Since the debut of the Medicine Meets Virtual Reality (MMVR) conference in 1992, MMVR has served as a forum for researchers harnessing IT advances for the benefit of patient diagnosis and care, medical education, and procedural training. At MMVR, virtual reality becomes a theatre for medicine, where multiple senses are engaged—sight, sound and touch—and language and image fuse. Precisely because this theatre is unreal, it is a valuable tool: the risks of experimentation and failure are gone, while the opportunity to understand remains. Improvement of this tool, through steady technological progress, is the purpose of MMVR.

This book presents papers delivered at the MMVR18 / NextMed conference, held in Newport Beach, California, in February 2011, with contributions from international researchers whose work creates new devices and methods at the juncture of informatics and medicine. Subjects covered include simulation and learning, visualisation and information-guided therapy, robotics and haptics, virtual reality and advanced ICT in Europe, validation of new surgical techniques, and many other applications of virtual-reality technology.

As its name suggests, the NextMed conference looks forward to the expanding role that virtual reality can play in global healthcare. This overview of current technology will interest those who dedicate themselves to improving medicine through technology.
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