

Hazel's on the mend after her op - in Poland

AN AUCHENCAIRN woman tired of waiting for NHS surgery on her arthritic knee went to Poland to have the operation instead.

Hazel Osborne was told she would have a 34-week wait just to get on the waiting list and decided enough was enough.

BY FRASER ROBERTSON

Within weeks she was on her way to Krakow for her operation and three weeks of physiotherapy - and it cost less than getting it done privately in the UK.

Mrs Osborne said she had been disappointed when she saw a local consultant in March and found out she would have a 34-week wait to be put on the waiting list which would guarantee surgery within nine months.

She said: "I thought I was down for an operation in November but the doctor told me that was only when I started on the waiting list."

Mrs Osborne's husband, Norman, said the flights, operation and physiotherapy cost



Hazel Osborne relaxes back at her Auchencairn home after her op in Poland

£6,000 and they had been quoted £7,700 with 14 days physiotherapy - with extra costs for more physiotherapy after that - to have it done privately here.

They had to use some of the money they had been saving for a holiday to celebrate their ~~Diamond~~ Wedding anniversary next year but

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house, said: "They were very efficient and very hygienic - the hospital was spotless, in fact. This is an up-and-coming, almost Third World country, which is better than what is supposed to be one of the most top-class medical health services in the world."

Mrs Osborne's knee had started to trouble her in the mid-eighties and it was five years ago that it started to be really painful.

An advert in a magazine promised quick, professional help from a company based in Croydon and the couple were so desperate that they thought it was worth trying.

Their son said he would split the cost but the couple were sceptical at first. At a meeting, they met people who had been and said how good it was.

Mrs Osborne said: "I wasn't worried then and put my faith in them."

Mr Osborne went over for the last 10 days and the couple came back together on November 14. Mrs Osborne is still using a stick but says the operation had made a world

of difference. Mr Osborne said: "I could see the pain in her face but when I saw her after the operation she was a completely different person."

The couple lived in Auchencairn, Borgue and Kirkcudbright when Mr Osborne was in the army and seconded to work at Dundrennan range in 1955. After that they lived in Dover but always intended to come back, which they did in 1992.

Mr Osborne said he had nothing but praise for Dumfries and Gallo-way Royal Infirmary after he suffered a heart attack in 1998. Within three quarters of an hour of being taken to the doctor he was in the hospital and received marvellous after care.

He said: "The system seems to work if there is an emergency but when it comes to things like this you really have to wait. The population had got bigger and bigger but the health service hasn't kept up with that."