



2019 Short Takes

French Govt Seeks To Limit Exposures from Cell Phones

Wants SARs Measured Without 5 mm Separation from Body

October 28, 2019

French health officials want cell phone users to be better informed of potential risks and are urging them to take precautionary steps to limit their radiation exposures.

The move comes after an government health and safety agency (ANSES) issued an October 21 [advisory](#) warning the public not to carry phones in shirt or trouser pockets.

The French government wants the European Commission to require measurements indicating how much energy is absorbed (SAR) when the phone is next to the body—that is, with the phone in simulated contact with the user. Current protocols allow a 5 mm separation.

On October 25, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health issued a [statement](#) with these key points*:

1. France will ask the European Commission to reinforce the requirements for new mobile phones put on the market. As recommended by the National Agency for Safety, Environment and Labor (ANSES), the Government will request that the approval tests be carried out in contact with the apparatus, and not 5 mm away as is currently the case. This will be more representative of actual exposures;
2. The National Frequency Agency (ANFR) will develop tools to improve user information:

- The mobile application “Open Barres” will be completed by the end of the year to allow each user to know the emissions of his mobile phone model;
- The recommended usage distance will also be indicated on the ANFR website, which already cites distances for the telephones checked, as

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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](#)

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[Korean NTP Lite: Progress Report](#)

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well as the "Open Barres" application. If there is cooperation from manufacturers, they will be available by the end of the year.

3. The Government will bring together major manufacturers to take voluntary steps to update the software of their models already on the market, before the adoption of recent, more restrictive emission standards;
4. ANFR's monitoring of products placed on the market will be increased by 30% in 2020.

The government reaffirmed its [advice](#) that users take these safety steps:

1. Use a hands-free kit
2. Favor text messages over phone calls
3. Favor areas with good reception
4. Avoid holding your phone to the ear when in a car, bus or train
5. Pick a mobile phone with a low SAR
6. Avoid long conversations

The full announcement (in French) is [here](#), an English version is [here](#).

For more on phones in pockets:

[Colorectal Cancer Soaring in Young Adults; Are Smartphones in the Mix?](#) (2019)

[Keep That Phone Out of Your Trouser Pocket!](#) (2009)

*Adapted from Google Translate.

EMF Studies: Industry Funding Sways Findings

Power Line-Cancer Links Show Consistency, Not Contradictions

September 4, 2019

Industry-funded studies have promoted false doubts about EMF cancer risks and led to the failure of the public health community to reduce exposures, argues [David Carpenter](#) in a [paper](#) published last week in *Environmental Research*.

Carpenter, the director of the Institute for Health and the Environment at the University of Albany in upstate New York, shows that, over the last 20 years, findings on the link between power line (ELF) EMFs and childhood leukemia have been heavily influenced by their source of funding. Government or independently sponsored studies have "consistently" shown that higher exposures lead to the greater cancer risks, while those supported by electrical utilities "consistently" have not.

These superficial contradictions have led to unwarranted doubt and inaction, according to Carpenter: "The public is confused and many times the press declares that results are 'inconsistent' when in fact

they are very consistent if one does not consider the results of industry-funded studies.”

He writes:

“It is remarkable that in the 40 years after [\[Nancy\] Wertheimer and \[Ed\] Leeper \(1979\)](#) first reported an association between exposure to magnetic fields from residential power lines and elevated risk of childhood cancer, and the large number of subsequent investigations, that there is still controversy over the question, ‘Does exposure to magnetic fields cause cancer?’”

The main reason for the uncertainty, Carpenter maintains, is that industry studies have weakened the findings of meta-analyses by diluting the “true association” between ELF EMFs and cancer. As a result, the medical and public health communities have failed to advise people to reduce their EMF exposures. He calls the current situation “unacceptable.”

Beyond childhood leukemia, Carpenter points out that individual studies and meta-analyses have shown “strong evidence” that excessive exposure to magnetic fields increases the risks of adult leukemia, male and female breast cancer and brain cancer.

