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Robot reinvents pancreatic surgery

The Oregon Clinic Announces Dr. Paul Hansen First to Perform Robotic “Whipple” Surgery in Pacific Northwest

Portland, Ore., July 1, 2009 -- Paul Hansen, M.D., Gastrointestinal & Minimally Invasive Surgeon at The Oregon Clinic, recently became the first surgeon in the Pacific Northwest to perform a fully Robotic Whipple procedure, a complicated surgery used to remove tumors of the pancreas. The operation, traditionally performed as open surgery, generally involves removal of the gallbladder, bile duct, part of the small intestine and head of the pancreas.

According to Dr. Hansen, surgery is the only effective therapy for pancreatic cancer. The best results are obtained when performed by a specially trained surgeon. The “Whipple” is one of the most demanding and complex surgeries of the abdomen. It is the most commonly performed operation for pancreatic cancer, the fourth leading cause of cancer death in the U.S.

For patients with benign as well as malignant pancreatic tumors, it is believed that the Robotic Whipple procedure will be a major improvement over the traditional procedure. The newer surgery involves five small incisions (one to accommodate a miniature camera), rather than a large incision, and separation, not cutting of muscles. It is anticipated that patients will have a shorter hospital stay, less pain, less risk of complications, faster recovery time, and a quicker return to normal activities.

According to Dr. Hansen, the robotic camera allows for magnified, high definition viewing of organs. "It results in a remarkable operation. It gives me incredible dexterity in the abdomen to do things that are extremely challenging to do with my hands during open surgery."

Dr. Hansen performed the procedure at Providence Portland Hospital using the daVinci® Robotic Surgical System, a major breakthrough in surgical technology. To perform the procedure, which requires special training and expertise, including knowledge of minimally invasive techniques, Dr. Hansen sits at a console, viewing a three-dimensional image of the surgical field and manipulating small flexible tipped instruments inserted through the small incisions.

First Robotic Whipple Patient

Happy Valley resident, Daniel Ducret, 31, reaped the benefits of the new procedure as Dr. Hansen's first Robotic Whipple patient. Ducret suffered from chronic recurrent

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pancreatitis and endured two years of remittent, excruciating abdominal pain.

Ducret and his wife, Lisa, researched the surgery and agreed that the Robotic Whipple was the best procedure. Following the surgery, Ducret was up and walking two days following surgery. "I'm grateful to have had this procedure and I'm feeling better every day," says Ducret. "My wife and I were both confident that if anyone could do this surgery successfully, it would be Dr. Hansen." "I'm very fortunate."

About Paul Hansen, M.D.

Paul Hansen, M.D. is an award-winning, Board-certified physician and surgeon specializing in Gastrointestinal and Minimally Invasive Surgery at The Oregon Clinic. His areas of focus include: Adrenal gland resections, gall bladder and bile duct surgery, inguinal hernia repairs, laparoscopic and robotic surgery, liver resections, pancreatic resections including Robotic Whipple procedures and more.

Dr. Hansen spent 10 years in advanced surgical training developing the technical skills he uses in his career in minimally invasive and liver and pancreas surgery.

Additionally, Dr. Hansen is program director of Hepabiliary and Pancreatic Surgery at Providence Portland Hospital and a member of several medical associations. He has volunteered with International Humanitarian Surgical Teams and with the Volunteer Surgical staff, Chimaltenago, Guatemala in 2006.

About The Oregon Clinic

With more than 120 physicians, The Oregon Clinic is one of the largest private specialty physician practices in Oregon. An evidence-based, multidisciplinary organization, The Oregon Clinic provides the highest quality care using a team approach to address medical conditions in the areas of cardiology, gastroenterology, neurology, pulmonology, urology, podiatry, otolaryngology, radiation and surgical oncology, cardiothoracic surgery, general and minimally invasive gastrointestinal surgery and imaging. Committed to providing the highest quality care, The Oregon Clinic practices data-driven medicine, providing leadership for the healthcare community and respectful, compassionate service. It was founded in 1994 with the merger of several clinical groups in Portland, offering specialty care from Vancouver to Salem, and from Hood River to Astoria.

Visit The Oregon Clinic Website at www.oregonclinic.com or call (503) 935-8000 for more information.

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