

How industry and government have buried bad news

Source: What Doctors Don't Tell You

1996

Professor of Bioengineering Dr Henry Lai, of the University of Washington in Seattle, exposes animal brain cells to low-level wireless radiation. If wireless radiation were simply a matter of heating ('thermal' effects), nothing untoward would happen. Instead, he found "increases in brain cell DNA single-strand breaks...a concern because DNA mutation is a cause of cancer"

1999

After the mobile phone industry commissions a \$27 million research programme, epidemiologist and legal expert Dr George Carlo reports a higher rate of brain cancer deaths among handheld phone users than in those using phones away from their heads. Carlo found a 50% increase in acoustic neuromas (a type of benign tumour of the cranial nerve to the ear) and a more than 100% increase in "rare neuro-epithelial tumours on the outside of the brain". His research programme is promptly cancelled by the industry.

2000

Sweden becomes the first country to officially classify electro-sensitivity as a "functional impairment"; at this time, it's estimated that 3% of the population is affected by wireless signals in general, and mobiles in particular.

That same year, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) declares there isn't enough evidence to raise concerns over mobile-phone safety.

After surveying all the available evidence – by now, this means more than 200 published reports of the safety of electromagnetic radiation from mobile phones – the highly respected ECOLOG Institute in Hanover, Germany, found "carcinogenic effects...especially brain tumours [and] leukaemia", "greatly increased permeability of the blood-brain barrier", "effects...on the central nervous system", "impairment of cognitive functions", "debilitation of the immune system", "direct damage to DNA" and "chromosome aberrations".

The German phone company T-Mobil rejects these findings out of hand, commissioning three other German scientists, all sceptics, who trash the ECOLOG study.

UK government scientist Sir William Stewart, chairman of the Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones (IEGMP), in its May 2000 report, recommends the "precautionary principle" of advising people to limit their use of mobiles – and children in particular.

2006

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) concludes its \$24 million, size-year study of brain tumours and cell phones by 50 scientists in 13 countries. Published in 2010, the Interphone Study concludes that there are "suggestions" of an increased risk of glioma at the highest exposure levels, "but biases and error prevent a causal interpretation"



2014

A major British study reports that despite "exhaustive" research, "we have found no evidence of risks to health from the radio waves produced by mobile phones or their base stations"

The European Commission's SCENIHR report, after evaluating many thousands of studies, dismisses the substantial number that found evidence of harm as a "chance finding", "methodological artefacts" or just "highly implausible"

Using your mobile safely

- 1** Limit the use of mobile phones to essential calls and always keep calls short
- 2** Children should use a mobile phone only in an emergency
- 3** Wear an air-tube handset, not a wired headset, as the latter can intensify radiation in the ear canal.
- 4** Don't carry your mobile phone in a pocket or on a belt while it's switched on – your lower body tissues absorb radiation more quickly than your head.
- 5** If you don't have an air-tube handset, don't immediately put the phone to your ear once you've made the call, but wait a few seconds for the connection to be made and while the other phone is ringing.
- 6** Don't use your mobile in enclosed metal spaces, such as in a car or a lift.
- 7** Don't make a call when network strength is showing just one bar, as your phone will emit higher radiation levels to compensate.
- 8** Purchase a mobile phone with a low specific absorption rate (SAR).
- 9** Use a scientifically validated electromagnetic field (EMF) protection device.
- 10** Text instead of talk whenever possible.
- 11** Use a landline phone (but not a cordless).
- 12** Turn your mobile device off as much as possible; callers can leave messages and you can call them back on a landline.