

WHO Knew: The Elephant in the Room

Monday, February 3, 2014 was a very strange day in London. Only the weather was predictable. A cold rain fell as a dais of scientists faced a room full of reporters in the Royal Society Library's Special Events Room on Carlton House Terrace. With its pillared roots going back to the 1600s, the Royal Society Library had welcomed scientists from all over the world for centuries.

On this day, two scientists distinguished themselves as authors of the thick, glossy tome that was almost the biggest presence in the press briefing. Co-authors Prof. Bernard Stewart, Faculty of Medicine, University of New South Wales and Christopher Wild, PhD, Director of the World Health Organization's (WHO) esteemed International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) prepared to tell the world we are on the verge of a cancer tsunami. *World Cancer Report 2014* was nearly six years in the making. IARC is the cancer agency of the WHO, and a core part of their mission is to disseminate information on cancer. They gather information, frequently classify the risk level of various substances, and share that news with the world. This day the news was daunting.

Cancer rates are growing at such a rapid pace that we cannot treat our way out of this global health crisis. We must focus on prevention on a massive scale, Drs. Wild and Stewart announced to the gathering of just over 25 reporters. The human and economic catastrophe awaiting the world, with healthcare costs spiraling out of control, was described in great detail in the massive report these two men had just completed. The 650-page book, the first World Cancer Report since 2008, painted a dim picture for the world.

Reporters gathered at the press briefing heard the numbers and the implications were clear. 14,000,000 new cancer cases are being diagnosed worldwide each year, with that number expected to almost double over the next two decades to 22,000,000 new cases per year. Even the richest countries will struggle to cope with the spiraling costs of treating and caring for cancer patients. Of course the greatest burden will be borne by the lower income countries where numbers of new cases are expected to be the highest, and they are poorly equipped for the epidemic that is descending upon them. Over 60% of the global burden threatens Africa, Asia and Central and South America, where 70% of cancer deaths occur.

These were big numbers being delivered by the biggest name at IARC, Dr. Christopher Wild, the cancer agency's director. A press release was issued worldwide, as well as to the roomful of reporters. "Despite exciting advances, the report shows that we cannot treat our way out of the cancer problem," Dr. Wild announced. "More commitment to prevention and early detection is desperately needed in order to complement improved treatments and address the alarming rise in cancer burden globally." Big numbers, big news, delivered by a very big name.

Yet the largest presence in the room that rainy day in early February was unannounced and unexpected. It was not a physician, nor a reporter, nor even a human being. Looming over the presumptively-esteemed scientists delivering the presumptively-comprehensive 650-page cancer report was an immense mammal whose thick skin hung in ripples of wrinkles descending to hooved feet. There were four of them, instead of the two that steadied both Drs. Stewart and Wild.

Imagining the machinations that surely went on behind the scenes as decisions were made regarding what should be included in a major report focusing on the prevention of cancer amidst burgeoning numbers, one might have wondered if two feet were enough for Drs. Stewart and Wild. After all, it appears they had one foot each in profound truth, and one foot in denial. That is an unsteady posture indeed. A cynic might even say the esteemed scientists had one foot in truth and one foot in active concealment, a legal term describing when a party, in this case representatives of IARC and WHO, conceals information which they have a duty to disclose. Though the duty in this case may not have been

legal, a case could surely be made for a moral obligation that was left unfulfilled. What did Dr. Christopher Wild of IARC and Dr. Bernard Stewart, a professor at University of New South Wales, fail to disclose?

While the elephant awaits introduction, standing tall and steady squarely in the middle of a room that could barely contain the uninvited guest, let us examine the very fine work Drs. Wild and Stewart did reference.

First, let's start with the premise of the *World Cancer Report 2014*. Prevention is the only way out of this mess, and these two men know it. So what news could they and their team of experts share that we don't already know about with respect to prevention of cancer? Drs. Wild and Stewart spoke to a hushed crowd. The reporters for *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, the BBC and all other major media outlets were busy scribbling down the wisdom the co-authors were imparting, namely, that alcohol, obesity, physical inactivity, and tobacco were all preventable causes of cancers.

