

Group-Based Trajectory Analysis of Longitudinal Employment Patterns and Predictors for Adults With Visual Impairments

What Were We Trying to Learn?

This study aimed to explore employment patterns over time for people with visual impairments compared to those without and to identify the factors, like health, education, and disability benefits, that influence these employment trajectories. By exploring these topics, we hoped to provide insights into the challenges and opportunities for improving workforce participation among people with visual impairments.

How Was This Project Carried Out?

We analyzed data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2014 Panel of the Survey of Income and Program Participation, focusing on 816 adults with visual impairments and matching them with another 816 adults without visual impairments based on gender, age, and number of non-visual disabilities. Group-based trajectory modeling was applied to estimate patterns of monthly employment status over a 4-year span and identify predictors of these patterns.

What Are the Most Important Things We Learned?

We found that adults with visual impairments were more likely to not work at all during the 4-year span than those without visual impairments. Key factors linked to not working included receiving disability benefits (such as SSI and SSDI), reporting fair or poor health, and having non-visual disabilities. It was unclear whether the people who did not work at all were out of the labor force due to their visual impairments or other reasons (e.g., health problems, other disabilities, fear of losing benefits). In contrast, having good or better health and a higher education level, such as a bachelor's degree, increased the likelihood of consistent employment. These findings highlight the need to address health, education, and support systems to improve employment outcomes for people with visual impairments.

How Do These Findings Relate to Me?

These findings emphasize the importance of education, health, and access to support for individuals with visual impairments. Higher education, such as a bachelor's degree, can significantly improve employment opportunities. Maintaining good health and understanding available resources, like work incentives for individuals receiving disability benefits, may help overcome employment challenges.

Research Takeaway

Individuals with visual impairments are more likely to not work at all over time than those without. Key factors influencing their employment trajectories include receipt of disability benefits, non-visual disabilities, gender, race, age, health, and education level.

This research encourages individuals and professionals to focus on strategies that promote long-term employment for people with visual impairments.

Learn More

Findings were taken from the following article:

Cmar, J. L., & McDonnall, M. C. (2024). [Group-based trajectory analysis of longitudinal employment patterns and predictors for adults with visual impairments](#). *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 61(2), 143-156.

For more information about this project, visit the [project overview page](#).

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