

Phone risks

Seven people at RMIT have been diagnosed with brain tumours – life threatening even when benign. A Telstra spokeswoman is quick to reassure us that there is “no evidence” of a link between mobile phone technology and adverse health effects, including cancer (The Age, May 12, 2006). However, a professor of neurosurgery tells us that the jury is out. This suggests that there may be a link, though conclusive evidence has not yet been found.

In 2004, soon after surgery for a brain tumour, I was recruited to a study that explored the link between mobile phone technology and brain tumours. A researcher came to my home and interviewed me for hours about my mobile phone usage. She asked the brand, model, shape, size and level of radioactivity of my first mobile phone and how many times a month I used it. I could not remember. She then moved on to ask about my second and third mobile phones. In my postoperative daze, my answers were largely meaningless. It is difficult to see how this research will prove or disprove anything.

Although Australian researchers are vague about the adverse health effects of mobile phones, the Swiss are not. A recent study from researchers at Orebro University demonstrate an increased risk of malignant brain tumours in users of mobile and cordless phones. We should listen to such research. Otherwise we are at risk of only hearing what mobile phone companies who sponsor Australian research want us to hear.

Regards, Dr Jan Browne
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