Dear Dr. Melissa Norton,

Thank you for the opportunity to resubmit our manuscript as a research letter. We have substantially revised our paper following the helpful suggestions made by the two reviewers.

With these modifications, we hope our paper is now acceptable for publication. We thank the editor and the reviewers again for their helpful suggestions, and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Hiroyasu Iso, MD

Reviewer 1
Major comment
1. The reviewer raised concerns about the importance of the question raised in the present study.
According to the reviewer’s comment, we added a few sentences to indicate the importance of this study clearly. (pp6, 2nd paragraph, line 6). First of all, we think it crucial for us to examine whether inequalities in prevalence of functional limitation according to education level existed in Japan. Due to limited studies on this topic in Japan, public health measures to prevent functional limitation among persons with low education level have not paid attention. Moreover, it is also important to show whether inequalities existed in terms of stroke prognosis, because approximately 30% of people with functional limitation were due to stroke in Japan.

2. The reviewer suggested us to refer to several important studies.
According to the reviewer’s suggestions, we referred to several important studies and added sentences to describe the association between education level and prognosis after stroke. (pp 5, paragraph 4 line 1)

3. The reviewer suggested us to make it clear how education level linked to socioeconomic status.
According to the reviewer’s suggestion, we added a paragraph to describe the education level and health. (pp5, paragraph 2) Education level is a good indicator of socioeconomic status but it is not equivalent to socioeconomic status.

4. The reviewer pointed out the discrepancy in number of subjects.
Thank you for pointing out the discrepancy. We corrected the number of subjects.

Minor comment
5. The reviewer suggested us to correct typos in the text.
According to the reviewer’s suggestions, we corrected typos throughout the text.

Reviewer 2
Major comment
1. The reviewer suggested us to shorten the title by removing the phrase: a cross sectional study.
According to the reviewer’s suggestion, we removed the indicated phrase.

2. The reviewer pointed out the discrepancy in number of subjects.
Thank you for pointing out the discrepancy. We corrected the number of subjects.

In addition, according to the reviewer’s suggestion, we changed men and women aged 40-59 in 1990 to men and women aged 50-69 in 2000 in abstract.

3. The reviewer suggested us to change keywords.
We also think that “Japanese elderly” would be more informative than “Japan”. However, we decided to keep Japan as our key word because Japan is Mesh term but not Japanese elderly.
4. The reviewer suggested us to have some discussion on mechanisms of social inequalities in prevalence of functional limitations among people without stroke. According to the reviewer’s suggestion, we added a paragraph describing possible explanation. (pp10, paragraph4) Because we regarded marital status, smoking, alcohol use as mediating variables in the statistical model, we did not do so in the table for the primary analyses. However, we conducted extra analysis to examine how much those health behavior factors explained the associations between education level and functional limitation, and added the result in text.