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## Third world medical care

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By Dan Owen, Weekly News

A RETIRED businessman who was told he was dying from a heart condition in 2003 was so frustrated by the health care he received in the UK that he flew more than 4,000 miles to be treated in India.

Stan Ayres, of Penrhyn Beach East, Penrhyn Bay, has been trying to get his debilitating heart condition sorted since being diagnosed with atrial fibrillation three years ago.

But every time he felt he was getting somewhere, more obstacles were put in the way.

"It started in 2000 when I went for a cystoscopy," explained Stan. "The doctors asked if I was in general good health, and I said I got a bit puffed going up the stairs, and from there I was referred to another doctor and put on drugs."

It turned out Stan has a heart condition which causes the upper chambers of his heart to beat excessively fast, resulting in problems with the heart's ventricles, meaning blood can't be pumped round the body properly.

Nothing happened until 2003, when Stan was sent to Ysbyty Gwynedd in Bangor for more tests.

"I did the treadmill test but that had to be terminated after about two and a half minutes because I couldn't do any more," explained Stan, who then feared the worst.

"They said I had significant coronary artery disease. They told me I was dying.

"It was an awful time with a lot of worry, but I wasn't given any timescale for more tests or treatment, so I got in touch with a cardiologist in Manchester."

This would give an amazing twist to Stan's tale.

"I had an angiogram and the results of that said there was nothing greatly wrong - the treadmill tests had given a false result."

A bewildered Stan decided in April this year that enough was enough, and that he would get treatment to relieve the atrial fibrillation. Facing the prospect of a long wait on the NHS, he looked further afield, and to different types of surgery, to help the condition.

"I was in America and saw a new procedure that involved zapping the heart with electric rays after opening up the chest. I asked about this, but in the UK they ask for huge

amounts of money.

"I was supposed to see a doctor in Liverpool, but he broke his foot. I tried Germany, but the hospital went on strike. I was banging my head against a brick wall!"

Eventually, Stan discovered a hospital in India.

**"I got in touch with Taj Medical and they were superb," he said. "They came back to me promptly with how much it would cost to have the treatment. They said it would be £1,800 all in - they wanted more than £10,000 in the UK."**

Last month Stan and wife Christina flew out to Mumbai for the treatment.

"It was after midnight when we got there but there was a car waiting to take us to hospital," explained Stan. Turn to page 14...