



in Cooperation with



and



Press Information

„Recognizing Depression saves life“ – 1st German Patient Congress Depression (2nd October 2011)

Famous German actor and entertainer Harald Schmidt hosts a multi-faceted programme in the Gewandhaus (Concert Hall) in Leipzig, Germany

Berlin (Germany), 21st of September 2011 – On 2nd October 2011, the concert hall ‘Gewandhaus’ in Leipzig, Germany will be witnessing a premiere of a different kind: The Stiftung Deutsche Depressionshilfe [English: Foundation German Depression Aid] and the Deutsche DepressionsLiga [English: German Depression League] are holding their first congress for patients suffering from depression, their relatives and persons who are generally interested in the topic. Getting out of isolation is an aim of the congress for persons affected by depression and their relatives during this event, which, so far, is one of a kind in Germany.

The patron of the Foundation German Depression Aid, famous German actor and entertainer Harald Schmidt will host this lively and multi-faceted programme. In the course of the congress, both experts and persons affected by depression will have their say. There will be a panel discussion, workshops, movies and music from a band. Patients, relatives and physicians will be talking about depression from their perspective or in the context of their scientific work. Depression in children and adolescents will also be discussed.

Often, the symptoms of depression include markedly diminished interest or pleasure and feelings of guilt. That is why it is particularly difficult for patients who are suffering from depression to represent their own concerns in a loud voice. “For the first time ever, the congress offers a platform to experts and patients alike, giving them a chance to have their say. We from the organization of affected persons are very happy about this”, says Françoise Margue, member of the board of the German Depression League, on the occasion of the 8th European Depression Day (October 1st, 2011).

“The aim of the congress is to contribute to a more confident handling and way with depression and to put depression into the limelight. Hopefully, the congress will become firmly established as part of the German health care system”, says Assistant Professor Dr Christine Rummel-Kluge, Executive Director of the Foundation German Depression Aid. “It’s our pleasure that famous German actor and entertainer Harald Schmidt, who is the patron of the foundation, will host this event. This is very helpful because this way, the congress actually gets the attention it deserves.”

Depression is a very burdensome, severe and often life-threatening disease. With 4 million people affected it is also one of the most common diseases in Germany. The mental burden of those affected by depression is much heavier than for most other illnesses. This is also reflected in the high risk of committing suicide. Because depression is a 'silent' illness, the frequency and the magnitude of the reduced quality of life as well as the tremendous mental burden resulting from depression are largely unknown in the public. People who are suffering from depression cannot enjoy activities with their families and friends and they withdraw themselves from everything. They cannot enjoy anything and even small tasks become insuperable obstacles.

Improving information

Even though antidepressants and psychotherapy are effective methods of treatment, they are not used optimally with most of the patients. This is due to several different reasons including lack of knowledge in the general public, affected persons' fears and shame of stigmatisation and diagnostic and therapeutical deficits in medical care.

Exchanging experiences

The congress was initiated by members of the German online discussion forum for persons affected by depression and their relatives. The forum can be visited at www.diskussionsforum-depression.de.

The forum was established within the Competence Network on Depression and Suicidality in 2001. In 2010, the forum became part of the Foundation German Depression Aid, which is the successor of the Competence Network.

With more than 11.000 active users and more than three million visitors per year, the forum has meanwhile become an important part of depression-self-help in Germany.

For further information about the 1st German Congress for Patients please visit

www.deutsche-depressionshilfe.de/kongress (Note that this site is in German.)

Contact persons:

Stiftung Deutsche Depressionshilfe
Prof. Dr. Ulrich Hegerl (Chairman)
PD Dr. Christine Rummel-Kluge (Executive Director)
Simmelweisstr. 10
D- 04103 Leipzig, Germany
Web: www.deutsche-depressionshilfe.de
Telephone: +49 (0)341/97-24493
Fax: +49 (0)341/97-24599

E-mail: info@deutsche-depressionshilfe.de

Deutsche DepressionsLiga e.V
Françoise Margue (Executive Board)
Postfach 1151
71405 Schwaikheim

Web: www.depressionsliga.de
Telephone: +49 (0)7144/70-48950
Fax: +49 (0)7144/70-48979

E-mail: kontakt@depressionsliga.de