27 June 2006

By: Alexandra Lupu, Health News Editor

Mobile Phone Excites Brain Cells

When talking to a mobile phone the cells in the area of the motor cortex next to the phone change excitability level

A study led by Italian researcher Dr. Paolo Rossini of Fatebenefratelli hospital in Milan and published yesterday in the Annals of Neurology shows that electromagnetic fields emitted by cell and wireless phones excite the area of an user's brain cortex that is near the phone. The research study was carried on 15 volunteers. Each of the 15 healthy young men had to wear a helmet with a cell phone at about half an inch from his left ear. There were 2 sessions of the tests, both of 45 minutes. During the first session the cell phone was turned on, while during the second session the cell phone was off. The results showed that during and after the first session the excitability of the cells in the motor cortex adjacent to the cell phone changed - this happened in the case of 12 of the 15 boys. The second test showed no visible changes upon the cortex because the cell phone was turned off. Previous studies on the effects of mobile phones and electromagnetic fields have been rather controversial: some of them claimed that they are very dangerous for our health by causing brain tumors, while others found no reason to worry about this issue, as their effects are neutral.This may have implications for individuals that suffer from neurological disorders, such as epilepsy, that relates to brain cells excitability. But the study has not concluded yet if exciting brain cells is a good or bad thing. Nevertheless, specialists claim that further studies are needed in order to investigate the problem and its consequences on users of mobile phones.Referring to the effects of cell phones on human brain, the medical team led by Rossini reported that "We still do not know whether this effect is neutral, or potentially dangerous, or beneficial. But we firmly believe that, starting from this observation; more research is needed both in healthy people and in specific groups of subjects suffering from neurological diseases in which brain excitability is affected."