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Robot baby is latest addition to Torrance hospital

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A Southern California hospital held a baby shower this week for an unlikely addition: a 7-pound robotic baby named Simantha.

The \$35,000 baby "born" May 30 will serve as an educational tool for students and staff members in the Torrance Memorial Medical Center's Clinical Skills lab. Simantha joins three robotic adults: Stan D. Ardman (a play on the phrase "standard man"), Brittnay and Jake, who is called Jessica when staff members use her as a female.

John Edwards, the clinical skills simulation technician who runs the lab and maintains the robots, was beaming like a proud father at the baby shower, he said. About 50 staff members attended the shower Thursday, bearing gifts and gift cards, which were donated to Casa De Los Angelitos, a local crisis center for pregnant women.

Edwards, who creates fake wounds on the robots, will make Simantha more realistic for staff members and students.

"Babies are slimy and dirty," he said. "I make them all goopy."

Ann O'Brien, a spokeswoman for the hospital, said the 21-inch baby is lifelike. It will hiccup, cry and even turn blue in respiratory distress.

"It feels like a real infant," she said.

— Nicole Santa Cruz

Photo: Robot baby Simantha. Credit: Torrance Memorial Medical Center

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