



## A Report on Non-Ionizing Radiation

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## 2011 Short Takes

### Mevissen & Portier on IARC RF Meeting

December 6, 2011

Switzerland's [Meike Mevissen](#) and [Chris Portier](#) of the U.S. offer their insiders' account of last May's IARC search for consensus on the cancer risks of RF radiation in their article, "[The Eyes of the World Were Upon Us](#)." It's a serious look at the give-and-take among the 29 participants over the weeklong meeting (hint: they never mention pickled vegetables). Ten years ago, Mevissen and Portier were also members of the [IARC panel](#) which classified [power-frequency EMFs](#) as a "possible human carcinogen (2B)," the same [designation assigned to RF](#) last spring.

### EM Sensitivity in *Earth Island Journal*

November 30, 2011

[Christopher Ketcham](#), who made a splash early last year with his GQ piece, "[Warning: Your Cell Phone May Be Hazardous to Your Health](#)," is back on the EMF beat with a cover story in the latest issue of *Earth Island Journal*: "[Warning: High Frequency](#)." The first warning centered on brain tumor risks; the new one focuses on electromagnetic hypersensitivity. One quote from [Carl Blackman](#) of the [U.S. EPA](#) highlights how controversial the whole issue is: "With my government cap on, I'm supposed to tell you you're perfectly safe," Blackman tells [a woman whose family and farm animals are bedeviled with health problems after a cell tower was installed nearby]. "With my civilian cap on, I have to tell you to consider leaving." See also the [accompanying comments](#) by the editor of *Earth Island Journal*.

### Italy's Health Council Recommends Precaution

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November 26, 2011

Italy's [National Health Council](#) is recommending a [precautionary approach to the use of cell phones by children](#), according to *La Repubblica*, a leading national newspaper.

Although the announcement comes right after the airing of a hard hitting TV program last night (see item below), *La Repubblica* reports that the decision to advise precaution was made at the council's November 15 meeting. In a [press release](#), the council states that its move was prompted by IARC's classification of RF radiation as a [possible cancer agent](#). An information campaign is planned to "raise awareness."

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## Italian TV Investigates Cell Phone Health Risks

November 26, 2011

Tomorrow, Sunday, Italy's TV news documentary program, *Report*, will present the findings of its investigation on cell-phone health risks and the role of industry funding for research. The program will air on RAI3, a national network, at 9:30pm local time (3:30pm on the U.S. East Coast). The show may be seen on the Internet. Watch a [short preview](#).

November 27

Now you can watch the entire [hour-long show](#). There is also a [transcript](#), and with [Google Translate](#), you can make sense of it all even if you don't speak Italian.

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## ICNIRP Elections: Matthes & Feychting Are the New Leaders

November 23, 2011

ICNIRP has announced the results of its most recent elections. [Rüdiger Matthes](#) and [Maria Feychting](#) are the new chair and vice-chair, respectively, of the commission. They will take over in May 2012. Three new members were also elected to ICNIRP and will take their seats in May: [Rodney Croft](#), [Carmela Marino](#) and [Soichi Watanabe](#).

Last summer, ICNIRP began posting a "declaration of personal interest" for each member of the commission. At the time, one declaration was noticeably missing: [Mike Repacholi](#)'s. Since then, ICNIRP has added an explanation: Because Repacholi is chairman emeritus and has no "voting rights," he is not required to out fill out a declaration.

ICNIRP is also not asking its consulting experts and members of its advisory committees to make full disclosures. We think we know why. A number of industry consultants advise ICNIRP —[Leeka Kheifets](#) and [David Black](#) come right to mind. If such ties were

openly acknowledged, they would make a mockery of ICNIRP's claims of being free of corporate influence.

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## Failing Epigenetics 101

November 19, 2011

Is it possible that a senior scientist at [NIH](#), a former White House advisor, could be clueless about [epigenetics](#) (the study of how changes in the expression of genes can occur without changes in the underlying DNA)? Seems so. We're talking about [Ezekiel Emanuel](#), a bioethicist at NIH. His brother [Rahm Emanuel](#) is the mayor of Chicago and the former chief of staff to President Obama.

Earlier this month, [Franz Adlkofer](#) gave an invited lecture at Harvard Law School on how institutional corruption stands in the way of research on the effects of cell phone radiation. (A [video of his lecture](#) was posted online yesterday.)

In the Q&A session that followed, an unseen member of the audience stated that she had been at NIH last spring when she and her coworkers received an e-mail from Ezekiel Emanuel "bashing" the news —presumably— that IARC had found that RF/microwaves are a [possible human carcinogen](#) because it "would require a really deep radical alteration of our views in basic physics." In other words, Emanuel was espousing the opinion that cell phones cannot lead to cancer because microwaves cannot break human DNA. Emanuel appears to have been reading too much of the unscientific musings doled out each week by [Robert Park](#). This is nothing new for Emanuel. In 2008, he said essentially the same thing about cell phones and DNA breaks in [The New Republic](#). It also means that Emanuel has had the last three years to take Epigenetics 101 and still has an incomplete.

