

ES-UK NEWSLETTER

February 2008

ElectroSensitivity UK

charity number 1103018 www.es-uk.info

- for everyone sensitised by electro-magnetic radiation -

Editor's comments

*Thank you for your encouraging messages about the new-look **ES-UK Newsletter (December 2007)**. It's good to know people read it!*

*Ruth Davis' **Newsletter Extra – Lighting** on the problems of energy-saving lighting interested many readers. A week or two later this topic was headline news, with items in the Daily Mail and the BBC1 News at Ten. Their main concern was the safe disposal of the mercury in the new bulbs, but they also mentioned people who find such bulbs difficult and some of the illnesses the new bulbs can cause or make worse. In February The Times published an article featuring a lupus sufferer who reacts badly to the UV radiation from energy-saving bulbs. The Big Issue in Scotland had an article describing the ill-health caused by these bulbs to someone allergic to UV radiation. It also reported on LED bulbs as replacements being developed by Dr Rahman at Glasgow University.*

***ES and power-lines and appliances.** Some people have written in requesting a similar piece on power lines, including televisions, cookers, heaters and land-line phones. If you have any ideas on avoiding electro-magnetic fields from such sources, do write in and share useful tips.*

This issue of ES-UK NEWSLETTER and attachments

- A helpful article by **Sandi Lawrence**, known to many ES sufferers, on the basics of **surviving with ES** - for newcomers to ES, as well as a useful reminder for others.
- A note on the **new ES-UK website** and its chat forum.
- Further **volunteers** to help different aspects of the charity's work are welcome. Those ringing the **new ES-UK number** now hear a recorded message giving a list of volunteers to be contacted. We shall see how this new system works and appreciate any comments on developing it. Sadly there seems to be a growing number of people being sensitised to the ever-increasing electro-magnetic pollution around us.
- Some **specimen forms** to help with what to say to your doctor or MP, never easy when the illness is still new to many people; use them as you wish.
- Also a **Gift Aid form** for those taxpayers able to contribute to the charity. Donations should be sent to the London address with cheques payable to **ES-UK**.
- Some thoughts on **WiFi in schools**, a growing issue.
- Plus **world news** on **science** and **governments**. The aim is not to worry ES people (we already know the dangers!), but to give information in areas relevant to ES.

ES and EHS – Learning to live with sensitivity

by Sandi Lawrence

We are all individuals and sensitivity can vary. Some are only affected by electrical sources, transformers etc. Others react to mobile phones and/or masts, TETRA, WiFi or any of the “wireless” gadgets that make life so much easier. However, increasingly there are people who react to a mixed range of sources such as chemical/electrical and pulsed microwave radiation. The list can become endless for those who have been unknowingly exposed for years. It can even include drug sensitivity if they have been treated for a long-term complaint/illness or a series of illnesses.

Learning to live with electrosensitivity (ES) or electro-hypersensitivity (EHS) is not easy, as it incurs changes in attitude, diet, lifestyle and hobbies, and sometimes in relationships with partners, family and friends. Each individual has to find the right way for him/herself by trial and error over time, after seeking advice from knowledgeable sources or by researching.

Attitude – Be positive

It is not easy to adopt a positive attitude when you are plagued with pain and unpleasant symptoms, your sleep is disturbed and your life seems to have blown apart. It gets much harder to be positive when you realise that others don't believe you, maybe even your GP or official organisations who tell you “it is all in the mind”. Often this continual denial of your condition can cause such feelings as lack of confidence, depression, a tendency to withdraw from society or deep anger and hurt etc. You might even question or doubt yourself at times.

