

SCIENTIFIC MEETING

Radiofrequencies and health:

research in a fast-moving
environment

23rd November 2022

Espace Diderot - Paris

#RadiofrequenciesRS

The association between real-life markers of phone use and **cognitive performance**, **health-related quality of life** and **sleep**

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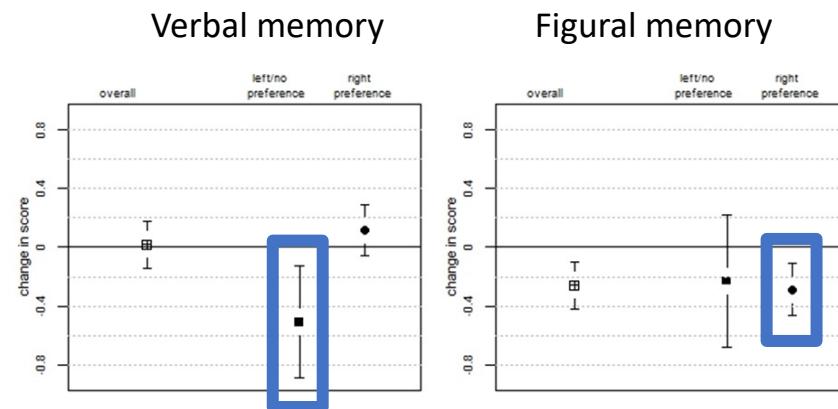
Background

SPUTNIC: Study Panel on Upcoming Technologies to study Non-Ionizing radiation and Cognition

Real-life short-term effects of RF-EMF on cognition and HRQoL have not been well studied

Inconclusive results from previous study in Swiss adolescents (Foerster et al., 2019):

- **Left-side** users scored lower on **verbal** memory
(which challenges the left side of the brain)
- **Right-side** users scored lower on **figural** memory
(which challenges the right side of the brain)



Project Goal

Study 3 Markers of RF-EMF exposure:

- (1) Cordless phone call duration
- (2) Mobile phone call duration
- (3) Screen time

And 3 Markers of health:

- (1) Cognitive performance
- (2) Sleep quality and quantity
- (3) Health-related quality of life



Recruitment of study population

Followed 121 smartphone users for 10 days each

- 58 from Basel, Switzerland
- 63 from Besançon, France

SPUTNIC
Study on Upcoming Technologies to measure Non-ionizing radiation and Cognition

Téléphonie mobile et santé :
L'utilisation quotidienne du smartphone a-t-elle un impact sur notre mémoire, notre sommeil, notre bien-être ?

- Vous avez un smartphone Android ?
- Vous l'utilisez quotidiennement et passez au moins 5 appels par semaine ?
- Vous avez 20 ans ou plus ?
- Vous habitez Besançon ?

PARTICIPEZ pendant 10 à 15 jours à cette étude !

Renseignements et inscriptions :
sputnic@chu-besancon.fr
Étude indemnisée à hauteur de 35 €

Logos: Swiss TPH, CHRU Besançon, CHU de Besançon, Universität Basel, CHRONO ENVIRONNEMENT, UBFC, anses

Studie zu Mobilfunkstrahlung und Gedächtnis

Wie hoch ist Ihre Strahlungsbelastung durch Ihr Smartphone?
Wie beeinflusst die Strahlungsbelastung Ihr Gedächtnis?

Finden Sie es heraus und leisten Sie einen Beitrag zu topaktueller Forschung



SPUTNIC Swiss TPH Universität Basel

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International Agency for Research on Cancer
World Health Organization

