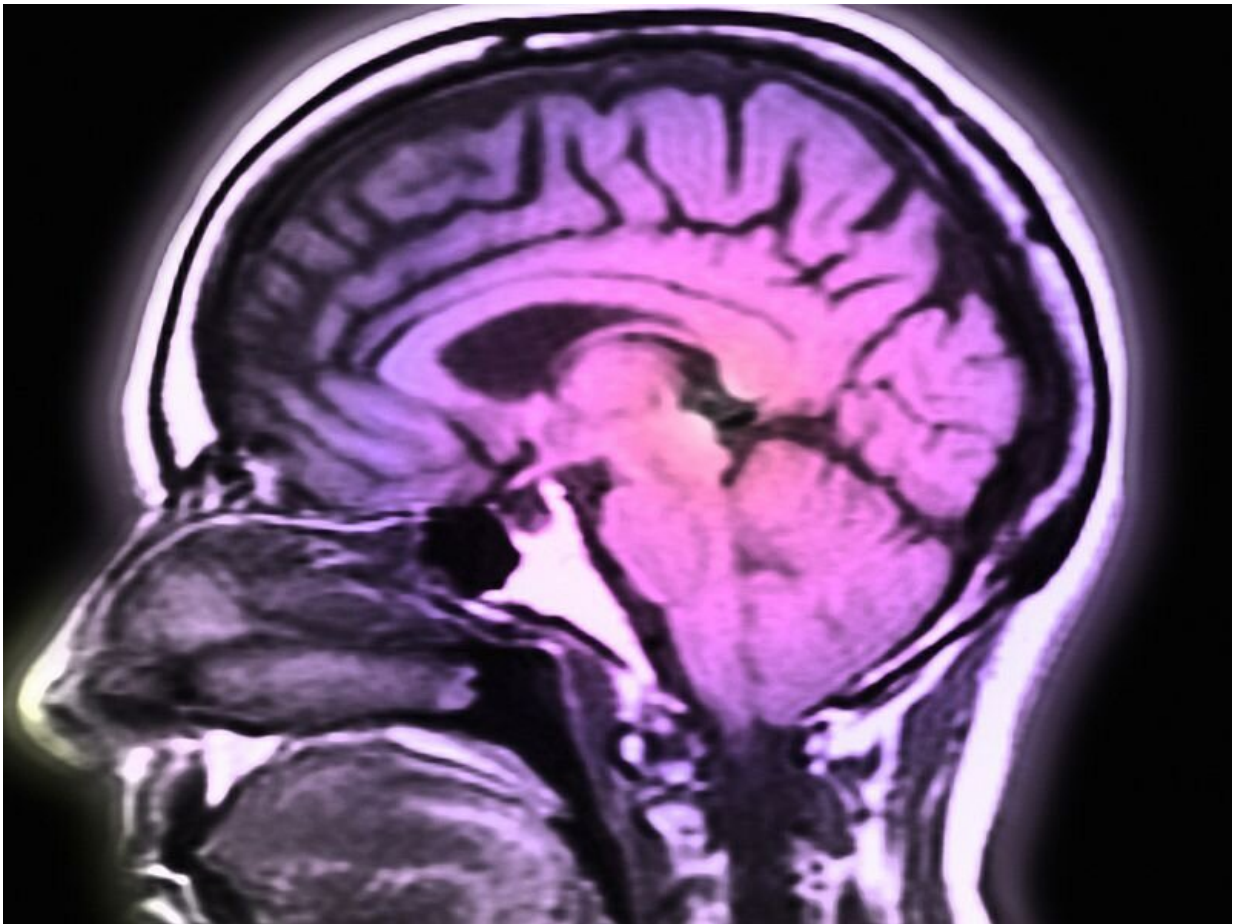


Targeted microwaves probably caused U.S. embassy illnesses: Scientists

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(HealthDay)—Targeted microwaves were the likely cause of mysterious

illnesses that afflicted staff and their families at U.S. embassies in Cuba and China, according to a U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine report.

Symptoms included ear pain, intense head pressure or vibration, dizziness, visual problems, thinking difficulties and the perception of loud noise.

The physical complaints were reported in Havana, Cuba, in 2016 and in Guangzhou, China, in 2017. They were previously described as "sonic attacks," and many of the people affected still have health problems.

The U.S. Department of State asked the National Academies for advice. The investigators considered multiple possible causes, including directed, pulsed [radio frequency](#) (targeted microwave) energy, chemical exposures, infectious diseases such as Zika, and mental health issues.

The committee concluded that targeted microwaves appear to be the most plausible explanation.

However, other possible causes couldn't be ruled out. It's likely that a number of factors explain some cases and the differences between others, the scientists said.

The committee noted it faced challenges in trying to pinpoint the cause of the illnesses due to the wide range of symptoms among patients and a lack of access to their specific health or personal information.

"The committee found these cases quite concerning, in part because of the plausible role of directed, pulsed radiofrequency energy as a mechanism, but also because of the significant suffering and debility that has occurred in some of these individuals," [committee](#) chair Dr. David Relman said in an academies news release. He's a professor and

senior fellow at the Stanford University Center for International Security and Cooperation.

"We as a nation need to address these specific cases as well as the possibility of future cases with a concerted, coordinated and comprehensive approach," Relman added.

The report also includes recommendations to help the patients recover and suggestions on what actions the State Department should take to improve responses to future threats to the health of its personnel.

More information: The American Academy of Family Physicians has information on [dizziness](#).

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