

## Mobile phone cancer risk 'higher for children'

By Harry Wallop, Consumer Affairs Correspondent

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Children should not be given mobile phones because using them for more than 10 years increases the risk of brain cancer, a leading scientist has said.

People who have used their phone for a decade are twice as likely to be diagnosed with a tumour on a nerve connecting the ear to the brain, according to a group of scientists who have surveyed the results of 11 different studies.

Prof Kjell Mild, of Orbero University, Sweden, who is a Government adviser and led the research, said that children should not be allowed to use mobile phones because their thinner skulls and developing nervous system made them particularly vulnerable.



New research says that children's thinner skulls make them more vulnerable to tumours

His study comes just a month after a separate piece of research, jointly funded by the Government and the mobile phone industry, found there was [only a "very faint hint" of a link](#) between long-term use of mobile phones and brain tumours.

This six-year, £8.8 million Mobile Telecommunications and Health Research (MTHR) programme came under fire for failing to investigate more thoroughly those who had used their phones for more than a decade.

Most scientists have had difficulty researching this area as mobile phone usage did not become widespread until the late 1990s.

Professor Mild said the danger may be even greater than his study suggests because 10 years is the minimum period needed by cancers to develop.

"I find it quite strange to see so many official presentations saying that there is no risk. There are strong indications that something happens after 10 years," he said.

He has called for more research, especially into a possible link between mobile phones and Alzheimer's disease, since "we have indications that it might be a problem", as well as a possible link with Parkinson's.

The need for greater research has been echoed by Prof Lawrie Challis, who led the MTHR research.

He has confirmed that a second wave of studies - funded by the Government and the phone industry - would include a long-term look at the health of 200,000 mobile users in Britain, Denmark, Sweden and Finland.

The Swedish scientists' initial findings were unveiled in April but are published in full in the latest issue of the peer-reviewed journal Occupational Environmental Review.

They want a revision of the emission standard for mobiles and other sources of radiation, which they describe as "inappropriate" and "not safe".

The international standard is designed merely to prevent harmful heating of living tissue or induced electrical currents in the body, and does not take into account the risk of getting cancer.