Aim: Despite rapid evolution of surgical robotics systems, training opportunities are very limited especially for medical students and junior doctors. We organised a free-of-charge regional robotics workshop in collaboration with CMR Surgical with the goal of increasing exposure to surgical robotics technology. We also evaluated the delegates’ perception on current surgical robotics training and the workshop.

Method: CMR Surgical was invited to exhibit their Versius® robot and Virtual-Reality trainer for a one-day workshop at Glenfield Hospital, Leicester. The workshop was advertised across universities and hospital trusts in East Midlands. Registration form included pre-workshop questionnaire which assessed the motivation and barriers to attending surgical robotics courses, and their familiarity with robotics surgery. After 1-hour hands-on exercise supervised by consultants and CMR Surgical trainers, delegates were asked to complete post-workshop questionnaire to evaluate shift in familiarity, interest, and confidence in basic robotic skills.

Results: 75 delegates registered with 93% having never attended similar workshop before and the barriers were perceiving that robotics surgery skills are for advanced surgeons only (37%), cost (26%), no accessible courses (24%), time constraints (9%) and others (4%). The primary motivation to attend this workshop were learning basic robotic skills (49%), exploring innovative technology (44%) and networking (7%). 30 delegates were shortlisted for 1-hour hands-on experience into six groups consisting of 18 students and 12 junior doctors. Post-workshop feedback showed a positive shift in familiarity, interest, and confidence in basic robotic skills. Delegates also expressed increased interest in surgical specialties after this workshop. They also found VR station was enjoyable and believed it has potential in training future robotic surgeons.

Conclusions: These findings highlight the feasibility and importance of creating accessible training opportunities to bridge the gap in surgical robotics education.