



RAWALPINDI: For the first time in Pakistan, an interactive surgery was broadcast over the internet to help educate surgeons and surgical students from various medical colleges and hospitals across the country.

The workshop on “Advanced Upper GI Laparoscopic Surgery” was broadcast live on Saturday from Holy Family Hospital through videoconferencing facilities provided by the Higher Education Commission (HEC).

Doctors, consultants, trainee students from various medical colleges and hospitals attended the workshop. This is the first time in the history of the country an interactive surgery has been relayed over a high speed network across the country.

The workshop comprised live demonstration of different laparoscopic procedures, including minimally invasive laparoscopic oesophagectomy, laparoscopic surgery for hiatus hernia, and single port laparoscopic surgery procedures like cholecystectomy and appendicectomy. A minimally invasive does not require an incision and thus does not require any significant recovery.

The procedures were demonstrated live from Holy Family Hospital Telemedicine Centre’s operating theatres in Rawalpindi.

HEC Chairperson Dr Javaid Laghari informed the audience that 75 universities across the country are connected through videoconferencing facilities. “The HEC has strengthened physical and technological infrastructure in universities. How they make use of these facilities is up to them. Video conferencing may be used for guest lectures, national and international seminars and conferences. Universities may even offer joint courses through this facility,” he said.

Dr Asif Zafar Malik, Professor of Surgery at Rawalpindi Medical College and MIS Director of Virtual Training Laboratory and Telemedicine and e-Health Training Centre of Holy Family, was

the workshop organiser. Dr Amir Nisar, Consultant Surgeon at Maidstone Hospital and Director of International Minimal Access Surgery Centre KENT, UK, was the international resource person.

The webcast was made possible through the Pakistan Education and Research Network (PERN) 2, which connects different universities across the country. The network has its own nationwide gigabit network that is suitable for relaying interactive surgeries and telemedicine workshops.

PERN is a specialised internet service provider primarily dedicated to supporting the needs of the research and education communities. It is a high-speed backbone network, often offering dedicated channels for individual research projects.

*By APP*

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