#### ITU Workshop on "Human Exposure to Electromagnetic Fields (EMFs)"

Quito, Ecuador, 14 August 2013

## **RF and Health: A WHO Perspective**

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Quito, Ecuador, 14 August 2013





#### OUTLINE

Introduction
Assessing the health risk
Managing the potential risk
Conclusions



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When diplomats met in San Francisco to form the United Nations in 1945, one of the things they discussed was setting up a global health organization. WHO's Constitution came into force on 7 April 1948 - a date we now celebrate every year as World Health Day.

Delegates from 53 of WHO's 55 original member states came to the first World Health Assembly in June 1948. They decided that WHO's top priorities tuberculosis, venereal disease, nutrition and environmental sanitation – many of which we are still working on today. WHO's work has since grown to also cover health problems that were not even known in 1948, including relatively new diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

International Classification of Disease WHO took over the responsibility for the International Classification of Disease (ICD), which dates back to the 1850s and was first known as the International List of Causes of Death. The ICD is used to classify diseases and other health problems and has become the international standard used for clinical and epidemiological purposes.

would be malaria, women's and children's health,

952 Dr Jonas Salk (US) develops 1967 South African surgeon

the first successful polio vaccine. Christlaan Barnard conducts the

Global yaws control programme

first heart transplant.

that afflicted some 50 million people in 1950. The global yaws control programme, fully operational between

had examined 300 million people in 46 countries and reduced global disease prevalence by more than 95%.

1952-1964, used long-acting penkillin to treat yaws with one single injection. By 1965, the control programme



One of the first diseases to claim WHO's attention was yaws, a crippling and disfiguring disease

1974 The World Health

to all the world's children.

Assembly adopts a resolution to

create the Expanded Programme on

Immunization to bring basic vaccines

#### 1974 Onchocerciasis control programme

WHO worked for 30 years to eliminate onchocerciasis - or river blindness - from West Africa, 600 000 cases of blindness have been prevented and 18 million children spared from the disease. Thousands of farmers have been able to reclaim 25 million hectares of fertile river land that had been abandoned because of the risk of infection.

1977 The first

Essential Medicines

two years after the

List appeared in 1977,

World Health Assembly

introduced the concents

of "essential drugs" and

"national drug policy".

156 countries today

have a national list of

essential medicines.



Mr.41 Mallin Gefu, from Somalia, and 1979. It was the first and so far the only time that a major infectous disease has were the last provide the major infectous disease has be infected with majors. Here here mail the decty more than the decty

1978 The

aspire.

International Conference

on Primary Health Care,

in Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan

sets the historic goal

of "Health for All" - to

which WHO continues to

treated him more than 25 years ago. Ali has since worked on polio eradication campaigns.

2003 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome 2005 World Health Assembly revises the (SARS) first recognized and then controlled.

and disease around the world.

2003

**Tobacco Control** 

International Health Regulations

WHO Framework Convention on /

21 May 2003 was a historic day for global

Assembly unanimously adopted WHO's first

2004 Adoption of

the Global Strategy on

Health.

Diet, Physical Activity and

public health. After nearly four years of

intense negotiations, the World Health

global public health treaty. The treaty is

designed to reduce tobacco-related deaths

Eradication Initiative established

1983 Institut Pasteur (France)

Identifies HIV.

Global

Polio

Since its launch in 1988, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative has reduced the number of cases of polio by more than 99% - from more than 350 000 per year to 1956 in 2006. Spearheaded by national governments, WHO, Rotary nternational, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and UNICEF, it has immunized more than two billion children thanks to the mobilization of more than 20 million volunteers and health workers. As a result, five million children are today walking, who would otherwise have been paralysed, and more than 1.5 million childhood deaths have been averted. THE GOAL IS TO ERADICATE POLID WORLDWIDE SO THAT NO CHILD WILL EVER AGAIN BE PARALYZED BY THIS DISEASE.

MANILA

REGION

WESTERN PACIFIC

#### PEOPLE

Last but not least, WHO is people. Over 8000 public health experts including doctors, epidemiologists, scientists, managers, administrators and other professionals from all over the world work for WHO in 147 country offices, six regional offices and at the headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.



**COPENHAGEN** 

**EUROPEAN REGION** 

NEW DEI

SOUTH EAST

ASIA REGION

## The Present EMF Context

 Increasing EMF human exposure due to electricity demand, medical technologies and wireless devices
 Increasing concern from the public



## Radio Frequency Fields (100 kHz - 300 GHz)





**Telecommunications** 















scanners



Daily Mail 24 October 2002 Page 43

## **Mobiles 'boost cancer'** Radiation may make tumours

use are still unclear.

