

ELECTRO MAGNETIC SENSITIVITY

My name is Alwyn Lewies and I am 42 years old. This is my story of living with a condition called Electro hyper Sensitivity (EHS) which I have been struggling with for the past 16 years of my life. Whenever I am exposed to electromagnetic fields, I am in severe pain.

It started in 2000 when a cell phone tower was erected at my workplace in Wapadrand, Pretoria. A cell phone company was interested in putting up a tower on my premises and we were assured that the tower would have no effect on us.

Unfortunately this was far from the truth, but we didn't know any better at the time. Within a brief period since the erection of the first tower, another one appeared only 80 meters away. Four months after these installations, my first symptoms started to occur.

While being at work, I would experience a 'burning' sensation in my head. The pain far exceeded that of a normal headache. In the beginning my headaches were painful, but bearable. But after some time, the pain became excruciating.

I then started to go from one doctor to the next, underwent several tests and brain scans, but all reflected as normal. I started monitoring my pain and realized that I only experienced pain after making a phone call on my mobile phone, or when being within close proximity of a cell phone tower.

Research confirmed my assumptions that it was in fact the radiation from these devices that caused my headaches. A short time after, all other electronic devices such as TV's, electric motors etc. started to affect me. To an extend, I was able to avoid some of these devices, but the cell phone towers were popping up all over the city and was a constant obstacle.

The radiation started to affect me so badly that I wasn't able to function in any way. I started to experience a new symptom which was the constant ringing in my ears.

As time passed, matters got worse, and I met Dr. Cloete in 2004. For the first time, I was diagnosed with EHS and it was a relief to finally put a name to my illness. Today in 2016 there are more doctors who are aware of this condition.

Studies showed that much research has been done, but a cure has yet to be discovered. The best I could do was to boost my immune system as much as possible and avoid radiation.

Some people are more sensitive to electromagnetic fields than others, in the same way that some such as my wife are more sensitive to hay fever. Just proves that not one person is the same and therefore our sensitivity to allergies also different.

In 2004 I was forced to seek employment elsewhere at a construction company as my body couldn't handle the strain of the towers in such close proximity. After two years had passed, I resigned once more after all got worse and I was barely functioning and couldn't keep track of my thoughts.

Due to a lack of income, we had to sell our house and our family moved in with my parents. The only room where I felt the least pain was on the dining room floor. The electricity had to be switched off at the main switch in order for me to sleep.

During the day, I was confined to this small space, because this was the only place in the house with the lowest radiation levels.

After some time had passed, there was still no improvement, an opportunity came along for me to stay on a sheep farm in the Karoo. We decided it was best for my family to stay with the in laws in Cape Town until our son was born. My health improved but the distance between us became a problem. I had to get closer, but I couldn't move back into the radiation.

I travelled to Cape Town to be with them, but I had to sleep in my car every night. I drove to different places to establish where I felt best, but it was very unsafe. This continued for two weeks. After the birth of my son, I was forced to find a place to stay for our family.

In June 2007 we found a small cottage in Gordon's Bay where the radiation was minimal. I was only able to sleep on the kitchen floor where the radiation was lowest. The situation wasn't ideal, but we were together, and this lifted our spirits.

We managed to stay there a little more than a year, but in the beginning of 2009 I felt a new signal in the area which was very strong. The sleeplessness and pain started again and I couldn't be in the house any longer.

Once more the nightmare started, and I didn't know what to do, or where to go. The anxiety and uncertainty I experienced was frightening.

The following thoughts were flashing through my mind. I had to leave my wife and two young kids once more and they were too small to understand why I was abandoning them once more. The idea of me having to sleep in my car again was unthinkable and I didn't know which pain was worse – the burning sensation in my head, or the heartache of leaving my loved ones.

The turmoil continued for two weeks as I slept in my car next to the side of the road where there was no reception. Sleeping in discomfort and fear, the only times I went home was to eat and clean. It was then when I learned about a lady outside a West Coast town called Clanwilliam who suffered from the same condition.

