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Reduced Growth of Soybean Seedlings after Exposure to Weak Microwave Radiation from GSM 900 Mobile Phone and Base Station

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Running title:

Weak microwave radiation affects soybean growth

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Abstract

The aim of this project was to study possible effects of environmental radiation pollution on plants. The association between cellular telephone (short duration, higher amplitude) and base station (long duration, very low amplitude) radiation exposure and the growth rate of soybean (*Glycine max*) seedlings was investigated. Soybean seedlings, pre-grown for 4 days, were exposed in a gigahertz transverse electromagnetic cell for 2 h to global system for mobile communication (GSM) mobile phone pulsed radiation or continuous wave (CW) radiation at 900 MHz with amplitudes of 5.7 and 41 V m\(^{-1}\), and outgrowth was studied one week after exposure. The exposure to higher amplitude (41 V m\(^{-1}\)) GSM radiation resulted in diminished outgrowth of the epicotyl. The exposure to lower amplitude (5.7 V m\(^{-1}\)) GSM radiation did not influence outgrowth of epicotyl, hypocotyls, or roots. The exposure to higher amplitude CW radiation resulted in reduced outgrowth of the roots whereas lower CW exposure resulted in a reduced outgrowth of the hypocotyl. Soybean seedlings were also exposed for 5 days to an extremely low level of radiation (GSM 900 MHz, 0.56 V m\(^{-1}\)) and outgrowth was studied 2 days later. Growth of epicotyl and hypocotyl were found to be reduced, whereas the outgrowth of roots was stimulated. Our findings indicate that the observed effects were significantly dependent on field strength as well as amplitude modulation of the applied field.

Keywords: Mobile phones, base station, radiofrequency electromagnetic fields, soybean seedling growth.
Introduction

The use of mobile phones has evolved from a rare activity to 6 billion subscribers (87% of the world's population) worldwide, including both adults and children thereby creating an extremely strong mobile phone industry sector [International Telecommunication Union (ITU), 2011]. The World Health Organization (WHO) concluded in a review study that there is no epidemiological evidence that mobile phone usage causes brain tumors in adults [WHO, 2011]. However, radiofrequency (RF) radiation from mobile phones has been classified as a “Possible Human Carcinogen” (Group 2B) that might transform normal cells into cancer cells [WHO, 2011]. This classification was based on a review of previously published evidence including the Interphone study results published up to that date and the Swedish studies by Hardell et al. [2006]. Nonetheless, a recently published review suggests that most of these investigations led to inconclusive results partly due to a lack of a hypothetical mechanism to guide the experimental designs [Hore, 2012].

The exact mechanisms by which organisms react to exposure to electromagnetic fields and radiation are largely unknown. Increased production of reactive oxygen species (ROS) is a common response to many stressors, possibly including exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMFs), as stress situations interrupt cellular physiological processes between generation and neutralization of highly reactive molecules [Arora et al., 2002]. ROS can damage cell structures by oxidizing proteins, nucleic acids and membrane lipids. In a number of in vivo animal studies reviewed by Desai et al. [2009]...
it was shown that oxidative stress develops in response to cell phone radiation. In plants it was also reported that RF radiation increased ROS and induced oxidative stress [Tkalec et al. 2007; Sharma et al. 2009]. Thus studies of simple plant systems might reveal important information that could apply to animal and human biological systems as well.

Possible biological effects from electromagnetic radiation from mobile communication systems are known to depend on the carrier frequency, the mean power level and the low frequency amplitude modulation of the power. Most studies in the field of effects of RF EMFs and radiation have focused on animals and cell cultures. Only a few studies of EMF effects on plants [Tkalec et al., 2005, 2007, 2009; Sharma et al. 2009] have been reported. In early studies seeds were exposed to extremely low frequency (ELF) magnetic fields or RF radiation in order to investigate biological effects [Bigu-del-Blanco et al., 1977; Belova et al., 2001; Belova et al., 2007; Tkalec et al., 2009; Shine et al., 2011], however, the results are inconsistent.