anses

Study Population

Followed 121 smartphone users

- 58 from Basel, Switzerland
- 63 from Besancon, France

Characteristics of the study population by study center

	Total	Besancon, FR	Basel, CH
	121	63	58
Age (mean (SD))	34.3 (15.5)	31.4 (13.4)	37.4 (17.0)
Male sex (n (%))	36 (30)	15 (24.2)	21 (36.2)
Education status (n (%)) *			
Lower secondary	1 (0.8)	0 (0)	1 (1.7)
Higher secondary / Grammar	33 (27.3)	11 (17.5)	22 (37.9)
Post-secondary, non-tertiary	16 (13.2)	12 (19.0)	4 (6.9)
Bachelor / teacher's college	38 (31.4)	20 (31.7)	18 (31.0)
Master University	28 (23.1)	18 (28.6)	10 (17.2)
Doctorate University	5 (4.1)	2 (3.2)	3 (5.2)
Employment status (n (%))			
Employed	50 (41.3)	29 (46.0)	21 (36.2)
Student	46 (38.0)	21 (33.3)	25 (43.1)
Pensioner	13 (10.7)	4 (6.3)	9 (15.5)
Unemployed	9 (7.4)	7 (11.1)	2 (3.4)
Other	3 (2.5)	2 (3.2)	1 (1.7)
Right-handed (n (%))	106 (87.6)	55 (87.3)	51 (87.9)
Hand phone use (n (%))			
Both (n (%))	50 (41.3)	25 (39.7)	25 (43.1)
Left (n (%))	21 (17.4)	9 (14.3)	12 (20.7)
Right (n (%))	50 (41.3)	29 (46.0)	21 (36.2)

Methods (study design)

Setup home visit / video call:

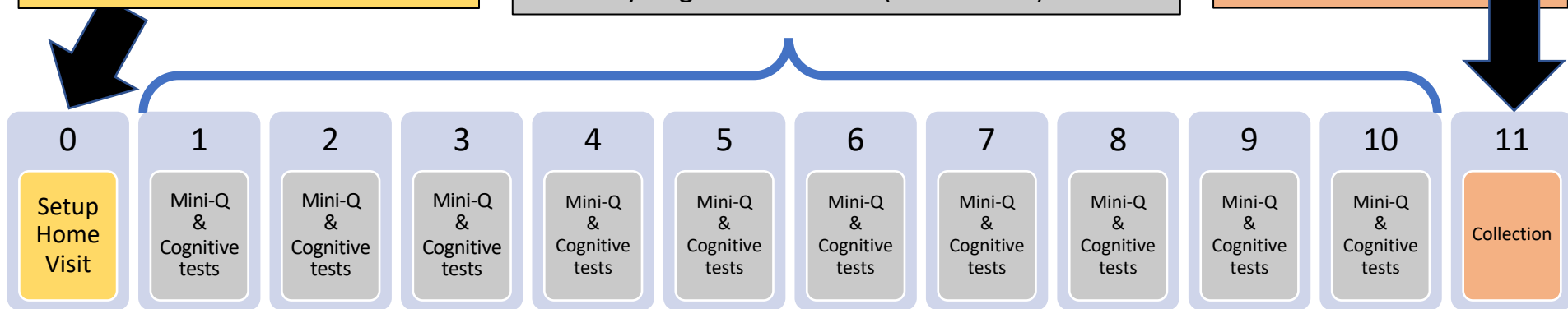
- Study information
- Informed consent

10-day follow-up:

- Mobile phone use & EMF (smartphone app)
- Physical activity & sleep measurements (Fitbit)
- Daily HRQoL (mini-questionnaire)
- Daily Cognitive function (online tests)

Collection visit:

- Check-up
- Collect materials



Methods (exposure and health assessments)

3 Markers of RF-EMF exposure:

- (1) Cordless phone call duration
- (2) Mobile phone call duration
- (3) Screen time

3 Markers of health

- (1) Cognitive performance
- (2) Sleep quality and quantity
- (3) Health-related quality of life



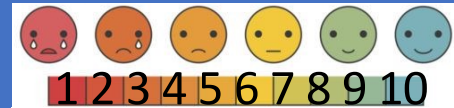
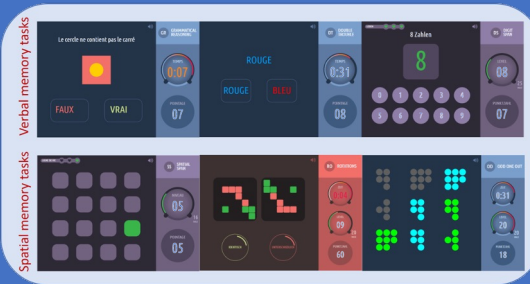
Daily online questionnaire
(4hrs prior to cognitive tests)



Cognitive tests

Fitness Tracker (Fitbit)

