



## Physician group adds weight to warnings of Wi-Fi in schools

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(MARK WIERZBICKI/QMI AGENCY)

OTTAWA - Schools should not install wireless Internet systems because the technology is linked to learning disabilities, headaches and immune system deficiencies, according to an international association of physicians.

The American Academy of Environmental Medicine, which is holding a conference on the brain and nervous system this week in Florida, says safer alternatives should be used instead of Wi-Fi.

"Adverse health effects from wireless radio frequency fields, such as learning disabilities, altered immune responses, and headaches, clearly exist and are well documented in the scientific literature," the academy said in a statement on its website. "Safer technology, such as use of hard-wiring, is strongly recommended in schools."

The American Academy of Pediatrics has also called for a review of government safety limits for electromagnetic radiation because of the growing number of wireless devices that are part of children's lives.

In 2011, the World Health Organization classified radiation emitted by wireless devices, including cellphones and wireless Internet, as possibly carcinogenic. Despite this classification, Health Canada still says Wi-Fi is safe.

Dr. Jennifer Armstrong, an Ottawa-based doctor who works an environmental health clinic, says it is important to practise precaution, especially with kids. She is the former president of AAEM.

"They're more vulnerable. Their skulls are smaller, their brains are still developing. We don't want to start treating any permanent damage in these kids," Armstrong said. "If they're going to have trouble learning while at school or if they're developing immune system problems ... we don't need to contribute more to it with something we can prevent."

Tory MP Terence Young has called for a review of Safety Code 6, the framework for industry guidelines on radiation exposure in Canada.

"My constituents believe that Safety Code 6 is outdated, and there are a number of studies that have come out in the last year that they haven't taken into consideration," Young said in an interview with QMI Agency.