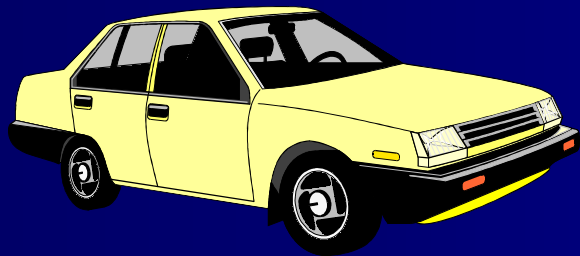


# Older Drivers, Road Safety and Community Health



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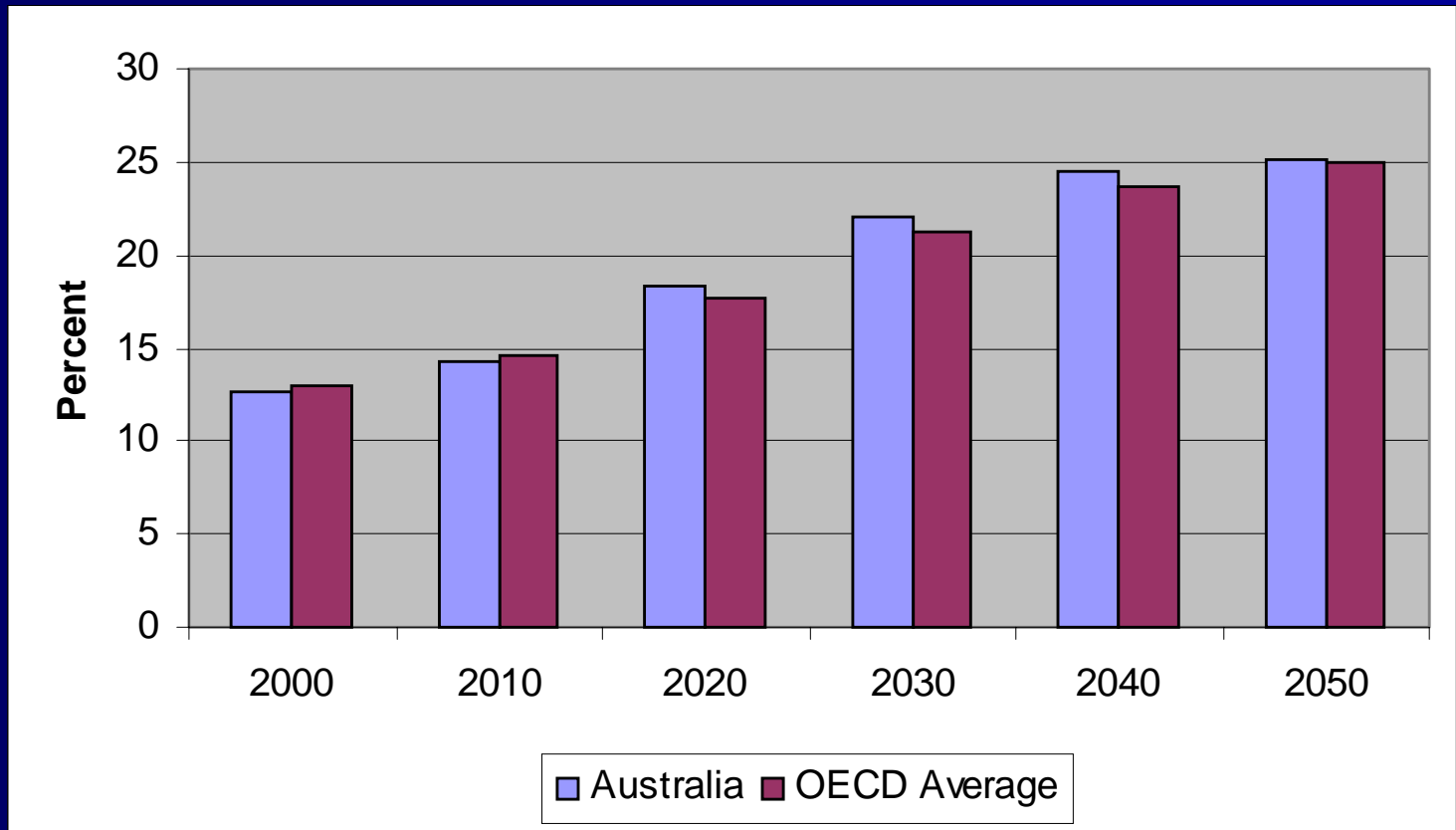
# Questions ...