The biggest British study, led by Sir William Stewart two years ago, could find no evidence of a risk to health. But Sir William still recommended a precautionary approach, particularly in children.

The World Health Organisation has called for more research and has urged people to limit mobile use. Now Italian scientists believe they could be closer to the truth.

Cancer develops when control signals in a normal cell go wrong and an abnormal cell results. Instead of destroying itself the mutant cell keeps on dividing and forms a lump or tumour.

The results of the Italian study support the belief of some scientists who say radiation can damage DNA and destroy the cell repair system - making tumours more deadly. Dr Peter de Pomerai of the



#### Stop Smart Meters!

Fighting for health, privacy, and safety



## The Present Scientific Knowledge

- Large and increasingly sophisticated database
- Known mechanisms
- Health effects not established below international guidelines
- Scientific uncertainty

## **WHO International EMF Project**

Established in 1996 Coordinated by WHO HQ A multinational, multidisciplinary effort to create and disseminate information on human health risk from EMF



# The International EMF Project

investigates health effects of electromagnetic fields

advises national authorities on EMF radiation protection

#### **WHO Partners in Radiation**



## mHealth an ITU/WHO initiative





| itatistics | Media centre | Publications | Countries | Programmes and projects |        |
|------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|-------------------------|--------|
| Q          |              |              |           |                         | Search |
|            |              |              |           |                         |        |

#### Media centre

## ITU and WHO launch mHealth initiative to combat noncommunicable diseases

Plan to save lives and reduce costs agreed at ITU Telecom World 2012

Joint ITU/WHO news release

17 OCTOBER 2012 | DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES - The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and WHO today launched a new partnership called the 'mHealth' Initiative to use mobile technology, in particular text messaging and apps, to help combat noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular diseases and chronic respiratory diseases.

・ 甲又 ー ペシ

#### **Do EMFs pose a heath risk?**



#### OUTLINE

# IntroductionAssessing the health risk

#### What do we know?



#### What do we know? Mechanisms of interaction



# What type of research is needed?

## **RF Research Agenda**



- To promote research areas that have relevance to public health, and can
  - reduce scientific uncertainties: health effects research
  - respond to public concern through better risk communication: social science research
- Useful to researchers and funding agencies
- Uptake of the latest agenda in several countries

#### **Research** Balance of studies needed



http://www.niehs.nih.gov/emfrapid/booklet/emf2002.pdf

## **Laboratory Studies**

#### Cellular studies

- Genotoxicity
- Gene expression

#### Animal studies

- Cancer
- Behaviour
- BBB
- Skin

#### Human studies

- Sleep
- EEG
- Hormones
- EHS



#### **Short-term effects** (WHO fact sheet 193, June 2011)

- To date, research does not suggest any consistent evidence of adverse health effects from exposure to RF fields at levels below those that cause tissue heating.
- Research has not been able to provide support for a causal relationship between exposure to EMF and self-reported symptoms, or "electromagnetic hypersensitivity".

## **Epidemiological studies**

Studies on mobile phones



#### Tumours in head and neck

#### Glioma, meningioma, acoustic neuroma, parotid gland



Over 20 studies on the use of mobile phones

- <u>Published</u>: USA, Nordic countries, INTERPHONE, CEFALO
- Ongoing: MOBI-Kids, COSMOS

## (published 18 May 2010)

Published by Oxford University Press on behalf of the International Epidemiological Association © The Author 2010; all rights reserved.

International Journal of Epidemiology 2010;1–20 doi:10.1093/ije/dyq079

#### Brain tumour risk in relation to mobile telephone use: results of the INTERPHONE international case–control study

#### The INTERPHONE Study Group\*

5 Corresponding author. Elisabeth Cardis; CREAL, Doctor Aiguader 88, \*List of members of this study group is available in the Appendix.



