PREVENTING THE CORRUPTION OF A GOVERNMENT RESEARCH PROGRAM

NEUTRA, RAYMOND, *Neutra Consultancy, USA*

Background and Aims: This presentation will explain how staff of a government agency and a stakeholder's advisory committee created procedures to successfully avoid corruption of an extramural research program.
Methods: The presentation will summarize information about the oversight,conduct and attempted corruption of the California Electric and Magnetic Fields Program.
Results: In 1992 the California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) asked the California Department of Health Services(DHS) to oversee an extramural policy-relevant research program. It was to deal with the mix of electric and magnetic exposures (EMFs) from power lines and house wiring. The research was to provide information about sources of exposure, possible risks and policy options for lowering exposure in schools and from power lines. The PUC stipulated that the program be overseen by a stakeholder's advisory committee made up of concerned citizens, electrical worker unions, utility representatives and public interest organizations such as the Parent Teacher's Organization. The committee was charged with developing procedures and transparency to prevent corruption of the conclusions by any of the stakeholders. This committee later additionally requested a risk assessment by the DHS scientists. The stakeholders had to approve the wording of the scope of work in the requests for proposals, the membership of the panels who judged the submitted research proposals. They were directly involved in specifying the options to be considered and the criteria to be used for judging options for dealing with EMFs from power lines and schools. They demanded the formation of a scientific advisory committee to approve the risk evaluation methodology and the risk assessment itself.
Conclusions: Despite several serious but unsuccessful attempts by some stakeholders to sway the results, the final products were judged by all the stakeholders to be corruption-free.
References:
www.ehib.org/emf