



2018 Short Takes

ICNIRP Finds NTP & Ramazzini RF-Animal Studies Unconvincing

“Further Research Is Required”

September 4, 2018
Updated May 1, 2020

The International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) has determined that the two recent animal studies pointing to a cancer risk from cell phone radiation are not convincing and should not be used to revise current exposure standards.

In a “note” published today, the 12-member group states that the studies by the National Toxicology Program (NTP) and the Ramazzini Institute “do not provide a consistent, reliable and generalizable body of evidence.” “Both studies have inconsistencies and limitations that affect the usefulness of their results for setting exposure guidelines,” according to ICNIRP.

In contrast, a peer review panel of toxicologists and pathologists recently found that the NTP study showed “clear evidence” of RF carcinogenicity.

The current ICNIRP limits were set 20 years ago and are based only on acute effects. Two months ago, ICNIRP issued revised draft guidelines for public comment which are largely unchanged and also discount cancer risks.

Late last year, Maria Feychting, the vice chair of ICNIRP, was reported to be attempting to discredit the NTP study. See our “The Anatomy of a Rumor.”

On the other hand, Jim Lin, the editor-in-chief of Bioelectromagnetics and a 12-year former member of ICNIRP, recently wrote that, “Perhaps the time has come to judiciously reassess, revise and update [the ICNIRP] guidelines” so that they protect against long-term RF exposures.

☒ Microwave News ☐ The Web

VIEW SHORT TAKES BY YEAR

[2026 Short Takes](#) [2017 Short Takes](#)
[2025 Short Takes](#) [2016 Short Takes](#)
[2024 Short Takes](#) [2015 Short Takes](#)
[2023 Short Takes](#) [2014 Short Takes](#)
[2022 Short Takes](#) [2013 Short Takes](#)
[2021 Short Takes](#) [2012 Short Takes](#)
[2020 Short Takes](#) [2011 Short Takes](#)
[2019 Short Takes](#) [2010 Short Takes](#)
[2018 Short Takes](#)

RECENT SHORT TAKES

[RF Animal Cancer Review Is #1](#)
.....
[NTP Lite: All Good in Korea Too](#)
.....
[NTP Lite: No Cancer Risk Seen in Japan](#)
.....
[ElektrosmogReport Now in English Too](#)
.....
[NCI 'Cancer Bioelectricity' Conference](#)
.....
[Another WHO RF Review Challenged](#)
.....
[Italy's 6 V/m RF Limit at Risk](#)
.....
[“NTP Lite”: Update from Japan](#)
.....
[Schwannoma Puzzle](#)
.....
[Korean NTP Lite: Progress Report](#)
.....

Help Support
Microwave News

Here are the conclusions of ICNIRP's eight-page note, which was released today:

Conclusion

Although the NTP (2018a, b) and Falcioni et al. (2018) studies used large numbers of animals, best laboratory practice, and exposed animals for the whole of their lives, consideration of their findings does not provide evidence that radiofrequency EMF is carcinogenic. NTP reported that their strongest findings were of increased malignant cardiac schwannoma in male rats, however that is not consistent with the results of Falcioni et al. (2018), is not consistent with the NTP female rat nor male or female mouse results, and is not consistent with the radiofrequency EMF cancer literature more generally. While results from epidemiological studies suggest vestibular schwannoma is an outcome of interest, this is not true for malignant cardiac schwannoma. NTP found no increase in schwannoma overall or for vestibular schwannoma. Further, as multiple comparisons were not controlled for in the NTP study, there is no indication that the increased incidence of malignant cardiac schwannomas in male rats was more than what would be expected by chance alone. ICNIRP considers that the NTP (2018a, b) and Falcioni et al. (2018) studies do not provide a consistent, reliable and generalizable body of evidence that can be used as a basis for revising current human exposure guidelines. Further research is required that addresses the above limitations.

(L. Falcioni is the first author of the [Ramazzini study](#).)

For more on the NTP study: go [here](#).

And for more on the Ramazzini study, go [here](#) and [here](#).

September 27, 2019

A somewhat different version of this Note has been published in *Health Physics*. It will appear in the March 2020 issue of the journal. A free download is available now from the [ICNIRP website](#).

May 2, 2020

The [Note](#) has now been published. It appears in the May 2020 issue of *Health Physics* (open access).

Martin Blank (1935-2018)

June 15, 2018

Martin Blank died on June 13 at the age of 85.

A retired professor at [Columbia University](#), Blank was a long-time EMF researcher, best known for his collaboration with Columbia's Reba Goodman.

Writing in his 2014 book, *Overpowered*, Blank called himself an "unlikely activist" and urged people to practice precaution.

His [obituary](#) is posted on the Web site of the [EMF Safety Alliance](#).

