

Open letter on health implications of WiFi

Dr Grahame Blackwell 29th October 2008

I have for some years provided advice on all forms of mobile telecommunications and was an invited speaker at the Radiation Research Trust International Conference last month at the Royal Society in London.

See details of the conference at: <http://www.radiationresearch.org/conference/>

It's claimed by some sources that the radiation from WiFi is different from that used in mobile phones. In terms of technical detail, this is true - the base frequency and the transmission protocol are both slightly different. However I'd refer you to the accompanying document from SMAG (Spectrum Management Advisory Group), which reports directly to Ministers, on WiFi. You'll note that point (8) specifically advises that "Note should be taken of the recommendations in the Stewart Report ..."

This is unquestionably likening WiFi emissions to those of mobile phones & masts, in respect of potential health effects - so evidence such as the Bioinitiative Report, based on over 2000 studies and reviews considered by 14 world-class experts (including 3 former presidents of the prestigious Bioelectromagnetics Society) is directly relevant, as well as the Stewart Report's own cautionary words regarding notably exposure of juveniles.

You'll further note that SMAG point (7) flags adaptive power control as "an important part of system design, thereby minimising the overall level of r.f. energy emitted." This is clearly also in relation to potential health effects.

I'd also draw your attention to the document herewith from the TES last year, relating to what I believe is the only official study carried out on possible health effects of WiFi. You'll see that "some engineers complained of headaches...". BECTA left it open as to whether this was caused by WiFi exposure - but given that these were professionals asked to evaluate this technology, observations made by them at the end of the day should be seen in that context. The HPA spokesman's comment seems somewhat incongruous in that respect - particularly since more than one of those professionals considered it worth highlighting this point.

The position of the HPA appears somewhat equivocal on this matter. Their advice that "there is no reason why schools and others should not use WiFi" seems somewhat inconsistent with the warning in the Stewart Report, repeated in the follow-up NRPB (now HPA-RPD) Report, of "scientific evidence ... which suggests that there may be biological effects occurring at exposures below [ICNIRP] guidelines." I have communicated with Dr Clark, their spokesman, a number of times in attempts to gain clarification on this issue but their position is still not clear to me. [In this respect you may be interested in confirmation from Dr Clark in a news interview that we are "all guinea pigs in some global multi-billion pound commercial experiment" (Sunday Times, 3/10/04)]

One thing Dr Clark has made very clear is that the HPA is an advisory, not a regulatory, body, and therefore does not determine policy. The clear message from this was that they cannot be held responsible if adverse health effects do ultimately surface. The operators state that they adhere to official guidelines - so they, too, cannot be held liable. I believe you will find that the government

takes the view that they are following advice received from an advisory body and so likewise are not culpable should there be legal consequences further down the line.

In fact, my understanding is that those responsible for the property on which the installations are mounted will be wholly liable (i.e. the landowner, which in cases of installations on public land would presumably be the local authority) - this is an extension of the laws of trespass, relating to allowing substances to escape from property to the detriment of others. I believe the case law was established by Rylands v. Fletcher in the 1860s.

Finally I would refer you to recent developments in the insurance field - see article herewith on the attention that Lloyds underwriters are giving to the possibility of future actions, including large class actions, in relation to this matter.

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