

# Integrated Surgical Suites in Latin America

**Graham Russell, RN**

Many Latin American surgeons now demand *integrated surgical suites*. Surgery integration is best defined as the management of multiple audio signals, video signals, and displays. The images are used during planning prior to surgery or created during surgical procedures. In some cases images are transmitted to other facilities for consultation by other clinicians. Images are then digitally stored in the permanent medical record. Image quality, clarity and color are vital to optimal diagnosis, intervention and storage. In Latin America, medical equipment sales and service after the sale is often limited to a small number of vendors. Selection of a market leading partner for surgery integration will drastically improve a hospital's return on investment.

There is no standard original equipment manufacturer (OEM) camera or video display. Surgeons typically utilize the system that best fits their clinical specialty. Therefore, surgery integration requires conversion of video and picture images created by *multiple* OEMs in many different formats and resolution to an optimal digital format. Most OEMs offer integration systems designed to integrate their equipment. Some offer "generic" interfaces which allow inclusion of video and image signals from other manufacturers' equipment. But no OEM offers a solution designed specifically to integrate all video and picture images regardless of the manufacturer or video format. This and other

factors decrease the value proposition for OEM integration systems.

Third party systems utilize vendor neutral devices that provide uniform interfaces. This optimizes clinician and biomedical personal training and the creation of standard operating procedures regardless of the imaging equipment manufacturer.

Third party integration companies have a single focus. Life cycles for third party systems are not tied to scopes, cameras or monitors and replacement parts are limited to the third party system's platform.

While some OEM systems include control of room and OR lighting, OR HVAC and other room functions, integration of these provide no real ROI. Latin American Hospitals should select imaging and lighting equipment within each class based on what is optimal for Latin American hospitals, not what is limited by an OEM integration system.

According to a 2011 ECRI survey, OEM integration systems are typically 20-30% more expensive. OEM monitors are also typically more costly than a functionally equivalent third party monitor.

The use of a third party integration provider with robust sales and support functions in Latin America provides the best ROI scenario for surgery and procedure room integration

*About the author; Mr. Russell is a registered nurse and Chief Operating Officer for Mesa Healthcare, LLC an international surgical services consultant company. He is the former Director of Clinical and Surgical Services for Hospital Corporation of America.*