

Rising eye injury rates seen with robotic prostate surgery

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Patient position during procedure or other unknown cause may lead to scratches on cornea.

(HealthDay)—The number of eye injuries associated with robotic-assisted radical prostatectomy—complete removal of the prostate—increased nearly tenfold in the United States between 2000 and 2009, although the risk was still small, a new study finds.

During that time, the incidence rate of [eye injuries](#) rose from 0.07 percent to 0.42 percent, according to the review of more than 136,000 such procedures. Most of the injuries involved corneal abrasion, or scratching of the eye surface.

While undergoing robotic-assisted [radical prostatectomy](#), patients are positioned head-down and are at risk for facial swelling, arm injuries, as

well as corneal or other eye injuries, the researchers explained.

Possible causes of eye injuries during robotic-assisted radical prostatectomy include the long duration of surgery, patient positioning or something associated with the robot itself, said Dr. Ajay Sapat and colleagues at the University of Chicago.

The study was scheduled for presentation Tuesday at the annual meeting of the American Society of Anesthesiologists in Washington, D.C.

Robotic-assisted radical prostatectomy was approved for use in the United States in 2000, and is increasingly used to remove prostate cancer because it is minimally invasive, leading to shorter hospital stays, lower infection rates and less need for [pain medications](#) after surgery, the study authors noted in a news release from the society.

The procedure was used in less than 10 percent of prostate cancer surgeries in 2000, and increased to between 50 percent and 80 percent of all such operations in 2008.

"It is important for patients who are considering a robotic operation to discuss these concerns with their [health care providers](#) to consider the risks and benefits of all options," Sapat said in the news release. "And physicians caring for patients undergoing [robotic-assisted radical [prostatectomy](#)] should be more watchful of these potential injuries and take the necessary steps to help prevent them."

Research presented at medical meetings should be viewed as preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed journal.

More information: The American Cancer Society has more about [prostate cancer surgery](#).

[Abstract](#)

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