One man was hushed, initially, for a reason other than jotting notes to be sent back to a news desk. That man was not a reporter, but rather a representative of a charity in the UK that had prevention as its primary goal. He had hurried to the London press conference at the request of his friend Eileen O'Connor, Director of the UK's Radiation Research Trust (RRT), a non-profit she and several others founded after Eileen found herself caught up in a cancer cluster in her tiny town of Wishaw in The Midlands section of England. A cellular telecommunications mast had loomed over the tiny hamlet for seven years before Eileen was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2001, and once in the hospital, she started bumping into neighbors who were also there for chemotherapy. A campaign that led to the halls of Parliament was started, and along the way the Radiation Research Trust was formed.

Unable to make the press conference herself, Eileen turned to RRT's trusted advisor who shared her deep concern about the growing radiation throughout the United Kingdom and all of Europe. The two had shared many long talks and Eileen had recently passed on the latest, brilliant epidemiological studies by Sweden's Dr. Lennart Hardell showing increases in cancer in keeping with the rising number of cell phone users. The Advisor had arrived at the press conference sure that he would hear profound concern about the increasing "electrosmog" – as the rising tide of microwave radiation from cell phones, masts, towers, Wi-Fi, and smart meters is often referred to. Certainly the *World Cancer Report 2014* listed this form of non-ionizing radiation as an area where greater exposure prevention would be urged.

The man had eagerly listened to the entire briefing by the esteemed co-authors. He had expected crystal clear insight from the two men who were entrusted with guiding the world on cancer prevention strategies in the face of an onslaught of rising numbers of new cancers. The risk factors contributing to the cancer crisis had been enunciated, one after another: tobacco, alcohol, obesity, physical inactivity . . . As reporters scribbled notes, the man suddenly felt alone in a room full of people. He had listened in vain for the words he had fully anticipated: *RF radiation. Microwave radiation. Wireless gadgets from crib to grave*. Nothing about it at all. Absolutely nothing.

His disappointment was palpable. The world knows tobacco, alcohol, obesity, and physical inactivity are contributors to disease, yet the only risk mentioned by Drs. Wild and Stewart that had been deeply associated with cancer in the public's consciousness was smoking. And that news of tobacco's carcinogenic effects was 70 years old, with warning labels first showing up on tobacco products in the US the same year The Beatles released their psychedelic rock album *Revolver*, and bell-bottoms were in vogue -- for the first time. Some five decades later public policy throughout much of the U.S. and part of Europe had banned smoking in public places. Was smoking – along with alcohol, physical inactivity, and obesity, the latter two not even on the radar as suspected carcinogenic conditions, truly accounting for 14,000,000 new cases of cancer a year with that number predicted to grow to 22,000,000 new cases *per annum* over the next two decades?

The RRT Advisor quelled his disappointment and listened even more closely, a sliver of hope remaining that Drs. Wild and Stewart were saving the worst for last. After all, what *other* technology had taken over the planet with such explosive force, with seven billion cell phones in use on a planet with more cell

phones than people, \$2 trillion in annual revenues, and accounting for 5.8 percent of the global GDP. [Razorsight 2012] What else could be contributing so heavily to 14,000,000 new cancers around the globe annually?

When it came to the subject of radiation, there was mention of the sun, but this was nothing new, either. Still there were no precautionary warnings regarding RF (microwave) radiation that powers mobile phones, Wi-Fi, smart meters, laptops and mobile mast or cell towers. Not a single mention. How could that be?

This was when the Advisor's incredulity allowed him to see what apparently all the reporters missed. And what they missed was apparent not only by their lack of intellectual curiosity in pinning down Drs. Wild and Stewart, but also in their superficial reporting which was to come out in the days and weeks following the press conference. It was during the lack-luster question and answer phase that Eileen O'Connor's trusted and highly disappointed Advisor truly noticed the presence no one else in the room appeared to be aware of. It was the giant Pachyderm – the proverbial Elephant in the Room, and the Advisor, well-bred man that he is, could hold his tongue no longer.

