many tablets. I find I am still angry - to those who did not see beyond the ‘middle aged lady’, and with those who still don’t recognise my health problems and think I am simply lazy when I have to sleep. If I don’t sleep, I begin to feel really tearful, and my brain goes to mush; I can’t think and my words are slurred. When I sleep it is like falling down a pit. Sometimes I wake more tired than when I went to bed. It is both frightening and frustrating.

The future? I haven’t a clue. Will anyone ever answer all of my questions? Should I change my life style? I choose to carry on, and I do have more confidence in myself - and in dealing with medical professionals. However, I find walking any distance very tiring and bending almost impossible as I can’t breath. I have learned from my young ponies, that taming a wild animal relies on getting their confidence, not on strength - perhaps another lesson learned? However, I too feel that AF has brought with it a form of ‘premature ageing’, without even meaning to you find yourself taking things more slowly, and thinking out how far you have to walk in order to pace yourself, I resent this, and I realise, I am still very angry.

“sleep it is like falling down a pit”

2009 will see AFA working towards raising greater awareness of Atrial Fibrillation through a ‘Know Your Pulse’ campaign. As part of this work we hope to have posters displayed in shops, clubs, libraries colleges... everywhere! Not forgetting hospitals (but not just the cardiology departments) and local medical centres. So if you know ‘just the spot’ please contact AFA and we’ll be delighted to send you a poster or pack of AF materials to hand out.

News from India

AFA receives enquiries from patients, carers and clinicians from around the world.

John, a member in India, shares his story:

Co-existing Uneasily with AF

In June 2006 I noticed I was breathing with irregularity, so went to a local cardiologist for a check-up. I already had hypertension and was borderline diabetes, now, after tests were carried out, I was diagnosed with Atrial Fibrillation. Current drugs continued with Warfarin being added to my daily cocktail. Fear of stroke was uppermost in my mind, and constant exhaustion plagued me. I looked into other options, but in India there is no National Health Service, and private services are prohibitive due to high costs. So, the position for me, and for that matter, anybody in my country, is precarious so far as advanced medical treatment is concerned. I am 70 years of age, a retired teacher, but as inflation goes up, I hope that some new medical gadget or invasive method cures me of this ailment with the cost being very, very low. Perhaps that can only be a distant dream. My physical mobility is slightly compromised now, and each night I sleep with prayers on my lips that there will not be an emergency – this type of care is practically non-existent or extremely expensive.

I look forward to learning more about Atrial Fibrillation and hope one day to meet a kindred soul with whom I can exchange insights and ideas about this ailment.

John

The AFA moderated Forum offers individuals the opportunity to share experiences with fellow AF patients and carers. It is a friendly and supportive forum which protects the individual’s contact details while enabling contact. Follow the links from the AFA website: www.atrialfibrillation.org.uk ‘to join’ Alternatively, join AFA at the 2009 AFA Patient Day, Sunday 18th October, further details on page 2.

www.HeartLibrary.com

Heart Library is a collection of educational, patient-focused videos about the human heart. The videos illustrate the causes of and treatments for many heart diseases and arrhythmia, including Atrial Fibrillation and Atrial Flutter. Each video is narrated by a physician in everyday language. New videos are added to the site regularly.