



◀ Vincent Vasconcellos is mesmerized by da Vinci's precise movements.



MountainView Regional Medical Center Offers

ROBOTIC-ASSISTED SURGERIES

By Charlotte Tallman
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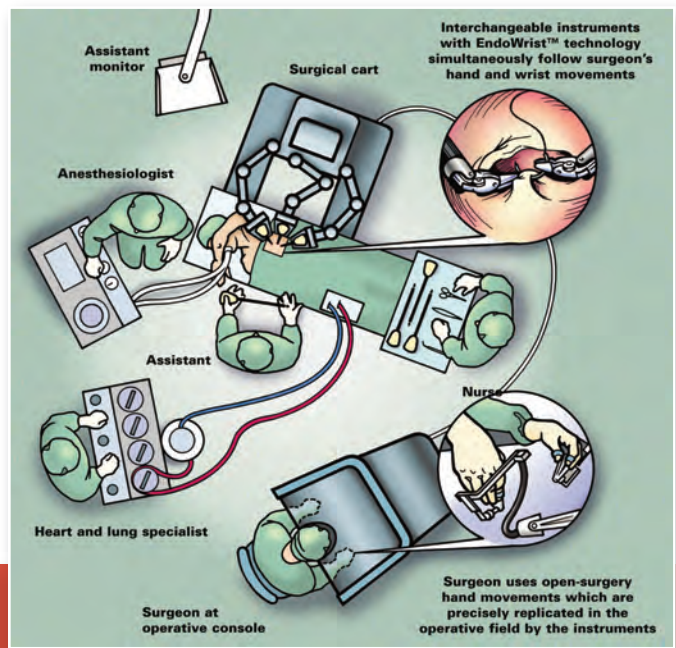
MountainView Regional Medical Center (MVRMC) is becoming robotic. The hospital is the first in Southern New Mexico to offer the da Vinci® Robotic Surgical System, a breakthrough surgical technology.

The surgery is a minimally invasive surgery alternative to open surgery and laparoscopy, offering enhanced precision and visualization of the surgical site. Currently at MVRMC the robotic-assisted surgical system is used for gynecological surgeries, but plans are in place to expand into urological and cardiovascular procedures.

The robotic arm of the da Vinci system contains special "endowrists" that move as a surgeon's wrists move. While sitting at the console, the surgeon looks through lenses at magnified 3D images of the inside of the body. With controls and foot pedals the surgery is performed as the surgeon guides the robotic arm and tools.

▶ Dr. Anthony Levatino (left) and Dr. Ismael Lopez (right) are the local surgeons trained on minimally invasive robotic-assisted operations.





The robotic-assisted surgery provides surgeons with an alternative to both traditional open surgery and conventional laparoscopy, and enables surgeons to perform complex procedures through small incisions with great precision. Benefits to the patients are increased as well, including shorter hospital stays, less pain after surgery, less scarring, lower risk of infection, less blood loss and a quicker recovery time.

Dr. Ismael Lopez is an OB/Gyn specialist and the first surgeon on the medical staff at MVRMC to perform surgeries with the da Vinci system.

“Using this device allows for a better view and more precise surgery,” Dr. Lopez says, noting that because the patients get out of hospital faster and endure less pain as a result of the new technology, the recovery time is quicker. “There is a lot less blood loss and a lot less pain compared to traditional gynecological procedures. There is less potential for complications with the robotic-assisted surgery, and a patient’s stay in hospital can often be reduced to one day.”

Traditional gynecological surgeries, like a hysterectomy, required a large incision for access to the uterus and surrounding anatomy.

The open surgery could cause pain, trauma, a long recovery process and threat to surrounding organs and nerves. Now, thanks to the robotic aid, hysterectomies and other gynecologic procedures are done with tiny, 1-2 cm incisions, and surgeons can operate with greater precision and control.

Like gynecological surgeries, traditional open urologic surgery required a large incision to access the pelvic organs. Common drawbacks of the procedures include significant post-surgical pain, a lengthy recovery and an unpredictable, potentially long-term impact on continence and sexual function. With the da Vinci surgery, a minimally invasive approach is ideal for delicate urologic surgery, including prostatectomy, in which the target site is not only tightly confined but also surrounded by nerves affecting urinary control and sexual function.

In El Paso, both Sierra Providence and Las Palmas hospitals are using da Vinci. The parent company of da Vinci is Intuitive Surgical, Inc.

“This surgery is one that we will continue to see very good outcomes with for our patients. It is an excellent tool for us and for our patients,” Dr. Anthony Levatino, another da Vinci-trained OB/Gyn, says.

FYI

For more information about robotic-assisted surgery at MountainView Regional Medical Center, visit www.mountainviewregional.com. For an appointment call 575.556.7600.

For more information on da Vinci, visit www.davincisurgery.com.