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Michelson

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[54] **ADJUSTABLE SURGICAL FRAME AND UNIVERSAL RAIL CLAMP**

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Related U.S. Application Data

[63] Continuation of application No. 08/108,885, Aug. 18, 1993.

[51] **Int. Cl.**[7] **A47B 7/00**; A47C 20/00; A61G 13/12

[52] **U.S. Cl.** **5/621**; 5/630; 5/632; 5/646; 128/845

[58] **Field of Search** 128/870, 869, 128/871, 845; 606/241, 240, 237; 5/621, 624, 648; 601/24

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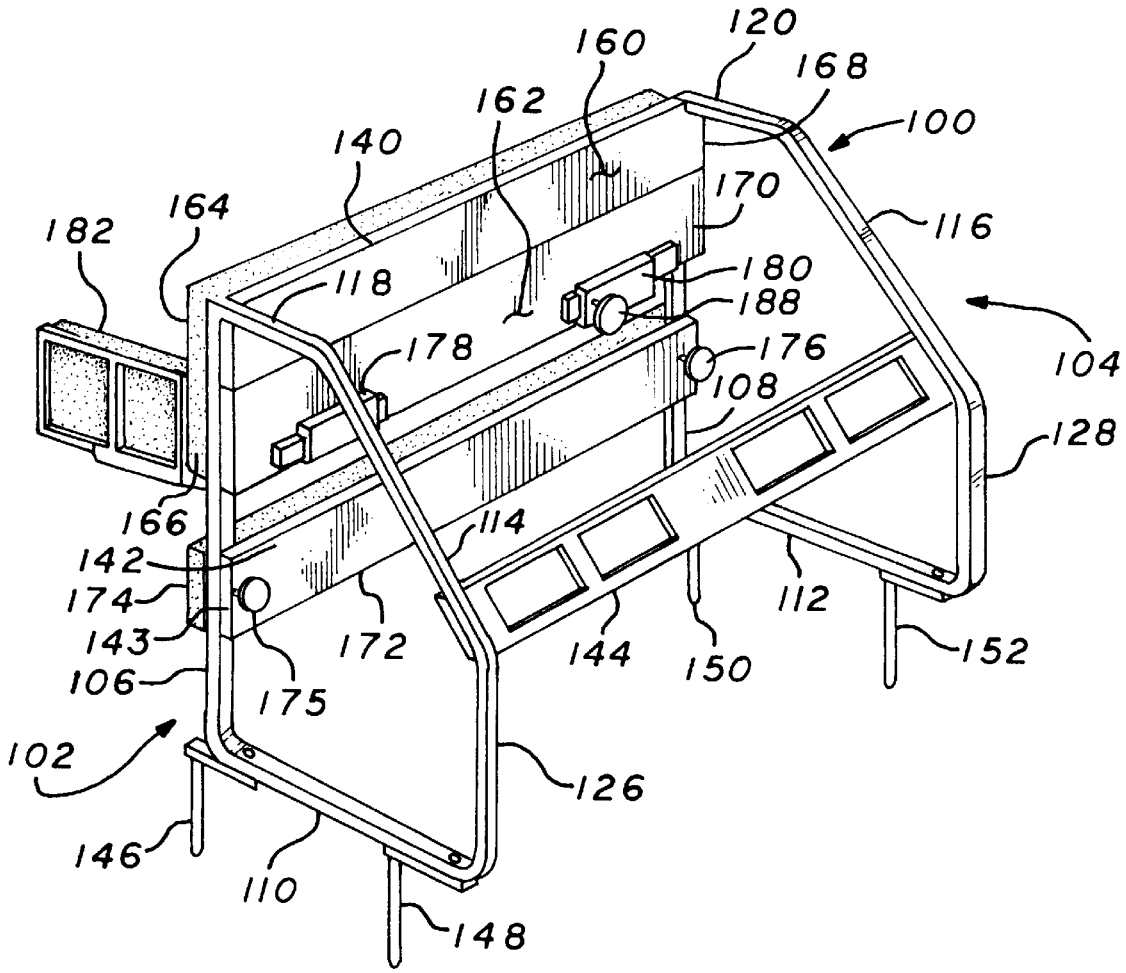
Primary Examiner—Michael O'Neill

Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Martin & Ferraro LLP

[57] **ABSTRACT**

The adjustable surgical frame of the present invention comprises two side frame members made from rectangular rods forming closed loop, disposed in parallel and spaced apart relationship that provides the surgical frame with the predominate portion of its structural integrity. The configuration of the side frame members is such that the base portion of each side frame member is substantially narrower than the base portions of the surgical frames of the past. The reduced width of the base portion permits the surgical frame of the present invention to be placed closer to the end of the operating table without diminishing the strength and stability of the surgical frame. The side frame members are configured so as not to interfere with the area near the wound and permit the placement of peripheral surgical equipment, such as an instrument stand, adjacent to the wound site and level with the patient's back.

