

**"ELECTROSENSITIVITY", "ELECTROSUPERSENSITIVITY" AND "SCREEN DERMATITIS": PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS FROM ON-GOING PROVOCATION STUDIES IN HUMANS.** Olle Johansson, assoc. prof., Experimental Dermatology Unit, Department of Neuroscience, Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden.

A new category of patients has recently been described in the literature [1, 2], namely those that claim to suffer from subjective and objective skin- and mucosa-related symptoms, such as itch, smarting, pain, heat sensation, redness, papules, pustles, etc., after exposure to visual display terminals (VDTs) as well as other electromagnetic devices, both at their work and in their home. Some patients also have symptoms from internal organs, such as the heart and the brain. Clinical dermatologists often describe these patients as suffering from either some kind of earlier acknowledged skin disease, e.g. seborrheic keratosis or rosacea, or from so-called 'techno-stress', a term first used in Japan for work-related stress. Also Pavlovian-type conditioning has been attributed to this group of patients. So far, however, very little is known about the exact cause of the above-mentioned symptoms and, thus, generally very little treatment can be offered. In addition, it may be mentioned that recent epidemiological studies point to a correlation between long-term exposures from magnetic fields and cancer [3, 4].

The aim of the on-going study is to investigate possible stimulus-response couplings, during blind provocations with electric and/or magnetic fields using verbal descriptors. As controls, age- and sex-matched persons without any subjective or clinical symptoms are serving.

The study is in an on-going phase, and therefore only preliminary observations will be presented and discussed. However, in summary, it is already obvious that several background milieu factors may interfere in such provocations studies. The implications of this will be further discussed during the presentation.

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**References:**

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