



## Spine surgeons home in on holes

SURGEONS have been using GPS-based devices for some time, but a Sydney operating theatre has been fitted with the medical equivalent of park-assist.

It's a leap forward, says neurosurgeon Dr Jonathon Ball, who is using the robotic system to make his already exacting spine operations more precise.

Apart from reducing risk and improving accuracy, the Israeli-designed Renaissance guidance system improves recovery time and reduces pain.

Dr Ball and orthopedic surgeon Dr Brian Hsu use it to position a drill guide before they insert screws and rods that stabilise deformed, degenerated or injured spines.

The system takes away the need to drill holes freehand.

Before each operation the doctors use a CT scan to program the device.

It moves along the spine to position the drill guide in a pre-planned sequence, ensuring each hole is in exactly the right place and at exactly the right angle.