MICRO WAVE NEWS

A Report on Non-Ionizing Radiation

2012 Short Takes

Plus Ça Change…

December 4, 2012

Another in our continuing series —*Nothing Ever Really Changes.*

We recently came across an item in the January 20, 1964, issue of *Newsweek* titled, “The Mrs. G Effect” about a California housewife, who could hear noises that no one else could hear.

An “expert” was brought in. As far as he could tell, Mrs. G was converting alternating current fields into sound signals “as though she were a radio receiver.” *Newsweek* also talked to Allan Frey who offered qualified support. “If you use the correct frequency and modulate it properly, it's easy to induce sensations,” Frey told the magazine. “But how it is perceived, it’s too early to tell.” Frey had authority in these matters because three years earlier he was the first to report people's ability to hear certain types of microwaves. Many now call this the “Frey effect.”

A few days ago —or forty-nine years later— we called Frey and reminded him about the *Newsweek* article. It was not fresh in his mind! “I don't know what they measured, so I don’t know what to conclude,” he said, but he did allow that Mrs. G was probably hearing low frequency, not microwave, signals.

Mrs. G’s condition is no different from what we now call electromagnetic hypersensitivity, Frey told us.

For another reminiscence, see "The Man Who Was Allergic to Radio Waves."

Buddy, Can You Spare $25,000?

November 30, 2012

Search

Microwave News The Web

VIEW SHORT TAKES BY YEAR

2026 Short Takes 2017 Short Takes
2025 Short Takes 2016 Short Takes
2024 Short Takes 2015 Short Takes
2023 Short Takes 2014 Short Takes
2022 Short Takes 2013 Short Takes
2021 Short Takes 2012 Short Takes
2020 Short Takes 2011 Short Takes
2019 Short Takes 2010 Short Takes
2018 Short Takes

RECENT SHORT TAKES

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NTP Lite: All Good in Korea Too
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ElektrosmogReport Now in English Too
NCI ‘Cancer Bioelectricity’ Conference
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Italy’s 6 V/m RF Limit at Risk
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Korean NTP Lite: Progress Report

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EPRI, the research arm of the electric utility industry, has just published what might be a very useful report. Unfortunately, most of us will never get to see it.

The report is an evaluation of consumer-grade RF exposure meters —the type of instrument you might use to measure radiation levels from a cell tower or a smart meter. In a short abstract, which is publicly available, EPRI states, "Consumers need to recognize that each [RF exposure] meter's performance can vary dramatically at different frequencies, distances, and orientation. Such variations can be significant and may limit interpretation of measurement results."

Those who are unaware of such factors have often gotten themselves all mixed up with spurious readings. That's why this report would be a handy tutorial for the uninitiated. The problem is that only member utilities can access the report without paying the list price of $25,000. That's not a joke. We called an EPRI customer assistance operator and asked for a discount. No dice. We also wrote to Gabor Mezei, EPRI's manager on the project. So far, no word back.

EPRI is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. It's worth recalling how it came to be. In November 1965, a series of errors blacked out some 30 million people in the Northeastern states. The electric utility industry was in the doghouse for not doing enough R&D to prevent such accidents. The U.S. Senate proposed setting up a new federal agency to do research paid for with a tax on electricity use. The utilities moved quickly to keep control and EPRI was born.

In a paper published in *Science* magazine on the occasion of EPRI's 10th anniversary, Chauncey Starr, its founding president, recalled that back in 1973 there were "imputations from many quarters that EPRI was a sham and that the utility industry was not serious about its technical responsibilities." Up until about 15 years ago, EPRI did make an effort to keep people informed about its work. Technical reports were distributed to those who needed them: We have a shelf full of EPRI publications to prove it. Today, EPRI often does not even send a copy of its final reports to those who wrote them.

Last April marked Starr's 100th birthday. We doubt he would have been pleased with the way things turned out.

