

## *Mars 500 crew break record for longest 'space mission'*



*Mars500 crew spends 438 days on simulated mission*



August 15, 2011 — Moscow, Korolyov, Russia (Reuters) The Mars500 crew has spent 438 days on a simulated space mission, breaking previous records of days spent in space and they haven't even left earth. Their groundbreaking mission is being conducted not in space but in a hangar in Moscow.

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A group of astronauts on Sunday (August 14) set a new record for space flight - 438 days or enough to have made 73 return trips to the moon - without ever having left the outskirts of the Russian capital, Moscow.

The crew of a simulated Mars mission is taking part in an ambitious one and a half years' isolation experiment to test the strains of interplanetary travel. Their mock spacecraft makes for cramped living in a 160-square-metre (1,722 square ft) module inside a hangar outside Moscow.

Dubbed 'Mars 500', the ambitious experiment - the first full-duration simulation of a manned flight to Mars - aims to test one of the biggest unknowns of deep space travel: the mental and physical strains of such a journey.

The project's chief operating officer, Alexander Suvorov explained the new methods being implemented in the Mars 500 experiment.



*Simulated Mars mission*

“We are implementing some new methods which have not been used earlier, but only in our experiment. Although the main results will be for sure assessed later, we can now judge on the reports of the mission members, and we also know now from the experiment analysts that the experiment brings very interesting results for them, as well as for crew members,” Suvorov said.

The Mars 500 crew is led by 38-year-old Russian engineer Alexei Sitev and includes Russian surgeon Sukhrob Kamolov and Russian doctor Alexander Smolevsky, 33. The other mission members are 27-year-old Diego Urbina from Italy, 27, China's Wang Yue who is also 27 and 31-year-old Roman Charles from France.

The crew are due to 'touch down' in November when they will complete their 520 day mission.

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