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Cell phone headaches



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Authorities investigate possible effects of new digital cellular phones

From Correspondent Steve Young

NEW YORK (CNNfn) - The possibility that cellular phones could cause brain cancer dominated the headlines nearly four years ago, but subsequent research has neither proved nor disproved the existence of any link.

Now, the question at hand is whether the latest generation of digital cell phones may be responsible for headaches, fatigue and other problems in users.

Doctors in Australia and Great Britain have been receiving numerous complaints from digital cell phone users.

Swedish health authorities have said they've received about 100 complaints and are now surveying 12,000 people who use the phones extensively.

Government authorities in the United States are beginning to encounter complaints as well.

"Headaches have been the main thing we've heard about, but we've also heard some complaints about ... problems of dizziness or just not feeling quite the same," said Linda Rosenstock, director of the National Institute on Occupational Safety and Health. [\(167K WAV\)](#) [\(167K AIFF\)](#)

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is also tracking complaints.

Many cell phone users are often under a great deal of stress, which might be one explanation for their headaches. But many reports are coming from individuals who say they've had no problems until they switched from the older, analog cell phone to the new digital technology.

"The interaction of stress and the phones and ill health have to be looked into very carefully, said Louis Slesin, editor of *Microwave News*. "What's interesting, though, is these reports are relatively new, and they've come from countries where the digital phones have been introduced." [\(288K WAV\)](#) [\(288K AIFF\)](#)

Studies published two decades ago reported that workers who were exposed to microwaves frequently complained of headaches. There are, however, both similarities and differences between microwave energy and the signal that radiates from today's digital cell phones.

A spokesman for [Motorola](#), the world's largest cellular phone manufacturer, said "we don't see there is any kind of evidence" linking headaches to digital cell phones.

The Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association (CTIA), a Washington lobbying group, said there is "no credible research which scientifically links headaches to wireless phone usage."

Health officials around the world hope to have a better handle on the complaints when the Swedish study is completed next spring.

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