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Once again: Do cell phones cause brain tumors?

by [Elizabeth Armstrong Moore](#)

A collaborative of international electromagnetic radiation ([EMR](#)) watchdogs, including [Powerwatch](#) and the [EMR Policy Institute](#), sent a paper to government leaders and media Tuesday detailing several design flaws in a major but [oft-delayed](#) telecom-funded [Interphone study](#).

Now consumers get to wonder yet again whether the message behind the paper, "[Cellphones and Brain Tumors: 15 Reasons for Concern, Science, Spin and the Truth Behind Interphone](#)," is legitimate or the result of overzealous conspiracy theorists.

The paper's main conclusions are: There is a "significant" risk of brain tumors from cell phone use; EMR exposure limits that have been used by

governments and supported by industry are based on the false premise that EMR has no biological effects except for heating; and design flaws of the Interphone study include selection bias, insufficient latency time to expect a tumor diagnosis, unrealistic definition of what makes a "regular" cell phone user, exclusion of children and young adults from the study, exclusion of many types of brain tumors, and exclusion of people who had died or were too ill to be interviewed as the result of brain tumors.



A widely endorsed report calls into question the methodologies of studies that show no link between cell phone use and brain tumors.

(Credit: L. Lloyd Morgan, et al)

Read the [full report here \(PDF\)](#), as well as [CNET's cell phone radiation level chart](#) (a few Motorola models top the list, with several Samsungs coming in lowest).

The paper's primary author, L. Lloyd Morgan (a retired electronics engineer and member of the [Bioelectromagnetics Society](#)), is backed by endorsers (mostly scientists) from 14 countries when he cautions that cell phone use might lead to an increased risk of more than just brain tumors:

Exposure to cell phone radiation is the largest human health experiment ever undertaken, without informed consent, and has some four billion participants enrolled. Science has shown increased risk of brain tumors from use of cell phones, as well as increased risk of eye cancer, salivary gland tumors, testicular cancer, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and leukemia. The public must be informed.



The [World Health Organization](#) does not seem terribly worried about the effects of cell phone use on health: "None of the recent reviews have concluded that exposure to the RF fields from mobile phones or their base stations causes any adverse health consequence." But this statement--last updated [nine years ago](#)--relies on precisely the kind of data these watchdogs suggest is flawed.

Several other studies, many of which are referenced in the book ["Cancer Biology,"](#) including one of 195,775 workers manufacturing and testing cell phones, indicate no association between EMR exposure and brain or other nervous system cancers. But again, this book was published in 1995; time for an update?

Yesterday's announcement also calls into question the wide use of wireless technologies beyond cell phones. If [GSM](#) cell phones are dangerous in the 1.8GHz band, does that render [Wi-Fi](#), at [2.4GHz and 5GHz](#) frequency bands, even worse? These are questions that need to be addressed, preferably by researchers who do not receive their funding from the telecommunications industry.



Elizabeth Armstrong Moore is a freelance journalist based in Portland, Ore. She has contributed to Wired magazine, The Christian Science Monitor, and public radio. Her semi-obscure hobbies include unicycling, slacklining, hula-hooping, scuba diving, billiards, Sudoku, Magic the Gathering, and classical piano. She is a member of the CNET Blog Network and is not an employee of CNET.