



The Cutting Edge

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Obesity Surgery Complications on the Decline

Obesity surgery-related complications in the United States declined 21 percent between 2001 and 2006, and payments to hospitals for obesity surgery decreased by as much as 13 percent, partly because there were fewer patient readmissions due to complications, a new study reports. The findings from a study by the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality are based on an analysis of more than 9,500 patients under age 65 who had obesity surgery, also known as bariatric surgery, at 652 hospitals between 2001 and 2002 and between 2005 and 2006. (U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality – April 29, 2009)

More at <http://www.hon.ch/News/HSN/626473.html>





Are Herbal Supplements Putting Aesthetic Surgery Patients At Risk?

For many people, the words "natural" or "herbal" are virtually synonymous with safety and purity. Products available over-the-counter without a doctor's prescription are often mistakenly believed to be free of significant risks. A report in the March/April issue of Aesthetic Surgery Journal warns that more than 40% of plastic surgery patients use herbal supplements in the two weeks prior to undergoing surgery. And, while some herbal supplements may provide benefits during recovery, commonly used herbal medications such as ginkgo biloba, ginseng, garlic, echinacea, valerian root and others can have deleterious effects when combined with surgery. (ASJ – April 16, 2009)

More at <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/146156.php>

Robot Improves Suture Proficiency More Rapidly for Surgeons Inexperienced in Laparoscopic Techniques

New research published in the April issue of the Journal of the American College of Surgeons suggests that, among surgeons inexperienced in laparoscopic techniques, closing incisions using robotic-assisted laparoscopic surgery (RALS) requires less time to learn and results in improved outcomes compared with suturing done via traditional, "open" surgery or with freehand laparoscopy. Laparoscopic suturing – a minimally invasive operation in which suturing is performed using an instrument that is inserted through small incisions in the abdomen – is a technically demanding skill that traditionally has required a significant amount of time to master. (JACS – April 20, 2009)

More at http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2009-04/wsw-ris042009.php

Americans' Medical Files Go Digital, By Way of Asia

In a startling illustration of the life-or-death decisions involving low-paid workers thousands of miles away in today's globalized world, Americans' most personal details move 24 hours a day as U.S. healthcare providers outsource billions of lines of transcription work each year to offices across Asia in a bid to cut the massive cost of medical bureaucracy. From dictated summaries of routine checkups to complete recordings of conversations between surgeons and nurses in operating theaters, the foreign workers are transforming the digital audio files into the documents that tell Americans' medical histories. (LA Times – April 19, 2009)

More at http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-philippines-transcribe19-2009apr19_0,6480094.story?track=rss



Complications, Death Rates Similar at Bariatric Surgery Centers of Excellence, Other Hospitals

Center of excellence designation is awarded to bariatric surgery centers by the American College of Surgeons or the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery. The nearly identical guidelines require that centers perform at least 125 operations per year; employ a bariatric surgery coordinator and personnel to follow up patients long-term; and enter outcomes into proprietary databases, which requires trained staff and a subscription to a database. "These criteria make intuitive sense but lack an evidence base for their application," the author writes. (JAMA – April 20, 2009)

More at <http://www.physorg.com/news159464280.html>



GENERAL HEALTHCARE Articles

New Study Evaluates Community Response to Personally Controlled Health Information

A new paper published in the latest issue of the open access publication Journal of Medical Internet Research evaluates consumers' experiences with the Indivo personally controlled health record (PCHR) system - a system developed by researchers in the Children's Hospital Informatics Program (CHIP) more than a decade ago that has been adapted by PCHR providers including Dossia, Microsoft and Google. This is the first report to be published that investigates consumers' response to a platform PCHR and subsequent implications for policy and design. (CHIP – May 1, 2009)

More at http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2009-05/chb-nse050109.php

Continuity of Care For Older Adults From Outpatient to Hospital is Low, and Decreasing

The proportion of Medicare patients experiencing continuity of care between outpatient and inpatient settings decreased substantially between 1996 and 2006, with decreases occurring in all areas of the country and in all types of hospitals, according to a study in the April 22/29 issue of JAMA. Continuity of care is generally recognized to have 3 dimensions—continuity in information, continuity in management, and continuity in the patient-physician relationship. Gulshan Sharma, M.D., M.P.H., of the University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, Texas, and colleagues examined outpatient to inpatient continuity of care of older adults between 1996 and 2006, with the study including 3,020,770 hospital admissions during this time period. (JAMA – April 16, 2009)

More at <http://newswise.com/articles/view/551325/>

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