Cell Phone Use Is "Not a High-Risk Situation"

Notes from the NTP Press Conference

February 2, 2018

Updated October 5, 2018

Here are four key takeaways from the [NTP](#) press conference held this afternoon, soon after the release of its two cell phone reports [these are no longer available]:

1. NTP's bottom line on cell phone use: "This is not a high-risk situation."
2. RF radiation has biological effects at levels previously believed to be innocuous—they may be good or bad.
3. NTP will continue to do RF health studies. A new exposure facility is being built on the NIEHS campus, which will be smaller and more flexible than the one used for the two-year exposures of the rats and mice in Chicago. It should be ready by late summer.
4. The finding that most impressed NTP was the increase of schwannoma of the heart in male rats. It was statistically significant. This was striking because of the similarity to acoustic neuroma, a tumor which has been reported in human studies. (For more on this, see our [original story](#) from May 2016.)

Of course, there is much else to delve into, notably the NTP analysis of DNA breaks, the incidence of brain tumors (glioma) among the male rats and the fact that they lived longer than the controls. The NTP attributes the significantly longer lifespan of the male rats to a lower incidence of chronic kidney disease (nephropathy). At the press conference, Dr. [John Bucher](#), who led the project, suggested that the radiation might lessen inflammation which benefited the kidneys. (See also our [previous coverage](#) of DNA breaks in the NTP study.)

The NTP press release, "High Exposure to Radiofrequency Radiation Linked to Tumor Activity in Male Rats," is [here](#).

Even before the NTP released the two reports this afternoon, it posted an [updated version](#) of the "partial" report it issued on the rats in May 2016. The new report features a few tweaks and the addition of a new Appendix (B2), which responds to the criticism of NIH's Michael Lauer that have been frequently cited to counter concerns of a cell phone cancer risk.

After the release, [Jeffrey Shuren](#), the director of the FDA's Center for Devices and Radiological Health [called](#) the NTP evidence of a cancer risk "mostly equivocal or ambiguous." The bottom line, he said, is that, "We believe the current safety limits for cell phones are acceptable for protecting the public health." The FDA requested the NTP study back in 1999.

The NTP draft rat cell phone report runs 381 pages and the draft mouse report is 270 pages. They can both be downloaded [here](#), where other related papers and data are also available. The NTP will hold a public [peer review](#) of the reports on March 26-28 in Research Triangle Park, NC.

An audio file of the press conference together with a transcript will be posted on the NTP Web site early next week, according to the

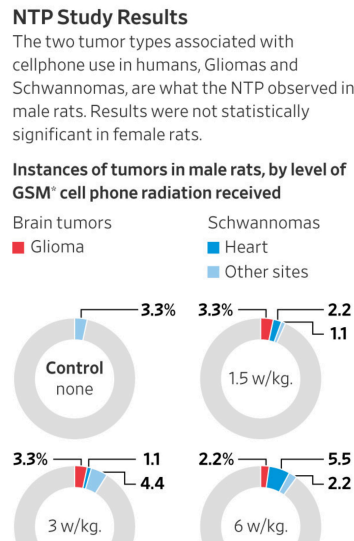
NTP press office.

[February 6: The transcript and audio file are now available [here](#).]

February 3

The headline in this morning's *New York Times* story is "Rodent Studies Suggest Cellphones' Risk to Humans in Minimal." The title of the [online version](#) is "Cellphones Are Still Safe for Humans, Researchers Say."

The *Wall Street Journal* took a different tack with "Why the Largest Study Ever on Cellphones and Cancer Won't Settle the Debate." The [story](#) included this useful graphic:



The *Washington Post* picked up the [AP feed](#) under "Cancer from Cellphones? New Studies Say No Need to Hang Up." (Later in the day, it was changed to: "[Studies Offer No Clear Answers on Safety of Cellphone Use](#).") Meanwhile, the print edition ran a story by one of the paper's staff reporters with the headline, "Human Health Conclusions Elusive After Cellphone Radiation Studies on Rodents."

And [Bloomberg](#) ran with "Cell Phone Radiation Tied to Rare Tumor in Rats, Study Says."

For more of *Microwave News*' coverage of the NTP RF project, [go here](#).

NTP: Draft RF Cancer Reports Released

Peer Review Meeting March 26-28

January 29, 2018

Updated February 2, 2018

The NTP has released two reports on the cancer risks from cell phone radiation (GSM and CDMA) on rats and mice. They are available [here](#).

The NTP press release, "High Exposure to RF Radiation Linked to Tumor Activity in Male Rats" is [here](#).

January 29, 12018

The National Toxicology Program (NTP) has announced that the draft reports on its \$25 million animal study on the cancer risks associated with cell phone radiation will be released on February 2.

A peer review meeting is scheduled for March 26-28 in Research Triangle Park, NC.

Further details are available [here](#). The *Federal Register* notice is [here](#).

Preliminary results pointing to a cancer risk were published close to two years ago. See the *Microwave News* story that prompted the release [here](#). For more of our detailed coverage, check out [these links](#).