

Since the arrival of a robotic system in 2006 in our hospital, we realised that this was the opportunity for us to introduce minimally invasive approach in our Division of Thoracic Surgery. In fact as commonly happened at that time, many cancer centers were skeptic about the introduction of videothoroscopic major lung resections mainly due to doubts to obtain satisfactory radical lymph node dissection. Besides, lateral muscle sparing thoracotomy that we commonly used at that time, represented already a soft approach to the chest compared to the traditional posterolateral one. Robotic approach, already adopted by few centers in Italy for prostatectomy at that time, was considered the ideal tool to guarantee extended and radical dissections in early stage lung cancer patients. Meanwhile, Bernard Park of the MSKCC (Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Centers) had just published its series of 34 lung cancer patients treated with robotic approach, paving the way for the other cancer centers.

The main motivation to start a minimally invasive program in our division came from the experience with lung cancer screening program that has revolutioned the history of cancer patients thanks to the detection of very initial tumors in a large number of asymptomatic high risk individuals.

Since that period robotic surgery has developed and diffused rapidly worldwide at the point that a recent analysis reports that 15% of lobectomies in US are nowadays performed with robotic approach.

I'm happily surprised to see that in Chinese big hospitals, like the Ruijin one, embraced systemically this technique and reached outstanding results and experience.

One of the main critic point today is to find the right and efficient way to teach this procedure to residents and young thoracic surgeons and create the adequate route to avoid the risks related to learning curve in particular in a phase in which the number of robotic procedures is expected to increase further as new devices are going to enter the market and costs hopefully decreased. The scientific societies will propose soon standardised curriculum with the most up to date educational content and simulation systems to facilitate and standardise the educational process. A process that will be conducted in strict collaboration with the manufacturers companies.

This textbook contains the description of the most common robotic thoracic techniques with different point of views by recognized experts at the end of each chapter, representing an innovative and useful way to present and illustrate technical aspects of thoracic surgery to novices in the field and offering in the mean time a critical approach.

With great honor I contribute to the edition of this text that as well as being a witness to the advanced technique developed by Ruijin's colleagues, is an extremely useful manual for young and/or senior open surgeons who want to approach robotic surgery of the chest.

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