

RADIATION RISK ON THE ROOF

<http://www.thisisbristol.co.uk/displayNode.jsp?nodeId=145365&command=displayContent&sourceNode=145191&contentPK=15852359&folderPk=83726&pNodeId=14492>

04/12/2006 - Informant : Iris Atzmon - **Comments : J-L Guilmot**

Residents of a block of flats feel they are living on "death row" because of two mobile phone masts on their roof.

People living in Berkeley House, Staple Hill, claim radiation emitted from the Vodafone and Orange masts is harming their health. They say that, of the residents of eight flats on the top floor, five people have died of cancer and two more have developed the disease - and the rate of cancer among residents of the top floor is almost twice the national average.

Others among the 110 residents in the five-storey building have complained of problems including headaches, blood disorders and insomnia.

A number of residents contacted the Evening Post after we reported that another phone company, called 3, now wants to put a mast on their roof.

South Gloucestershire Council has asked Vodafone and Orange to remove their masts, but the firms are involved in a legal dispute with the council. Both companies had 10-year contracts for their masts. Vodafone's expired in October 2003 and Orange's expired in August 2004. The council served notices for them to quit the site, but both firms served counter notices.

Staple Hill Residents Association chairwoman Doreen Sheppard, 73, said seven people had either died from or fallen ill with cancer since the masts were installed.

Mrs Sheppard said: "None of them said they had cancer before the masts were up so we believe it may be more than a coincidence.

"When they first put the masts up there were very few children living here. But they have moved a lot of young mums in with their kids. We need to get the masts down for their sakes."

Resident Mike Cole, 70, who lives on the fourth floor, said his wife Corinne, 50, suffered from lack of platelets in her blood, which he believes may have been linked to the masts.

He said: "It is like living on death row here, with the number of people who have died. You are constantly wondering who is going to be next. "You would not want one of these masts at the end of your garden, so why would you want one right over your head?"

Their campaign has been backed by councillor Shirley Potts (Labour, Staple Hill), who said: "I am very concerned because we have been trying to get some action for such a long time. It is about time the people were listened to and the mast was taken down."

Scientists are divided over the potential dangers of phone masts.

A recent Journal of Cancer study found the risk of cancer trebled if you live near a phone mast **[AND MUCH MORE THAN THAT : A TOTAL OF 8 WHO & PUBMED EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDIES ON BASE STATIONS WITH POSTIVE RESULTS vs ONLY 2 WITH NEGATIVE RESULTS]**. But in May this year the World

Health Organisation said the amount of radiation emitted from the masts was safe. **[CONFUSION: WE KNOW THIS TOP OF THE PYRAMID VIEW CONTRADICTS W.H.O.'s OWN SCIENTIFIC DATABASE WITH 80% PUBLISHED EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDIES ON BASE STATIONS GIVING "POSITIVE" RESULTS !]**

Dr Julie Sharp, science information manager at Cancer Research UK, said: "In 2000 an independent report assessed the health of people living near to mobile phone base stations. The report concluded the balance of evidence suggests there is no general risk to the health of people living near base stations. **[WRONG: WHERE IS THE PUBLISHED PEER-REVIEWED EVIDENCE ? - THIS IS JUST A "independent" REPORT NOT PUBLISHED NOR PEER-REVIEWED]**.

"But as mobile phones are a relatively new technology this situation is constantly being monitored by the National Radiological Protection Board."

Dr Tom Frewin, Bristol spokesman for the British Medical Association, said: "The jury is out on the safety of phone masts. There is plenty of anecdotal evidence to suggest they do increase risk of cancer, but there is also evidence they are perfectly safe." **[WRONG: WHERE IS THE PUBLISHED PEER-REVIEWED EVIDENCE ?]**

Orange spokeswoman Rebecca D'Arcy said: "It seemed that each person (at Berkeley House) had a different type of cancer and of course there are varying ages **[CONFUSION: THE VARIETY OF CANCERS IS NO INDICATION THAT RADIATIONS ARE NOT INVOLVED]** and lifestyle factors that people do not take into account. It is understandable people look for something specific to blame.

"It is interesting that the residents believe if the mast is gone they will be free of radiation but this will not be the case. In fact, a 90- second phone call on a mobile is the equivalent in exposure terms to standing in front of a mast for a full 24 hours without moving. **[WRONG: CONFUSES ACUTE AND CHRONIC EXPOSURE]** "We are obviously sensitive to the fact that some people who live there have health problems, but there is no evidence to suggest the phone masts are in any way a cause of their various illnesses." **[WRONG: cf. SUPRA + W.H.O. & PUBMED EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDIES]** Ms D'Arcy said Orange's mast remained at the site as the council had failed to serve a valid vacation notice on it.

Vodafone spokesman Rob Matthews said: "We are working with the local authority to address the residents' concerns but the fact is we have paid rent for the site until April 2007. There is no evidence to suggest masts cause any health problems. A World Health Organisation report says it is completely safe to live near them." **[WRONG: BIS REPETITA]**

Council spokeswoman Sarah Hudspith said: "Both mobile phone companies were served with notices to quit which were subsequently refused but we are still negotiating a solution with them."