Waiting for "NTP Lite"

Japanese/Korean Project Two Years Late
Unlikely To Resolve NTP Cancer Findings

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The Japanese/Korean partial repeat of the U.S. National Toxicology Project's (NTP) RF–animal cancer study has been hit by delays. The project is two years behind schedule, with results now not expected before the middle of next year.

"We hope we will present our data" next summer at the BioEM 2026 conference in Australia, Professor Katsumi Imaida of Kagawa University, the leader of the Japanese team, told *Microwave News* via email. The international NTP validation project —nicknamed "NTP Lite"— is in its "final stages," he wrote.

The project was launched in 2019 to confirm or counter the $30+ million NTP animal study, which showed "clear evidence" that RF radiation can cause cancer in rats.

Teams in Japan and Korea, using the same protocol, have each exposed rats to RF radiation for two years. The plan was to combine the two sets of results to achieve greater statistical reliability. The RF exposures were scheduled to end in December 2022.

Young Hwan Ahn, who oversees the Korean arm of the project, did not respond to a request for comment. Ahn, the director of the RF-EMF research lab at the Ajou University School of Medicine, became an ICNIRP Commissioner last year.

IARC Reassessment Still Pending

The delay frustrates the plans of the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), which has been waiting for the project results before embarking on a formal reassessment of RF–cancer risks.

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Return to Main Article Archive

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2026 Articles
2025 Articles
2024 Articles
2023 Articles
2022 Articles
2021 Articles
2020 Articles
2019 Articles
2018 Articles
2017 Articles
2016 Articles
2015 Articles
2014 Articles
2013 Articles
2012 Articles
2011 Articles
2010 Articles
2009 Articles
2008 Articles
2007 Articles
2006 Articles
2005 Articles
2004 Articles

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In 2011, IARC classified RF as a ”possible” cancer agent. The release of the NTP and Ramazzini animal studies in 2018 and 2019, with their surprisingly similar cancer findings, prompted calls for a new evaluation —and to upgrade the risk to “probable” carcinogen or higher.

At a public meeting in Paris in December 2022, IARC Director Elisabete Weiderpass initially signaled that she would green-light a new assessment, but then began to waver. She indicated that she wanted to wait for the Japanese/Korean experiments to be completed.

“It’s very important for those results to be published before we can assess the literature,” she said.

Weiderpass has been silent on the RF issue since that meeting in Paris.

Her decision —or indecision— runs counter to an IARC advisory group’s 2019 recommendation that RF radiation be reassessed by 2024. Last spring, a similar IARC panel once again called for a new evaluation.

Experimental Mishaps

The first indication of problems in the Japanese/Korean project emerged two years ago, when Korea’s Ahn revealed at a private WHO meeting in Geneva that four of his RF-exposed rats had unexpectedly died (details here). No further information has been made public.

At about the same time, Japan’s Imaida offered some preliminary results indicating that his RF-exposed rats had significantly different body weights and food consumption than controls. Last year, he presented those same results again, with few additional specifics.

Little else about the state of the project has been released. But *Microwave News* has learned that a key element of the Japanese protocol was quietly abandoned. The cancelled experiment would have used exposures with 6 W/Kg SARs. These rats were the positive —thermal— controls.

Without the benefit of Imaida’s positive controls, there is concern within the project that they will be unable to assess the reliability of the NTP findings, it’s main objective. If this limitation is confirmed, it would remove Weiderpass’s reason for delaying a new cancer assessment.

Project Advisors Seen as Biased

Many see the panel of scientific advisors chosen by the Japanese/Korean managers as a tell of the project’s biases. All are deep skeptics of a cancer risk.

Four of the five members are closely linked to ICNIRP (Michael Repacholi and Eric von Rongen, both former chairs) and/or to industry (Repacholi, Vijayalaxmi and Joe Wiart). The fifth,

Alexander Lerchl, is the most outspoken of them all. One of his vendettas led a German court to order him to stop smearing a professor who found that RF can damage DNA.

The original announcement included two other advisors: Emilie van Deventer of the WHO EMF project in Geneva and Michael Wyde of the NTP. *Microwave News* has been advised, however, that van Deventer never formally joined the panel, and that Wyde has been absent from advisory meetings.

NTP Lite, NTP, Japan, Korea, IARC, RF animal studies, Katsumi Imaida, Young Hwan Ahn, Elisabete Weiderpass, WHO, Michael Repacholi, Emilie van Deventer, Eric van Rongen, Vijayalaxmi, Joe Wiart, Alexander Lerchl, Michael Wyde,

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