

Are Surgical Robots Worth It?

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The FDA looks into the safety of the da Vinci system in light of increased adverse incidents.

Surgical robots allow surgeons to perform a variety of less invasive operations because their miniaturized instruments can work through small incisions in the body and are more dexterous than traditional laparoscopic tools (see "[The Slow Rise of the Robot Surgeon](#) [1]"). The result is that patients leave the operating room with a smaller surgical wound with the promise of faster recovery and less scarring.

In 2000, [Intuitive Surgical](#) [2]'s da Vinci system became [the first FDA-approved commercially available robotic surgical platform](#) [2] and has since been used on hundreds of thousands of patients. According to a [report on Bloomberg's news site](#) [3], the FDA is now taking another look at the system in response to an increase in reports of adverse incidents. As reported by Bloomberg:

What the agency is trying to determine is whether a rise seen in incident reports sent to the agency are "a true reflection of problems" with the robots, or the result of other issues, said Synim Rivers, an [FDA] spokeswoman, in an e-mail. "It is difficult to know why the reports have increased," she said.

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http://www.mdtmag.com/news/2013/03/are-surgical-robots-worth-it?qt-video_of_the_day=0

Links:

[1] <http://www.technologyreview.com/news/418141/the-slow-rise-of-the-robot-surgeon/page/2/>

[2] http://www.intuitivesurgical.com/company/media/media_kit/da-vinci-fast-facts-en-870456.pdf

[3] http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-02-28/intuitive-surgical-robots-probed-by-u-s-in-survey-of-surgeons.html#disqus_thread