

Increased use of
technology is a
blessing and a curse



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

I think that this statement is true. Modern surgery has both its good points and its bad points. However, I think that the good points outweigh the bad points.

Surgery and medicine has come a long way since prehistoric times. Indeed, even when compared to standards of the Renaissance, the improvements are remarkable. New discoveries in the last few centuries, mainly in anaesthetics and antiseptics, have ensured that complicated surgery can be carried out, with a very high chance of the patient surviving. People can now have heart transplants, kidney transplants, lung transplants etc. Almost any organ in the body can now be transplanted. In fact, some people have even had arm or leg transplants!

This can lead to problems. In the future, there may be cases where people are walking around with two different arms from two different people, the same for the legs, with someone else's heart and lungs. They will be a living model of Frankenstein's monster. This may sound funny, but it is not. I think that it is fine for doctors to perform transplants if the person desperately needs it, but I think that soon, the doctors will start to go too far. They must find some other way of dealing with the problem.

Another major problem with modern surgery is the cost. In 1948 the NHS was set up. This institution aimed to provide all sorts of medical care for people which was free at the point of use. The idea behind the NHS was that health care would generally be cheaper. This is because at the time, lots of people were being vaccinated for different diseases. The logic was that if people were being vaccinated against the disease, they would not catch the

disease, therefore there will be less people in hospitals. This would reduce the cost of health care. All British citizens would pay for the cost of health care in the form of taxes.

That idea was a very good one. However, the people behind the idea did not consider the cost of new machinery. New machines are being invented all of the time, each one more expensive than the last. To be able to perform certain operations, hospitals need to purchase these machines. These machines may only be used a few times every year, but it is essential for the hospital to have them in case of an emergency. This means that the machines have to be maintained throughout the year, even if they are not being used. This takes money.

Year by year, health care costs are increasing. The maintenance of machines contributes to this increase, but the place where most of the money goes is on research. Machines and medicines are always being improved. This benefits the patient, but it also costs more.

Research has enabled modern surgery and technology to become more than just a dream. To be truthful, during the 20th century, not many real discoveries have been made. Scientists have always been looking for ways to improve previous discoveries or inventions. If improvements had not been made, operations would still be performed using Joseph Lister's carbolic spray. Now we have antiseptics which can be used both inside and outside the body, and which are safe for both doctors and patients. On a similar note, anaesthetics have come a long way. Once upon a time, an anaesthetic came in the form of a knock to the head. It solved the problem of killing the

pain while the operation was being performed, but afterwards you had a terrible headache! Although this research is for a good cause, it does cost money. Some people begrudge paying for improvements in health care. They may never need to make use of the technology, so they do not like the fact that they have to contribute towards the cost.

Lots of people use private health facilities, which are not now as expensive as they used to be. This is mainly because of the strain which is put on the National Health Service. If you use a private medical service, you will receive treatment quicker, and will receive privileges such as private rooms in hospitals.

Making medicine has gradually become more expensive, too. The materials from which the medicines are made are becoming harder to come by, so the cost increases. There are certain medicines which doctors are reluctant to prescribe because they cost too much to make. They will cure the illness, but the doctors would rather find an alternative remedy rather than spend so much on one medicine.

Generally, I think that modern technology is a good thing. It has enabled people to have operations which, a few decades ago, were not possible. Due to developments in antiseptics, anaesthetics and other medicines, there is a lower mortality rate after operations.

I would say that at the moment, there are only two main bad points - cost, and the danger of doctors taking things too far. At the minute, I am unaffected by the cost. Under the NHS, there are certain groups of people

who are given free treatment. These groups are people with low income, children under the age of 16, students and pensioners.

The second disadvantage is potentially very dangerous, I think. Doctors and scientists are performing lots of experiments to improve and invent new drugs. However, some drugs have alarming side effects. People don't know anything about these side effects until they read in the newspapers or see on TV that somebody has died from a new drug. Although the drug may be very successful at fighting disease, people will be wary of it because of the side effects. A good example of the side effects of drugs is given here: When you go to the doctor's for medicine for a cold, the doctor will give you antibiotics. How many colds do you have in a lifetime? Lots. The germs that cause colds soon become immune to the antibiotics. This means that the next time you get cold, it will not be so easy to cure, because the germs will be immune to the medicines, so doctors have to find new medicines which will kill the germs. The germs become super-germs. It takes a lot to kill them.

So, to sum everything up. I think that modern surgery and technology is a very good thing, but I would warn doctors against going too far. As long as they don't overdo things, I think that technology will continue to improve and benefit everyone.