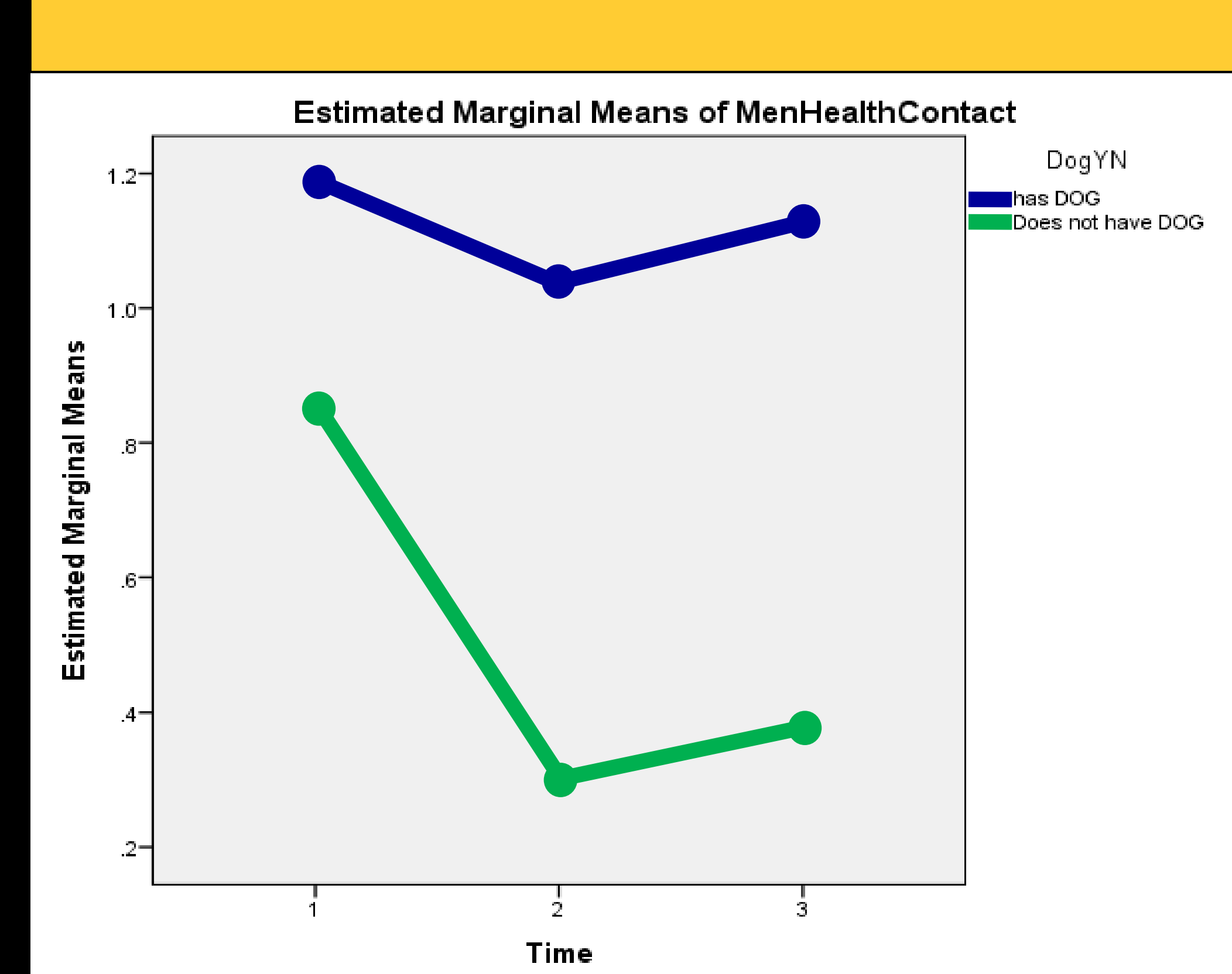
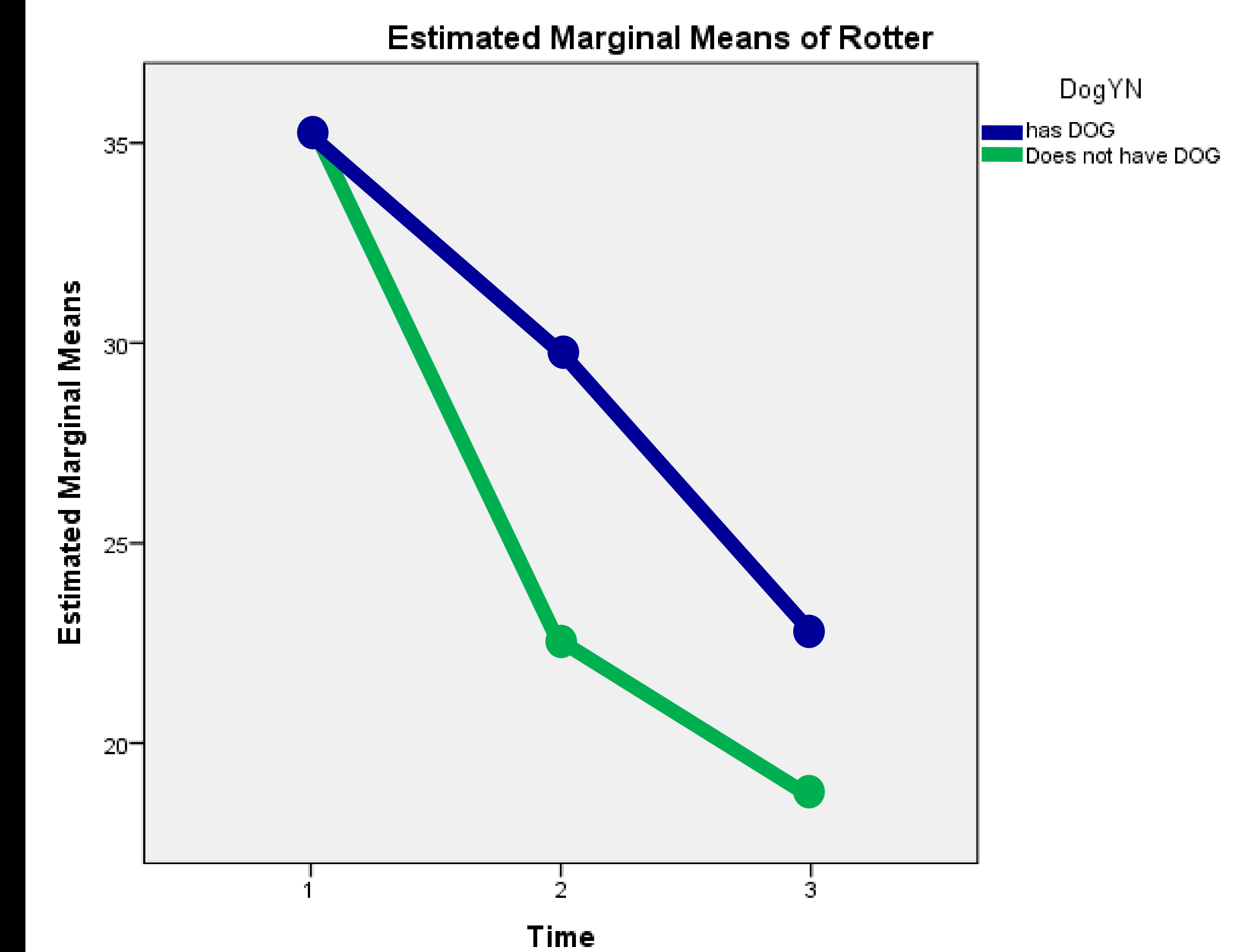


Figure 5. Rotter I/E Scale Locus of Control (LOC)



Conclusions

- Significant Findings :
 1. Improved self-perceived physical health compared to one year ago (p=0.009).
 2. Improved self-perceived mental health compared to one year ago (p=0.023).
 3. Increased medical service requests (p=0.000).
 4. Increased mental health service requests (p=0.049).
 5. Improved Rotter I/E Locus of Control (p=0.000).
 6. Increased dog relationship and perception scale (p=0.000).
- Predicted trends (ns):
 1. Self-esteem
 2. Conduct violations
 3. Grievances filed

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