



STAY IN TOUCH . . .

WITH ANNOYING DISTRACTIONS

IT SEEMS telemarketers are as sick of themselves as we are of them. A new study has found that the phone spruikers talk so much that they've been making themselves unwell. **Diane Hazlett**, head of the school of communication at the University of Ulster, studied 600 people working in 14 call centres in Britain and Ireland, AAP reports. She found that, in a six-month period, only 31 per cent of telemarketers had not taken time off work for a voice-related condition. Longer shifts in noisy environments with high sales targets were cited as the cause of their strained vocal cords, which then affected their ability to have strained conversations with members of the public about new electricity or mobile phone contracts. The results, presented at Speech Pathology Australia's national conference



in Melbourne this week, suggested that not all call centre workers were as sick as they thought they were. Or as those on the other end of the phone might want them to be. "When someone had perhaps light strain in their voice it appeared as if they felt they were getting a throat infection or they were getting a cold," she said. "In a sense they overestimated the difficulties they were having, to some extent. This was much more likely to perpetuate them taking time off work."