



# MICRO WAVE NEWS

## A Report on Non-Ionizing Radiation

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### EC: More Research Needed

May 9, 2007

More health research is needed for all EMF frequency bands, according to the newly-released [report](#) by the EC's Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR). (See also the [press release](#) and [news item](#).) Anders Ahlbom of the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm is the chair of the committee.

With respect to the possible risks following the long-term use of a cell phone, the SCENIHR acknowledges "some evidence of an association" with acoustic neuromas. But for brain tumors, the committee states that "it does appear that there is no increased risk" among long-term users. This is surprising given the release of the [Lahkola study](#) in January. Anna Lahkola and coworkers found a higher incidence of gliomas on the same side of the head the phone was used after ten or more years of exposure. These are the same criteria for which the strongest association was found for acoustic neuromas. Karolinska's Maria Feychting, a former student of Ahlbom's and now his colleague and frequent collaborator, is a coauthor of the Lahkola study.

As we noted at the time, the Lahkola study prompted both the Sweden's SSI and its German counterpart to reiterate their advice to be cautious with respect to the use of cell phones (see [MWN, February 1](#) and [February 5](#)).

A separate [assessment](#), carried out for the Swedish Radiation Protection Authority (SSI) and released in March, downplayed both the acoustic neuroma and the brain tumor risks. A possible acoustic neuroma link was called only "a concern." As for brain tumors, the SSI panel wrote that the "majority of the evidence...speaks against an association." Ahlbom also chaired this panel and Feychting served as its scientific secretary.

Just last month, Ahlbom, Feychting and others made the point that long-term cancer risks cannot be excluded (see [MWN, April 18](#)). But we have moved beyond that point: Lahkola tells us that they are now a real possibility. Why are they soft-pedaling the tumor

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risks? Perhaps not to alarm the public, perhaps not to alienate funding sources, perhaps because epidemiologists can never prove causality. Whatever the reasons, the public needs to know that these risks are no longer purely speculative —albeit still uncertain. At the very least, greater awareness may prompt parents to think twice before giving their young children cell phones.

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*EC, SCENIHR, Anders Ahlbom, Anna Lahkola,  
Maria Feychting,*

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