

Phone cancer report 'buried'

■ Daniel Foggo

T-MOBILE, the mobile phone giant, has been accused of "burying" a scientific report it commissioned that concluded handsets and masts contribute to cancer and genetic damage.

The report argued that officially recommended limits on radiation exposure should be cut to 1/1000th of those in force. The suggestion has not been taken up by the company or by regulators.

Campaigners claimed T-Mobile's handling of the report was part of a wider pattern of behaviour by the industry in its efforts to keep discussion of the

health risks off the agenda.

The Ecolog Institute, which has been researching mobile phone technology since 1992, was paid by T-Mobile to evaluate evidence on its potential dangers.

But Dr Peter Neitzke, one of the authors of the report, has accused T-Mobile, which has about 17m British customers, of diluting the findings by commissioning other studies from which it knew "no critical results or recommendations were to be expected".

Guidance from the Health Protection Agency states that, while there is no conclusive evidence phones or masts jeopardise health, the technology has been in existence for only a relatively

short time. It recommends that caution should be exercised in siting masts and using phones a lot, particularly where children are affected.

The Ecolog study, drawn up in 2000 and updated three years later, has only been published in Germany and was unknown to British campaigners until it was recently leaked to the Human Ecological Social Economic project (HESE), which examines the effect of electromagnetic fields on health.

Andrea Klein, a member of HESE, said: "T-Mobile tried to dilute and bury it."

Ecolog's report, which analysed dozens of peer-reviewed studies, stated: "Given the results of the present epidemio-

logical studies, it can be concluded that electromagnetic fields with frequencies in the mobile telecommunications range do play a role in the development of cancer.

"This is particularly notable for tumours of the central nervous system."

Neitzke said that once T-Mobile realised the likely outcome of his study it commissioned further research.

The phone company said: "It was the aim of T-Mobile to engage four different institutes with the same questions to guarantee an independent and objective discussion. All the institutes and people involved are well known and respected experts."

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