

Surgeons Perform Advanced Laparoscopic Procedure at Trinitas

Dr. Joao A. Lopes, a surgeon associated with Trinitas Regional Medical Center and a partner in Advanced Surgical Associates in Springfield, recently performed the first single incision laparoscopic surgery of this kind at Trinitas. The gall bladder removal, or cholecystectomy, was the first of its kind at Trinitas using the next generation Single Incision Laparoscopic Surgery (SILS) procedure. The surgery was done in about 30 minutes, or half the time of traditional laparoscopic surgery done with the usual four incisions. The access point for the surgery is the umbilicus or belly button which results in the potential for no visible scarring.

Single Incision Laparoscopic Surgery, is a dramatic improvement in laparoscopic surgery. For those undergoing gall bladder surgery this is particularly significant since the single incision, done through the navel, is barely noticeable. In addition to the much-desired cosmetic benefit, patients experience less pain and enjoy a shorter recovery time.

“Trinitas is at the forefront of these technological advances — advances in which nearly all hospitals in New Jersey are lagging,” notes Dr. Lopes who adds, “Single incision procedures require a higher level of skill since the surgeon’s hands work much closer together while performing the procedure. Only about five percent of surgeons are currently trained in this advanced procedure.”

Approximately 500,000 procedures are performed each year in the



Video monitors help guide surgeons James Frost and Joao Lopes as they perform the intricate surgery. Operating Room nurse Olga McGruder appears in the foreground.



Dr. Joao A. Lopes

US to remove the gallbladder, a small pear-shaped organ located in the upper abdomen beneath the liver that stores bile that helps break down fat. Stones can sometimes develop in the gallbladder which can then cause inflammation and infection in the organ. Dr. Lopes continues, “The SILS is well suited to gallbladder surgery, one of the most commonly performed surgeries, since the incision can be done through the navel, making the resulting scar barely noticeable.”

With the success of this first SILS done for the removal of a gall bladder, Dr. Lopes anticipates that the new procedure will become the preferred surgical technique for both surgeons and patients for appendectomies, gastric lap band bariatric procedures, and general surgery.

“The highly skilled and experienced members of the operating room team, nurses Olga McGruder, Mari Cor Ancheta, and Avi Yarmove, nurse anesthetist, were a tremendous asset during the surgery. We knew we could count on them every step of the way,” notes Dr. Lopes.



The SILS procedure requires a high degree of skill and expertise as evidenced by the concentration visible in the eyes of Drs. Lopes and Frost.