Large parts of the world are covered with sources of electromagnetic radiation like radio and television transmitters and base stations for mobile communication, but little is known about biological effects on plants. The aim of the present study is to investigate the growth rate of 4-day-old soybean seedlings exposed to radiation from global system for mobile communication (GSM) both as acute exposure to intermediate, nonthermal exposure levels. This provides specific absorption rate (SAR) values comparable to ones in the human head during mobile phone use and long term
exposure at a very low exposure level, which give rise to SAR values as can be expected a few hundred meters from a base station. We also aim to study the importance of the amplitude modulation as used in GSM by comparing to the effects on growth rate of continuous wave radiation with the same carrier frequency and amplitude.

**Materials and Method**

**Exposure System**

GSM 900 mobile signals were considered in this experiment. GSM phones transmit data in bursts with a repetition rate of 217 Hz. Since, a number of papers indicated that the modulation pattern itself, in addition to carrier wave frequency and intensity, was an important parameter for causing biological effect, we chose to compare GSM 900 exposure with continuous wave exposure (CW). GSM 217 Hz fields were generated with 900 MHz center frequency, pulse period = 1/217 = 4.6 ms and pulse width = 0.576 ms. The exposure system contained: a signal generator (Agilent 4433B; Hewlett-Packard, Palo Alto, CA), a power amplifier (30W 1000A, 25A250A; Amplifier Research, San Diego, CA), a spectrum analyzer (Agilent 8891A; Hewlett-Packard, Palo Alto, CA), a power meter (PM2002; Amplifier Research, San Diego, CA) and a Gigahertz Transverse Electromagnetic (GTEM) cell (Model 5407;ESCO Technologies, St. Louis, MO) to create homogenous EMFs. The electric field
uniformity of the GTEM cell was measured according to the European Standard EN 61000-4-20 for testing and measurement techniques in transverse electromagnetic waveguides and found to be about 2 dB in a 633 x 250 mm vertical/transverse plane centered at an 80-cm septum height. The dimension of the testing region with highest accuracy of transverse wave was 400 x 400 mm (5407 model). The GSM 900 MHz mobile signals were generated by the signal generator and boosted by the power amplifier to field intensities (during the pulses) of 0.56-41 V m$^{-1}$ in the GTEM cell as measured with a near field probe (VM7000, ARWorldwide, Souderton, PA) in the middle of the testing region where the Petri dish with the soybeans was to be placed. Electric field values were measured with and without the Petri dishes present and were found to be identical.

At the beginning, during, and end of exposure, the temperature inside the GTEM cell was measured using a thermometer (Fluke-52, Auber Instruments, Alpharetta, GA). The temperature inside the GTEM cell as well as on seedling surface did not vary more than ±0.1 ºC.

**Soybean Seedlings**

In this study, growth rate was investigated for soybean (*Glycine max*) seedlings. Seeds were pregrown in complete darkness for 4 days at 26 ºC, as in Belova et al. [2007], on moist sterile filter paper in Petri dishes (90 mm in diameter) before exposure to radio frequency electromagnetic radiation in the GTEM cell. The temperature in the
growing room was checked twice a day. After this period, exposure and sham exposure inside the GTEM cell was performed for 2 h at the ambient temperature of the air-conditioned room of 23 °C. Inside the GTEM cell, 10 seedlings (4 days old) were placed, evenly distributed, in a Petri dish (nearly 2.4 cm apart) in total darkness. The long axis of the Allium Cepa seeds was aligned along the propagation direction of the electromagnetic wave, as in Tkalec et al. [2009]. Filter paper was moistened with 2 ml of distilled water before RF exposure or sham exposure. The humidity level was 70% (MT6600 SW hygrometer; Charm FaithAutosystem, Beijing, China). Immediately after exposure the dishes were transferred back to the growth chamber and watered, regularly. The length of the primary roots was measured after a week.

