



18th International Zurich Symposium on Electromagnetic Compatibility

WS-8 on Monday September 24

RF Health Risks: from Assessment to Management

Organizer: FSM – Swiss Research Foundation on Mobile Communication

Chair: Dr. Alastair McKinlay, Health Protection Agency, U.K.

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Workshop objectives and content

In recent years, there has been a rapid diffusion of RF technology in general, mobile communication applications in particular. As a consequence, environmental exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMF) has increased for most parts of the population. Scientific research into possible adverse health effects from these emission levels and novel exposure characteristics has multiplied in the last 5 to 10 years. Nevertheless, scientific uncertainty associated with human health risk assessment of EMF from mobile communication technologies has not yet been eliminated. This is especially true for low-dose, long-term effects relevant for human epi studies.

The workshop will focus in its first part on the state-of-the-art of exposure assessment in epi studies. Issues presented and discussed will include: assessment and validation of personal exposures with the help of exposimeters, simulations, measurement campaigns, questionnaires, and provider data. The different approaches are demonstrated in the context of on-going or recently terminated feasibility and epi studies.

In the second part, the workshop will focus on the issues of risk perception, communication and management. In general, scientific evidence does not translate one-to-one into risk management decisions. In real life, perception frames, interest and reputation stakes, and technological lock-in effects narrow stakeholders scope for decision-making. The workshop will present research on the perception of health risks by laypersons and experts, on the communication strategies adopted by the main stakeholders, and on the interdependence between health-oriented decision-making and the scope offered/limited by technology.

Program

Session 1: Exposure Assessment in Epi Studies

- 14.00 – 14.30 Dr. Georg Neubauer, ARC Seibersdorf (Austria)
EA in human epi studies: personal dosimeters and simulations
- 14.30 – 15.00 Prof. Katharina Stärk Spallek, Royal Veterinary College (U.K.)
EA for animal epi studies: measurement campaigns and simulations
- 15.00 – 15.30 PD Dr. Martin Rösli, Univ of Bern (Switzerland)
Errors in epi EA: implications for study results

15.30 – 16.00 Break

Session 2: Risk Perception and Risk Management

- 16.00 – 16.30 PD Dr. Michael Siegrist, Univ of Zurich (Switzerland)
RF health risk perception of laypersons and experts
- 16.30 – 17.00 Lic. Phil. Katrin Meier, Foundation Risk Dialogue (Switzerland)
Risk communication strategies for stakeholders
- 17.00 – 17.30 Prof. Roman Boutellier, ETH Zurich (Switzerland)
Technological lock-in effects: a new challenge for RF health risk management?

17.30 – 18.00 General Discussion, Concluding Remarks