

*Hospitals have spent tens of billions of dong to buy expensive medical equipment, but have not made adequate investment in human resources to use the machines in an effective way.*



*Hospitals spend big money to buy expensive medical equipment*

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Able to access different sources of capital, healthcare facilities now have opportunities to equip themselves with advanced technologies and modern equipment, including robots, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and respirators.

Binh Dan Hospital in late 2016 bought a Da Vinci robotic surgery system made in the US at VND71 billion with a preferential loan from HCMC authorities. Cho Ray Hospital also bought the same system last month.

A report of Binh Dan Hospital showed that 231 surgery cases with robots had been implemented there by the end of October. To be able to use robots, 14 teams of surgeons have been sent abroad to training courses and recognized as meeting international standards.

With its superior features, the robotic arm can be easily manipulated to help surgeons reach the most difficult positions of the body. Many hospitals want to buy this surgical laparoscopic surgical system, although the medical equipment is very expensive and the cost of robotic surgery may be 5-10 times higher than normal surgery.

Truong Hung, deputy chair of the HCMC Medical Equipment Association, commented that hospitals are now willing to spend tens of billions of dong on medical equipment. However, they don't have a qualified workforce to take full use of the modern equipment.

"There are very expensive respirators and disease monitoring machines with many different functions being used at hospitals. However, medical workers can use only some of the functions because they have not received training on how to use the functions," he said.

Vo Xuan Son, director of Exson Clinic, commented that modern medical equipment is essential, but said reasonable investments need to ensure that the equipment can bring optimal efficiency.

He said not all hospitals in developed countries spend money on robots and not all surgeons support surgery with robots.

According to Son, the number of patients who need surgery with robots every year is not high and the cost of VND100 million for every operation is unaffordable for most people.

Other experts also believe that if hospitals' budgets remain limited, it would be better to spend money on other items than expensive equipment.

Many hospitals only focus on investing in modern machinery and equipment, but underestimate infection control work.

At a recent workshop on infection control, Hoang Van Thanh from the Ministry of Health said many people die every year because of infections at hospitals. Infection control systems have been established in most hospitals, but have not been properly monitored.

*Source: VietNamNet*