

Robotic surgery technology comes to SA

Robotic surgery has come to South Africa after the first revolutionary multi-million-rand system, which undertakes highly complex surgical procedures safer and more cost effectively, arrived in South Africa recently.

This comes after Earth Medical, a division of Litha Healthcare Group was appointed by Intuitive Surgical as the da Vinci Surgical System distributor for the South African market.

Intuitive Surgical leads in the development and commercialisation of medical robotic technology. Their products are designed to extend the benefits of minimally invasive surgery to the broadest possible base of patients.

Intuitive's product line can provide surgeons with all the clinical and technical capabilities of traditional open surgery while enabling them to operate through a few tiny incisions. The da Vinci® Surgical System combines superior 3D high definition vision with patented EndoWrist® Instruments, allowing for enhanced dexterity, precision and control. The end result: a breakthrough in surgical capabilities.

The Urology Hospital in Pretoria is the first recipient of this system which improves patient experiences and outcomes by fundamentally changing surgery in three ways:

- ***Simplifying existing minimally invasive procedures:*** Many standard laparoscopic procedures may be performed more quickly and easily using the da Vinci Surgical System because it delivers equal or improved outcomes while maintaining the same "look and feel" of open surgery. Standard laparoscopy uses small incisions to insert long-shafted instruments, but has certain limitations when the procedure, patient's anatomy or condition is challenging or complex. The da Vinci system overcomes these.
- ***Making difficult operations routine:*** Traditional laparoscopic surgery has been used in many routine procedures by a fairly wide base of surgeons, however only a select group of highly skilled surgeons attempt complex procedures using this approach. The da Vinci Surgical System allows more surgeons to perform complex procedures using a minimally invasive approach - routinely, with confidence and in a reproducible manner.
- ***Making new minimally invasive surgical procedures possible:*** A number of procedures that could not be performed using traditional minimally invasive technologies can now be performed using the da Vinci Surgical System. The advanced features and extensive EndoWrist® instrumentation of the da Vinci System allow surgeons to perform more procedures through small, 1-2cm incisions.

By improving surgical capabilities, Intuitive's products are helping improve clinical outcomes and redefining standards of care. Patients may experience the following benefits:

- Excellent cancer control, where indicated

- Less blood loss and transfusions
- Shortened hospital stay
- Less pain
- Low risk of infection, complications
- Fast recovery and return to normal activities
- Small incisions for less scarring

As with any surgery, these benefits cannot be guaranteed as surgery is unique to each patient and procedure. The da Vinci Surgical System is considered safe and effective but may not be appropriate for everyone. Always ask your doctor about all treatment options as well as the benefits and risks.

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