

ILAE Executive Committee Nominees

Tatsuya Tanaka Personal Statement

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Dear Colleagues of ILAE

It is a great honor to be nominated as a candidate in the election of officers for the Executive Committee of the ILAE.

I started to develop an international perspective during my training in epileptology which started in 1973 under Professor Robert Naquet in France, when I studied basic research using techniques such as kindling and kainic acid-induced seizures. My international experience continued under Professor Andre Olivier at the Montreal Neurological Institute, where I acquired clinical experience in epilepsy surgery. I put the tools that I learned abroad to good use when I returned to Japan and continued my clinical and research career as an epileptologist and neurosurgeon. In 2005, I was the first neurosurgeon who was elected President of the Japan Epilepsy Society (JES). During my three year term, the JES continued to grow to a membership of over 1,800 doctors, the second largest chapter of ILAE after the United States.

My basic research background has been extremely important to my understanding of the pathophysiology of epilepsy, and I have taken what I have learned about central neuronal networks and used it to develop therapeutic strategies for my patients. For this reason I strongly support the emphasis that the ILAE has placed on translational research to move laboratory research findings to clinical practice.

For the next 4 years and beyond one of the great challenges and opportunities will be the training of new epileptologists in underserved areas. Our experience with the JES scholarship system may provide a model for meeting this challenge. The JES is receiving young epilepsy clinicians and researchers from the Asian and Oceanian region to receive training in Japan. At the moment the number is small and the training facilities are limited, but we will expand the scholarship system and increase the number of facilities that can accept trainees and train them well.

The international epilepsy community faces other challenges. Stigma surrounding epilepsy continues to exist in many places of the world. Educational campaigns based on a strong collaboration between ILAE and IBE is necessary to break down the barriers faced by our patients. Another challenge remains the significant regional disparity that persists in epilepsy care despite the 100-year history of ILAE. No worldwide international conference of ILAE has ever been convened on the African continent. I would like to work to remedy this problem in the next four years. Finally, there is a problem in the dissemination of information about epilepsy. There are many regions in the world that cannot afford access to journals. The electric journal "Epilepsy & Seizure" launched by JES is an open access journal which can be viewed by anyone. We hope that this approach can serve as a model to supply information to many underserved areas.

If elected as an officer of the Executive Committee, I would devote all my efforts to assist the President-elect Dr. Solomon Moshe, who has proposed a challenging set of goals for us to meet. Again, I am greatly honored by this nomination that I have received. I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to help the League achieve its important goals.

Yours sincerely,

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