



Robotic Surgery

A surgeon has become the first to use a robot during heart surgery to repair a heart valve. The surgeon used a *daVinci* robot to repair the mitral valve of a 62-year-old man.

Until now, the procedure involved opening the chest and patients took along time to recover. Now, “patients suffer fewer complications and return to their normal lives much quicker,” said a doctor. “We have performed the (surgery) for years ... now we adapted the robot to our technique,” he said.

It took lots of training to be able to perform the surgery. Instead of opening the chest, surgeons made four small cuts along the right side of the chest to insert the instruments attached to the robotic arms. Attached to one of the arms is a camera that sends images back to the doctors so they can see what they’re doing inside the body. To move the instruments the surgeon simply moves his/her hands.

Physicians say that the robot is ideal for

valve repair surgery because it gives the surgeon a 3-D, magnified view of the operation and gives a great look at the delicate tissue and organs.

The surgery actually takes longer than



normal but there are more benefits for the patient, say scientists.

“Because we are not opening the chest, there is less scarring, fewer (wounds), and a much quicker recovery time,” said a doctor.

The valve is the “in” valve for the left ventricle, the main pumping chamber of the heart. Blood flows from the lungs and across this valve. A repair is made to treat a leaky valve or other problems. This is often better than are placement because it is considered more durable, say doctors. In some cases, the valve is replaced with an artificial one. The original technique for this surgery (used for many years) has only a 60 percent success rate.

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