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FDA Finds Insufficient Evidence Linking Cell Phone Radiation and Cancer

The agency reviewed a decade of animal and epidemiological studies in search of such evidence.

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The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has reviewed a decade of animal and epidemiological studies of the potential health effects of exposure to cell phone radiation and found “insufficient evidence” linking such exposure to a higher risk of cancer, Healio reports.

This review backs up a 2018 statement from Jeffrey Shuren, MD, the director of the FDA’s Center for Devices and Radiological Health on the National Toxicology Program, indicating the FDA’s confidence that cell phone use is safe.

“Based on the FDA’s ongoing evaluation,” the new FDA report stated, “the available epidemiological and cancer incidence data continues to support the agency’s determination that there are no quantifiable adverse health effects in humans caused by exposures at or under the current cell phone exposure limits.”

Researchers at the federal agency analyzed studies published between 2008 and 2018, including 125 animal studies and 70 epidemiological studies of humans. They were looking for data that could shed light on whether exposure to cell phone radio waves is causally associated with the development of tumors.

None of the animal studies showed such an association. These studies were limited, however, by their inability to accurately determine the dose of cell phone radiation that the animals absorbed.

The FDA’s review of the epidemiological studies turned up no association between cell phone radio wave exposure and tumor development. These studies were themselves limited by the fact that the level of such exposure was based on individuals’ self-reports. Consequently, the overall exposure to cell phone radiation amounts to an estimate in each study.

A 2018 study found that high-level cell phone radiation was possibly associated with a higher risk of cancer in rats.

In 2017, the California Department of Public Health issued recommendations for reducing cell phone radiation exposure, despite a lack of scientific consensus about risks associated with such

exposure. These include texting instead of calling, carrying cell phones in a bag or briefcase rather than in a pocket and using wired headphones or a headset instead of cradling the phone to one's ear.

"While some studies suggest a possible link between, for example, 'heavy' users of cell phones and some tumors, there is no clear and consistent pattern that has emerged from these studies and these studies were subject to flaws and inaccuracies," the FDA researchers stated in the new report.

To read the Healio article, click here.

To read the FDA report, click here.

For related coverage, see the Cancer Health article, "Myth or Truth? Report Claims AirPods and Other Wireless Headphones Cause Cancer."

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