

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION AND HIGH VOLTAGE POWER LINES

The Myth:

The World Health Organization (WHO) will protect the public from the negative health impacts of overhead high voltage power lines and associated electromagnetic fields (EMFs).

The Facts:

- Electricity transmission companies such as EPCOR and AltaLink refer to the WHO as indicating that EMFs from overhead high voltage power lines pose no health risk.

- The WHO (2007) indicated “there are established biological effects from acute (EMF) exposure at high levels that are explained by recognized biophysical mechanisms”, but that no such biophysical or biological mechanisms have been determined for EMF exposure at lower levels. This statement is blatantly false. Many studies report the EMF effects on the reduction in melatonin which is one of the body’s most powerful natural defenses against a whole array of diseases and other health problems including cancer (Cherry 2001) (see RETA Fact Sheet No. 25).

Based on his analysis of many peer-reviewed studies, Cherry stated that “reduced melatonin from 50/60 Hz EMF exposure is the core biological mechanism” for the many documented negative health impacts of EMFs.

- The WHO (2007) went on to state that “animal studies have been largely negative.” This statement is also false, considering that many animal studies cited in other RETA Fact Sheets report negative effects of EMFs on many diseases; and these are only a sampling of the total number of animal studies in the scientific and medical literature that conclusively link EMF exposure to cancer, birth defects, sexual abnormalities and other health problems.

- Maisch (2006) and Microwave News (2005 and 2009) reported many examples of serious credibility problems with the WHO EMF Task Group and related bodies. These include: inviting power industry representatives to review, influence and draft WHO opinions on EMF impacts, while credible and independent EMF experts were denied this opportunity; Task Group members



Not the best partnership for the best interests of the public...

consulting with the utilities industry; the head of the WHO’s International EMF Project receiving significant annual payments from industry; and utilities industry attempts to discredit reputable EMF scientists. “Such a blatant disregard for the fundamental principles of credible science as well as WHO’s mission on protecting world health speaks of a desperation to bury independent science at all costs, even if that cost is the integrity of WHO.” (Maisch 2006).

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