

## SAGES Assessment on the da Vinci<sup>®</sup> Surgical System

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Readers are directed to two important documents found in the Journal addressing the issue of robotic surgery. The first is the work product of the Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES) Technology and Value Assessment Committee on the da Vinci<sup>®</sup> Surgical System [1]. As a society, SAGES believes one of its missions is to provide documents putting forth opinions and judgments regarding new technology. A recent similar example is a safety and effectiveness analysis regarding the LINX<sup>®</sup> Reflux Management System [2]. In both of these instances, SAGES gathered experts and thought leaders from the society and brought them together with the charge of producing a document assessing the safety and effectiveness of a new technology based upon currently available data sources.

These assessments are done in a very careful manner, with extensive literature review, debate, and discussion among the experts, at the committee level, and finally at the society's Board of Governors' level. These documents are not produced lightly or capriciously. They are carefully considered and put forth as the society's official opinion. It should go without saying that individual members of SAGES with various levels of expertise may or may not agree entirely with the recommendations and conclusions.

Upon publication of the da Vinci system assessment [1], Myriam Curet, MD, FACS, SVP & Chief Medical Officer,

Intuitive Surgical, Inc., requested the opportunity to respond to the SAGES analysis. Given the significance of the issue, and the spectrum of strong opinions held regarding robotic surgery, the editors have chosen to provide Dr. Curet with the opportunity to respond in writing. Her response is being published as a Commentary in *Surgical Endoscopy* [3].

The topic of robotic surgery, particularly within the realm of general surgery, has been hotly debated since the initial FDA approval of the da Vinci robotic system and its integration into modern surgical practice. There is no doubt that the goal of enhancing surgery by adding advanced imaging and mechanical robotic technology is important. The Intuitive da Vinci system has been the only example of a major advancement in this direction approved by the FDA in the USA, with the very recent exception of the Medrobotics Flex<sup>®</sup> Robotic System. This advancement has occurred in a time frame in American medicine in which we are all required to consider carefully the addition of significant expense to our healthcare system. This potential conflict between the expense and the potential benefit of a major new technology has been the topic of much debate. Additional elements of importance include training, and the pathway technologies should take when they enter the healthcare system.

Within this context, the da Vinci system assessment [1] and Dr. Curet's commentary [3] represent important reading and important viewpoints regarding robotics in our gastrointestinal and general surgery world.

### Compliance with ethical standards

**Disclosures** Dr. Talamini has no conflicts of interest or financial ties to disclose.

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## References

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3. Curet MJ (2015) da Vinci<sup>®</sup> System Assessment Response. *Surg Endosc* In press