

Karolinska Institutet

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Scientists Urge Halt of Wireless Rollout and Call for New Safety Standards: Warning Issued on Risks to Children and Pregnant Women

Scientists who study radiofrequency radiation from wireless technologies have issued a scientific statement warning that exposures may be harming the development of children at levels now commonly found in the environment. Pregnant women are cautioned to avoid using wireless devices themselves and distance themselves from other users.

The Seletun Scientific Statement has now been published in *Reviews on Environmental Health* (2010; 25: 307-317). The article recommends that lower limits be established for electromagnetic fields and wireless exposures, based on scientific studies reporting health impacts at much lower exposure levels. Many researchers now believe the existing safety limits are inadequate to protect public health because they do not consider prolonged exposure to lower emission levels that are now widespread.

“Current US and ICNIRP standards for radiofrequency and microwave radiation from wireless technologies are entirely inadequate. They never were intended to address the kind of exposures from wireless devices that now affect over 4 billion people.”

(Olle Johansson, professor, The Experimental Dermatology Unit, Department of Neuroscience, Karolinska Institute, and The Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden)

The combined effect of cell phones, cordless phones, cell towers, WI-FI and wireless internet place billions of people around the world at risk for cancer, neurological disease and reproductive and developmental impairments.

“We are already seeing increases in health problems such as cancer and neurobehavioural impairments, even though these wireless technologies are fairly new in the last decades or so for the general public. This finding suggests that the exposures are already too high to protect people from health harm. Evidence suggests there are special risks for persons with occupational exposures to RF/MW as well as ELF.”

(Elihu Richter, assoc. professor, Unit of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, Hebrew University-Hadassah School of Medicine, Jerusalem, Israel)

Safety standards also ignore the developing fetus, and young children who are more affected.

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“Pregnant women and children of all ages should avoid using cell and cordless phones given the health effects we are seeing already.”

(Yuri Grigoriev, professor, Dr of Med Sci, Chairman of Russian National Committee on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection, Moscow, Russian Federation)

Many countries are promoting wireless communications on a community-wide scale for energy management and conservation. The SmartGrid concept could require every home to have a wireless electric and gas meter in place of their existing meters. If implemented, it will greatly increase the intensity of new wireless emissions in homes, schools and every other building that uses electricity and gas.

“WI-FI routers, DECT phones and other wireless devices like baby monitors produce radio frequency emissions that will affect millions of people and babies in their homes, and should be halted until other, less harmful options are investigated.”

(Lukas Margaritis, professor, Department of Cell Biology and Biophysics, Faculty of Biology, University of Athens, Athens, Greece)

The Scientific Panel urges a halt to the rollout of new wireless technologies, especially those that cause exposures for pregnant women and for children.

“New, biologically-based exposure limits are crucial to guide new technology development toward solutions that are not harmful to health. The global rollout of wireless technologies has outpaced both health studies and calls for more restrictive public safety limits.”

(Cindy Sage, co-editor of The Bioinitiative Report, MA, Sage Associates, Santa Barbara, CA, USA)

Copies of the Seletun Scientific Statement [Fragopoulou A, Grigoriev Y, Johansson O, Margaritis LH, Morgan L, Richter E, Sage C. “Scientific panel on electromagnetic field health risks: Consensus points, recommendations, and rationales. Scientific Meeting: Seletun, Norway, November 17-21, 2009”, Rev Environ Health 2010; 25: 307-317] can be obtained from the Karolinska Institute. Contact: Prof. Olle Johansson <olle.johansson@ki.se>.

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