

Press Release:

## **Health Canada's Wind Turbine Noise and Health Study: Summary of Results 1**

[Summary Statements \[1\]](#) regarding the above study were released this past week by Health Canada; however, the study itself was not released.

Health Canada's summary report on wind turbine noise and health **confusing**

Media timing issues relating to summary report release and issues with CANWEA press release

Some summary statements indicate no association between wind turbine noise and health

Some summary statements appear to indicate an association between wind turbine noise and health

Reports immediately following Health Canada's press advisory state no problems with wind turbines

No peer reviewed study results released - caution advised in interpretation of summary statements

Summary report statements appear "rushed" given no study or peer reviewed study available

## **Children, Noise, Annoyance, Respiratory Effects, World Health Organization**

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### **WAIT-PW Comments:**

We are finding the summary report provided by Health Canada, the initial press advisory, and the reporting in the media confusing.

There are inconsistencies in the summary statements and the media releases and media reports.

The study was never designed to prove or disprove direct causation such as hearing loss. Direct causation will take many years, multiple studies, and millions of dollars to prove or disprove. Media reports stating turbines cause or do not cause adverse health affects are misleading.

For example:

CANWEA, the Canadian Wind Energy Association's [press release\[2\]](#) states: "[CANWEA] welcomes new research which, released today, concludes that there is **no evidence of a**

**causal relationship** between exposure to wind turbine and self-reported medical illnesses and health conditions.”

This is contrary to the study’s purpose, design, and summary report statements released by Health Canada that states: “**results do not permit any conclusions about causality**”

The study was designed to assess indirect associations. In this regard, the summary statements support findings on both sides of the debate adding to the confusion.

*“The following were not found to be associated with WTN [Wind Turbine Noise] exposure:*

- > self-reported sleep (e.g., general disturbance, use of sleep medication, diagnosed sleep disorders);*
- > self-reported illnesses (e.g., dizziness, tinnitus, prevalence of frequent migraines and headaches) and chronic health conditions (e.g., heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes); and”*
- > self-reported perceived stress and quality of life”*

*“Statistically significant exposure-response relationships were found between increasing WTN [Wind Turbine Noise] levels and the prevalence of reporting high annoyance. ”*

*“WTN [Wind Turbine Noise] annoyance was found to be statistically related to several self-reported health effects including, but not limited to, blood pressure, migraines, tinnitus, dizziness, scores on the PSQI [Pittsburg Sleep Quality Index], and perceived stress.”*

*“WTN [Wind Turbine Noise] annoyance was found to be statistically related to measured hair cortisol, systolic and diastolic blood pressure.”*

*“...the findings support a potential link between long term high annoyance and health.”*

We find the above results confusing; however, given the summary statements by Health Canada of a statistical association between "annoyance" and wind turbine noise, we reference the following:

**Annoyance:** The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes annoyance as an adverse health effect.

In “[Noise Effects and Morbidity](#)”[3] published by the World Health Organization, the study concludes “*The result confirms the thesis that for **chronically strong annoyance** a causal chain exists between the three steps health – strong annoyance – increased morbidity. For adults with strong annoyance, significantly elevated relative risks exist both in the **cardiovascular system, the respiratory system, and the musculoskeletal system** as well as by depression. ... **With children the effects of noise is to be seen primarily in the respiratory system.**”*

Health Canada’s summary statements regarding the study indicate annoyance begins at a lower noise level for industrial wind turbines compared to rail and road traffic and increases more rapidly with increasing wind turbine noise.

We agree with the Grey-Bruce Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Hazel Lynn's statement that *some of the best survey findings are from the people who have moved away because they simply couldn't live near turbines*. They have not been included in the study.

We are wondering why there was such a rush to have summary comments provided on a study without having the study itself available to the public or waiting until the methodology and results have been peer reviewed and published.

We urge caution in interpreting the statements contained in the summary report at this point in time. These are statements about a study. It is not the study. Neither the study, nor the summary report statements have been peer-reviewed.

### **Press Advisory on Health Canada's Summary Report**

The summary comments on the Health Canada study were to be released to the public online at 8:30 a.m. on November 6<sup>th</sup>. Health Canada scheduled a press conference for 11:00 a.m. Mainstream media were present. The summary comments on the study were not released to the public at 8:30 a.m. They were released minutes before the press conference. Concerned citizens were not provided time to study the summary report and provide critical feedback in a timely manner and have their views included with Health Canada's comments in the initial [news announcements \[4\]](#).

Days after the announcement, we are starting to see some concerns regarding the summary comments made by Health Canada on the study in regional news pieces. Some of the reports follow...