At such times, remember that you know yourself better than anyone else and believe in your own conclusions. Talk to another ES person – if you don't know anyone then ES-UK might be able to put you in touch with someone. Play music you like and dance to it if you can; playing an instrument really helps; go for a walk where there is water, vegetation or animal life and really look around; watch programmes which make you laugh, or do something else that will distract your mind. Meditation and yoga or some form of gentle exercise helps, or something more strenuous like that household chore or repair you have been putting off? **Be positive and have hope. Trust yourself. Make the best of what you have.**

Diet – Wholesome and fresh

If you live on fast foods and convenience foods you need a drastic change. Cook fresh food and eat plenty of fruit, vegetables, nuts etc. Check out food supplements and decide if you need to take a good vitamin and mineral or antioxidants such as Gingko Biloba or Goji berries. Do not eat GM food or drink sugar-free soft drinks or coco cola in any form. Check your water supply – does it contain fluoride? Some additives can be bad for us (and non-sensitive people), as can some types of medication. Try to avoid sleeping pills, antidepressants and other similar medication. Use herbal/homeopathic remedies instead.

Lifestyle and hobbies

Depending on your type and degree of sensitivity, your lifestyle and hobbies may have to change. Try to continue as usual if you can, but if it makes your condition worse you may have to learn to live a different way. If you do, then you might be pleasantly surprised. You may rediscover things you used to enjoy! Our modern and very fast lifestyle is not all it is cracked up to be! Whichever way it takes you, look for the positive things and not the negative ones – nothing is perfect.

Relationships

This can be tricky if you are the only ES/EHS person in your family, group of friends, or your community. You won't feel your normal self and won't appear your normal self to others. Almost every media outlet is extolling the worth of all these technologies, to

make more profit, and other people in your life usually love them or get addicted to them. Some people won't believe you if you try to talk to them about your condition, others might be scared of what you tell them or not want to believe it because they don't want to face this issue. Even a devoted partner could doubt you!

Take it slowly and gently and try not to get upset if you hit a big brick wall. Chip at it gradually over time and have hope. It is not their fault or yours – blame it on big companies who want to make big profits.

ES - a personal story

by Sarah Dacre

One of the worst symptoms when I suddenly became incapacitated in May 2005 was a sudden-onset inability to remember anything short-term whatsoever. I had been growing increasingly addicted to my cell phone and had begun to sleep with it on a table next to my head, using the alarm clock function and charging it all night. The charger pack was fixed into the wall 18 inches behind my bedhead and the cell phone was 18 inches to the side of my head. The only other item on the bedside table was a simple lamp.

That level of exposure was almost irrevocably ruinous to my health. You should also know that I also had two DECT phone cordless systems in my home, located in other rooms in the house and a microwave emitting burglar alarm where one of the room sensors was located at ceiling height opposite my bed covering the entire room with its beam, 24/7. This radiation cocktail was completed with infrequent microwave cooking.

In addition to dizziness, right eye deterioration, palpitations, night terrors, erratic and extremely sudden onset high blood pressure, bladder and digestive disturbance, ME/CFS and prolonged deterioration in my immunity, one of the worst symptoms was a complete and sudden loss of short-term memory. I would forget the beginning of a sentence, either written or spoken, I would forget what I had jotted as a reminder; I forgot basic family details, birthdays and common recipes and easy domestic arrangements. On one occasion I forgot that I had started to cook a meal and left burning pans on the cooker, to great amusement of my family, I should add. I had always had photographic recall and I ran a commercial log book for legal reasons rather than to support a bad memory.

I now have 98% of my perfect memory back. How did I achieve this? By shielding my life from EMR: moving my bed; switching off all EMF emitting devices; alternative supplements and detox; wearing the 99% EMR proof headnet for motorway driving and a shawl in highly emitting environments such as offices and airports, train stations, shopping centres. I also set out to retrain my short-term memory with exercises, lists and sudoku. My diet is full of healthy foods and pure supplements and minerals. I have regular Chinese acupuncture where the remedial focus is on memory and a healthy brain and central nervous system.

I know that my previous heavy use of my cell phone for, say, 4-5 hours each day and the night-time phone charging ritual were the principal underlying cause of my memory problems. We will certainly see an epidemic of similar levels of memory collapse in young people addicted to their cell phones among other symptoms. My own quest is to raise awareness of ES in the general population so that the complex symptoms are recognised and treated immediately.

