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Laparoscopic colon surgery

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Authors

Stamos, Michael J
Jafari, Mehraneh Dorna

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Minimally invasive approaches to general surgical procedures became popularized over the decade following its introduction by Erich Mühe in 1982. It is now universally accepted that laparoscopy is associated with decreased post-operative pain and length of stay. The improved short term outcomes in conjunction with the advent of new technology have led many surgeons to adopt this as their preferred approach. However, the utilization of laparoscopy continues to be less than 50% of case in the United States in the field of colon and rectal surgery. This is despite large randomized studies showing similar oncological outcomes compared to standard open techniques. It has been hypothesized that the steep learning curve for laparoscopic colectomy may be the reason for the slow adoption. However, in the era in which laparoscopy is the mainstay of general surgery, we hypothesize that the number of colectomies performed via this approach will continue to increase. The key to adoption is to learn a safe technique from expert surgeons. This issue aims to bring forth technical aspects of colectomies from an expert set of surgeons. It also provides further material on the use of “more complete” minimally invasive techniques such as intracorporeal anastomosis to further our strides to improve surgical care in the coming years.

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Michael J. Stamos



Mehraneh Dorna Jafari

Michael J. Stamos, MD, FACS, FASCRS

Dean, School of Medicine, University of California Irvine, Irvine, CA, USA.

(Email: mstamos@uci.edu)

Mehraneh Dorna Jafari, MD, FACS, FASCRS

Department of Surgery, University of California Irvine, Irvine, CA, USA.

(Email: jafarim@uci.edu)

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