The Advisor announced to the panel of scientists that he was there on behalf of the UK's Radiation Research Trust. He squarely addressed the presence of the enormous and rare species standing silently, and to all others invisibly, next to him. "We seem to have an Elephant in the Room," the Advisor offered.

He then stated the known: IARC, the International Agency on Research for Cancer – the very sub-group of the World Health Organization that sponsored the report, had classified RF (microwave) radiation and everything on the RF – EMF Spectrum a 2B or "possible human" carcinogen in May of 2011. He further stated that a major minority of the May 2011 IARC Working Group, based on the scientific evidence, did not want a 2B "possible human" carcinogen status for RF radiation, but rather the more serious classification of 2A, meaning a "probable human" carcinogen.

The Advisor then proceeded to state the unknown: "What was the future trajectory of this RF-EMF Spectrum classification given new science that had come along since May of 2011?" the gentleman queried. "Since Dr. Lennart Hardell, the scientist whose science was considered as part of the 2B classification, had come out in 2013 and said the classification should now be Group 1, meaning RF radiation is a known human carcinogen, might IARC upgrade the RF Spectrum to 2A, or even Group 1 – a known carcinogen?" Catching a quick breath, he continued, "In short, RF radiation causes cancer, the concern among independent scientists appears to be growing, and what does the panel see as a potential for upgrading the warning about RF radiation's status as a carcinogen?"

Dr. Christopher Wild responded to the gentleman mounting the challenge, saying he was a part of that Working Group in May 2011 and up to this point in time there was "no new evidence which suggests there is any cause for concern."

Prof. Bernard Stewart attempted to further defuse the Advisor's identification of the Elephant in the Room by saying there was a "mention" of RF radiation in the report and "we are aware." The Advisor later found "the mention" around page 140 – in a report of 650 pages.

The RRT Advisor stood his ground. He told the scientists he had been investigating the dangers around microwave radiation through Wi-Fi and mobile phones for a number of years and he has found there is clear evidence of serious health risks. Then as if raising the elephant's trunk himself and trumpeting the truly unspoken, the Advisor reminded the panel they were in a great position to prevent many cancers, and that many people are falling ill.

An uncomfortable shift could be felt in the room. The Advisor asked one final question: "Would Drs. Wild and Stewart have a problem with people of all ages being exposed to RF radiation 24/7?" Dr. Stewart voiced his opinion in a professorial fashion, "I would have no problem at all."

Neither the scientists nor the reporters spoke. A line in the sand had been drawn by Drs. Wild and Stewart and their massive report. The RF Spectrum is not a sufficient risk at this time to deserve a place alongside inactivity, obesity, the sun, alcohol and smoking – at least according to Drs. Wild and Stewart. It was as if the “The Great Oz” had spoken and a curtain was about to be drawn.

But wait . . . We are rapidly approaching the third anniversary of one of IARC’s most historic votes. This was the 2B “human carcinogen” classification for everything on the RF – EMF Spectrum. And it was not a close vote. It was unanimous, but for one dissenter whose identity has been kept secret by the 30 IARC scientists. What is *not* secret is the fact that the U.S. National Cancer Institute’s Peter Inskip left the meeting early and did not return in time for the vote.

For all intents and purposes, IARC came out with a unanimous vote on a hotly debated subject. Does RF (microwave) radiation cause cancer? This esteemed committee is saying it may cause cancer in humans. Nearly-unanimous speaks volumes. Who led this erudite group? Who was head of the committee when this vote heard around the world was taken? It was none other than Dr. Christopher Wild, the man seated at the dais, the co-author of the *World Cancer Report 2014* – a report which *failed* to list RF radiation as a preventable carcinogen.