ES and WiFi in schools

Several parents are facing problems with schools which have rolled out WiFi without support for ES children or teachers. Schools often avoid the issue through sensitivity to bad publicity about exposing children to WiFi radiation, although they rarely understand the medical effects. Some parents have simply been rebuffed by the school when they have raised the issue of their child having ES or being likely to have ES. They have then had to find another school, where possible. A few years ago one Welsh LEA agreed to home education for a child suffering epileptic seizures triggered by a police TETRA mast.

Independent schools are more varied in attitude. Some have changed from wireless to wired or avoided WiFi because of the growing acceptance of the health dangers. Others admit the danger of pupils and staff becoming sensitised from WiFi and provide a list of the usual ES symptoms to help diagnosis, although research suggests that the conscious symptoms occur at a secondary stage of sensitisation. In a recent case, however, a school withdrew the offer of a place and returned the parents' deposit when told that the child was probably ES. The parents and child were understandably distraught.

A UK Health and Safety inspector has said that all schools should carry out a risk assessment before installing radiation systems like WiFi. Given the way the media has highlighted the dangers of EMF pollution over the last year, especially the BBC1 *Panorama* programme in May 2007, all UK schools should now be aware of the risks.

Sweden, one of the leading countries in research on ES, recognises ES as a disabling condition and the World Health Organisation in 2005 stated that EHS symptoms are 'certainly real' and 'EHS can be a disabling problem'. The Essex ES study of 2007 reported a recent UK survey in which 'around 4 %' of the general population claim that they are 'sensitive to RF-EMF to some degree'. Presumably each school and LEA should have a policy on providing for ES children, if 4 % of the general population is affected.

ES and science

The tide seems to be beginning to turn over the **dangers of mobile phones** (and thus, presumably, of WiFi), at least among scientists closely involved. In November 2007 **Erik Huber**, the environmental advisor to the Vienna Medical Association, stated that 'scientists do not argue anymore whether mobile phones are harmful, but how harmful they are'. On 17th January 2008 **Microwave News** reported that 'most close observers now believe that the epidemiological data show that a health risk from mobile phones can no longer be dismissed'.

No doubt it will take a while for governments and regulators to react appropriately, given past experience with power-lines. The epidemiological research showing a link between close proximity to power-lines, at a magnetic field of over 0.4 μT , and an increased incidence of childhood leukaemia was published in 1979. It took a decade before most scientists accepted it. Then it was another decade before governments like the Swiss introduced a realistic limit of 1 μT (1999). The UK (ICNIRP) limit is 100 μT , although legally it would still be considered as 1,600 μT (the old NRPB limit).

A new study has shown that **mobile phone use impairs sleep**. This reinforces many previous studies showing that low-level radiation adversely affects the human body. As reported in the *Independent on Sunday* on 20th January 2008 and other national newspapers, radiation from mobile phones 'delays and reduces sleep, and causes headaches and confusion'. 'Using the handsets before bed causes people to take longer to reach the deeper stages of sleep and to spend less time in them, interfering with the body's ability to repair damage suffered during the day.' The research, studying 71 people aged 18-45 in Sweden and the USA, was sponsored by the Mobile Manufacturers Forum and published by MIT. The MMF claimed the results were 'inconclusive', but Prof. Arnetz, the study leader, said they found an effect on the brain, 'making people more

alert' and 'decreasing their ability to wind down and fall asleep'. About half the subjects claimed to be ES but they were unable to tell if they had been exposed, suggesting it was the radiation itself, and not knowledge of the radiation, which impaired sleeping patterns.

In December there was further publicity for the research since 2002 by Dr Halberg and Prof. Johansson into a possible link between **melanoma** incidence and **FM radio and TV transmitters**. The rate of skin cancer has grown from almost zero in 1955. It seems related, not to the distance from a single transmitter, but to the total number effective in a given area. The resonant effects do not seem to occur at other frequencies, as used in Japan, although Japanese suffer western rates of melanoma when they move abroad.

