

Subject :Wi-Fried Catalyst - Not sure what the fuss is about. Pretty good job

Dear Media Watch,

For most of my working life (35 years) I have worked as a Radiation Health Physicist. I am not anti-technology and have worked in the uranium industry and believe in nuclear power. I also see sustainable technology like solar, wind power and wave power playing a part going forward. I always like to keep an open mind about technology and don't take a position without reading around the subject.

I have been reviewing the literature on wireless technology and current standards for the last decade at such sites like: [EMF-Portal](#), [PubMed.gov](#), [ICNIRP](#)

We cannot say using this technology is risk free and non-thermal effects as shown in animal studies may translate into human disease over time. Many more eminent scientists than myself have been outspoken about the potential risks associated with wireless devices, eg

<http://www.iemfa.org/emf-scientist-appeal-to-the-united-nations/>. In fact I think *Catalyst* was very measured in statements and I think the video below is alarmist.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=My5leLBbNqI>

Dr. Davis is worried that the improper use of mobile phones, particularly by children, is of concern and we can do much better informing parents on safer ways for children to use these devices. She is not a fringe scientist when it comes to research in this area, as others have suggested but she does have a different view. She is actively working with many scientists around the world to improve our understanding and she unlike me is a good communicator. She has no industry support and is totally independent. In Australia the government agency that makes money from selling licenses, the ACMA, also is the health regulator; see http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/ra1992218/ Section 162, (3)(f) on protecting the health or safety of persons.

Talk about the "Cat in charge of the Cream"! The ACMA pick up the ARPANSA EMF guidelines through their regulations. ARPANSA is not the regulator. I think we need an independent bureau setting these RF standards that has a multidiscipline team, which includes physical scientists, biological scientists, psychologist, brain scientists and specialist medicos such as endocrinologists. This is a multidiscipline research project. At the moment it is top heavy with psychologists. Industry needs to have a voice in the standards setting process as an advisor of the technology but not be involved in the final decision to set EMF reference levels.

Many countries particularly in Europe have taken a precautionary approach and lowered their EMF reference levels. Lowering safety standards changes behavior for example:

- The scientific community of which the medical profession is part of took a much more conservative approach when using X-rays to diagnose problems when treating pregnant women post WWII. The caution displayed by the medical profession in using obstetrical X-rays was one of the driving forces behind the development of obstetrical ultrasound technology. This new ultrasound technology was quick to point out the lack of radiation risks when diagnosing a problem in early pregnancy. Regulatory limits and risk factors do and can drive changes in innovation.

I watched the Catalyst program twice last week and thought it was a pretty fair assessment of the science. I probably would have left out the Atomic Bomb part as it confused the issue (okay for entertainment value) but examples given like tobacco and asbestos were better. Also the title of the Wi-Fried was a bit out there but I am not in the entertainment business, so it gets people attention. The program educated people on the proper use of the phone and explained how the SAR thermal standard was measured using a phantom head (adult size) filled with fluid. These devices were not designed for use by children. Mobile phones were not designed to be worn against the skin (eg. in a woman's bra or in a man's trouser pockets). These devices are not toys and parents can teach children how to use them in a safer way. I had to re-train myself on safer ways to use my mobile phone. I no longer place the phone against my ear, The industry is scared that if they put this message out there it will affect sales. We are all not going to stop using wireless devices. They are a part of our everyday life.

It's about educating people on how to use them safely. I feel that every user of a mobile phone should be given a 3 minute video on how to use them in a safer manner. Not have this message buried in the fine print in manuals and mobile phone settings. I did not see the program as scare-mongering at all. It had a good balance of views. Dr Karipidis (ARPANSA) is part of the ACER group (Croft's psychology group), Prof Bruce Armstrong was part of the IARC Working Group classified RF- EMF as "possibly carcinogenic to humans" (Group 2B). Other feel they have been left out, well its only a 30 minute time slot.

Many scientists around the world feel the way Dr Davis does, including me. I think the Catalyst program was not unbalanced and did a good job given the 30 minute time slot. To use a good football slogan: "I think we need to play the ball (the science) and not the man(reporter) "

Victor Leach
MSc (Melb)
Radiation Health Physicist (Retired)