



THE GOLDHABER WARNINGS REPORT



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SHOULD CELLPHONES HAVE WARNING LABELS?

On January 2, of this year, The New York Times published an article about the possibility of heavy cellphone use being linked to brain cancer. Since approximately 280 million people use cellphones in the United States, including almost 85% of all teens in America, The Goldhaber Warnings Report believes that a summary of the New York Times article would be very helpful to our readers.

During the coming month, the State of Maine will take up the question of whether cellphones sold in Maine should contain warning labels that they may cause brain cancer. According to the New York Times, the mayor of San Francisco, Gavin Newsom, plans to introduce an amendment this year requiring that cellphone packages in San Francisco display the amount of radiation a phone emits. Some countries, including France and India, already recommend limiting exposure to cellphone radiation.

While the politicians debate this issue, it might be helpful to review some of the research that has been published over the last several years. The National Cancer Institute claims that studies have not shown any consistent link between cellular telephone use and cancer, but adds that more research is needed before any firm conclusions can be drawn. A 2005 World Health Organization study found no convincing evidence of an increased cancer risk from cellphones, however, the London Daily Telegraph last October published what they called a sneak preview of a more recent W.H.O. study which will conclude that people who have used their cellphones for over ten years were at an increased risk of developing brain cancer.

Naturally, the response from the cellphone industry has been that cellphone use is safe, and they claim that the peer-reviewed literature overwhelmingly indicates such. Further, the FCC supports the industry's position that the available research does not support a link to cancer.

Are we today, with regards to potential harms associated with cellphones, at the same place we were as a nation in the late 1940's and 1950's when early claims of the dangers of smoking were first published? Until further research is available that has taken into account long-term cellphone use, especially with the newer devices and smartphones, you may want to err on the side of caution and use a hands-free or speaker phone cellular device.

Feel free to pass this newsletter on to any of your friends and colleagues .