24 Claims, 5 Drawing Sheets



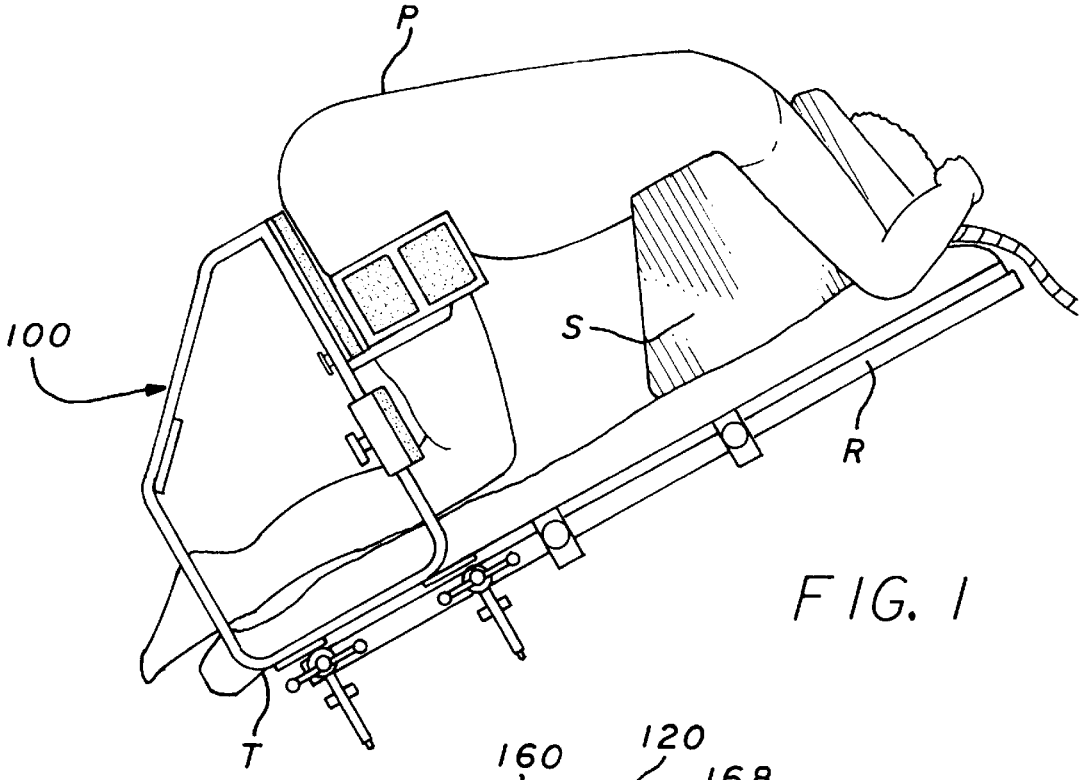

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FIG. 1

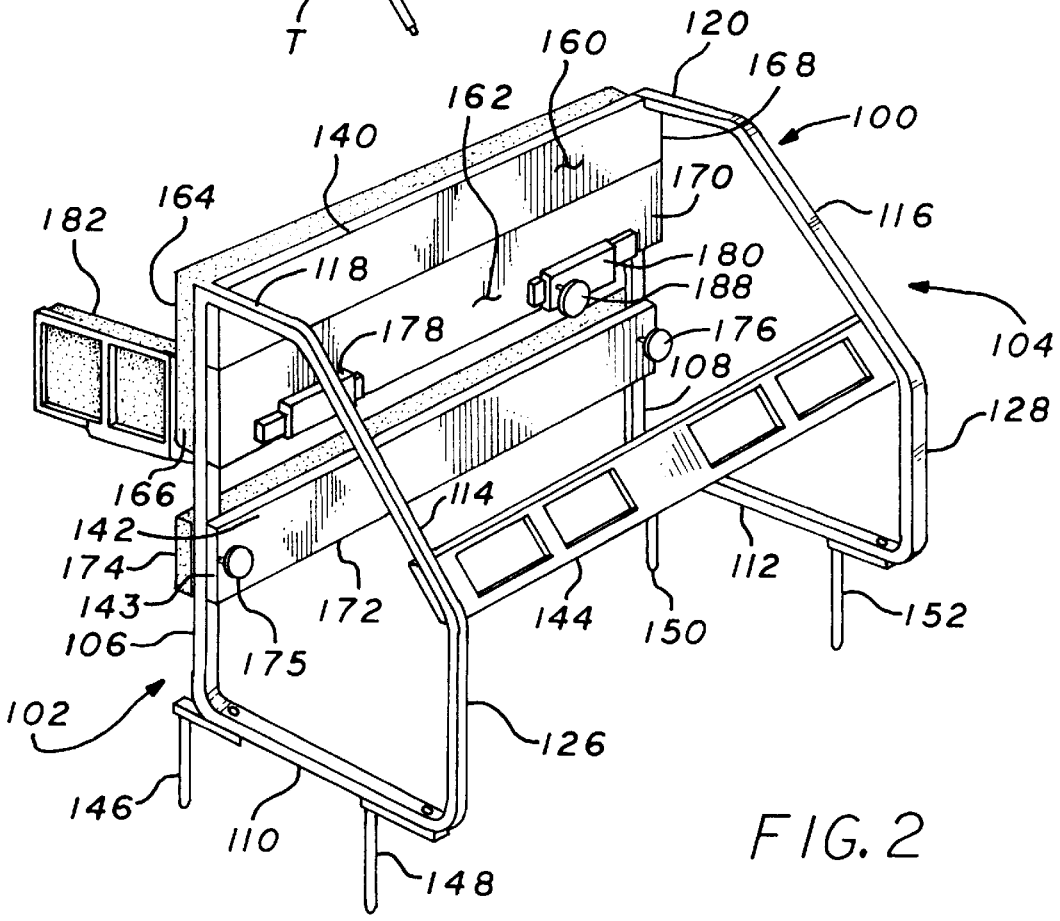
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FIG. 2

