



MMF Commentary on BioInitiative Report

The BioInitiative Report¹ is an informal commentary on some of the scientific information on the health impacts of electromagnetic fields (EMF). The report is broadly critical of both of the internationally accepted and widely adopted EMF exposure standards that have been developed by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP), which in turn have been endorsed by the World Health Organization (WHO), and the International Committee on Electromagnetic Safety of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. The report does not contain any new scientific data – but reflects individual author’s interpretations, and is consistent with these authors’ statements in various forums in the past.

The views of the BioInitiative authors – and their scientific work - have been considered along with those of their scientific peers over the years. Importantly, this has not resulted in any change in the conclusions drawn by the 100-plus reviews, reports and government statements that have been published in this area² from countries around the world. Those documents have arrived at very similar conclusions, essentially -- *that there is no established evidence that EMF exposure within the internationally accepted limits causes any adverse health effects.*

The European Initiative EMF-NET³ was asked by the European Commission to comment on the BioInitiative Report and its underlying science. The main conclusions of EMF-NET read as follows:

...the 'Summary for the public' is written in an alarmist and emotive language and whose arguments have no scientific support from well-conducted EMF research.

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.

Expert panels at the national level have also scrutinized the BioInitiative Report, its methodology and conclusions, e.g.:

1. The COMAR Technical Information Statement (2009):

*The BioInitiative Report...has a number of weaknesses and is a selective, rather than a comprehensive, review of the literature in various topical areas.*⁴

2. German Federal Office for Radiation Protection (2008):

¹ <http://bioinitiative.org/report/index.htm>

² <http://www.gsmworld.com/health/links/independent.shtml>

³ <http://web.jrc.ec.europa.eu/emf-net/index.cfm>

⁴ COMAR Technical Information Statement: *Expert reviews on potential health effects of radiofrequency electromagnetic fields and comments on the BioInitiative Report.* Health Phys. 2009 Oct;97(4):348-56.



The Bioinitiative report has clear scientific weaknesses including selection bias in several research areas.⁵

3. The Health Council of the Netherlands (2008)⁶:

[WHO's and ICNIRP's] multidisciplinary weight-of evidence method leads to a scientifically sound judgement that is as objective as possible. The BioInitiative report did not follow this procedure.

And concluded: (The report) is not an objective and balanced reflection of the current state of scientific knowledge and does not provide any grounds for revising the current views as to the risks of exposure to electromagnetic fields.⁷

4. The Australian Centre for Radiofrequency Bioeffects Research (2008):

Overall we think that the BioInitiative Report does not progress science, and would agree with the Health Council of the Netherlands

(The report) is not an objective and balanced reflection of the current state of scientific knowledge. As it stands it merely provides a set of views that are not consistent with the consensus of science, and it does not provide an analysis that is rigorous-enough to raise doubts about the scientific consensus.⁸

5. Danish National Board of Health (2007):

The BioInitiative report (a) does not provide any reason to change the current health risk assessment on exposure to electromagnetic fields and (b) does not include new data and has not taken the scientific quality of the cited reports into consideration in the way that is customary.⁹

The MMF supports the recommendation of the ACRBR¹⁰ that "interested reader(s)" should consult the likes of the WHO's EMF project¹¹, ICNIRP¹², the UK's MTHR programme⁴ and ARPANSA¹³ for "a balanced perspective" and an authoritative analyses of electromagnetic radiation bioeffects research.

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⁵ http://www.emf-forschungsprogramm.de/int_forschung/wirk_mensch_tier/Synopse_EMFStudien_2008.pdf (in German)

⁶ Health Council of the Netherlands. BioInitiative report. The Hague: Health Council of the Netherlands, 2008; publication no. 2008/17E

⁷ <http://www.gr.nl/adviezen.php> (in English)

⁸ <http://www.acrbr.org.au/FAQ.aspx>

⁹ http://www.sst.dk/Forebyggelse/Miljo_hygjejne_og_sol/lkke_-_ioniserende_straalning.aspx?lang=da (in Danish)

¹⁰ Australian Centre for Radiofrequency Bioeffects Research <http://www.acrbr.org.au/FAQ.aspx>

¹¹ World Health Organisations Electromagnetic Fields Project <http://www.who.int/peh-emf/en/>

¹² International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection <http://www.icnirp.de/>

¹³ Australian Radiation and Nuclear Safety Agency <http://www.arpansa.gov.au/mobilephones/index.cfm>