Reviewer's report

Title: Representative survey on idiopathic environmental intolerance attributed to electromagnetic fields in Taiwan and comparison with the international literature

Version: 0 Date: 04 Aug 2017

Reviewer: A. Braescher

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting manuscript, following up the prevalence rate in Taiwan by a representative telephone survey (N = 3,303) and comparing it with the prevalence rate in 2007. The authors report a decrease in prevalence (from 13.3 to 4.6 %), confirm that more women than men are affected and show that persons' concerned have impairments in daily activities. They further researched the literature on prevalence rates worldwide and conducted meta-analyses, showing a prevalence rate of 6 %.

I have a few suggestions.

Background:

- Other than reported by the authors, the cited study by Linet et al. (1997) (p. 4, l. 45) did not come to the conclusion that residential exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMF) increased the risk of lymphoblastic leukemia in children

- Could you insert a reference, proving your statement on p. 5, l. 66/67?

- It might be appropriate to critically reflect on the approach and methods used in the cited letter to the editor (Hallberg & Oberfeld, 2006) (p. 5, l.74-p. 8, .1), predicting a prevalence of 50 % of IEI-EMF in 2017

Methods

- Missing word (p. 6, l. 85)

- Why was the target sample size 1,100 in every region?
- During which time interval did the telephone survey take place?

- How people were contacted, how many declined to participate?

Results

- The results section would be better structured, if the authors would separate results of the telephone survey/comparison with the 2007 study and the results of the literature review/meta-analyses

Discussion

- How can the cited paper (Claassen et al., 2012) partly explain the declining trend in the prevalence of IEI-EMF? Claassen et al. (2012) come to the conclusion that "media often suggest a negative relationship between electromagnetic field exposure and health" and that information "was mostly framed in terms of precaution and concern" - in my opinion this would not speak in favor of a decreased prevalence; cf. Eldridge-Thomas & Rubin (2013) and Huiberts et al. (2013) for similar content analyses in Britain and Norway

Fig. 1

- Google scholar is missing

- Could you insert the specific numbers for reason of exclusion?

Fig. 2


Fig. 3 & 4

- Please check the spelling of the names (e.g., Scherottner, Levallosis)
- It would be convenient, if you could insert the reference [x]

- Please explain whether the year refers to the publication or to the year of the assessment

References

- Please check the guidelines for the reference style (e.g., [12])

Typos, spelling mistakes, grammar

- P. 4, l. 46 have

- P. 4, l. 53 a

- P8, l 112 meta

- P. 12, l. 185 interviews

- P. 13, l. 186 2007 survey

- P. 13, l. 193-194 too many words

- P. 13, l. 194 observe

- P. 14, l. 204 & p. 16, l. 235, 237 prevalence

- P. 16, l. 235 the

- P. 16, l. 235 globally
Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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