- How much of a road safety risk do 'older' drivers present?
- What are the risks of forcing someone to 'retire' from driving?
  - Road safety risks?
  - Community health risks?

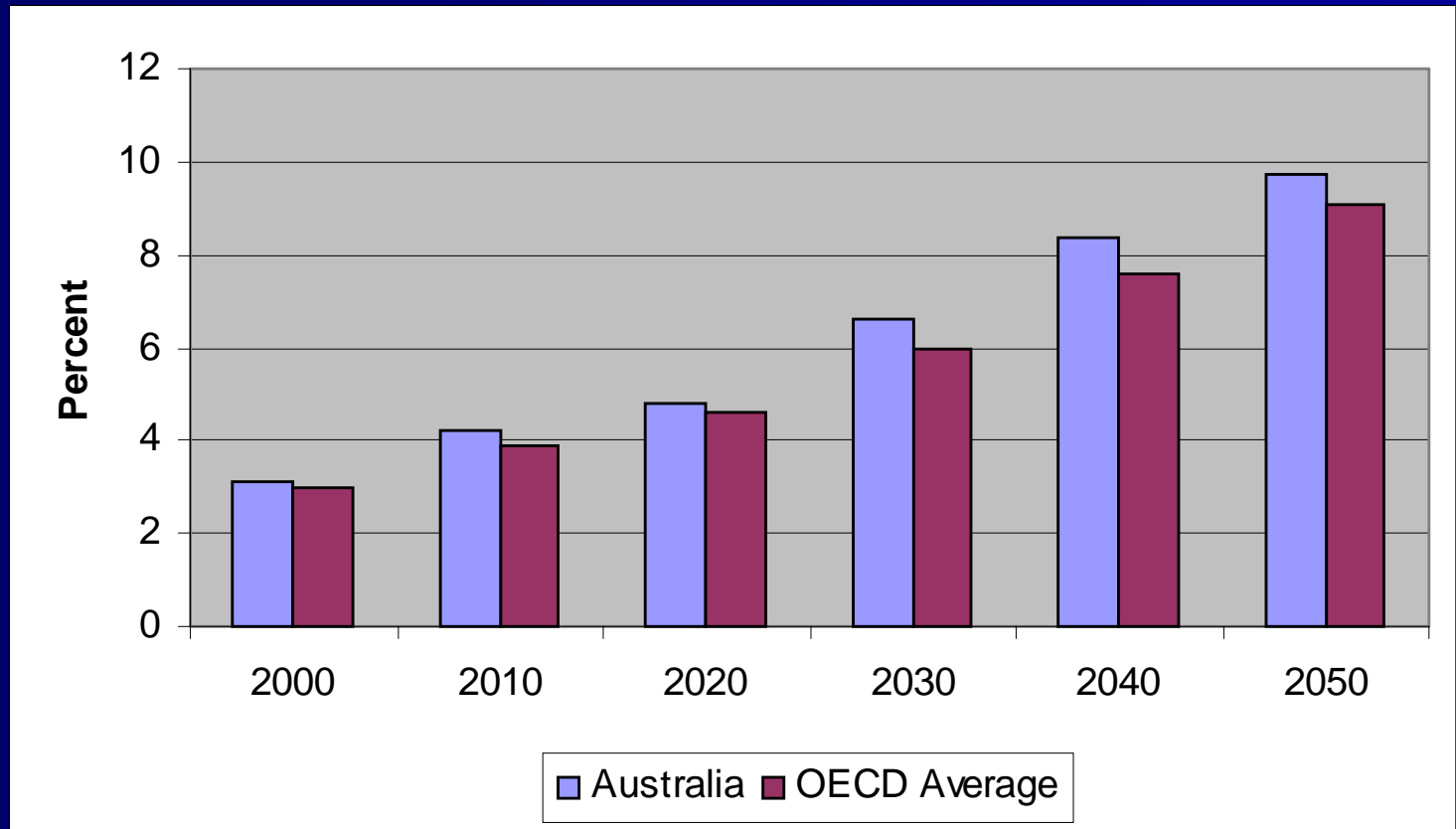
# Context - why it matters

Our population is ageing ... as in most countries, an increasing proportion of the population is 'old'.


# Projected % of population over 65yrs old - 2000 to 2050



