

Special Edition!

FAST-MAG Times

Los Angeles County Paramedics' Success Leads to Expansion

Thanks to the outstanding work of paramedics across Los Angeles County, we are fast approaching the 1,000th patient enrolled.

Since the start of FAST-MAG there have been two unexpected developments:

1. The overall rate of strokes has declined by 25%.
2. The number of ischemic stroke patients who call 911 within two hours of the onset of symptoms has been fewer than anticipated.

Therefore, the rate of enrollments is lower and the number of hemorrhagic strokes (bleeds) is higher than originally planned. In order to prove that paramedic initiation of magnesium sulfate improves outcome for stroke patients, we must increase the overall number of patients enrolled.

Los Angeles County paramedics already identify potential FAST-MAG patients 95 times out of 100. Nearly all of the EMS agencies and the vast majority of hospitals in Los Angeles County currently participate in FAST-MAG. In order to complete the study more quickly, we must increase the area from which we enroll patients.

We are now excited to report to our FAST-MAG collaborators that we are expanding the study to

Orange County. The expansion has been approved by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Food and Drug Administration and the California EMS Authority. Work has begun to enroll the nine Orange County stroke centers and to establish a training program for Orange County paramedics. (See page two for more details.)



The expansion is important for two reasons. First, it will help us achieve the new target enrollment of 1,700 patients. Second, expanding the study to Orange County will allow us to prove that the procedures developed in LA County are easily transferable to other jurisdictions. The willingness of the NIH to invest in this expansion indicates that the trial is recognized by leading researchers as critically important.

We thank the paramedics of Los Angeles County for your skill, leadership, and commitment. You are pioneering a new scope of practice – active treatment of the threatened brain in the field. Through your stellar efforts, the FAST-MAG trial is demonstrating that research begun in the field is not only feasible, but can deliver potentially protective drugs to stroke patients in record time. Your work will shape the future care of stroke patients, not just in Los Angeles, but throughout the country and around the world.

FAST-MAG Expands to Orange County

Why was Orange County selected for FAST-MAG expansion?

When the FAST-MAG team considered sites for expanding the trial, Orange County was at the top of the list for a number of reasons:

1. EMS leadership

The Medical Director of the Orange County EMS Agency is Dr. Sam Stratton. He has been the FAST-MAG principal investigator for the LA County EMS Agency from the beginning of the study. Dr. Stratton's familiarity with both EMS systems and with FAST-MAG will help ensure a smooth expansion process. According to Dr. Stratton, "FAST-MAG participation will compliment the efforts made by the Orange County EMS providers and hospitals to improve care and outcome for stroke victims."

2. Orange County and Los Angeles County are adjacent

The proximity of Orange County to current FAST-MAG operations in adjacent Los Angeles County allows FAST-MAG staff to support the start of the study in Orange County and assist the new Orange County-based staff as they are hired.

3. Demographics

Founded in 1889, Orange County is the second most populous county in California after Los Angeles County, which was founded in 1850.

Demographics	Los Angeles Co.	Orange County
Population	9.86 million	3.01 million
Area	4,061 square miles	781 square miles
Age over 65 (↑ stroke risk)	10.4%	11.1%
English-speaking	45.8%	58.6%
Spanish-speaking	37.9%	25.3%

4. Stroke statistics

Stroke is the third highest cause of death in the USA, and California is no different. Orange County and Los Angeles County are very similar in the annual number of new stroke diagnoses and deaths per population.

Stroke Statistics *	Los Angeles Co.	Orange County
Stroke diagnoses (per 1,000)	6.6	5.8
Stroke deaths (per 100,000)	44.5	55
Stroke discharges	12,805	3,590

*California Department of Public Health's Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program, 2007

5. Regional stroke care

Orange County has a well-established stroke center system, having launched it with nine hospitals in April 2009. The LA County system includes two of the Orange County stroke center hospitals. Implementation of FAST-MAG in "the OC" will be accelerated by focusing solely on these nine facilities.

Regional Stroke System	Los Angeles Co.	Orange County
EMS provider agencies	31	13
Paramedic ambulances	230	125
EDs for adult medical	69	26
Approved Stroke Centers	13	9
FAST-MAG hospitals	51 (actual)	9 (projected)