Spike in "Aggressive" Brain Cancer in Denmark

November 8, 2012
Updated June 2, 2014

The Danish Cancer Society is reporting that the number of men diagnosed with glioblastoma —the most malignant type of brain cancer— has nearly doubled over the last ten years. Hans Skovgaard Poulsen, the head of neuro-oncology at Copenhagen University Hospital, is calling it a "frightening development."

The society is not linking the increase to cell phones or to anything else. "We have no idea what caused it," Poulsen said in a statement issued by the Danish Cancer Society on November 2. (See the June 2, 2014, update below.)

Both the Interphone study and the group led by Sweden's Lennart Hardell have reported that long-term cell phone use is associated with higher rates of glioma. (Glioblastoma is a type of glioma.)

"I think the data is true and valid," Christoffer Johansen of the Danish Cancer Society told *Microwave News*. Johansen is a member of the team that has been working on the Danish cohort study, which has been investigating the possible links between cell phones and brain tumors. The group has long maintained that there is no association. (For our analysis of the Danish cohort study, follow this link.)

Like Poulsen, Johansen did not offer any explanation as to what may have led to the increase.

Joachim Schüz, who used to work at the Danish Cancer Society and is now with IARC, could not be reached for comment. Schüz and Johansen were members of the Interphone project and work together on the Danish cohort study.

Schüz has long said that he does not believe that cell phones present a brain tumor risk. One of his main arguments against an association has been that national cancer statistics have stayed relatively stable.

November 9, 2012

This morning, we heard from Joachim Schüz, who is travelling in Asia. He tells us that the news about the increase in glioblastoma is "indeed a concern." Like Johansen, Schüz does not have an explanation for what may be responsible for the uptick in these aggressive brain tumors, but he does not believe that it is because of better diagnostics.

Schüz added that he sees "no reason to question the quality of the Danish cohort study."

June 2, 2014

The Danish Cancer Society has removed the original 2012 news advisory noting the spike in glioblastoma from its Web site. (The original link is now "404"). It is still available, however, from the Internet Archive's "Wayback Machine". Here is the news advisory as it was first posted by the society. If you open this link in Chrome, Google will automatically translate the page into English.

See also our follow-up article:
"Something Is Rotten in Denmark."

GAO to FCC: "Reassess" RF Limits for Cell Phones

August 7, 2012

In its much-anticipated report, released today, the GAO told the FCC to take a fresh look at its cell phone exposure standard and the way the phones are tested for compliance with that limit. The 46-page report is available here.

Julius Knapp, the chief of the FCC's Office of Engineering and Technology, responded that he and his staff had "independently arrived at the same conclusion." He added that rules that the Commission has already drafted would "address and even expand on the GAO's recommendations" (see our "What's Up at the FCC?").

Some consumer and environmental organizations appear to be happy with the report. The Environmental Working Group (EWG), for instance, thanked the three members of Congress who had requested the GAO investigation after IARC designated RF radiation as a possible human carcinogen last year (see our June 3, 2011, post).

The EWG should keep in mind the old proverb, be careful what you wish for. A close reading of the new report indicates that the most likely outcome of a FCC review would be a substantial weakening of the current cell phone standard in the name of harmonization with the IEEE and ICNIRP.

That might explain why the CTIA, the wireless trade association, also embraced the GAO report. "CTIA welcomes the Commission's continued careful oversight of this issue," stated John Walls, its VP for public affairs.

The U.S. currently has the most stringent cell phone exposure limit in the world. But perhaps not for much longer.

For more, see:
• The *Washington Post's* blog post;
• Bloomberg's news story;
• The EWG's press release;
• CTIA's press release;
• And this item from Ars Technica, which closes with, "Maybe, finally, we'll get to the bottom of [the mystery of cell phone radiation]." We wouldn't take that bet.