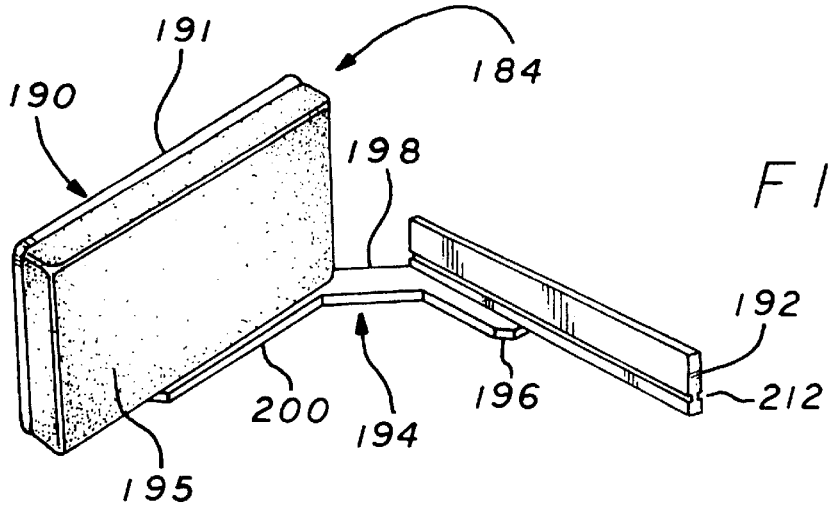

FIG. 3

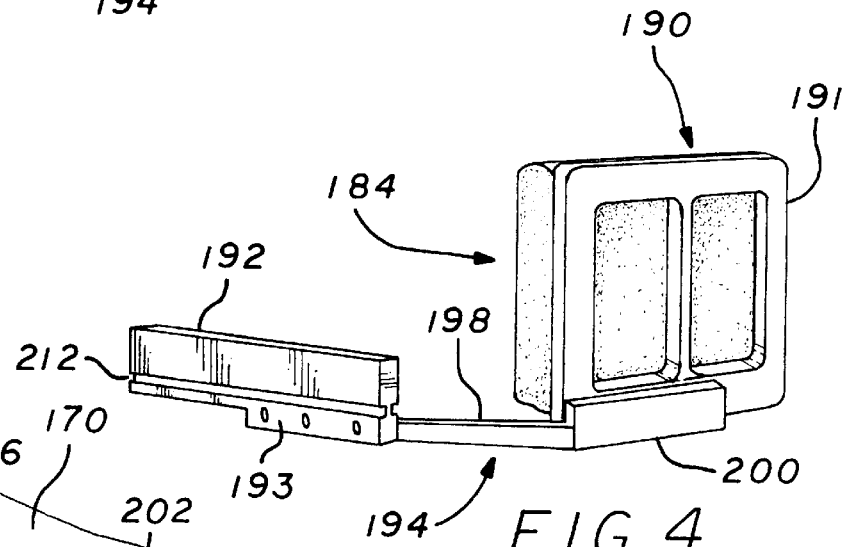

FIG. 4

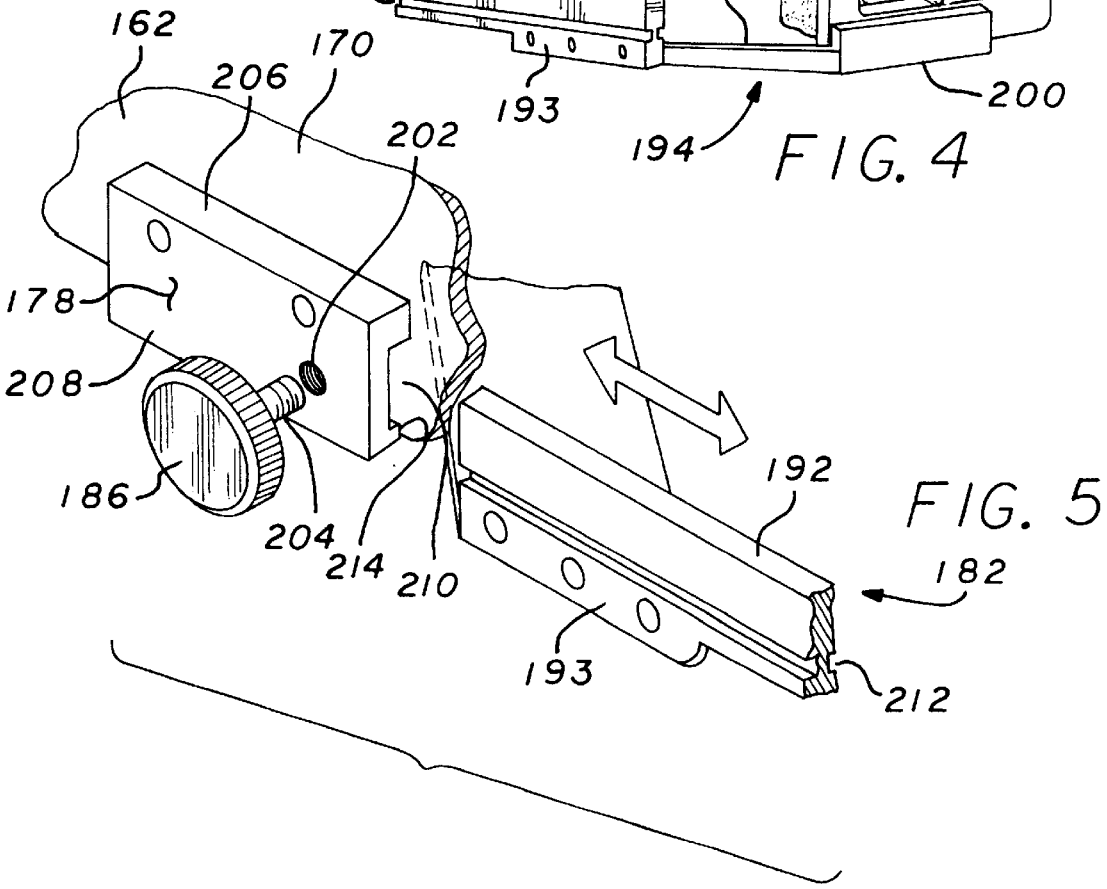

FIG. 5

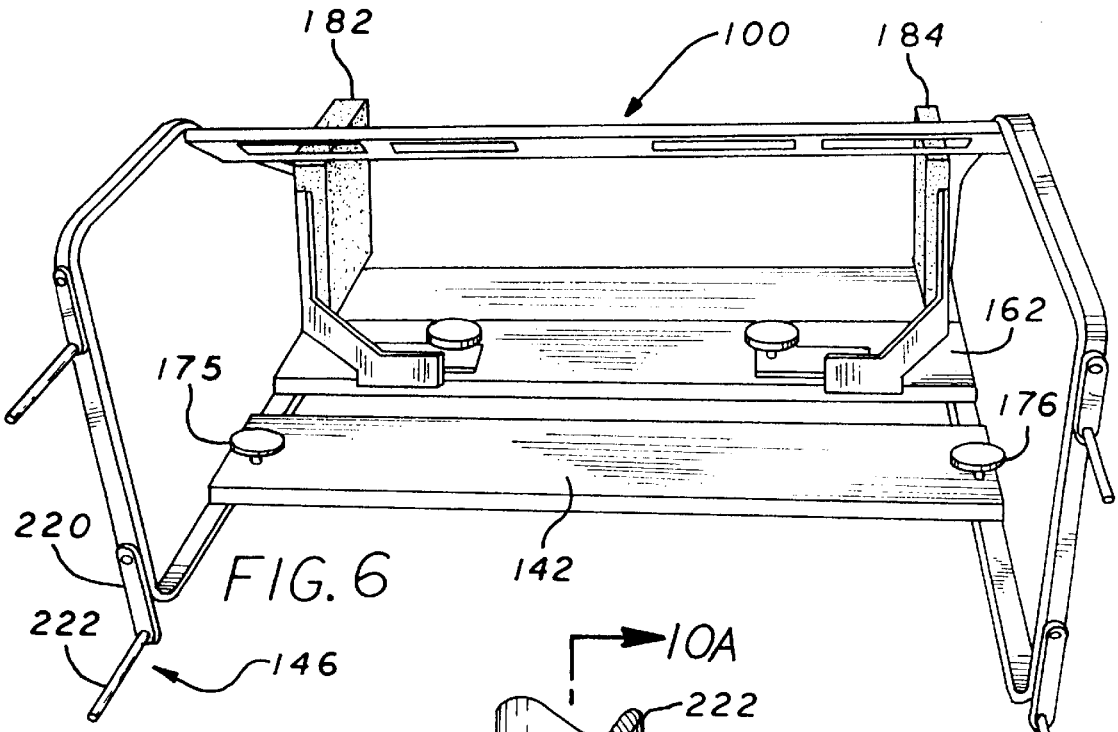

FIG. 6

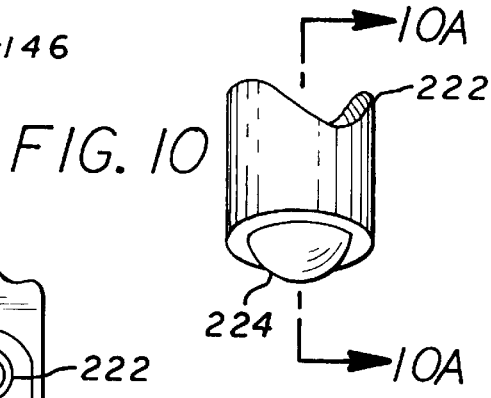

FIG. 10

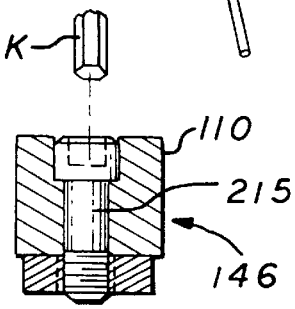

FIG. 8

