

CORA - Description of the BioInitiative Report 2007

1. About

Source
The BioInitiative Report, 2007
Link
http://www.bioinitiative.org/index.htm
Supporting information
None

2. Content and Mandate

Objectives
"to document the reasons why current public exposure standards for non-ionizing electromagnetic radiation are no longer good enough to protect public health"
EMF spectrum covered
0 Hz – 300 GHz
Status of report and authorship
(ad hoc) BioInitiative Working Group
Funding
Not indicated, but probably in part by the company of one of the two editors (Sage).
Accountability
None
Summary
Basic premise is not to provide a full risk assessment, but to prove a point. Not set up as an expert group to provide an objective assessment of science.

3. Authorship

Selection of Members
Not indicated: "A working group composed of scientists, researchers and public health policy professionals (The BioInitiative Working Group) has joined together..."
Composition (institutional)
Organizing committee: 4; participants: 9; research associate: 1
Composition (expertise)
Cellular biology, physiology, dermatology, epidemiology, radiation physics, biophysics, environmental health, veterinary medicine, medicine. Missing: Human Laboratory Research / Clinical Research.
Impartiality
No information provided on any procedures that are applied to get an impartial view. No information provided on criteria to check for vested interests.
Disclosure
Member's names and affiliations published. No information on vested interests.
Summary
No transparency on selection of group members. No declaration of interests, hence commercial influences are not impossible. One of the editors (Sage) owns a company that provides EMF mitigation advice. Most of the required expertise was available within the group, except for human studies. Unfortunately the expertise has not been used in a group process. Chapters have been written by one or several authors without apparent input from the other group members.

4. Assessment Process

Literature search
No information is provided about a literature search strategy. Authors of different chapters likely had their own strategies.
Quality assurance
No information is provided about how the scientific quality of the literature was assessed.
Weighing of evidence
A narrative weighing of evidence is done per chapter, without specific procedures. In the summary one of the coordinators (Sage) combines and weighs the evidence also, again only narrative and without specific procedures.
Consultation activities
The draft report was sent to external experts; some are named in the report.
Consensus finding
None; the chapters are the responsibility of the authors; the summary, which is also an overall evaluation, is written by one of the coordinators (Sage).
Summary
Literature selection and evaluation are not described and therefore prone to bias. Risk assessment was not a group process, but mainly the work of one of the coordinators (Sage). Her personal influence was substantial.

5. Communication

Differentiation between biological and health effects
No, biological effects are basically considered adverse health effects.
Unbiased descriptions
No. The report is heavily biased toward proving the existence of adverse health effects.
Evidence-based conclusions
The conclusions in the summary do not fully correspond to the evaluations made in the body of the report, but seek to overemphasize biological and adverse effects (which are considered identical).
Plain language summary
Yes
Unbiased summary
The summary is unbalanced and biased, not discussing uncertainties, and aimed at proving the a priori point of view that current exposure limits are inadequate.
Summary
The evaluation is highly subjective and mainly reflects the opinion of one the two coordinators (Sage).