What in the world was Dr. Christopher Wild thinking that rainy morning of February 3 in the Royal Society Library’s Events Room? The Spectrum of RF – EMF, meaning everything on the radio-frequency through the electromagnetic field spectrum, may cause cancer in humans. Yet this spectrum that seems to now be ubiquitous in our daily lives was missing on the list of possible carcinogens that we should approach with a massive focus on prevention. The RRT Advisor wondered what Christopher Wild’s reasoning was when he signed his name to the report. How did inactivity, alcohol, and obesity take priority over cell phones, cell towers, smart meters and Wi-Fi? The Advisor was incredulous.

It is true that alcohol was listed as a Group 1 carcinogen in 2012 by IARC. It is a known carcinogen for certain types of cancer. But nowhere is obesity listed as a carcinogen by IARC, nor is inactivity. While fat cells can store chemicals that in turn weaken the immune system and may make an individual more prone to cancer, studies have shown radiation from cell phones directly weakens the protective blood-brain barrier – a sort of biological “hairnet” around the brain to protect it from harmful chemicals that may be circulating in the blood. Thus chemicals can now access the brain as never before, and this is suspected as a key mechanism for the inducement of cancer in the temporal lobe of the brain in some cell phone users, particularly for gliomas, the deadliest of brain tumors. Dr. Lennart Hardell’s science was key in IARC securing the nearly unanimous 2B vote. Dr. Hardell has linked both gliomas and acoustic neuromas to RF (microwave) radiation exposure from cell phones and cordless phones. With all this in mind, what was Dr. Wild thinking with this glaring omission to IARC’s massive cancer report on precautions? Was he not working with a team of qualified experts when he led IARC to this historic 2B vote on RF – EMF in May of 2011?

In a report dated June 3, 2011, *Microwave News* editor Louis Slesin, arguably the best reporter in the world on this subject, wrote: “On Tuesday, May 31 [2011], more than two dozen scientists and doctors from 14 countries – a group IARC Director Christopher Wild called “the world’s leading experts” – issued a joint statement that cell phones and other types of radiofrequency (RF) and microwave radiation might cause cancer.”

Slesin continued: “Long-term use of a cell phone might lead to two different types of tumors, glioma, a type of brain cancer, and acoustic neuroma, a tumor of the auditory nerve.”

This news absolutely shook the telecommunications industry. Studies by industry friendly scientists were quickly released to try to persuade the public that cell phones were safe, while World Health Organization donations continued to decline. Most would be surprised to hear the WHO does rely on donations from countries, private organizations, and various companies, with the United States and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation the world’s largest contributors. Within weeks of the IARC vote, the World Health

Organization “updated” their website. These websites are created for the world to see, and their words of warning do not go unnoticed.

When a country, a national cancer society, a state health department, or a consumer wishes to access the status of the health debate concerning cell phone and related safety issues, they often turn to WHO fact sheets. Thus it was shocking to read the words on the WHO Fact Sheet dated June 2011 – one month after the 2B classification by WHO’s cancer agency IARC: **“A large number of studies have been performed over the last two decades to assess whether mobile phones pose a potential health risk. To date, no adverse health effects have been established as being caused by mobile phone use.”**

No adverse effects? Confused yet? You should be. That’s the idea. There are conflicts of interest woven throughout the WHO and IARC itself. The telecommunications industry is powerful, and it is generous. Money for independent science has virtually disappeared worldwide. Money for industry-friendly science is readily available. Prestigious universities worldwide enjoy the largesse of the telecommunications industry. When their scientists make discoveries that would hurt the profits of telecom interests, the previously generous donations are withdrawn. Thus most universities are not known to encourage research that would prove an adverse biological effect from RF radiation.

