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TV News on Mobile Phones & Health (Seven Videos)

April 10 ... Shows on cell phone radiation are all over the TV news—at least in Australia and Europe, if not the U.S.

One theme that runs through many of these programs is impatience over the delays in the publication of the **Interphone** results. In a Swiss documentary, aired on March 31, **Christopher Wild**, the new head of **IARC**, expresses his concern over the reputation of IARC and says that he looks forward to its completion “in the coming months.” **Elisabeth Cardis**, the head of Interphone, concedes to that same Swiss TV reporter that Interphone is indeed taking a long time to finish (see “**Interphone Project: The Cracks Begin To Show**”). A few days earlier in an unrelated e-mail, Cardis stated that the results would be submitted for publication “in the coming weeks.”

In early April, on consecutive nights, two major news magazine shows in Australia, each aired a detailed, hard-hitting report on cancer risks: “**Scientists Speak Out on Mobile Phone, Cancer Link**” by Ticky Fullerton of the Australian Broadcasting Corp.’s *Lateline* and “**Wake Up Call**” by Liam Bartlett of ninemsn’s *Sixty Minutes*. Both programs include interviews with **Rodney Croft**, the head of the Australian Centre for Bioeffects Research (**ACBR**) in Melbourne, who maintains that there are no cancer risks associated with mobile phones (see also “**Cell Phone Link to Tumors? — ‘We Don’t Know’**”). Here’s what Croft told *Lateline*:

There really has been a lot of research done to date and the research has very clearly shown that there aren’t any effects. With children, I really don’t think that there is any evidence suggesting that this might be a problem. There isn’t anything to suggest that we may have to be a little bit more cautious.

A little later, Croft acknowledges that he has himself **seen** non-thermal effects of GSM radiation in his laboratory:

We’ve been exploring effects on mobile phones on very subtle changes to brain function. We have been finding reliable changes in a particular frequency of brain activity called the alpha rhythm.

When Fullerton follows up and asks, “Why is it such a leap of faith to

(continued on p.2)

think that if there's a biological change, that that might not be a health impact?", Croft maintains that the only known effects are thermal and suggests that a piece of wood may present a greater risk to the brain than a cell phone:

I think one of the reasons is that the only known mechanism for interaction is heating. But we must remember that it's also possible that holding a block of wood to your head, which is going to increase the temperature by more than the radiofrequencies, could cause a problem.

Bruce Armstrong, an epidemiologist who is coordinating Australia's Interphone group, declined to be interviewed by *Lateline*. Instead, the program ran clips of his talk at an ACBR conference where he advocated precaution because of the possibility of a tumor risk following long-term use of a mobile phone (see our report). Croft does not agree. "I certainly do not believe that it is as strong as what [Armstrong] would think," he tells Fullerton.

Here are the details for seven recent videos from Australia and Europe, with the most recent first:

April 3 in Australia: "Wake Up Call" (in English, includes transcript, 14 minutes). This is largely a profile of John Bryant, who blames his brain tumor on cell phones. His neurosurgeon, **Charles Teo**, says: "If the question is do I believe that mobile phones can cause brain cancer? The answer is yes, I do." Teo also gives this warning: "I'm incredibly worried, concerned, depressed at the number of kids I'm seeing coming in with brain tumors. Malignant brain tumors. Just in the last three or four weeks I've seen nearly half a dozen kids with tumors which really should have been benign and they've all been nasty, malignant brain tumors. We are doing something terribly wrong."

April 2 in Australia: "Scientists Speak Out on Mobile Phone, Cancer Link" (in English, includes transcript, 20 minutes). In addition to interviews with ACBR's Croft, Fullerton also talks to **Devra Davis** of the University of Pittsburgh, neurosurgeon **Vini Khurana**, **Colin Roy** of Australia's radiation protection agency (**ARPANSA**) and *Microwave News*' Louis Slesin. In the course of her research, Fullerton discovered that ARPANSA had neglected to cite the fact some Interphone studies have seen a link between long-term use of cell phones and the incidence of brain tumors (gliomas) on its Web site—much like **Anders Ahlbom's** committee report to SSI (now called the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority), ARPANSA's Swedish counterpart, did last year (see our **March 14, 2008** post). ARPANSA has now acknowledged this omission and includes it on its **Web site**.