I left for Clanwilliam, but weren't able to afford the accommodation. She informed me about a small town, Wuppertal where I could stay. It was completely secluded from modern society with no reception. Since I had to wait for accommodation to become available, I took a trail into the bush and stayed next to a river in the mountains for a few days.

I managed to rent a small cottage from the Moravian Church who owns the town. There I found relief from the constant pain.

My wife and kids tried their best to visit me twice a month, but it didn't quite work out the way we planned. The distance and a poorly maintained gravel road made it a dangerous and lengthy journey with two young children.

During this period, I did extensive travelling up and down the West Coast and Cederberg and closer to Somerset West in search for a safe place to stay, only to come up empty handed.

At the end of 2009 I left Wuppertal and travelled back to my parents' house in Pretoria. There was a safe spot on the dining room floor where I was able to sleep. I met an engineer who specializes in radiation blockage. He assured me that it was possible to isolate a room from radiation although it would be costly.

I was warned that some people suffering from EHS do experience problems with these rooms, because the material used, reflected the radiation and made matters worse in most cases, because it's extremely difficult to block out radiation completely.

The EMF Forum also advised that it could be a problem for me, but I carried on because of my desperation to be with my loved ones.

During 2010 I did extensive travelling between Pretoria and Cape Town in order to build a safe room, but it was unsuccessful. I had to remain in Pretoria.

In the beginning of 2011 it became clear that my wife was under enormous pressure and I realized that I urgently had to get to them. She struggled to manage with us being apart, the kids and her work.

This forced me to go back and support my family to the best of my ability, whilst facing the daily agony, no matter how bad. After three months, the constant radiation and living in my car had a crippling effect on my body. I was sleeping next to the side of the road between Gordon's Bay and Rooi Els.

I became extremely ill, when exposed to these elements for lengthy periods. Suddenly I was unable to function and my body just gave in by collapsing. I decided that it really was impossible for me to be with my family because the next step could be fatal.

In the beginning of June 2011, I kissed my family goodbye and left for Pretoria. It felt unreal but I had to push forward for the sake of survival.

On arrival at my parents' house I was shocked beyond my wildest belief. Their house was no longer safe for me to stay in. A tower had been erected within very close proximity and although I wasn't sure what type of tower it was, the signal was too strong for me to handle. I thought I had finally run out of options.

This was one of the darkest days of my life. Little did I know that there would be many more to follow.

I just had to keep pushing forward. I am blessed with a wonderful wife and two precious kids, and I had so much to live for.

I didn't know where to go or where I was going to sleep. I drove out to a farm 230 km outside Pretoria, close to Polokwane, where I created a man-made tent in the middle of the bush.

After 9 months on the farm I couldn't stand it any longer. I was spending my days alone with nothing constructive to keep me busy and I was missing my family terribly.

I was cut off from the outside world, friends and family. The only reason I remained there was to survive. During this time my belongings have been flooded with summer rainstorms.

On 24 December 2011, I couldn't stand it any longer, and I went to visit my family. This time, I felt much better on arrival, and thought that my health was improving.

I was surrounded by my wife and kids, and my time at home wasn't that painful. This was during the December holiday.

Then, in early January 2012 things rapidly changed. I was in agony, but remained in Somerset West. It was as if everything flared up again as soon as the December holidays had come to an end.

The excruciating pain was back.

I spoke with an engineer about the strange pain sensation that came and went without warning, and he assured me that it cannot be from cell phone towers, because they weren't designed to be switched on and off on a frequent basis, but that it might be caused by other signal, such as Wi-Fi.

He strongly suggested that it had to come from nearby houses in our neighborhood. After we had some measurements taken in the surrounding area, it was confirmed that my pain was indeed caused by Wi-Fi from surrounding homes.

For the first time, I learned how dangerous it was for EHS sufferers to come into contact with Wi-Fi.

I started to contact my neighbors and enquire about whether they were using Wi-Fi, and the response was astonishing. Most of them were very understanding about my situation, and my next door neighbors agreed to switch off their Wi-Fi when they weren't using it.

