MICRO WAVE NEWS

A Report on Non-Ionizing Radiation

American Cancer Society: Cell Phones Are Safe

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The American Cancer Society is misleading the public —while alleging that Americans are perilously ill-informed about cancer risks. Thanks to the ACS, the front page of this week's *Washington Post* Health section tells the 30% of the population who believe that "cell phones cause cancer" that they are "wrong."

The *Post* story was prompted by an ACS news release about a study that will soon appear in *Cancer,* a journal published by the ACS. The ACS team warns that, "A notable percentage of the participants in this study hold beliefs about cancer risk at odds with the prevailing scientific evidence."

Ironically, it is the ACS that is out of touch with the scientific evidence. As we have pointed out many times, there are now two different research groups which have found elevated risks of two different types of tumors on the side of the head the phone was placed after ten or more years of cell phone use (see for instance, our January 22 post). Given these troubling findings, why is the ACS taking such a cavalier attitude towards a still uncertain, yet possibly very serious, cancer risk?

One possible reason is that the survey on which the ACS builds its case is five years old. That was before the studies pointing to tumor risks were available. But this is no excuse. The absence of proof of a hazard is not the same as proof of safety. (We can almost hear the chorus of industry consultants chiming in, as they so often do, that you can never prove a negative. They're right in a general sense, but not about this. No one yet knows whether phones are safe. Not even the ACS.)

The ACS cites only one study to back up its claim that a cell phone cancer risk is an urban myth: the Danish study published last year. It's true that the Danish Cancer Society did not see a tumor risk, but it had no information on which side of the head the phone was used

by those surveyed. If laterality is a key variable, as it appears to be, the Danish study could not have seen a link.

Next week, the National Academy of Sciences is convening a workshop to identify research gaps in what is known about cell phone health effects. At a time when not a single experimental or epidemiological study is underway in the U.S., it is foolish indeed for the American Cancer Society to discourage further work on RF radiation. There are now close to 250 million users of cell phones in the U.S. (and over 2 billion worldwide). They need to hear the facts rather than industry-friendly blather from the cancer establishment.

American Cancer Society, urban myth, Danish cohort study,

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