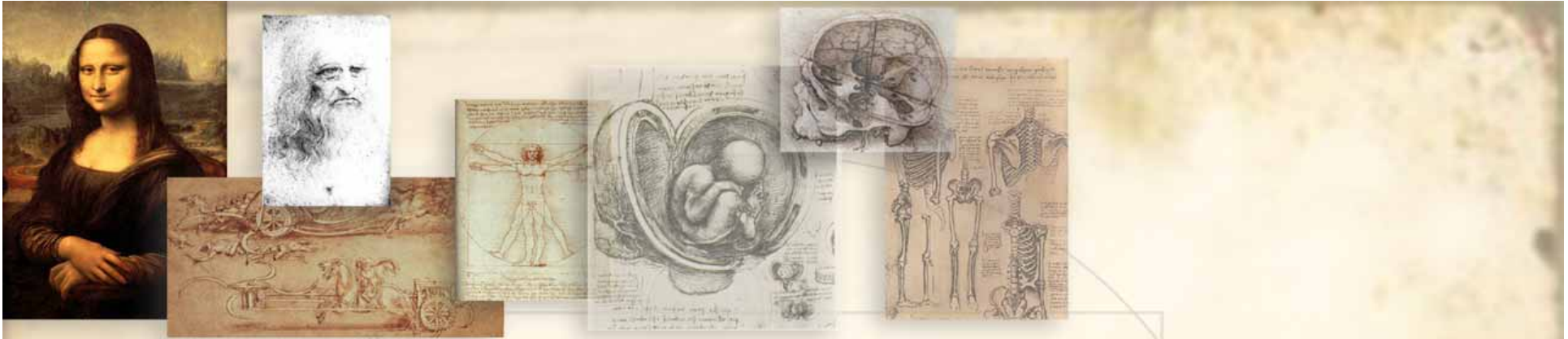




Epilepsy and Driving in Europe

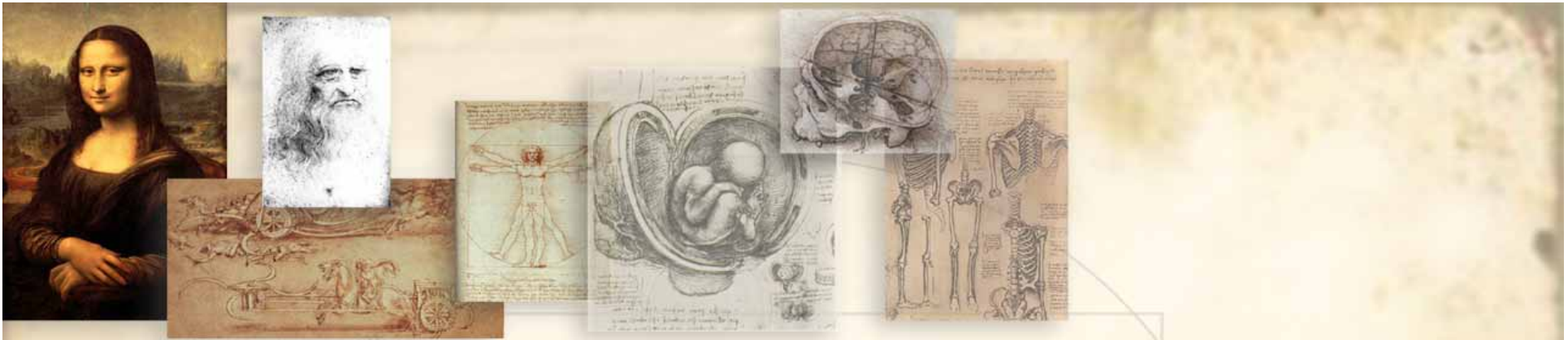
Mike Glynn, 10th IBE Epilepsy &
Society Conference - Copenhagen
5th August 2006





