

# City's west has seen the rise of the machines

Robotic-assisted surgery may improve accuracy and reduce risks, writes **Dani Wright**.

As the population of Greater Sydney soars past 5 million, so does the demand for health-care resources.

The good news is that robotic-assisted surgery in the city's west is bringing the local population the highest level of care.

Having undertaken 1000 robotic cases since 2013 in various surgical applications, specialists at Westmead Private Hospital now have a robotic option for spinal surgery. "Our world-class surgeons continue to push the limits of this game-changing technology to perfect even more innovative and complex surgical procedures - redefining minimally invasive surgery," says Westmead Private's CEO, Mike Flatley.

"A growing, and ageing, population is even more reason for us to continue providing the best in healthcare, offering surgical options that achieve optimal outcomes for our patients."

Mazor Robotics' Renaissance spinal surgery technology, supplied by LifeHealthcare, may lead to patients experiencing less post-operative pain, lower complication rates and faster recovery times.

The technology facilitates less invasive procedures compared with traditional free-hand surgery.

Matt Muscio, CEO at LifeHealthcare, partnered with Ramsay Healthcare to bring spinal robotics to the hospital, one in which the spinal service is already recognised for its clinical excellence.



Orthopaedic spine surgeon Dr Brian Hsu says using robotic technology at Westmead Private Hospital increases accuracy and lessens risks.

Neurosurgeon Dr Andrew Kam sees significant value in the Mazor equipment and says it marries the latest robotic technology with the drive for less invasive surgery.

"It significantly improves accuracy of screw fixation, but also has the benefit of reducing the surgical team's exposure to unnecessary radiation from intraoperative

fluoroscopy," he says.

Sydney children can now benefit from the technology thanks to the work of orthopaedic spine surgeon Dr Brian Hsu.

"Around 99 per cent of the paediatric surgery I do is to treat scoliosis, so we're excited the Mazor robot is at Westmead Private," says Dr Hsu.

"Children have smaller bones than adults, so the technology is even more beneficial due to the increased difficulty of operations.

**'Robotic technology is more like a self-driving car, but with the surgeon [pushing] the accelerator and the brake.'**

**Dr Brian Hsu**

There's also less risk of harming the spinal cord due to increased accuracy."

Even though the technology is robotic, the surgeon retains full control at all times.

"While CT and MRI scans can be seen as navigation maps for a surgeon, robotic technology is more like a self-driving car, but with the surgeon still needing to push the accelerator and the brake," Dr Hsu says.

"Once, MRI scans were something new, now they are commonplace.

"With robotic surgery becoming more common at Westmead, more surgeons will be exposed to the technology and trained to operate the machinery in Sydney."

As Sydney's population continues to grow, robotic technology will likely broaden healthcare options and more patients, including children, may be in line to benefit.



## Sydney Robotic Centre at Westmead Private Hospital

**Westmead Private Hospital** is a leader in robotic surgery. Since its inception in 2013 we have continued to innovate and be at the forefront of robotic surgery, with many Australian-first procedures been performed in urology, gynaecology, orthopaedic spinal and general surgery.

Our world-class surgeons work with our team of skilled nurses and allied health professional to provide the highest standard of personalized care to all our patients. The team work together to ensure the needs of our patients are met prior to admission, whilst in hospital and following discharge.

We are committed to providing the best in quality health care, offering the most advanced surgical options for the community of Western Sydney.

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