

Electromagnetic Hypersensitivity (EHS): Desperation for a Denied Illness

Pistoia, 15th February 2009 – During the night between 14th and 15th February a 48-year old lady, M. from Pistoia in Tuscany, committed suicide because exasperated by a complex disabling condition.

She had a motor disability and a few months ago she started to be extremely reactive to electromagnetic fields and chemicals so she had lost her autonomy and she also suffered for the isolation caused by these sensitivities. The help of friendly people and of patients-organizations was not enough to give her confidence in the future.

M. had a burning sensation in the head and throughout the body, tinnitus in the ears, a feeling of suffocation when she was in contact with a freshly washed fabric or near a computer, a phone or electrical. She could not even use the phone because it caused her headache. These are all very common symptoms for those suffering from Electromagnetic Hypersensitivity (EHS), a condition that, according to medical estimates, affects from 1 to 8% of the population.

M. was in contact with the Association for Chronic Toxic and/or Environmental Injury (AMICA) and the Association of Italian Electro-Hypersensitive people (AIE), which have been trying for months to help the lady as much as possible and had provided scientific evidence to bring to her doctors.

"We know that she had plans to move to the mountains, away from phones, masts and power lines", Silvia Bigeschi, Vice President and Head of AMICA Tuscany comments.

The lady started to react to electromagnetic fields since last April, shortly after a therapy with electromagnetic stimulation, and she wondered if this could be the cause of her deterioration.

"M. had metal plates in her body that may increase the absorption of electromagnetic fields up to hundreds of times and, according to some scientific studies (Irvine No 2004), these represent a risk factor for EHS", said Anna Zuccherò, physician and President of Associazione Italiana Electro.

"The ICNIRP guidelines (International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection) does not specify limits to ensure safety for the population with metal prostheses and we are still waiting, since 10 years ago, that the CENELEC (European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization) determines limits of exposure for these subjects", Dr. Zuccherò adds.

"Many scientists complain that the current standards do not protect the health of citizens and the European Parliament has recommended last September to review the limits for exposure to electromagnetic fields of ICNIRP precisely because the emergence of diseases like the EHS and MCS", Francesca Romana

Orlando, Vice President of AMICA, comments.

EHS is a recognized disability in Sweden, where there are initiative to overcome "electric barriers" and, similarly, in the United States and in Germany, Multiple Chemical Sensitivity is recognized as a physical disability by several administrations. A few months ago the first village for EHS was created in France: www.zoneblanche.fr

According to international associations, such as www.next-up.org or www.microwavenews.com , the non-recognition of this condition worldwide is attributable to the heavy conflict of interests of the leader of the WHO group of study about electromagnetic fields.

A.M.I.C.A. and A.I.E. believe that the silence of the institutions and their failure in protecting who is suffering from Multiple Chemical Sensitivity and Electrosensibility might be a real crime and the two organization are considering to take legal action.

"The only investment by the Ministry of Health to the Istituto Superiore di Sanità (the scientific arm of the Ministry) is used for a study about the change the perception of the risk from electromagnetic fields (project CAMELET); this is contrary to the provisions of the law suggesting the need for studies about the health impact", the President of the Italian EHS complains.

"M. loved the truth, the intellectual honesty and the social commitment: we invite everyone to listen to what she is telling us with her death in order to avoid to others the same suffering she had", Dr. Zuccherero says.

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