Epilepsy and Driving in Europe

- *There are few aspects of having epilepsy in adult life that cause greater distress than the necessary legal restrictions on driving.*
Hopkins, A. Appleton, R 1996 'Epilepsy The Facts
- *Coping with modern life without the motor car is too much for many and not surprisingly some with uncontrolled epilepsy continue to drive and undoubtedly many accidents ensue.*
Taylor, MP 1996 Managing Epilepsy in Primary Care
- *This (Driving) is undoubtedly one of the most emotionally charged issues for individuals with epilepsy. Until relatively recently most countries had extremely onerous restrictions on individuals with seizures. Some even took away driving privileges for life.*
Berg, A 2004 IBE Commission on Epilepsy, Risks and Insurability



Epilepsy and Driving in Europe

- **EUCARE Action Plan**

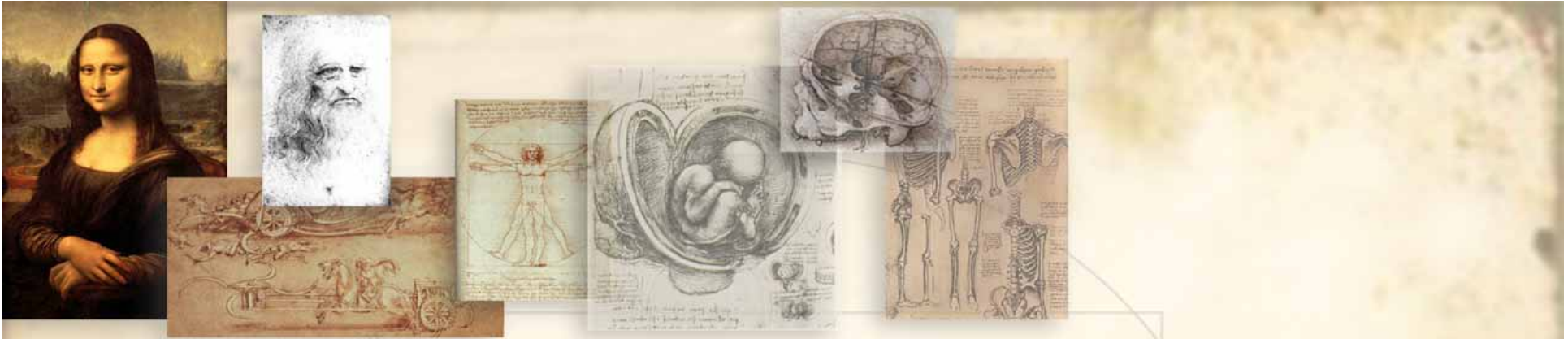
Campaign to change driving regulations

Brainwave, The Irish Epilepsy Association

Outcome

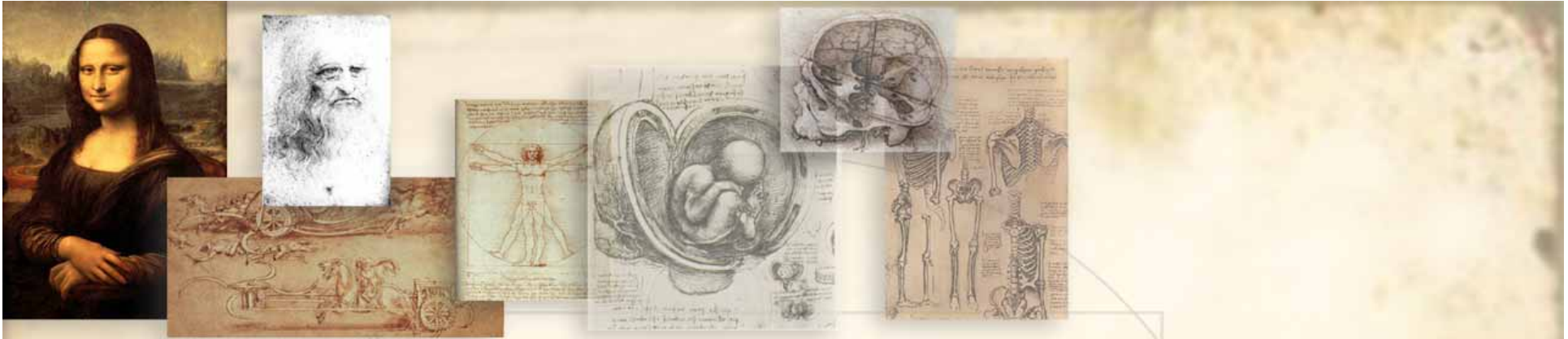
New regulations including the 1-year seizure-free period came into effect on the 26th November 1999. A new Irish Government in 2002 gave driving regulation responsibility to the Department of Transport. Brainwave is continuing to *lobby* for a review regarding:-

