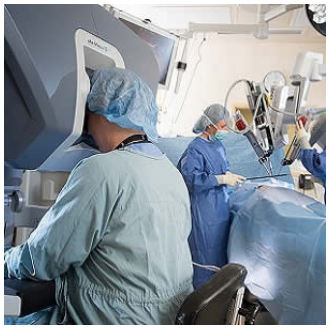
Robots to train surgeons for intricate procedures



A "new age of surgery" is coming to Australia with the establishment of a robot academy that will train surgeons to perform certain cancer procedures on hard-to-reach and small spaces in the body. Robotics surgery is already being used in the treatment of prostate cancer but has also been harnessed for gynaecological procedures, as well as ear, nose and throat surgeries.

This advanced technology works with precision resulting in improved patient outcomes – higher survival rates, lower infection rates, shorter hospital stays and faster recoveries.

According to the Victorian Government, the Australian Medical Robotics Academy will be located in the heart of Victoria's biomedical precinct in Melbourne's Parkville. The state-of-the-art facility will train surgeons to conduct minimally invasive surgery for prostate cancer and other conditions.

"This facility will usher in a new age of surgery that will change the lives of patients from right around the world," said Victorian Minister for Health Jill Hennessy. Earlier this month Hennessy announced a $2 million funding injection into the Australian Prostate Centre's plans to build the new international centre for excellence in medical robotics.

Robotics surgery currently is being conducted at a relatively small number of private hospitals in Victoria and the training will allow it to become more commonplace throughout the state and beyond.

The robot academy will contain virtual reality simulators for surgeons to use to build their skills. The cutting-edge technology provides feedback on the efficiency of their movements and errors during simulated surgeries, allowing clinical specialists to grow in proficiency before conducting procedures on live patients.

The Australian Medical Robotics Academy will be completed by the end of 2019, according to the government.

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