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Making a Better Manikin
FRD announces product launch of technology from MUSC Healthcare Simulation Center to improve training for labor and delivery

CHARLESTON, S.C. – Promising technology born at the Medical University of South Carolina Healthcare Simulation Center is now available as an improvement to Laerdal Medical’s SimMom, a manikin that simulates childbirth for medical training. The MUSC Foundation for Research Development filed the patent application for the adaptation and exclusively licensed it for commercial purposes to Laerdal, which recently made the new module available to the public.

“Simulation offers an effective way to train medical students and other health care professionals for real-life situations, ultimately producing better patient outcomes,” said FRD Executive Director Michael Rusnak. “This enhancement of SimMom’s capabilities will improve obstetrics training worldwide and is yet another accomplishment for MUSC’s Healthcare Simulation Center, which has quickly emerged as a leader in the evolving field of medical simulation.”

Dr. John J. Schaefer III directs both the MUSC Healthcare Simulation Center and the statewide network HealthCare Simulation of South Carolina, an MUSC SmartState Endowed Chair program. His wife, Dr. Carol Simmons, is an obstetrician and adjunct assistant professor at MUSC. They co-invented the new module, which automates SimMom’s birthing process so the delivery of the manikin’s Birthing Baby no longer has to be replicated manually by an instructor.

The automatic delivery module allows for greater standardization of scenarios and assessments and offers cost savings because SimMom trainings can be done more quickly and with fewer instructors. Elegant in its simplicity, the new module is easy to use, yet can be adapted through software to simulate a range of scenarios from a typical delivery to complex and even dangerous situations for mother and baby.

SimMom training benefits students preparing for medical careers as well as established professionals. This includes obstetrician-gynecologists, midwives, nurses and emergency medical personnel.
Laerdal introduced SimMom simulators for distribution in 2011, and they are now deployed worldwide. The main simulator costs around $33,000, and the special introductory price of the automatic delivery module, including technical and educational service costs, is around $7,000. The inventors and Laerdal developed the new technology as an adaptation rather than as a completely new SimMom model to help make it available to the most users possible. Laerdal recently made the automatic delivery module available to the public after spending several months on design and industrialization.

“This could not have been done without the concept, input and continued support from Dr. Simmons and Dr. Schaefer. Working with both of them through the whole development process has truly led to a better product,” said Laerdal Emergency Care Business Unit Director Alf-Christian Dybdahl.

A Norwegian-based company, Laerdal Medical pioneered the world famous Resusci Anne manikin for CPR training in 1960 and is now a global corporation dedicated to saving lives with innovative solutions that include SimMom and a complete portfolio of simulation products.

Dr. Schaefer and Dr. Simmons work with SimMom at the MUSC Healthcare Simulation Center, an 11,000-square-foot multi-disciplinary training facility that was established in 2008 to improve quality of care, promote patient safety and advance the practice and training efficiency of an understaffed workforce.

Dr. Schaefer, in his role as a SmartState Endowed Chair, leads HealthCare Simulation South Carolina. The network has grown to include 15 collaborative partners, mostly colleges and universities in South Carolina. Together, they perform about 70,000 simulations a year, including about 20,000 at the MUSC Healthcare Simulation Center.

The new SimMom module should encourage greater utilization of SimMom manikins, exposing more people to training and allowing them more practice. The module also allows a more reliable, consistent way to assess trainee performance. “We have already utilized SimMom’s automatic delivery module in courses for practicing obstetricians and for midwives, and it has been very well received,” Dr. Schaefer said.

*For more information regarding SimMom and the automatic delivery module, please visit [http://www.laerdal.com/us/SimMom](http://www.laerdal.com/us/SimMom).*

**Photo of SimMom and the automatic delivery module available to media upon request.**

**About the Foundation for Research Development**

*FRD has served as MUSC’s technology transfer office since 1998. During that period, FRD has filed patent applications on more than 320 technologies, resulting in 99 issued patents. Additionally, FRD has executed 125 licenses and spun out more than 40 startup companies. MUSC startups have had products approved by the FDA, been acquired by publicly traded corporations, and attracted substantial investment dollars into South Carolina. Innovations from MUSC, including medical devices, therapies and software, are positively impacting health care world-wide.*

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