

# How the right doctor helped my wife and me

by AFA member, Peter



Peter and Joan

Having been in permanent AF and taking medication since I was diagnosed in January 2004, I found that the breathlessness and fatigue which I had lived with since then got a lot worse in September 2007. It was so bad that I had to take time off work and at the present time (June 2008) I am just about to start a phased return to work.

In November 2007 I saw a cardiologist and six months later I was referred to a specialist called Dr Hussain at Harefield to discuss an ablation procedure.

Dr Hussain was superb. He straight away put my wife and I at our ease. He was professional, but also friendly and showed interest in what we had to say. He was very willing to discuss the medication I was on and clearly explained how each heart medication was being used. He wanted to make sure that he knew where we were coming from before he even tried to discuss the procedure.

Having established where we were at, he then asked if he could now do his bit to explain about the procedure. He was asking our permission to move on!! His explanation was clear and precise. He willingly talked about what the procedure involved, their success rates, and he outlined the follow up, so he had up to date statistics on success rates.

Having done this he willingly answered other questions we had and made sure that I fully

understood the pros, cons and success rate for someone in my position. He asked where I felt I was at, but he was in no way pushing for me to have the procedure.

I felt comfortable enough to say to him that since my medication had been changed in recent months, and the breathlessness and fatigue had greatly reduced, I would like to wait and see how things go when I go back to work and start teaching again.

Dr Hussain's response was absolutely fantastic. He said that in this case he would discharge me, but that I could feel free to contact him in writing at any time in the future, to either discuss the situation further or to ask to have the procedure. He said that I would not need to go through any referral system again.

My wife and I both left that consultation feeling absolutely fantastic. We were so relaxed, encouraged and really as high as kites at such a super consultation with an excellent consultant.

It shows just what a difference a caring professional electrophysiologist, who is happy to share information on the centre's catheter ablation success rates, and who really does seem to understand what living with AF is like, can make to a patient dealing with a condition he/she has had to live and struggle with for a number of years.

Peter (Northampton)

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