Research by Dr Sadetzki in Israel (*American Journal of Epidemiology*) showed a link between 5 years' frequent use of **mobile phones** and parotid gland tumours or **mouth cancer**, among 56 people with malignant mouth tumours compared with 402 people with benign mouth tumours and 1,266 controls. The UK has 60 malignant cases each year.

The **flawed Essex provocation study** of 2007 continues to reverberate. The February *Environmental Health Perspectives* has three critical articles. One argues that the results actually show that the people with self-declared ES were more sensitive to the signals than the others, the opposite of the study's original interpretation. Clearly there is a need for more medical research on how to measure conscious EMF symptoms. There exists, of course, a great quantity of quality research showing numerous adverse subconscious effects of pulsed microwaves and other EMFs on humans and animals, as well as plants.

In February there was yet another study showing **increased cancer near transmitter masts**. The Austrian Press Agency reported that a study by Dr Oberfeld for a Public Health Department found a significantly increased cancer risk within 200 metres of the site of the mobile phone mast at Hausmannstaetten which operated from 1984 to 1997 at a height of 8 metres. The 67 cases, compared with 1,242 controls, lived for 5 or more years within 1,200 metres of the C-net transmitter (NMT 1G analogue, 450 MHz).

A study, partly by the Finnish Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority, published in *BMC Genomics*, showed that **mobile phone radiation alters protein expression** in living people. An area of forearm skin in 10 female volunteers was exposed to a non-thermal GSM signal at SAR 1.3 W/kg (the ICNIRP limit is 2.0 W/kg) for 1 hour and compared with an unexposed area. The study identified 8 differentially expressed proteins, with 2 present in all 10, confirming *in vitro* studies with a similar number of proteins affected.

In a French study (2007) on **tomato plants**, it was shown that tissues situated at a distance from the site of 900 MHz EMF stimulation (thus not directly stimulated) respond in a similar way to tissues subjected directly to EMF radiation. This implies that the EMF stimulation is an environmental stimulus which generates a traumatic signal emitted from the exposed tissue to the entire plant. There may be a calcium link in the mechanism. At least tomato plants, presumably, cannot be accused of reacting psychologically!

ES and governments

A report by the **Australian Democrats**, *Joining the Dots*, of December 2007, noted a steady increase in illness for the last 40 years but a sudden worldwide increase over the last 15 years in a number of these illnesses which could correlate with the sudden explosion in wireless communications technology. They are particularly worried that ambient EMR is the only environmental pollutant not subject to any regulation.

In January 2008 the **French Ministry of Health, Youth and Sport** issued a warning against excessive mobile phone use, especially by children, in view of studies indicating long-term dangers. Parents should prevent children from using mobiles when reception is poor, during high-speed travel or for longer than six minutes. The UK already advises

against children under 16 using mobiles except in emergencies. The six-minute limit suggests that the French authorities are aware of possible long-term non-thermal effects, such as brain tumours and neurological illnesses, according to current ICNIRP definitions.

A report of January 2008 by the **U.S. National Research Council**, and compiled at the request of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, urges more research into the long-term (10-30 years) dangers of mobile phones. It is concerned about the compounding effect of radio and TV transmitters and other wireless communication systems, the possibly greater dangers for children, unborn babies and pregnant women, and possible links with brain cancer and neural or cognitive complications.

Also in January a new study of the effect of mobiles on 40 children aged 12-13 was announced in **Australia**. A study of 110 adults at the Australian Centre for Radiofrequency Bioeffects Research, partly funded by the Federal Government, confirmed mobile phones cause a change in brain function by altering alpha brainwaves.

In February the Muharraq Municipal Council in **Bahrain** extended its ban indefinitely on new mobile phone masts until the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority proves that they are safe. The MMC vice-chairman, Abdunasser Al Mahmeed, a certified telecommunications engineer with 11 years' field experience, said that the TRA had not given a definite answer on their safety. He is concerned that any such radiation, no matter what its level, could endanger health. The TRA spectrum adviser, Karl van Heeswick, reportedly said that mast radiation levels in Bahrain were similar to the UK's.