#### Cases:

- 2,765 gliomas
- 2,425 meningiomas
- 1,121 acoustic neuroma
- 109 malignant parotid gland
- Controls:
  - ♦ 7,658

#### Long-term effects (WHO fact sheet 193, June 2011)

- No increased risk of glioma, meningioma or acoustic neuroma with mobile phone use of more than 10 years
- Indications of increased risk of glioma for heavy users
  - Biases and errors prevent a causal interpretation
- No available data for long-term use (15-20 years)
- Studies on children ongoing
  - No causal relationship seen in CEFALO study (July 2011)





#### Centro de prensa

## Campos electromagnéticos y salud pública: teléfonos móviles

Nota descriptiva N°193 Junio de 2011

#### Datos y cifras

- El uso de teléfonos móviles se ha universalizado: en el mundo hay unos 4600 millones de contratos de telefonía móvil.
- El Centro Internacional de Investigaciones sobre el Cáncer ha clasificado los campos electromagnéticos producidos por los teléfonos móviles como posiblemente carcinógenos para los seres humanos.
- Hay estudios en curso para analizar más a fondo los posibles efectos a largo plazo del uso de los teléfonos móviles.
- En 2012, la OMS realizará una evaluación formal de los riesgos a partir de todos los resultados de salud estudiados en relación con campos de radiofrecuencias.

http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs193/es/index.html

## **Epidemiological studies**

Base stations and wireless networks

Some studies have been performed

- Well-being and performance
- Cancer
- Difficulty of personal exposure assess



Kenneth R. Foster, *Radiofrequency exposure from wireless LANs utilizing WI-FI technology*. Health Phys. 92(3):280–289; 2007







#### Campos electromagneticos (CEM)

#### Los campos electromagnéticos y la salud pública

Estaciones de base y tecnologías inalámbricas

Nota descriptiva N°304 Mayo 2006

#### Conclusiones

Teniendo en cuenta los muy bajos niveles de exposición y los resultados de investigaciones reunidos hasta el momento, no hay ninguna prueba científica convincente de que las débiles señales de RF procedentes de las estaciones de base y de las redes inalámbricas tengan efectos adversos en la salud.

## .... subject to proper siting



## How do we evaluate the health risk from EMF?

#### **EMF Health Risk Assessment**



From V. Cogliano, Workshop on "Characterizing evidence in EMF risk assessment", Berlin, May 2006, <u>http://evidence.pureres.net</u>

#### **Overview of the evaluation process**





Group 4 Probably not carcinogenic to humans

## IARC Evaluation Volume 102 - Radiofrequency Fields

- RF fields classified as "possibly carcinogenic to humans (Group 2B)" based on
  - limited evidence in humans. Positive association observed between exposure to RF-EMF from wireless phones and glioma and acoustic neuroma (epidemiologic studies).
  - limited animal data

Evidence for other exposures (e.g. base stations, wifi, ...) and outcomes (other cancers) considered insufficient for any conclusion



## **Agents Classified by IARC (950)**

| IARC Classification   | Examples of Agents  |  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Carcinogenic to humans (107)</b><br>(usually based on strong evidence of<br>carcinogenicity in humans)   | Asbestos<br>Alcoholic beverages<br>Benzene<br>Mustard gas<br>Radon gas<br>Solar radiation<br>Tobacco (smoked and smokeless)<br>X-rays and Gamma |  |
| Probably carcinogenic to humans<br>(59)<br>(usually based on strong evidence of<br>carcinogenicity in animals)  | Creosotes<br>Diesel engine exhaust<br>Formaldehyde<br>Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)  |  |
| Possibly carcinogenic to humans<br>(267)<br>(usually based on evidence in humans which<br>is considered credible, but for which other<br>explanations could not be ruled out) | RF fields<br>Coffee<br>Gasoline engine exhaust<br>Pickled vegetables<br>ELF magnetic fields<br>Styrene  |  |

#### **Health Risk Assessment**



#### Environmental Health Criteria Electromagnetic Fields





#### Frequency range:

- 100 kHz 300 GHz
- Include UWB, pulses, mm-waves
- Sources:
  - RFID, EAS, mobile telephony, radar, smart meters, ...
- Health benefits not included
  - Hyperthermia, MRI, medical treatments, diathermy, RF ablation surgery
- Systematic review of scientific evidence of health risks
- Update on research recommendations
- Review of national RF policies

#### OUTLINE

Introduction
Assessing the health risk
Managing the health risk
Developing standards and regulations

 Communicating the scientific knowledge
# Norms, Standards and Guidelines

Emission standards
 have specifications
 that limit the EMF
 emissions from
 devices
 A