In an interview, Carpenter said that he was “a bit surprised” by the strength of the links between adult cancers and ELF EMFs, where the industry-funded bias is less apparent. This “may be simply because few have paid attention to adult cancers, and therefore the industry has chosen to discredit the whole cancer association by focusing on childhood cancer,” he said.

In the early 1980s, Carpenter led the New York Power Line Project, which sponsored the first [replication](#) of the Wertheimer-Leeper study by [David Savitz](#), then at the University of Colorado. (See our [report](#) from 1986 when those results were announced —to the surprise of the electric utilities.)

Over a decade ago, a team of Swiss researchers [showed](#) a similar bias among studies on the health effects of cell phone radiation.

FCC Proposes No Change to Its RF Standards

Existing Rules Will Apply to 5G Phones and Infrastructure

August 8, 2019
Updated August 9, 2019

After six years of study, the Federal Communications Commission ([FCC](#)) has decided not to revise its current safety limits for RF radiation. The rules, which were first adopted in 1996 and are the only ones governing cell phone exposures in the U.S., will continue to be based only on thermal effects.

"After a thorough review of the record and consultation with [the [FDA](#) and other health] agencies, we find it appropriate to maintain the existing radiofrequency limits, which are among the most stringent in the world for cell phones," said [Julius Knapp](#), the chief of the FCC's Office of Engineering and Technology.

Some had wanted the FCC to harmonize its limits with those of [ICNIRP](#), which are considerably more permissive for cell phone exposures. The ICNIRP standard is 2 W/Kg, averaged over 10 g of tissue, while the FCC limit is 1.6 W/Kg over 1 g. The larger averaging volume alone makes the ICNIRP standard less stringent by two- to threefold (see [MWN, J/A00](#), p.8).

In the FCC [announcement](#), issued today, Chairman [Ajit Pai](#) cites the support of [Jeffrey Shuren](#), the director of the FDA's Center for Devices and Radiological Health. "The available scientific evidence to date does not support adverse health effects in humans due to exposures at or under the current limits..." Shuren told the FCC, adding, "No changes to the current standards are warranted at this time."

FCC officials said at a press briefing that there's "nothing special about 5G," according to a report from [CNET](#). They went on to argue that the scientific evidence to date indicates that, in terms of causing health effects, 5G is no different from any other cellular technology, including 4G or 3G. The higher-frequency signals (millimeter waves) used to deliver 5G also pose no health risk, they said, pointing out that the existing RF exposure guidelines apply to 5G.

The FCC first announced its plan to review the agency's RF rules in March 2013 in a 200-page [filing](#).

For more on the FCC and RF safety, go [here](#).

Danish Spike in GBM Is Back

Information and Misinformation Vie for Attention

June 11, 2019
Updated June 21, 2019

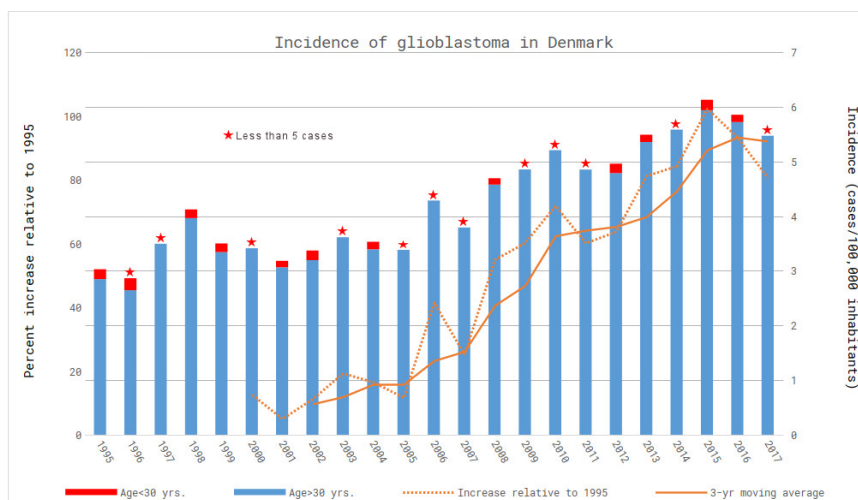
[Hans Skovgaard Poulsen](#) sounded the alarm seven years ago. There's a spike in glioblastoma —GBM— in Denmark, he warned. Poulsen, the head of neuro-oncology at Copenhagen University Hospital, called it "frightening."

