Will Automation Affect Surgeons' Skills?

Skeptical Scalpel

Although it has been known for over two years, news outlets are again reporting that automation is degrading pilots' skills. Links are here [1] and here [2]. I blogged about this back then as part of a comparison of pilots to surgeons. My point was that surgeons did not have autopilots to rely on in the operating room.

This new report has prompted some to wonder whether robotic surgery will lead to deterioration of surgeons' skills.

In my opinion, that is not likely at this time because the robot is not really doing the surgery by itself. It is simply a tool that helps the surgeon and is under the surgeon's complete control at all times (except when it runs amok).

However, ever since the advent of laparoscopic surgery over 20 years ago and its popularity for many of the common procedures surgeons do, there has been concern that surgeons may eventually lose proficiency for open procedures. And a number of other open operations have been done less frequently due to alternate ways of treating patients such as non-operative or interventional radiologic techniques.

Here are some examples from the ACGME resident log data [3] for the academic years 1999-2000 and 2011-2012.

Continue reading... [4]

Source URL (retrieved on *03/30/2015 - 10:43pm*):
http://www.surgicalproductsmag.com/blogs/2014/04/will-automation-affect-surgeons-skills

Links:
[1] http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304439804579204202526288042?mod=e2tw
[2] http://gizmodo.com/faa-discovers-that-commercial-pilots-suck-at-manually-f-1466929308
[3] http://www.acgme.org/acgmeweb/tabid/274/DataCollectionSystems/ResidentCaseLogSystem/CaseLogsStatisticalReports.aspx
[4] http://skepticalscalpel.blogspot.com/2014/04/will-automation-affect-surgeons-skills.html