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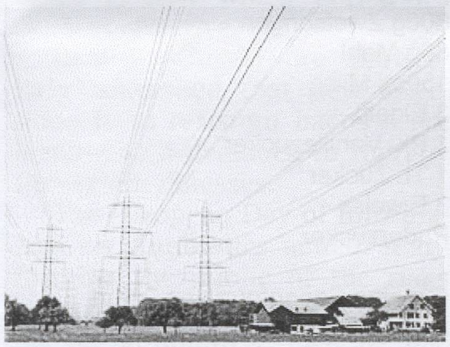
# Proximity to power lines linked to Alzheimer's

Researchers in Switzerland have found a link between electromagnetic field exposure from power lines and certain neurodegenerative conditions like Alzheimer's disease.

Doctors at the Institute of Social and Preventative Medicine at Bern University used census and mortality data from 4.7 million Swiss to investigate all deaths between the years 2000 and 2005.

They found that people who lived within 50 metres of high voltage electricity lines were more likely to die from Alzheimer's disease and senile dementia.



However, the public health relevance is limited because the proportion of the Swiss population that lives within that 50 metre corridor is 0.25 per cent, which amounts to about 18,000 people. So it's a very small proportion of the Swiss population that's actually exposed to that radiation within the 50-metre corridor.

The research team sought to establish whether the higher rates of dementia were solely the effect of exposure to electromagnetic fields or whether other factors were in play. People with lower education attainment, which are also people of lower socioeconomic position on average, have a higher risk of dementia, on average. Perhaps people who live that close to power lines live in less desirable neighbourhoods and are of low socioeconomic status. The researchers found that probably within Switzerland, living near a power line isn't linked to lower socioeconomic position.

The longer people lived in the shadow of high voltage lines, the more likely they were to develop dementia. After 15 years, the risk was twice as high as for the rest of the population.

While research indicated a relationship between electromagnetic radiation and higher rates of dementia, a causal association between the two could not be proven with data.

The researchers suggest a phase optimisation programme, which would distribute electricity in a way that reduces exposure to magnetic fields within the 50-metre corridor. They also encourage people who are worried about exposure to cut their exposure to certain electric appliances, like electric alarm clocks; anything that is plugged in and that is on all the time and that is near your body is a source of this type of radiation. *from swissinfo*

# Sendeschluss für Radio Beromünster

Rund 15,000 Personen sind ins luzernische Gunzwil gepilgert um vom legendären 77 Jahre alten Landessender Beromünster Abschied zu nehmen. Radiolegenden wie Ueli Beck, Heiner Gautschi, Elisabeth Schnell, Verena Speck, Susanne Enz und viele weitere Persönlichkeiten nahmen an der legendären Live-Sendung Musikwelle teil. Musikalisch begleitet wurde die Abschiedfeier unter anderem von Musikgrössen wie Roberto Blanko, Maja und Carlo Brunner und dem Trio Eugster. Das Aus für den Landessender wurde bereits im Jahre 2002 beschlossen, als festgestellt wurde, dass die verschärften Emissionswerte für Elektrosmog weit überschritten werden und dass eine Sanierung des veralteten Senders zu kostspielig würde. Zudem hat Mittelwellenrundfunk sehr stark an Bedeutung verloren. Die sehr populäre Sendung Musikwelle bleibt aber weiterhin auf Sendung und kann über Digitalradio , Kabel oder Satellit empfangen werden. Der Mittelwellensender ist von der Betreiberin der Swisscom nun definitiv am 28. Dezember 2008 vom Netz genommen worden.

# Almost one in ten babies is born prematurely

In Switzerland almost ten per cent of babies are born early, one of the highest rates in Europe.

Experts say that in general more premature infants are being born in industrialised countries. Older mothers and more multiple births are said to be contributory factors.

For multiple births, which account for 3.5 per cent of infants and of which 97 per cent are twins, pre-term births rose to 61 per cent. Babies born at term weighed on average 3.372kg and were 49.6cm long; those born early were on average 2.5kg and 45.7cm.