



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE BIOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELDS

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Joel Moskowitz PhD
jmm@berkeley.edu

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New Publication: WHO's Cell Phone Radiation Cancer Study is "Seriously Flawed"

Scientists conclude the review does not assure wireless safety, and should not be used to set public health policy

A [Letter to the Editor](#) published in the journal *Environment International* by the International Commission on the Biological Effects of Electromagnetic Fields (ICBE-EMF) concludes that a recently published World Health Organization (WHO) systematic review and meta-analysis on cell phone radiofrequency radiation (RFR) and cancer risk by Karipidis et al. (2024) is scientifically flawed and does not provide a reliable assessment of the evidence on brain cancer risk associated with the use of cell phones and other wireless technologies. The ICBE-EMF are experts in researching the health effects of RFR from wireless devices and infrastructure including cell phones, Wi-Fi and cell towers.

ICBE-EMF's scientific leadership points to numerous significant flaws in the WHO review that combine to understate the cancer risk from wireless exposure and undermine the validity of the study's conclusions, raising serious concerns about its impact on public health policy.

"Cell phone and wireless safety is not assured. Conclusions of no cell phone cancer risk' in the Karipidis et al. paper is a misleading representation of the science because credible scientific evidence from case-control studies suggests increased cancer risk from cell phone radiation," stated ICBE-EMF. Seven meta-analyses published since 2016 have reported significant links between cumulative and long-term cellphone use and brain tumor risk including a [2024 review](#) which highlighted the same methodological flaws that ICBE-EMF identified.

"The WHO review failed to follow widely-used scientific guidance for meta-analysis reviews," stated John Frank MD, a physician and epidemiologist at the University of Edinburgh, Professor Emeritus, University of Toronto, and ICBE-EMF member.

"It is dishonest to assure the public that cell phones and wireless radiation are safe based upon such a flawed review." said Joel Moskowitz, PhD, Director of the Center for Family and Community Health at the School of Public Health, University of California, Berkeley, also an ICBE-EMF member.

The key weaknesses include:

- The authors' excessive reliance on simplistic categories such as “ever” versus “never” or “time since start of use,” which do not reflect a person’s actual exposure.
- The conclusion relied largely on cohort studies that were subject to serious [exposure misclassification](#) and considered uninformative regarding cancer risks during the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) evaluation.
- Studies cited to support the conclusion do not capture unique exposure characteristics of groups with increased brain cancer risk, such as higher incidence in the temporal lobe and on the side of the head where the person held the cell phone.
- Sweeping conclusions of no cell phone cancer risk are not scientifically justified as the reviewed studies did not follow people for sufficient duration to diagnose late-developing cancers. The [IARC Preamble \(page 22\) states](#) “experience with human cancer indicates that the period from first exposure to the development of clinical cancer is sometimes longer than 20 years; therefore, latent periods substantially shorter than 30 years cannot provide evidence for lack of carcinogenicity.” Furthermore, combined analysis for tumor types, [acoustic neuroma](#) and [glioma](#), strongly suggests increasing risk after moderate to long latencies.
- It is not scientifically acceptable to draw conclusions from analyses which combine disparate study designs.

The ICBE-EMF also released [a response to the Karipidis rebuttal](#) to these criticisms stating, “the response failed to adequately respond to the issues and included numerous incorrect and misleading statements.” Full details, a [factsheet](#) and video presentations are available at the [ICBE-EMF website](#).

ICBE-EMF continues to strongly recommend reducing public exposure to RFR from cell phones, cellular antennas and other wireless sources such as Wi-Fi. These recommendations are especially important during pregnancy and childhood, and for individuals who are medically vulnerable or electromagnetically sensitive.

Scientific Reference for ICBE-EMF letter

John W. Frank, Joel M. Moskowitz, Ronald L. Melnick, Lennart Hardell, Alasdair Philips, Paul Héroux, Elizabeth Kelley. [The Systematic Review on RF-EMF Exposure and Cancer by Karipidis et al. \(2024\) has Serious Flaws that Undermine the Validity of the Study's Conclusions](#). Environment International, 2024. doi: 10.1016/j.envint.2024.109200.

Open access at <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0160412024007876>

[PDF link](#)

Media Resources



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[Fact Sheet on Key Weaknesses of the WHO Funded Review on Cell Phones And Wireless \(PDF\)](#)

[ICBE-EMF Overview of WHO Funded Reviews on Cell Phone and Wireless Radiation Health Risks](#)

[ICBE-EMF response to the Karipidis et al. rebuttal is posted here.](#)

Dr. Moskowitz shares details in a Podcast

Dr. Joel Moskowitz did a [radio interview](#) about wireless radiation health effects and the WHO reviews on [Green Street Radio](#) that was broadcast on WBAI-FM in New York City on November 1, 2024. The podcast can be streamed or downloaded at https://bit.ly/Wireless_radiation-jmm-241101.

Video Explainers by ICBE-EMF Experts

Joel Moskowitz Ph.D. detailed problems with the WHO funded review in a [presentation he gave on September 24, 2024](#) in a Webinar for the Collaborative of Health and the Environment entitled Health Hazards of Wireless Technologies.

John Frank M.D. [speaks about the WHO cell phone cancer risk review](#)

About the ICBE-EMF

ICBE-EMF is an international consortium of scientists, doctors and researchers with expertise and peer-reviewed publications on the biological and health effects of electromagnetic fields including RFR. The Commission is committed to upholding the highest standards of scientific research and makes science-based recommendations to ensure the protection of the public and environment.

<https://icbe-emf.org>

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