

PANDORA - Foundation for Independent Research

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Does government-funded research help to play down the possible health risks of mobile phone radiation?

Berlin, 17 August 2010 - According to the newspaper *Weser-Kurier* from June 4, 2010, the German Federal Office for Radiation Protection (BfS) has granted Prof. Alexander Lerchl, biologist at the private Jacobs University Bremen and chairman of the Committee Non-ionizing Radiation of the German Commission on Radiological Protection (SSK), 600,000 euros for a research project. It is the aim of the Bremen scientist to further clarify possible health risks of cell phone radiation through experiments with rats. Project details are not known to us. But we remember very well that Prof. Lerchl was the leader of five individual projects within the framework of the German Telecommunication Research Programme (DMF), all of which came to the conclusion that there is no evidence for adverse health effects from cell phone radiation and that the currently valid exposure limits require no correction.

In our opinion, Prof. Lerchl's statements regarding the fundamental safety of cell phone radiation are in conflict with currently available scientific knowledge. Since, he refers – among others - to the results of his projects with the DMF, it is imperative that those bear critical analysis. Prof. Franz Adlkofer from the Verum Foundation, which studies possible biological effects of cell phone radiation since 1995 and organized between 2000 and 2004 the EU-funded REFLEX project, the results of which have been confirmed several times by now, has put one of Prof. Lerchl's DMF projects under close scrutiny as an example. This project falls within the area of his expertise, that is, endocrinology. The outcome can be found at http://www.pandora-foundation.eu/downloads/ki_2010-08-16_gutachten-zu-lerchl_en.pdf. In summary, it says:

Prof. Lerchl's research project on the verification of the "melatonin hypothesis" does not fulfill the standard, which should be expected from scientific research regarding design, execution, and interpretation of the results. An imposition of a special kind is his very individual interpretation of his research results. It shows him as a scientist who wants to enforce conclusions seemingly important for him by ignoring and/or reinterpreting findings, no matter if they actually correspond with the obtained data or not.

The evaluation of the reasons for such behaviour may differ. Should Prof. Lerchl himself be actually convinced of the reliability of his data and correctness of their interpretation doubts about his qualification as a scientist are more than justified. Should he not carry out his responsibility in the SSK regarding the protection of the public from unnecessary radiation exposure because of political and economic interests doubts about his ethics as a scientist might be justified.

It is equally unclear what guided the political responsible authorities in their grant and appointment policies. It would be extremely questionable, if Prof. Lerchl should again be appointed chairman of the SSK's Committee Non-ionizing Radiation in spite of his scientific and/or scientific-ethical shortcomings. It seems much clearer, though, that the killing of 500 or only — for some inexplicable reason quoted elsewhere — 320 dwarf hamsters for such a pointless research project is a violation against the Animal Protection Act.

The Board of the Pandora Foundation

signed

Prof. Dr. med. Franz Adlkofer, Prof. Dr. med. Michael Kundi, Prof. Dr. phil. Karl Richter