### **Media Reports subsequent to Initial Health Canada Announcement**

[Those Who Move Away Are Not Part of the Turbine Study \[5\]](#)

Click on link above to go to media report.

Medical Officer of Health – Dr. Hazel Lynn (Grey Bruce)

*"Dr. Hazel Lynn says an important segment of the population has been left out of a Health Canada study into the impact of industrial wind turbines on peoples' health.*

*The Health Canada study, released Thursday, found no link between wind turbine noise and negative health effects in people. [WAIT-PW is confused by this statement as statements in the Health Canada Summary Report appear to indicate otherwise; and Dr. Michaud, the principal investigator in the study will not state definitively that Wind Turbines are safe] But Lynn, the medical officer of health for Grey-Bruce who has done a review of such studies, said some of the best survey findings are from the people who have moved away because they simply couldn't live near turbines.*

*"These folks are still living there so obviously they are not in that 10% of people who actually abandoned their homes," Lynn said of those who participated in the study.*

*"Although the wind folks would pooh-pooh those people (who have moved away) as being especially difficult, I think they are especially sensitive and if you are living in a place where*

*you are afraid to go to sleep at night then you are going to move. Obviously this study didn't pick up any of those folks."*

*"It is going to take years and years as it did with any environmental exposures and illness to actually prove it or not prove it," Lynn said. "You don't know until the studies are done properly and you can get enough of them."*

*In 2013, Lynn and epidemiological researcher Dr. Ian Arra released a review of studies from around the world on wind turbines and people's health. They found "reasonable evidence that an association exists between wind turbines and distress in humans."*

[Officer of Health for Grey Bruce is disappointed with a Health Canada report on wind turbines.\[6\]](#)

Click on link above to go to media report.

Medical Officer of Health – Dr. Hazel Lynn (Grey Bruce)

*Doctor Hazel Lynn says the study leaves a lot of questions unanswered.*

[Health Canada report says wind turbines OK, opponents upset\[7\]](#)

Click on link above to go to media report.

Chief Investigating Officer for the Health Canada Study, Dr. David Michaud *still will not say definitively that wind turbines are safe.*

[Study finds no link between wind turbine noise, perceived health effects\[8\]](#)

*"We did find that people who were highly annoyed were more likely to report other health effects, such as migraines, tinnitus, sleep disturbance, perceived stress, and **they also had higher levels of measured cortisol and blood pressure.** These are statistical associations and they do not mean that annoyance is causing these health effects."*

Comment: study was designed to demonstrate associations, not causation.

### **Background on Health Canada Study**

Dr. Robert McMurtry MD FRCSC FACS, recipient of the Order of Canada and Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal and former Dean of the University of Western Ontario's medical school, in his deputation to the Standing Committee on Bill 150 in April of 2009 said:

"There clearly are competing claims about LFN [low frequency noise] and health risks [from industrial wind turbines] - those who are living the claims and those who deny them. There is a way out of this dilemma. Authoritative guidelines must be established based on sound science. A well-designed epidemiological study conducted by **arms-length investigators**, mutually agreeable to all sides, must be done.... "

Following the announcement in 2012 from the Federal Government that Health Canada would be conducting the study, Dr. McMurtry stated:

"...Health Canada is NOT the agency to be doing the research. They are regulatory and have very limited research capacity. Furthermore they are on record as supporting wind energy[9][10]. This is too important a question to be addressed by science bureaucrats. The research should be conducted by CIHR (Canadian Institutes of Health Research) which is the top health research agency in Canada."

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[1] <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/noise-bruit/turbine-eoliennes/summary-resume-eng.php>

[2] <http://www.newswire.ca/en/story/1441555/summary-of-health-canada-study-on-wind-turbine-noise-and-health-impacts-released-today#>

[3] [http://www.euro.who.int/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0015/105144/WHO\\_Lares.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/105144/WHO_Lares.pdf)

[4] <http://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/wind-turbine-noise-not-linked-to-health-problems-health-canada-finds-1.2826206>

[5] <http://www.owensoundsuntimes.com/2014/11/07/those-who-move-away-not-part-of-turbine-study>

[6] [http://www.bayshorebroadcasting.ca/news\\_item.php?NewsID=70455](http://www.bayshorebroadcasting.ca/news_item.php?NewsID=70455)

[7] <http://blogs.windsorstar.com/news/health-canada-report-says-wind-turbines-ok-opponents-upset>

[8] <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/study-finds-no-link-between-wind-turbine-noise-perceived-health-effects/article21484223/>

[9] <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/sr-sr/pubs/hpr-rpms/bull/2005-climat/index-eng.php>

[10] The background and rational area of the summary report suggests Health Canada's support of wind energy