We decided to put it to the test. If I did experience the pain, I would inform my neighbor when he switched on the Wi-Fi, and he was astounded at my accuracy. As soon as the pain disappeared, there was this relief. The best I can describe the feeling is as if someone just pulled a knife from my head.

Some days are better than others – depending on the volume of Wi-Fi in the area, and the period it remains on.

In the beginning of August 2012 I slept in a spot between Gordon's Bay and Koggel Bay. After about 3 months I picked up a new signal in that area, and I called in the help of David Miles who took a reading with his meter. He confirmed my suspicions and I had to relocate once more.

For 2 weeks I went without sleep until one day my body just gave in. This put enormous strain on my immune system, and I fell terribly ill. My wife and our helper had to carry me to my car.

Seeing that hospitals in S.A. don't make provision for EHS sufferers, it wouldn't be an option to ever be hospitalized. The only thing I can do is going away from everything and everyone.

We knew I had to get away immediately but I was unable to drive. My wife threw a few essentials in a bag and we left without knowing where we were going or for how long.

It was the start of the long weekend and we had no other option than to drop two hysterical children at their grandparents and drive off with no plan whatsoever for the weekend ahead. I was sick and there were no space for them to sleep in the car with us.

My wife and I spent the following 3 days and nights in the car. We found a spot just outside Laingsburg next to the side of the road, where I felt some relief for the first time. We tried different places and spent the entire weekend driving from one place to the other, but to no avail.

We eventually found a farm outside Sutherland, and I stayed there for about 3 weeks to re-cooperate.

I then learned about a Nature Reserve 10 km outside Simon's town, 70km away from home, called 'Smutswinkel', but I couldn't find a place to stay. There was a 'dead zone' (radiation free zone) just around the mountain for a few meters. I parked my car once again, next to the side of the road and it became my next 'home'. This carried on for another 7 months.

This was a secluded and unsafe area, where the poachers and game rangers were at war with each other. I was warned by the police and game rangers that it was unsafe, but I had nowhere else to go.

One of the last nights I slept there, I had a close encounter with death once more as the poachers surrounded my car whilst I was asleep.

After 7 months I had my back up against the wall, and didn't know how I was ever going to find another place, a kind doctor in Somerset West came to my rescue and offered his premises close to Hangklip as a safer place to sleep. This time it was on a private property where was able to open my car windows and breathe fresh air. I was still sleeping in my car, but at least I was safe.

It has now been 3 years since I started sleeping in this spot, and I don't know if this person will ever really know how much it means to me, but he truly saved me when I was out of options.

I spend most of my time there. Waiting in my car until I have worked up the courage to move back into this invisible prison I'm supposed to call my home.

My wife and kids feels blessed to have me closer, but there are no way of telling how long I will remain, before rushing off when the 'airwaves' come to get me.

Lately we have experience a lot of load shedding in our area, and although other people may despise it, it confirmed my findings.

Whenever load shedding takes place, I find that I experience huge relief for that period of time. Cell phone towers don't shut down when power failures takes place. They run on battery power.

At the moment the Wi-Fi signal in our area is still painful, but I'm able to live with it. I have been blessed with very understanding neighbors who are willing to shut off their Wi-Fi whenever they don't make use of it. This makes an enormous difference in my life and the time I spend at home become bearable.

Our lives are more complicated than the average family's but if there's one thing it has taught us, that is that life is precious, and you need to take every moment you can get and make the most of it! For you never know what awaits you around the corner.

We can never plan our next move or know what tomorrow would be like, but we've always managed to get through it. Not by our own strength, but by the help of our Creator and a handful of spectacular people who won't quit praying and helping wherever they can.

During these years, I have missed several events and milestones in my families' lives which can't be bought back. Their first teeth, words, bike rides, school and other events.

During this period, I have been inspected by the police, harassed and threatened by people. On one occasion a car crashed into mine while I was sleeping.