In another experiment, in order to mimic base station-like conditions, we exposed seedlings for 5 days (24 h/day) inside the GTEM cell at the very low field amplitude of 0.56 V m⁻¹. After this exposure the seedlings were transferred to a growth chamber in total darkness for two days before stem and root outgrowth were determined.

The following parameters of outgrowth were studied: \(L_1\) - epicotyl - length between leaves and cotyledon, \(L_2\) – hypocotyl - length between cotyledon and start of root and branches \(L_3\) – length of root and its branches (Fig. 1). Each segment measured was stretched out before measurement.
Exposure

We performed 12 different experiments as shown in Table 1. To avoid thermal heating of the soybean seedlings, we kept the power density below 5000 mW m^{-2}. The soybean seedlings were exposed to RF fields of 900 MHz as continuous wave (CW) or pulse (pulse width 0.576 ms) modulated with 217 Hz repetition rate according to GSM 900. Three different field strengths were investigated: 0.56, 5.7 and 41 V m^{-1}, corresponding to (peak) power flux densities of 0.8, 86 and 4400 mW m^{-2} respectively. The time-averaged intensities of the pulsed signals are 1/8 of the intensities for the continuous wave signals with the same amplitudes (Table 1). The time averaged power density is the relevant parameter for determining SAR in the soybean seedlings.

Lin et al. [1973] showed that when wavelength of electromagnetic radiation is long compared to diameter of a sphere, analytic expressions can be derived for the electric field in the sphere and hence, for the absorbed power density. Durney et al. [1975] refined the model to include prolate spheroid objects. The long-wavelength condition is fulfilled for soybean seedlings in a 900 MHz electromagnetic plane wave field. In order to calculate SAR values according to this formalism, some assumptions have to be made. We calculated SAR values for a spheroid approximation of a soybean with a long axis of 1.5 cm and short axis of 0.75 cm. We assumed moisture content of 14% and a density of 0.78 g/cm^{3}. Data on the dielectric properties of soybeans at around 1 GHz could not be found in the available literature. For this reason, we used the empirical expressions given by Nelson [1991] and found values of 3.5 and 0.4 for
the relative permittivity and loss factor (real and complex part of the complex
permittivity) respectively, for the density, moisture content and field frequency
assumed. The loss factor corresponds to a conductivity of 0.02 S m\(^{-1}\). The calculations
were performed for a k-polarized plane wave (the long axis of the bean is along the
propagation direction) according to Equation 6 of the Appendix. The SAR values we
derived are 2.6 mW kg\(^{-1}\), 0.049 mW kg\(^{-1}\) and 4.8x10\(^{-4}\) mW kg\(^{-1}\) for the signals of 41 V
m\(^{-1}\), 5.7 V m\(^{-1}\) and 0.56 V m\(^{-1}\), respectively (Table 1). As a comparison, the 0.56 V m\(^{-1}\)
signal corresponds to a GSM mobile phone base station at a distance of approximately
500 m.

For the CW exposures, we chose to use the same electric field strengths as the
peak values of the pulsed GSM signal. As a consequence, CW radiation will result in 8
times higher average power densities (and SAR) for the same electric field strength (V
m\(^{-1}\)): 20 mW kg\(^{-1}\) and 0.39 mW kg\(^{-1}\) for the signals of 41 V m\(^{-1}\) and 5.7 V m\(^{-1}\),
respectively (Table 1).

Lin et al. [1973] and Johnson et al. [1975] pointed out that in long-wavelength,
quasi static approximation, the electric field in the irradiated object can be considered
as the result of two components: first, a homogeneous internal field resulting from
polarization of the medium by the external electric field component and second, a
circular electric field caused by induction by the external magnetic field component.
However, the approximation made by these authors that the real part of the permittivity
is so much smaller than the complex part that it can be neglected, does not apply for
soybeans irradiated at 900 MHz. We have derived a more exact expression for the SAR
distribution following the derivation described by Durney et al. [1975] (Equation 3 in
Appendix). Under the assumption of the soybean being electrically homogeneous, the
SAR distribution is calculated to be very homogeneous (Fig. 2).

