

Medlines

MEDICAL NEWS PROVIDED BY MCV HOSPITALS AND PHYSICIANS OF THE VCU HEALTH SYSTEM



Dr. Eric DeMaria



Dr. Harvey Sugerman

Surgical Teleconference Marks First for MCVH Physicians

Medicine is heading into the future at full speed: new treatments, new technology and now - new techniques for telemedicine. The Medical College of Virginia Hospitals and Physicians of the VCU Health System recently performed laparoscopic gastric bypass surgery in Richmond while medical specialists watched from St. Louis.

On Saturday, April 21, MCV Hospitals and Physicians held their first surgical teleconference outside the MCV Campus. Dr. Eric DeMaria,

Director of the Minimally Invasive Surgery Center, and Dr. Harvey Sugerman, Chairman of General/Trauma Surgery, projected laparoscopic gastric bypass surgery onto a big video screen at the SAGES (Society of American Gastrointestinal Endoscopic Surgeons) Conference in St. Louis, Missouri. Approximately 1300 attendees and 90 companies watched the two surgeons perform the procedure while answering questions. "It was a tremendous honor to be asked to perform surgery for an international audience of laparoscopic surgery specialists. It was a fitting tribute to the world-renowned MCVH program in obesity surgery, particularly as we were the first to perform this operation in our region and have completed over 200 laparoscopic gastric bypass operations to date," said Dr. DeMaria.

Moderated by Dr. Shanu Kothari, a Surgery/Laparoscopic Fellow, the one-hour teleconference demonstrated high quality video as well as excellent audio. According to Stryker Communications, the teleconference equipment manufacturer, "The MCVH teleconference produced the highest speed transmission and band width of any other broadcast that we know of to date." This kind of quality is crucial in order to provide adequate training and to demonstrate the surgeons' level of expertise. The dynamic quality of the transmission clearly indicates the health system's involvement in new technology,

education, and pioneering techniques.

"We were able to teach a large number of laparoscopic surgeons at an international meeting about our extensive experience with new laparoscopic gastric bypass procedures as well as our experience with over 2,600 obesity surgery patients. We emphasized the tremendous importance of overall management of severely obese patients, specifically long-term follow-up, treatment with multivitamins and minerals, and a dietitian's involvement in their care. We also taught the surgeons how to recognize and avoid complications and to be aggressive in their treatment," said Dr. Sugerman.

Laparoscopic gastric bypass surgery is a minimally invasive procedure that promotes weight loss by restricting food intake in severely obese patients. The laparoscopic technique uses a laparoscope - a surgical instrument with a light, inserted through tiny incisions and connected to a video camera - to allow the surgeons to see and do their work on a video screen. Gastric bypass surgery is a procedure in which the stomach is almost entirely sealed shut, leaving only a small pouch to receive food. The minimally invasive method involves smaller incisions, less pain, and quicker recovery. For more information on minimally invasive surgery, visit the website at www.lesspainsurgery.com.

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