# Projected % of population over 80 yrs old - 2000 to 2050

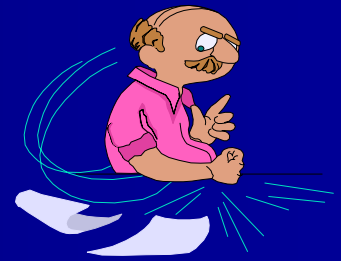


# 'Old' people and driving

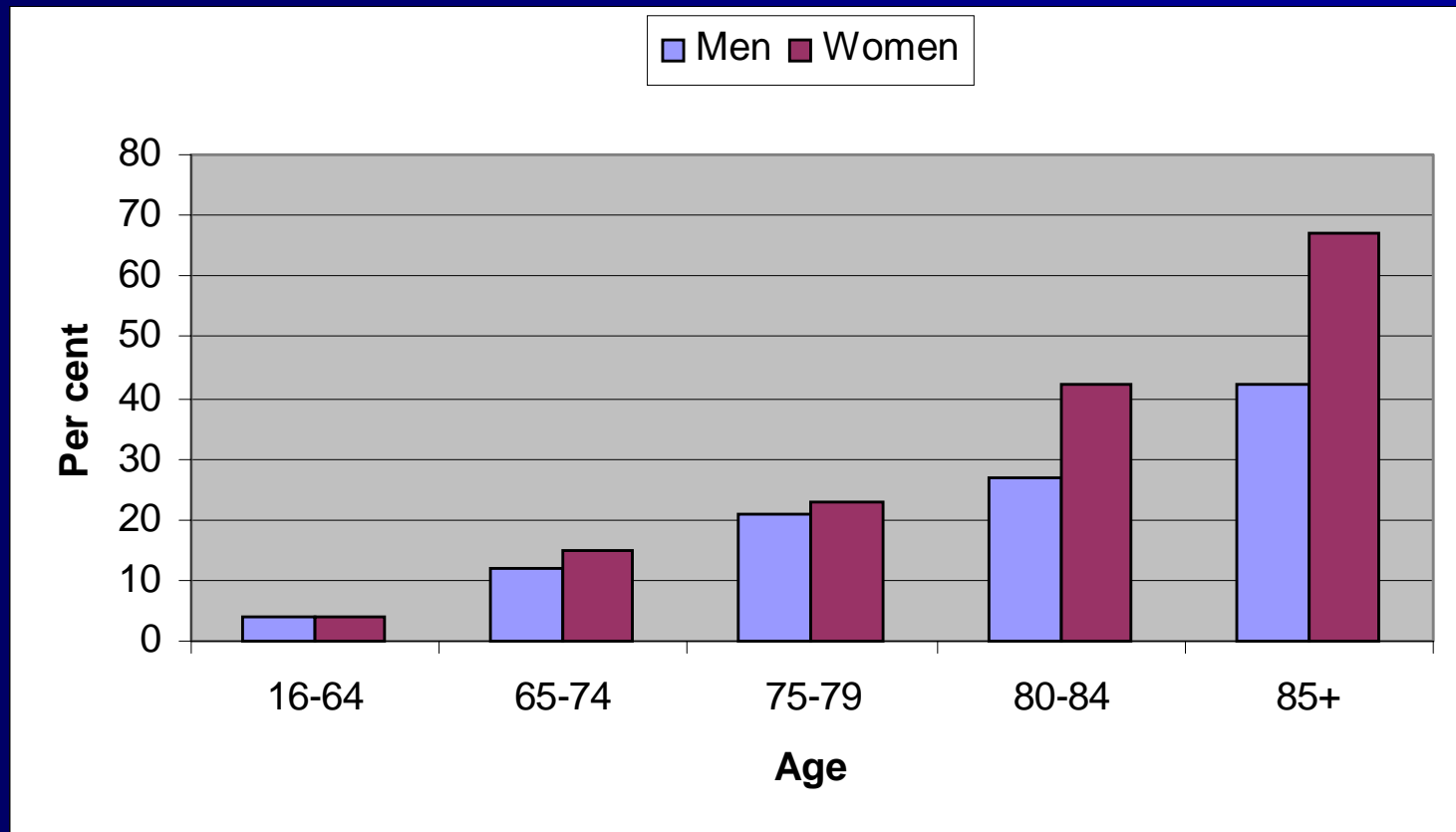
- You and I are future 'old' drivers, and we will probably be *more* reliant on driving - we *like* to drive
- We will probably:
  - be healthier and more active 
  - have high expectations of being 'mobile'
  - until an older age than drivers now.

