

Risk Management

Robotic Surgery Improves Patient Outcomes

JEFF LORBERBAUM WITH COWORKERS
AT MOHAWK INDUSTRIES

Jeff Lorberbaum knows a thing or two about managing risk in the pursuit of positive outcomes. As CEO of Mohawk Industries, Inc. for the past 20 years, he has helped that business grow into the world's largest flooring company, employing more than 43,000 team members worldwide and generating more than \$11 billion in sales in 2021.

So, when the Northwest Georgia native opted to undergo surgery to repair an internal tear earlier this year, he put his trust in Hak Lee, MD, the region's only urological oncologist specializing in robotic surgery, and the da Vinci Xi robotic-assisted surgery system at AdventHealth Gordon.

"Dr. Lee is a leading expert in the field of robotic surgery, which gave me confidence in his ability to perform the procedure safely," Lorberbaum said. "With three small holes, well-trained surgeons like Dr. Lee can complete elaborate procedures with minimal trauma and faster recovery time. I'm a firm believer in reducing risk, so I really appreciated that."

Indeed, compared to more traditional, invasive approaches, robotic-assisted surgeries offer numerous risk-reducing advantages to patients, including shorter hospitalization times, reduced pain and discomfort during recovery, reduced blood loss and minimal scarring.

According to Dr. Lee, who has performed more than 200 robotic procedures during his tenure at AdventHealth Gordon, robotics in general—and the da Vinci Xi specifically—are beneficial for surgeons, as well.

"Advantages include an enhanced and magnified view inside the patient's body, instruments that bend and rotate farther than human hands can and overall enhanced precision and control," Dr. Lee said. "The da Vinci Xi is the most capable system on the market and continues to advance minimally invasive surgery."

The da Vinci Xi consists of three components—a surgeon's console, a patient-side cart and a vision cart. The patient-side cart is positioned near the operating table and is where the instruments

used during the operation move in response to the surgeon's hand movements at the surgeon's console. The vision cart makes communication between those two components possible and provides a screen for the care team to view the operation.

For patients like Lorberbaum, whose health care journey began with internal bleeding and a visit to the emergency room at AdventHealth Gordon, potentially serious conditions can be managed with a reasonable expectation of full recovery.

"I've seen Dr. Lee twice for follow-up visits. He's confirmed that I've healed and am better than ever," said Lorberbaum, a father of two and grandfather of three. "I'm experiencing no discomfort, and I go about my daily routine just like I always did. At home and at work, I feel like I'm back to normal."

In addition to the performance of the da Vinci Xi, Lorberbaum praised the contributions of Dr. Lee and his team, which included Hannah Holland, RN, his nurse navigator. Dr. Lee saw him in his room multiple times each day, and in-between visits, Holland followed up to ensure that things were going as planned.

"During his daily visits, he took time to educate me while also providing reassurance in a compassionate way," Lorberbaum said. "That blend of knowledge and empathy is ideal in a physician, and it's rare."

The care team's presence was never more important than when Lorberbaum developed complications unrelated to the initial procedure. He said Dr. Lee and the AdventHealth Gordon team were diligent in updating his treatments to deal with the new challenges that arose. They adjusted his care as the situation evolved and explained why the team was taking different steps to support his recovery.

"My wife and son were with me every day, and the staff made them feel welcome, including them in discussions of my care and helping them understand my condition and my progress," Lorberbaum said. "Everyone on the medical team at AdventHealth Gordon made me feel that my comfort



and care were their top priority. I felt my care was tailored to my specific needs. When complications arose, the response was based on my condition, not a cookie-cutter approach.”

Lorberbaum believes that the combination of patient-focused care and state-of-the-art technology makes AdventHealth Gordon a valuable asset to Gordon County and the surrounding region.

“As a manager of a large, worldwide business, I recognize well-run operations and talented staff, and AdventHealth has a strong, professional team running the hospital and caring for patients,” he said. “By being treated in a community hospital, I received a faster and more thorough evaluation, which led to diagnosing the problem and quickly beginning treatment. In emergency situations, having leading-edge health care available within your community is critically important.”

While having the da Vinci Xi is a distinct advantage for hospitals like AdventHealth Gordon and AdventHealth Redmond, such technologies are only as good as the men and women operating

them, according to Dr. Lee. After all, it’s the surgeon’s hand movements that bend and rotate the instruments in real-time during the procedure. The surgeon is in control of the robot at all times.

“The key to a successful robotic-assisted surgery is the experience and proficiency that is gained through extensive training,” Dr. Lee said. “It is also crucial to have a team of robotic-trained nurses, anesthesiologists and technicians to assist the surgeon throughout the procedure.”

Dr. Lee was AdventHealth Gordon’s first physician to be trained and certified in robotics. Within both his six-year urology residency and his two-year urologic oncology fellowship, he received specialized training in minimally invasive surgery in laparoscopy and robotic surgery.

“I was lucky Dr. Lee was in Calhoun,” Lorberbaum said. “It’s amazing that in this community we have someone with Dr. Lee’s skills and experience. He could be at any of the top hospitals in the world.”

For more information about robotic surgery at AdventHealth Gordon, please call 706-602-7800 ext. 4052.

In Good Hands

Robotic Technology Offers Multiple Advantages for Surgery Patients

For five years, Calhoun resident Mary Ellen Van Horn lived with two different obstructions in her right ureter, the duct connecting her right kidney to her bladder. She put off surgery as long as she could, but when the temporary stents that had been placed in the ureter shifted, the ensuing complications and pain prompted her to finally deal with the problem surgically.

Van Horn was admitted to AdventHealth Gordon, where she underwent a corrective procedure on December 6, 2021. The surgery was performed by Hak Lee, MD, with the da Vinci Xi robotic-assisted surgery system.

“It was a very serious surgery. I could have lost that kidney,” Van Horn said. “Dr. Lee didn’t know if I would lose it or not until he got in there, but with the robotic procedure, my recovery time would be better.”

Fortunately, Van Horn’s operation, which involved severing and rerouting the obstructed ureter, was successful.

“I bounced back pretty fast. I was walking that afternoon,” she said. “I was in the hospital for four

days, and the pain management there was great. I was driving again in two weeks.”

Patients undergoing robotic surgery also benefit from nurse navigators who work closely with each patient and their family members every step of the way, from scheduling to discharge and beyond.

“Once they’re at home, I call and check on our patients almost daily for several weeks to ensure they are healing properly and getting back to normal as quickly as possible,” said Hannah Holland, RN, Dr. Lee’s nurse navigator. “Dr. Lee strives for above-average outcomes by closely monitoring and following each patient, and my main goal is to treat our patients like they’re family, not just a number.”

Van Horn found such connection points to be invaluable during the recovery process.

“Hannah called me several times a day, and I could call her anytime I needed her,” Van Horn said. “I even called her on a weekend, and she contacted Dr. Lee and then got back with me really fast.”

