

HEALTH

Lynn to outline wind study

DON CROSBY

Sun Times correspondent

The medical officer of health for Grey Bruce is preparing a proposal for a study of the health effects of living near wind turbines.

Dr. Hazel Lynn said in an interview Thursday that she's been asked by the health unit's board of directors to prepare a report on what's possible for a study of the Grey Bruce region and the estimated cost.



Lynn

She said the options are somewhat narrow and revolve around comparing the effects on residents at increasingly greater distances from wind turbines.

"What you do is measure the effects at a kilometre, a kilometre and a half and two kilometres and try to do as complete a survey as possible if you don't have a big population of everybody within those concentric rings," Lynn said during a visit to Bruce County council to take in the inaugural meeting on Thursday.

Information would be gathered through a questionnaire, which has been tried in many other places around the world.

See STUDY, page A2

STUDY

Work would rely on surveys

FROM PAGE 1

Lynn would like to conduct the survey in several communities that have wind turbines. She wonders if topography is a factor.

"Some communities seem to have a lot more problems than others, and that might begin to increase our knowledge of siting when you've got irregular fields, and up-hills and down valleys, which seems to aggravate the problem," said Lynn, who ruled out conducting physical examinations or chemical tests to corroborate symptoms.

"Sleep disorders — you could get people to keep a sleep diary, but there's no blood test I can do to test whether you're sleeping or not. Similarly nausea — it's a very subjective measure. There's no test I can do for that," she said.

Elevated blood levels of cortisol, a steroid hormone that is produced by the adrenal glands in response to stress can be measured with blood tests, but many things can cause stress, she noted.

"If you have a nasty drive like I did to get here today, I'm sure my cortisol levels are up," she said.

The information gathered in a study in Grey-Bruce would add to a growing body of evidence accumulating worldwide.

Lynn said it would take several years to acquire enough scientific information to detect any patterns and produce conclusive findings.

"It took 40 years to prove smoking caused lung cancer and we knew it long before that," she said.

Lynn said it could cost upwards of \$250,000 to hire a researcher, prepare a questionnaire and involve people to conduct the study and analyze the data.

This type of study has been done several places before, so the study design is readily available.

Lynn said she changed her mind about the possible relationship between illness and living near wind turbines because of a growing body of evidence in the medical literature. She says it is plausible that health is disturbed by low-frequency infrasound.

"And it's very consistent throughout the world. When people live closer than a kilometre, then the complaints start to rise," she said.

Lynn will present her report and recommendations at the January health board meeting in Owen Sound.