

Is Cellphone Radiation a Danger?

Confusion and concern linger in the public's imagination

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Hold the line: Despite countless published studies and decades of ubiquitous cellphone use, no data currently link cellphone radiation with cancer or other illnesses. In fact, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) states, "The evidence to date suggests that cellphone use does not cause brain or other kinds of cancer in humans."

Nonetheless, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is launching a study to investigate the potential harm of cellphone radiation at the direction of Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who, according to NBC, claims there is a link between cellphone use and neurological damage and cancer. At the same time, the Food and Drug Administration, an agency within HHS, has taken down web pages stating that cellphone radiation is not dangerous, according to the Wall Street Journal.

As the NCI points out, confusion and concern probably linger in the public's imagination because cellphones do in fact emit radiation (in the form of radiofrequency radiation, or radio waves). But this type of radiation is low energy and low frequency—too low to damage DNA and result in cancer. This contrasts with the high-energy, high-frequency ionizing radiation found in X-rays and radon, which indeed can cause cancer.
