

Fed: Experts says TV poses more risk than mobile phone

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MELBOURNE, Nov 18 AAP - The World Health Organisation (WHO) says there's been a global over-reaction to modern mobile communications technology and its possible threat of health risk. Coordinator of the WHO's Radiation and Environmental Health Unit, Dr Mike Repacholi, says televisions and radios pose more of a health risk than mobile phones or mobile phone base stations - at least for adults. He says, however, more study is needed to determine whether there is a risk for children and their developing nervous systems. "The signals from (mobile phone) base stations are generally less than for the TV and radio, which we've all been subjected to for 50 to 60 years," Dr Repacholi said today. "People are generally scared by new technology ... but after \$250 million in research over ten years we still haven't found any (reason for health concerns)." But, Dr Repacholi says there is one area where more science is needed to rule out concerns. That is, the effect today's rising levels of electromagnetic transmissions might have on children. "Kids are going to be exposed to these fields for much longer now, children as young as five have got mobile phones," Dr Repacholi said. "We don't think they have any extra sensitivity but we do need to do the studies." He said it was particularly relevant as wireless internet was rolled out across schools in the western world. Generally, Dr Repacholi said, wireless internet resulted in less electromagnetic transmissions than mobile phones and, therefore, less than television and radio. "They are also of no health concern," he said. Dr Repacholi was in Melbourne this week for a two-day WHO and Australian Centre for RF Bioeffects Research (ACRBR) regional workshop, which also included researchers and scientists from Thailand to New Zealand. The workshop discussed the latest scientific findings relating to radio frequency fields. He said efforts would continue to dispel myths surrounding the technology. The suspicion of electromagnetic transmissions - along with claims of related ill health including rashes, headaches and sleeplessness - remained a problem globally, he said.

Public outcry over mobile phone base stations in Spain had led to 300 being dismantled by the government, while there were more than 1,000 related cases before that country's courts, he said. "The only people who win out of that is the lawyers," Dr Repacholi said. "The purpose of this is to tell people what the real situation is, what the science is saying ... It's no use perpetuating a myth."

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