



Mast Sanity Press Release 24th July 2007

MTHR Essex University Study

The results of the Industry and Government funded Mobile Telecommunications and Health Research Programme (MTHR) study "to investigate whether emissions from mobile phone base stations can elicit a variety of symptoms in those exposed to them"^[1] run by Professor of Psychology Elaine Fox at the University of Essex^[2] is to be published on Wednesday 25th July at the Science Media Centre.

Firstly we should state that we don't know why this research is being done by psychologists as there is already evidence showing changes in the important mast cells in human skin upon exposure to microwaves^[3].

This Essex study will not be able to give us any insights into the long term effects such as cancer and genetic damage as has been highlighted in other research and so we think is just tinkering at the edges.

In doing this research one is subjecting the volunteers to harm. As such this research is unethical. We know of at least one person who had to stop doing it because it made him so unwell. Lab tests have already identified disruptions to the immune system, surely if this were a drug we would not go on to do further tests on human subjects as there is already enough evidence?

Some subjects of the study were sent summaries showing 90-100% ability to identify the 3G(UTMS) and 2G (GSM) signals from the SHAM (No signal) conditions without prior knowledge of which was which. Additionally, physical markers such as anxiety was 2-4 times higher, tension and arousal 1.5 times higher, discomfort 4-6 times higher and fatigue 3.5 - 5.5 times higher under the 2G and 3G signals. Clearly these individuals experienced real effects, not psychological problems.

Yet being unable to complete the study has led to the exclusion of these individuals from the results, we believe.

As Dr Carlo, Safe Wireless Initiative and former Chairman of the US \$28 million research programme into mobile phone research, says:

"Because of the imprecisions in the Essex study^{[4],[5]}, findings of 'no effect' are likely to be false negatives in that the study was not designed well enough to pick up all of the effects among the participants."

"Any findings of 'effect' are likely underestimates of the true risk for the same reasons of imprecision in the study design."

We also do not know how much of a part has been played by the so-called 'Wessely School' of psychiatry in separate earlier comparable studies with sufferers from farm Organophosphate Poisoning, Gulf War Syndrome and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME / CFS)^[6]. In each case the researchers' conclusion was that each condition was just a case of unfounded mental anxiety, which would be relieved by their form of psychotherapy and exercise. This in spite in every case findings of physical evidence of nerve system damage. In the case of electrosensitivity studies undertaken in Sweden are able to pinpoint the sort of damage that sufferers endure^[7].

Mast Sanity Spokesperson Yasmin Skelt says *"Isn't it time that the Government woke up to the reality of electrosensitivity instead of attempting to persuade sufferers that it is all in their minds?"*

"History has shown that many now commonly accepted physical conditions were initially dismissed as psychological, with the patients subjected to all kinds of tests and quack remedies."

"Electrosensitivity has been recognised by medics in Sweden since 2000, and its government calculates 3.1 per cent of its population - 200,000 people - suffer from the condition. In fact this figure has more recently been revised upwards to nearer 9%. That is an awful lot of people."

"This study has been such a waste of money. The World Health Organisation already recognise electrosensitivity^[8]. Why was the money not used to translate the 1500-subject Russian long-term epidemiological studies into English?"

Mast Sanity reiterate their call on the Government to stop talking and start doing something. The UK should adopt the Precautionary Principle and halt the roll-out and proliferation of microwave transmitters of all types. If the new Brown Government is serious about protecting public health then they will readily accept our recent request for urgent talks and take action. Too many lives have been blighted or completely ruined already.

END.

The Mast Sanity Press Office can be contacted on 08704 867 807.

Notes and References:

[1] <http://www.essex.ac.uk/psychology/EHS/pages/MTHR%20press%20release.htm>

[2] EMH Lab: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/psychology/EHS/pages/emh%20lab%20launch1.htm>
Professor Fox Profile: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/psychology/psy/PEOPLE/fox/foxResearch.html>

[3] http://www.radiationresearch.org/pdfs/olle_johansson.pdf

[4] Previous electrosensitivity studies: <http://www.electrosensitivity.org.uk/Travesty.htm>

[5] The electrosensitive volunteers' degree of electrical sensitivity and sensitivity to other environmental factors such as chemicals and heavy metals combined with imprecise measurements has invalidated the results from many previous so-called "provocation" studies (see [4] above) . With only 56 electrosensitive volunteers the sample in the Essex study is certainly not large enough to even out the degree of sensitivity.

Electrosensitive people are not all sensitive to the same frequency ranges, so the use of only two ranges for 2G/GSM and 3G/UMTS, might not trigger a response in some genuinely electrosensitive volunteers. Also multiple research studies have found that using empty "carrier" signals without speech or data does not trigger the "biological pathway" that a non-empty signal does. The Essex study appears to use "scaled" signal strengths, which are unlikely to be realistic.

[6] Previous "psychological" studies:
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmhealth/503/503we79.htm>

[7] Physical evidence of electrosensitivity (Search on "You mention mast cells in the skin")
<http://www.feb.se/ARTICLES/OlleJ.html>

[8] The World Health Authority recognises that EHS "*symptoms are certainly real and can vary widely in their severity*". The WHO urges that Governments should provide appropriately targeted and balanced information about potential health hazards of electromagnetic field to EHS individuals, health-care professionals and employers. Ref: Fact sheet N°296 December 2005
<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs296>

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**Calling for Environmentally and Biologically safe communications networks and radio
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