



News and Events

News Releases

LIJ Medical Ctr. Introduces Remote-Control Physician Robots to Monitor Patients in Intensive Care Unit, Consult with Surgical Patients After Hours

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In an unprecedented event, three "remote-rounding" robots held a news conference today at LIJ Medical Center to discuss how physicians are using them to consult with patients, family members and healthcare staff in real time, at a moment's notice—even when the doctors are miles away from the hospital.



Even though he was three miles away at North Shore University Hospital, Louis Kavoussi, MD, chairman of urology at the North Shore-LIJ Health System, is able to chat with surgery patient John Hebrank of Bethage and his wife, using one of LIJ Medical Center's three "remote-rounding" robots. Accompanying the robotic Dr. Kavoussi on his rounds was Lee Richstone, MD.

Patients see, hear and interact with physicians through the five-foot-tall robot, which displays a live video image of the doctor's face on its monitor/head. The physician, seated at a computer console (a control station), also sees and hears the patient through a live video image, which is projected directly onto the control station monitor. The control station is equipped with a joystick that allows the physician to drive the robot to the patient's bedside, control movements of the robot's head, and even zoom in to take a closer look at the patient or the bedside monitors.

The reaction of patients and families to the robots has been extremely positive. In a study led by Louis Kavoussi, MD, chairman of urology at the North Shore-LIJ Health System, and the nation's first user of the remote rounding robot, half the

patients preferred a "tele-rounding" visit by their own doctor to a "real" visit by another physician. Over 80 percent of the patients felt that the robot increased physician accessibility. "Patients have been extraordinarily receptive and enthusiastic about the robot," said Dr Kavoussi, who is using one of the three robots at LIJ to check on his patients after hours and on weekends.

LIJ's Intensive Care Unit (ICU) is home to the hospital's two other robots. The hospital's intensivists – physicians who specialize in the care of critically ill patients --use the robots from their homes and offices to provide additional monitoring of ICU patients. Studies show that the intensivists' presence in the ICU results in better patient outcomes by decreasing morbidity, mortality, length of stay and cost of care. Because intensivists are familiar with

complications that may occur, they are the specialists who are best qualified to minimize errors in the ICUs.

However, there is a significant shortage of intensivists, with fewer than 6,000 practicing in the United States today -- at a time when more than five million Americans are being admitted to ICUs every year.



Corrado Marini, MD, vice chairman of education at LIJ, has been using two of LIJ's three "remote-rounding" robots to provide additional monitoring of patients in the hospital's intensive care unit. Here, he consults remotely with an ICU patient (shown on screen). To the right are robots controlled remotely by T.S. Ravikumar, MD, surgeon in chief at the North Shore-LIJ Health System, and Louis Kavoussi, MD, chairman of urology at North Shore-LIJ, during a March 15 news conference at LIJ Medical Center in New Hyde Park, NY.

"We recognize that leveraging the intensivists' time offers the possibility of improved patient care, reduces the length of stay and saves money," said T. S. Ravikumar, MD, chairman of surgery at LIJ Medical Center and North Shore University Hospital. "With the robot, we are able to monitor and access our patients anytime from our homes and offices in a way that was not previously possible. With that kind of remote access, physicians are basically accessible to their patients 24/7."

The robots are manufactured by Santa Barbara, CA-based InTouch Health©.

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