

# ROBOTIC SURGERIES GAINING ACCEPTANCE AMONG PATIENTS, SURGEONS IN INDIA

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Robotic assisted surgeries (RAS) seem to be gaining some acceptance among surgeons and patients in India.

While it offers to help doctors perform complex operations with ease, it reduces the size of surgical incisions, minimises blood loss, cuts pain and shortens patient's post-procedure recovery time, claim surgical robotic systems manufacturers and surgeons who conduct operations on these machines.

In addition, it facilitates better visualisation (of the body part under surgery), enhanced dexterity and greater precision and thereby delivers better clinical outcomes especially for patients who are undergoing procedures for oncology, thyroid, liver, gynecologic cancers (cervical, uterine, ovarian, vaginal and vulvar) and urology, according to medical professionals.

Dr. Preetha Reddy, Executive Vice Chairperson, Apollo Hospitals said, "The advent of cutting edge technologies always pushes the boundaries of medicine and a remarkable innovation of this era has certainly been RAS."

"With RAS, surgeries are possible with fewer blood transfusion, reduced risk of wound infection and shorter stay in the hospital," she added.

Responding to the growing awareness about robotic-assisted surgeries, many tech-savvy surgeons in the country are now in the process of learning and adopting this technology.

Intuitive Surgical, designer and manufacturer of Da Vinci robotic surgical systems recently entered into a collaboration with AIIMS Delhi to launch a robotic onboarding training (ROPE) to equip young surgeons to move the robotic way.

Dr. S.V.S. Deo Professor and Head, Department of Surgical Oncology, AIIMS said, "This will enable young surgeons and trainees to gain exposure to cutting-edge technologies of the future. We ran a pilot programme of ROPE in the oncology division of AIIMS and now based on surgical students' feedback we are planning to expand it to other specialties and institutions."

RAS companies like Intuitive Surgical and Medtronic have been receiving positive feedback from surgeons regarding the usage of robotic technology. Intuitive Surgical, which has 73 RAS installations in various hospitals in India, reported a 25% to 30% year-on-year growth in deployments.

"We are now aiming to scale our RAS introductory programme in the country in partnership with several medical institutions," said Mandeep Singh Kumar, VP and GM at Intuitive India.

Madan Krishnan, Vice President & Managing Director, Medtronic India, that makes robotic guidance platforms, said, "RAS is an extension of the doctor. It helps surgeons visualise the surgery in advance and map the progress in real-time. This helps them align their surgical plans accurately while doing spinal or cranial procedures."

Seeing the growing scope of robotics in surgeries, IRDAI, has already issued guidelines to

insurance firms to include RAS in their health coverage plans. As of now, the cost of robotic surgeries will remain equivalent to that of traditional surgeries, say healthcare providers.

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The technology could be as much as 45% faster than the mainstream 7-nanometre chips in many of today's laptops and phones and up to 75% more power efficient, the company said.

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