March 31 in Switzerland: "Waves: You Are Surrounded" (in French, 29 minutes). In addition to Interphone's Cardis and IARC's Wild, there are interviews with Swedish oncologist and epidemiologist **Lennart Hardell**, **Mirjana Moser** of the Swiss Office of Public Health, and **Michèle Rivasi**, the vice president of **Criirem**, an activist group. Two noteworthy sequences: (1) measurements of RF levels from a mobile phone in various settings (e.g. in the city, in the country, in a train or car), and (2) footage from an **IEEE/ICES** meeting, with background music ("Jumpin' Jack Flash") from the Rolling Stones, taken from a Norwegian TV documentary, **"A Radiant Day"**. (This video, first aired last year, is available with English subtitles—some of the interviews are in English. Emphasis on RF exposure standards and electrosensitivity. Among those interviewed: **Igor Belyaev**, **C.K. Chou**, Eva Markova, **Gerd Oberfeld**, **John Osepchuk**, **Ron Petersen** and **Mike Repacholi**.)

March 28 in Belgium: "Is GSM Radiation Harmful or

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Not” (in Flemish with many interviews in English, French and German, 44 minutes; to access the Web site of the TV station where this show first appeared, click [here](#)). Interviews with Belgian researcher **Dirk Adang**, VITO’s **Gilbert Decat**, Green Party Member of the Flemish Parliament **Rudi Daems**, Sweden’s Hardell, Brussels’ Minister **Evelyne Huytebroeck**, Austria’s **Michael Kundi** and Gerd Oberfeld and **GSM Association**’s **Jack Rowley**, as well as a number of men and women who are electrosensitive.

March 28 in France: “Mobile Phones and Towers: Danger?” (in French, 19 minutes). Interviews with Françoise Boudin, director of the **Health and RF Foundation** and **David Servan-Schreiber**, a neuroscientist at the University of Lyon. Includes a panel discussion with André Aurengo, a member of the Academy of Medicine, Pierre Bouvet, a cardiologist and environmentalist, and **Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet**, a minister with responsibility for the development of the digital economy.

March 28 in France: “Waves That Shock” (in French, 30 minutes). Mainly on cell towers. Interviews with Aurengo, Oberfeld, Rivasi and Servan-Schreiber, as well as with Jean-Marie Danjou of the **French Association of Mobile Operators**, **Martine Hours**, the head of the French Interphone team, **Pierre Le Ruz**, president of Criirem, **Gérard Ledoigt**, who has investigated the effects of RF on tomato plants, **Thierry Philip**, a cancer researcher, and **Cindy Sage** on behalf of the **BioInitiative** working group.

March 17 from European Parliament TV: “ACTION: Mobile Phone Health Threat Should Not Be Waved Off Lightly” (in French and Italian, with subtitles in all EU languages, 15 minutes). Features an interview with **Frédérique Ries**, a member of the European Parliament from Belgium, who drafted a report on EMF health risks adopted by the parliament, and an accompanying **resolution**.

Doubts About Electrosensitivity

April 25 ... Is it possible that the precautionary principle could do more harm than good? Could the mere suggestion of a health risk bring on effects that it was intended to avoid? Such a phenomenon is known as the nocebo effect and has been much discussed in relation to EMFs in general and electrohypersensitivity in particular. For a cogent analysis of all this, check out Stuart Blackman’s **“Why Health Warnings Can Be Bad,”** in today’s *Financial Times Weekend* magazine.

Blackman quotes **James Rubin** of Kings College London: “There is no robust evidence that there is a direct link [between reported symptoms and EMFs], and there is reasonably robust evidence that there is no link.” Rubin believes that the symptoms are real, but the causes are psychological rather than physiological. Rubin was a **speaker** at last September’s conference, **“EMF & Health – A Global Issue’ – Exploring Appropriate Precautionary Approaches.”** See also his paper: **“Electrosensitivity: A Case for Caution with Precaution.”**

A case in point: Last Sunday, the *Journal de Dimanche*, a leading French newspaper, **reported** on the Dubas family whose apartment in the Paris suburbs faces three mobile phone antennas installed by **Orange**, a unit of France Telecom. Thomas Dubas said that he gets a metallic taste in his mouth when the antenna is transmitting; meanwhile his five-year-old daughter developed a bloody nose and a neighbor complained of headaches. A spokesman for Orange responded that while the company was sympathetic with the local residents, it could not be held responsible because the antennas had not yet been activated, according to the Web site **Silicon.fr**.