Happily, there are people who have done their homework and who are making sense. [Richard Stein](#), a postdoc in molecular biology at Princeton, is one of them. In a [just published essay](#) in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, Stein writes: "For a long time, it was assumed that chemicals are able to cause cancer only by mutating the DNA. However, a growing body of scientific evidence reveals that this 'carcinogenesis equals mutagenesis' paradigm is not accurate." (This applies equally to radiation as well as chemicals.) Another is Melinda Wenner Moyer, a science writer and blogger, who recently posted a piece, "[The Epigenetics of Cancer](#)," which concludes: "cancer is about far more than just mutations." (See also her earlier piece: "[Cell Phones, Cancer, and Scientific Oversimplification](#)." ) Want to know more about epigenetics? Check out this [paper in Nature](#).

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## The European Electromog Protest

November 12, 2011

The list of organizers and supporters of the EC protest on November 16 has grown and now includes groups from all over

Europe, according to a press release we just received. The European Electrosmog Protest is backed by, among others: [Teslabel](#) (Belgium), [Robin des Toits](#) (France), [Bürgerwelle](#) (Germany), [AMICA](#) (Italy), [Stop UMTS](#) (The Netherlands & Belgium), [Diagnose:Funk](#) (Switzerland & Germany), [Mobilewise](#) (U.K.). The groups are collecting signatures for their petition, "[Less Electrosmog!](#)", which, at this writing, has been signed by more than 70 professors and medical doctors, according to Steven Boone, its coordinator.

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## Occupy EC?

**November 9, 2011**

The European Commission is holding a [conference on EMFs and Health](#) in Brussels next week. [Teslabel](#), a local activist group, is planning a [demonstration](#) outside the meeting, in part because only one side of the research community was invited to speak. Check out the [program](#): no surprises, all the usual names and faces — those who don't think there's much risk — with only a few exceptions.

Two Americans are on the agenda: [Leeka Kheifets](#), the peripatetic industry consultant, [Chris Portier](#), who was on the [IARC RF panel](#) last May.

Those who understand French might want to watch the Belge TV coverage of the [Danish cohort study](#), under the refreshingly accurate headline: "[Dishonest Study](#)" (scroll down to "Une nouvelle étude danoise dément la nocivité du GSM"). In an unusual reversal, the TV reporters do a better job at pointing out the serious flaws of the study than did the Karolinska group, which wrote the accompanying [editorial](#) in the *British Medical Journal*.

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## Repacholi's RF Review

**October 25, 2011**

**Updated November 10, 2011**

Last year, sensing that the upcoming [IARC](#) assessment might undercut his legacy at both the [WHO](#) and [ICNIRP](#), [Mike Repacholi](#) assembled a team to prepare its own assessment of the possible tumor risks from RF radiation: That [review](#) has just been released by the journal *Bioelectromagnetics*.

No surprise: In contrast to the IARC decision to classify RF radiation as a possible human cancer agent, Repacholi and his 14 coauthors could not identify any hazard beyond overheating. What is surprising is that no one from the WHO EMF project and only one member of ICNIRP, [Paolo Vecchia](#), joined his study team. On the other hand, two who served on the IARC panel did sign up: [David McCormick](#) of the U.S. [Martin Röösli](#) of Switzerland. Repacholi's second author is [Alex Lerchl](#), who has long sought to discredit studies showing that RF can lead to DNA breaks. Here

again no surprise: the paper finds that "studies do not support the conclusion that RF exposure causes genotoxic effects."

As we long ago documented, Repacholi's EMF project at WHO received substantial support from the cell phone industry. Did the industry subsidize this new review? The published paper provides no information on possible conflicts. We have asked for clarification from Repacholi and [Jim Lin](#), the editor of *Bioelectromagnetics*.

**Later:** Mike Repacholi replied that "there were no sponsors for this review." He expressed surprise that the conflict-of-interest statement had been left out of the published paper. Some days after we raised the issue with Lin, a new version of the paper was posted with a detailed, two-paragraph statement covering two of the 15 authors. All the others "reported no conflicts of interest." The conflict-free include Repacholi and Lerchl. We have yet to be told how the two paragraphs were omitted from the originally posted paper. That pdf is now a collectors' item.

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## New Light on Electrosensitivity

October 19, 2011

Updated October 20, 2011

Cornell biologists may have made a breakthrough in understanding why some people are electrosensitive. They report in *Nature Communications* that humans as well as many other species descended from a type of fish that lived some 500 million years ago which had a "well developed electroreceptive system." A possible implication is that some of us, like sharks and rays, may be able to detect very weak electric fields and perhaps a subset has an electroreceptive system that has gone awry.

The editors at the *New York Times* offer a sympathetic [viewpoint](#): "One thing is certain. If we had the electrical sensitivity of that ancient aquatic ancestor or the paddlefish, we would find the world we live in now, which roars with electrical current, deeply inhospitable."

See also the Cornell University [press release](#).

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