

## Study links leukemia risk to power lines, appliances

LOS ANGELES — A study that seems to link childhood leukemia to power lines, hair dryers and black-and-white televisions also hints at possible risks from curling irons, clocks and video games, scientists said Tuesday.

Sponsored by the electric utility industry, the five-year, \$1.7 million study is the most comprehensive yet conducted on the possible but unproved health risks of electromagnetic fields, or EMFs — invisible force fields generated by power lines, appliances and everything electrical.

The study found that children who live close to high-current power lines may have twice the normal one-in-20,000 chance of getting leukemia. Actual 24-hour measurements of EMFs in children's homes suggested only a weak link

between leukemia and magnetic fields, and no link between the cancer and electric fields.

"The current study adds some support to the hypothesis that electromagnetic fields increase childhood leukemia risk, but it doesn't resolve the controversy," said Dr. John Peters, a co-author of the report and occupational health director at the University of Southern California.

As for possible cancer risks posed by appliances, "the main thing this study does is raise this issue. It requires more study," Peters said.

Because there are so many uncertainties, "it would be important for parents not to panic about these results," said Dr. Stephanie London, chief author of the study and a USC

assistant professor of preventive medicine.

Peters endorsed a concept called "prudent avoidance," which means reducing exposure to electromagnetic fields when it is cheap and easy. Some scientists have suggested avoiding electric blankets, moving clocks away from beds and sitting at least arm's length from computer screens.

London said the strength of EMFs drops rapidly with distance from appliances. So standing back from appliances can reduce any potential hazard, although that isn't possible with appliances such as electric blankets and hair dryers. Some electric blanket makers are now making low-field blankets.

The study's main conclusions, released and

widely publicized in February, tied increased leukemia risk to children's proximity to power lines and their use of hair dryers and black-and-white television sets.

The final report, released Tuesday, also hints that children might face an increased risk of leukemia if they regularly use electric blankets, curling irons, electric clocks with dials, video games and electric space heaters, Peters said.

The links between leukemia and appliance use were statistically significant only for hair dryers and black-and-white televisions. Peters said that means the connection between cancer and other appliances is inconclusive but requires more study.

## Abortion-counseling veto by president sustained in House

WASHINGTON — The House on Tuesday sustained President Bush's veto earlier in the day of a bill that would have lifted his ban of federally financed abortion counseling. Democrats had thought they had the muscle to override Bush for the first time, but fell a dozen votes short.

The outcome left Bush with a perfect 24-0 record for making his vetoes stick, and was a blow to House Speaker Thomas Foley, D-Wash., who convened the override debate immediately after the president's action with a prediction that "we have the votes" on the hotly disputed abortion issue.

Foley didn't; the 276-156 tally was a dozen short of the two-thirds necessary.

Foley condemned the veto as motivated by "a mistaken principle."

At stake was an overall, \$205 billion spending bill for education, labor and health programs. The fight was centered on a provision that would block for one year the Bush administration's rule banning abortion counseling at federally supported family planning clinics.

That provision has been attacked as a "gag rule" by critics who say it shackles doctors and prevents pregnant women from obtaining information pertinent to their right of choice.

Supporters did not have the two-

thirds override strength in the last House vote on the measure, when it was approved 272-156.

The bill had cleared the Senate 72-25, more than the two-thirds veto-proof majority, earlier this month.

In vetoing the bill, Bush contended he was not trying to restrict counseling for pregnant women.

He pointed to a memo he sent to Louis Sullivan, the secretary of Health and Human Services, which he said "makes clear that there is no 'gag rule' to interfere with the doctor-patient relationship. I have directed that in implementing these regulations, nothing prevents a woman from receiving complete medical information about her condition from a physician."

Rep. Vic Fazio, D-Calif., called the veto "disgusting."

"This is an absolute outrage," said Rep. Patricia Schroeder, D-Colo. "Anyone who does not vote to override is saying to American women, we don't think you're adult enough to have your options explained to you... by a doctor or a nurse."

Bush's ban on abortion counseling had the strong backing of anti-abortion leaders. Though lacking majority support in both the House and Senate, they had relied



Brian Shellito/DN

on Bush's veto and his perfect record of sustaining those vetoes.

"You are being pressured by the pro-abortionists today to do something you believe to be ethically wrong. You are being pressured to facilitate abortion by overriding this vote," Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., said.

"Make no mistake about it: The failure to override will not be forgotten by the women of this country," said a Republican congresswoman, Olympia Snowe of Maine. "... No male patient is affected by this gag rule. You are creating a situation for women only."

House Republican Leader Bob Michel, R-Ill., tried to move the debate off the abortion issue in urging that Bush's veto be sustained for other reasons. He noted that Bush also raised objections in his veto message to a budget provision that delays \$4 billion in spending until the next fiscal year.

## Release pledged for 3 captives

Released hostages Terry Waite and Thomas Sutherland savored their first full day of freedom Tuesday, and key players in the hostage drama gave new indications that the remaining Westerners held in Lebanon could soon be released as well.

