



Doctors Using Robot To See Patients

With the help of a high technology telemedicine robot, Edward Morris is getting a visit from his cardiologist. The 5-foot-tall medical worker uses a computer screen for a head and real time video cameras for eyes and ears so doctors and patients can communicate with each other from different locations.

Cardiologist Dr. Samer Salka said that when he's at home, the robot is a convenient and fast way to check on his patients when necessary. "Make good medical decisions faster for better patient care and expedite their care as well," Salka said. Each robot is controlled by a joystick and uses wireless broadband technology and the Internet to communicate with the doctor's computer. The robot also allows doctors to get immediate updates on important tests such as X-rays and EKGs.

So what do patients think of this medical helper? "It was different and not like anything I expected," Morris said.

Currently the following medical facilities are using the robot:

- UC Davis Medical Center, Sacramento, Calif.
- Mission Hospital, Mission Viejo, Calif.
- Sentara Norfolk General Hospital, Norfolk, Va.
- University of California, Los Angeles
- Johns Hopkins, Baltimore, Md.
- Hackensack University Medical Center, N.J.
- University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston, Texas

Salka expects to see more in the near future. As a safety mechanism, there are 24 infrared sensors on the robot to help prevent it from bumping into people and walls as it makes its rounds visiting patients throughout the hospital.

For more information on the robot, check the In Touch - Health Web site at www.intouchhealth.com.