

# SHADOW ON THE SOUL

Depression is a widespread disease  
More than 800 000 Austrians are concerned

**"M**inimum once a year I suffer from depression. These phases creep in unnoticeably. Then I am caught in a vicious circle and do not find out without professional help", claims Herbert W.\*. Meanwhile the 38-year-old can better deal with his disease. "My wife mostly realizes before me when I "fall down the black hole". She knows me." And that is good, he tells us, because she is the one who sends him to the specialist when the first symptoms appear.

Specialists denote a depression as a change of mood which lasts a minimum of 14 days and influence all areas of life negatively. Sadness, bleakness, inability to take decisions, anxiety, loss of meaning and sleep disorders are regarded as the main symptoms. The cheerless soul condition takes possession of the whole person and totally depletes power. Intrinsic restlessness, lacking self-esteem and disturbed perception of colors can be first indications, too. The disease manifests itself differently from person to person and there are also different severity codes. The symptoms sometimes develop rapidly, sometimes creeping over months.

Many persons concerned range between manic and depressive phases. Surprisingly men are often differently depressive than women: they react with anger, hostility, concentration disorder and deterioration of performance rather than with anxiety and inactivity.

Alarming: according to the WHO 121 million people suffer from depressions.

"50 % of all early retirements worldwide are traced back to a depression" reports Dr. Alexander Bernhaut, specialist for psychiatry and neurology as well as psychooncology in Vienna. Like all the other psychological diseases depression was a taboo issue of our society too long. Depression, the most common disease of the brain, has become a widespread disease. But what can you do against it?

Psychotropics are an essential component of the treatment of mental diseases. Careful with depressants, they can lead to addiction and deeper lying problems of the sick person remain unsolved. Often depression has triggers like mobbing, separation, worries about family members, illness, addictions and loneliness – life crises of all types. Lots of people look for professional help when being in such a situation, e.g. a family or conversation therapy.

Body and soul are one unit. Psychic burdens can make a human being sick. This is the reason why everybody should spend as much attention on the mental condition as on the heart, kidney, blood pressure and pulse.

\*name altered by editorial department