

Singapore Was the Right Choice for Me

In early December 2007, 53-year-old Londoner Jane B. experienced a nagging pain in her lower abdomen and suspected something was wrong. A pelvic ultrasound and a CT scan revealed ovarian cysts and also an unidentified mass within the cysts. When Jane underwent surgery to remove both ovaries, the pathology results indicated a benign tumor in the left ovary and signs of a borderline tumor malignancy in the right.



“I was shocked when I learnt I had ovarian cancer”, she recalls. Another operation was necessary, a bigger one, with a longer recovery period. “When my doctors suggested I head to Singapore, I was comforted, as I was aware of its reputation for good medical service. I had no reservations about it.”

Her London doctors contacted Singapore’s National University Hospital and put her in touch with Dr. Jeffery Low, head of the Department of Gynecologic Oncology and Urogynecology and a senior consultant in obstetrics and gynecology. Jane corresponded with Dr. Low via email, and he detailed the operation she was to undergo. She also contacted NUH’s International Patient Liaison Centre, where the staff took care of administrative details for her trip and arranged with a nursing home for her post-surgery recuperation.

Jane arrived in Singapore in February 2008. After a complete physical examination, chest x-ray, mammogram, and blood test, the plan was to remove her uterus, take a fluid sample from her abdomen, and biopsy any areas where the cancer might have spread. Dr. Low says, “This was to help determine the precise stage of her cancer, so we could provide her with an accurate prognosis and decide if there was a need for chemotherapy.”

The two-hour surgery showed that her cancer was, fortunately, at an early stage. The next day, Jane’s nurses coaxed her out of bed to do some simple exercises. By the fourth day post-surgery, she was on her feet and walking short distances unassisted. A few days later, she was transferred to Econ Medicare Centre, where she continued her rehabilitation for four weeks.

Jane relates, “In Singapore everyone speaks English, which was a relief. The level of service and care at NUH was excellent. Even at nursing home, I was made to feel very comfortable and besides daily physiotherapy, I had acupuncture to help me relax. It was great.” Eager to get back to her work and social life, Jane was finally given a clean bill of health in March 2008.