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## INDIA OP FOR BOY QUICKER THAN UK

By Geoffrey Lakeman

A MOTHER is taking her injured teenage son to India for treatment as he would have to wait more than a year on the NHS.

Elliot Knott, 14, can barely stand and is in constant pain after he injured his back in an ice skating accident.

His condition is called spondylolisthesis and occurs when a vertebra slips out of line in the spinal column and presses on a nerve.

Young Elliot was captain of the West Dorset Warriors swimming team - but he can now barely stand and has to be helped around his home near Dorchester.

His mum Karen, who also has another son Ryan, 10, has now sent Elliot's details to **The Taj Medical Group** which organises medical treatment abroad.

She said yesterday: "It seems an extraordinary step to take but desperate times call for desperate measures.

"We're prepared to travel any distance either in this country or abroad as we feel the most important thing is to get Elliot treated as soon as possible so that he can return to school and a normal life.

"To go private in this country would cost about £25,000 but the same treatment in India costs around £3,000.

"Politicians talk about how the NHS is improving and waiting times are coming down - and they talk about the importance of education.

"But Elliot will be waiting over a year and is likely to have that time off school. He is supposed to start his GCSE courses in September.

"Waiting a year without doing anything will drive him mad.

"He injured himself on New Year's Eve and it got worse and worse."

Southampton General Hospital told Karen and husband Kevin, who both work for Westland Helicopters in Yeovil, Somerset, that Elliot would get an appointment in 17 weeks' time.

He would then have to wait nine months for an operation - and only then if he is deemed serious.

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A spokesman for the hospital said: "I understand how frustrating this is for people.

"Even though our waiting times are within the national levels, it's difficult when you are the person affected.

"Staff who have these specialised skills are in short supply and a lot of their time is taken up with emergency cases."



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