Case in point was the discovery by University of Washington researchers Henry Lai and Narendra “NP” Singh two decades ago. [Lai, H. and Singh, N.P. Acute low-intensity microwave exposure increases DNA single-strand breaks in rat brain cells. *Bioelectromagnetics* 16:207-210, 1995.] They were examining the effects of radiation on the DNA of rats. This is the same type of radiation that is emitted from cell phones and cell towers, Wi-Fi, lap tops, and smart meters. Even though Lai and Singh used a level of radiation considered safe by the US government – which would be in keeping with UK standards, as well – the researchers discovered the DNA in the brain cells of rats was damaged by exposure to the radiation. After the Lai and Singh findings of DNA breaks were published in 1995, a campaign to discredit Henry Lai and his work was launched by the industry. In other words, if your research threatens this new technology in any way, your research will be threatened and your reputation will be impugned.

Lest you think Drs. Lai and Singh made a mistake when they discovered DNA breaks in the presence of RF radiation and levels deemed “safe” in the US, the UK and Canada, please note that following the 1995 paper that threatened a multi-trillion dollar industry, a plethora of scientific studies had similar findings. Henry Lai has clarified that since publication of the respected BioInitiative Report 2007 which detailed all the existing science on genotoxic effects (DNA and chromosomal damage), there have been 86 new papers on genotoxic effects of RF radiation published between 2007 and mid-2012 alone. These additional studies were gathered for the updated BioInitiative Report 2012 co-authored by Cindy Sage, MA and Harvard-trained David Carpenter, MD.

According to Dr. Henry Lai, of these 86 new papers, 54 (63%) showed effects of RF radiation on DNA and 32 (37%) showed no effects. Considering funding is jeopardized for almost all independent, non-industry funded science worldwide, meaning the industry-funded study continues to thrive, this is a daunting review of science behind the technology that is in all our lives every single day. RF radiation has never been proven safe, and Dr. Lai’s review of the genotoxic science alone, as a part of the overall BioInitiative Report 2012, should give the world pause before the roll-out of wireless continues unabated.

The BioInitiative Working Group 2012 was composed of 29 scientists from 10 countries who reviewed over 1800 new studies since the original review in 2007. One purpose of the study was to come up with updated, biologically-based exposure standard recommendations. After reviewing over 3800 studies between the two reports, the standards recommended are less than 1/1000th the standards currently allowed in the United States, the United Kingdom, and well below standards in most countries around the world. Instead of guessing at standards that are supposedly protective, the BioInitiative Reports 2007 and 2012 were a world-wide scientific effort to look at all the science available and suggest standards below which harm does not occur to the human body.

The world presently relies on antiquated standards that are based on the industry and military view of principles of physics. The “safety” standards have morphed from 6 minute exposure standards for industrial use -- that is, how long could a worker in the workplace safely be exposed to RF radiation -- to the entire population 24/7. The standards vary by country with the US, UK and Canada allowing the greatest exposure. Most governments were persuaded to rely upon two industry groups for standard setting that do not take the biological effects of RF radiation into account: US-based Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) and European-based International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). Yet neither IEEE nor ICNIRP can produce ethical science that proves the extraordinarily high exposure levels they established do not cause harm to humans.

A new report by the BioInitiative Working Group 2012 says that evidence for risks to health has substantially *increased* from electromagnetic fields and wireless technologies since their 2007 report. Cell phone users, parents-to-be, young children and pregnant women are at particular risk.

“Strong concern has been voiced by scientists, public health and environmental policy experts alike that the deployment of technologies that expose billions of people worldwide to new sources of EMF may pose a pervasive risk to public health,” said Cindy Sage, primary author of BioInitiative 2007 and BioInitiative 2012.

“Prolonged exposure appears to disrupt biological processes that are fundamental to plant, animal and human growth and health,” Sage explains. “These exposures did not exist before the age of industry and information. Life on earth did not evolve with biological protections or adaptive biological responses to these EMF exposures.”

In an emphatic cautionary statement, Sage warns, “A rapidly accumulating body of scientific evidence of harm to health and well-being constitute warnings that adverse health effects can occur with prolonged exposures to very low-intensity EMF.”