Questionnaire



Likert scale

Verbal memory tasks

Spatial memory tasks

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Statistical analysis

Confounders

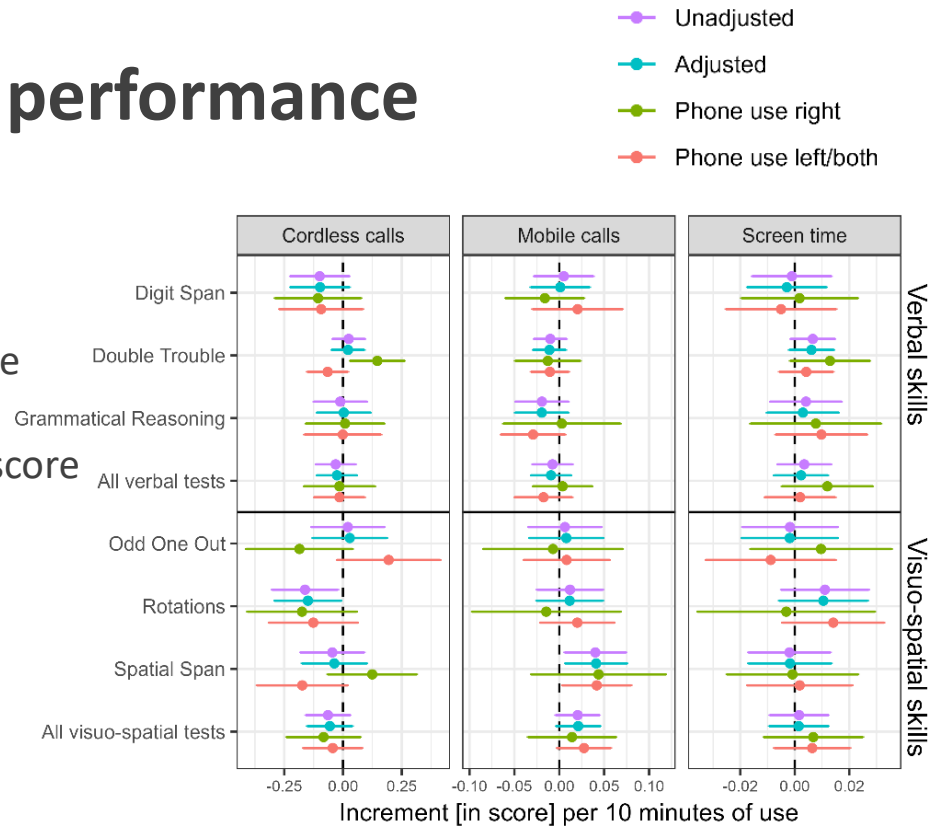
- Time-variant confounders (time spent outdoors, medication, coffee and alcohol intake) were assessed daily by online questionnaire.

Statistical modelling

- Data from all participants who completed at least 3 assessments
- Software: R version 4.0.3
- Mixed models (R lme4 package) with random intercepts for each study participant (considering systematic differences between individuals in cognition, HRQoL & sleep)

