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**LAPAROSCOPIC EXPERIENCE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF HEIDELBERG
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1990-2001**

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The laparoscopic techniques performed in the urologic setting have received great attention in Germany. The introduction and application of laparoscopy succeeded also in the Heidelberg University in the past decade. Especially, with the development of improved laparoscopic instrumentation new approaches to adrenal, renal, prostate, and bladder diseases have been successfully developed.

This development in the Heidelberg University Hospital Department of Urology was typical of initial hardships usually encountered, whenever completely new techniques are introduced and implemented.

The urologists needed additional training and support to improve their surgical skills. The learning curve was very important for them to become good surgeons in laparoscopic procedures.

Finally, several laparoscopic urologic procedures became routinely performed in the Heidelberg University Hospital Department of Urology in selected patients: laparoscopic donor nephrectomy for transplantation, radical nephrectomy for the treatment of the renal cell cancer, nephropexy, laparoscopic adrenalectomy, varicocele ligation, pelvic node dissection and radical prostatectomy for prostatic cancer. As surgical skills improved, the operating times diminished, the procedures became less expensive and comparable in cost to open surgery.

The advantages were less complications, shorter hospital stay, excellent cosmetic results, and shorter convalescence times for the patients.