On November 2, 2012, the [Danish Cancer Society](#) dutifully sent out a press [advisory](#) under the title "Massive Increase in New Cases of Aggressive Brain Cancer." The incidence of GBM had doubled over the last ten years, Poulsen said.

Then he walked away and wouldn't talk about it anymore. The Danish Cancer Society took down the press advisory from its Web site¹ and no one there wants to talk about it anymore.

Turns out Poulsen was not far off, just ahead of the curve.

In May, [Julius Graakjaer Grantzau](#), a member of the Danish Parliament, requested [statistics](#) on the incidence of GBM from the government and then released them to the public. At my request, a Danish epidemiologist plotted the graph below. (The epidemiologist asked not to be identified by name.)



Incidence of GBM in Denmark, 1995-2017 ([blue bars](#)); % increase relative to 1995 ([orange line](#)).

Prepared by a Danish epidemiologist for *Microwave News*. ([click to enlarge](#))

Note that the rates have not been adjusted to account for the fact that an aging population will have more brain tumors. (The older you are, the greater the odds of developing one.) The larger number of older people in the population could account for up to 15% of the observed increase in GBM, according to the unnamed epidemiologist.

I asked Mette Vinter Weber, a communications advisor in the office of the director of the [Danish Cancer Society Research Center](#) in Copenhagen, for a comment on the GBM data posted by Grantzau. Over the next ten days she tried to find someone to answer my question, but in the end, came up empty. It was, she finally told me, out of the “area of expertise” of her colleagues at the Cancer Society.

I also wrote to [Christoffer Johansen](#), a former staffer at the Society, who is now the head of research at the Rigshospitalet, a leading hospital in Copenhagen. Johansen continues to advise the Society as a guest researcher. Back in December 2013, a year after the press advisory, Johansen told me that Poulsen was [wrong](#), citing some unspecified computational error. Now he doesn’t want to talk about the new data. He did not reply to a request for an update.

Johansen, a coauthor of what is known as the [Danish Cohort Study](#), has long maintained that there is no association between brain tumors and mobile phones. His epidemiological study, however, is widely considered to be flawed and unreliable. The [IARC expert committee](#) that classified RF radiation as a possible carcinogen in 2011 discounted the study as riddled with errors. (Follow the links for our coverage of the [IARC decision](#) and [detailed look](#) at the Cohort Study.)

I then tried Hans Poulsen as well as [Jørgen Olsen](#), the former head of research at the Cancer Society. They too stayed silent. Olsen, who is now retired, has been helpful in the past while Poulsen has never replied to any e-mail messages from *Microwave News* since the press advisory was posted in November 2012.

Though apparently unable or unwilling to comment on GBM rates, representatives of the Danish Cancer Society, including Johansen, continue to dismiss cancer concerns over wireless radiation — notably from the upcoming 5G networks, despite the lack of available information.

Here is what the Cancer Society's [Aslak Harbo Poulsen](#) told [DR](#), the Danish Broadcasting Corp., at the end of May: A single study may show a link, but an overall assessment of the existing literature does not indicate any health effects, including cancer. This Poulsen is a post-doctoral researcher and he too worked on the Danish Cohort Study.²

Russian 5G Disinformation Campaign in Denmark?

The May 31 story posted on the DR Web site is headlined, "[5G Opponents Spreading Russian Misinformation in Denmark](#)," and promotes a conspiracy theory first floated by [Bill Broad](#) of the *New York Times* earlier in the month.

Whether DR was aiming at Grantzau, the member of Parliament, is not known. But he, among some others, is not satisfied by the way the Danish government is handling the rollout of 5G. In an e-mail exchange with *Microwave News*, this is part of what Grantzau told me:

"Getting a balanced answer about the possible dangers from 5G is impossible. The minister wants to clearly state that there is nothing to be afraid of. Even though her own government ([Sundhedsstyrelsen](#), like the U.S. FDA) has no specific information about 5G. ...

