

Mobile phone use linked to behavioural problems in children

The children of mothers who use mobile phones while pregnant are more likely to develop behavioural problems, new research suggests.

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A study of more than 13,000 children in Denmark claims to show a link between use of handheld telephones by pregnant women and problems such as hyperactivity in their children.

The risks are increased if the child then uses a mobile themselves before the age of seven, according to the report to be published in the journal *Epidemiology*.

The study raises renewed questions over the safety of mobile phones, which have in the past been linked with brain cancer.

The scientists behind the research at the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA) and the University of Aarhus in Denmark stressed that the results "should be interpreted with caution" and checked by further studies.

But they added: "If they are real they would have major public health implications."

The programme surveyed 13,159 children born in the late 1990s. Results showed that mothers who did use handsets were 54 per cent more likely to have children with behavioural problems. That figure increased to 80 per cent when the children also later used the phones themselves.