

# Heart surgeon flies out to Ghana to save man's life

A CARDIOLOGIST from Cardiff dropped everything to travel to Ghana to save the life of a man he had never met before.

Professor Nick Gerning works at the University Hospital of Wales.

A mutual friend showed 52-year-old David's angiogram pictures to him after David fell ill with a major heart condition.

When Prof Gerning saw the pictures he said he couldn't believe the patient was still alive.

"His arteries were a shocker," he said. "How he was still alive with the extent and severity of the disease, I don't know."

Prof Gerning arranged for David to go to the Heath hospital but his visa application was refused by the UK Home Office.

So, the cardiologist flew out to Accra in Ghana to insert a stent.

Prof Gerning, who is originally from

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Ghana, explained: "I really thought he wasn't going to survive. The clock was ticking.

"When I got to the intensive care unit there he had only been given aspirin.

"When they opened the lab I looked around and thought 'what am I supposed to do here'. I asked for somewhere to scrub my hands and they said there was no such thing so I sprayed alcohol on my hands.

"I started the procedure and it was much worse than I thought. I had no backup and there wasn't even a resuscitation trolley.

"The screening was terrible and it was the most complex thing I have done in my whole career, under the worst conditions."

After almost four hours Prof Gerning successfully inserted the stent and following the experience he was unable to speak for the entire evening due to the intensity of the procedure and circumstances.

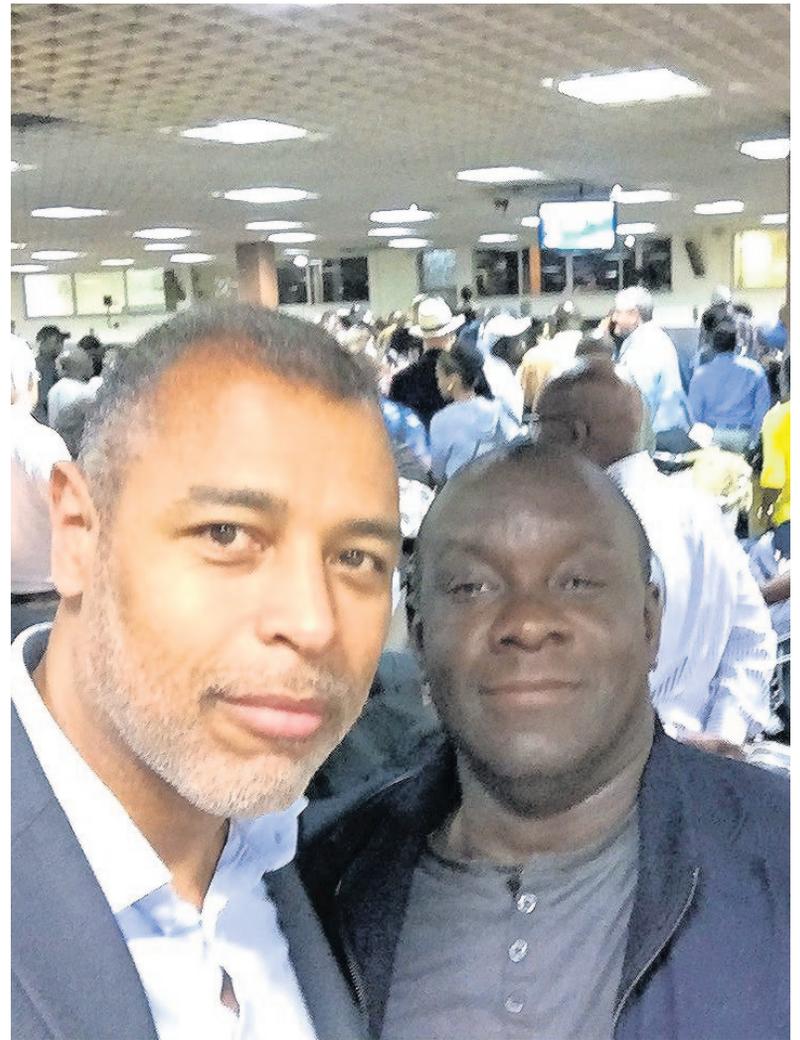
And while he did not even have the right tools for the surgery he said he didn't allow negative thoughts to cross his mind.

He said: "I'm trained to think I'm going to win the fight and I kept thinking I would get out of it with a live patient.

"David has two young children who are the same age as my children and when it all ended successfully it was a great sense of relief."

David's family were waiting outside the hospital, praying as the surgery was taking place.

"I didn't think twice about going," Prof Gerning added. "I just had to do everything I could to save his life."



Cardiologist Professor Nick Gerning, right, pictured with a friend, Dawid Konotey-Ahulu

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