

Studies Evaluate Micro-Incision Surgery for Removal of Advanced and Complex Kidney Cancers

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Surgeons at the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine continue to advance minimally-invasive surgery for cancer patients by reducing the number of abdominal incisions from approximately six to a single small incision.

For the first time in medical literature, two recent reports from UCSD's Department of Surgery document that micro-incision or Laparo-Endoscopic Single-Site Surgery (LESS) is safe and feasible for partial and total kidney removal and to excise life-threatening tumors and blood clots from the main kidney vein.

"For advanced as well as localized kidney cancer, our surgical team has been able to reduce and consolidate the number of incisions to one port hidden in the belly button," said Ithaar H. Derweesh, MD, associate professor of surgery, Division of Urology at UC San Diego Health System and Moores UCSD Cancer Center. "With one small opening to deploy instruments and remove diseased tissue, patients benefit from fewer complications, minimal opiate-requirements, preserved quality of life, and excellent short term outcomes."

Derweesh emphasized that the studies involved a small number of patients and that larger studies are needed. Results from these pilot studies were recently published by *BioMed Central Urology* and *Diagnostic and Therapeutic Endoscopy*.

"What we are seeing is that techniques such as LESS are more technically rigorous for the surgeon but infinitely better for patients," said Derweesh, a member of the Center for the Future of Surgery at UC San Diego. "As our experience grows with single port laparoscopy, we are committed to perfecting the operating tools and training new surgeons in these emerging techniques."

The surgeon-scientists of UC San Diego Health System have pioneered both scarless and single-incision surgery. As part of research conducted by the UCSD Center for the Future of Surgery, the Center's surgeons were the first in the United States to perform an oral appendix removal. Less incisions result in a more rapid recovery and reduced pain.

The incidence of renal cell carcinoma is increasing worldwide. In the United States, kidney cancer is the most lethal of the commonly diagnosed urologic malignancies, diagnosed in more than 55,000 Americans every year. According to the American Cancer Society, kidney cancer is increasing at a rate of two to three percent each year in the U.S.

Established in 1965, the Department of Surgery at UC San Diego Health System represents more than 100 leading surgeons with specialties in open, minimally invasive, and scarless surgery techniques. The Department is committed to advancing surgical education by teaching and training the next generation of innovators; researching, testing and developing groundbreaking surgical techniques; providing superior patient care and service; and attracting a world-class faculty.

The Moores UCSD Cancer Center is one of the nation's 40 National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Centers, combining research, clinical care and community outreach to advance the prevention, treatment and cure of cancer.

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