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Best Health Care Medical Group, Inc.
Professor Mike Mirahmadi, M.D.
Diplomate, American Board of Internal Medicine & Nephrology
Clinical Professor of Medicine at UCLA

Robot-Assisted Surgery for Gynecologic Cancers: The Future Is Now!

Robotic surgery was associated with shorter operative times and hospital stays, less blood loss, and lower complication rates than were traditional methods.

Robotic technology offers many potential advantages to surgeons, including 3-dimensional vision and precision; the dexterity that is possible with robotic surgery surpasses that of even the most skilled surgeons. Clinicians at one academic institution evaluated their experience with robotic-assisted gynecologic surgery.

Fifty-one women who underwent robot-assisted radical hysterectomy for early-stage cervical cancer were compared with 49 historical controls who underwent open hysterectomy before implementation of a robotics program. The robotic cohort had shorter mean operating time, shorter mean hospital stay, lower mean estimated blood loss, lower incidence of complications, and removal of more lymph nodes.

One hundred three women who underwent robot-assisted hysterectomy with staging for endometrial cancer were compared with historical cohorts of women who underwent staging hysterectomy by laparotomy or by traditional laparoscopy. Again, mean operating time and hospital stay were shorter, and blood loss and complication rates were lower, in the robotic cohort.

Comment: These series are the largest published yet on the efficacy of robotic surgery for gynecologic malignancies. Limitations include lack of randomization, absence of long-term follow-up, and performance of surgery by a single group. Nevertheless, the findings suggest that robot-assisted surgery likely will become the preferred approach for women with cancer of the uterus or cervix.

— [Robert W. Rebar, MD](#)

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Boggess JF et al. A case-control study of robot-assisted type III radical hysterectomy with pelvic lymph node dissection compared with open radical hysterectomy. *Am J Obstet Gynecol* 2008 Oct; 199:357.e1.