

Worklife Expectancy

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In All Litigation, Including Personal Injury, We Deal With The “Actual” and “But For” Scenarios

■ Actual

■ Effect of injury on

- Employment
- Earnings
- Worklife
- HHS
- Cost of Living
- Etc.

■ “But For”

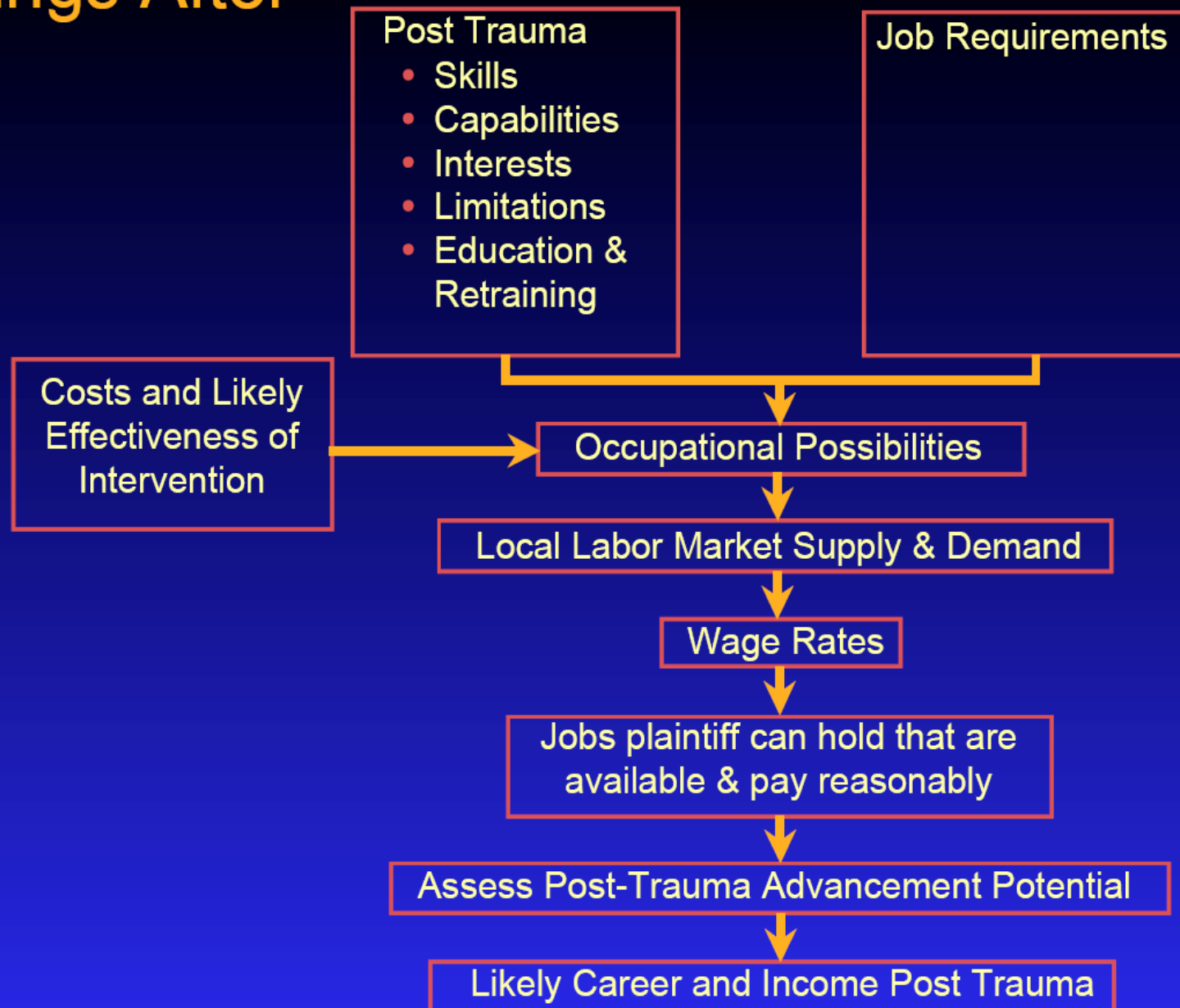
■ Pre Injury

- Employment
- Earnings
- Worklife
- HHS
- Cost of Living
- Etc.

