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Scot's praise for Indian surgeons

By Fred Brenton
For BBC News Online Scotland

A Scot who hit the headlines when it was revealed that he was travelling to India for surgery has been singing the praises of medical services there.

James Campbell, from Braemar, in Aberdeenshire, chose to fly thousands of miles out to the sub-continent for a double knee replacement operation.

Otherwise he faced a two-year wait on the National Health Service.

The 68-year-old arthritis sufferer said he has thanked surgeons there for "giving me my life back'."

Mr Campbell suffered from osteo-arthritis in his two joints and did not want to end up dependent on pain-killing injections before they were replaced at home.

After an extensive search on the internet, he opted to travel to the Krishna Heart Institute in Ahmedabad, western India, for his treatment.

The former retail manager flew out to India at the start of October and underwent two 45-minute operations at the institute.

Afterwards he spent three weeks recuperating before moving to a friend's house in the nearby town of Baroda for further rest.

He returned home at the end of last month after a **seven-week stay which cost him significantly less than the £8,000 he initially budgeted** for.

If he had decided to go private **in the UK it would have set him back at least £20,000.**

Mr Campbell said: "I would tell anybody who wanted surgery of the type I underwent to consider having it carried out in India.



James Campbell travelled to India for his surgery

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James Campbell
Arthritis sufferer

"I know osteo-arthritis is not a life-threatening condition like cancer or heart disease and people suffering from such things had to come before me back in Britain but anyone who has it will tell you there is no relief from the pain.

"Although there are some things I cannot do anymore, like kneel down or ride a bike, at least I don't have the arthritis in my knees anymore and no longer have the pain.

"After the surgery the first thing I said to the surgeon was 'Thank you for giving me my life back'."

But **it was the level of care and not the low cost of the treatment which Mr Campbell was most impressed with.**

"The treatment I received was absolutely perfect," said Mr Campbell. "The room I was in was swept, disinfected and mopped out three times a day and every day the surgeon and members of his surgical team would come in to check if everything was okay.

'Somewhat disgusting'

"I can only say as I have found, and I have never had major surgery before, but I have had friends and relatives in hospital and never seen that happen over in the UK.

Mr Campbell stressed that he was "grateful" to have the financial means to consider surgery in India.

He said: "I still do find it somewhat disgusting in as much that I've worked all my life and paid my National Insurance and taxes and never asked for any surgery in that time.

"And yet when I want something significant back from the NHS I wasn't able to get it.

"I can quite willingly accept that what I had was not a life-threatening condition but I still think people like myself should be given the opportunity to have surgery within a maximum period of time."



Standards were very high, said Mr Campbell