

TRENTHAM ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION CAMPAIGN

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High incidence of ill-health in residents living near a high voltage powerline in Trentham

A survey of the health of residents living near a 132 kV powerline in Trentham has revealed a high incidence of depression, headache and insomnia. The survey has also found 11 cases of miscarriage compared with only 1 miscarriage case in a similar population living away from the powerline.

The survey was carried out by the Trentham Environmental Action Campaign against a background of scientific reports of higher incidence of depression, miscarriage and certain cancers linked to magnetic fields such as those that radiate from powerlines.

The survey took the form of a questionnaire to all residents living within 25 metres of the powerline in Trentham, as well as residents living greater than 25, metres but less than 150 metres away.

In both men and women there was a clear excess of depression, headache and insomnia in those living near the powerline, including an excess in those requiring either treatment by a doctor or treatment in hospital.

The most startling findings was of 11 cases of miscarriage in those living near the powerline, compared with only one case in the residents living further away. This finding is particularly significant because two recent epidemiological studies in California have shown an increase in the risk of miscarriage for magnetic field exposures similar to or less than that seen under the powerline in Trentham.

Full details of the survey are attached.

For further information contact either Frank Lewis on 01782 659324 or Maureen Asbury on 01782 658648.

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Survey of ill-health in residents living near the 132 kV powerline crossing Trentham

There have been a large number of scientific studies showing a link between powerline magnetic fields and the incidence of depression and similar illnesses. Recent reports have shown an increased risk of miscarriage associated with magnetic fields such as those produced by powerlines. There is a high incidence of depressive symptoms in our own neighbourhood of Trentham and we believe these may be related to the Midlands Electricity Board 132 kV high voltage powerline passing over our houses.

We decided to carry out a survey of the health of people in our neighbourhood. We composed the attached questionnaire (Table 1) for distribution to households; this included information about residents' age, gender and whether they had symptoms of depression, headache, insomnia or dietary problems. Respondents were asked to reply on a scale of 0 (not suffering) to 5 (severe suffering requiring hospital or medical attention). Respondents were also asked whether there had been a case of miscarriage in their household and whether there had been any other serious health problems.

An introductory letter giving notice of the survey was initially sent to 162 households within 25 metres of the 132 kV powerline. Two weeks later the questionnaire was posted to these households. The householders did not at that stage speak to members of the Action Group. A further two weeks later, a visit was made to each household for return of the questionnaire. A control group of 102 households was then approached living more than 25 metres but less than 150 metres from the powerline to whom an introductory letter and questionnaires was sent.

The results of the questionnaire are attached. There were 113 responses from households living within 25 metres of the 132 kV powerline and 83 responses from households living greater than 25 metres, but less than 150 metres, away.

For females. Twice as many women living near the powerline were suffering from insomnia and dietary problems; more had headaches and nearly 4 times as many had depression (which confirms the findings of Dr Stephen Perry in the 80s). **The most significant finding is of 11 cases of miscarriage within 25 metres of the powerline compared with only 1 case further away.** For all conditions asked about, the severity of the symptoms was sufficient to require more treatment from their GP or a hospital (Table 2).

Health survey near powerlines continued ...

For males. Depression and headaches were 2½ times more common, insomnia was twice as common and dietary problems experienced 3 times as often. Again, for all categories, more medical intervention was required (Table 3).

In view of these results we are calling on the North Staffordshire Health Authority to carry out a further health study into our situation. We also strongly urge the Government to legislate against houses being built near high voltage powerlines. We hope that others will follow our lead and carry out their own survey near powerlines in their own area. To facilitate this, full details of the survey will be posted on our website: <http://www.nopylons.co.uk/trentham>

Frank Lewis
Chairman

Maureen Asbury
President

Table 1

TRENTHAM ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION CAMPAIGN

HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE

Post Code

Are you, or a member of your household suffering from one of the following?

Please use following scale to answer these questions.

- 0 = Not suffering
- 1 = Very occasionally
- 2 = Regularly but no medicine needed
- 3 = Regularly requiring over the counter medicine but no doctor
- 4 = Moderate requiring visit to a doctor
- 5 = Severe requiring hospital or similar attention

	Self	Other I	Other II	Other III	Other IV	Other V
Age						
Gender						
Depression						
Headache						
Insomnia						
Dietary problems						
Miscarriage						
Other serious problems (please specify)						
Other serious problems (please specify)						

Any further related information

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Table 2

Females		
	Within 25m of power line	> 150m from power line
Total number of questionnaires	162	102
Total number returned	113	83
Depression:		
Total reported	52	14
No. requiring doctor	9	3
No. requiring hospital	2	1
Headache:		
Total reported	106	41
No. requiring doctor	8	1
No. requiring hospital	1	2
Insomnia:		
Total reported	61	27
No. requiring doctor	6	3
No. requiring hospital	1	
Dietary:		
Total reported	29	15
No. requiring doctor	5	3
No. requiring hospital	13	1
Miscarriage	11	1

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Table 3

Males		
	Within 25m of power line	> 150m from power line
Total number of questionnaires	162	102
Total number returned	113	83
Depression:		
Total reported	33	13
No. requiring doctor	4	
No. requiring hospital	3	1
Headache:		
Total reported	96	38
No. requiring doctor	3	2
No. requiring hospital		
Insomnia:		
Total reported	44	21
No. requiring doctor	3	1
No. requiring hospital		
Dietary:		
Total reported	25	8
No. requiring doctor	5	
No. requiring hospital		