

Possible arson attacks hit phone towers even though 5G has no link to COVID-19

Influencers and Russia are pushing conspiracy theories that link the coronavirus to the new, super-fast wireless technology. They're absolutely wrong.

As the coronavirus sweeps the globe, so do rumors about what caused it or how it's spread. One that's gained steam online is that new 5G networks caused the disease. That's completely wrong. Radio waves don't create viruses, which is what causes COVID-19.



But that hasn't stopped threats against broadband engineers and possible arson attacks against UK phone towers -- the type of issues that have prompted the UK's national medical director to call out the 5G conspiracy theory as "complete and utter rubbish" that's threatening communications networks crucial in the fight against the pandemic.

The theory has spread on social media. Keri Hilson, an American singer with 4.2 million followers on Twitter, sent several tweets last month that attempted to link the coronavirus to 5G. She wrote: "People have been trying to warn us about 5G for YEARS. Petitions, organizations, studies...what we're going thru is the affects [sic] of radiation. 5G launched in CHINA. Nov 1, 2019. People dropped dead."

Others on YouTube and Facebook, including an anti-5G Facebook group, have also shared false claims. In March, a Facebook user named Ben Mackie linked 5G to the coronavirus, saying in part that it's not actually a virus. "They are trying to get u scared of a fake ass virus when it the 5G towers being built around the world," he

said. He also claimed that Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates invented the technology and that it's an effort to depopulate the world. And Mackie said that vaccines being developed for the coronavirus are actually chips that will be implanted in people.

(Editors' note: We are not linking to these posts because they contain falsehoods.)

Those claims were debunked by UK fact checker FullFact, and other experts have chimed in.

"This story about 5G has no credence scientifically and is certainly a potential distraction, as is other such misinformation, from controlling the COVID-19 epidemic," said Dr. Jonathan M. Samet, dean of the Colorado School of Public Health.

Brendan Carr, who serves on the Federal Communications Commission, tweeted that Hilson's effort to link 5G to the coronavirus "is straight from the most dangerous depths of tin foil hat land." He noted that COVID-19 is caused by a virus that's spread by person-to-person contact, not by radio waves, and he reiterated that the FCC, Food and Drug Administration, and Environmental Protection Agency all say 5G is safe.

5G is the new, super-fast wireless technology that's been rolling out across the globe. In the US, major cities have live 5G networks. 5G is also live in a number of other countries, such as China, South Korea, Germany and the UK. The technology is poised to change the way we live and is expected to power everything from self-driving cars to advanced augmented reality experiences. The belief is whatever country leads in 5G will lead the world over the coming decades and possibly longer.

5G health concerns?

But ever since companies first started talking about 5G, there have been concerns expressed by some people about the technology's impact on health. One version of 5G, called millimeter wave, runs on very high-frequency radio waves. Those signals can't travel long distances, which requires towers to be placed close together and installed in more locations. That has reignited worries that the radio waves could produce harmful radiation that could cause brain cancer, reduced fertility, headaches and other illnesses.

The FDA and FCC say there's nothing to worry about because studies haven't found a link between radio frequency signals from cellphones or cell towers and disease. But because 5G is so new, there's no definitive way to know if it will cause long-term health problems.

What can be definitively stated is that 5G doesn't cause or spread a virus.

"It's a ridiculous concept," said John Bucher, a senior scientist with the National Toxicology Program, a US Health and Human Services interagency program dedicated to testing and evaluating substances in our environment. "Each year, you get a new strain of flu that goes around. That's what viruses do -- mutate and move around that way, probably as long as there's been life."

A coronavirus is a type of virus that is spread from person-to-person contact. It doesn't travel through something like radio waves. You can't get it from using your phone or watching your TV -- unless the phone itself or the remote control is contaminated with coronavirus. This novel coronavirus belong to the Coronaviridae family. They look like spiked rings when viewed under an electron microscope and are named for these spikes, which form a halo or "crown" (corona is Latin for "crown") around their viral envelope.

The coronavirus was first detected in the Chinese city of Wuhan late last year. The virus, initially known as 2019-nCoV, was reported to the World Health Organization on Dec. 31 and has been under investigation since. Other coronaviruses include SARS and MERS. In mid-March, the World Health Organization labeled the coronavirus outbreak a pandemic, and the virus' spread has caused countries around the world, including the US, to take drastic measures like lockdowns.

One point addressed by the 5G-coronavirus theories is that COVID-19 came from China because that's where most 5G network towers are. While China does have service in many areas, 5G came to South Korea and parts of the US first. The US hasn't seen major numbers of coronavirus until the past couple of weeks. COVID-19 also has spread to areas without 5G, like Iran and Japan.

"There appears to be no dispute that animals are the source of the coronavirus, according to experts like the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control," said CTIA, the wireless industry trade association, said.

This isn't the first time that 5G has been a target of conspiracy theories. Russia, which has sown misinformation and influenced the 2016 US presidential election, has included 5G as one of its target areas. Broadcaster RT America, which is funded by the Russian government, a year ago published a report called "5G Wireless: A Dangerous 'Experiment on Humanity'" that sought to create fear about the technology. The New York Times at the time said it was an effort by Russia to slow the US push for 5G.

You finished reading the article "**Possible arson attacks hit phone towers even though 5G has no link to COVID-19**" edited by the [TipsMake](#) team. We hope this article has provided you with many useful tech tips and tricks. You can search for similar articles on tips and guides. Thank you for reading and for following us regularly.