- Nocturnal seizures
- Changes of medication; provoked and unprovoked seizures
- Non-epileptic seizures or situations in which diagnosis is uncertain
- Single seizures; provoked or unprovoked
- Simple partial seizures where awareness is retained



Epilepsy and Driving in Europe

- **Changes in Ireland**
- **Extract from the Road Traffic (Licensing of Drivers) (Amendment) Regulations 2004**
- (2) in the case of an applicant for a licence to drive a vehicle of any category who suffers, or has suffered in the past, from epilepsy, fitness to drive-
 - (a) may be certified for a limited period in relation to vehicles of category A1, A, B, EB, M or W, where the applicant –
 - has not suffered any epileptic attack during the 12 month period preceding the date of medical examination,
 - has only had nocturnal seizures over a period of 2 years preceding the date of medical examination, and certification is by a consultant neurologist,
 - has only had a single provoked seizure and such seizure was prior to the 6 month period preceding the date of medical examination, and certification is by a consultant neurologist, or
 - has only had simple partial seizures where awareness is fully maintained at all times, and certification is by a consultant neurologist



Epilepsy and Driving in Europe

- has only had nocturnal seizures over a period of 2 years preceding the date of medical examination, and certification is by a consultant neurologist,
- has only had a single provoked seizure and such seizure was prior to the 6 month period preceding the date of medical examination, and certification is by a consultant neurologist, or
- has only had simple partial seizures where awareness is fully maintained at all times, and certification is by a consultant neurologist




News Extracts

MIKE GLYNN
IRISH EPILEPSY ASSOCI
249 CRUMLIN ROAD
DUBLIN 12

**Media
Kilkenny People**

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213 11-1



Dear Doctor

I'm on epilepsy tablets since I was a child and haven't had an attack for five years. Is it okay to stay on the treatment? I have a good job and need to drive every day. I prefer to stay on the medicine rather than take a risk. Are there any medical problems from staying on the tablets? I'm on Epilim.

The general rule about epilepsy is that treatment may be discontinued slowly if there are no attacks for two years and no evidence (on EEG) of worsening of the condition.

In practice many patients with epilepsy prefer to stay on their treatment because it lessens their risk of attacks, and thus allows them to stay driving. Those who are free of attacks for three years are allowed legally to drive.

The issue of driving can be the deciding issue. If you cannot afford to take the chance then staying on treatment is perfectly sensible. There are no medical issues from long-term use, other than the usual surveillance. Epilim is a very safe drug for those it suits. I know some patients who are on it for ten or 20 years, all without problems.



Epilepsy and Driving in Europe

Assessment of Fitness to Drive in Epilepsy in Europe 1996

International Bureau for Epilepsy



Epilepsy and Driving in Europe

Recommended European Regulations

Group 1 Licenses (Private car, motor)

FIRST SEIZURE

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| -no neurological disorder | 3-6 months driving ban |
| -neurological disorder | individual assessment, at least 6 months |

EPILEPSY

1 year driving ban

(more than 1 seizure, more than 24 hours apart)

Exceptions

- | | |
|---|---|
| -in last year, seizures only during sleep | no ban, but licence of limited duration (for example 1year) |
| -sporadic seizures
(interval of more than 2 years) | assessment as in case of first seizure |
| -progressive neurological disorder | individual assessment,
at least 1 year driving ban |

Epilepsy and Driving in Europe

Recommended European Regulations cont.....