The telecommunications industry is fond of circulating doubt about the current science, continually suggesting, “We need more study.” Yet how much proof do we need before caution is demanded in the face of massive fallout of cell towers and Wi-Fi in schools hospitals, businesses, and homes? When did the world demand 100 percent proof with tobacco warnings? Never. Do we legitimately need more study to determine that RF (microwave) radiation is harmful? The BioInitiative Reports 2007 and 2012 examined over 3800 studies with a majority of these studies showing adverse health effects from RF – EMF exposure.

Perhaps, if the Elephant in the Room could speak, he may have announced that instead of calling for more study, Drs. Wild and Stewart could surely have called for prevention – if not for adults, than for children. Russia has much more protective safety standards than most other countries, and officials have issued the recommendation that all children under the age of 18 should avoid using cell phones. Caution with respect to children's use of cell phones has been called for in the UK, Belgium, Germany, France, Finland and India. If these countries can urge precaution and prevention, why not IARC and WHO? Haven't the scientists contributing to the IARC classification of RF radiation as a 2B carcinogen and the BioInitiative Reports 2007 and 2012 offered enough? How much of humanity are Drs. Wild and Stewart willing to risk?

One of the most important scientists contributing his work to the BioInitiative Report 2012 was Dr. Lennart Hardell – the man whose science was one of the two studies on which IARC based their 2B carcinogen status for the entire RF – EMF Spectrum.

Dr. Hardell is quoted in the BioInitiative Report 2012 press release, “There is a consistent pattern of increased risk for glioma (a malignant brain tumor) and acoustic neuroma with use of mobile and cordless phones,” stated Lennart Hardell, MD at Orebro University, Sweden. “Epidemiological evidence shows that radiofrequency [radiation] should be classified as a human carcinogen. The existing FCC/IEEE and ICNIRP public safety limits and reference levels are not adequate to protect public health.”

Consider again Dr. Wild's response to the Radiation Research Trust Advisor's question about 'the Elephant in the Room' and the possibility of RF - EMF receiving a higher classification than 2B in the future. Dr. Christopher Wild had responded that he was a part of that Working Group and up to this point in time there's no new evidence which suggests there is any cause for concern. If Dr. Wild was indeed part of the Working Group when RF radiation was classified as a 2B carcinogen, then his opinion regarding what should or shouldn't be given weight in the cancer prevention categories is profoundly meaningful.

But wait . . . once again. We have a slight problem here. Dr. Christopher Wild, though Director of IARC in May 2011, was *not* part of the Working Group that classified RF – EMF a 2B carcinogen. His presence was noted by some, though not all, of the experts assembled. Perhaps he was there as an observer? Wild was not invited to join the Working Group as an expert, nor was he listed as an official observer. Yet his comment during the February 3 press conference led almost all in the room to believe he was a key player in the historic 2B vote in May 2011. The problem is, Dr. Wild's statement appeared to be self-anointed gravitas with a hollow ring. The purpose of this maneuver?

It was time to alert Dr. Lennart Hardell, the epidemiologist whose science helped move IARC toward a nearly unanimous vote to classify RF – EMF a 2B carcinogen. Hardell is the esteemed researcher whose science the Italian Supreme Court gave significant weight to as they decided the fate of a landmark case of a man who developed a brain tumor known as an acoustic neuroma from a work-related cell phone.

In just six words Dr. Lennart Hardell summed up what the silent elephant taking up the greatest space in the press conference could not express. "What is going on at IARC?" asked Dr. Hardell.

No one could have phrased it more poignantly. And no one deserved to ask this question more than the man whose science earned the 2B classification for the RF – EMF Spectrum as voted on by IARC in May 2011, the man who maintained independence in the financing of his science, and the man whose science is the hope of a series of cell phone-related brain tumor lawsuits in the United States. Indeed, what *is* going on at IARC?