Statistical Analysis

We first computed the peakedness (Kurtosis) and Skewness of the probability
distribution of the observed $L_1$, $L_2$ and $L_3$ in order to test for the normality of the
distribution. Since our data were not normally distributed, in this study we used non-
parametric analyses (Mann-Whitney, Wilcoxon and Kruskall Wallis signed ranks tests).
All analyses were carried out using SPSS statistical package for the Social Sciences,
Version 21 (IBM Software, Armonk, NY), to compare the growth of soybean seedlings
exposed to the RF EMFs with those grown concurrently under control conditions (sham
exposed), using a 95% confidence level ($p < 0.05$) to estimate statistical significance.

Crucial in experiments where growth rates are determined, is that all other
factors except exposure are kept constant. Two tests for systematic errors were applied
to the data sets. First, outgrowth for sham exposure was compared between the
different experiments with the same exposure condition, thus testing for constant
environmental conditions. Under constant conditions the results from different
experiments can be pooled. Second, as a test for constant environmental conditions
during a testing day, in five experiments sham exposures were applied both before and
after exposure during the same day. This allows us not only to compare exposed to
shams, but also shams to shams (Fig. 3 a-d).

RESULTS

The data were analyzed with respect to \( L_1 \), \( L_2 \) and \( L_3 \) as described above. Only if a
simultaneous comparison between the three experimental conditions applied on the
same day indicated a significant difference between the conditions, did we continue
with pairwise comparisons. The reason was to avoid mass-significance effects due to
multiple pairwise comparisons on the same material. Sham exposures during the same
day never differed significantly as illustrated in Figure 3. The medians and interquartile
range for \( L_2 \) and \( L_3 \) for CW exposure at 5.7 V m\(^{-1}\) are shown in Figure 3a, b). These
parameters were significantly reduced as compared to the two sham exposures in this
experiment. Similar results were found for \( L_1 \) for GSM 900 exposure at 41 V m\(^{-1}\) (Fig.
3 c, d). In the fifth experiment (41 V m\(^{-1}\), GSM 900 MHz) with sham-exposure-sham
design, no significant difference was found between the three parameters studied and
the two sham exposures before and after exposure.

Comparing results from sham exposures obtained during different days gives
confidence that data from identical exposure conditions can be pooled. Thus all 12
experiment occasions were used in the analysis. Results for pooled data (also sham
exposures obtained on the same day were pooled) are shown in Table 2. For GSM
exposure with signal strength of 41 V m\(^{-1}\), \( L_1 \) was reduced by 1.7 mm (\( p = 0.002 \),
whereas $L_2$ and $L_3$ did not change. GSM exposure with 5.6 V m$^{-1}$ did not result in changes in outgrowth. For CW exposure with signal strength of 41 V m$^{-1}$, only $L_3$ was reduced significantly, by 1.1 mm ($p < 0.001$). CW exposure at the lower signal strength of 5.7 V m$^{-1}$ only resulted in a reduction of $L_2$ by 1.3 mm ($p = 0.004$).

In the five-day experiment where a low power density of 0.1 mW m$^{-2}$ was applied, $L_1$ was reduced by 0.2 mm ($p = 0.024$), $L_2$ was reduced by 1 mm ($p = 0.001$), whereas $L_3$ increased by 1 mm ($p < 0.001$) (Table 2).

**DISCUSSION**

Most studies in the field of effects of RF EMFs and radiation have focused on animals and cell cultures. So far, however, there have been few experiments on plants. Our aim is to advance knowledge on the effects of EMFs on biological tissue. Studies on simple biological systems can add to our understanding of fundamental interaction mechanisms and which proteins in living matter are susceptible to electromagnetic radiation and fields. This knowledge is crucial to develop dose-response relationships on which guidelines for exposure limits can be built. It will also help the industry design safe communication systems.

