

Mobile phone use and the risk of acoustic neuroma: results of the Interphone case-control study in five Northern European countries. (MJ Schoemaker et al)



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Today's publication of a population-based case-control study of acoustic neuromas in the British Journal of Cancer¹ is the latest in a series of studies published as part of the internationally coordinated INTERPHONE project. This particular study involves data from five countries: Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway and the United Kingdom. The data used from Sweden and Denmark has been published separately².

By way of background, acoustic neuroma is a rare, benign and often slow-growing tumor of the nerve that connects the ear to the brain and it may be detected due to effects on hearing. It has a natural yearly incidence rate of about 1 per 100,000.

In the present study, the authors reached the following conclusion:

"Thus on balance, the evidence suggests that there is no substantial risk of acoustic neuroma in the first decade of use, but the possibility of some effect after longer periods remains open."

In the press release accompanying the release of the paper the authors are quoted as saying:

"The study found no relation between the risk of acoustic neuroma and the number of years for which mobile phones had been used, the time since first use, the total hours of use or the total number of calls, nor were there any relations separately for analogue or digital phone use."

We note that this result is consistent with previous studies and the significant body of research reporting no health risk from using mobile phones. The authors say that the data was insufficient for a clear interpretation of possible risk after use of a phone for 10 years or longer.

As already mentioned, this study is an analysis of some of the national data collected as part of a 13 country INTERPHONE project coordinated by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). As these diseases are rare, large numbers of subjects are needed for accuracy and IARC will follow with an overall analysis involving the combined data from all 13 countries. Therefore, it is necessary to wait for the results of the combined analysis, which is due in mid 2006.

The mobile phone industry takes all questions regarding the safety of mobile phones seriously and we have a strong commitment to supporting ongoing scientific research – such as the INTERPHONE project. This particular project is being funded by the mobile phone industry jointly with governments and national health agencies in a way that ensures the complete scientific independence of the work carried out.

It is also important to note that all mobile phones sold comply with international health and safety exposure guidelines.

¹ See Schoemaker et. Al. **Mobile phone use and risk of acoustic neuroma: results of the Interphone case-control study in five Northern European countries.** British Journal of Cancer. 2005 doi:10.1038/sj.bjc.6602764
<http://www.nature.com/bjc/journal/vaop/ncurrent/abs/6602764a.html>

² For Sweden see Lonn et. al **Mobile Phone Use and the Risk of Acoustic Neuroma.** Epidemiology. 15(6):653-659,
(<http://www.epidem.com/pt/re/epidemiology/abstract.00001648-200411000-00003.htm>), for Denmark see Christensen et al **Cellular Telephone Use and Risk of Acoustic Neuroma,** Am. J. Epidemiol. 2004 159: 277- 283 (<http://aje.oupjournals.org/cgi/reprint/159/3/277.pdf>)