Welcome to WHO Workshop
Electrical hypersensitivity

Many thanks to:
Prof. Ludek Pekarek, Dagmar Pisarikova, Pavel Sistek and Lukas Jelinek at the National Reference Laboratory for Non-Ionizing Radiation

Sincere thanks to our co-sponsors:
✓ Ministry of Health, Czech Republic
✓ European Commission Coordinated Action (EMF-NET)
✓ European Cooperation in the Field of Scientific and Technical Research (COST 281)
✓ International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP)

Prague 25-26 October 2004
Electrical hypersensitivity: Is EMF involved?

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Electrical Hypersensitivity: Workshop Prague 25-26 October 2004
Established in 1996

To assess health and environmental effects of exposure to electromagnetic fields in the frequency range from 0 to 300 GHz

A multinational, multidisciplinary effort to create and disseminate information appropriate to human health risk assessment for EMF

Coordinated by WHO
Structure

EMF Project Secretariat

International Advisory Committee
Research Coordinating Committee
Standards Harmonization Committee

International Organizations
Collaborating Institutions
>50 National Authorities
Objectives

- To provide a **status report** on current knowledge related to possible health effects of EMF

- To identify **gaps in knowledge** that need further research leading to better health risk assessments
Frequency-related

- Static and low-frequency fields, Bologna, 1997
- Intermediate frequency fields, Maastricht, 1999
- Radio frequency fields, Munich, 1996
- RF pulse-modulated fields, Erice, 1999
Specific topics

- Psychosocial impacts of EMF exposure, Graz, 1998
- Environmental impacts of EMF, Ismaning, 1999
- Adverse temperature levels in the human body, Geneva, 2002
- Applying precaution to EMF, Luxembourg, 2003
- Children and EMF, Istanbul, June 2004
- Hypersensitivity, Prague, October 2004
- Mobile phone base stations and wireless networks, Geneva, June 2005?
WHO Health Risk Assessment

- EHC 35 Extremely low frequency (ELF) fields (1984)
- EHC 69 Magnetic fields (1987)
- EHC 137 Electromagnetic fields (300 Hz-300 GHz) (1993)
WHO Research Agenda

Research needs

• identified when the evidence for a health risk is judged **suggestive, but insufficient** to meet the criteria for assessing health risk…EHS??

• established on the basis of **unconfirmed effects** having implications for health, and **replication** of key studies to confirm effects

**Goal**: To promote studies that demonstrate a reproducible effect of EMF exposure that has the likelihood to occur in humans and has a potential health consequence
Electrical hypersensitivity: Questions

- EHS is certainly real for people affected, but is it due to EMF exposure?
- People over the world are affected although certain countries more than others

Symptoms but not a syndrome:
- Nervous system symptoms (e.g. headache, fatigue, stress, sleep disturbances)
- Skin symptoms (e.g. facial prickling, burning sensations, rashes)
- Various body symptoms (e.g. pain and ache in muscles)
- Eye symptoms (e.g. burning sensations)

Symptoms similar to those from other environmental factors such as multiple chemical sensitivity (MCS)
Technology is advancing

New York 1893

Today
Base stations in beautiful Prague
Workshop

Motivation

✓ Rapid increases in EMF exposure from new technologies
✓ Need to assess whether EHS is due to EMF or other factors
✓ Significant public concern about EMF effects

Need a specialized workshop to

➢ Assess EHS in a valid scientific manner ....ONLY
➢ Identify any research needed to fill gaps in knowledge
➢ Recommend policy options for national authorities...
➢ Determine how best to help EHS individuals?
Workshop speakers

Emphasis given to presenters with specialization in areas related to EHS but not associated with EMF…will facilitate enlightened discussion with EMF specialists
Workshop outputs

- Book of abstracts of all presentations
- Summary report to peer-reviewed journal
- Proceedings of speaker presentations
- EMF Project web site
- WHO Fact Sheet and Press Release for a press conference with UN Press Corps
- Contribution to EHC reviews
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