



# erc

epilepsy RESOURCE CONNECTION

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# hotline

## Probability of traffic accidents linked to seizure type in people with epilepsy

The chances of people who drive after being diagnosed with epilepsy having traffic accidents differs depending on the type of seizures they have, say researchers from the Department of Neurology, Regional University Hospital of Patras, Greece.

"For patients with epilepsy, driving restriction has serious effects on their quality of life and employability," said Elisabeth Chroni, MD, PhD.

"On the other hand, if they have a seizure while driving, they can put themselves and others at risk for severe traffic accidents and injuries. Therefore, to balance the important social reasons for driving against the risk to public safety, most countries have enacted limitations on driving for people prone to epileptic seizures."

"Identifying risk factors such as the type and frequency of epileptic seizures might help grading the risk for accidents in people with epilepsy who drive or are considering driving," she said.

Dr. Chroni and her colleagues were attempting to identify clinical risk factors for seizure-related traffic accidents that should be considered when counseling people with epilepsy on driving. They conducted a study comparing patients who had traffic accidents during seizures to patients who continued to drive after being diagnosed with epilepsy but were not involved in accidents.

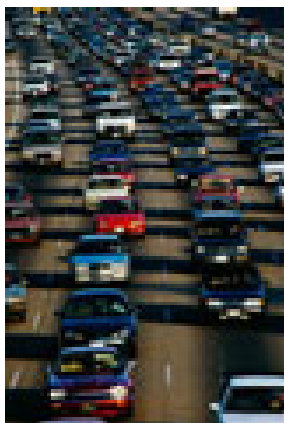
The researchers enrolled 35 people with epilepsy who continued to drive after their diagnosis. Information collected from patients and their relatives included the frequency and types of their seizures, how old they were when their epilepsy started, the cause of their epilepsy, whether or not they had auras and how reliable they were; and whether they complied with instructions on their anti-epileptic medication. Data on their driving was also collected, including the number of hours per week and years of experience.

The researchers found that 14 of the 35 patients (40%) had traffic accidents or 'near misses' during seizures, and seizure type was the only factor that was significantly different between this group of patients and the other 21 patients.

Of the 14 patients who had (or almost had) accidents, five had complex partial seizures. Of the 21 patients who did not have accidents, only two of them had complex partial seizures.

Having reliable auras and long seizure-free intervals did not reduce the probability of accidents, said the researchers. According to the authors, these results suggest that seizure type should be considered when

consulting patients with epilepsy about driving, bearing in mind that complex partial seizures are most likely to be associated with an increased risk of traffic accidents. • EPILEPSY ACTION



## BRAIN STORMS:

Bringing Epilepsy Stigma out of the Shadows

A patient education conference

Saturday, November 10, 2007

Wichita State University—

Eugene M. Hughes Metropolitan Complex

5015 E. 29th Street N., Wichita, Kansas

9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

This free conference is appropriate for persons with epilepsy, their family members; nurses, teachers, social workers, and counselors. Conference includes program, breakfast, lunch and access to the vendor exhibits in our epilepsy resources area.

**Please help us by registering prior to the event.** Early registration helps to ensure we will be able to accommodate everyone wishing to attend.

[www.epilepsybrainstorms.org](http://www.epilepsybrainstorms.org)

*Partial support of this conference is provided by educational grants from:*



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## Mahjong causes rare epilepsy syndrome

A study by doctors in Hong Kong has concluded that the Chinese tile game of mahjong can cause seizures.

The findings, published in the Hong Kong Medical Journal, were based on 23 cases of people who had suffered mahjong-induced seizures.

The report's four authors, from Queen Mary Hospital, said the best prevention was to avoid playing the game.

The study led the doctors to define mahjong epilepsy as a unique syndrome. The game, played by four people around a table, can involve gambling and can quickly become compulsive.

The game, which is intensely social and sometimes played in crowded mahjong parlors, involves the rapid movement of tiles in marathon sessions. ✧ EPILEPSY ACTION



## Persons with auras may be good candidates for surgery

People with epilepsy who experience multiple auras – sensations such as feeling a cold breeze or seeing a bright light – before they have a seizure may be good candidates for epilepsy surgery because their seizures seem to be generated in one area of the brain, according to a study published in the August 21, 2007, issue of Neurology.

For the study, researchers examined 31 people with epilepsy who experienced multiple types of auras, such as a bad smell, psychic experience, or abdominal pain.

The study found 90% of patients with at least two types of aura and 100% of the patients with at least three aura types had seizures arising from the non-dominant side of their brain.

"Epilepsy surgery may be effective for people with multiple auras since most of the seizures seem to arise from one area of the brain rather than multiple regions," said the study's author Dr. Prakash Kotagal, from Cleveland Clinic Epilepsy Center in Cleveland USA.

The study also found that more than half of the 19 study participants who went on to have epilepsy surgery stopped having seizures.

Before now, researchers say little has been known about the significance of having multiple auras since most of the attention has been focused on people with single auras.

"Multiple auras may be underestimated since auras are often difficult and time-consuming to elicit from a patient, particularly if their importance is not appreciated by the patient's doctor," said study co-author Dr. Peter Widdess-Walsh with Saint Barnabas Institute of Neurology in West Orange, New Jersey. "However, our findings show multiple auras should be recognized by doctors as a significant finding and should be used in deciding whether to proceed with epilepsy surgery." ✧ EPILEPSY ACTION

## Adult Epilepsy Support Group

Meets Second Tuesday of Month,  
6:30 PM @ 2919 W. 2nd Street, Wichita

August 14th: "Stress of Living in Seizure Fear"  
September 11th: "Group Choice"

## ERC's Glimmer Group

### Halloween Carnival

Saturday, October 20, 2007

12:00 - 4:00 PM

2919 West Second St., Wichita

Families of children with epilepsy  
are invited to attend.

\$5.00 per family • Lunch will be served

▶ Please RSVP: 316-943-2453 ◀



© Face painting © The Bubble man! © Crafts © Clowns ©  
Puppet Show © Fun Foods © Games © Magician © Prizes  
© Inflatables © WPD Child ID Safety Officers will be on hand

## Home School FIELD TRIP

Tuesday, October 23

Join ERC for our first field trip for families of children with epilepsy that are home schooled. We will unite families facing similar challenges with this Home School Field Trip!

**Fall Fun – Pumpkin Patch,  
Horse Riding & Corn Maze!**

For more info or to sign up, please call:  
**943-2453**



The Arc of Sedgwick County  
2919 West Second Street  
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**BRAIN  
STORMS**

Conference  
NOV. 10, 2007

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