Say that you have a dataset of workers who do and do not enroll in a job training program. Let’s say it happens in 2020 and you have their earnings in 2021.

Y~a + delta D + beta X + e

Regress y d x if year==2020 (post-treatment outcomes)

X is all those covariates needed to satisfy the backdoor criterion. And you run it and you find delta hat = $100.

Someone says “how sure are you that that DAG is right? How do you know you have all the correct covariates, X?”  
  
So Imbens in several of his papers about unconfoundedness has written that the falsification test needs to be a standard part of these covariate strategies. And here is what that would be:

Y~a + delta D + beta X + e

But only for 2019.

Regress y d x if year==2019 (pre-treatment wages, pre-treatment X, and a dummy variable, d, indicating that the workers will *in the future* be treatd [but who are not yet treated in 2019]).

Well if you find a non-zero effect on that D variable in 2019, when you know for certain there was no treatment until 2020, then the fact that delta hat is not zero is suggestive that you have not satisfied the backdoor criterion. This is sort of similar if not identical to the idea of the event study plot in diff-in-diff. All pre-treatment coefficients in an event study regression diff-in-diff is a type of “pre-treatment falsficaition”. Which is why you want in an event study those pre-treatment coefficients to be zero -- because you know pre-treatment there hadn’t been any treatment. So there cannot be any treatment effect. If you go back to the SDO decomposition:  
  
SDO = ATE + E[Y(0)|D=1] – E[Y(0)|D=0] + (1-pi)(ATT-ATU)

We in 2019, there is no treatment effect, which means in the 2019 data, ATE=ATT=ATU=0. Which means that any pre-treatment regression (with or without covariates) is only this:  
  
SDO = E[Y(0)|D=1, X] – E[Y(0)|D=0, X]

And so you ideally would want it to be that your research design in a location where there is no treatment effect is giving you a zero (i.e., no selection bias) .And if it’s not, then you probably have a problem – just like people deduce in diff-in-diff when their pre-treatment coefficients are not zero.