WiFi in the U.K. News: How Little We Know

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U.K. newspapers ran another batch of power line and Wi-Fi stories last weekend. The BBC, the *Guardian* and the *Times* all featured items on EMFs following the formal release of the SAGE report, which presented policy options to address EMF health risks. The *Daily Mail* profiled Sarah Dacre and her travails with electrosensitivity. And the *Independent* and the *Telegraph* continued to focus on public anxiety over the proliferation of Wi-Fi systems, especially in schools.

Lawrie Challis, the head of the U.K. Mobile Telecommunications and Health Research Program, warned that children should not put RF-transmitting computers on their laps. Denis Henshaw and Alan Preece, both of Bristol University, called for more research on Wi-Fi. "The research hasn't been done. Therefore we cannot assume that there are no effects," Henshaw told the *Independent.*

Henshaw and Preece are quite right. Very little health research has been done on Wi-Fi, but that's also true for all the other wireless technologies. What specific studies would fill the gaps and assure parents that their children are safe at school? Should we start tracking those kids who have Wi-Fi in their classrooms? If so, for how long? Ten years? Twenty? How could the possible effects of one set of RF radiation exposures be distinguished from those from other sources? For instance, most school children now have cell phones, live near cell towers, and have their own Wi-Fi systems at home (cable and DSL broadband modems set them up automatically). And anyone living in central London will be in the largest municipal Wi-Fi system in Europe. Is anyone studying that? We doubt it.

We are all awash with RF signals at work, at home, at school and most places in between. And this is just the beginning. The wireless revolution is still in its early stages. If we are serious about learning the health consequences of RF exposures, we must invest — heavily and over many years— in understanding the underlying

biophysical basis of electromagnetic interactions. Otherwise, we will continue to ricochet from one set of scary headlines to another with little to show for it.

WiFi, U.K., MTHR, Denis Henshaw, Alan Preece, SAGE,

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