Some trends can be discerned in results for the 2 h exposure experiments as below. When we consider $L_1$ (length between leaves and cotyledon) we found that pulsed radiation with average power density of 560 mW m$^{-2}$ reduces outgrowth more than CW with 4400 mW m$^{-2}$. This might indicate the importance of the low frequency
amplitude modulation of the RF-signal. When we consider $L_2$ (length between cotyledon to start of root and its branches), no effect on outgrowth was observed except for CW radiation with power density of 86 mW m$^{-2}$ where a reduction of outgrowth was seen. No effects were seen for GSM 900 with 560 mW m$^{-2}$ or CW with 4400 mW m$^{-2}$. This gives an indication that CW with low SAR could be more effective than pulsed radiation with higher SAR for this parameter. Contrary to our findings, Juutilainen et al. [2011] published an extensive review of possible modulation-dependent biological effects of RF fields and concluded there is little evidence for modulation being important. One of the papers cited in this review, however, reported enhanced genotoxic effects of CW radiation as compared to GSM [Luukkonen et al., 2009]. Tkalec et al. found in studies on Axenic duckweed [2005, 2007] and Allium cepa [2009] that the extent of the biological effects depended on frequency, amplitude and modulation. The results for the $L_2$ parameter might also implicate an “amplitude window” effect (a higher amplitude of exposure elicits a lower biological effect) as described by others for low frequency magnetic fields [Blackman et al., 1985; Lednev et al., 1991; Edmonds et al., 1993]. Finally, when we consider $L_3$ (maximum length of root and its branches), we found no inhibiting effects on outgrowth except for CW at a power density of 4400 mW m$^{-2}$. As for the $L_2$ parameter, CW seems to have more impact than GSM, but since in this case the power density is much higher than in any of the GSM exposures, no definite conclusions can be drawn.

Akbal et al. [2012] confirms our findings of a diminished root growth after
exposure to high frequency electromagnetic radiation and discovered a decrease in root growth in lentil seedlings (*Lens Culinaris Medik*), exposed to mobile phone radiation at 1800 MHz.

Tkalec et al. [2005] reported decreased growth and reduced peroxidase activity in Axenic duckweed exposed to 400 MHz and 900 MHz CW and amplitude modulated microwaves for 2 and 14 h. The same author [Tkalec et al., 2007] found increased levels of peroxidation and \( \text{H}_2\text{O}_2 \) and diminished anti-oxidative enzyme activity in Axenic duckweed and found mitotic aberrations [Tkalec et al., 2009] for a variety of exposure conditions at 400 and 900 MHz in *Allium cepa*. Also Sharma et al. [2009] found an inhibition of root growth and increased oxidative stress after exposure of mung beans (*Vigna radiata*) to radiation from mobile phones (900 MHz, 8.55 \( \mu \text{W cm}^{-2} \), for \( \frac{1}{2}, 1, 2, \) and \( 4 \) h).

Our results indicate that 900 MHz microwave exposure elicits a stress response that not only depends on strength of the exposure (SAR-value) but also on type of modulation.

A stress response, similar to ones elicited by plant wounding, was reported by Beaubois et al. [2007] and Roux et al. [2008] who studied tomatoes at 900 MHz (5 V m\(^{-1}\), 10 min). They found a stress related accumulation of mRNA (calmodulin, calcium-dependent protein kinase and proteinase inhibitor) and an enhancement of the translation of encoded proteins. Several authors hypothesize membrane Ca\(^{++}\) ions to be the primary target for stimulation of cells by electromagnetic radiation that alter the
conformation of NADPH plasmic membrane oxidase, inducing increased formation of reactive oxygen species that may alter proteomic functions [Beaubois et al., 2007; Ledoit and Belpomme, 2013]

On the contrary, Schmutz et al. [1996] who investigated the effect of long-term exposure (2 years) of young spruce (4-year-old) and beech trees (3-year-old) to 2450 MHz with power flux densities 0.007 to 300 W m\(^{-2}\) did not find any effect on crown transparency, growth, and photosynthesis. Nevertheless, they found changes in foliar calcium and sulfur concentration in beech trees.

