

Wyoming News Service

A statewide news service for Wyoming

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Report: 'Electrosmog' is an Emerging Public Health Issue

Congress is taking big steps towards limiting air pollution, but there's another type of pollution in the air that's being overlooked, according to a new report landing in Congress' mailbox this week. The study issued by the National Institute for Science, Law and Public Policy (NISLAPP) highlights the science showing the biological effects of wireless radiation, also called 'electrosmog.' Comments from Dr. Magda (MAG-dah) Havas (HAH-vahs), associate professor of Environmental and Resource Studies at Trent University (Canada), and co-author of the report. Comments also from James Turner, chair of NISLAPP and Citizens for Health.

Intro: Cell phones, wireless networks, and the developing "smart grid" utility technologies are hailed as progress for communication and information, but the downside is an emerging public health issue. A report documenting health hazards linked to wireless radiation, called 'electrosmog,' is landing on desks in Congress this week. The document highlights the independent science on acute and chronic health issues from exposure to the radiation, and the report authors call for more scrutiny of federal safety guidelines. Dr. Magda Havas is a co-author of the report. She's been studying the issue and says there's a wide range of public health consequences.

:11 "Some people have no sensitivity, others have mild; might develop a slight headache, but they can function, and they're fine, and they recover very quickly when the exposure stops. And for some, they have debilitating migraines."

Tag: She says compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) are emitters of electrosmog, too. For those who suspect sensitivity, Dr. Havas recommends removing all C-F-Ls in the home, and turning off wireless networks for a few days to see if common symptoms such as headaches, fatigue and insomnia are alleviated. Not everyone believes electromagnetic radiation can be linked to health problems, and the industry argues that the radiation isn't hot enough to cause tissue damage. Dr. Havas says independent scientists say biological damage is done without the heat.

Second Cut: James Turner with Citizens for Health says even when state and local governments have concerns about health effects linked to cell phone towers and wi-fi, they can't do anything about it because the Telecommunications Act of 1996 prevents them.

:11 "These things need to be in the hands of local communities. So, that's the first thing to do, and that means to address changing the Congressional policy that was adopted cutting the local communities out."

Third Cut: Dr. Havas says it's time to explore ways to make the technology safer and reduce cumulative exposure.

:09 "We simply cannot continue increasing our exposure and assume that it's going to have no adverse health effects. Adverse health effects are already being documented."

OPTIONAL REPORTER WRAP: uses first soundbite(s)

LEDE: Cell phones, wireless networks, and the developing "smart grid" utility technologies are hailed as progress for communication and information, but the downside is an emerging public health issue. A report documenting health hazards linked to wireless radiation, called 'electrosmog,' is landing on desks in Congress this week. Deborah Smith reports.

:39 Outcue...Deborah Smith, reporting

Note to Editors: The report, "Public Health SOS: The Shadow Side of the Wireless Revolution," is online at electromagnetichealth.org/electromagnetic-health-blog/. Dr. Magda Havas, mhavas@trentu.ca. James Turner, 202-462-8800.