

Panasonic breaks into robotics with medical robot

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(AP) -- Panasonic Corp. said Tuesday has developed a medical robot that dispenses drugs to patients, the Japanese electronics giant's first step into robotics.

Panasonic will sell the [robot](#) to Japanese hospitals next March and will market it in the United States and Europe later. Panasonic spokesman Akira Kadota said the [robot](#) will cost several tens of millions of yen (hundreds of thousands of dollars).

"This robot is the first in our robotics project. It sorts out injection drugs to patients, saving time for pharmacists," said Kadota.

The robot does not look humanoid. "It looks like a cabinet with lots of small drawers," he said.

Pharmacists put drugs into the robot, which stores medical data for patients. The robot will then sort out drugs for each patient and place them into respective drawers bearing the names of patients.

Osaka-based [Panasonic](#) hopes annual revenue from the robot and other medical robotics will reach 30 billion yen (\$315 million) in the financial year to March 2016.

Japan boasts one of the leading robotics industries in the world, and the government is pushing to develop the industry as a road to growth. Automaker [Honda Motor](#) Co. has developed the child-sized Asimo, which can walk and talk.

Earlier this year, the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology, a government-backed organization, revealed a walking, talking robot with a female face. But it hasn't cleared safety standards and cannot yet help humans with daily chores.

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