

The Østergaard Declaration

Just recently, in early June of this year, the European Society of Anesthesiology and Intensive Care adopted a document that, without exaggeration, can be considered a major milestone in the history of simulation-based training in healthcare: — The Østergaard Declaration, named after one of Europe's leading experts in this field, Professor Dora Østergaard from Copenhagen (the link to the full text of the document is provided below).

In recent years, professional communities have repeatedly published key statements, consensus documents, and communiqués on the role of simulation in medical education. However, here and now, a leading European medical professional organization is moving beyond the usual rhetoric and formulating fundamentally new principles.

For the first time, it has been stated so clearly: despite the convincingly and repeatedly proven effectiveness of simulation methods, the level of their implementation in healthcare practice remains unacceptably low. This is despite the fact that simulation should be viewed not so much as a teaching method, but rather as an effective tool for ensuring patient safety and improving the quality of medical care. It is

no longer merely a supplementary educational technology, but an integral component of clinical medicine and the modern healthcare system as a whole.

Like other continuing professional development activities, simulation techniques should be applied at all stages of a career — from basic training and residency to postgraduate education, specialization, and continuing education — on a routine and ongoing basis.

The Declaration emphasizes the complexity of this professional tool, which requires expert knowledge in the fields of pedagogical theories, simulation scenario design, facilitation, debriefing, the human factor, team interaction, and digital technologies. Consequently, the development of simulation is impossible without specialized training for instructors, specialists, and experts in medical simulation programs.

The professional society directly appeals to healthcare administrators to stop treating simulation education as an optional activity conducted “when possible” or outside of regular working hours. On the contrary, it must become a mandatory and scheduled part of



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clinical departments' work. To achieve this, time must be officially allocated within the regular work schedule — both for healthcare professionals participating in simulation sessions and for instructors responsible for their preparation and delivery.

The very logic of the discussion regarding the role of simulation in medical education is also changing. Whereas we used to cautiously state that “simulation does not replace, but merely complements, traditional training methods,” today the professional community is articulating a more decisive position: “less effective forms of educational activities should give way to simulation-based methods” wherever they allow for the development of professional competencies in a safer, more effective, and more realistic manner that closely mirrors actual clinical practice.

Simulation must be integrated into educational programs, clinical protocols, team training processes, and quality management systems. The declaration elevates simulation from the category of innovation to that of a professional standard. What was once viewed as best practices at individual centers is now the expected

norm for modern medicine.

For the Russian and international readership of the journal *Virtual Technologies in Medicine*, this document holds special significance. It confirms what we have been saying for many years at ROSOMED events: simulation is not a peripheral educational practice, but a strategic tool for the development of healthcare. This is a call to rethink the role of simulation in medicine — from a supplementary teaching method to a full-fledged tool for quality, safety, and the systemic development of healthcare.

Full-text link: <https://esaic.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/The-Ostergaard-Declaration-ESAIC-Statement-on-Advancing-Simulation-Based-Education-1.pdf>