Truly, it makes no sense, unless one starts to believe telecom influences at WHO are more powerful than WHO/IARC's responsibility to accurately assess cancer risks of various substances that have the potential to jeopardize the health of millions, or billions, of people. After all, when the Monograph was published by IARC detailing, in 430 pages, the basis for the 2B decision on RF radiation, *Microwave News* reported that the basis for the 2B decision was summed up in one sentence: "'Positive associations have been observed between exposure to radiofrequency radiation from wireless phones and glioma and acoustic neuroma" (p.421). Those associations with brain tumors and tumors of the acoustic nerve were observed, reported Louis Slesin, by the Interphone study group and Lennart Hardell's team in Sweden.

But Hardell's science was hardly done. Subsequent to the 2B classification in May 2011, the Hardell group published five more studies, all of them in 2013, prior to the release of the *World Cancer Report 2014*. Lennart Hardell and his research team have reaffirmed their previous findings that long-term use of a wireless phone leads to higher rates of both malignant brain tumors and acoustic neuromas. The longer the use of wireless phones (mobile and cordless), the greater the risk for malignant brain tumors as well as acoustic neuromas.

The Hardell Group concluded in their world-renowned epidemiological studies, that according to the IARC Preamble, the classification for RF - EMF should be Group 1, i.e., "the agent is carcinogenic to humans", and stated urgent revision of current guidelines for exposure is needed. The current safety limits and reference levels are not adequate to protect public health. New public health standards and limits are needed. Lennart Hardell, PhD could not have stated his findings more clearly.

How could this be that Dr. Christopher Wild, Director of IARC at the time of the 2B classification and co-author of the *World Cancer Report 2014*, could tell a room full of reporters – in response to a query as to

whether the 2B classification might be deserving of 2A or “probable human” carcinogen status, “There is no new evidence which suggests there is any cause for concern.”

No new evidence? Did IARC’s director fail to see Dr. Hardell’s five new papers? Responded Lennart Hardell, “If Wild says that there are no new studies he is either not telling the truth or is uninformed about what is published, although our articles were sent to IARC. In either case he is not doing his job properly.” Dr. Hardell was absolutely correct. It is IARC’s responsibility to monitor studies in PubMed Central, a comprehensive archive of biomedical and life sciences journal literature at the U.S. National Institutes of Health’s National Library of Medicine.

Hardell then asked a question that surely the Elephant in the Room had been trumpeting in vain ever since his arrival at the press conference taking place at the Royal Society Library : “Is there a conflict of interest at IARC?”

So what does IARC have to say about the failure to include the RF – EMF Spectrum in a major world health policy study and press conference, in this world of rising cancer rates juxtaposed with “all things wireless”? Could we be facing the biggest failure in cancer prevention since it took 30 years to label tobacco products carcinogenic?

One scientist does not speak for all, as IARC is composed of experts from around the world. Yet one voice that deserves to be heard is that of Dariusz Leszczynski, PhD, DSc., Specialty Chief Editor, *Health and Radiation*, Frontiers in Public Health. He is also an Adjunct Professor, University of Helsinki, Finland and a member of the IARC Working Group that in May 2011 classified cell phone radiation as a possible human carcinogen.

“There are many causes of increases in cancer cases around the world,” explains Prof. Leszczynski, reflecting news of the *World Cancer Report 2014*. “IARC’s focus on prevention is a very good sign. It is easier and cheaper to prevent cancers than to cure them.

“In 2011 IARC classified cell phone radiation as a possible carcinogen,” Leszczynski continues. “It means that in 2011 there was enough science to support such classification. Since 2011 there were new studies published on cell phone radiation and cancer but none of them provided evidence that could be used to invalidate 2011 classification of cell phone radiation as a possible carcinogen. There are over five billion cell phone users. Even a small risk, as this identified by IARC, if it materializes, will have far reaching consequences because of the omnipresence of cell phone radiation-emitting technologies. It would be prudent, and it would be in line with IARC’s own evaluation, to remind people of the possible carcinogenicity of cell phone radiation.”

