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Indication for robotic simple prostatectomy

Robotic Simple Prostatectomy (RSP) is a minimally invasive surgical procedure used to treat severe benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), particularly when the prostate is significantly enlarged (typically ≥80 grams) and other treatments have failed or are not suitable. Symptoms that may improve after RSP include:

- Difficulty starting urination
- Weak urine flow or stopping and starting
- Frequent urination, especially at night
- Sudden urge to urinate
- Inability to completely empty the bladder

Alternatives

Several alternatives to RSP are available:

- **Transurethral Resection of the Prostate (TURP)**: Removal of prostate tissue using a resectoscope through the urethra.
- **Holmium Laser Enucleation of the Prostate (HoLEP)**: Uses a laser to remove obstructive prostate tissue.
- **Prostatic Urethral Lift (PUL) Implants**: Inserts implants to hold the enlarged prostate away from the urethra.
- **Greenlight Laser Therapy**: Uses a laser to vaporize excess prostate tissue.
- **Prostate Artery Embolization (PAE)**: Reduces blood supply to the prostate to shrink it.
- **Open Simple Prostatectomy (OSP)**: Traditional surgery involving a larger abdominal incision to remove prostate tissue.

Expected Perioperative Care and Stay

- **Preoperative**: You may need to stop certain medications and fast for a specific period before surgery. Preoperative tests and evaluations will be conducted.
- **During Surgery**: The procedure is performed under general anesthesia. Small incisions are made in the abdomen, and robotic instruments are used to remove the enlarged prostate tissue.

- **Postoperative**: You will stay in the hospital for 1-2 days. A catheter will be placed to help drain urine and will typically be removed within a week. A drain may also be placed in the abdomen temporarily.

Postoperative Effects

- **Short-term**: It is normal to experience some blood in the urine, mild pain or discomfort, and urinary frequency or urgency for a few weeks. Pain can be managed with prescribed medications.
- **Long-term**: Most men recover fully within a few weeks and experience significant improvement in urinary symptoms. You will be advised to avoid heavy lifting and strenuous activities for a few weeks.

Side Effects and Risks

- **Common Side Effects**:
    - Mild pain or discomfort in the pelvis
    - Blood in the urine
    - Burning sensation during urination
    - Frequent and urgent need to urinate
    - Temporary difficulty in emptying the bladder
- **Infection**: There is a risk of urinary tract infections (UTIs) which can be treated with antibiotics.
- **Urinary Incontinence**: Temporary loss of bladder control, which usually resolves within weeks.
- **Erectile Dysfunction**: Some men may experience temporary or permanent difficulty achieving or maintaining an erection.
- **Blood Clots**: Risk of developing blood clots in the legs or lungs.
- **Bleeding**: There is a risk of significant bleeding, which may require a blood transfusion.
- **Stricture**: Narrowing of the urethra due to scarring, which may require further treatment.
- **Urine Leak**: Leakage of urine from the bladder, which may require additional interventions.
- **Adjacent Tissue Damage**: Potential damage to surrounding tissues or organs.

Main Advantages of Robotic Simple Prostatectomy Over Traditional Methods

Robotic Simple Prostatectomy (RSP) offers several significant advantages over traditional open simple prostatectomy (OSP) and other surgical methods for treating benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). Here are the main benefits:

1. Less Invasive Procedure

- **Smaller Incisions**: RSP is performed using small keyhole incisions rather than a large abdominal incision, leading to less trauma to the body.

- **Reduced Scarring**: The smaller incisions result in less visible scarring compared to the larger incision required for OSP.

2. Reduced Blood Loss and Transfusion Rates

- **Lower Blood Loss**: RSP is associated with significantly lower intraoperative blood loss compared to OSP, reducing the need for blood transfusions.
- **Better Visualization**: The robotic system provides enhanced visualization, allowing for more precise dissection and minimizing bleeding.

3. Shorter Hospital Stay and Faster Recovery

- **Shorter Hospital Stay**: Patients undergoing RSP typically have a shorter hospital stay compared to those undergoing OSP. The average hospital stay for RSP is about 1-2 days, compared to 3-5 days for OSP.
- **Faster Recovery**: The minimally invasive nature of RSP allows for a quicker return to normal activities and a shorter overall recovery time.

4. Lower Risk of Complications

- **Reduced Risk of Infections**: Smaller incisions and less tissue trauma result in a lower risk of postoperative infections.
- **Less Postoperative Pain**: Patients generally experience less pain after RSP compared to OSP, leading to a reduced need for pain medication.
- **Lower Risk of Urethral Injury**: Since RSP is not performed through the urethra, the risk of urethral injury or stricture is lower than with transurethral procedures.

5. Improved Functional Outcomes

- **Better Urinary Function**: RSP offers quality-of-life advantages for urinary function, with a lower incidence of postoperative complications such as urinary incontinence and bladder neck contracture.
- **Preservation of Sexual Function**: The precise nature of the robotic approach helps in preserving the nerve structures responsible for erectile function, potentially reducing the risk of erectile dysfunction.

6. Enhanced Surgical Precision

- **Advanced Robotic Technology**: The use of the da Vinci Surgical System provides surgeons with enhanced dexterity, precision, and control. The 3D high-definition visualization allows for better identification and preservation of critical structures.
- **Short Learning Curve**: Surgeons experienced in robotic surgery can quickly adapt to performing RSP, making it a viable option for many patients.

Conclusion

Robotic Simple Prostatectomy is a modern, minimally invasive procedure offering significant relief from urinary symptoms caused by an enlarged prostate. While there are potential risks and side effects, most men experience substantial improvement in their symptoms and quality of life.