CHANGE OF MEDICATION

- Change of medication
- recurrence in the course of seizure withdrawal or change of medication

driving ban during 0-3 months assessment as in case of first

- withdrawal

After less than 3 years seizure-freedom

driving ban during withdrawal plus 3 months

After 3 or more years seizure-freedom

no driving ban during withdrawal or thereafter



Epilepsy and Driving in Europe

Schmedding et al Recommendations

Group 1



- 1st Seizure
- Epilepsy
- Provoked seizure
- Sleep seizures
- 6 months
- 12 months
- Varies
- 12 months + no other seizures
- Other seizures without influence on driving ability
- 12 months + no other seizures
- Other loss of consciousness
- Varies
- Seizure because of change of medication
- 3 mo



Epilepsy and Driving in Europe

Questionnaire Respondents

**Belgium
Croatia
Czech Rep.
France
Germany
Ireland
Israel
Malta
Portugal
Sweden
Switzerland
UK**



Epilepsy and Driving in Europe

Group 1

Epilepsy- Seizure Free Period in Months

Country	Months	Country	Months
Belgium	12	Malta	12
Croatia	24	Portugal	24
Czech Rep	12	Sweden	24
France	Varies	Switzerland	12
Germany	12	UK	12
Ireland	12	EU Recs.	12
Israel	12		



Epilepsy and Driving in Europe

Group 2

Epilepsy- Seizure Free Period in Years

Country	Years	Country	Year
Belgium	LIFE (some exceptions)	Malta	1
Croatia	LIFE	Portugal	LIFE
Czech Rep	10	Sweden	5
France	Varies	Switzerland	1
Germany	5	UK	10
Ireland	LIFE	EU Recs.	10
Israel	1		



Epilepsy and Driving in Europe

Group 1

Seizures excl. during sleep- Sleep Seizures only Period in Months

Country	Months	Country	Months
Belgium	24	Malta	NO RULE
Croatia	NO DETAILS	Portugal	NO RULE
Czech Rep	NO RULE	Sweden	60 in some cases
France	NO RULE	Switzerland	NO RULE
Germany	NO DETAILS	UK	36
Ireland	24	EU Recs.	12
Israel	NO RULE		

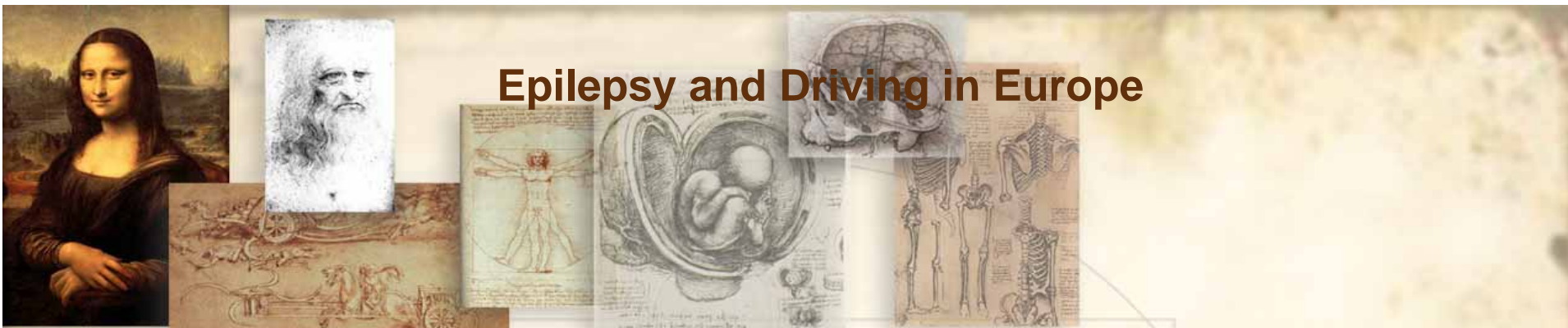
Epilepsy and Driving in Europe

Group 1

1st Seizure (unprovoked) – Seizure Free Period in Months

Country	Months	Country	Months
Belgium	6	Malta	12
Croatia	NO DETAILS	Portugal	24
Czech Rep	12	Sweden	Varies
France	As Epilepsy	Switzerland	12
Germany	3-6	UK	12
Ireland	12	EU Recs.	6
Israel	12		

