

NIEHS Office of Communications and Public Liaison (OCPL)
September 2017 – February 2018

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I. EVENTS

NTP cell phone radiofrequency radiation study findings:

February 2, NTP teamed with OCPL to host a telephone press conference to announce the findings of the NTP studies on cell phone radiofrequency radiation in rats and mice. About 180 people participated in the one-hour briefing. NTP Associate Director John Bucher, Ph.D., served as the spokesperson. The audio recording and transcript from the telebriefing can be found at <https://www.niehs.nih.gov/news/newsroom/releases/2018/february2/index.cfm>.

The reports are available at <https://ntp.niehs.nih.gov/about/org/sep/trpanel/meetings/docs/2018/march/index.html>. The public comment period is open and a [peer review](#) of the draft technical reports will be held March 26-28.

More than 1,000 stories have appeared in the media, as well as hundreds of social media posts. A few examples include:

- Wall Street Journal, [Why the Largest Study Ever on Cellphones and Cancer Won't Settle the Debate?](#)
- New York Times, [Cancer From Cellphones? New Studies Say No Need to Hang Up](#)
- Washington Times, [High cell-phone radiation causes tumors in rats, but humans should be safe: Researchers](#)
- Reuters, [High levels of cellphone radiation linked to tumors in male rats: U.S. study](#)
- CNN, [Cell phone radiation study finds more questions than answers](#)
- Consumer Reports, [Government Study Suggests Cell Phones May Cause Cancer in Rats](#)
- Fortune Magazine, [Cell Phone Radiation Tied to Rare Tumor in Rats](#)
- Los Angeles Times, [Radiation from cellphones is not hazardous to your health, government scientists say](#)
- MedPage Today, [Cell Phone Radiation Unlikely to Cause Cancer](#)
- New York Post, [Cell phones cause tumors in rats, study finds](#)
- Undark, [Of Science, Certainty, and the Safety of Cell Phone Radiation](#)
- Washington Post, [Cellphone radiation study finds mixed effects in rodents, without clear implications for human health](#)

Meetings/Conferences:

OCPL exhibited at the American Public Health Association conference November 4-8 in Atlanta, Georgia.

OCPL will be exhibiting at the following conferences in early 2018:

- American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology conference March 3-5 in Orlando, Florida.
- Society of Toxicology Annual Meeting and ToxExpo March 12-14, in San Antonio, Texas
- Health Journalism conference April 12-15 in Phoenix, Arizona
- American Thoracic Society conference May 20-22 in San Diego, California

Promotional materials were developed for the following NIEHS events/activities:

- Women's Health Awareness Day – April 7
- Keystone Lecture with Maureen Lichtveld – February 13
- NIEHS Annual Awards – January 31
- ICCVAM Strategic Roadmap – January 30
- Keystone Lecture with Lee Ferguson – January 24
- Distinguished Lecture with Michael Snyder – January 16
- CFC Charity Fair – January 10
- Keystone Lecture with Riley Dunlap – December 13
- Distinguished Lecture with Catherine Dulac – December 12
- Warehouse Grand Opening Map/Legend – December 11
- Giving Tree – November/December
- CFC Holiday Decorating Contest – November 27
- Scholar's Connect Fall Presentation – November 17
- Veteran's Day Event – November 8
- Science Days – November 2-3
- CFC Campaign – October-January
- Keystone Lecture – October 18
- Falk Lecture – October 10
- Engaging Diverse Partners: Strategies to Address Environmental Public Health – September 20-22
- Global Environmental Health Day – September 15
- Workshop on Telomeres as Sentinels for Environmental Exposures, Psychosocial Stress, and Disease Susceptibility – September 6-7
- Keystone Lecture Series seminar on Assessing Telomere Length and Telomerase Activity in Twin and Unrelated Astronauts – September 5
- Keystone Lecture Series seminar on Place, Culture, and Health: Risk and Protection in Native Americans – August 17

See the monthly newsletter [Environmental Factor](#) for a comprehensive report of institute events.

II. NEWS COVERAGE

Press Releases

February 2, [High exposure to radiofrequency radiation \(RFR\) in rodents](#) announced results of NTP cell phone radiofrequency radiation studies in mice and rats.

February 1, [Telephone Press Conference: NTP Draft Conclusions for Radiofrequency Radiation Studies in Rats and Mice](#) alerted media of a teleconference February 2 to discuss results of the NTP studies above.

January 30, [Roadmap to Guide Progress Toward Replacing Animal Use in Toxicity Testing](#) announced the publication of a new NTP report, A Strategic Roadmap for Establishing New Approaches to Evaluate the Safety of Chemicals and Medical Products in the United States.

January 24, [New Tool Visualizes Employment Trends in Biomedical Science](#) reported on a new method developed by NIEHS scientists that will help science administrators better understand the numerous factors that contribute to career decisions of their trainees.

