



The Cutting Edge

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Survey Finds Many Surgeons Suffer Injuries From Minimally Invasive Techniques

Surgeons who engage in minimally invasive, laparoscopic surgery are providing great benefits to their patients, but possibly to their own detriment. That's the finding of the largest survey ever conducted of surgeons in North America who perform laparoscopic procedures. The survey, developed at the University of Maryland School of Medicine in Baltimore, found that 87 percent of laparoscopic surgeons have experienced physical symptoms or discomfort. This was especially true among those with high case volumes. Previous surveys had found only a 20-30 percent incidence of occupational injury among these surgeons. (JACS – February 1, 2010)

More at <http://www.physorg.com/news184254090.html>

Community Hospitals Offer a Safe Surgical Option for Some Cancer Surgeries

Low-risk patients who require certain cancer surgeries can have the procedures performed with low operative mortality rates at community hospitals, according to a new study. The research showed that for 13 different kinds of cancer surgeries such as gastric and colon, younger patients with few pre-existing illnesses survived operations at community hospitals at a similar rate as at cancer centers. But patients who are considered high risk or who need complicated cancer surgeries have a higher survival rate at specialized cancer centers. Patients with pancreatic and esophageal cancer, among the most complex cancer surgeries, are twice as likely to survive an operation at a specialized cancer center. (Annals of Surgery – February 2, 2010)

More at http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2010-02/nu-cho020210.php



Injections May Boost Knee Surgery Success

For people with arthritis, injections of a fluid made from rooster combs can improve recovery from arthroscopic knee surgery to repair damaged cartilage, researchers say. The fluid, sodium hyaluronate, is known by the brand names Hyalgan, Euflexxa, Ostenil and Synject. Studies have shown that hyaluronic acid products can reduce arthritis pain and improve functioning for patients who do not respond to standard anti-inflammatory medications. Almost 16 million Americans between 25 and 74 have osteoarthritis, according to background information in the study. And many have torn or debilitated knee cartilage (meniscus), requiring surgery. The presence of arthritis in patients with meniscus tears impedes knee surgery outcomes, and the study authors wanted to know if combining injections with surgery would improve results. (American Journal of Orthopedics – January 28, 2010)

More at <http://www.healthday.com/Article.asp?AID=635271>

Top-Rated Hospitals Don't Always Have Superior Outcomes

New research published in the January issue of the Journal of the American College of Surgeons finds that while popular hospital rating systems can help identify high-quality hospitals for cardiovascular operations, patients can achieve similar outcomes by seeking care at high-volume hospitals closer to home. Hospital quality ratings have become a source of bragging rights for many hospitals, and they receive substantial attention from both the public and media. Two of the most recognized ratings are the U.S. News and World Report's "America's Best Hospitals" and HealthGrades' "America's 50 Best Hospitals." Although patients and caregivers increasingly use these quality ratings to choose hospitals, the relationship between ratings and outcomes remains unclear. (JACS – January 28, 2010)

More at <http://www.physorg.com/news183724902.html>

After Medicare Rule Change, Fewer Facilities Performed Bariatric Surgeries but Outcomes Improved

Following a rule expanding coverage of weight-loss surgery under Medicare, bariatric procedures in the Medicare population were centralized to a smaller number of certified centers, were more likely to be minimally invasive and were associated with improved outcomes, according to a report in the January issue of Archives of Surgery, one of the JAMA/Archives journals. In February 2006, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services issued a national coverage determination (NCD) for bariatric surgery. Under the NCD, Medicare began covering bariatric procedures for patients older than age 65 at institutions certified by the American College of Surgeons (ACS) or the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS). (JAMA – January 18, 2010)

More at <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/01/100118161933.htm>

GENERAL HEALTHCARE Articles

Tattletale Pills, Bottles Remind You to Take Your Meds

If you have problems remembering to take your meds – or whether you've taken them already – some high-tech products on the horizon may be able to help you. Companies are using wireless technology, the same mechanism by which you use a cell phone or the Internet, to develop devices that monitor whether you took your pills as the doctor ordered, beaming information back to you, your doctor or a designated family member. In some cases, this requires swallowing a microchip about as thin as a few human hairs. The concept may sound invasive, but it has the potential to save as much as \$290 billion annually in increased medical costs. (CNN – February 2, 2010)

More at <http://www.cnn.com/2010/HEALTH/02/02/pills.medication.compliance/index.html>

Magnetic Nanoparticles Show Promise for Combating Human Cancer

Scientists at Georgia Tech and the Ovarian Cancer Institute have further developed a potential new treatment against cancer that uses magnetic nanoparticles to attach to cancer cells, removing them from the body. The treatment, tested in mice in 2008, has now been tested using samples from human cancer patients. The results appear online in the journal Nanomedicine. The idea came to the research team from



the work of Ken Scarberry, then a Ph.D. student at Tech. Scarberry originally conceived of the idea as a means of extracting viruses and virally infected cells. At his advisor's suggestion Scarberry began looking at how the system could work with cancer cells. (Nanomedicine – February 1, 2010)

More at http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2010-02/giot-mns020110.php

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