



UK Glioma Study

Today's publication of a UK population-based case-control study of gliomas in the British Medical Journal is the latest in a series of studies published as part of internationally coordinated INTERPHONE project¹.

By way of background, gliomas, a type of brain tumour, are relatively rare. Each year, about 7 are diagnosed for every 100,000 people in the UK. There are about 4,300 new patients every year. Tumours of the brain account for 1.6% of all cancers in England and Wales.

In the present large study, the authors reached the following conclusions:

Use of a mobile phone, either in the short or medium term, is not associated with an increased risk of glioma.

...

Overall, we found no raised risk of glioma associated with regular mobile phone use and no association with time since first use, lifetime years of use, cumulative hours of use, or number of calls.

We note that this result is consistent with most of the previous studies in this field and the significant body of research reporting no health risk from using mobile phones.

As already mentioned, this study is part of a 13 country INTERPHONE project coordinated by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), part of the World Health Organization. The data from national studies is being published separately. As these diseases are rare, large numbers of subjects are needed for accuracy and IARC will follow with an overall or 'meta' analysis involving the combined data from all the countries. Therefore, it is necessary to wait for the results of the combined analysis which is expected later this year.

INTERPHONE studies of mobile phone users in Denmark and Sweden have been published separately and reported no increase in brain tumour among mobile phone users.²

¹ For the new UK study see: <http://bmj.bmjournals.com/current.shtml>

² For Sweden see; Lönn et al Long-Term Mobile Phone Use and Brain Tumor Risk. American Journal of Epidemiology, 161:526-535, March 2005 at <http://aje.oupjournals.org/> and for Denmark Collatz Christensen et al Cellular telephones and risk for brain tumors: a population-based, incident case-control study. Neurology 64 (7): 1189-1195, 12 April 2005 at <http://www.neurology.org/>; For SSI see: Boice JD Jr., McLaughlin JK. Epidemiologic studies of cellular telephones and cancer risk – a review. Swedish Radiation Protection Authority 2002 at http://www.ssi.se/english/Press_release_rapp2001_16.html.

An epidemiological review for the Swedish Radiation Protection Institute (SSI) in 2002 found no evidence for a causal link between the use of mobile phones and cancer. The review examined a wide range of exposure measures, including type of phone, duration of use, frequency of use, total cumulative hours of use, tumour location and laterality (concurrence of tumour location with hand normally used during phone conversations).

The mobile phone industry takes all questions regarding the safety of mobile phones seriously and we have a strong commitment to supporting ongoing scientific research – such as the INTERPHONE project. This particular project is being funded by the mobile phone industry jointly with governments and national health agencies in a way that ensures the complete scientific independence of the work carried out.

It is also important to note that all mobile phones sold must comply with international health and safety exposure guidelines.

January 2006