

Whole body cryotherapy in cryo-chamber for treating Bekhterev's disease

My original intention was not to include any individual case descriptions in this book. I have now succumbed to this temptation, however, and I would now like to mention the case of one gentleman suffering from Bekhterev's disease who was treated with whole body cryotherapy at the health center in Bad Haering. The disease had really managed to depress him completely over the years in fact. When I met him for the first time and asked him what he wanted from the therapy, the modesty of his answer completely surprised me: "I just want to be able to turn my light on and off in my apartment again, I haven't managed to be able to reach the light switch for a long time". This desire was already outdone after just a few days of intense cold application. When I met him again in the spring of the following year, he told me full of pride that two three week serial cold therapies had already recuperated him to the extent that in the preceding winter he was able for the first time in many years again to stand once again on his beloved skis, and indeed do so over a course of more than 150 kilometers!

Of course, whole body cryotherapy does not produce such astounding results in every individual case, but a clear improvement in state is indeed the rule. Just like rheumatoid arthritis, Bekhterev's disease is also an immune-mediated, chronic, inflammatory-rheumatic disease that afflicts the locomotor system. An ossification process is typical at the spine which has a tendency to stoop. However, joints outside of the spine, mainly at the lower extremity, can also be affected, as can the inner organs. The inflammatory process causes pains, stiffening and restrictions in articular function. Excessive pain can also lead to inflammations in the area of the tendon connections. Bekhterev's disease also can not be cured at its root cause. Other anti-algesic and anti-inflammatory therapies are all the more important here. Apart from pharmaceutical therapy these include above all physiotherapy, physical therapies and if necessary also irradiation therapy. Whole body cryotherapy has now become a steady component of treatment for these conditions. Its effect has been proven adequately.

The therapeutic procedure does not differ from that already described for rheumatoid arthritis. With consistent treatment one can usually achieve a recession of the inflammatory event, a relief and/or elimination of the pain, a reduction in medication intake and an improvement in joint mobility. One can also assume here an effect duration of up to half a year after a serial cold application.

Whole body cryotherapy is also particularly indicated when, as occurs with Bekhterev's disease, the disease is accompanied by psoriasis or chronic intestinal inflammation (Crohn's disease), that can also be assumed as autoimmune diseases (see also Psoriasis and further indications).