ES and the NHS

No news of clinical help for those suffering from ES.

In January, however, the online **NHS Choices** entered the field of journalism on ES in a surprisingly bold way. This 'guide to the science that makes the news', 'brought to you by the NHS Knowledge Service', with analysis by Bazian, a research company, but edited by NHS Choices, had an article on the study showing adverse health effects on sleep from mobile phone use. Entitled *Behind the headlines: Mobile effect on Sleep*, it criticised the reports of this study in three national newspapers. At the same time, in what might appear as unusual sensitivity about ES, since the study in question was primarily on sleep and not ES, it heaped unqualified praise on the flawed Essex ES provocation study of 2007, calling it 'a large and rigorous study'. In fact the Essex study, with 44 'sensitives', was not all that far removed from the 38 of the sleep study, criticised as 'a relatively small study', where 'the results would have to be confirmed in a much larger study before we can draw any conclusions'.

Nevertheless, one part of this NHS article rings true for all of us who regularly suffer ES symptoms caused by the presence of electromagnetic fields: 'the non-symptomatic subjects did report more headaches during radiofrequency exposure, and this requires further investigation'. It thus appears that NHS Choices is aware of the problem of ES symptoms induced by EMFs and admits that it needs further investigation. Let's hope other parts of the NHS react appropriately to this soon.

ES and the media

Sarah Dacre, one of our trustees, reports on the Channel 4 TV programme in which she had a star role, along with four others, including Roger Moller, another ES-UK trustee.

Allergic to the 21st century was a 30 minute Channel 4 programme broadcast on 4th January 2008 at 00:40 hours, showing mainstream TV viewers how difficult it is to live with ES/MCS. It was based on five case studies: Sarah Dacre (ES & MCS), Roger Moller conducting an EMR survey on a country cottage (ES & MCS), Gillian McCarthy (MCS &

ES), Adrian Gray (ES) and a MCS sufferer. Each interviewee was asked how their daily living has been affected and what their health is like and what affects them, how they are unable to work and sometimes have to withdraw totally from the outside world. There were no sceptics, no doctors or scientists and no HPA denial. ES & MCS was thoroughly credible even to the average viewer with no understanding of the daily challenges of living with ES &/or MCS. The closing frame was an atomic cloud - the producer had linked ES and MCS to the severity of the effects of weaponry, nuclear fallout and commercial toxins. To borrow a copy, please see the form attached.

Sarah Dacre reviews the presence of ES in the media during 2007:

In January 2007, I felt sufficiently recovered enough from ME/EHS to dedicate some 3-6 hours most weeks to contacting the media to generate coverage of ES and its symptoms. The journalists in all cases were interested and supportive and grateful for the proactive stance in generating good copy (for that, read shocking insights into a 21st century Problem).

In addition to getting stories placed in a wide range of magazines and UK newspapers, the BBC suddenly became interested enough to give the first TV coverage of the possibility that WiFi could be linked to ES on *Breakfast TV* in March 2007. *Newsnight* picked up the story as did the *BBC News* when the story ran on the 1pm and 6 pm slots. *Channel 4 Richard & Judy* (with Brian Stein) and *GMTV* (with Dr Andrew Goldsworthy) each dedicated several minutes to ES. Several European radio stations also called in for interviews.

My own favourite was when *ABC Good Morning America* ran a 5 minute case study, filmed in London, across the USA in June. Interestingly they were unable to find any good case studies to film in USA. *Middle Eastern Broadcasting* also found their way to my door, as did Channel 4 for a documentary 'Allergic to the 21st century' which was transmitted on 4th January 2008, which also featured Roger Moller, Adrian Gray and Gillian McCarthy.

