

Dear Friends,

More than a century has gone by since the first radical removal of the uterine viscera. It has been a century characterized by a first phase during which surgeons were striving to improve the surgical technique, and a second phase dedicated to the reduction of the possible complications as well as improvement of the prognosis.

During the first phase, skilled surgeons, such as Wertheim, Latzko, Okabayashi, and Mengis tried in turn to define step by step the timing of the radical abdominal hysterectomy. Thanks to their work, younger generations of surgeons have been learning a surgical technique where anatomy plays a fundamental role, since only a precise and extensive knowledge of the pelvic spaces and connective pillars will enable the surgical procedure to be carried out accurately.

Another 50 years have gone by trying to find the right balance as regards radicality, prognosis, and quality of life thanks to the new scientific knowledge and to the upcoming technologies, leading to the concepts of modulation of radicality, nerve-sparing and the use of laparoscopy. Nowadays we adapt the surgical procedure to the diseases characteristics and we know the relation between resections of the pelvic nerve structures, and the consequent urological, rectal, and sexual complications. We therefore, know how to radically dissect pericervical tissues, thereby reducing the complications that can so greatly influence our patients' quality of life.

This educational video has its roots in such a cognitive context. For a number of years, we have experienced some difficulties when teaching this type of surgery. Although the laparotomic approach allows a good view of the field, the surgical steps are sometimes difficult to understand, even though texts and diagrams have often been of great help. The ureteral tunnel, the treatment of the posterior and anterior vesico-uterine ligament, the topography of the pelvic nerves have always been difficult topics to explain to our students. We spent many hours in the OR observing our teachers in order to perceive and capture barely glimpsed images, images from unclear videos, because they were obscured and confused by surgeons' hands and heads, or close-ups which were blurred and unsteady.

Nowadays, robot-assisted laparoscopic surgery allows us to obtain steady images as well as the desired visual amplification. This is why robot-assisted surgery is a more effective way of learning how to perform surgical procedures and also teaching both anatomy and the techniques of certain types of surgery. This video is an educational tool designed to teach young surgeons how to perform a nerve sparing radical hysterectomy. We wished to apply robotic technology to describe Okabayashi's surgical procedure with the application of the nerve sparing technique as designed by Shingo Fujii. We have followed his surgical diagrams and have translated them into concrete surgical images. Every single step finds its anatomo-surgical interpretation. Students will easily be able to mentally fix the anatomic layout, understand it, ponder on it, and then observe it in action. Each and every surgical step has been thoroughly described according to the lessons of our past and present teachers, though with a closer vision, based on the evolution of the image and the computerization.

This is an educational video not only important for those performing minimally invasive surgery, but also for those who are willing to follow steps when performing traditional laparotomic surgery.

I would like to express my sincerest thanks to Shingo Fujii for the educational material he has provided us with, for his teaching, and for being the successor and the interpreter of a great school of radical pelvic surgery.


Angelo Maggioni,
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Dear Colleagues,

ESGO supports initiatives in postgraduate education in gynaecological oncology in Europe and has endorsed the publication of this DVD which is offered to ESGO members. Although robotic surgery may be currently beyond the financial reach of many European Centres, the ESGO Council agreed that this DVD features an excellent demonstration of robotic surgery at early stage cervical cancer and contributes to increase knowledge of the anatomy of the small pelvis. ESGO is extremely grateful to the authors from the European Institute of Oncology, Milano, for their work in producing this DVD and for providing it to ESGO membership.

Ate GJ van der Zee
ESGO President

Robot-Assisted Laparoscopic Nerve Sparing
Okabayashi's Radical Hysterectomy according to
Shingo Fujii's Technique



EDUCATIONAL VIDEO

Robot-assisted laparoscopic surgery is a new surgical technique to perform minimally invasive hysterectomy and pelvic lymphadenectomy. This video demonstrates the effectiveness of robot-assisted laparoscopic hysterectomy and pelvic lymphadenectomy.

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