

AN ELECTRONIC SILENT SPRING

Imagine your body humming with electrical impulses, carrying messages from your brain to every cell in every organ, muscle and tissue, and back again, along the spinal cord and nerves, controlling everything you do, think, and feel. That's natural.

Now imagine your body, whether asleep or awake, sliced through by many, many external electronic signals - most from human made devices like cell phones that confuse or even cancel the body's electrical signals. That's unnatural, and the focus of Katie Singer's "An Electronic Silent Spring: Facing the Dangers and Creating Safe Limits" (2014).

Though studies are relatively few, "electrosmog," as Singer calls it, may cause various cancers, leaking of the blood/brain barrier, allergies, autism, sleep disorders, cognitive problems, reaction time problems, immune function lapses, miscarriages, suicide, Alzheimer's, failed DNA repair, obesity, lowered fertility, etc.

If this comes as news, it may be because only about 3% of the population suffers from "electrosensitivity" or "radio wave sickness" – immediate negative physical reactions to cell phones, cell towers, microwave ovens, etc. Most at risk from random electrical energy are pregnant women, infants, children, the infirm and those with medical implants.

The Food and Drug Administration, though generally uninterested in electronics' health effects, does say that though short term exposure to microwave radiation may not cause problems, long term exposure may.

Cell phones have been around for 15 years; cancer may be latent for decades. In other words, we are guinea pigs in a vast electronic experiment.

How vast? By 2010, 91 percent of U.S. citizens had cell phones, and almost all the rest of the world had mobile service. By 2016, 1.2 million minutes of video will be streamed or downloaded every second – so cellular antennae, already ubiquitous, will soon sprout thicker. More than 75 percent of 12-17 year olds have mobile phones, and many, many younger as well, and spend on average 8-11 hours daily on them and other devices.

A recent Record Searchlight article and opinion piece hint at what our community faces. Ken Lengel's opinion piece notes studies linking cell phone towers with cancer. An article on siting cell towers in the Garden Tract and at Sequoia Middle School reveals that the Federal Communications Act forbids denying access based on health or environmental concerns. Local residents are objecting on the only grounds allowed – looks or lowered property values.

Few showed up for a public meeting.

As Singer says, regulations for electronic devices serve “engineering needs,” only, no federal agency controls the grid, and cell phone towers require no environmental impact studies.

Singer says that kids, with more fluid in the brain and softer bones, may absorb twice the radiation from cell phones that an adult does. In France, mobile phones are banned from elementary schools, and ads touting them for kids as well.

What, then, should we do? Return to incandescent bulbs (fluorescents yield “dirty power”); replace wireless with wired devices, digital with analog; stay as far as you can from Wi-Fi routers, “smart” meters, cell phones, circuit breakers and digital displays; demand safer hybrid and electric cars; unplug devices near your bed at night; don’t use baby monitors, electric blankets, heating pads, Bluetooth earphones or electric Christmas decorations. Call for stronger regulations for the grid and related devices.

A metallic tooth filling can act as a complete radio receiver.

One electrosensitivity sufferer sought an electrosmog free zone throughout North America and Mexico -- and could not find one.

Telecom companies have more lobbyists than the oil and health insurance industries.

AT & T would like to phase out land line equipment, though data centers consume enormous power and mobile phones use three times as much energy as land lines.

Welcome to the world of electrosmog!