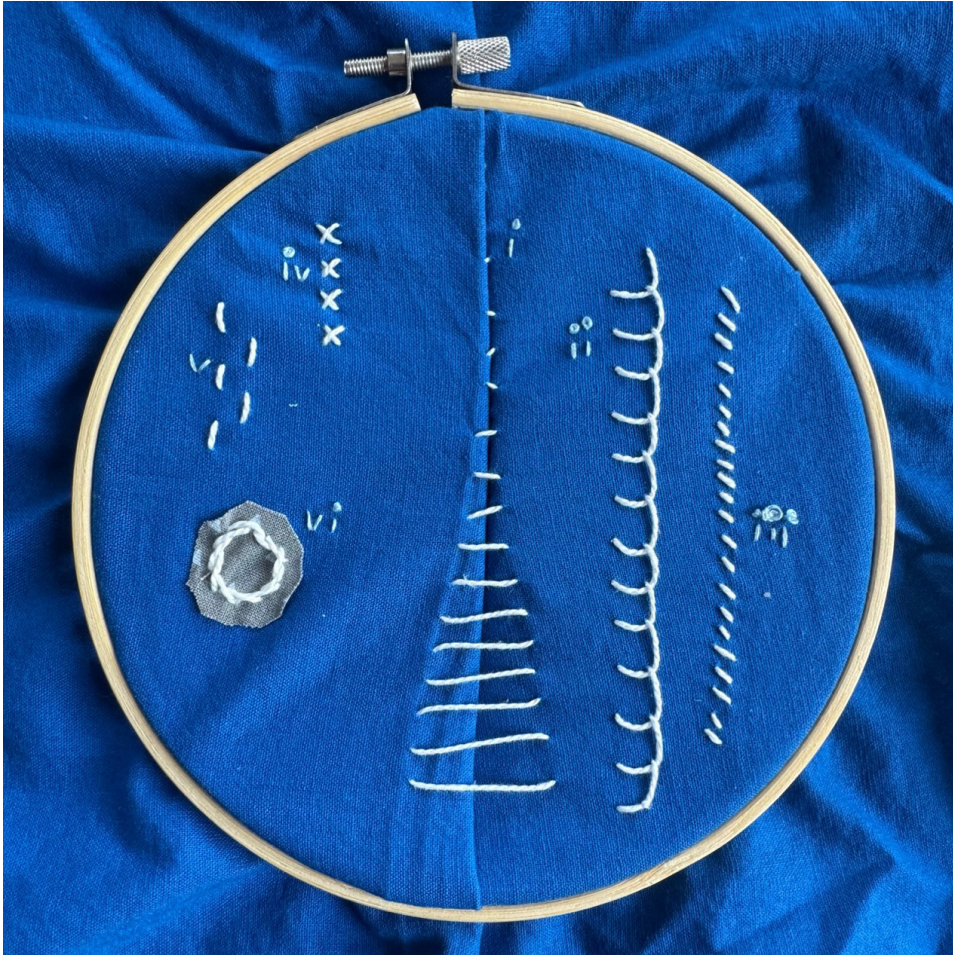


Feature: Visual Art

Erin Garzella, MS3, showcases her creative work

When someone is first learning embroidery, a traditional first project is a stitch sampler for learning new techniques. When I started my surgery rotation, I was delighted to learn that many of the suturing techniques we use in the OR are identical to stitches used in a variety of fiber arts, including sewing, embroidery, knitting, and more. This sampler highlights some of the stitches used in both surgery and fiber arts.



*i. **Running subcuticular/Ladder stitch:** Used for closing skin during surgery this stitch is used to make invisible seams when sewing. Sometimes called the 'zipper stitch' because when you pull on the end the stitch will 'zip' together.*

*ii. **Locking stitch/Blanket stitch:** This closure can reduce tension when closing skin and can prevent fraying on the edges of blankets.*

*iii. **Simple continuous/Whipstitch:** An extremely versatile stitch both in surgery and fiber arts. Often one of the first stitches a beginner learns, it is commonly used to join two pieces of material: skin-skin, skin-graft, skin-mesh, fabric-fabric.*

*iv. **Cross stitch:** Known of by the same name in surgery as it is in fiber arts, this stitch reduces tension on a skin closure. Cross stitching is also a type of embroidery where many individual cross stitches are tiled in different colors to create an image.*

*v. **Horizontal mattress/Mattress stitch:** The deep nature of this suture reduces tear through wounds with atrophic skin. This stitch can also be used to invisibly join two pieces of knitting, useful when making a sweater.*

*vi. **Basting suture/Stem stitch:** This stitch is used by plastic surgeons when attaching a full thickness skin grafts to increase contact-and reduce hematoma-in the center of large grafts. In embroidery the same technique is used to create flower stems, letters, and outlines.*