WHO Workshop on Electrical Hypersensitivity
25-26 October 2004
Prague, Czech Republic

Review of Current Governmental Responses to EHS

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OUTLINE

• Introduction

• A survey of governmental responses

• WHO's related activities
HEALTH is a state of COMPLETE physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the ABSENCE of disease or infirmity (WHO Constitution)
EMF: An Environmental Risk?

Risk Assessment
The Evidence

Risk Perception
The Public Concern

Risk Management
The Policies
The Stakeholders

- Scientific Community
- Health Community
- Associations
- General Public
- Media
- Industry
- Law
- Government
Thailand
• Philippines
• Japan
• New Zealand
- Austria
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Germany
- Israel
- Netherlands
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- United Kingdom
WHO Activities

Science
- Scientific Reviews
- Health Risk Assessment

Communication
- Information
- Risk Perception
- Dialogue

Policies
- Standards
- Legislation
- Precaution
WHO and EMF RESEARCH

http://www.who.int/emf

What has been done?
- WHO Research reviews
- Health Risk Assessments

What is being done?
- WHO Research Database

What needs to be done?
- WHO Research Agenda

Time
OUTLINE

Science
- Scientific Reviews
- Health Risk Assessment

Introduction

Communication
- Information
- Risk Perception
- Dialogue

Policies
- Standards
- Legislation
- Precaution
What do we do when the evidence is not strong?

- Understand and weigh the data
  - risk assessment
- Get better data
  - research
- Understand and manage perception
  - risk communication

Build a rational framework for precautionary measures
Framework to Develop Precautionary Measures in Areas of Scientific Uncertainty

WHO/OMS

Draft for Review
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NOT FOR QUOTATION

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An overarching approach ....
This Framework

- Encourages the development of reasonable and realistic options
- Includes consideration of tradeoffs and cost-benefit analysis
- Calls for iterative evaluations of policies
OUTLINE

• Introduction

Science

• Scientific Reviews
• Health Risk Assessment

Communication

• Information
• Risk Perception
• Dialogue

Policies

• Standards
• Legislation
• Precaution
WHO and Communication

ESTABLISHING A DIALOGUE ON RISKS FROM ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELDS

www.who.int/emf
Recommendations

• Fund research identified as useful to identify the relationship between EMF and EHS

• Facilitate the development of protocols for medical evaluation

• Set up instruments for information gathering (surveys, databases,…)
• Develop means of communication and dialogue with EHS sufferers
“Wisdom is to know, that you do not know”

Socrates, Greek philosopher, 469-399 BC

Please send comments to emfproject@who.int
The Precautionary Principle (PP) provides

**what?** “a framework, procedures and policy tools for public policy actions in situations of scientific complexity, uncertainty and ignorance, where there may be some need to act before there is strong proof of harm

**when?** to avoid, or reduce, potentially serious or irreversible threats to health or the environment,

**why?** using an appropriate level of scientific evidence, and taking into account the likely pros and cons of action and inaction”

European Environment Agency, 2004