There are several other places which I tried out and failed, and this letter would be endless if I had to mention them all, but some of them include Natal, Eastern Cape, Free State, Karoo and Northern Transvaal.

I am not alone. Many people are starting to show similar symptoms but our voices aren't being heard.

South Africa doesn't even recognize this illness, nor do we have any legislation in place for this invisible disease. Countries such as Sweden and others offer compensation for citizens from these health hazards. They have laws in place to protect EHS sufferers.

This illness is not recognized in our country (yet). But nothing is keeping us from coming up with a solution for people like myself.

It is unrealistic to expect that radiation and technology would ever come to a grinding halt, or even banished, but we can surely put certain areas aside which would be safe to live in for those who are more sensitive to these elements, like other countries.

We all have Human Rights in S.A. EHS sufferers should form part of it, and have other options, than being forced to live in these man-made radiation areas.

How is it that one is permitted to cut away branches from a neighboring tree when it crosses over to your side, or file a noise complaint in your neighborhood, but you don't have any say when it comes to neighbors Wi-Fi streaming into your yard, just because it can't be seen?

Most of these places I have been to barely have livable conditions. I am tired of being on the run and my body is exhausted I have led a nomadic life and been deprived of my rights of being a husband, father and having friends. Meanwhile my children are growing up without their father and I'm unable to lead a fulfilling life. I need to be part of my family's lives, but instead we're being ripped apart continuously. This is the worse punishment that anyone can endure.

I trust that God will provide as he has to this day, and that the right people will be involved to end this horrible nightmare.

With plenty of research and consideration, I have come up with the only sure way to be with my family. Plenty of research has been done around this issue to ensure that this will be the solution to my dilemma. We have to build an underground bunker.

On the 28th of November 2014, the final drawings for the bunker have been approved. After a long period of time, investing plenty of money and research; things were looking up for us.

Finally things were starting to come together until a transmitter was put up only 150m away from my home on the 2nd of December 2014.

I drove past the spot and a crane caught my eye. My immediate thought was that a tower was being erected.

Upon my return 40 minutes later, the tower was up. It hasn't been activated yet, so I have limited time to do my utmost best to convince the company to move this tower.

We decided to keep it quiet and not tell the kids about this, seeing that they knew what this would mean for us as a family and for their daddy.

Upon our return from school my son instantly saw this transmitter and was hysterical, because by now, he knew what pain this transmitter was causing. That broke my heart, and I knew that we had to do everything in our power to stop this transmitter from being activated.

My children prayed for a solution for this pain and being separated again.

They were broken but I could see their faith was strong. If only the decision makers could see the look on my children's faces, it would be enough to make them realize what all this was causing.

I know that I had to take immediate action before this tower was activated, for then it would be too late for taking action.

After completion, there is no doubt in my mind that such a bunker will be that new beginning many other sufferers deserve.

Should this transmitter be activated, I will be confined to this bunker 24/7.

This is the closest that I have come to finding the solution for this dire situation, and I refuse to think that I have come this close just to be stopped by one transmitter being put up.

On the 14th of September 2015 PRASA switched on a tower 150m away from our house. The moment the tower got switched on, I became homeless and extremely ill. My wife said that it was like experiencing the loss of a husband and father, even though I was still alive.

I was isolated and couldn't bear to be home for more than half an hour, because of the effects of the transmitter.

I was only able to take a quick bath, get something to eat, and then drive off again. The safest spot for me was 9 km away from home where I would sit in my car the entire day.

At night I would drive off to the farm in Hangklip where I've been sleeping for the past few years. This was a terrible time in my life – I didn't have any more options.

On September 18th 2015, I collapsed at my daughter's gymnastics club in front of everybody. My daughter ran into the bathroom crying, fearing that I was about to die. This happened because I pushed myself to be home for longer than I was supposed to.

We could see how this whole ordeal was taking its toll on our 10 year old daughter, who was starting to struggle concentrating on her schoolwork and exams, because her father was barely hanging on.

