
Rolling out New Medical Products in the Market: Simulation Helps Reduce Major Risks for Patients



When new medical products are rolled out in the market, staff need to learn their proper use. Frequently, this phase produces significant risks for patients. Simulation in medicine now helps generate user competence including new handling skills, and at the same time ensures maximum safety for patients.

Baxter is a leading producer of pharmaceuticals, including anesthetics. Suprane (Desflurane, USP) and Forane (Isoflurane, USP) are part of the company's global portfolio. Currently Baxter aims at expanding its market share in the Middle East in particular with regard to Desflurane. In order to enable the medical and nursing staff to learn how to use the anesthetic quickly and without risk for patients, the manufacturer is now cooperating with the AQAI Simulation Centre in Mayence, Germany.

The German experts configured simulators, the equipment landscape, and sophisticated scenarios which represent the application context in very much of a realistic manner. The technology encompasses heating, vaporization, as well as real washing in and out of the anesthetic. Barriers which needed to be overcome included climate challenges: the boiling point of Desflurane is approximately 23 °C, a temperature level which is frequently exceeded in the Middle East.

This simulation configuration was implemented at the University Hospital in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. AQAI made similar installations in the UK, in Russia, Egypt, and South Africa, where they provided significant support for product roll-out and today serve in routine further education in anesthetics application.

In mid May 2012, Baxter's regional organisation began the first simulation-based training for Desflurane in Saudi Arabia. "We are highly satisfied with how the scenarios turned out. They worked without problems and in accordance with our expectations, and they produced the desired know-how for participants", said Ala Asi who is in charge of Baxter sales. He already has ideas about how to further optimise: "we will focus even more on the application of Suprane in the future; and we plan to develop scenarios which help communicate in detail the differences between handling Suprane in comparison with Sevoflurane [note: competitive product] and Isoflurane". Baxter will collaborate with AQAI on these projects. The next simulation-based training for anesthetics in Riyadh is scheduled for late September.

"Our innovative approach supports manufacturers and care providers in ensuring safe application of new products by the staff – without putting life, and quality of life, of patients at risk", underlines Prof. Dr. med. Wolfgang Heinrichs, anesthetist and Director of the AQAI Simulation Center. According to the expert, the potentials for the use of simulation in the context of the roll-out of many other pharmaceuticals and medtech products are huge.

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