

Brazil Trains Hundreds of Doctors in Robotic Surgery

Contributed by Alexandre Rocha
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The Syrian-Lebanese Hospital, in São Paulo, in the Brazilian Southeast, is going to start training Brazilian doctors to do surgeries using the Da Vinci robot, a device used by the institution since March 30. According to the Institutional Relations director at the hospital, Paulo Chapchap, the device may be used in any operation done by laparoscopy.

"But in very simple surgeries, like gall bladder ones, using the robot is not worth it. The greatest use is for surgeries like prostate cancer, where the prostate is completely removed," said Chapchap.

This procedure, according to him, is very invasive and is generally promoted in conventional surgery. The use of robots, however, reduces pain in the post-op. It makes a large cut unnecessary, as well as simplifying the procedure.

The Da Vinci is a machine with four arms that move the instruments introduced into the patient's body through small holes, one holding the camera. The surgeon controls the equipment from a distance, seeing the image of the inside of the body on a monitor and moving the mechanic arms through manual controls.

According to Chapchap, apart from making the operation less invasive, the device permits precision in the movement of instruments. Apart from that, the doctor has total command of the camera, which permits better vision of the area to be operated on.

The Syrian-Lebanese purchased two Da Vincis, produced in the United States. The first, already in use, cost US\$ 1.75 million and is used in the Surgery Center at the hospital. The second, which cost US\$ 1.5 million, will only be used at the Teaching and Research Center at the institution, and should be delivered in May.

Even before the delivery of the second unit, the hospital should start promoting this week the 1st Course in Introduction to Robotic Surgery in Urology. Apart from talks, the participants should accompany a surgery using the robot, at the hospital itself, through teleconferencing.

Among the speakers will be American doctor Vipul Patel, director of the Global Robotics Institute at Florida Hospital, considered by the Syrian-Lebanese as one of the great names in robotic surgery in the world. The institute trains around 7,000 doctors a year.

The Syrian-Lebanese is currently negotiating a partnership in the area with the US institution. According to Chapchap, the idea is to send Brazilian surgeons for training in the US and to bring specialists from there to teach in Brazil. To him, it is cheaper for doctors from Brazil and other Latin American countries to do the course here than to travel to Florida.

Currently, according to Chapchap, 10 doctors from the Syrian-Lebanese are trained to use the robot, but by the end of the year the hospital plans to train 450 Brazilian and foreign professionals.

The equipment may be used in other areas of medicine. In May, for example, it should be used in a gynecological surgery.

Service

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