A day after pro-Iranian Shiite Muslim captors freed Waite, 52, and Sutherland, 60, Iran said the kidnapers would soon free the last three American captives and "close this case."

At the United Nations, Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said Tuesday that such a release would be unconditional.

Tuesday marked the first time he had suggested that the Westerners could be freed even if all the pieces of the complex puzzle do not fall into place.

At a rain-swept air base in western England, Waite, the bearlike Church of England envoy kidnapped nearly five years ago during a mission to free the other hostages, had an emotional homecoming.

"After 1,763 days in chains it is an overwhelming experience to come back and receive your greetings," he told the crowd that turned out to welcome him. In London, church bells rang and subway riders cheered, and at Waite's church, a candle that had burned throughout his captivity was extinguished.

Waite criticized all who hold prisoners in the Middle East. "Those who do it fall well below civilized standards of behavior, no matter who they are," he said in impassioned tones.

Sutherland was reunited with his family in Wiesbaden, Germany, after more than six years in captivity.

Flanked by family, he appeared briefly on the balcony of a U.S. military hospital, saying little but raising his fists like a victorious prizefighter.

"No words. Body language!" said his wife, Jean. Sutherland, who was dean of agriculture at the American University of Beirut, was to hold a news conference today.

## Ties to North are alleged for hostage

LONDON — Amid the rejoicing over Terry Waite's freedom, new questions arise that Church of England envoy may have been a pawn in the U.S. arms-for-hostages deal.

It is not known what Waite knew of the clandestine activities run by former White House aide Oliver North.

According to the U.S. Tower Commission report on the Iran-Contra affair, the two men met at least five times and worked closely on the release of two American hostages in Lebanon, the Rev. Benjamin Weir, freed Sept. 15, 1985, and David Jacobson, whose freedom came 14 months later.

Waite repeatedly insisted he acted independently of any government in his efforts to free hostages, and that he knew his last mission in January 1987 was the most dangerous.

Lord Runcie, the former archbishop of Canterbury who sent Waite to Beirut, said the envoy assured him before the last trip that "our integrity... was secure."

The BBC in a television documentary, "Panorama," broadcast Tuesday night after Waite's return to Britain said the Reagan administration planned to use Waite, unwittingly, as a cover for the trading of arms for hostages.

Arriving at Wiesbaden early Tuesday, Sutherland was given a bouquet and deeply inhaled the scent. "I haven't seen flowers in 6 1/2 years," he said.

## Close encounter Scientists try to identify object flying near Earth

LOS ANGELES — A small, mysterious object is going to zoom close to Earth on Dec. 5, but astronomers can't tell yet whether it's some previously unseen kind of asteroid or an old spacecraft swinging past its home planet.

"We don't know what it is: It just struck me as very curious," said astronomer Brian Marsden, director of the International Astronomical Union's Central Bureau for Astronomical Telegrams, a reporting agency for astronomy discoveries.

James Scotti, a University of Arizona scientist, first spotted the object Nov. 6 through the university's 36-inch Spacewatch telescope

on Kitt Peak in southern Arizona.

The telescope is used to look for asteroids that might smash into the planet. Many scientists believe that large asteroid impacts wiped out the dinosaurs and caused other prehistoric mass extinctions on Earth, and also might threaten the planet in the future.

This object — with a diameter estimated at one yard to 11 yards — won't hit Earth or the moon on its orbit around the sun, but it will pass within 290,000 miles of Earth at about 2 a.m. or 3 a.m. PST on Dec. 5, Marsden said Monday by phone from Cambridge, Mass.

The only asteroid observed flying closer to the planet was a 30-foot-wide chunk of rock designated 1991BA, which flew within 106,000 miles of Earth last Jan. 15, he said. That was less than half the distance between Earth and the moon, and was considered a "near miss" by astronomers.

Paul Chodas, an aerospace engineer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, said his calculations suggest that the object is an asteroid. But it also could be a spacecraft, perhaps an upper stage from one of the rockets that sent manned Apollo spacecraft to the moon from 1968 through 1972.

## Fly

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"We just can't afford to go \$1,600 more every week," he said.

Douglas Rix, UNL's assistant director of food services and housing, said Demma of Lincoln and Food Service of America in Grand Island both supply lettuce to UNL, depending on proposed bids.

"The produce people at Demma shared with me that they were having

no problem getting lettuce; the only problem is the price nearly doubled," Rix said. "If there's a way to scalp people, real or unreal, the industry will take advantage of it."

Anne Dumper, administrative dietitian for housing, said that because lettuce is not particularly nutritious, students' diets did not suffer from the shortage.

"We did not think that we were creating a nutrition-type problem for the students," Dumper said.

Although lettuce prices have fallen,

Robert Cane, vice president of sales at Demma Fruit Company, said the price of lettuce continues to be unstable and could change at any time.

"The Western Growers Association (is) saying not to overestimate the (whitefly) disaster," Cane said. Lower prices have made housing officials less apprehensive about buying lettuce for daily meals, Zatechka said.

"Lettuce will continue to be on the salad bar unless prices fluctuate dramatically," he said.

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