Two Veteran EMF/RF Researchers Lost

June 22, 2012

The ranks of long-time EMF/RF researchers are thinning out too quickly and much too soon. Last week, Doreen Hill of OSHA and Larry Cress of the FDA died at ages 60 and 61, respectively. Hill joined the EPA back in 1973 and the agency's Office of Radiation

Programs a decade later. More recently, she worked at OSHA. Hill, a brain tumor survivor, had a doctorate in epidemiology from Johns Hopkins University. Her dissertation was a mortality study of members of the MIT Radiation Lab who helped develop radar during World War II. Cress, a medical doctor, began at the FDA in 1990, where he collaborated with Mays Swicord at the Center for Devices and Radiological Health on cell phone radiation risks (see *MWN,* J/F03 p.1). He later worked in the agency's Office of Counter-Terrorism.

BEMS' Industry Sponsors

June 1, 2012

The Bioelectromagnetics Society (BEMS) is trying to drum up support for its annual conference, which will be held in Brisbane, Australia, later this month. For those truly committed to advancing EM health research —the stated ethos of the society— it's a tough sell. Here's a list of the sponsors of the meeting, in descending order of their level of support: Telstra, MMF, EPRI, ENA, Powerlink, Energex, GSMA, AMTA, SPAusNet. Each and every one represents industry interests at EMF frequencies (power companies) or in the RF/MW bands (telecoms). Most are more committed to suppressing health research than encouraging it. We used to go to BEMS meetings. Those days are long gone.

Dead in the Water

May 18, 2012

We haven't posted many new items recently because we've been too busy fixing up the new Web site. In the process, we've been rereading many of our old stories. Last night, we came across an item from five years ago under the title "Cell Specific Responses to RF." It highlighted some new research from Finland, which found that cell phone radiation affected the activity of ODC, a biologically important enzyme, in *primary*, *but not secondary,* cell lines.

Primary cells are those taken from a live animal while secondary lines, or cultured cells, tend to be bought from a supplier. As the Finnish researchers pointed out, primary lines act more like cells in a live animal. That said, most people use cultured cells because they mulitply in the lab and are more likely to be uniform, and, perhaps most important, they are much easier to get.

At the time, we called the results "startling" because they could help explain why so much of cell biology on RF radiation is contradictory and hard to interpret.

In their paper, the Finns noted that the type of changes in ODC that they observed could indicate an impaired capability to "protect DNA from free radical attack." In the context of widespread concerns over cell phone-induced brain tumors and neurological disease, this, we would think, merited prompt attention.

Yesterday, we wrote to Jukka Juutilainen, a member of the Finnish team, and asked what had happened since 2007 when the paper was published in the *International Journal of Radiation Biology.* Not much, it turns out. "I am not aware of any attempts to follow up the findings," Juutilainen replied. "We still think the finding is interesting," he added.

The original work was funded, in part by the cell phone industry — the MMF and the GSMA.

Repacholi Challenges Gro Brundtland, EHS

April 12, 2012
Updated May 29, 2012

Mike Repacholi, the former head of the World Health Organization's EMF project, is blaming his former boss, Gro Harlem Brundtland, for contributing "massively" to people's fears of RF radiation from mobile phones.

While Brundtland was director-general of the WHO (1998 – 2003), she revealed that she was EHS or electromagnetic hypersensitivity (EHS) (see *MWN,* M/A02, p.6 and M/J02, p.8). In an interview with reporter Thomas Ergo, published today in *Aftenbladet,* a daily newspaper, Repacholi calls Brundtland's disclosure "unfortunate." Repacholi does not believe that EHS is a real condition: He complains that he was barred from issuing fact sheets that said so by Brundtland's office. "If the science disagrees with the Director-General, then that was it. We could not do anything about it," he told Ergo.

Brundtland, a medical doctor who served as the prime minister of Norway for more than ten years in the 1980s and 1990s, declined to comment. (Maybe she will address EHS when she delivers a lecture on "The Importance of Public Health to Global Wellbeing" in Canada next week at the opening of the University of Waterloo's new school of public health. Maybe not.)