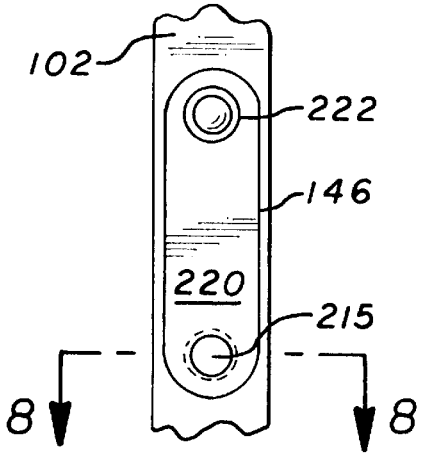

FIG. 7

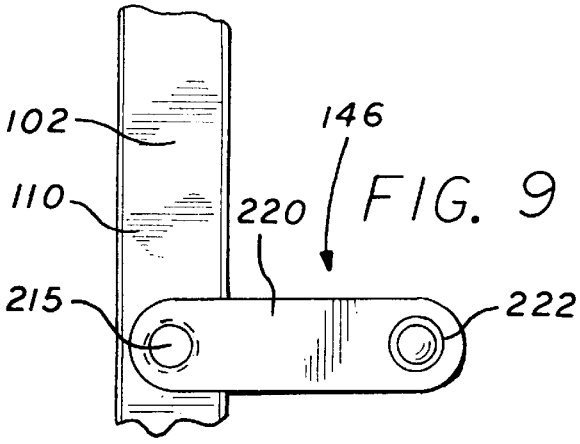

FIG. 9

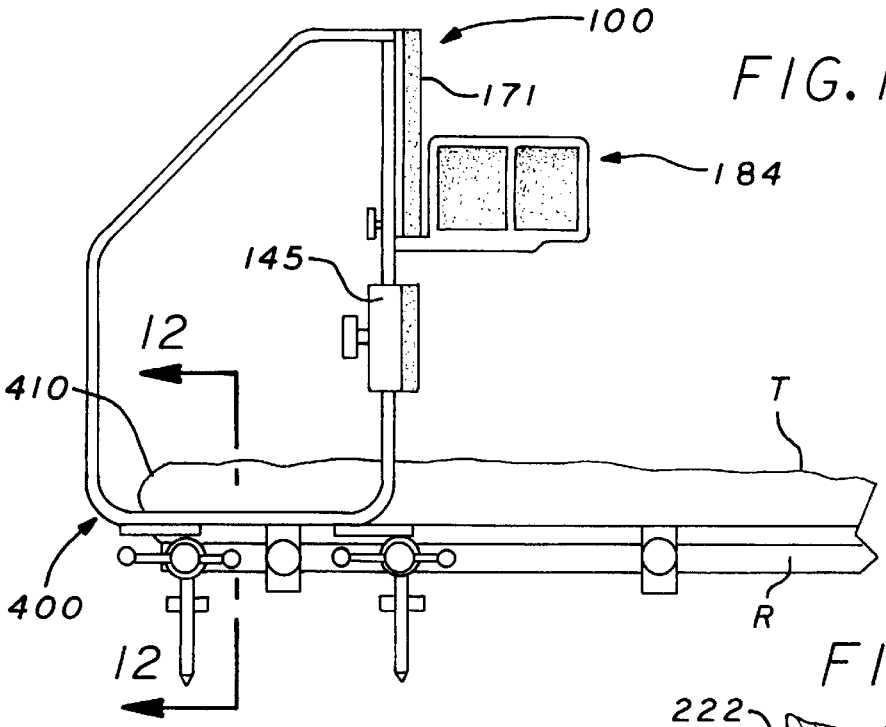

FIG. 11

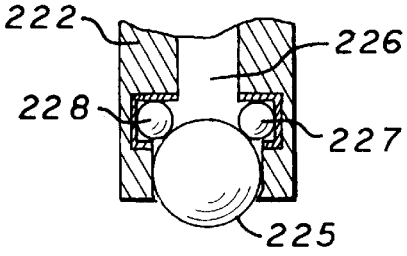

FIG. 10A

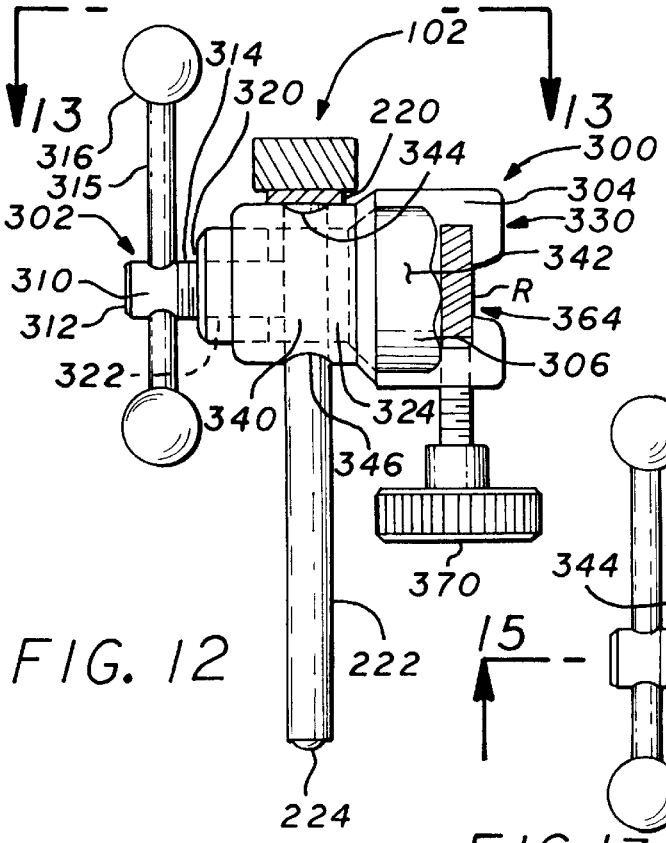

FIG. 12

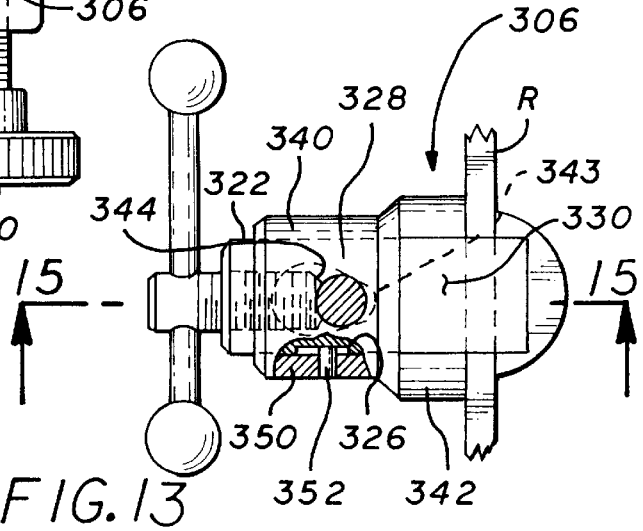

