



It's hi-tech healing

Robotic surgical technique has Strathmore father back on his feet after cancer scare

Health | Baria Bol

A STRATHMORE man who beat prostate cancer was one of the first Victorians to be operated on by a robotic surgical system.

John Manca, 45, said his life turned upside down when he was diagnosed with prostate cancer in April last year.

But he was given renewed hope when he was told about a new addition to the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre's surgery unit.

"I was diagnosed with prostate cancer after five biopsies and I can recount every footstep from that moment on," Mr Manca said.

"Not knowing what was in store was what really had me.

"I realised how important my family was and I had to put my head up, keep it up and beat it."

Mr Manca was referred to the Peter Mac Cancer Centre through the public system and was the second patient to be operated on by the da Vinci S HD surgical system in August last year.

"I'll avoid even an injection at all costs, so you can imagine how daunting being operated on by a robot was for me at the beginning," Mr Manca said.

"But my family and I did some research on the robot and it sounded amazing."

The \$3 million robot is a surgeon-operated tool that performs complex key-hole surgical procedures, positioned over the patient's abdomen, deploying a telescope and instrument deep in to the body.

"I was told that there was less blood loss and the recovery rate was a lot quicker compared to the conventional method of removing prostate cancer," Mr Manca said.

"I walked out on my feet the very next day and got straight back into beach volleyball in less than seven weeks. As a result, I'm all for technology in the medical industry, bring it on."

Peter Mac's associate Professor and director of robotic surgery Declan Murphy said the robot "holds great promise for the future treatment for many cancer patients".

Mr Manca has been cleared of cancer since his surgery and he continues to serve winning points on the volleyball court at Vic Beach Club in Altona.

Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre has performed 37 robotic surgeries since Mr Manca's treatment.



John Manca, at home with wife Kathryn and daughters Lauren and Olivia, has been given a new lease of life by the da Vinci S HD surgical system (below). Picture: TONY GOUGH

