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November 3, 2023

Dear Editor,

As leaders of the American Hernia Society, our board members are disturbed by the imbalanced portrayal of hernia surgeons performing advanced techniques in the NYT article [How a Lucrative Surgery Took Off Online and Disfigured Patients](#) published 10/30/23.

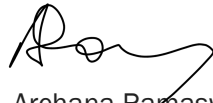
Components separation has increased in use over many years due to the improved outcomes in patients with complex ventral hernias. Robotics is a tool which has allowed all areas of surgery to increase the utilization of minimally invasive techniques. Specifically for components separation, peer-reviewed publications continue to demonstrate that robotics has lower rates of complications, shorter recovery time and a lower cost of care.

Unfortunately, complications do occur in all areas of medicine. Complications occur within this complex population of patients with ventral hernias, regardless of the surgical technique utilized. As individual surgeons, and as a surgical society, we are continuously studying surgical outcomes and complications and identifying strategies to decrease them.

Surgeons are not using online videos as a sole learning tool. In addition to years of medical school and residency training, there are many available resources to safely learn new procedures. American Hernia Society provides vetted educational tools including hands-on training courses and ongoing mentorship by experts in the field.

The article would have benefited from diverse patient and surgeon perspectives. Many of our leaders, experts in open and robotic surgery, were interviewed about their experiences and outcomes. We find it curious that none of these were included as they directly challenged the narrative which was eventually published. As a society, we will continue to adhere to our values: advancing the science and treatment of hernia and promoting the highest standards of professional skill and competence among abdominal wall surgeons.

Kind regards,



Archana Ramaswamy MD, MBA, FACS

American Hernia Society President

On behalf of AHS Board Members