# Exposure standards have specifications that limit EMF exposure to people



#### **Relevant Authorities**

Non-governmental and international organizations

- Emission standards
- Measurements standards







#### **Exposure** standards





#### **Reference Levels**



## **Policy documents ....**



http://www.who.int/peh-emf/standards/

| Extraordinary   | Assen   | National<br>Assembly<br>Journal |  |  |
|-----------------|---|---------------------------------|--|--|
| No. 62          | Abuja - 17th April, 2012  | Vol. 8                          |  |  |
|                 | CONTENTS  |                                 |  |  |
|                 | INDEX TO LEGISLATIVE INSTRUMENTS  |                                 |  |  |
| Bill No.        | Long Title  | Page                            |  |  |
| HB. 11.12.181 A | Bill for an Act to Require Statutory Bodies to Prepare and<br>Forward To The National Assembly Through The President<br>Annual Reports of Its Operations and Finances; and For Other<br>Matters Connected Therewith | C4897 - 4905                    |  |  |
| HB. 11.12.182 A | Bill for an Act to Provide For The Protection of Humans From -<br>Certain Levels of Exposure to Electromagnetic Fields; and for<br>Other Matters Therewith  | C4937 - 491-                    |  |  |

# **Worldwide EMF standards**

| 8                         | Health topics   | Data and statistics      | Media centre                                  | Publications                     | Countries   | Programmes   | and projects   | lbout WHO  |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|----------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
|                           |   | Q.                       |   |                                  |   |  | Search   | Advanced search  |
|                           |   | Global                   | Health Ob                                     | servatory                        | (GHO)   |  |  |  |
| )ati<br>Rep<br>Cou<br>Iap | al Health Observa<br>a repository<br>orts<br>ntry statistics<br>gallery<br>ndards |                          | health and                                    | environm                         | Pro<br>pre<br>en<br>phy<br>our<br>des<br>en<br>pre<br>yea | ventable illnesse<br>vironment influer<br>viscal, chemical<br>behaviour in res<br>ths are due to p<br>vironmental risk<br>dominantly in de | es that are directly<br>noes our health in r<br>and biological risk<br>sponse to those fa<br>reventable environ<br>can save as many<br>eveloping countries | the key to avoiding a quarter of all<br>caused by environmental factors. The<br>nany ways – due to exposures to<br>factors, or through related changes in<br>stors. Each year, thirteen million<br>mental causes. Preventing<br>'as four million lives a year,<br>, among children aged less than 15 |
|                           |   | Global dis 23%           | ease burden                                   | Public hea                       | <sup>Ith and env</sup>                                    |  |  | ater and sanitation burden   |
|                           |   |                          | -<br>al disease burden                        | is attributable                  | deaths every  | year as a result<br>ke from cooking  | of exposure of<br>fuels wa   | the diarrhoal deaths are due to unsaft<br>ater, inappropriate sanitation and lack<br>hygiene   |
|                           |   | Preventing<br>environmer | disease through h<br>hts                      | ealthy                           | Mortality and<br>household air                            | burden of diseas<br>pollution  |  | ortality and burden of disease from<br>ater and sanitation   |
|                           |   |                          |   | d air pollution<br>and burden of | <u>.</u>  |  | assessment,<br>disease and PI  | ontact us<br>ease send us your comment or<br>estion by e-mail.   |
|                           |   | L <u>n</u> .,            | Outdoor u<br>pollution<br>Exposure<br>disease | urban air<br>and burden of       |   | Second-ha<br>Exposure :<br>disease   | ind smoke<br>and burden of   |  |

#### Survey on EMF Standards May 2013



Powered by WHO Extranet DataCol

#### Test: Electromagnetic Fields Exposure Standards

Many countries have put in place standards or limits to control exposures to electromagnetic fields (EMFs) over the frequency range from 0 Hz to 300 GHz. WHO is creating a new database of such standards and invites your assistance.

For simplicity, the term "standard" is used throughout this questionnaire and is intended to include any limit, guideline or policy that is used to control exposures to EMFs.

This questionnaire is divided into three broad frequency ranges:

- static static or DC fields
- low frequencies frequencies from 1 Hz to 100kHz, i.e. including power frequencies

 radio frequencies – frequencies from 100kHz to 300 GHz, i.e. including broadcast radio and TV, mobile telephony and wireless technologies.

Please fill in as many of these frequency ranges as you are able to, leaving aside any questions that lie outside your knowledge or responsibility - we recognise that the responsibility for different frequency ranges may rest with different organisations or sections of government (e.g. Ministry of Health, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Telecommunications, Ministry of Labor, Radiation Protection Agency, ...). Feel free to forward this survey to whom it may concern in your country.