**How Do I, as an Economist, See the Vocational
Rehab Person In This?**

You Fill in The Following Blanks.

Earnings After



Properly Implemented, This Model

- Is focused on the individual
- Carefully considers alternatives that mitigate physical limitation
- Evaluates retraining and physical hardening strategies
- Incorporates interfaces between specific jobs and physical requirements
- Is what YOU do or at least should do

Of particular importance is that the general model recognizes that the individual in the “actual” and “but for” scenarios differs in very important ways

For Example

- Most disability research shows that education trumps physical limitation – post injury worklife may be greater than pre (e.g. steelworker)!
- “Disabled” individuals in sedentary occupations have longer WL than comparables in physically demanding jobs
- The physical limitation may not cause a change in occupation or WL

Your Job is to Identify the Jobs That Minimize the Effects of a Physical Disability

So, if you do “your job”, the Gamboa
Tables are inapplicable!

These Are the Inputs to The Economic Model

And, your job is over because the next
steps are outside of your education and
training

The Next Steps

- Given the Voc Rehab input to the “Actual Scenario”, how long will the individual with that “disability” in that occupation work
- Are there life expectancy implications
- Is expected unemployment different in the “but for” scenario

To Answer These Questions, One Uses Various Statistical Methods, Including

- Cox Regression (life expectancy)
- Logit Regression (probability of working)
- Heckman Regression (earnings)
- Markov Process Models (initial state effect)

Notice

- Vocational Specialists are unqualified, as a group, to use these tools
- You didn't learn them in school
- They do not appear in your published literature
- They are not used in your daily work

I doubt that there are two people in this room who could carry on a discussion about them

If there are two people in the room who
understand these statistical methods,
Dr. Gamboa is not one of them

His PhD is in High School Guidance
Counseling

And The “Gamboa Tables” Are Useless and Inapt to Answering The Questions

- The groupings are too expansive (heterogeneity)
- Does not relate to a specific disability
- Response bias in data
 - Rationalization for not working
 - Person coping does not identify as disabled
- Censored sample for income
- Ad hoc in application

Contrary, to what Dr. Gamboa said in his AEFEE “debate” with Tom Ireland, my work does not support anything that he does!

In fact, what George McCollister and I have done in the area stands in sharp contrast to VEI’s sham statistics.

In fact, in our SCI paper we state:

“We believe that our findings can be extended to forms of disability other than SCI though this extension should be done with caution given the unique nature of the health problems associated with living with SCI. At the very least, our results strongly rebut Gamboa’s findings regarding disability and work.”

So, we have gotten that out of the way. Perhaps, now, VEI people will stop saying that I support their “approach”

But, this does not solve the problem that you face, which is “how can I estimate reduced WLE resulting from serious injury?”

There are solutions, if you take the trouble to find them.

First, there are data that allow one to estimate the effects of a specific disability on an individual with specific social, educational and economic characteristics.

- SCI Model Systems database
- NHIS

Pflaum, et al in *Journal of Spinal Cord
Medicine*

- Use very specific definition of level of injury – ASIA grade
- Have variables on education, sex, age, age at injury, race, marital status, etc.
- Very importantly, have the work status of the individual at time of evaluation (work, not work, student)
- Data are longitudinal, we use increment/decrement

Results Published in a Respected, Peer-Reviewed Journal

- We provide a full description of the data and the methodology
- The regression equations are published including the error rates (Daubert Proof)
- We discuss the findings
- You can use the results of this article in your work – it is in the public domain!
- As we note, it can also “inform” your WLE in non-SCI cases

McCollister & Pflaum Presented at ASSA

- Use NHIS Data
- Does not depend on self-selection into “disabled”
- Corrects for self-selection bias
- Uses advanced statistical techniques to “drill down” into the data, avoiding small sample problems
- It is possible to build a “huge” database (M&P had over 350,000 observations, 1 million is possible)

**Our Results Differ Dramatically From
Those of VEI for Most Cases**

Facts are your friends. Get to know
them