
Would You Let a Robot Assist in Surgery?



In a recent article published in the Journal of Marketing titled "The Role of Advertising in High-Tech Medical Procedures: Evidence from Robotic Surgeries," the authors investigate whether direct-to-consumer advertising for robotic surgery is successful in persuading patients to choose it over other procedures. The researchers are affiliated with the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology and the University of Texas at Dallas.

The FDA approved the world's first minimally invasive robotic surgery, the Da Vinci system, in 2000. Since then, the adoption of robotic surgery and its ethical implications have been a contentious topic.

Robotic surgery provides surgeons with a magnified high-definition 3D view of the surgical site and enables them to control robot arms. This offers greater flexibility and a wider range of motion than human hands alone. As a result, the Da Vinci system has become the most commonly used robotic surgical system globally and is approved by the FDA for many procedures in urology, thoracic surgery, general surgery, and gynaecology, among others.

Supporters of robotic surgery contend that its advanced precision and smaller incisions lead to improved patient outcomes. However, robotic procedures have faced criticism for their significantly higher costs than laparoscopic surgery.

Healthcare marketers are faced with the question of whether or not direct-to-consumer advertising (DTCA) for robotic surgery is effective in persuading patients to opt for it over other procedures.

Approximately 140,000 individual patient records and television advertising data from Florida between 2011 and 2015 were analysed in this new study to investigate how hospital advertising of robotic surgery affects patients' preference for robotic surgery over more traditional laparoscopic and open surgeries. The findings show that patients exposed to robotic surgery advertising are more likely to choose it over laparoscopic surgery.

These findings suggest to hospital marketers that DTCA can effectively influence patient decision-making, even in cases involving significant health risks and even though no long-term health benefits have been observed. However, the shorter length of hospital stay associated with robotic surgery (approximately five hours less) is a clear advantage.

Source: [American Marketing Association](#)

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