I am convinced that the media has a sharp interest in ES. The media knows there is a potential media-busting story and when ES is finally let out of the proverbial box ES-UK will be deluged with requests. What we need are new cases to present to our very friendly journalists. If you feel brave enough to participate please email me: sarahdacre@aol.com. Please note that you will need to be able to sit with journalists somewhere close to where you live and to be able to discuss your health in front of a camera, which is not the easiest thing to do when you have acute brain fog and heart palpitations.

Please help us to generate media coverage to raise awareness and to help to bring ES out into the open.

A new book by Martin Walker, *Cultural Dwarfs and Junk Journalism* (a free download from www.slingshotpublications.com), claims that Dr Ben Goldacre, a columnist on the *Guardian* newspaper, who has apparently supported the flawed Essex ES provocation study, is a clinical researcher adopting the same line as the 'corporate science lobby'. In February the *Guardian* newspaper featured a Japanese study claiming no dangers from mobile phones. The Mast Sanity website asserts that the *Guardian* must have seen an advance copy; the *Guardian's* report was online 90 minutes after the study's release. The website also states that the study was funded entirely by the Japanese government and the mobile phone industry, and not sponsored by Cancer Research as the *Guardian* claimed. It refers its readers to another essay by Martin Walker called *Guardian of What? The Guardian, the Science Lobby and the Rise of Scientific Corporatism*.

ES-UK - the new website - www.es-uk.info

Jean Phillips, chair of the Trustees, gives an update on the new website.

Electrosensitivity-UK has a new website. Some of the information from the old website will be included on it in the future, but the new one has a new look and a new emphasis, to take us forward into 2008. It is intended that the website should reflect what the ES community wants to see on there much more than previously.

One of the features of the new website is an **interactive forum**, which can be used by anyone, to air views and opinions; to offer help and advice; what works to make people feel better and what doesn't; and anything else that people wish to discuss. There is a moderator, who is ES, whose function is to stop world war 3 breaking out online, but not to prevent freedom of speech.

The website will include new **research**, with comments, and also past research which underlies the reality of the ES experience. Links to other useful and interesting websites are included. It is very new and only went online on 2nd January 2008, but is growing, even as you read this newsletter (probably). The newsletters are also going on the site for people who can use the internet. Read, enjoy, inform – it's your website.

ES-UK - would you like to help to raise awareness of ES/EHS?

ES-UK aims to raise awareness of ES and push for a change in attitudes to ES.

- Media Contact, Sarah Dacre, covers the national media, including newspapers, magazines, TV and radio.
- Some of our volunteers are writing to local papers across the UK or contacting local radio stations to raise awareness. Could you do this? If not, would you like us to write to your local paper? If so, please tell us what it is called and we will do our best.
- Are you able/willing to write to your local MP/MEP or doctor and try to build up some degree of awareness with him/her? ES-UK has provided template letters if you wish to use them. They can also be found on the website www.es-uk.info.
- Do you have any other ideas you want to share with us?

To contact ES-UK, please use the address or email at the bottom of this newsletter.

The SWI ES Health Survey

by Sarah Dacre, a trustee of ES-UK

The SWI ES Health Survey generated enormous interest and the completed health surveys were still arriving four weeks after the closing date. Some 250 hard copy Health surveys came by mail and a further 40 went by email directly to the USA. The completed surveys are now being reviewed and analysed in the USA and we anticipate that the results and recommendations will be made available sometime in April/May 2008. Many thanks to those of you who were able to complete a survey. It will help to widen understanding of the terribly distressing plight of those with electro-sensitivity.

Please send contributions for the ES-UK Newsletter to:

Michael Bevington, Stowe School, Buckingham, MK18 5EH
or email: mbevington@stowe.co.uk

from **BM Box ES-UK, London, WC1N 3XX.**
email **enquirers@es-uk.info**
telephone **0845 643 9748**
website **www.es-uk.info**

A donation of £15 per year, or whatever you can afford, helps with the running costs of ES-UK. Cheques, payable to *ES-UK*, should be sent to the BM Box above, with a Gift Aid declaration if you wish and are eligible. We aim for a newsletter every two months or so.