Henrik Eriksson of the U.K. group Mast Victims has posted a translation of the *Aftenbladet* article under the headline "Repacholi Attacks Gro Harlem Brundtland on EHS Claims." Also today, *Aftenbladet,* released a video of Ergo's interview with Repacholi (both are speaking in English). The headline runs: "I Offered To Examine Gro. But She Would Not Hear of It." (Google translation).

Ergo has also just published a 26-page article in the Norwegian magazine, *Plot,* titled "The Ridiculous and the Pursuit of Gro" (Google again).

April 13, 2012

In a follow-up article published today, *Aftenbladet*'s Thomas Ergo quotes two senior Norwegian legislators who defend Gro Harlem Brundtland against Michael Repacholi's claims that her EHS is a psychosocial response rather than a true medical condition. "I believe people who say they are allergic to mobile phone radiation,"

said one member of the Parliament's health committee. (Here's Henrik Eiriksson's translation of today's *Aftenbladet* story.

April 25, 2012

As it turned out, Gro Harlem Brundtland did discuss her EHS in Waterloo, Canada, on April 19 after being asked about it by Magda Havas of Trent University. This is part of what of what Brundtland said: "I have been heavily criticized as scaring people from using cell phones because I told the truth about my illness." (See Havas's full report.)

May 3, 2011

Thomas Ergo today ran a story in Norway's *Aftenbladet* based on Magda Havas's report from Waterloo.

May 29, 2011

Henrik Eiriksson has just released a full translation of Thomas Ergo's story in *Plot, under* the title "The Laughing Stock — and the Pursuit of Gro." It runs 23 pages and is available from the Mast Victims Web site.

Lerchl Bags Another Trophy

March 16, 2012

A paper on the effects of a mobile phone on the reproductive function of adult male rabbits, has been withdrawn by the *International Journal of Andrology.* In an advisory posted on March 14, the journal's editor-in-chief, Ewa Rajpert-De Meyts, states that Nader Salama, the lead author of the paper, requested its withdrawal. She cites three reasons: (1) "Lack of approval" by Salama's coauthors at the Tokushima School of Medicine in Japan; (2) "Lack of evidence to justify the accuracy of the data" in the paper: and (3) "Overlap" with two other papers by the same group. Salama is affliated with both the Tokushima medical school and the Alexandria Faculty of Medicine in Egypt.

Soon after the paper was posted by the *International Journal of Andrology* in December 2008, Alex Lerchl of Jacobs University and Christian Bornkessel of IMST, both in Germany, expressed "severe concerns about the validity of the exposure conditions and the reported biological effects" in a letter to the journal (open access). Though Salama and his Japanese colleagues stood by the paper in their response to Lerchl and Bornkessel (not open access), they have apparently now changed their minds.

Lerchl tells *Microwave News* that "other retractions will follow soon." In recent years, Lerchl has taken up the role of policing the EMF and RF literature to weed out what he believes is bad science and misconduct, with special if not exclusive attention to work that reports weak field effects. His most high-profile campaign was against Hugo Rüdiger's findings of RF-induced DNA damage, carried out in Vienna as part of the EC's REFLEX project. In this

case, Lerchl failed to get Rüdiger's papers withdrawn (see "Three Cases of Alleged Scientific Misconduct").

The now retracted paper by Salama and colleagues is only a small part of the growing literature implicating mobile phone radiation in fertility problems (see "Keep That Phone Out of Your Trouser Pocket!").

Behavior Disorders Follow *in Utero* Exposure

March 15, 2012

A new study, out today, by a team headed by Hugh Taylor at Yale University has found that mice exposed to cell phone signals in the womb run the risk of altered neurological development and subsequent behavioral disorders. The paper is open access. For more on the new paper, see the write-ups from the Yale press office and *IEEE Spectrum.*

The Yale study lends support to the surprising finding, reported a couple of years ago that young children born to mothers who had used cell phones during pregnancy were more likely to have behavioral disorders, such as hyperactivity and emotional problems. That 2008 study was repeated by the same group in 2010 with similar results.

1 | 2 | next › | last »

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