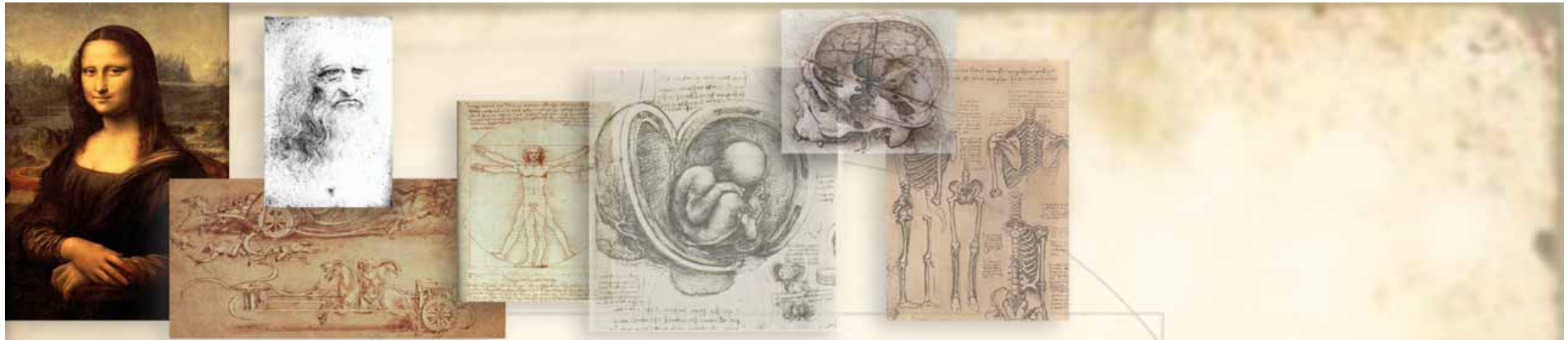
Epilepsy and Driving in Europe



Group 1

Seizures with no loss of consciousness - no other Seizure Free Period

Country	Months	Country	Months
Belgium	3	Malta	NO RULE
Croatia	NO DETAILS	Portugal	NO RULE
Czech Rep	NO RULE	Sweden	NO RULE
France	NO RULE	Switzerland	NO RULE
Germany	NO DETAILS	UK	NO RULE
Ireland	12	EU Recs.	12
Israel	NO RULE		



Epilepsy and Driving in Europe

Epilepsy and Driving Licence in Lithuania

Mameniskiė R 1, Jatuzis D 1, Budrys V 1

1 Vilnius University Hospital, Vilnius, Lithuania

Purpose: In Lithuania driving is prohibited by law for patients with a current diagnosis or history of epilepsy despite analyse and to compare the view of doctors and patients with epilepsy into the legalisation of driving in appropriate

Method: 260 patients with epilepsy were given a questionnaire regarding epilepsy characteristics, social issues and quality of life. 156 neurologists completed a questionnaire regarding legal permission to get a driver's license for patients

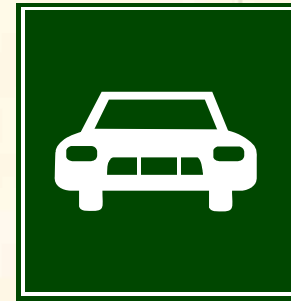
Results: 64.2% of patients indicated that driving restrictions have a negative impact on their quality of life. 28.1% of hold a driver's license. 73.1% would support legal permission to drive for seizure-free patients. 94.5% of neurologists clearly defined subgroup of epilepsy patients. 87.8% of them would permit the patient to drive if seizure-free without antiepileptic drug. 19.8% would allow the patient to drive if seizures occur only during night sleep and 14.4% if seizures driving after a 5 year seizure-free period, 43.2 % after 2 years. 26.7% would not withhold a driving license after the in the assessment of driving fitness.

Conclusion: Most epilepsy patients and neurologists support legal permission to drive for seizure-free patients. Results of the ongoing revision of regulations of driving licensing in Lithuania towards liberalisation according to EU directives.



Epilepsy and Driving in Europe

DRIVE ON !



[http://europa.eu.int/comm/
transport/home/driving
licence/index_en.htm.](http://europa.eu.int/comm/transport/home/driving/licence/index_en.htm)





Centraal Bureau
Rijvaardigheids
bewijzen

You are driving your car,
Are you allowed to stay behind this bike?



YES



NO