Contrary to the findings of a diminished growth after exposure to high frequency electromagnetic radiation, several authors reported improved germination and growth parameters after exposure to static magnetic fields in the mT range [Aladjadjian, 2002; Atak et al., 2003; Yaycili and Alikamanoglu, 2005]. It is not unreasonable to assume that totally different interaction mechanisms are responsible for biological effects observed at different exposure frequencies.

Rather surprisingly, one-week exposure for very weak GSM 900 radiation with very low power density (0.1 mW m\(^{-2}\)) influenced all three outgrowth parameters significantly. In this case L\(_1\) and L\(_2\) were influenced in the same way as for short-term exposure, the outgrowth being inhibited, whereas L\(_3\) was stimulated by radiation. To our knowledge, no long-term studies of exposure of plants to very weak microwave radiation from mobile phone base stations have been published.

No generally accepted interaction model exists that explains how very weak high
frequency magnetic fields interact with biological molecules. Neither is it known whether it is the electrical or magnetic component of radiation that is responsible for the observed effects. Electric fields influence all electric dipoles and electrical charges in the biological system. Sernelius [2004] argued that van der Waals forces in biological matter can be altered dramatically by the presence of microwave fields. For bio effects where amplitude modulation of the carrier wave was found to be important, the theory developed by Lednev [1991] could be applicable. In this ion parametric resonance model, a combination of a time-varying magnetic field and the static earth magnetic field causes the bio effects. The field strength of 41 V m$^{-1}$ corresponds to strength of the magnetic component of the signal of 0.14 µT. Earth’s magnetic field at the site of the experiment (Singapore) is about 40 µT. The frequency of 217 Hz would correspond with the resonance frequency of an ion with charge one and mass three. No such ion comes to mind. However, the third harmonic of the square wave of the signal corresponds to the resonance frequency of hydrogen ions. The strongest biological effects according to the IPR model are expected when time varying and static magnetic fields have comparable strengths, and it is doubtful if the very weak AC magnetic field in this experiment could elicit a biological effect. Later Lednev [Belova et al., 2007] developed a promising interaction model based on polarization of hydrogen nuclei in biological matter. In this model, biological effects are expected, and seen for AC-magnetic fields below 1 µT. This model is not dependent on resonance frequency conditions and applies to any time-varying magnetic fields with a frequency well below
the Larmor frequency of hydrogen nuclei in the local Earth magnetic field (1700 Hz in Singapore).

CONCLUSION

In this paper, the possible effects of environmental radiation on plants (growth rate of soybean seedlings) using the association between cellular telephone-like (short duration, higher amplitude) and base station-like (long duration, very low amplitude) radiation exposure have been investigated. Evidence has been presented that nonthermal exposure levels for 900 MHz radiation mostly decreases the outgrowth of soybeans. Establishing a dose-response relationship is complicated by the fact that different parameters studied behave differently, with epicotyl outgrowth reduced more by modulated radiation than CW, and hypocotyl outgrowth only reduced by CW at low intensity (5.7 V m\(^{-1}\)), suggesting an amplitude-window effect. It was also observed that long-term exposure for extremely low-level (0.56 V m\(^{-1}\)) GSM 900 radiation significantly affected all response parameters.

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Bioelectromagnetics 26:185-93.


