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Wrexham man's Legionnaires disease hell
Jan 12 2008 by Steve Bagnall, Daily Post

A HOLIDAYMAKER struck down by a killer bug in a Turkish hotel yesterday won a share of a £120,000 compensation payout. Peter Maitland, from Wrexham, was among nine people hit by an outbreak of Legionnaires disease at the Grand Sarba 1 Hotel in the south eastern resort of Icmeler.

The then 72-year-old became critically ill while on holiday with tour operators Goldrail, in September 2004. He was rushed to the Caria hospital in Marmaris unconscious and battling to stay alive because of the effects of the bug, believed to have come from a shower in the hotel.

Days later he was released and was pushed in a wheelchair to the local airport for a flight back to Manchester, still seriously ill. For two months he could only eat liquidised food and needed help to get dressed. Mr Maitland was fit and healthy, and had played golf in the week before he and his wife flew off for the holiday. But last night the 75-year-old said he has never been the same since. "It was absolutely horrendous," he told the Daily Post. "My head was hurting, I was having trouble breathing, everything ached and my throat was almost closed," he said. "I don't remember anything when I was in hospital. I was totally out of it."

The disease was thought to have come from a shower at the hotel. It was only after the couple returned to Britain and a report was spotted about others suffering Legionnaires' disease at the hotel they decided Mr Maitland should be tested for the disease. A long legal battle followed led by specialists in travel law Irwin Mitchell Solicitors. Mr Maitland added: "This holiday was supposed to be a time for myself and my wife to relax, however it was quite the opposite. I am appalled at the standards of the hotel. A number of people suffered illness and still continue to suffer on-going symptoms. I am pleased that this nightmare has come to a conclusion. I just want to put it behind me and get on with my life."

Suki Chhokar, partner at Irwin Mitchell Solicitors, said: "This was an especially serious outbreak of a potentially fatal disease. A number of holidaymakers were hospitalised and continue to suffer from on-going symptoms. Tour operators need to be aware of their duty of care to their paying customers, to ensure their health and safety are protected."

A Goldtrail spokeswoman said: "This claim was handled in the appropriate manner by our legal representatives and we have no further comment on the matter."

Steve Bagnall