# But - 'personal' mobility deteriorates as we age

Health deteriorates with increasing age, which will limit our ability to walk around

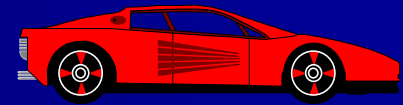


# Percent of UK people with mobility (walking) problems



So driving may become more important to us than it is now ...

- greater difficulty in walking
- no longer able to use (current forms of) public transport
- ... but can still drive



# Therefore ...

- A higher proportion of 'old' people will be drivers (ageing population)
- A higher proportion of 'old' drivers will probably want to continue driving for as long as possible.
- ... Is this a problem?

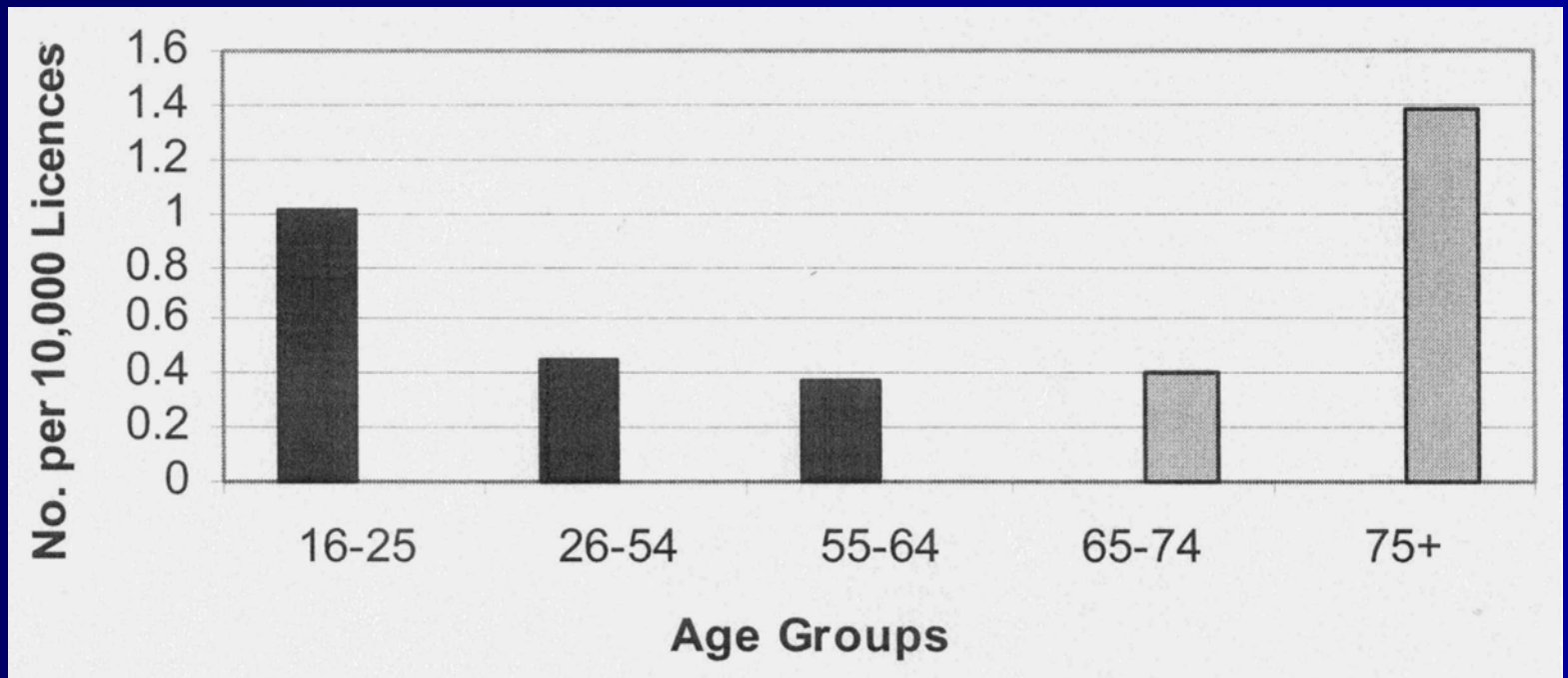
# Not necessarily a problem, provided that ...

- design of the road system & vehicles matches older driver capacities
- older drivers limit their 'exposure' – to cancel their higher risk per kilometer
- we are able to identify older drivers who present the greatest risk

and provided that ...

