

Phone Tumour

Reporter: Laura Sparkes

Laura Sparkes reports "most 27 year olds have the world at their feet, finding you have a brain tumour was really hard to take. That dark patch there that is the tumour, it's fairly big, it's quite large."

Anna "I've been told the tumour is probably about that big and that's just here, it's positioned right there. I do think they should take a bit more responsibility I don't want to be pointing the finger or anything but they're making a lot of money out of these mobile phones."

Dr Teo says "She's a beautiful person who's done nothing wrong and that's the problem with brain cancer it's indiscriminate."

Anna "It's taking up at least 10 percent of my brain space"

Laura "Anna Tarrant's story is a chilling one, at 27 she's about to undergo life threatening brain surgery to cut this large tumour out. It's positioned right behind the ear lobe, normally I always use my right hand, in my right ear, so it's pretty much positioned right behind where I've used my phone, you put two and two together it's all pointing in one direction."

Anna "It pretty much happened out here"

Laura "It all began here, four weeks ago after suffering a seizure. Anna spent five days in hospital. She was eventually diagnosed with a glioma, an aggressive brain tumour."

Anna "I think initially I was in shock, that was pretty hard to take, especially when I had no history, there was no indication"

Laura "Since diagnosed she's been researching how and why she has the tumour."

Anna "I really have probably used the mobile phone at a minimum of 2 to 3 hours a day consistently. I have been on the road in sales for 5 to 7 years and that my tumour is placed above my right ear I find that to be quite coincidental, I'm not a scientist, I'm not an expert but all things are leading to mobile usage."

Laura "What sort of duty of care do you think the mobile phone companies have?"

Anna "If there is some way we can make them more accountable, have warning signs on every mobile phone package maybe we will be able to save some lives."

Laura "Even our top epidemiologist in Australia, Dr Bruce Armstrong from Sydney University believes the research is now strong in terms of long term mobile use and tumours."

Dr Armstrong says "What was found there was evidence of a two fold increased risk in tumours. I would not want to be a heavy user of a mobile phone"

Laura "Anna's not the first to raise the alarm about brain tumours, mobile phone salesman and heavy user David Smith had a tumour as big as a golfball removed from his acoustic nerve."

So David the tumour was just here behind your ear

David "That's right behind my right ear."

Laura "Where did you used to talk on the mobile phone?"

David "I used to use my right ear."

Laura "Anna is facing up to four hours in surgery in just 11 days."

Anna "It's very scary I'm pretty good at putting on a brave face I've always been a glass half-full type of person but the thought of leaving the people I love behind is very very daunting

Dr Teo says "we're seeing the increase in tumours in the insular region, which is this region right here, the temporal lobe and frontal lobe so it's right where you hold your phone."

Laura "Her neurosurgeon, the world renowned and high profile Dr Charlie Teo is worried yet another young person has come to him with a tumour near their ear."

Dr Teo "I'm not a world expert on mobile phones, nor am I an expert on EMR, electromagnetic radiation, but I do keep up with the literature, I have written an article on it, I personally feel there is a link between mobile phone usage and the genesis of brain tumours."

Laura "Dr Teo limits his use of a mobile phone and only uses it on speaker phone and has this warning

"You've got to limit the amount of mobile phone usage, there's no reason a child should be on the phone unless there's some emergency. I'd love for people to stand up and say listen this disease is bad its affecting a lot of people, more people, young people, kids, we need to put more time and money into research." Says Dr Teo

Laura "Dr Teo rates Anna's chance of surviving the operation as good but her long term prognosis is not."

Dr Teo "Invariably you can't take out all the cells, in other words it's going to grow back again (butt 2.43) with radical surgery you're hoping to extend the survival to 10 years or more."

Laura "In the days leading up to her surgery, Anna's mission is to get the message out, particularly to parents who issue mobiles to their children for safety reasons."

Anna "I just hope in some way this interview can make people think twice before they answer their phone without using a hands free and maybe parents think about the responsibility they have to their children wouldn't it be better to take that precaution and avoid something like that happening to your child or yourself."