



MARK RIGHTMIRE, THE REGISTER  
JUST TESTING: A mannequin lies on an operating table in the SimSuite bus as Dr. Subbarao Myla demonstrates a carotid artery stenting procedure.

## Firms take show on the road

Mobile mock-operating rooms promote products to doctors across the country.

By BLYTHE BERNHARD  
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Medical devices change so fast that doctors frequently need training on new technologies.

As soon as their devices receive FDA approval, manufacturers want to get the products in the hands of doctors who might use them. If a doctor wants to learn the new technology, they usually travel to training conferences or other hospitals that are using the device.

To speed up that process, Boston Scientific teamed with Medical Simulation Corporation of Denver to create mock operating rooms inside buses. Those vehicles travel to hospitals across the country and hold training sessions in parking lots.

There, doctors can practice on mannequins that have been rigged to re-create the look and feel of patients, complete with unpredictable compli-



MARK RIGHTMIRE, THE REGISTER

**BEFORE AND AFTER:** Screens in the SimSuite bus show the before stenting and after stenting views of a carotid artery. Myla, a cardiologist at Hoag Memorial Hospital in Newport Beach, created the SimSuite bus that will be used to train physicians in the procedure.

cations.

Think of in-flight simulation.

"You don't jump in a 747 with 400 people behind you the first time," said Bob Mullins, a business development manager with Boston Scientific.

The company's latest bus promoting the NexStent for treating blocked carotid (neck) arteries was given a test drive recently at Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian in Newport

Beach.

Dr. Subbarao Myla helped Boston Scientific develop the simulated operating room and gave the system its final tweaks before sending it out to hospitals across the West. The Hoag surgeon was the principal investigator on the NexStent clinical study that received FDA approval last month.

"Not that many physicians have ex-

perience with the technology yet," Mullins said. "Myla is a pioneer in the procedure."

The NexStent treats blockages in the neck arteries that can impede blood flow to the brain and lead to strokes.

In the simulated operating room, the doctor can take angiograms (X-rays of blood vessels) of the mock patient to check the blood flow. The stent is threaded through a catheter in the groin to reach its desired target and pin plaque against the arterial wall. Audio cues tell the surgeon whether the fake procedure is going well.

In real life, the procedure takes half an hour, and some patients are released the same day, Myla said.

Larry Robertson, 69, of Huntington Beach received the NexStent at Hoag in 2003 during the clinical trial.

"The before picture of the angiogram looked like a map with roads that you can't quite make out," said the retired program manager from McDonnell Douglas. "The after picture was clean as could be with the freeways clearly marked."

CONTACT THE WRITER: 714-796-6880  
or bbernard@ocregister.com