

« **Wireless Notes** »

Dr. **Henry Lai** has found that a single one-hour exposure to relatively low levels of microwave radiation can impair **long-term memory** in rats. The rats, exposed to pulsed microwaves with a whole-body specific absorption rate of 1.2 W/Kg, were slower than controls to learn the location of a submerged platform in a water maze. The study appears in the January issue of *Bioelectro-magnetics* (21, pp.52-56, 2000). “The results indicate that the rats had trouble forming a map inside their head. In fact, the exposed rats used a different strategy to find the platform,” Lai told *Microwave News* from his lab at the University of Washington, Seattle. “This is the first paper on

the loss of long-term memory following microwave exposure,” Lai said. “It could be a warning sign—we need to look into this further.” After the university’s news department issued a press release on the forthcoming paper at the end of November, Lai’s results gathered a great deal of attention, including coverage by *CBS Evening News with Dan Rather* (December 2), the *New York Times* (December 14), *Scientific American* (February) and <drkoop.com> (December 6). The European press also picked up the story. The U.K.’s *Sunday Mirror* did not wait for the press release and ran an item on October 31, following a presentation by Lai at the NRPB.

**The Far Field**



*“Dr. Lai?...I’m supposed to be at the lab?  
...Oh, I’m sorry. I completely forgot...”*

Kathleen MacInnes for *Microwave News*