FIG. 13

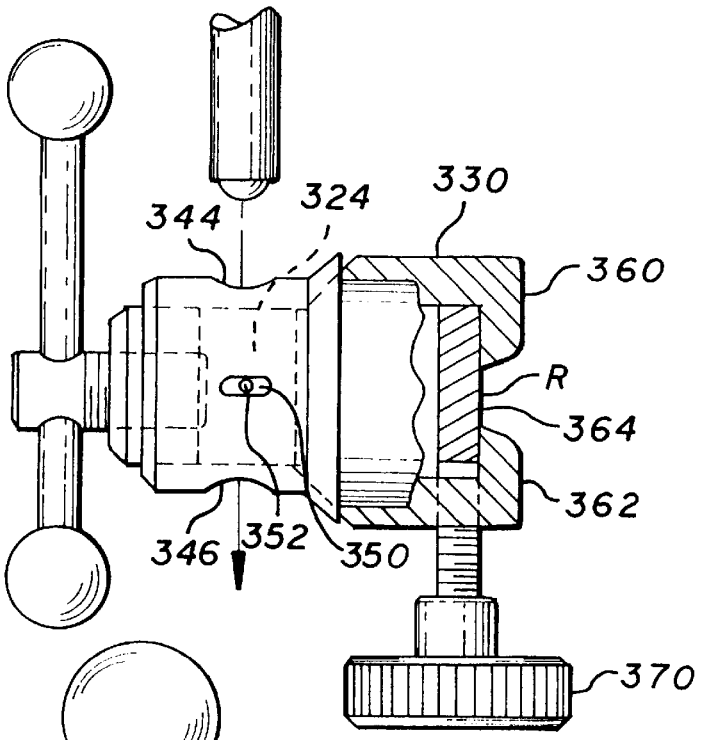
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FIG. 14

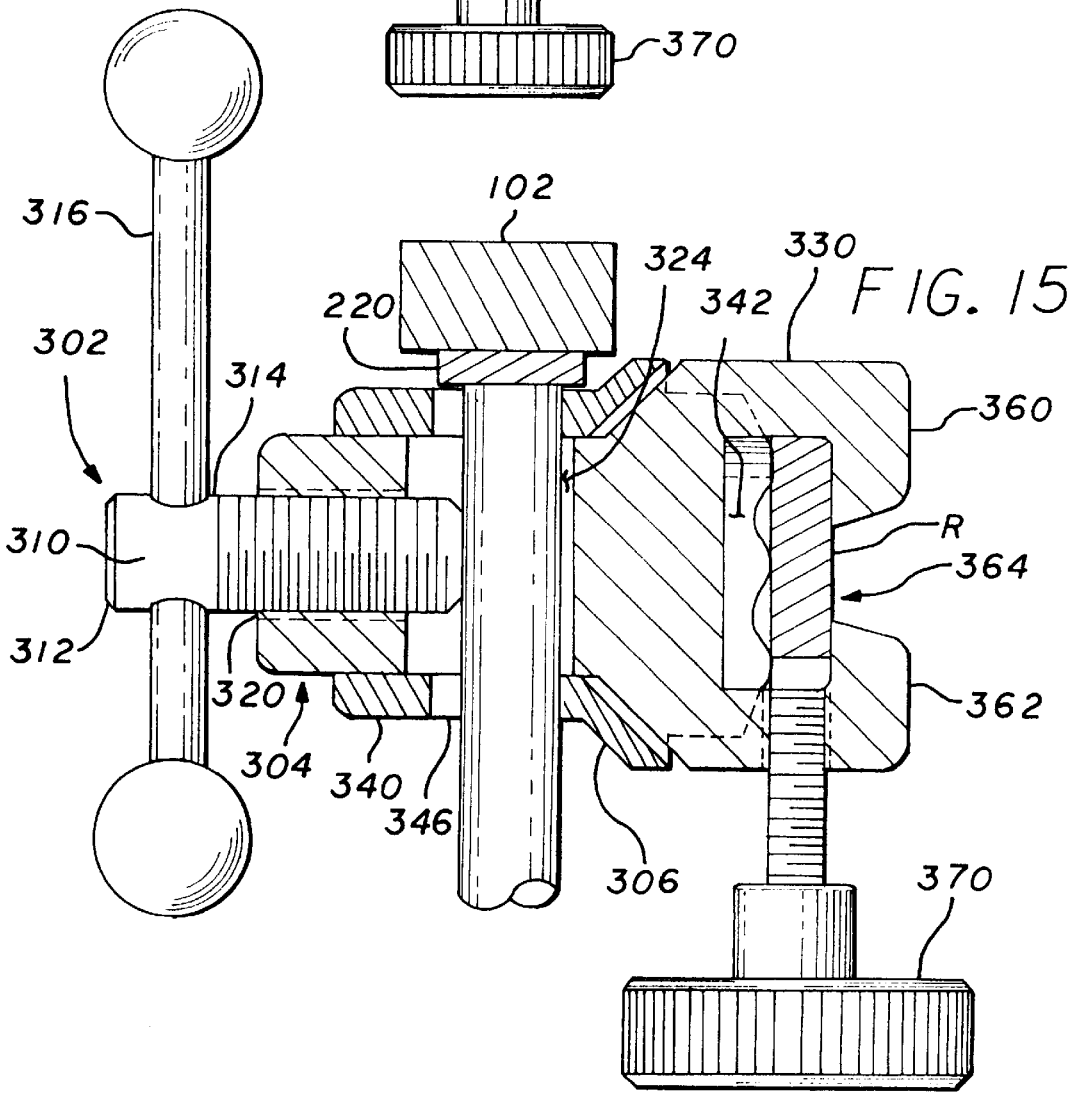
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FIG. 15

ADJUSTABLE SURGICAL FRAME AND UNIVERSAL RAIL CLAMP

This application is a continuation of application Ser. No. 08/108,885, filed on Aug. 18, 1993.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

This invention relates to surgical positioning devices, and more particularly to an adjustable surgical frame to support and stabilize a patient to facilitate spinal surgery.