January 12, [Brian Berridge Tapped to Manage National Toxicology Program](#) announced the selection of the new NTP associate director.

December 20, [Defending Against Environmental Stressors May Shorten Lifespan](#) discussed results of a study, Cytokine signaling through Drosophila Mthl10 ties lifespan to environmental stress, conducted by DIR scientists and colleagues in Japan.

November 20, [Allergens Widespread in Largest Study of U.S. Homes](#) reported study findings in an article, Bedroom allergen exposures in US households, published in the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology by NIEHS Scientific Director Darryl Zeldin, M.D., and colleagues.

October 6, [DNA Damage Caused by Cancer Treatment Reversed by ZATT Protein](#) discussed a study, ZATT (ZNF451)-mediated resolution of topoisomerase 2 DNA-protein cross-links, published in the journal Science, by DIR researchers and colleagues.

September 19, [Gulf Spill Oil Dispersants Associated with Health Symptoms in Cleanup Workers](#) reported on an article in Environmental Health Perspectives, Respiratory, dermal, and eye irritation symptoms associated with Corexit EC9527A/EC9500A following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill: findings from the GULF STUDY.

News Coverage of NIEHS Science, Researchers, and Activities

February 2018 — 1265 news stories (as of February 7)

January 2018 — 316

December 2017 — 569

November 2017 — 628

October 2017 — 589

September 2017 — 994

Highlights from Newspapers, Trade Papers, and National Magazines (see full stories at end of report)

January 24, **North Carolina Health News** wrote “Republican Congressmen Challenge North Carolina Scientist.” Linda Birnbaum, Ph.D., quoted.

January 5, **Science** discussed “Air pollution’s hidden impacts.” NIEHS mentioned.

December 1, **Microwave News** highlighted the NTP cell phone study in “The Anatomy of a Rumor.” John Bucher, Ph.D., of NTP quoted.

November 18, **Ensia** wrote “Most Americans drink fluoridated water. Is this a good thing?” Birnbaum quoted.

November 8, **Scienceline** discussed the GuLF STUDY findings on Corexit, a chemical used in the Gulf oil spill, in the article “Clean-up chemical at the BP Oil Spill tied to health problems.” Dale Sandler, Ph.D., of DIR quoted.

November 1, **Scientist** wrote “Getting drugs past the blood-brain barrier.” Ron Cannon, Ph.D., of DIR quoted.

October 27, **SFGate** mentioned “Safety resources for wildfire recovery highlighted by the OSHA Training Center at Chabot-Las Positas Community College District.” NIEHS mentioned.

October 10, **News-Medical** ran a story on “Multivitamin use during pregnancy could protect children from autism with intellectual disabilities.” NIEHS mentioned.

October 6, **MSU Today** highlighted NIEHS-funded Superfund Program study results in “MSU research breakthrough could cleanse soil, sediment, and water pollution.”

October 5, **Durham Herald-Sun** ran feature story on cryo-electron microscopy in “The technology won a Nobel Prize. Now Duke and UNC are getting into the game.” Mario Borgnia, Ph.D., of DIR mentioned.

September 20, **Pittsburgh Post-Gazette** noted CPSC decision to ban organohalogen flame retardants in “Landmark decision on household products with toxic flame retardants protects children from harmful chemicals.” Birnbaum quoted.

September 20, **Chicago Tribune** also ran story on petition to ban organohalogen flame retardants, prior to CPSC decision being made, in “Will federal safety panel ban toxic flame retardants in household products.” Birnbaum quoted.

September 19, **MedicalXpress** highlighted GuLF STUDY results in “Gulf spill oil dispersants associated with health symptoms in cleanup workers.” Birnbaum and Sandler quoted. Richard Kwok, Ph.D., and Lawrence Engel, Ph.D., of DIR mentioned.

September 16, **Times Union** wrote “Mission for safety in disaster’s wake” about worker training of clean-up workers in Houston after hurricane. Mentioned NIEHS-funded training.

September 15, **Washington University** discussed study results in “Medical history can point to earlier Parkinson’s disease diagnosis.” Mentioned partial funding from NIEHS.

September 5, **Texas A&M University** discussed public health impacts of disasters in “Protecting public health: a whole community approach to disaster recovery.” Mentioned funding from NIEHS.

III. PUBLIC INFORMATION AND OUTREACH

In accordance with popular trends, NIEHS continues to expand its use of social media in effort to reach new audiences with its environmental health messages. At present, NIEHS posts content through the following platforms:

- [Facebook](#) (targeted to a more general audience)
- [Twitter](#) (targeted to both the general public and science community)
- [LinkedIn](#) (targeted primarily to those in the environmental health career field)

Social Media Growth Trends

The fall and winter months of 2017/2018 saw continued growth in NIEHS social media followership. From September 1 to February 8, our numbers increased as follows:

- The NIEHS Twitter feed (@NIEHS) saw its followership grow from 14,212 to 14,671.
- The NIEHS Facebook page saw its followership grow from 18,216 “likes” to 18,442.
- The NIEHS LinkedIn page saw its followership grow from 2,231 to 2,417.