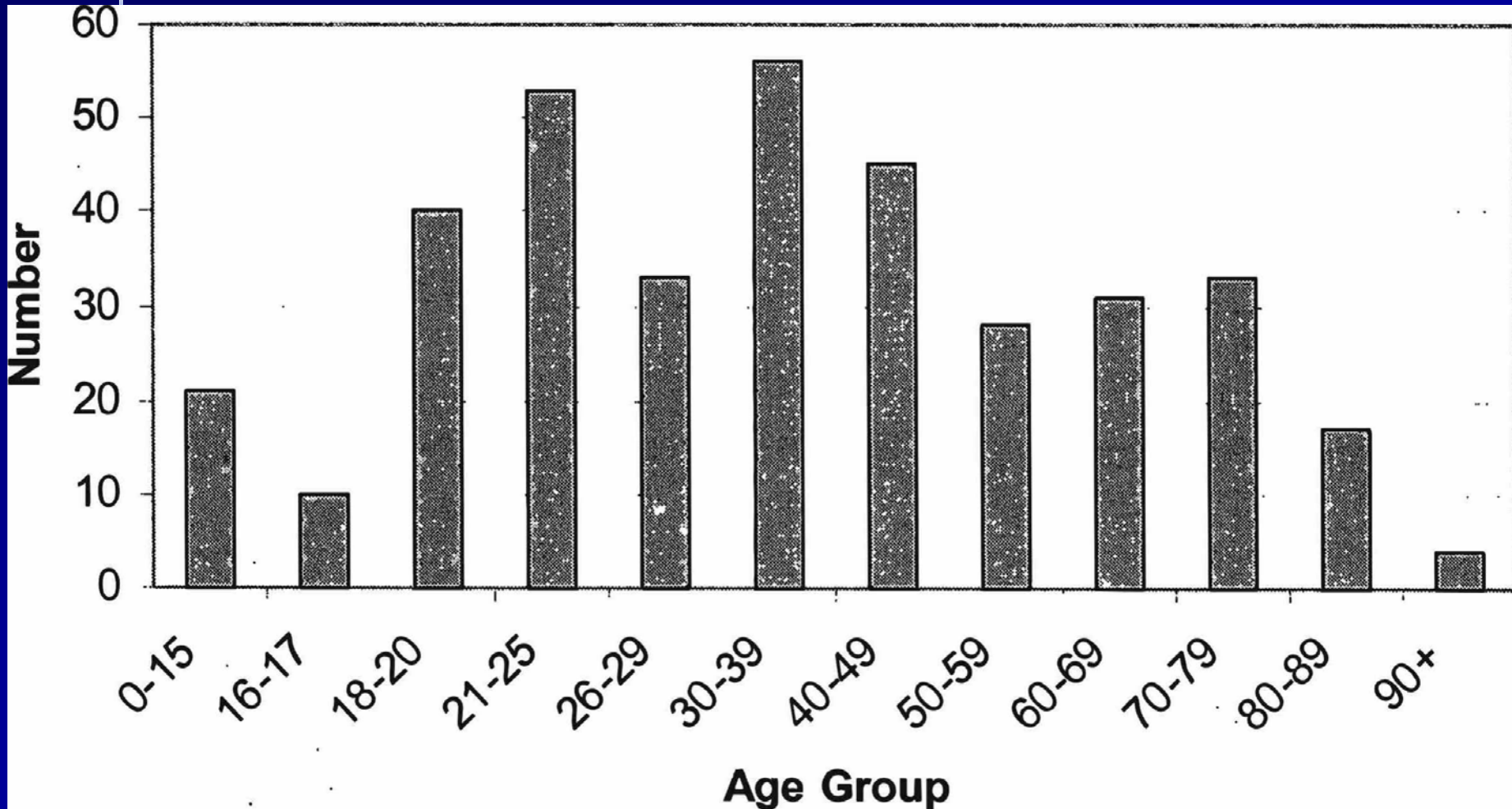
- 'retired' drivers are able to remain mobile within their communities.

