

Cell Phone Industry Finds, 'No Cancer'



Analysis by Tracy Staedter

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The first results of the long-awaited, 10-year, international Interphone study finds little evidence that cell phones cause either glioma or meningioma, the two most common types of brain cancer. This is the first study in a series being undertaken by the International Agency for Research on Cancer to assess the overall cancer-risk of mobile phone use by 2011.

In summary, the study, to be published May 18 in the International Journal of Epidemiology, says that:

Overall, no increase in risk of glioma or meningioma was observed with use of mobile phones. There were suggestions of an increased risk of glioma at the highest exposure levels, but biases and error prevent a causal interpretation. The possible effects of long-term heavy use of mobile phones require further investigation.

Biases and errors could be along the lines of:

1. Bias. The study was funded in part by the Mobile Manufacturers' Forum, an international association of telecommunications equipment manufacturers, and GSM Association a firm that represents the interests of the worldwide mobile communications industry.

According to the Interphone study, "Provision of funds to the INTERPHONE study investigators via the UICC was governed by agreements that guaranteed INTERPHONE's complete scientific independence."

Biases could also stem from a patient's inability to accurately estimate their cell phone use. Michael Milligan, Secretary General of the Mobile Manufacturers Forum said in a press release, "The authors make it clear that the data was insufficient for a clear interpretation of possible risk from self-reported heavy use due to a number of possible errors or biases. For example, the paper notes that there is evidence that people diagnosed with a brain tumor over-reported their past mobile phone use and that 'recall bias-like this may be more likely if subjects perceive that mobile phone use is associated with brain tumors, as has been widely speculated in the media."

2. Errors. Devra Davis, professor of Preventive Medicine at Mount Sinai Medical center in New York told CNN in this article that the study excluded children and young adults, two groups who have seen increased use since the study period. **She also said that the user groups being compared are not those who do not use a cell phone and those who do, it's between "people who used their phone less than once a week, and more than once a week, all on self-reflection memory of their mobile use, the day after they've had a brain operation."**

On Discovery News Tech, we recently published two articles related to this matter: Do Cell Phones Cause Cancer? and How the Internet Fuels Cell Phone Scares.

But despite the abundance of information on this topic, the jury still seems to be out. In the press release, Christopher Wild, director of the International Agency for Research on Cancer said, "An increased risk of brain cancer is not established from the data from Interphone. However, observations at the highest level of cumulative call time and the changing patterns of mobile phone use since the period studied by Interphone, particularly in young people, mean that further investigation of mobile phone use and brain cancer risk is merited."