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International Mobile Phone Health Risk Study - Publication Delays Continue

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Delays to the publication of the final report from the Interphone study group of The International Agency for Research on Cancer looking at mobile phone radiation and the risk to human health, continue into 2008 despite the study findings having been completed and analysed some two years ago.

Speculation as to the reasons behind this continued delay in publication is being raised within the scientific community. In particular, the much applauded and internationally respected publication, Microwave News, has this week stated that "Any further delay would be close to scandalous."

Calling for the immediate publication of the findings of the international study, this weeks press release claims that there are sinister reasons for the continued delay: "The real reason, we believe, is that the study shows that there are tumor risks following long-term use of a mobile phone and that some of the Interphone researchers don't want to go public."

Microwave News press release goes on to raise a number of concerns and is reproduced here, with all cross referred links left intact for those readers who wish to read more in detail:

"At the same time, the worldwide wireless industry —now worth on the order of a trillion dollars— and the governments that tax them are applying pressure, subtle or otherwise, to keep the lid on.



The willingness of some Interphone players to downplay the risks has been apparent for a long time. Here's how U.K.'s [Tony Swerdlow](#), [advised](#) the press on an Interphone acoustic neuroma study back in 2005: "The results of our study suggest that there is no substantial risk of in the first decade after starting use. Whether there are longer-term risks remains unknown..." This was, to put it kindly, outright misdirection. The published paper indicated a

statistically significant increased risk after ten years on the side of the head the phone was used. That finding was even in the study's [abstract](#). The next day's headlines were predictable. "Mobile Phone Cancer Link Rejected," the [BBC](#) announced.

This 1995 study was based on the pooled data from five Interphone countries: Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and the U.K. Last year, researchers from those same five countries [reported](#) a parallel elevated, ipsilateral risk for brain tumors after ten years.

Add to those five, the [German](#) and the [French](#) Interphone groups. Both have also reported increased risks of brain tumors after ten years (see our January 29, 2006 [post](#) and September 19, 2007 [post](#), respectively). A few weeks ago, the French Ministry of Health [called](#) for precaution with respect to the use of mobile phones by children.

In December, the Interphone team from Israel brought a third type of tumor —of the parotid gland— into play. (The gland lies just under the skin in the area of the cheek near the ear.) One striking **finding** was the "exceptionally heavy" use of mobile phones among Israelis. Not only was there an elevated tumor risk, but it showed up earlier, often in less than ten years.

In an interview with the Israeli newspaper **Haaretz**, Siegal Sadetzki, the leader of the Israeli Interphone group, also called for a precautionary approach to cell phones. "The time is past when it could be said that this technology does not cause damage; apparently it damages health," she said.

We asked Sadetzki what she could tell us about the risks of brain tumors and acoustic neuromas among Israelis. She declined to comment saying only that these results had not yet been submitted for publication. They may well be a key indicator of the long-term risks and need to be made public.

The absence of the Interphone paper has made it easy to avoid dealing with all the signals that point to a cancer risk. A good example is the list of research priorities from the National Academy of Sciences, released on January 17. It skirted the critical data from seven different Interphone countries because, we were told, the Interphone final report was not yet in hand (see below).

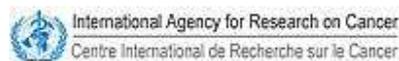
Just how absurd the situation has become was apparent at a workshop on ***Dosimetry Meets Epidemiology*** hosted by the Swiss National Research Program on Non-Ionizing Radiation (**NFP57**) in Zurich on January 11. Many of those attending were working on, or had some connection to, the Interphone study, including four of the principal investigators (Anssi Auvinen, Elisabeth Cardis, Maria Feychting and Joachim Schüz). Yet, Interphone was never discussed. Everyone ignored the 800-pound gorilla in the room.

It's easy to see why some people are getting more and more nervous about long-term cell phone use. If Interphone does in fact point to a tumor risk as many observers now believe, the public should be informed. Parents should warn their children. Two billion cell phone users deserve to know what only a select few know now. The next step would be to fund more research.

The code of silence about Interphone must end. Public health demands it.

Elisabeth Cardis is leaving IARC on March 21st to join the Centre for Research in Environmental Epidemiology (**CREAL**) in Barcelona. The Interphone paper should be submitted for publication before she leaves Lyon —in a journal which can expedite the review process. The sooner the results are posted on the Internet and available to all, the better."

Many view the delays as sinister and in the interests of government and industry, much in the same way as evidence in the Smoking and lung cancer debate was hidden for some 30 years.



However, in December '07 an interim report statement was issued by the The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) who are responsible for the Interphone study group and the final report of the study:

"Work is starting to further exploit the information on occupational exposures collected within INTERPHONE study with the aims of:

- 1) evaluating the possible association between occupational exposure to EMF (both ELF and RF/MW) and glioma and meningioma;
- 2) evaluating the possible association between selected occupational chemical exposures and these tumours and
- 3) investigating the possibility of synergism and/or confounding between chemical and EMF exposures on the risk of brain cancers.

This work involves assessing occupational exposure to EMF and selected chemicals using validated job-exposure matrices, which will be developed within the project and refining this assessment by consolidating information obtained from the JEM with data on exposure variations related to the specific industry in which a subject worked, to the tasks he or she performed and to the actual sources of exposure, available from the INTERPHONE questionnaire."

For most, this heralds the need for further delay as an excuse to 'interpret' the results as to show no conclusion and merely echo every report done so far into the health effects of mobile phone use: more study is needed!

There is a danger, as Microwave News amongst others point out; that will be seen as simple delay and truth burial tactics!

Read the full Microwave News report [here](#)

Full Interphone December '07 statement [here](#)

Related news item: [CWU Call For Further Mobile Phone Health Risk Research](#)

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