2. Description of the Related Art

During orthopedic surgery, when the lumbar spine is to be operated on, the patient must be placed in a position which takes pressure off the chest cavity and the abdomen. One commonly used position is the modified knee-chest position where the knees of the patient are not actually positioned against the chest but rather are bent to a right angle with the hips similarly bent to a right angle. A special positioning device is required to maintain a patient in this modified knee-chest position.

One such device was developed by Michelson, U.S. Pat. No. 4,481,943 ('943) issued on Nov. 13, 1984. The '943 patent discloses a surgical frame for use during surgery to position a patient in the modified knee-chest position and reduce the tension on the neural structures during surgery. While the surgical frame of the '943 patent had its advantages, certain short comings became known during its use.

One problem experienced during the use of the '943 frame was that the patient was positioned relatively high with respect to a surgeon of average height. When the '943 frame was placed on an operating table, it sat relatively high on the operating table requiring the surgeon and his assistants to stand on a raised platform or other supporting surface during surgery in order to access the spine of the patient. This set up was relatively dangerous because the surgeon or the assistants could fall from the platform and injure themselves or the patient during the operation. Moreover, the '943 frame could not be adjusted to position the patient in an adequate lowered position to facilitate access to the lumbar spine for a surgeon of average height, especially for taller patients.

Another problem encountered with the '943 frame was that the '943 frame was too bulky and heavy which created problems in storing and transporting the frame. Although the '943 frame had legs with a roller mechanism, the roller mechanism would become impeded by the normal dust and wax present on the operating room floor and would prevent the '943 frame from being rolled so that it had to be carried. Yet another problem encountered by the '943 frame was that it was not attachable to the various types of operating tables used in surgery because it was not adaptable to fit the differing side rail dimensions and inter-rail widths of the various operating tables used in spinal surgery.

A further problem with the '943 frame was that the top portion of its side frame members extended above the level of the patient's spine and would interfere with the area near the wound of the patient, so that during surgery, the surgeon would have to work around the top portion of the side frame members. The top portion of the side frame members would also prevent the use of the '943 frame with peripheral surgical equipment such as an instrument stand, which is normally placed adjacent to the wound site so that a flat working surface adjacent to the wound and level with the height of the spine of the patient is created.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is an adjustable surgical frame for positioning and maintaining a patient in a modified knee-chest position during spinal surgery. The adjustable surgical frame of the present invention comprises two side frame members made from rectangular rods forming a closed loop, disposed in parallel and spaced apart relationship that provide the surgical frame with the predominate portion of its structural integrity. The configuration of the side frame members is such that the base portion of each side frame member is substantially narrower than the base portions of the surgical frames of the past. The reduced width of the base portion permits the surgical frame of the present invention to be placed closer to the end of an operating table so that the patient is also placed closer to the end of the operating table without diminishing the strength and stability of the surgical frame. The side frame members are configured so as not to interfere with the area near the wound and permit the placement of peripheral surgical equipment, such as an instrument stand, adjacent to the wound site and level with the patient's back.

The adjustable surgical frame of the present invention is removably mountable to an operating table by a plurality of pivoting mounting legs pivotally attached to the bottom of the surgical frame. The pivoting legs each have an attachment post that is off-set from the pivotal attachment point of each pivoting leg on the bottom of the surgical frame. The off-set orientation of each attachment post enables the user of the surgical frame of the present invention to alter the position of the attachment posts by simply swiveling the surgical frame about the pivoting legs. As a result, the attachment posts may be positioned so that they may be easily attached to a variety of conventional operating tables having different widths and different distances between the rails located at the sides of the operating tables.

Also, the surgical frame of the present invention may be swiveled about the pivoting legs to extend a portion of the surgical frame past the end of an operating table so that the surgical frame is cantilevered off the end of the operating table. In the cantilevered position, when the operating table is tilted in a reversed 45 degree angle, the surgical frame of the present invention is in a much lower position than was possible with the surgical frames of the past. As a result, the height of the patient being supported by the surgical frame is lower than previously possible and the surgeon has better access to the patient's spine, eliminating the need for the surgeon and his staff to stand on a platform in order to reach the patient's spine during surgery.

Further, the pivoting legs of the surgical frame may be attached to the side rails of an operating table by a plurality of universal rail clamps that are adjustable to fit different types of side rails found in various operating tables currently in use. Each universal rail clamp used to attach the surgical frame of the present invention to an operating table has a universal socket at one end adaptable to attach to a variety of side rails of different sizes. The universal rail clamp is designed so that it may be tightened to secure the attachment post of a pivoting leg and attach to a side rail of an operating table simultaneously by the rotation of a single handle. This one step tightening saves time and facilitates the mounting and adjusting of the surgical frame onto an operating table.

In addition, the surgical frame of the present invention has self-locking, adjustable lateral supports to provide increased stability of the patient in the modified knee-chest position during is surgery. The lateral support panels of the surgical frame of the present invention are also removable and are

attachable to the interior portion of the surgical frame to facilitate shipping and storage.

Finally, the surgical frame of the present invention is lighter and more compact than the surgical frames of the past so that it is easily transportable and may be easily stored.

OBJECTS OF THE PRESENT INVENTION

It is an object of the present invention to provide an adjustable surgical frame for use in surgery that has pivoting legs for supporting and mounting the adjustable surgical frame in different positions on an operating table by swiveling the frame about pivoting legs.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide an adjustable surgical frame for use in surgery that is universally mountable to the various types of operating tables.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a rail clamp for attaching the surgical frame to a operating table having a socket that is universally adaptable to fit a variety of operating tables having different sizes of side rails.

