

## **Girl Emerges from Coma During Bryan Adams Concert**

*By Michael Leidig*

MUNICH (Reuters Health) - A young woman left in a coma for six years after she collapsed at school has started to respond to the world around her after her mother took her to see her pop star hero Bryan Adams perform live. Christiane Kittel, now 24, was left in a vegetative state after her collapse on 12 June 1997. Doctors believe her condition was caused by a combination of hot weather, a hereditary hemophilia condition and side-effects of the contraceptive pill.

She had to be resuscitated three times, once at school and twice at the University Clinic in Regensburg, where she underwent surgery before being attached to life-support machines in the intensive care unit.

Later she was moved to the intensive care unit at the Clinic for Neurologic Rehabilitation in Regensburg, where her parents Karl-Gunther and Adelheide Kittel have kept a 15-hour watch by her bedside every day.

Her father, now 55, told Reuters Health: "We did not want her to be alone so we have spent every day by her bedside. We take it in turns, my wife does six hours than I take over for about six hours, there is usually someone there constantly between 5 AM and 8 PM."

"We have never given up hope of seeing our beloved daughter again," he said.

"Bryan Adams was always her biggest hero and she loved his music before she fell into a coma," said his wife Adelheid, 53. "When we heard about the concert in Regensburg we knew straight away that we had to take her there."

A local paper paid for the tickets and doctors arranged special help to get Christiane to the concert, her mother said.

During the concert, Christiane started to move in the wheelchair and was fascinated by the music and the singer.

"I will never forget it, I could have hugged the whole world. When we got back to the clinic she was still animated, and three times she called my name, she said Mama."

Head of the clinic Dr. Gerhard Weber, who has worked with Christiane for six years, confirmed that the concert had been a big leap forward for the young woman, but warned there was still a long way to go.

"I think there had been signs that she was starting to respond to the treatment she was getting before the concert and was no longer in a full vegetative state, but the concert certainly represented a big improvement," he told Reuters Health.

"There is a long way to go but I am very happy with the results of our experiment. It was the first time she had been out of the hospital apart from a single brief trip to her home. What she needs now is for the various therapies to continue and a lot of emotional stimulation including more trips home, for example.

"It's wrong to say it is a great miracle what happened here," Weber added. "But we have taken small steps and we are on the way to our goal."

But father Karl-Gunther takes another view: "I have no doubt that it was the concert that marked the turning point. She seemed to come alive when she was there, and clearly called out her mother's name. We now believe she is finally coming home to us."