Within each frequency range, the questionnaire asks separately about standards applying to the public and to workers. For each of these divisions, the questionnaire asks about the existence of standards, their legal status, and the values at specific frequencies within each range to allow easy comparison of different standards.

The results of this survey will be made publicly available on WHO's website <u>www.who.int/emf</u>. If you have questions, please contact us at: <u>emfproject@who.int</u>

Thank you in advance for completing this survey by May 27 2013.

NOTE: The mention of actions/policies in this survey does not constitute endorsement by WHO that risks exist or that the actions are appropriate. Merely, they represent examples of actions/policies that are in effect or that have been proposed in some countries.

Fields marked with an asterisk (\*) are mandatory.

#### Contact and Organization Details

Country \*
Organization name \*
Last name \*



#### **Global Health Observatory Data Repository**





#### WHO Regional Views

Eastern Mediterranean Western Pacific Europe Americas South-East Asia Africa Global

#### **National management approaches**

#### Relevant authorities

#### National level



# **National management approaches**

#### Relevant authorities

- National level
- Provincial level
- Local level
  - Dispense building and planning permits
  - Direct contact with public and operators
  - May introduce further conservative measures based on politics rather than science

## **Local Authorities**

| Role                               | Possible responsibilities   |  |  |  |  |
|------------------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|
| Planning authority or<br>regulator | Protect public health<br>Authorise siting of transmitters<br>Establish planning rules for transmitters<br>Approve land use near transmitters<br>Coordinate with other stakeholders                                      |  |  |  |  |
| Landowner of<br>transmitter site   | Decide whether to lease site<br>Act as a good neighbour<br>Use position as landowner to encourage or<br>promote local priorities.   |  |  |  |  |
| Network operator                   | Operate radio telemetry network to<br>monitor status of local infrastructure<br>Operate mobile radio network to<br>communicate with staff<br>Operate WiFi network for public use<br>Comply with regulatory requirements |  |  |  |  |
| Employer                           | Meeting occupational health and safety responsibilities for staff working near wireless network transmitters.   |  |  |  |  |
| Source of information              | Lead public communications about health<br>issues.<br>Respond to questions about wireless<br>networks   |  |  |  |  |







#### **Management Options**

Reduce concern Reduce uncertainty Reduce exposure No action
Communication
Research
Planning measures
Engineering measures
Exposure limits

#### **Risk Perception and Communication** WHO Risk Handbook



- For programme managers who need basic information on EMF risk perception, communication and management
- Available in English
- •Translated into Spanish, Italian, German, French, Russian, Bulgarian, Dutch, Polish, Portuguese, Hungarian and Japanese
- •Available on the web

# **Elements of Risk Perception**



- Extent of health risk
- Probability of occurrence
- Uncertainty
- **Ubiquity**
- Pattern of exposure
- Delayed effect
- Inequity and injustice
- Voluntary vs. involuntary exposure

## **Managing EMF Risk Communication**



#### **Stakeholders** With whom to communicate?



#### **Media education**

#### 8 MARCH 2010

#### MEDIA CAMPAIGNING INFLUENCES PUBLIC POLICY

UNITED KINGDOM

Key words: RF, risk communication, media campaigning, public policy

Madison, Wisconsin---In a recent article in the journal Risk Research, Adam Burgess of the University of Kent in the UK analyzes "media risk campaigning," which he defines as the conscious and systematic promotion of particular causes and issues. "It is usefully thought of in its most distinct sense as promoting an issue which media make their own, more than lending support to an established one," he says. In his paper, he uses 3 issues as examples: mobile phones, genetically modified organisms, and sex offenders. This Gateway summary will be restricted to mobile phones and masts.



#### OUTLINE

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#### **Challenges to governments....**

- Rapidly evolving RF technologies
- Launched on the market before health evaluation
- Disparities in risk management measures and regulations around the world
- Concern from the public

## Conclusions

- Need for clear roles and responsibilities in government on this topic
- Need for adoption <u>and</u> compliance of health-based standards
- Need for a public information program and dialogue with stakeholders
- Need for promoting research to reduce uncertainty

We are a "global village"

The International EMF Project Radiation and Environmental Health Public Health and Environment World Health Organization 21 Avenue Appia CH-1211 Geneva 27 Switzerland

> <u>email</u>: emfproject@who.int <u>website</u>: www.who.int/emf