The media has the same wish —to make sure, that nobody worries about 5G or electromagnetic radiation in general. So when I hosted a conference in the Parliament with critical scientists, telling about the dangers, the media writes about it in a ridiculing way. ...

My thoughts about the 5G rollout is that it is being pushed without any public democratic debate and without listening to any of the critical voices. I think it's difficult to find out what we actually need 5G for, but it's easy to find a lot of problems with it."

See also companion story:

["GBM Rising in Denmark, Much as in England."](#)

And:

["Spike in 'Aggressive' Brain Cancer in Denmark" \(2012\)](#)

["Something Is Rotten in Denmark" \(2013\)](#)

1. The press release is still accessible thanks to the [Wayback Machine](#) of the Internet Archive.

2. The Danish Cohort Study has other influential coauthors, including [John Boice](#), until recently the director of the U.S. NCRP, and [Joachim Schüz](#), a senior manager at IARC, as well as the Danish Cancer Society's Jørgen Olsen.

Advisors for Japan, Korea NTP Repeat

May 6, 2019

The Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications is circulating a report on the partial replication of the U.S. National Toxicology Program's [RF–animal study](#), planned by Korean and Japanese officials. It includes the proposed candidates for the project's International Steering Committee.

They are:

- [Alexander Lerchl](#), Jacobs University, Germany
- [Michael Repacholi](#), founder of [WHO-EMF Project](#) and [ICNIRP](#)
- [Emilie van Deventer](#), head of WHO-EMF Project
- [Eric van Rongen](#), chair of ICNIRP
- [Vijayalaxmi](#), University of Texas Health Science Center
- [Joe Wiart](#), Telecom Paristech, formerly France Telecom
- [Michael Wyde](#), NIEHS/NTP

The [report](#) is in Japanese and includes a two-page summary in English. For more on the project, see our [write-up](#) from last fall.

IARC Urged To Revisit RF Risk

Animal Studies Prompt Calls To Upgrade Classification to “Probably Carcinogenic” or Higher

April 22, 2019

Updated October 30, 2019

An advisory committee has recommended that the International Agency for Research on Cancer ([IARC](#)) reassess the cancer risks associated with RF radiation. This should be a “high priority,” according to the panel’s report, which was issued last week.

The group, with 29 members from 18 countries, suggests that the new evaluation take place between 2022 and 2024.

In May 2011, an IARC expert committee classified RF radiation as a [possible human carcinogen](#) [Group 2B]. Since then, the evidence has grown stronger. After the [NTP](#) and [Ramazzini](#) animal studies both showed higher rates of cancer among rats exposed to cell phone radiation, a number of observers argued that IARC should upgrade RF to a “probable” cancer agent [Group 2A] or simply “carcinogenic to humans” [Group 1]. (More on the IARC classifications [here](#).)

Following the release of the Ramazzini Institute results last year, [Fiorella Belpoggi](#), the principal investigator, called on IARC to take another look (see [our story](#)). Belpoggi is the director of the Institute’s Research Center in Bologna, Italy and was a member of

the IARC priorities panel. She would not comment on their deliberations because, she said, IARC required participants to sign a confidentiality agreement. The panel met during the last week of March in Lyon, IARC's hometown.

Paul Demers, another member of the panel, said that he was "happy with the decision." Demers, the director of the Occupational Cancer Research Centre in Toronto, noted that he is not sure what a new working group would decide but that there have been more studies since the last **RF Monograph** and the "animal studies certainly deserve evaluation."

"It is very good news," **Tony Miller**, an emeritus professor of epidemiology at the University of Toronto, wrote in an e-mail. He cited the substantial human epidemiology and animal evidence of carcinogenicity that has accrued since the 2011 evaluation. "If a working group were to conclude that RF is a Group 1 human carcinogen, as many of us now believe," he said, "it would be impossible for governments and public health authorities to ignore."