APPENDIX

Expressions for SAR distribution, as given by Durney et al. [1975] for homogeneous prolate spherical cylindrical objects in a long-wavelength approximation were used in this paper. However, the Equations derived by Durney et al. [1975] assume that the magnitude of the real part of the complex permittivity can be neglected compared to the complex (lossy) part of the permittivity. Since this condition is not met for soybeans irradiated at 900 Mhz, we used more general expressions.

For electric, magnetic and cross (k)-polarization of the incident electromagnetic field, the following Equations for the SAR distributions were derived:

\[
SAR_E(x, y, z) = \sigma E_0^2 \frac{B_i^2}{\varepsilon_r^2 + \varepsilon_i^2} - \frac{2B_i a^2 k y \varepsilon_i}{(a^2 + b^2)(\varepsilon_r^2 + \varepsilon_i^2)} + \frac{k^2(a^4 y^2 + b^4 z^2)}{(a^2 + b^2)^2} \]

(1)

\[
SAR_h(x, y, z) = \sigma E_0^2 \frac{B_h^2}{\varepsilon_r^2 + \varepsilon_i^2} - \frac{k B_h y \varepsilon_i}{2(\varepsilon_r^2 + \varepsilon_i^2)} + \frac{k^2(x^2 + y^2)}{4} \]

(2)

\[
SAR_k(x, y, z) = \sigma E_0^2 \frac{B_h^2}{\varepsilon_r^2 + \varepsilon_i^2} - \frac{2B_h b^2 k z \varepsilon_i}{(a^2 + b^2)(\varepsilon_r^2 + \varepsilon_i^2)} + \frac{k^2(a^4 x^2 + b^4 z^2)}{(a^2 + b^2)^2} \]

(3)

Where the expressions have been written in Cartesian coordinates, and where
\( \varepsilon_r \) and \( \varepsilon_i \) are the real and imaginary part of the relative permittivity;
\( 2a \) and \( 2b \) are the lengths of the long and short axis of the spherical cylinder;
\( \sigma \) = conductivity of the material;
\( \rho \) = density of the material;
\( E_0 \) = amplitude of the electric field component of the RF radiation;

\( k = \omega (\mu_0 \varepsilon_0)^{1/2} \) with \( \omega \) the circular frequency of the radiation and \( \mu_0 \) the magnetic susceptibility and \( \varepsilon_0 \) the permittivity of vacuum;

\[
B_e = [(u_{10})^2 - 1]^{-1} \left[ -1 + \frac{u_{10} \ln \left( \frac{u_{10} + 1}{u_{10} - 1} \right)}{2} \right]^{-1}
\]

\[
B_h = 2[(u_{10})^2 - 1]^{-1} \left[ -u_{10} \ln \left( \frac{u_{10} + 1}{u_{10} - 1} \right) + \frac{(u_{10})^2}{(u_{10})^2 - 1} \right]^{-1}
\]

\( u_{10} = a/(a^2 - b^2)^{1/2} \)

Integration over the volume of the spheroid gives the average SAR for the volume under study:

\[
SAR_E = \sigma E_0^2 \frac{B_e^2}{\varepsilon_f^2 + \varepsilon_i^2} - \frac{2B_e a^2 k \gamma \varepsilon_i}{(a^2 + b^2)(\varepsilon_f^2 + \varepsilon_i^2)} + \frac{k^2 a^2 b^4}{5(a^2 + b^2)}
\]

\[
SAR_E = \sigma E_0^2 \frac{B_h^2}{\varepsilon_f^2 + \varepsilon_i^2} + \frac{k^2 b^2}{10}
\]

\[
SAR_E = \sigma E_0^2 \frac{B_h^2}{\varepsilon_f^2 + \varepsilon_i^2} + \frac{k^2 a^2 b^2}{5(a^2 + b^2)}
\]

Figure captions

Fig. 1. One week old soybean seedling: \( L_1 \) – epicotyl – length between leaves and cotyledon, \( L_2 \) – hypocotyl – length between cotyledon and root and branches, \( L_3 \) – maximum length of root and its branches.

