

## Are cell phones hurting our children?

Cell phone use among kids could lead to brain cancer epidemic. Children and teens who use cell phones are five times more likely to get brain cancer, according to a new study. Concern has been growing about the health risks of cell phone use for some time. The most damning research linking

cell phone usage to brain tumors was noted in a study published in May 2009 in the International Journal of Oncology by a Swedish team of scientists led by Professor Lennart Hardell. It noted that

digital cell phone and cordless phone use by users who started when they were teenagers or younger led to a 420% increased risk of brain cancer.

Cell phone exposure in the womb tied to behavior problems. In another study of cell phone usage and its related adverse health effects, researchers have found that those children whose mothers used cell phones frequently during pregnancy and who are also cell phone users themselves are more likely to exhibit behavior problems. Dr. Leeka Kheifets, of the UCLA School of Public Health,

who helped conduct the study, told Reuters Health that although cell phones offer great convenience, "We need to be looking into what are the potential health effects and what are ways to

reduce risks should there be any." Kheifets and her team reviewed a group of 13,159 children whose mothers participated in the Danish National Birth Cohort study early in their pregnancies. Exposure to cell phones prenatally and postnatally was associated with behavioral difficulties such as emotional and hyperactivity problems around the age of school entry.

Exposure to radiofrequency fields is increasingly common. "Children are potentially exposed during

fetal life by maternal use of cell phones and then later in childhood when they themselves become

users of cell phones. Exposures early in life may have particular importance because this is during vulnerable stages of brain development." An increasing number of children are being diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or hyperkinetic disorder. According to the study, "Children with exposure to cell phones (prenatally, postnatally, or both) tended to have higher percentages of borderline or abnormal scores for emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity and peer problems."

Fetuses and children are more vulnerable to cell phone radiation than adults because the specific absorption rate (s.a.r.) of cell phone radiation is higher for children than for adults, and the relative penetration is deeper for children. "The immature nervous system is extremely vulnerable to toxicants, which can result in behavior-related toxicities that may not emerge until well into childhood, adolescence or adulthood."

Scientists and the federal government have been studying the effects of radiation for years and have established guidelines with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to limit the amount of exposure. Cell phones emit radiofrequency energy, a type of radiation that is a form of electromagnetic radiation, according to the National Cancer Institute. A new report, endorsed by a prestigious group of international scientists, finds that there is a risk of brain tumors from cell phone use, that industry studies underestimate this risk, and that children are at a much higher risk than adults. The report, therefore, sends a message to four billion cell phone users worldwide and to the multi-billion cell phone industry that they may be facing the same kind of bad news that first burst on the scene for the tobacco industry. In 2008, an Australian neurosurgeon, Dr. Vini Khurana published a report on the Internet stating that "cell phone use has far broader public health ramifications than asbestos and smoking."

The cancer threat of cell phone use has been recognized by some scientists and critics for decades, but has, essentially been covered up by the cell phone industry and by much of the mainstream media. In 1993, the industry commissioned Dr. George Carlo, to research whether cell phone usage was indeed safe or hazardous to our health, once and for all. To their dismay, the more Dr. Carlo researched the answer, the more he found to the contrary, i.e., tissue/brain damage, brain tumors, DNA damage and chromosomal/molecular mutations, just to name a few. His findings, as honest and independent as they were, lead to a parting in the ways between him and the industry. Dr. Carlo went one step further and began a crusade of public awareness to this situation. This led to the ABC 20/20 news expose' on the subject back in 1994. He also wrote a book called "Cell Phones and Invisible Hazards in the Wireless Age" along with Dr. Martin Schram detailing his research.

Although the cell phone industry has always claimed that cell phones are safe and harmless, there is overwhelming scientific evidence throughout the world that cell phones pose a very real and dangerous health risk. In fact, the top three manufacturers: Nokia, Ericsson and Motorola have all applied for patents for developing devices for their phones to deal with EMFs (electromagnetic fields). Their reason for the patents read, "Continuous exposure to radio frequency irradiation (EMFs) could lead to development of malignant tumors."

Time magazine and others, have run articles of top health professionals such as Dr. Andrew Weil, along with concerned environmentalists, stating that electromagnetic radiation is a more serious problem for the world right now than chemical pollution. The report, entitled "Cell phones and Brain Tumors: 15 Reasons for Concern; Science, Spin and the Truth Behind Interphone," was produced by a group called the International EMF (Electromagnetic Field) Collaborative. The endorsements of the report to date are listed in the report and will be updated on five web sites including that of the Radiation Research Trust, [www.radiationresearch.org](http://www.radiationresearch.org).

The primary author of the report, Mr. Morgan, put the issue into perspective: "Exposure to cell phone radiation is the largest human health experiment ever undertaken, without informed consent, and has some 4 billion participants enrolled. Science has shown increased risk of brain tumors caused by the use of cell phones, as well as the increased risk of eye cancer, salivary gland tumors, testicular cancer, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and leukemia. The public must be informed."

Here are just a few ways to reduce the harmful effects of cell phone radiation: (1) use the speaker phone or earbud, (2) keep the phone away from your body whenever possible, (3) do not sleep with or allow children to sleep with the phone under their pillow, and (4) use a scientifically proven radiation absorbing/shielding device on your phone. Be aware and be safe.

**material compiled by Matthew Anthony**