

## Drivers With Epilepsy Are On the Road Again

*As a result of a worldwide cooperative movement, the absolute driving ban for people with epilepsy (PWE) has been lifted in Japan. Since 1960, people who have epilepsy have been banned from driving in Japan. A December article in the journal Epilepsia outlines the efforts and procedures taken to reinstate driving rights to people with epilepsy, a restriction affecting many epilepsy patients throughout the world.*

([PRWEB](#)) December 25, 2004 -- According to experts at Johns Hopkins University, 86 drivers per year died in the U.S. as a result of crashes caused by epileptic seizures between 1995 and 1997. With this potential for accidents and fatalities, laws have been put in place to restrict people who have epilepsy from operating vehicles. Similar restrictions exist for persons with progressive vision loss, for example, reserving the privilege for those who are less likely to have an accident.

A draft of the Road Traffic Act in Japan in December of 2000 stated that people who suffer from epilepsy would not be eligible to receive a driving license at all. After protests from local and international epilepsy organizations and individuals, the Act was revised to allow PWE to obtain a driving license after a seizure-free period of two years.

In order to survey the effect of these new driving regulations, questionnaires were sent to driving authorities and doctors of the Japanese Epilepsy Society (JES). Data showed that some PWE were unwilling to declare their conditions for fear of losing a job, or having their licenses eventually taken away.

“The survey results [further] highlighted the need for cooperation between the driving authorities and JES for further amendment of the regulations as well as the importance of education for the public, patients and professionals,” states lead author Yushi Inoue, MD, PhD. These are key factors in efforts to modify restrictions for PWE driving rights worldwide.

According to Dr. Inoue, there are several countries where PWE are still banned from driving. Restrictions on holding a driving license vary from country to country and even state to state in the U.S. For most, the main requirement to be met is a minimum seizure-free period ranging from a few months to a couple of years. Often times, this must be followed by several years of regular medical reports confirming that a PWE is still physically fit to drive.

This study is published in Epilepsia. Media wishing to receive a PDF of the article contact [medicalnews@bos.blackwellpublishing.net](mailto:medicalnews@bos.blackwellpublishing.net).

### About the Author

Yushi Inoue, MD, PhD is currently Vice-director for the National Epilepsy Center, Institute of Epilepsy and Neurological Disorders in Shizuoka, Japan. He is a former member of the Commission on Driving Regulations for the International Bureau for Epilepsy, a member of the Commission on Legal Affairs and Commission on Guidelines for the JES, and is a certified psychiatrist and epileptologist in Japan. Dr. Inoue can be reached for questions and interviews at [yushi@szec.hosp.go.jp](mailto:yushi@szec.hosp.go.jp).

### About Epilepsia

Epilepsia is the leading, most authoritative source for current clinical and research results on all aspects of



epilepsy. As the journal of the International League Against Epilepsy, Epilepsia presents subscribers with scientific evidence and clinical methodology in: clinical neurology, neurophysiology, molecular biology, neuroimaging, neurochemistry, neurosurgery, pharmacology, neuroepidemiology, and therapeutic trials. Each monthly issue features original peer reviewed articles, progress in epilepsy research, brief communications, editorial commentaries, special supplements, meeting reports, book reviews, and announcements.

#### About the International League Against Epilepsy

The International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE) was founded in Budapest in September 1909. It has branches now in 92 countries and over 15,000 members. It is a non-profit and non-governmental association, with official links with the World Health Organization and the International Bureau for Epilepsy. It is the world's preeminent association of physicians and other health professionals working towards a world where no persons' life is limited by Epilepsy. Its mission is to provide the highest quality of care and well-being for those afflicted with the condition and other related seizure disorders. For information on epilepsy and education, please visit [www.ilae.org](http://www.ilae.org) for a patient brochure under the "resources" link.

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