

UC Berkeley Psychologist Joel Moskowitz Is Cell Phone, Wi-Fi 'Truther'



By Alex Berezow — February 28, 2017



Only one of these actually causes cancer. (Credit: Shutterstock) [1]

No matter the evidence, some people always will refuse to accept it. Some of those people are university professors.

[Joel Moskowitz](#) [2] is one of those professors. With a background in mathematics and social psychology, he now serves as Director of the Center for Family and Community Health at the University of California-Berkeley School of Public Health. And he is on a crusade to prove that California (yes, the state that passed Proposition 65, which [labels almost anything a carcinogen](#) [3]) is secretly hiding data that shows cell phones are giving people cancer.

Like 9/11 and vaccine truthers, Dr. Moskowitz knows a conspiracy when he sees one. To explain why he recently filed suit against the State of California to force it to turn over cell phone safety documents, he told the [local CBS affiliate](#) [4]:

"They claim that this would lead to chaos and confusion among the public, I suspect that they were afraid of the reaction from the telecommunications industry should they publish this document. In fact, they even argued that in their brief."

Big Government in collusion with Big Business. Even though Dr. Moskowitz admitted to the [Los Angeles Times](#) [5] that there is no "irrefutable evidence" linking cell phones to cancer, the conspiracy storyline never gets old.

There is, of course, a simpler (and more accurate) explanation: Cell phones don't actually cause cancer, and the telecommunications industry would be righteously outraged by the purposeful release of fake news.

National Cancer Institute Says Cell Phones Don't Cause Cancer

There is a neutral, evidence-based arbiter who could settle this matter for Dr. Moskowitz. It is the National Cancer Institute, an agency within the National Institutes of Health. They have an [entire page](#) [6] dedicated to explaining why cell phones don't cause cancer. It is worth reading in its entirety, but one particular section stands out: A [discussion](#) [7] of why studies that show a link between cell phones and cancer are probably wrong.

Take this [meta-analysis](#) [8], for instance. The methodology is suspect because the authors only examined case-control studies. Largely because of [recall bias](#) [7] (i.e., people who are sick tend to remember past events differently than healthy people), these observational studies are notorious for producing false positives. Cohort studies, in which groups of people are followed over time, are more accurate. [Two gigantic cohort studies](#) [9] (which, combined, total well over one million people), showed no link between cell phones and cancer.

Additionally, physics would argue that it is [impossible for cell phone photons to cause cancer](#) [10]. This, in conjunction with the enormous cohort studies, really ought to put the matter to rest.

Et Tu, Wi-Fi?

WiFi in schools: Is it hurting your child?

Paul Joncich, KLAS (Las Vegas, NV), May 10, 2016

Retired Electronics Professor Wants To Create Wi-Fi Free Refuge

Mark Ackerman, CBS Denver, Jul 9, 2015

Are Wi-Fi Signals Making You Sick?

Marissa Bailey, CBS Chicago, July 1, 2015

People Believe Wi-Fi Is Making Them Sick

Dr. Mallika Marshall, CBS Boston, Jun 8, 2015

Seen At 11: Is Wi-Fi Making You Sick?

CBS New York, May 20, 2015

Alas, the "debate" goes on. Dr. Moskowitz seems intent on "teaching the controversy" on cell phones... and wi-fi, too.

On his [website](#) [11], Dr. Moskowitz promotes media stories that cover the supposed link between

harmless kinds of electromagnetic radiation and cancer. It appears that needlessly scaring parents is how this professor of public health spends his free time. (See image on right.)

Wi-fi, like cell phone signals, relies on the [radio-frequency spectrum](#) [12]. This portion of the electromagnetic spectrum is utilized by all sorts of everyday devices, from broadcast television and AM/FM radios to microwave ovens and satellite communications. If it was really true that man-made electromagnetic radiation is making us sick, then we would all have died decades ago after the invention of radio.

Academia: Where Crazy People Can't Get Fired

Dr. Moskowitz disgraces the University of California-Berkeley in precisely the same way [Dr. Oz and Mark Bittman disgrace Columbia University](#) [13]: They are charlatans who wrap themselves in the prestige of academia to peddle foolishness to anxious parents. He is a blight upon academia and a nuisance to public health.

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Links

[1] <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-illustration/colorful-illustration-breakfast-eggs-bacon-on-235127482>

[2] <http://sph.berkeley.edu/joel-moskowitz>

[3] <http://www.acsh.org/news/2016/06/03/should-california-put-a-label-on-your-penis>

[4] <http://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2017/02/24/judge-orders-california-to-release-papers-discussing-risk-of-cell-phone-use/?source=acsh.org>

[5] <http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-lazarus-20150626-column.html>

[6] <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/radiation/cell-phones-fact-sheet>

[7] <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/radiation/cell-phones-fact-sheet#q5>

[8] <http://ijomeh.eu/Mobile-phone-use-and-risk-for-intracranial-tumours-and-salivary-gland-tumours-A-meta-analysis,63713,0,2.html>

[9] <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/radiation/cell-phones-fact-sheet#q4>

[10] <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/can-you-hear-me-now/>

[11] <http://www.saferemr.com/2015/07/wireless-radiation-tv-news.html>

[12] <https://www.britannica.com/science/radio-frequency-spectrum>

[13] <http://acsh.org/news/2016/11/30/dr-oz-mark-bittman-and-quacks-columbia-university-10500>