ABSTRACTS

02 KNOWLEDGE, BEHAVIOUR AND ATTITUDES OF GREEK HEALTH CARE PERSONNEL REGARDING MOBILE PHONE USE AND ROAD ACCIDENTS: THE 'ENIGMA' PROJECT
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Background Mobile Phone (MP) use constitutes an established risk for road traffic accidents; there still a scientific controversy, however, on other health risks related with electromagnetic fields (EMF) emitted by MP, frequently generating high risk perceptions of the public at large.

Aims Health Care Personnel (HCP) are central figures in shaping public behaviour on sensitive health issues; we sought to 1. examine their knowledge, behaviour and attitudes regarding perceived health risks specifically related to MP use and to explore whether the discrepancy between excessive concerns on the non-established risks due to EMF emissions versus minimal concerns on evident risks due to MP use on the road also hold for HCP.

Methods In the context of ENIGMA (http://www.enigma-program.gr), an EMF-related risks information programme, 722 HCP from several Greek cities completed a 22-item structured questionnaire; data were analysed with multiple regression techniques. This quantitative approach was complemented by a double-phased qualitative method, entailing 18 semi-structured individual interviews and 3 focus groups with paediatricians, followed by an interpretive phenomenological analysis.

Results Correct knowledge about MP health risks reached a minimum 8%, whereas perceived knowledge peaked to >75%, leading to a limited accuracy of <20%. Paediatricians’ excessive concerns clustered around three main themes, notably personal involvement, perceived confusion and perceptions about conflict of interest in health risk research, expressed through social conspiracy theories.

Significance Counselling by experts in sensitive issues is not always in line with evidence based scientific findings, but rather distillates from personal cognition/attitudes/characteristics suggesting a principal risk governance issue for health education policies.