

Interview

INTERVIEW WITH GYNECOLOGIST DR. LABIB RIACHI

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With a warm smile, Dr. Labib Riachi welcomed Spécial Magazine to the Levant Hospital in Beirut. Double American Board certified in Obstetrics and Gynecology and Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery, the current main goal of Dr. Riachi is to spread awareness about a topic he claims important: the benefits of minimal-invasive surgery and especially Robotics. The doctor assures that the future is all about robotics and artificial intelligence integration in the surgical field and urges the spread of its benefits across Lebanon and the Arab world. During the interview, a delegation of Jordanian doctors was visiting the hospital's robotic program to set up a new collaboration with the latter between the two countries. Dr. Riachi says "I don't want to hear about open surgery for everything that can be done for women in a minimally invasive way."



Who is Dr. Riachi?

Studying in the U.S. he occupied the position of Chief of Robotic Surgery and director of urogynecology as well as the chairman of obstetrics and gynecology at Trinitas regional medical center in New Jersey. In Lebanon, Dr. Labib was appointed as the chief of female pelvic medicine reconstructive surgery at

Moarbes Hospital in Beirut. He is also a teaching faculty at the School of Medicine at the Lebanese University. However, Dr. Riachi's job goes across the Arab world as he operates in UAE and Saudi Arabia and many other countries. Dr. Labib is a visiting consultant physician at the UAE Ministry of public health and prevention in charge of the gynecological robotic division.

He also gives teaching classes for doctors who want to work in robotic surgeries, no matter how long it takes, in Lebanon, and the United Arab Emirates so this knowledge would spread much faster in the region which will lead to more benefits for patients and their health overall.



Benefits of Robotic Surgeries

One of the many benefits of robotic surgery is that the scars will be minimal a maximum of 8 mm in diameter, thus less obvious cosmetically and less painful. With fewer wounds in mind, it is very important to note that robotic surgery is so precise that it leads to less bleeding than normal conventional operations. This fact will result in women leaving the hospital in around 12 hours instead of staying there for a few days. Not only that but also the machine, in Dr. Labib's case it's called Da Vinci, has a 10x magnification potential and 7 degrees of freedom allowing mobility of the robotic instruments arms similar if not better than someone hands., which makes the surgery more detail-oriented, precise as well as capable of identifying structures and manipulating them easier.

The tremor of a surgeon's s hand and fatigue are reduced tremendously leading to a safer approach in the hands of experienced surgeons. This credibility will lead to less pain and a faster recovery.

On another note, the benefits of robotic surgery go beyond just technical advantages. When women get out of normal conventional surgeries, especially those which cause a lot of pain via open large incisions, they will take medications to reduce the pain. These types of medications are known as drug controlled

substances. This pattern leads in many cases to addictions on these medications which is sadly a truth we witness today in Lebanon and many Arab countries.

This by itself is a preventable health disaster that affects many women across the world. The more people use robotics, the less pain they are in, the less medication they will use. In addition to the health benefits, the robotic surgeries have a major economic impact.

Nowadays women are considered an important working force in the community. The faster women heal, the earlier they would go back to their working life normally. The recovery break some women take can affect their jobs in a negative way. Distance also is not a problem when it comes to these types of surgeries since communication can be done across oceans. The benefits of robotics are that it can be done through long distances but with high accuracy. For instance, a surgeon from Marseille can operate on a patient in New Jersey. In the Levant hospital, you can communicate in the auditorium with people in the operating room doing robotic surgeries. Robotic surgeries make recovery easier and more comfortable for patients.



Types of Robots

You have three types of robots: the active robots which work autonomously and undertake pre-programmed tasks, semi-active robots that use the surgeon to complement pre-programmed tasks, and the master-slave robots, used currently in the Levant, which are entirely dependent on the surgeon's activity. IRCAD which is a teaching institution in Europe collaborates with the Levant hospital and the outcome was the arrival of the newest robotic machine in Lebanon, DaVinci Xi system. Da Vinci and Senhance (another robotic company) are the only two approved companies worldwide. Dr. Labib concludes that "In the next 20 years, robotic surgery and artificial intelligence are going to have a leap in every surgery whether in subspecialties or others, and many companies worldwide are competing to

come up with new and improved surgical robotic systems”.

Tags

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