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Robots to help reduce workplace injuries at UCSF Medical Center

By Katie Dvorak

February 2, 2015

Patients and doctors aren't the only ones who will be roaming the halls at the newly opened UCSF Medical Center at Mission Bay in San Francisco--a fleet of 25 robots will carry blood samples, food, medication and more around the facility.

The robots are meant to lessen the number of workplace injuries, according to anarticle at *CIO.com*. Because of strenuous tasks, like lifting hundreds of pounds of bed sheets, hospitals have a higher average of workforce injuries than the private sector, according to the article.

Healthcare workers had the highest injury rates of almost any industry in the country in 2011, costing the industry $13.1 billion and more than 2 million lost workdays, according to a report in the *American Society of Safety Engineers' Professional Safety* journal.

In addition to hauling supplies, the robots also can open doors, call elevators and roll around the hospital unguided.

"At UCSF Mission Bay, we have partnered with local and international innovators to build leading-edge, patient-facing technology that empowers our families for their health," Seth Bokser, UCSF Medical Center's clinical informaticist and medical director of IT, tells *CIO.com*.

Robots increasingly are being used in healthcare settings to deliver better care.Researchers can successfully perform imaging exams using robotic arms controlled remotely via the Internet, according to two papers published in the August issue of *JACC: Cardiovascular Imaging*.

However, some question the benefits of using robots for procedures like surgery--they may not be the most effective surgical tools, according research from Columbia University. At the same time, the market for robot technology is expected to reach nearly $3.8 billion by 2018, according to a 2014 report from MarketsandMarkets.

To learn more:
- read the *CIO.com* article

http://www.fiercehealthit.com/story/robots-reduce-workplace-injuries-ucsf-medical-center/2015-02-02