

WI-FI IN SCHOOLS: A HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE, A CHILDREN'S HEALTH ISSUE

For immediate release - July 18, 2018. On July 13, 2018, the BC Human Rights Tribunal released its decision in the case of *J and L obo T v. School District No. 63 and others*, where a mother and grandmother sought justice for T, their son/grandson who was assessed by two physicians as suffering from migraines from a school Wi-Fi system--a health condition known as electrical hypersensitivity (EHS) or microwave syndrome.

What many parents don't know is that the industrial-strength Wi-Fi routers used in schools can increase microwave radiation exposure up to 2700 times ambient levels. With levels this high, it should come as no surprise that some children are affected. There are numerous reports of children getting headaches and other symptoms following the installation of Wi-Fi in schools. No studies confirm the safety of long-term Wi-Fi exposure for children, and no EHS studies have been conducted on children. Even Health Canada "recognizes the need for long-term studies related to children and wireless devices."

Evidence submitted in this case indicates that it is now accepted in the scientific community that wireless radiation causes biological effects and children are much more susceptible. Scientists have identified a part of the brain that is highly sensitive to minute changes in microwave (wireless) levels and reacts, altering brain chemistry, following exposure. Health Canada has not acted to protect children.

Human rights tribunals were established to be independent from government and to provide a mechanism of accountability for government (in)action. In this case, the Tribunal chose to defer to Health Canada and other institutions on the scientific question. On the other hand, the family submitted evidence from scientists indicating Health Canada's reliance on biased and methodologically flawed reports.

In relation to the evidence and argument submitted, there appear to be some inaccuracies and concerning suggestions in the decision. Some members of the public have reacted by blaming the family for isolating T. This is akin to chastising a parent of an asthmatic child in the year 1950 for removing the child from a smoking environment. This seems preposterous now, but recall that cigarette smoke was considered so safe that it was permitted in hospitals.

Where there are powerful financial interests at stake, we know governments can be slow to act. Nonetheless, brave parents around the country are increasingly standing up to school boards in order to protect the health of their children. Schools are not following recommended best practices to turn routers off when not in use, and to dial back exposure levels to the minimum needed, and that's because the routers they chose are designed so they can't be turned down nor turned off by teachers.

In this case, the school misled the family regarding T's exposure to wireless devices at school. Based on his symptoms, the family correctly identified that T was still being exposed beyond what had been discussed. The Tribunal commented "It is troubling that the School District, after representing that it would allow anyone who wanted to avoid Wi-Fi and RF to do so, appears to have ignored that representation without any explanation."

As a community, we should be cautious about trusting our school boards and our governments when it comes to the health of our children. As Pediatric Neurologist Martha Hebert warns:

In fact, there are thousands of papers that have accumulated over decades—and are now accumulating at an accelerating pace, as our ability to measure impacts becomes more sensitive—that document adverse health and neurological impacts of EMF/RF. Children are more vulnerable than adults, and children with chronic illnesses and/or neurodevelopmental disabilities are even more vulnerable.

For more information on health and safety issues, visit: <https://ehtrust.org/key-issues/cell-phoneswireless/wifi-in-schools/>