# Driver fatality claims in the year 2000, per 10,000 licence holders



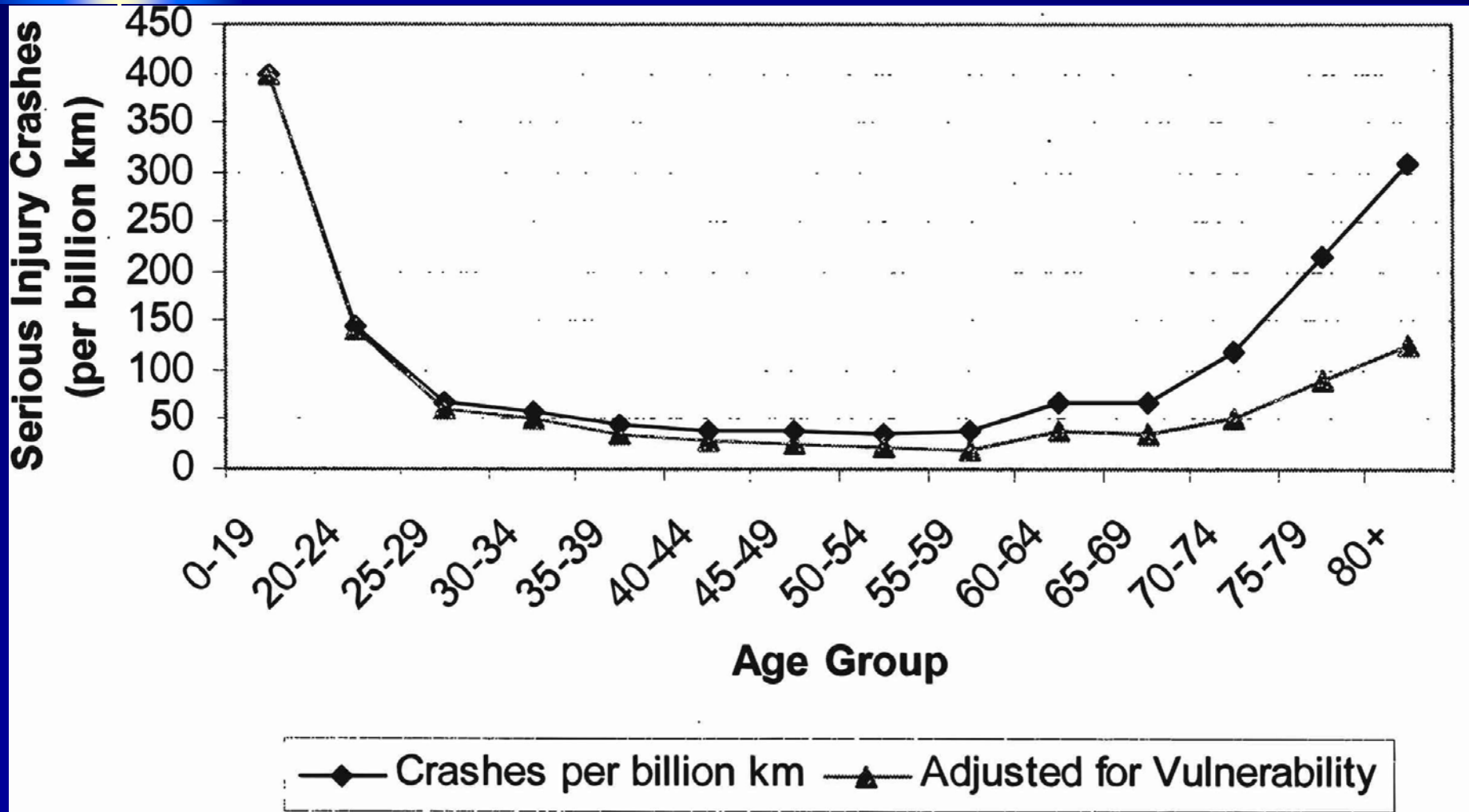
# Annual average fatalities by age group

