2012

Reflection: A Long Lasting Birthday Present

Charles J. Yeo, MD, FACS
Thomas Jefferson University

Follow this and additional works at: https://jdc.jefferson.edu/jss
Let us know how access to this document benefits you

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://jdc.jefferson.edu/jss/vol7/iss2/3

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Jefferson Digital Commons. The Jefferson Digital Commons is a service of Thomas Jefferson University's Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). The Commons is a showcase for Jefferson books and journals, peer-reviewed scholarly publications, unique historical collections from the University archives, and teaching tools. The Jefferson Digital Commons allows researchers and interested readers anywhere in the world to learn about and keep up to date with Jefferson scholarship. This article has been accepted for inclusion in Jefferson Surgical Solutions by an authorized administrator of the Jefferson Digital Commons. For more information, please contact: JeffersonDigitalCommons@jefferson.edu.
Reflection: A Long Lasting Birthday Present

I wrote a check this week. I do it yearly; this time, $169, for my annual subscription renewal to the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM). Writing this check reminds me of my dad… he started me on this tradition.

During the autumn of my senior year in medical school I was approaching my 25th birthday (1978) and my father asked if there was anything I “needed” for my birthday. My initial list was met with his comment that I really could use a subscription to the NEJM. After he heard my rationale, he exclaimed, “With today’s minimally invasive techniques, there’s no need to take the ‘wait and see’ approach.”

“Twenty years ago, mitral valve replacement was really the last and only resort,” explains Jefferson’s Gurjyot Bajwa, MD. “With today’s minimally invasive techniques, there’s no need to take the ‘wait-and-see’ approach, as we know the progression leads to deterioration of cardiac function.”

Indeed, minimally invasive mitral valve repair has become the standard of care – and in September 2011, Dr. Bajwa was the first surgeon in Philadelphia to perform a robotic mitral valve repair. One year later she has performed over 25 of the procedures.

“Most people don’t have the option of taking three months off of work or life,” Dr. Bajwa says, adding that patients also prefer to avoid large, unsightly scars. By using the minimally invasive robotic procedure to perform the mitral valve repair, patients are typically discharged from the hospital in just three or four days. Most are able to resume normal activities within two weeks – with no restrictions on driving because the sternum (breastbone) is untouched.

In September 2011, fellowship-trained robotic surgeon Dr. Gurjyot Bajwa became the first surgeon in Philadelphia to perform a robotic mitral valve repair. One year later she has performed over 25 of the procedures.

“Most people don’t have the option of taking three months off of work or life,” Dr. Bajwa says, adding that patients also prefer to avoid large, unsightly scars. By using the minimally invasive robotic procedure to perform the mitral valve repair, patients are typically discharged from the hospital in just three or four days. Most are able to resume normal activities within two weeks – with no restrictions on driving because the sternum (breastbone) is untouched.

Dr. Bajwa urges patients with mitral valve prolapse to obtain a surgical evaluation: “If you have mitral valve prolapse, please don’t wait for your heart to deteriorate,” Dr. Bajwa advises. “Come in when you’re diagnosed or as you’re progressing but before you have symptoms. That’s how you can enjoy the best quality of life.”

For more information about robotic cardiac surgery at Jefferson visit: www.jeffersonhospital.org/cardiothoracic

Yeo, MD, FACS: Reflection: A Long Lasting Birthday Present