

Personality Trait, Social Interaction and Mobile Phone Usage Dependence

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Policy Brief

The health effects by mobile base station have been extensively studied in recent years. Hutter et al. (2006) selected and interviewed households randomly in the vicinity of 10 GSM base stations in rural and urban areas of Austria, and the results indicated that the effects of very low but long lasting exposures to emissions from mobile telephone base stations on wellbeing and health cannot be ruled out. Kundi and Hutterin (2009) summarized the extensive literature of the effect of mobile base station on wellbeing and health. The results are mixed. Experimental studies applying short-term exposure to base station signals gave weak evidence that the signals reduce wellbeing in person. But two ecological studies cancer on the vicinity of base stations reported a strong increase of incidence within a radius of 350 and 400 meters, respectively. Though no firm conclusion can be drawn, the results underline the urgent need for a comprehensive investigation of this issue.

This study provides a better understanding of the public's attitude toward mobile base station siting and the suggestions to the authority NCC can be thus drawn. Mobile operators in Taiwan often install base stations by stealth at midnight. This kind of behavior decreases their corporate images and drastically raises the public's disapproval. Protests against siting deteriorate the relationship between operators and local residents. In the empirical results, it is found that proximity most highly affects the attitude toward mobile base station siting. In order to alleviate the resistance of station siting, to make base stations invisible or beautified are the alternatives in the siting procedure. However, Hadden (1989) claimed that the public's right to know is not only a legal subject but also a powerful approach to risk communication and an extension to public relations. It is the common phenomenon in the countries such as Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong and the U.S., in which high densities of base stations do not necessarily bring the protests against station siting. The authority approbates mobile operators to install network infrastructures such as base stations, and any local group has no rights to dismantle these infrastructures. Legality protection is enacted because the authority is trusted by the public in monitoring the installation process.

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Hence, mobile operators and the authority in Taiwan should make the siting of mobile base stations publicized and, at the same time, operators' legality protection should be enacted. But it is a challenging task for both operators and the authority.

People enjoy the convenience of mobile service but dislike base station siting nearby the neighborhood. The effect of EMF on health is still unclear today and it is hard to reverse the residents' negative stereotypes on base station. The authority should play an important role in the provision of the knowledge on EMF and base station, especially in the EMF measurement and installation of base stations. The public should be informed and educated by the accurate information such as the design of cellular system and base station, scientific health report, EMF measurement and safety regulation. The information should be brief, easy-to-read and updated frequently, broadcasting in various channels such as TV commercial and brochure. This will gradually increase the public's trust in the authority and operators. In turn, an increase in trust raises the public's positive attitude toward mobile base station siting.

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