

Wireless Communications

HEALTH POLICY UPDATE

APRIL 2008



Welcome to the *Wireless Communications Health Policy Update* (HPU), a joint publication of the Mobile Manufacturers Forum and the GSM Association. HPU provides updates on and links to recent developments concerning radiofrequency (RF) and wireless communications.

GLOBAL

The [International Agency for Research on Cancer](#) (IARC) published an [update report](#) on the status of the INTERPHONE project on 7 February. The update states manuscripts presenting results of the international analyses, based on much larger numbers of long-term and heavy users, are in preparation. IARC also issued a document outlining the [INTERPHONE project protocol](#).

In an article published in the science journal *Health Physics*, the [International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection](#) (ICNIRP) discussed the impact new technologies could have on exposure limits. The statement says it's important to be aware of the rapid development of new sources of non-ionising radiation and to continue the scientific assessment on the various health aspects related to these innovations.

EUROPE

The European Commission's EMF-NET released a new deliverable [report](#) (PDF) in November 2007 concentrating on possible effects of RF fields on reproduction and development as revealed by the results of laboratory studies with animals.

The overall conclusion of the report states that exposure to low intensity fields, at levels experienced by members of the public, should not have a significant impact on fertility or on development either before or after birth.

DIARY NOTES

The International Workshop on Risk Factors for Childhood Leukemia - Presented by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection, the World Health Organization and the German Federal Office for Radiation Protection

Berlin, Germany
5-7 May 2008

<http://www.icnirp.de/WChildhoodLeukemia.htm>

The 2008 Asia-Pacific Symposium on Electromagnetic Compatibility in conjunction with the 19th Intern. Zurich Symposium on Electromagnetic Compatibility

Singapore
19-22 May 2008

<http://www.emc-zurich.org/>

The Bioelectromagnetics Society 30th Annual Meeting

San Diego, California, USA
8-12 June 2008

<http://bioelectromagnetics.org/bems2008/>

The German Federal Office for Radiation Protection (BfS) Final Summary Conference on the German Mobile Telecommunication Research Programme,

Berlin, Germany
16-18 June 2008

<http://www.fgf.de/english/service/termin.php?id=428>

The European Union's [Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks](#) (SCENIHR) has been asked to update its opinion of March 2007 in the light of several reports and statements by scientists diverging from the scientific position taken by other research groups, including that of the SCENIHR. The [Terms of Reference](#) (PDF) specifically mention the BioInitiative report. The deadline for the updated opinion is November 2008.

In a response to a [European Union](#) parliamentary question on the 16 January 2008, Commissioner Markos Kyprianou said that EMF-NET has reviewed the BioInitiative report and has concluded inter alia that: "there is a lack of balance in the report; no mention is made in fact of reports that do not concur with authors' statements and conclusions. The results and conclusions are very different from those of recent national and international reviews on this topic".



Mobile Manufacturers Forum



AUSTRIA

The non profit organisation [Forum Mobilkommunikation](#) [Forum for Mobile Communication] has called Gerd Oberfeld of the Salzburg regional medical center “grossly negligent” and guilty of “public scaremongering” for suggesting that there is a cancer cluster associated to a mobile phone mast near the city of Graz. FMK has demanded that he retract his false claims.

FINLAND

The Finnish [Health Risk Assessment of Mobile Communications](#) (HERMO) research programme released their [final report](#) (PDF) in November 2007. The [overall summary](#) of the 13 research projects concluded no evidence was found of detrimental health effects.

FRANCE

The [French Health Ministry](#) issued a warning against excessive mobile phone use, especially by children, though it recognized science had not proved cellular technology was dangerous. According to [media reports](#), a statement released by the Ministry of Health, Youth and Sports said that the appearance on the market of mobile phones designed for children had raised concern since youngsters would be particularly vulnerable to any possible health effects.

GERMANY

The [Federal Ministry for the Environment](#) (BMU) in association with the Federal Office for Radiation Protection (BfS) issued a statement in February clarifying that there is

currently no established health risks from mobile phone use. However, both organisations said potential risks can not be completely excluded and therefore the BMU and BfS recommend as a precaution keeping radiation exposure as low as possible.

SWEDEN

The Swedish Government’s [Radiation Protection Authority](#) (SSI) published its [fifth annual report](#) (PDF) on recent research on EMF and health risks in March 2008. The Independent Expert Group on Electromagnetic fields concluded that short-term use of mobile phones does not appear to be associated with brain or head and neck cancer risks in adults.

SWITZERLAND

The [Federal Office of Public Health](#) (FOPH) issued an updated fact sheet on mobile phones and health, noting there is no established evidence of health risks. The fact sheet also advises users to minimise exposure to the head.

UK

A British Member of Parliament used question time on the 29 January 2008 in the UK House of Commons to ask the Government for assurances over public health amid growing exposure to mobile phone masts and wireless technology. Health Minister Dawn Primarolo responded to the [questions](#) from the member for Sutton, saying none of the research published in the MTHR 2007 report demonstrates that biological or adverse health effects are produced by radiofrequency exposure from mobile phones or base stations.



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The [Church of England's Consistory Court](#) has overridden objections on health grounds to a mobile phone mast being erected in a Yorkshire church, according to [media reports](#) in February 2008. The church judge, the chancellor of the Diocese of Bradford, said there is no evidence so far that mobile phone masts posed short- or long-term health risks and allowed the mast to be installed.

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The UK Government's [National Health Service \(NHS\)](#) website on mobile phone safety has been updated with information on the Mobile Telecommunications and Health Research Programme (MTHR). The [NHS Safety Q&A](#) states the MTHR report found no evidence linking short-term mobile phone use with cancers of the brain and nervous system.

AUSTRALIA

Research released by the [Australian Communications and Media Authority \(ACMA\)](#) suggests young people have not increased the total time they spend being entertained by electronic devices in the past decade. The [report](#)

(PDF) found most families with children aged 8 to 17 have three or more mobile phones and that four-fifths of parents see benefits in their child's use of a mobile phone, particularly for safety and security.

HONG KONG

The [Hong Kong Hospital Authority](#) has lifted the ban on using mobile phones in public hospitals to boost internal communications and offer the public greater convenience. The Hospital Authority states thorough Electromagnetic Interference (EMI) tests on the medical equipment revealed that the use of mobile phones at a distance of one metre from the medical equipment is safe, and the assessment also aligns with other international studies on EMI Tests.

RUSSIA

The 2006-2007 report of the [Russian National Committee on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection \(RNCNIRP\)](#) provides updates on research and standards activities in the country.



www.gsmworld.com

The GSMA is the global trade association that exists to promote, protect and enhance the interests of GSM mobile operators throughout the world.



Mobile Manufacturers Forum

www.mmfai.org

The MMF is an international association of wireless communications manufacturers established to support scientific research in relation to mobile telephony and health.

About Health Policy Update

Wireless Communications Health Policy Update (HPU) is a joint publication of the Mobile Manufacturers Forum and the GSM Association. Planned for quarterly production, HPU provides updates on and links to recent developments concerning radiofrequency (RF) and wireless communications. If you are aware of any developments that you think should be included in future editions of HPU, please contact us at articles@mmfai.info

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The views expressed in the internet sites that are referred to in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the MMF or GSMA.