



Media Release

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New surgery means prolapse success

The Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, is leading the world with a new, non-invasive surgical method of correcting vaginal prolapse.

Dr Marcus Carey Head of Uro-Gynaecology at the Women's, has invented a procedure that uses a unique adjustable silicon device to support mesh after it is surgically implanted to repair a prolapsed vagina.

The world-leading surgeon had become frustrated with the unacceptably high failure rate of conventional procedures. "I saw a huge, unmet need for women needing this surgery, which currently has a high fail rate," Dr Carey explained.

"Traditional surgical techniques for this operation had been around for about 100 years. One in nine women have surgery for a prolapsed vagina and about 22,000 women in Australia undergo surgery for prolapse each year.

"When you consider that the average age of the patient is 55, and women in Australia live to an average age of almost 85, there is a need for a surgical repair capable of lasting for 30 years," he said.

As well as being durable, Dr Carey's surgical method is also less invasive. The reinforcing polypropylene mesh is inserted through the vagina, with no need for abdominal incisions. At the completion of surgery, the vaginal support device is inserted into the vagina where it supports the healing tissues for three weeks until tissue ingrowth into the mesh has occurred, and it has assimilated with the surround tissues. It is then removed very easily.

The surgery has been trialled so far on 136 women at eleven centres internationally with an 88 per cent success rate – almost 15 per cent more successful than the current 'gold standard' prolapse operation that also uses mesh – but without the support device. Current surgical methods are also more surgically invasive because they are performed through an abdominal incision.

Dr Carey believes his prolapse repair method, which is available as a complete surgical kit, could be used by sub-specialist or general gynaecological surgeons, and would also be suitable in developing countries or remote areas. Dr Carey invented the new procedure, including the unique vaginal support device, with US company, Ethicon.

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