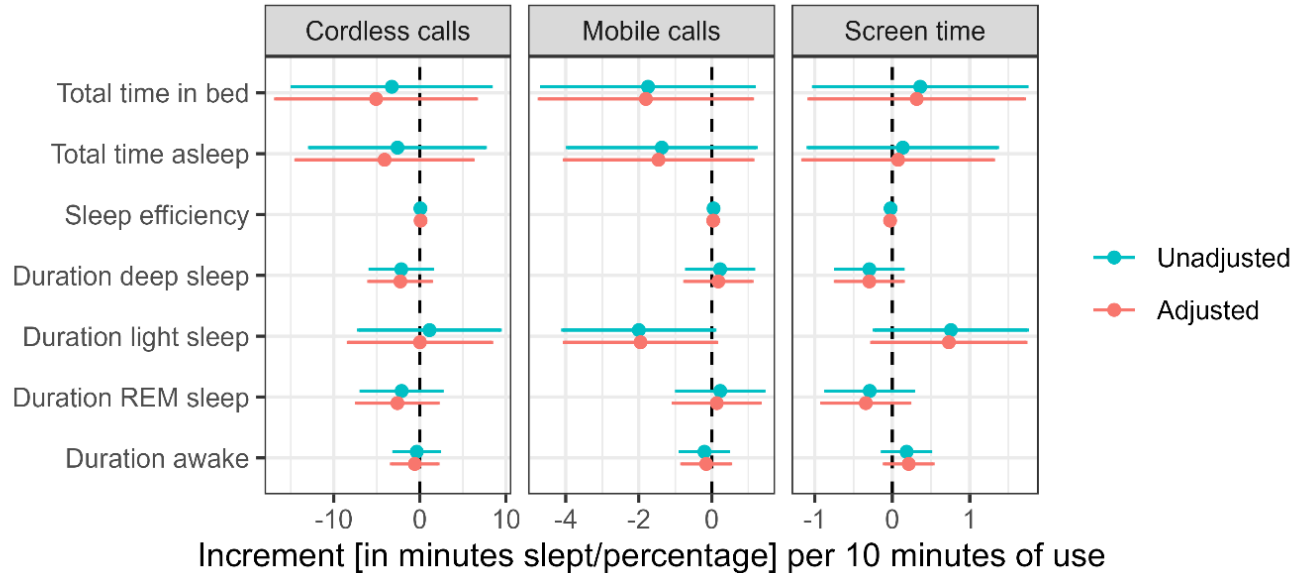
Associations with cognitive performance

- 24 statistical tests / 2 significant associations
- 10-min increase in cordless calls → -0.149 (95% CI: -0.292, -0.007) decrease “Rotations” score
- 10-min increase in mobile calls → -0.041 (95% CI: 0.006, 0.076) increase in “Spatial Span” score
- Lack of a pattern
- Compatible with chance findings
- Similar for laterality-specific associations



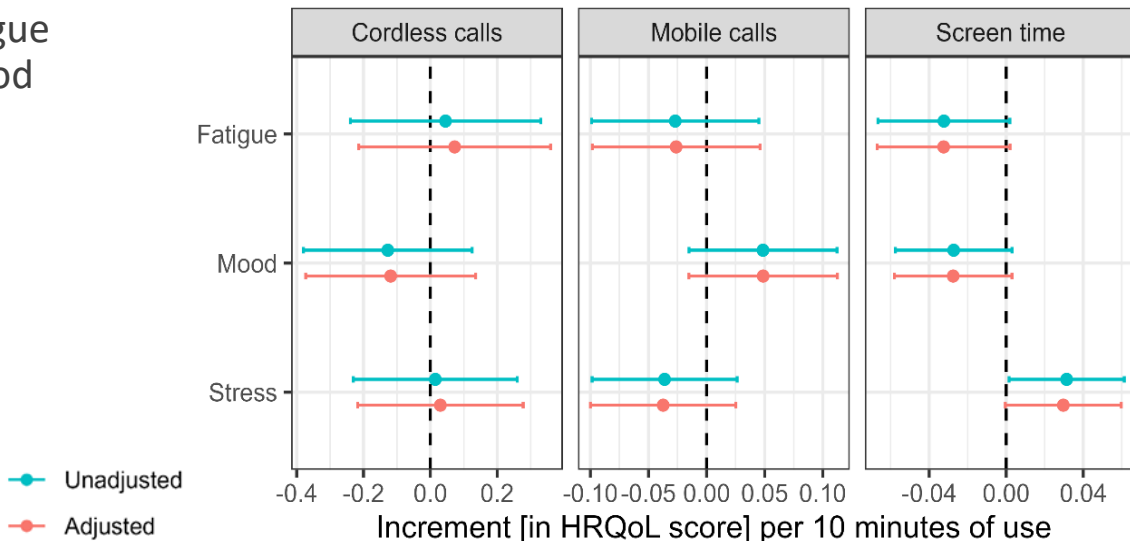
Associations with sleep duration & quality

- No significant associations at all, no patterns



Associations with Health-Related Quality of Life

- No associations between cordless or mobile phone calls and any of the HRQoL indicators
- 10-min increase in screen time →
 - 0.03 (95% CI: -0.07, 0.00) decrease in fatigue
 - 0.03 (95% CI: -0.06, 0.00) decrease in mood
 - 0.03 (95% CI: 0.00, 0.06) increase in stress



Conclusion

- Inconsistent associations between phone use and cognition
- No associations for sleep duration or quality
- Adverse effects of screen time on HRQoL have previously been indicated
- Screen time is likely to be a more critical exposure than call time

Project team:

Sophie Pujol, Aaron Klaiber, Gilles Chopard, Andrin Riss, Florian Smayra, Benjamin Flückiger, Thomas Gehin, Kadiatou Diallo, Joe Wiart, Taghrid Mazloum, Frédéric Mauny, Martin Rösli

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Ethics:

Ethical permission for the Swiss part of the panel study was granted by the Ethical Commission Northwest/Central Switzerland on 25 March 2019 (EKNZ number 2019-00466). The French study protocol was written in accordance with reference methodology MR004 (Outside the Jardé law).



Thank you! Questions? marloes.eeftens@swisstph.ch