

# Illnesses prompt cartoon guidelines in Japan

Associated Press

TOKYO — After hundreds of children became ill while watching an action-packed cartoon, Japanese broadcasters announced an agreement yesterday to create guidelines to keep it from happening again.

Medical experts still don't know why more than 700 viewers, mostly children, suffered epileptic-like seizures after watching an explosion scene with flashing lights.

Seiichiro Ujiie, chairman of the National Association of Commercial Broadcasters, said commercial and public broadcasters would create guidelines based on the medical investigation.

Video and animation experts from TV Tokyo, which broadcast the "Pocket Monsters" cartoons, plan to travel abroad to gather information for new guidelines, he said.

Medical experts suspect that a scene featuring rhythmic bursts of

brightly colored light was so rapid and intense that it interrupted normal brain function.

More than 200 viewers, with symptoms including blackouts, nausea and convulsions, had to be hospitalized overnight after watching the 30-minute cartoon Tuesday night or later on videotapes.

TV Tokyo is canceling the program until the cause of the reactions is known, and it has urged video stores to stop renting tapes of the show.