Here are Blackman’s provocative closing words of caution:

Legal cases brought against mobile phone companies

IARC Director Forces Publication of Interphone Brain Tumor Results

May 11, 2009

For the full story, please go to <http://microwavenews.com/Interphone.Wild.html>.

by people who believe that the electromagnetic radiation given off by their handsets is making them ill might have failed, but cases brought against those who issue health warnings, on the grounds that it exacerbates illness through the placebo effect, might prove more successful. At least they would have some scientific evidence to support their claims.

Using a Cell Phone in an Elevator

May 15 ... There are many reasons not to use a cell phone in an elevator. The most obvious would be as a courtesy to other passengers. Another is that a phone has to work harder in a shielded space. It's forced to operate at higher power levels for the signal to get out and reach the nearest tower and that leads to more ambient radiation in the elevator.

What most cell phone users would never consider is that a fellow passenger absorbs some of the radiation that would otherwise bounce back off the walls. It turns out, according to some new calculations from Japan, that a lone user can get a maximum exposure of about 1.6 W/Kg, 80% of the **ICNIRP** standard (2 W/Kg). But be advised that ex-

posures could exceed the current U.S. **FCC standard** by a wide margin, under worst-case conditions. (This is a rare —no, unique—example of an American EMF standard being stricter than those in other countries.) The FCC limit is averaged over only 1 g of tissue and, as **Jim Lin**, a member of ICNIRP, has often pointed out, increasing the averaging volume from 1g to 10g could triple the allowable radiation exposure (see **MWN, N/D00**, p.3).

These new **findings** appear in the May issue of the *IEEE Transactions on Microwave Theory and Techniques*.

What about the passenger? Here again, the exposure would be just a brief elevator ride. But, if you believe the work from Lund University in Sweden, even those passive, or second-hand, exposures could lead to biological changes. Lund's **Leif Salford** has long reported that he sees stronger effects in the brain at low, not high, radiation levels. When everyone else is talking about W/Kg, Salford speaks in terms of mW/Kg, exposures that are a thousand times lower. At last month's **5th International EMF Seminar** in Hangzhou, China, Salford explained why he is convinced the microwave effect on the blood-brain barrier is real: "We've consistently seen it over 21 years."

Interphone Brain Tumor Paper Has Been Submitted

May 28... **Christopher Wild**, the director of the International Agency for Research on Cancer (**IARC**), announced today that the **Interphone** study has been submitted for publication. An advisory, "**Status of the Interphone Study**" has been posted on the IARC, **CREAL** and **UICC** Web sites. Wild does not say to which journal the paper was sent.

As *Microwave News* reported on **May 11**, the submitted manuscript only addresses brain tumor (gliomas and meningiomas) risks from mobile phones. Still to be completed are the analyses for acoustic neuroma and parotid gland tumors, as well as for tumor location relative to RF radiation exposure. Wild states that, "Work is on-going to prepare subsequent manuscripts for publication."

Swiss RF Survey: Ten Times More Exposure

June 3... In the mid-1970s, the U.S. **EPA** sent a van around the country to survey RF levels in various cities, as well as from high-power sources such as radio and TV broadcast antennas, radars and satellite uplinks. The agency generated a trove of reports which describe the electromagnetic environment before the wireless revolution took hold. Some members of EPA's RF group continue to work on health issues —Norb Hankin is still at the EPA, Ed Mantiply moved over to the **FCC** some years ago—but the EPA van is long gone. No one in the U.S. is doing these types of radiation surveys anymore.

The good news is that a Swiss team has now completed its own set of RF measurements, which take into account the proliferation of wireless sources. The new survey is based on exposure profiles of 166 residents of Basel, a town with a population of just under 200,000. It's part of a larger project, called "**Qualifex**" led by **Martin Rössli** of the University of Basel and sponsored by the Swiss National Research Program on Non-Ionizing Radiation, known as **NRP57**. The results are in a new **paper** that has just

been published in *Environmental Research*.

Overall, the survey found a roughly tenfold increase in overall RF exposures in Switzerland compared to the levels found by the EPA in the U.S. It provides some additional insights: Yes, mobile phones and towers are major contributors to overall exposure, but so are cordless (DECT) phones, as is riding on a train or a bus. Airports may be hot zones too. The DECT finding could turn out to be a problem for the forthcoming **Interphone** study, which gives cordless phones short shrift. As for passive or second-hand RF exposures, their contribution can be important in confined spaces such as on public transportation (see **May 15** post).

