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January 2012

Open letter to GP and other Medical Colleagues

Dear Colleague

Electrosensitivity / Electromagnetic Sensitivity

This letter is probably being passed to you by one of your patients, for informational purposes. Thank you for spending a few moments to read it. I write as a medical colleague, trained at Guy's Hospital, and a Somerset GP since 1989. I have served on our Somerset Local Medical Committee, and currently am a GP Patient Safety Lead at NHS Somerset, a GP Appraiser and teacher of medical students. My particular interest is Health and Emotional Well Being, including Physician Health.

Electrosensitivity is an invisible, but very real problem for many people, and manifests in many ways. It is caused by the interaction of artificial electromagnetic fields with biological systems, both from field effects from cables and appliances, and from transmission effects from transmitting technology. Mechanisms are thought to include calcium efflux from cells, interference with the blood-brain barrier, general sympathetic upregulation, and interference with free radical pair recombination amongst others.

A number of my patients have symptoms and illnesses which have been caused by exposure to electromagnetic fields, and which have been relieved by avoidance of the same fields. Examples are a 22 year old whose headaches and tiredness were abolished and sleep pattern improved after moving her mobile phone on charge away from the bed, removing the mobile from her body space by day, and switching off other electrics; a 78 year old whose headaches so concerned me that blood tests, an MRI and neurology opinion were sought (both normal) – his symptoms disappeared after switching off his home wifi hub router and cordless phone; a 64 year old very fit man who had noticed 4 months of decreased vitality and increased irritability – both reversed after changing the wireless router to a wired one; a 40 year old and a 60 year old whose headaches disappeared (one) and migraines substantially reduced (the other) after removing cordless phones from the bedroom. Another adult has had tingling of face and muzzle area, and loss of ability to speak and think fluently when near a wifi router, whilst a child had a prolonged feverish illness for several weeks after a viral illness, which coincidentally completely resolved when transmitting wifi, baby alarm and cordless phones were removed from the house (ie failure to recover normally and rapidly from a viral illness). Diagnosis in all of these cases is mainly on history, supported in some by the use of an Electrosmog Detector.

Other symptoms that more sensitized people can develop include headaches, fatigue, poor sleep patterns, altered sensation and tingling, irritation and rashes, earaches and unsteadiness, confusion and difficulty in memory, aches and numbness, mood swings, faintness, tremors and restless legs, and other sensitivities. I have observed all the above in patients that I have seen, and suspect that the problem is far more widespread than is recognized. Please note, the above are all short term effects – the jury will be out for some time on long term effects, though we already know the correlation between EM fields and childhood leukaemia, whilst there is increasing evidence linking dementia with EM Fields. During the Cold War microwaves were used as offensive tools to cause ill health.

Because of my interest, I have become a trustee of the charity ES-UK (www.es-uk.info). This has given me the opportunity to meet many people whose lives have become a misery because of the severity of their problems, and who have had to take all sorts of measures to avoid exposure to EM fields. I am convinced that this is very real, but under-recognized problem. Regulatory and safety levels and information provided by the Health Protection Agency and ICNIRP may be lagging the developments in research and the harms occurring. Meanwhile the Council of Europe has recommended caution in the roll-out of transmitting technologies (wifi etc), especially in schools and the World Health Organisation's International Agency for Research into Cancer has reclassified transmitting technologies

as a Class 2b possible carcinogen (instead of having no potential for harm). The UK Government and industry are committed to the rollout of Smart Meters and wifi coverage without appreciating the increasing number of people affected.

There is now a considerable amount of good scientific research on the matter world wide, and the area deserves urgent investigation – however, research always lags the appearance of the problem in susceptible individuals – so we should all heed the precautionary principle advised by Sir William Stewart of the Stewart Inquiry.

We are seeing a developing picture – possibly the patient who has asked you to read this is one of the “canaries” in the coal mine (Canaries were used to detect carbon monoxide, dioxide and methane, as they were affected before the miners were). The incidence is not certain, but some reports show 3-5% moderately affected, less than 1% severely – but possibly 20% slightly affected. I myself am moderately affected.

Treatment is problematic – but essentially includes avoidance of EM fields as much as possible, as well as nutritional support, and antihistamines for rashes and irritation. It will certainly be a developing field to help the many people affected.

It took a long time for adverse effects to be noted from tobacco, from lead in petrol, and from asbestos – and the relevant industries were not exactly helpful in admitting the possibility of any problems. Expect to see lots of lobbying that rubbishes the helpful factual information such as on the websites noted below – even though Michael Bevington’s book alone has 828 references.

Please take your patient seriously – you may be the first doctor in your area to diagnose and support in this new field of illness – and you may have other patients who are helped – by you!

Thank you for reading this.

With good wishes,

Andrew Tresidder

Resources:

www.es-uk.info and www.powerwatch.org.uk have a good deal of useful information as does the Bristol University site from Prof Denis Henshaw www.electric-fields.bris.ac.uk

The Powerwatch Handbook by Alasdair and Jean Philips (Amazon) is recommended, as is

www.emfields.org/library/index.asp

www.electromagneticman.co.uk

www.electromagneticman.co.uk/are-you-at-risk/the-es-test

Electromagnetic Sensitivity by Michael Bevington – an excellent overview with 828 scientific references from ES-UK, BM Box ES-UK, London WC1N 3XX for £10