The effect my condition has had on my children is nothing but destructive and heartbreaking. I don't have any control over the situation.

I am very involved in my children's lives, and for them to just 'loose' me like that is very tough on them.

My marriage has also been under severe pressure, because I fail to have a decent conversation with my wife without forgetting my words or being disorientated.

I would phone my wife from a ticky box to establish whether they are still ok, before driving onto the farm. It's difficult to cope with the pain so I have to stay away, but it's just as bad to sit alone in a car the entire day.

It's also very costly to drive around the entire day, when you have a house to go back to.

For an entire month, I lived like this, until October 16th it was switched off. A man at PRASA was extremely helpful with switching off the tower. He agreed to help and try to move the tower or divert the signal before switching it back on.

It was a tremendous relief when I could go back home. I drove more than 4000km during that month just to get away from the radiation.

On December 2nd 2015, exactly 1 year after the PRASA tower was erected, another tower was put up. 16 Years of experience has told me this tower is too close to my home should it get switched on.

We searched for a low radiation area for 5 years before we purchased this house, and have stayed here for 7 years. Now I'm being chased around by new towers which haven't been here 7 years ago.

My life is very limited, and I'm not free to move around as I please. We are unable to go on holiday like normal people, or go to a school play. These towers are everywhere throughout the country.

I have missed out on so much of my children's big moments and their growing up. I have missed all their school plays, my mom's 60th birthday; my best friend's wedding and can't really set foot at my son's wrestling games or my daughter's SA gymnastics games.

The financial implications are tremendous. I had to leave my business and trust that my manager would take care of it, while he is getting paid the salary which in actual fact is mine.

I can't even set foot on my premises, so I have to let go and trust that all will be well. The cost of petrol, unnecessary wear and tear on vehicles and costs of relocating is another story entirely.

Up to date, I have spent more than 1400 nights in my car and relocated more than 17 times in a very short period of time.

I haven't slept next to my wife for the last 9 years. Today, I can't recall what that even felt like.

It is because of towers that I have lost all these things, I honestly feel that it's not asking too much that this tower be moved so that I can have the best possible quality of life and not be put through this turmoil any longer.

My latest situation is that I'm unable to be on the farm where I've been the last few years. On January 11th I discovered a new signal there, so it was just too painful to sleep there.

Luckily I worked on an aluminum cage for the past few months, and it just needed a few finishing touches. I now sleep inside this very small cage and it is mind over matter to stay locked in there during the entire night. This aluminum box is 2m x 1m x 1m.

My wife locks me in there at night, because it can't close properly from the inside.

I am forced to sleep in there since January 14th 2016. The door has to be taped closed and barricaded closed to block out all radiation. I get very claustrophobic in there, but I know it is the only option.

Knowing there are a multitude of things which can go wrong in there is not a nice thought, because I can easily suffocate through the night.

Up to date, I have built 9 cages, and this was the first successful attempt in which I was able to block out all radiation and to sleep in.

I don't think it's asking a lot when I ask that my house stay a safe and bearable environment. It is not impossible to move a cell phone tower and use other towers close by, instead of erecting yet another one.

If this specific tower can just be moved 350 – 400 meters farther, I will be able to cope being home. Cell phone users will still have a good signal, and I will have the use and comfort of my own home.

My pain won't disappear, but it will be more bearable so I can handle it and still function properly.

I know we have to live in harmony with these towers, but we shouldn't have to give up our right to health, family and places to stay.

Please understand that it is not just one person that you will be doing it for. The lives of my entire family in Pretoria are worried sick about me for the last 16 years. My wife, children and her family are mostly affected in more than one way, and also our friends and everyone who know us.

I am thankful to put my story in writing and share it with you.

Regards
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Other material available on Alwyn Lewies:

YouTube footage: 'eNuus-berig op YouTube:SLUG-SUFFER_15_PM'
Sunday Times, 26 Mei 2013, page 20
Huisgenoot page 22 on 23 Okt. 2013, You Magazine page 18, 19.