

Understanding the science

Is the jury still out on the health risks of mobile phones?

We sometimes hear in the press that the “jury is out” when it comes to the health risks of mobile phones. We hear one day about a study showing adverse health effects then another that a research has given them the all clear.

What are the public to do in the face of this uncertainty?

At WiredChild we wanted to investigate for ourselves. This is what we found:

1.□□□ All the independently-funded studies that included longer term users (10 years or more use) have shown an association between brain tumour incidence and mobile phone use.

In a number of studies the risks for some types of tumours is doubled or even quadrupled. The only studies that have not shown such a link were funded by the mobile phone industry or only analysed short-term duration of use. [See the studies here...](#)

Mobile phones have only been used widely since the late 1990's so the early studies, mostly done in the early 2000's, didn't involve long term phone users. They were done when it was too early for the association to show up. This has clouded the picture for the media and the public.

2. The studies ge

This is because:



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- they can only include people who are still alive (as they need to ask about mobile phone habits) so some of those who might have been worst affected are excluded
- many of the people in the control group and treated as un-exposed to the radiation being tested have been exposed through other sources. For example, many of the studies investigating the link

between mobile phones and brain cancers have not extracted cordless phone users from the control group which means that the difference between the risks of those classed as users and non-users may be obscured.

- none of the studies into the link between mobile phone use and brain tumours has directly studied children

- The full extent of the risks of using a mobile phone will

probably only show up when people have used them for 20 years or more



3. Not all studies are independent.

Have a look at the [list of brain tumour studies](#) to see which ones are

independently-funded. The independently-funded studies that included long-term mobile phone users found an association between mobile phone use and brain tumours, while mostly industry-linked studies found no association, normally having only studied short-term users.

[One study has](#)

demonstrated statistically
that the funding source is
linked to the results
found...

When an industry wants to discourage concerns about safety, it can muddy the waters by funding research that shows no association, thereby leaving the press and the public confused and

uncertain whether they need to act. Sometimes it is not obvious that they have funded the research.

[Read more...](#)

The big corporates with significant financial interests in the mobile phone and wireless markets, have skilled PR and other staff able to work

the system to the advantage of their corporate interest. Independent scientists and public interest groups, like us, rarely have the resources to counter this effect. [You can help by donating here...](#)

Some studies have small

samples. While this reduces the weight they should be given, in our view a small independent study is sometimes more trustworthy than a larger industry-funded study.

There is now almost no independent funding of research into the effects of

wireless technology in the UK. The industry-funded studies dominate in terms of number and consequently dominate the way the public health agencies assess the risk and the way the media reports the risk. Read more...

Sometimes, conflicts of interest are concealed...

4. Don't

Science is complex and st

[Click here for an](#)

example of the media
misunderstanding the
science...

5. Don't assume the g

The government has

Businesses can put financial
phone industry
contributes about
£15 billion a year to
government
finances. Coupled

Have a look at what happened in the early days of smoking research, and when the BSE scare was reported.

...In the case of tobacco

o **Recalling the risks**

Ronald Herberman
(Founding Director of
University of
Pittsburgh Medical
Center Cancer
Centres and Hillman
Professor of
Oncology) in a
statement to the US
Congress Domestic
Policy Subcommittee

about cell phone risks



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