Neither **Kurt Straif**, the head of IARC's Monographs section, nor **Joachim Schüz**, the head of its environment and radiation section, responded to a query on the likelihood that the agency would follow through and convene a new RF assessment committee. Schüz has made no secret of his skepticism of an association between RF and cancer.

Despite the confidentiality of the priority panel's deliberations, one insider revealed that, during the extensive discussion of the RF nomination at the meeting, some argued against it. This might explain why, while RF was given a high priority, it was assigned to the second half of IARC's five-year planning window (2020-2024).

Details, including the full membership of the priorities panel, are posted on the *Lancet Oncology* Web site ([free access](#)).

April 24, 2019

Correction:

Kurt Straif has retired. **Kathryn Guyton** is the acting head of the IARC Monograph Group, which is part of the Evidence Synthesis and Classification Section.

October 30, 2019

Today, IARC released the *Report of the Advisory Group to Recommend Priorities for the IARC Monographs during 2020–2024*. The section on non-ionizing radiation, EMFs and RF, is on pp.148-149.

The recommendation for RF is "high priority (and ready for evaluation within five years)."

The recommendation for ELF magnetic fields is "no evaluation."

Row over Cancer, Cell Phone Review

A Request That It Be Withdrawn

February 20, 2019

A major review of cell phone cancer risks is at the center of an ongoing controversy over whether it is biased and should be withdrawn.

The new paper by some of the most prominent members of the RF-health community contends that epidemiological studies do not show an increased risk of brain tumors or acoustic neuroma associated with the use of mobile phones. That is, cell phones are cancer safe.

Titled “Brain and Salivary Gland Tumors and Mobile Phone Use: Evaluating the Evidence from Various Epidemiological Study Designs,” the [new paper](#) is a detailed look at the literature and includes a meta-analysis of many of the studies that have been completed over the years. The lead author is [Martin Röösli](#) of the University of Basel in Switzerland.

The paper is slated to appear in the 2019 edition of the *Annual Review of Public Health*, which is scheduled to be published in the spring. The paper was posted online on January 11.

Röösli has four coauthors: [Maria Feychting](#) of Sweden's Karolinska Institute; [Joachim Schüz](#), a senior manager at IARC in Lyon, France; Italy's [Susanna Lagorio](#); and the U.K.'s [Minouk Schoemaker](#). Both Röösli and Feychting are members of ICNIRP; Feychting is its vice chair.

Four of the five, all except Röösli, worked on IARC's [Interphone project](#), a 13-country study of cell phones and cancer. They were part of the faction that maintained the results do not show a link.

In 2011, a panel assembled by IARC —Röösli was a member—disagreed and used Interphone as part of its [rationale](#) for classifying RF radiation as a [possible human carcinogen](#) (2B).

At the close of the panel meeting, there was talk of a minority report by those who disagreed with the 2B designation. But it never happened. The *Annual Review* paper fills that gap, though it's a bit late as many are now asking IARC to reclassify RF radiation as a probable human carcinogen (2A), or even as a known carcinogen (1) in light of the [NTP and Ramazzini animal studies](#).

In December, Australia's [Rodney Croft](#), another member of ICNIRP, published an analysis that had the same general objective. It is less sophisticated than the new review, and many say that it is [flawed](#).

These disputes are shining a spotlight on the workings of ICNIRP at a time it is under growing scrutiny. A team of reporters is working together on a project called [“Investigate Europe: The 5G Mass Experiment,”](#) a series of articles published across the continent on the health implications of the 5G rollout. The German affiliate coined the phrase, “The ICNIRP Cartel.”

Berkeley's Moskowitz: A Biased Review

Michael Jerrett of UCLA, a member of the *Annual Review's* editorial board, solicited the review paper. His expertise is on exposure assessment and his recent research has addressed air pollution as well as behavior and obesity.

When Rösli submitted the manuscript last August, Jerrett worried that the authors had overstated the no-risk case and asked Joel Moskowitz at UC Berkeley to take a look and offer an informal peer review. "The paper is the most biased review of this topic that I have [ever] read," Moskowitz replied. He urged Jerrett not to publish it, telling him that doing so would be a "disservice to public health."

