

Assessment guideline for new surgical equipment, investigations, implants or interventional procedures (“Surgical Technologies”)

Southern Cross does not specify the exact operative procedure used or equipment employed, this being the domain of the surgeon’s expertise according to accepted standard practice.

Southern Cross will not reimburse a Surgical Technology if it is developmental/experimental in nature or of a quality that does not meet current international regulatory or manufacturing standards.

Novel surgical procedures or equipment, investigations and implants proposed to be employed during surgery, and not covered by the fee usually paid by Southern Cross, will be assessed based on evidence of superiority in outcomes.

Outcomes may include the following: operative outcome (ie achievement of the goals of the operation as perceived by the patient); safety, including both the recovery period and longer term; and duration of hospitalisation.

Evidence from time-concurrent controlled randomised clinical trials is preferred over historical controls, though in the absence of any established therapy or satisfactory comparator good quality historical control data may be satisfactory.

A claim of superior performance as compared with existing Surgical Technologies will need to be supported by adequate randomised controlled clinical trial data. When data are based on international experience, the need for development of local expertise (eg training and other aspects of implementation) may also be taken into consideration prior to reimbursement decisions.

Surgical Technologies not meeting these levels of evidence will be regarded as developmental / experimental. A cost-benefit assessment will be undertaken if these levels of evidence are met.