



Thursday, December 4, 2003

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2003-11-12

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### Technology

#### 'Dr. Robot' Makes Good Impression During Tests At Johns Hopkins

How would your facility's patients respond to their next check-up--by a robot? They'd love it, according to research at Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, where a 5-foot, 200-pound robot that works like a remote control video camera is being evaluated as it rolls into patients' rooms and transmits sound and pictures to doctors.

Looking a bit like a floor buffer with a television for a head, "Dr. Robot" is guided through the room by a doctor operating a joystick at another location. The doctor can then watch what the machine "sees" through a video camera on top of a flat screen, while the patients see the doctor's face displayed on the screen.

The robot, which rents for \$2,500 a month from its manufacturer, InTouch Health, is connected to the Internet via broadband and a wireless network.

Louis Kavoussi, M.D., Hopkins' professor of urology and a pioneer in robotic surgery who is testing the device, says a survey of 20 patients showed they were satisfied with the care they received when the robot was used.

According to Kavoussi, who is also on InTouch's

advisory board, the positive response supports earlier Hopkins studies that found patients like using teleconferencing technology, in addition to traditional bedside visits, to communicate with their physicians.

"Any technology that facilitates communication between patient and physician is welcome by both," he adds.

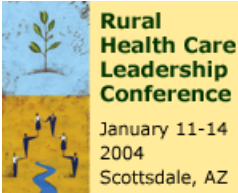
The robot has generally been used to check up on patients in between normal physician visits. Doctors operate the robots to ask the patients how they are feeling, inspect their surgical sites to ensure they are healing properly, and to answer questions.

Kavoussi says the machine could be used at facilities that don't have all the specialists they need on staff.

"The robot has the potential to fill this vacuum by enabling remote medical experts to 'virtually' consult with caregivers, patients, residents and family members at the point of care," Kavoussi says.

*This article 1st appeared in the November 2003 issue of Hospitals & Health Networks Magazine.*

java.sql.SQLException: ORA-00933: SQL command not properly ended  
2003-11-12



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