HEALTH AND MOBILE PHONE BASE STATIONS

We recognise that the growth in mobile technology has led, in some cases, to public concern about perceived health effects of mobile technology and its deployment, in particular about siting masts close to local communities. Quite naturally, the public seeks reassurance that masts are not in any way harmful or dangerous.

We are committed to providing the latest independent peer-reviewed research findings, information, advice and guidance from national and international agencies on radiofrequency (RF) electromagnetic fields.

Vodafone and Telefónica ensure that our radio base stations are designed, built and operated so that the public are not exposed to radio frequency fields above the guidelines set by the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). In fact, radio base stations operate at low power and emit low levels of radiofrequency fields, typically hundreds to thousands of times lower than the ICNIRP general public guidelines.

Research Reviews

The World Health Organisation notes that "*In the area of biological effects and medical applications of non-ionizing radiation approximately 25,000 articles have been published over the past 30 years. Despite the feeling of some people that more research needs to be done, scientific knowledge in this area is now more extensive than for most chemicals* (http://www.who.int/peh-emf/about/WhatisEMF/en/index1.html). The scientific community have collated, summarised and assessed these publications into research reviews, the most influential in the UK being the Mobile Phones and Health Report (also known as the Stewart Report) by the Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones under the chairmanship of Professor Sir William Stewart. These research reviews are used by Governments to develop policy on exposure to radiofrequency signals.

Published in May 2000, the Stewart Report concluded that the balance of evidence did not suggest that exposures to radio frequency fields below international guidelines could cause adverse health effects, although it is acknowledged that biological effects might occur below these values. The report stressed, however, that a biological effect does not necessarily mean a negative impact on health. Walking, drinking a glass of water or listening to music all produce biological effects. One of the recommendations of the Stewart report was a research programme to address uncertainties regarding mobile phone base stations and health. This programme was called the Mobile Telecommunications and Health Research (MTHR) Programme. The final report from this programme was published in February 2014. The report noted that the research conducted found no evidence of biological or adverse health effects from the radio waves produced by mobile phones or their base stations.

Since 2000, over 30 further reviews have been carried out, carefully considering many hundreds of pieces of research. Most have made similar recommendations and have come to similar conclusions: that research should continue to address any gaps in the knowledge; and that overall, the possibility of adverse health effects from mobile communications remains unproven.

In April 2012 the Health Protection Agency's independent Advisory Group on Non-ionising Radiation (AGNIR) published a report entitled "Health Effects from Radiofrequency Electromagnetic Fields". This report concluded that there is no convincing evidence that mobile phone technologies cause adverse effects on human health. In addition, AGNIR found that although a substantial amount of research has been conducted, there is no convincing evidence that RF field exposure below the internationally agreed guideline levels applied in the UK causes health effects in adults or children.