

My name is Christine and I am 65 years of age.

About twelve years ago I was diagnosed as having PAF and was prescribed Flecainide and Aspirin. For several years everything went well until about 18 months ago when I became extremely stressed and anxious over unavoidable family matters and my AF really worsened. Last year I was admitted to hospital on three separate occasions with prolonged rapid heart beat. Each time this was monitored carefully and treated with medication; after several hours it returned to normal and I was able to go home. I continued taking Flecainide but started to take warfarin instead of aspirin.

I was seeing the Consultant Cardiologist every year but in view of these attacks he thought it better if I saw the specialist cardiac nurse more frequently and should there be any problems she would contact him directly. This arrangement works well and has been very reassuring. It is possible to speak to a cardiac nurse every morning if I have any problems or worries.

When seeing the cardiac nurse I explained about my hospital admissions and said that I had been under a lot of stress. She said that it would be possible for me to see the cardiac counsellor if I wanted to. I took up his offer and have been seeing the cardiac counsellor for about 6 months and have found her to be extremely helpful. She has helped me to manage my stress and anxiety levels. During the last 6 months I have not had a bad attack of AF needing hospitalisation and feel much better. I know for certain that stress and anxiety make my AF worse. My counsellor said I was heading for becoming really ill and quite frankly without her I dread to think where I would be now! Cardiac counselling can only be proposed by the cardiac nurse.

I feel much calmer generally, stronger and emotionally and have started to take into account my own needs instead of pushing myself to the limit all the time. This is not easy as I have always worked and led a busy life!

Thankfully, feeling much better, I realise that I was fortunate to have the support of a wonderful cardiac team. My advice to anyone in a similar situation is to take advantage of these opportunities of help as I have found them to be very beneficial. I cannot say how grateful I am to all the people involved.