



July 28, 2015

The Honourable Ben Lobb

Chair, Standing Committee on Health (HESA)

House of Commons

c/o ben.lobb@parl.gc.ca

Dear Mr. Lobb,

Centre For Inquiry Canada is a registered Canadian charity with the mandate to provide education and training to the public in the application of skeptical, secular, rational and humanistic inquiry through conferences, symposia, lectures, published works and the maintenance of a library. One of our central priorities is to educate Canadians about the importance of science-based medicine to our health system – and that unproven health claims and practices are dangerous and costly for our publicly-funded system.

We are deeply concerned about the process by which a report regarding Wifi and Cellphone radiation ([Report 13 - Radiofrequency electromagnetic radiation and the health of Canadians](#)) was prepared and that its recommendations, not based on evidentiary science, will mislead the public and cause unnecessary fear. The introduction states that the study was driven by the concerns of witnesses who attended hearings but does not acknowledge that the hearings were strategically packed by “anti-WiFi” activists and MPs sympathetic to their lobby efforts. Unfortunately it appears that committee members were swayed more by voices of fear and misunderstanding than by those of reason and science.

The report refers to a few low-quality studies that purport to show a link between cancer, autism or other ailments and cell phones or UHF radiation but omits the thousands of high-quality studies that conclude the opposite.

In fact, brain cancer incidence in the US has been steadily decreasing since 1992, despite the steep rise in cell phone use (<http://seer.cancer.gov/statfacts/html/brain.html>). Dozens of expert panels from virtually every industrialized country have reviewed this literature and have reached the same conclusion (<http://www.emfandhealth.com/Science%20Sources.html>).

It is unfortunate that the report relies heavily on quotes from Dr. Magda Havas, an activist for people who claim to have electrohypersensitivity (EHS). There is a rich literature showing that EHS is the result of the nocebo effect, and has no relation to actual EMF. In dozens of sham studies “sufferers” are unable to tell the difference between real and fake devices, for example, and develop symptoms whenever they believe they are “exposed”, whether they are or not. Since researchers have not yet found any subjects who can detect or respond to EMF, we can conclude that there is no such condition, yet Dr. Havas claims otherwise. Her research on EHS has been highly criticized and she should not be considered as expert testimony by the committee (<http://www.skepticnorth.com/2010/11/magda-havas-new-ehs-study-has-serious-flaws/>). The links on Dr. Havas’ website to several companies selling products that profit from the public’s fear of EMF are red flags.

The anecdotes from individuals believing they suffer from EHS carry no scientific weight, yet the report includes them as if they did. It goes further by recommending that EHS be recognized as a functional disability, which would be utterly ridiculous. The nuisance and financial costs for the government and business to be required to accommodate such sufferers in the work place would be unbearable. Instead of reviewing the published literature, the report calls for EHS questions to be included in a National Health Survey. We might as well include questions about Bigfoot or ghosts.

There is no need to call for more research because there is already a rich literature indicating that EHS does not exist. The Canadian Medical Association and other health organizations have already considered the lack of evidence for EHS. We do not need recommendations to change policy based on anecdotal evidence.

Canadians require health policy based on scientifically valid evidence and verifiable facts – not the lobbying efforts of individuals who refuse to acknowledge repeatable and valid science.

It is unfortunate that the voices of Prof. Tarzwell, Bernard Lord and Tom Whitney were not given more weight. Should you require further information on this matter, we will be pleased to refer you to experts in the area.

Respectfully,



Eric Adriaans

National Executive Director

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