

Health

RADIATION

Researchers call for more cautious standards for wireless devices

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Current standards for radiation from wireless devices, Wi-Fi towers and power lines need to be dramatically lowered to protect public health, according to scientific researchers who have been studying the possible hazards from these devices.

The call for caution over the use of everyday electronic de-

vices was issued in the journal *Reviews on Environmental Health*, where the researchers said “sufficient scientific evidence” exists to link chronic exposure to these radiation sources to an increased risk of cancer, immune disruption and neurological diseases.

Standards “are entirely inadequate. They were never intended to address the kind of exposures

from wireless devices that now affect over four billion people,” says Olle Johansson, a professor in the department of neuroscience at Sweden’s Karolinska Institute and one of the authors of the paper.

Although regulators and industry groups have downplayed hazards from cellphones and power lines, there is a growing body of research linking power lines to

childhood leukemia, and heavy cellphone use to brain cancer.

To reduce risks, the researchers suggested that cell phones be kept away from the head and body and that the devices be turned off if worn in a holster or carried in a pocket.

They also advised that children not use cell or cordless phones, and recommended restrictions on their use apply in public areas

and on buses, trains and other forms of transport, to reduce involuntary exposures of people nearby.

Many utilities are using wireless connections on smart-grid electrical meters, but the researchers said a better approach would be to avoid community-wide exposures to new sources of radio waves by using telephone lines and fibre-optic cables instead.