



Audrey Curtis

As told by



Audrey Curtis was a recently retired credit controller. After several years of cardiac symptoms, such as shortness of breath, investigations revealed she needed her aortic valve replaced.

Audrey was admitted to the hospital on 29th March 2017 for her operation scheduled for 30th March for replacement of aortic valve.

I spent 48 hours in intensive care postoperatively and then moved back to the ward.

'The nightmare':

It started with vision of a television screen and a group playing hard rock music which I hate. It continued to increase in volume and the screen appeared to have become 3-dimensional and was protruding towards me. I can remember wanting the music to stop and believe I was calling at it to stop. Then it switched to me starting to panic as I believed I had been kidnapped and tied up with rope. I became very frightened and wanting to escape and began frantically pulling at the rope that I had been bound with. Instead of rope, I had been pulling on the tubing attached to my body at the time of the operation and ripping them out, including the catheter – until I had removed all of the tubes. I remember having the sensation that I was in a very large ward with lots of beds lined up quite close together. I was in a state of panic by this time, when I realised what I had done and rang the bell for the nurse. I felt that I kept ringing but no one came. Eventually when the nurse came I felt terrible about what I had done and continued apologising to the nurse. The nurse tried to assure me not to worry as this sort of thing happens sometimes. I cannot remember if I was given something to calm me down, but feeling quite alone when the nurse returned to her duties. I cannot remember anyone discussing this incident with me, no nursing staff raised the issue other than the one who answered my initial ringing of the bell.

Prior to the nightmare, my Granddaughter Chelsea visited with other family members when I was on the ward. Chelsea remembers me commenting that a gorilla had come up in the lift with her and then asked why Chelsea had pink and yellow spots all over her body?

Impact:

I feel apprehensive about undergoing any further surgery, so unless it was something serious, I wouldn't want to go through it again for risk of this happening again.

It was a terrifying experience and has taken me until recently (more than 18 months) to 'get myself back'.

I would be happy to help in any way I can to stop this happening to someone else.