Fig. 2. Distribution of Specific Absorption Rate (SAR) in a soybean of 15 mm long oriented with the
long (z-) axis along the propagation direction of the RF radiation (k-polarization) according to the long wavelength approximation (see text). The soybean is approximated as a prolate spheroid with a diameter of 7.5 mm.

Fig. 3. Box plots with median and interquartile range for a) L\textsubscript{2} for CW exposure at 5.7 V m\textsuperscript{-1}, b) L\textsubscript{3} for CW exposure at 5.7 V m\textsuperscript{-1}, c) L\textsubscript{1} for GSM 900 exposure at 41 V m\textsuperscript{-1} and d) L\textsubscript{1} for GSM 900 exposure at 41 V m\textsuperscript{-1}. The T-bars (whiskers) extend to 1.5 times the height of the box (inter quartile range, IQR).

Table 1. Exposure scheme for 900 MHz exposure. The GSM exposures consist of 0.5 ms pulses with a repetition rate of 217 Hz.

Table 2. Medians in mm (p-values in brackets) for the difference between exposed and sham exposed, pooled data (n.s. is denoted as non significant difference).
FIGURES

Fig. 1. One week old soybean seedling: $L_1$ – epicotyl – length between leaves and cotyledon, $L_2$ – hypocotyl – length between cotyledon and root and branches, $L_3$ – maximum length of root and its branches.
Fig. 2 Distribution of Specific Absorption Rate (SAR) in a soybean of 15 mm long oriented with the long (z-) axis along the propagation direction of the RF radiation (k-polarization) according to the long wavelength approximation (see text). The soybean is approximated as a prolate spheroid with a diameter of 7.5 mm.
Fig. 3. Box plots with median and interquartile range for a) \( L_2 \) for CW exposure at 5.7 \( \text{V m}^{-1} \), b) \( L_3 \) for CW exposure at 5.7 \( \text{V m}^{-1} \), c) \( L_1 \) for GSM 900 exposure at 41 \( \text{V m}^{-1} \) and d) \( L_1 \) for GSM 900 exposure at 41 \( \text{V m}^{-1} \). The T-bars (whiskers) extend to 1.5 times the height of the box (inter quartile range, IQR).
**TABLES**

*Table 1. Exposure scheme for 900 MHz exposure. The GSM exposures consist of 0.5 ms pulses with a repetition rate of 217 Hz.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Experiments</th>
<th>Exposure Type</th>
<th>Signal Strength (V m⁻¹)</th>
<th>Time Averaged Power Density (mW m⁻²)</th>
<th>SAR (mW kg⁻¹)</th>
<th>Exposure Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>GSM</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2 + 2 h (sham + exposure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>GSM</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>2 + 2 h (sham + exposure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>GSM</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2 + 2 + 2 h (sham + exposure + sham)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>GSM</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>2 + 2 + 2 h (sham + exposure + sham)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>GSM</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>4.8 x 10⁻⁴</td>
<td>5 days + 5 days (sham + exposure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>CW</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4400</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2 + 2 h (sham + exposure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>CW</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>2 + 2 + 2 h (sham + exposure + sham)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Medians in mm (p-values in brackets) for the difference between exposed and sham exposed, pooled data (n.s. is denoted as non significant difference).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exposure</th>
<th>Signal Strength ((V \ m^{-1}))</th>
<th>Avg. Power Density ((mW \ m^{-2}))</th>
<th>(L_1) ((p = )</th>
<th>(L_2)</th>
<th>(L_3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GSM (2 h)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>-1.7 ((p = 0.002))</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSM (2 h)</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSM (5 days)</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>-0.2 ((p = 0.024))</td>
<td>-1.0 ((p = 0.001))</td>
<td>+1.0 ((p &lt; 0.001))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CW (2 h)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4400</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td>-1.1 ((p &lt; 0.001))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CW (2 h)</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td>-1.3 ((p = 0.004))</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>