Social Media Highlights

During this same period, OCPL used social media to promote NIEHS programs and research in conjunction with the following national health observances:

- National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month (NIEHS/EPA Children’s Environmental Health and Disease Prevention Research Centers childhood obesity webinar) — September
- World Alzheimer’s Month (2016 Press Release: Seafood Consumption May Play a Role in Reducing Risk for Alzheimer’s) — September
- National Women’s Health and Fitness Day (NIEHS Women’s Health research) — September 27
- National Health Education Week (Brochures and Factsheets page) — October 16-20
- National Breast Cancer Awareness Month (Enviro Health Topics: Breast Cancer) — October
- Children’s Environmental Health Day (promoted official observance webpage) — October 12
- National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (Enviro Health Topics: Lead, NIEHS Kids: Lead Poisoning webpages) — October 22-27
- Lung Cancer Awareness Month (EPH article on lung cancer and air pollution) — November
- National Alzheimer’s Disease Awareness Month (Enviro Health Topics: Neurodegenerative Diseases) — November
- National Birth Defects Prevention Month (NIEHS resources on children’s health, specifically our work with understanding cleft palate) — January

OCPL also promoted the following grantee projects/press releases through social media:

- Gulf Spill Oil Dispersants Associated with Health Symptoms in Cleanup Workers (NIEHS)
- DNA Damage Caused by Cancer Treatment Reversed by ZATT Protein (NIEHS)
- Arsenic Exposure in U.S. Public Drinking Water Declines Following New EPA Regulations (Columbia University School of Public Health)
- How Chronic Inflammation Tips the Balance of Immune Cells to Promote Liver Cancer (UC San Diego School of Medicine)
- Allergens Widespread in Largest Study of U.S. Homes (NIEHS)
- Defending Against Environmental Stressors May Shorten Lifespan (NIEHS)
- Weekly Fish Consumption Linked to Better Sleep, Higher IQ, Penn Study Finds (University of Pennsylvania)
- Brian Berridge Tapped to Manage National Toxicology Program (NIEHS)
- New Tool Visualizes Employment Trends in Biomedical Science (NIEHS)
- Roadmap to guide progress toward replacing animal use in toxicity testing (NIEHS)
- Telephone Press Conference: NTP Draft Conclusions for Radiofrequency Radiation Studies in Rats and Mice (NIEHS)
- High Exposure to Radiofrequency Radiation Linked to Tumor Activity in Male Rats (NIEHS)

Other NIEHS/NIH projects/events promoted through social media during the fall and winter of 2018:

- NIH First in Human documentary — Created multiple posts on FB and Twitter, promoting the NIH documentary, “First in Human” as seen on Discovery Channel.
- Hurricane Harvey — Created custom posts on FB and Twitter, directing users to NIEHS Extreme Weather and Health resources on the public website. Also provided a schedule of Harvey-related posts to Christine Flowers for a daily report to NIH.
- NIEHS Website Resources on Climate Change — Compiled custom posts for FB and Twitter, promoting the various NIEHS resources available through our public website on climate change.
- Environmental Health Chat podcast series — Crafted custom posts for Facebook and Twitter promoting this series in an effort to further publicize the various educational resources available for free through the NIEHS public website.
- #NIHhealthy2018 Campaign — Compiled two posts each for Facebook and Twitter, spotlighting the NIEHS asthma and obesity health topics pages. Posts were tagged with the official NIH hashtag on Twitter in accordance with the overall campaign.
- 2018 Women’s Health Awareness Day — Compiled multiple Facebook and Twitter posts, spread from January through April, promoting the NIEHS event on-campus at North Carolina Central University.

Web

- Worked with NIH and created a method for NIEHS scientists to add and update their information on the [NIH Intramural Researchers website](#).
- Cheryl Thompson: Group HHS Green Champion awarded November 15, 2017 at NIH OD Award Ceremony.
- All Furlough notices were posted or removed from the website quickly and without delay.
- All weather delays were posted or removed from the website quickly and without delay, usually in “off” hours.
- OCPL worked with Epidemiology Branch and Computer Technology Branch to shut down a fake website claiming to be the NIH Gulf Study website
- Processed 85+ urgent tickets for the Comparative Medicine Branch in preparation for the AAALAC (Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care, International) site visit
- Updated format of phone numbers on NIEHS website to use only – and not (). Example: (919)541-1072 is now 919-541-1072. This supports mobile users, allowing them to dial NIEHS phone numbers by clicking on phone numbers on web pages.
- Greatly expanded Weather Extremes page with NIEHS resources

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