Here's some of what they found, in their own words:

“Exposure levels were high in trains, tramways and buses, with a high contribution of mobile phone handsets. This was not only due to calls by fellow passengers but also due to the hand-overs during the journey of mobile phone handsets from one base station to the next. Exposure to mobile phone handset radiation in public transport was only slightly lower for persons not owning a mobile phone, showing that passive mobile phone exposure plays an important role in these situations. We found also high exposure levels at airports, but analyses were based on relatively few measurements (5h in total), and these results should therefore be confirmed in future studies. The low exposures measured at churches and school buildings are explained by the infrequent use of mobile phone handsets at these places. Similarly the lower exposure during night compared to daytime is explained by the smaller contribution of mobile phone handsets. Considerable exposure contrasts were also found between individuals. Explanations for this include difference in exposure at home or at work from fixed site transmitters (mobile phone base stations or broadcast transmitters) and from wireless devices (mobile phone handsets, DECT phones, W-LAN) and different life styles

resulting in more or less frequent stays at locations with high exposure levels. Although mobile phone uplink was the major exposure source at most of the locations, mobile phone base stations and cordless phones contributed substantially to total exposure.”

BEMS' Bad Joke

June 15... EMFs are hot. People are interested again and things are happening, at least for the moment. Here's some of what's going on:

- The French government is stepping up its efforts to limit the use of cell phones by children. It's not just talk. Ministers of State are now involved. Legislation and regulation are in play. Public interest in France has never been greater. An example: *Sciences et Avenir*, a major French science magazine, devoted a special “dossier” on **EMFs: What You Really Need To Know** in the May issue. It runs 21 pages, in color.
- A Congressional briefing on cell phones and health risks is scheduled to be held in Washington in mid-September. Senator Arlen Specter, a brain tumor survivor, is slated to participate. This would be the first time a U.S. senator has publicly expressed interest in RF radiation since the 1992 hearings on radar guns (see **MWN, S/O92**). “It's the right time and we're going to make it happen,” one of the organizers told *Microwave News*. Meanwhile, two large-circulation national magazines, *GQ* and *Harper's*, have commissioned feature articles on EMFs.
- After a decade of work—and lots of internecine squabbling—the Interphone study team has finally been submitted its results for publication. The **director** of **IARC** himself orchestrated its release from a perpetual state of limbo.

The Conceits of Setting EMF Standards:

Australia To Triple Its Limit to 3,000 mG

June 11, 2009

For the full story, please go to <http://www.microwavenews.com/EMFConceits.html>

We hear the paper is under expedited review. Everybody wants to see the paper but no one expects it to settle much of anything. The disputes will just move out into the open. If the Interphone epidemiologists spent three-to-four years fighting over how to explain the tumor risks, the public debate will surely be fierce. Also, don't forget that much of the Interphone data has yet to be analyzed.

Against this backdrop, the Bioelectromagnetics Society (**BEMS**) is holding its annual conference in Davos, Switzerland, this week. A 90-minute slot was left open on Friday, the last day of the meeting, for a "Hot Topic," to be announced at the last minute to be as topical as possible. What did the organizers pick?—**"When Do We Know Enough To Stop Research on the Safety of Wireless Communications?"**

It could be the punch line of a bad joke. A society that is supposed to be dedicated to research suggests it might well be time to give it up. In poker, it's called a "tell." It tells you what's really going on. "Stop the research" is an industry mantra—another is, "the weight of the evidence shows there is no cancer risk"—and BEMS is all too willing to play along. BEMS has always had a schizoid relationship with research. It is one of the few research societies that rewards those who don't find effects and runs out those who do. No wonder the society's future viability is in

doubt.

That same Friday, the leaders of BEMS and the European Bioelectromagnetics Association (**EBEA**) will meet to discuss the possibility that the two groups might join together. Right now, that seems unlikely, as neither side wants to lose control.

We suggest a different model: a "Big Tent" approach. Not only should BEMS and EBEA merge, but they should seek alliances with all the other groups that work in the field: Those who work on visible light, on bone and wound healing, on sleep, on hyperthermia, on cancer therapy, on pain control, on animal magnetism, on avian navigation and so on. These are all part of bioelectromagnetics and only an integrated approach will lead to answers. The one problem with this concept is that it would mean that BEMS would have to shrug off the influence of the wireless industry and the military, which now dominate the society. That's not likely either, we know.

Also on that same Friday, June 19, the New York Academy of Sciences (**NYAS**) is holding a one-day conference on **Circadian Disruption and Cancer**. Among the speakers will be David Blask, Russel Reiter and Bugs Stevens, former regulars at BEMS meetings. It's time to lure them and other serious scientists back into the fold. The only way to do that is to commit to research, not repudiate it.