In conclusion, Leszczynski offers a reminder of a lesson often overlooked, “It would be good to call for precaution and it would be in line with the preventive message that IARC advocates. It would be good to remember the past and not again make mistakes where early warning signs are neglected.”

Dariusz Leszczynski was not necessarily referring to other elephants in the room of years and carcinogens past, but he could have been.

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And now, let’s have a glimpse back at that press briefing in London on the rainy Monday morning in early February with two esteemed scientists, 25 reporters, and one invisible Pachyderm. The latter had been standing in stoic silence, the giant mammal visible to none, though one might speculate that Drs. Wild and Stewart were made painfully aware of his enormous presence.

In the days and even weeks to come, the Radiation Research Trust’s Advisor waited for any one of the esteemed media outlets to pick up the proverbial Elephant in the Room’s presence. That giant mammal dwarfing all else in the room may as well have had the words “*The RF – EMF Spectrum may cause cancer*” flashing in neon lights on his side. Was the grip of corporate influence and government

complicity truly able to silence concern that came out of IARC's meeting in May 2011? The World Cancer Report 2014 was in process at the time and clearly one of its co-authors was acutely aware of the 2B "possible human carcinogen" status. Weren't the reporters even a tiny bit curious about a lone man's grilling of Drs. Wild and Stewart? Apparently not, because among the various news outlets, silence about the apparent hypocrisy dominated.

The Advisor's disappointment was great, but his surprise less so. After all, he had long been aware that telecommunications had been buying up large portions of the media. In addition, advertising revenue from telcom had become welcome income for media of all forms. Whoever controls the media controls the public's thinking.

But where was the Precautionary Principal, a concept that urges caution particularly where children are involved until a substance or technology can be proven safe?

There was absolutely no sense from IARC's *World Cancer Report 2014* or the accompanying press release of a Precautionary Principal considering the current classification of RF as a "possible human" carcinogen. Even in the face of demands from many scientists and public health officials around the world that the RF Spectrum causes cancer and should be much more tightly regulated, there is silence from IARC and WHO, and misleading statements on WHO's website continue, stating "no adverse health effects have been found" with respect to cell phones.

In his glimpse back to his eager anticipation as he entered the press conference on February 3, the Advisor's hopes for the world sagged around him like the ripples of wrinkles descending to the hooved feet of the Pachyderm that had stood next to him. There were two great disappointments. First, IARC missed a brilliant chance to change the well-being of so many people for the better. Where was the prevention they so desperately call for? Where was the leadership of IARC in the face of their own warning to the world in May 2011?

And secondly, and equally worrying, the Advisor was stunned by the sheer lack of journalistic duty. The journalists in that room represented the great British press, including the BBC, *The Guardian*, and *The Times*. None of his concerns were reported. Even weeks later, as he scoured the media, it was clear they had reported absolutely nothing about the questions raised by the RRT's Advisor who directly challenged Drs. Wild and Stewart. The omission of the 2B carcinogen, RF radiation that powers all things wireless, was complete. It didn't deserve a preventive focus because it barely existed in the giant tome, and certainly not a mention in the press release. Every single media outlet missed a major story considering our current levels of RF (microwave) radiation exposure levels. The truth is, thought the gentleman sent to the press conference by Eileen O'Connor – a woman who knew the horrors of 24/7 radiation first hand -- there appears to be a deeply complicit attitude from the media in not addressing these profoundly legitimate health concerns. Does that mean the truth of this major issue will not get out before it is too late?

The briefing room used by Drs. Wild and Stewart for their grand announcement has seen many visitors come and go since February 3. The topics differ as much as the people who file into the Royal Society's Library Events Room. Yet one visitor remains the same, and he has refused to leave the room. Hundreds of millions of lives are at stake, and as long as they are, the Elephant in the Room will remain, raising his trunk in a valiant attempt to be heard. After all, silence is not an option.