July 1996 – June 2001



# Effects of driver age on injury crash rates (per km)

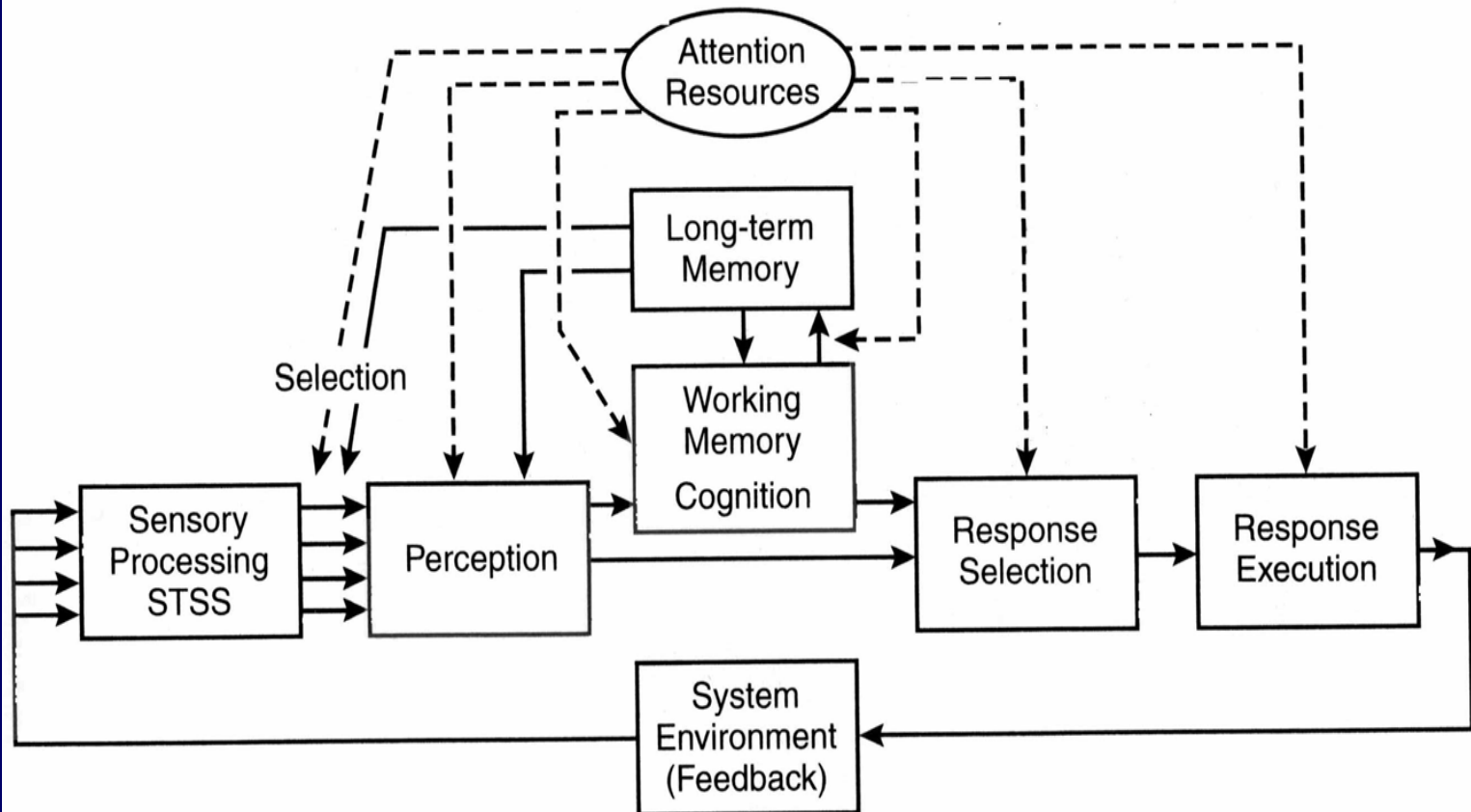
with & without adjustment for injury vulnerability



# Older drivers have problems with ...

- Intersection negotiation - particularly complex intersections
- Maintaining correct position on road (e.g. in lane, when turning)
- Remembering to check over shoulder, check mirrors, use indicators

# Inside the driver's head



# Reasons for older driver difficulties ...

- Poorer ability to deal quickly with complex information
- Poorer ability to divide attention between different sources of information
- Slower to make decisions
- Poorer vision - including field of view
- Driving takes more effort - tiring.

# Weighing up risks

- Increased risk as a driver might be still be lower than risk as a pedestrian
- Road safety risks VERSUS personal wellbeing and health system costs - i.e. road safety versus community health
- Need to support older people driving for as long as is **safely possible**.

# Testing older drivers

- VicRoads Review Test
- Specialist testing by an O.T. (Occupational Therapist) in coordination with VicRoads
  - may recommend a conditional licence: e.g. drive only in local area, or daylight, or off-peak.
- Entails judgements about 'acceptable' risk

# Maintaining community mobility of 'retired' drivers

- Need more effective ways to support community mobility of older people, *whether or not they can drive.*
- To achieve this, need better planning and coordination - government, commercial and community organisations.

## Maintaining community mobility of 'retired' drivers ....

### ■ Examples:

- better pathways for older people riding electric scooters to go shopping or to visit their local doctor
- shopping centre facilities to cater for many more people using this form of independent transport.
- better community transport services - e.g. subsidised taxis, private cars and/or small buses.

## Maintaining community mobility of 'retired' drivers ....

- We can no longer afford to ignore the needs of older people to remain mobile, active members of our community.
- In future, no one should feel that their life is pointless without a driver's licence.

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