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Cell phone and health risks exposure

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The Cellular phone is a marvelous piece of invention, which has probably saved thousands of lives in an emergency and also helped to energize and improve communication at both local and international levels. Its market penetration in to Nigerian terrain is phenomenal in consumer usage and in market growth. It is the GSM as it is popularly called, that saved Nigerians from the orgy of "no-ring- tones-please" of the rudderless telecommunication system we had then.

No wonder the warm embrace of cell phones which initially became a fashion, power and status symbol but eventually started to assume its true position of a necessity, a must have piece of IT garget rather than an appendage when the euphoria relaxed. Like every useful coin there is always a flip side and like every antidote there is always a side effect. What, I am about to tell you now is an epistle likened to a story called "What my mother failed to tell me then."

Are Cell Phones Dangerous?

The answer is a definite yes. In today's life style you are exposed to man-made electromagnetic fields. The growing demands of ever changing technologies and changes in social behavior have created electromagnetic fields around you. Radiation above certain level can trigger biological effects in human and has been known to damage human DNA.
Some evidence of Risk Presence.

A group of Scientists claim to have discovered a link between mobile phone use and eye cancer. Research by the team led by Dr. Andrews at the Starg University of Essen in Germany found that people who regularly use a mobile phone are three times more likely to develop cancer of the eye. Writing in The Lancet in December, British Scientist Dr. Gerard Hyland warned that children are at the greatest risk from mobile phone radiation, especially from low intensity, pulsed radiation that could affect a number of brain functions.

Recently a Maryland neurologist filed an \$800m. law suit at Baltimore City Court against several wireless providers and two umbrella organizations claiming that radiation from his cell phone is responsible for his malignant brain tumor. Dr. Christopher Newman, 41 was diagnosed with brain cancer in 1998

Whether you call them mobile, cellular, wireless, analog, digital, GSM, or Pc phones they are all the only radiation emitting products sold to consumers that is internationally placed against the head. There are fears that electromagnetic radiation emitted from mobile phone handset may harm health. In particular there have been claims that it could affect the body's cells, brain or immune system and increase the risk of developing a range of diseases. It is the proximity to the head or other part of the body

that elicit the danger.

Cell phone emit low levels of radio frequency energy (i.e. radio frequency radiation) The radiation in cell phone is generated in the transmitter, emitted through the antenna and penetrate the brain tissue, there by causing damage to the brain. The risk is higher for children whose tissues are tender and are still growing. This is because their brains are still developing and their skulls are thinner making it easier for the radio waves to penetrate them. Sir William Stewart, the Chairman of the UK Commissioned Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phone published its report in 2000. The Stewart report suggested that children should be especially careful about using mobile phones and recommended that they should only use hand set in emergencies.

Exposure to cell phone radiation has been linked as risk factor to the following frightening killer diseases: eye cancer, ear tumor, brain tumor, loss of memory, cancer, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's fatigue, head ache, dizziness, sleeping disruptions, loss of libido, infertility etc. The Western world have not been quiet over these issues even though they have the capacity and the facility and supporting infrastructure to cope with any emergency arising from out break of any of these diseases. They can not afford to keep quiet because it is not in their character to hoard information from their very enlightened and rights conscious people. Besides, the Governments will be the one to foot the medical bill of any of them that is sick because of their National Health Service programme.

With this size of Nigerians subscribers which is more than an entire population of some European countries exposed to risk, I wonder why nobody is saying anything about this issue, especially so when we are ill –equipped in all its ramifications to successfully handle any out break of disaster. May God protect us all. This information is a wake up call for individuals to search for information on this issue so that they can be in a better position to protect themselves and their loved ones. The Ministry of Information, Health, Nigerian Communication commission, Nigeria environmental management Agencies should please take note. (Mr. Ogunseitan, a retired banker writes from Surulere, Lagos)