Moskowitz, an epidemiologist who tracks RF and health developments on his Web site, [Electromagnetic Radiation Safety](#), has long believed that there is sufficient evidence to adopt precautionary policies and to limit exposures. Ten years ago, he was a coauthor of a [meta-analysis](#) that found "possible evidence" linking mobile phones to cancer.

Jerrett asked for another external review of the manuscript and later sent all the comments to Rösli with a request for revisions.

Jerrett and UCLA colleague Jonathan Fielding, the editor of the *Annual Review of Public Health*, referred a recent query from *Microwave News* about the peer review process to Jennifer Jongsma, the director of production and the associate editor-in-chief of all [50 Annual Reviews](#), which cover assorted scientific topics from analytical chemistry to virology. She told me that the two external reviewers "well represented" the views of what she called the "counter group." She went on to describe what happened next:

"The authors made several compelling arguments in their response to this extensive feedback to justify their causal determinations, and then they revised the manuscript to present a more nuanced interpretation of the evidence base."

Moskowitz says that he was never sent the revised manuscript for a second review. Jongsma told me that neither of the outside reviewers was asked to take another look and that the decision to publish was made by the Editorial Committee on its own. Asked whether members of the Committee have had experience with the RF issue, Jongsma answered yes, without offering any specifics.

When Moskowitz learned a couple of weeks ago that the paper would be published after all, he was appalled. He wrote and asked Jerrett and Fielding "to consider retracting" it. Moskowitz explained:

"In my opinion, this meta-analysis and review paper does not reflect the state of the science. Furthermore, publication of the paper in this form would contribute to industry efforts to manufacture doubt about cell phone radiation risks and impair public health harm reduction efforts."

I asked Moskowitz, How extensive were the changes made to the original draft? He declined to answer, citing the confidentiality of the

peer review process, however informal it might have been. He did comment that, “The paper that is posted online is biased to minimize evidence of increased risk.”

Stung by the renewed criticism, Fielding and his two associate editors have prepared an introduction to be included in the print edition when it appears in May. They write, in part:

“[S]ome experts may still feel that the authors’ conclusions are biased toward the null. These strong differences of opinion suggest that interested readers should consult the many referenced publications to help them make up their own minds about a public health impact.”

There are 120 publications cited in the review paper.

I did what Fielding is suggesting. It is hardly reassuring. See my companion article, “[The Precarious Case Against Precaution](#).”

Italian Court Orders Public Safety Campaign

Must Begin by July 16;
Government Will Not Appeal Decision

January 16, 2019

In a victory for advocates of precaution, an Italian court has ordered the government to launch a campaign to advise the public of the health risks from mobile and cordless phones.

The information campaign must begin by July 16.

The court in Rome reached its decision last November, but the announcement was only made yesterday. The decision is [here](#).

Today, the government announced that it would not appeal the ruling, [Stefano Bertone](#) told *Microwave News*. Bertone is with the law firm of Ambrosio and Commodo in Turin, and is helping represent a citizens group called [APPLE](#), which sued to force the government to act. APPLE is an acronym for the Association for the Prevention of and Fight Against Electrosmog.

In a joint [press release](#), three different ministries —of Health, of Environment and of Education and Research— acknowledge that there is a need to raise public awareness on how to use mobile phones safely.

“This case has important implications not only in Italy, but worldwide,” Bertone said. “At the moment, health and safety information is contained —or, I should say, buried— in cell phone manuals. This is not good enough. If it was, the court would have agreed with the government that sufficient information is already available.”

In October 2012, the Italian Supreme Court [affirmed a ruling](#) granting a claim for workers compensation filed by a businessman who claimed that his use of a cell phone for 12 years had caused a tumor to develop on one of his cranial nerves (the trigeminal nerve). [Gino Angelo Levis](#), a founder of APPLE, was an expert witness for the plaintiff.

Today's local coverage from *La Repubblica* is [here](#), and from *Corriere della Sera* [here](#).

The [Associated Press](#) story was picked up by the [New York Times](#) and the *Washington Post* Web pages.

APPLE's press release is [here](#).