It is yet another object of the present invention to provide an adjustable surgical frame for use in surgery that can be cantilevered off one end of an operating table.

It is also an object of the present invention to provide an adjustable surgical frame for use in surgery that provides adjustable self-locking lateral supports for the hips of a patient during spinal surgery.

It is still another object of the present invention to provide an adjustable surgical frame for use in surgery with removable lateral support panels.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide an adjustable surgical frame that is light weight, compact and easy to store.

It is yet a further object of the present invention to provide an adjustable surgical frame for use in surgery that is compact, low profile and non-intrusive into the surgical field.

It is still a further object of the present invention to provide an adjustable surgical frame for use in surgery that has pivoting legs having an improved rolling means at the end of the pivoting legs.

These and other objects of the present invention shall be more clear upon review of the detailed description of the drawings and the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is a lateral view of the adjustable surgical frame of the present invention mounted to an operating table, with a patient placed in a proper position thereon.

FIG. **2** is a rear perspective view of the adjustable surgical frame of the present invention.

FIG. **3** is a view of the interior side of a lateral support panel of the adjustable surgical frame of the present invention.

FIG. **4** is a view of the exterior side of a lateral support panel of the adjustable surgical frame of the present invention.

FIG. **5** is an exploded view of a locking mechanism for attaching the lateral support panel to the adjustable surgical frame of the present invention.

FIG. **6** is a bottom end view of the adjustable surgical frame of the present invention with the lateral support panels attached to the side facing away from the patient for shipping and storage purposes.

FIG. **7** is a bottom sectional view of a pivoting leg attached and parallel to the bottom of a side frame member of the adjustable surgical frame of the present invention.

FIG. **8** is a cross section view along lines **8—8** of FIG. **7** showing the attachment of a pivoting leg to the bottom of a side frame member of the adjustable surgical frame with a hex bolt and a hex nut.

FIG. **9** is a bottom sectional view of the pivoting leg attached and perpendicular to the bottom of a side frame member of the adjustable surgical frame of the present invention.

FIG. **10** is an enlarged view of the bottom tip of the pivoting leg having caster at its end.

FIG. **10A** is a cross sectional view along lines **1OA—10A** of FIG. **10** of the caster of the pivoting leg.

FIG. **11** is a lateral view of the adjustable surgical frame of the present invention attached to the end of a operating table.

FIG. **12** is an enlarged cross sectional view along lines **12—12** of FIG. **11** showing a universal clamp attached to the side rails of an operating table and attached to a pivoting leg of the adjustable surgical frame of the present invention.

FIG. **13** is a cross sectional view of the universal clamp along lines **13—13** of FIG. **12**.

FIG. **14** is a lateral view of the universal clamp of the present invention with a partial cross section showing the attachment of the universal clamp to the side rail of an operating table and showing the direction of insertion of the attachment post of a pivoting leg.

FIG. **15** is a cross sectional view along lines **15—15** of FIG. **13** of the universal clamp with the attachment post of a pivoting leg inserted into the clamp.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Referring to FIGS. **1** and **2**, the adjustable surgical frame **100** of the present invention is shown in use as contemplated. The patient P lies on the operating table in a hips-up, shoulders-down position. In order to accommodate the anesthetized patient P for an extended period of time, the operating table is tilted downwards to a reverse Trendelenburg position at approximately a 45 degree angle. At this angle, the patient's back is generally horizontal to the floor. The patient's arms are placed out of the way, as shown in FIG. **1**.

As seen in FIG. **2**, the surgical frame **100** has two side frame members **102,104** made from rectangular rods forming a closed loop that provide the surgical frame **100** with the predominate portion of its structural integrity. The side frame members **102,104** each have vertical front side rods **106,108**, horizontal lower side rods **110,112**, vertical rear side rods **126,128**, angled rear side rods **114,116** and horizontal upper side rods **118,120**.

The vertical front side rods **106,108** are substantially longer than the vertical rear side rods **126,128** and the horizontal lower side rods **110,112** are substantially longer than the horizontal upper side rods **118,120** so that the angular side rods **114,116** must be at an angle in order to connect the ends of the vertical front side rods to the vertical rear side rods.

In the preferred embodiment, the vertical front side rods **106,108** are each approximately 22 inches long, the vertical rear side rods **126,128** are each approximately 11 inches long, the horizontal lower side rods **110,112** are each approximately 12 inches long, the horizontal upper side rods **118,120** are approximately 3 inches long and the angular rear side rods **114,116** are each approximately 14 inches long.

In this configuration, the distance between the vertical front side rods **106,108** and the rear vertical side rods **126,128** is decreased to almost one half the distance that was present in the surgical frames of the past. In the preferred embodiment this distance is approximately 12 inches, equal to the length of the horizontal lower side rods **110,112**. A major advantage of this configuration is that when the surgical frame **100** is positioned at the end of an operating table T, the surface of the surgical frame **100** that supports the posterior of the patient may be placed closer to the end of the operating table T and thus lowers the height of the patient's spine when the table is pitched 45 degrees. The closer to the end of the operating table that the patient is placed, the lower is the position of the patient's spine which gives better access to the surgeon, thus eliminating the need for a surgeon to stand on a stool or similar supporting device in order to access the spine of the patient in the modified knee-chest position. Another advantage that results from the reduced distance between the vertical front side rods **106, 108** and the vertical rear side rods **126,128**, is that the surgical frame **100** is lighter while the overall strength and stability of the surgical frame is increased.

Connecting the two side frame members **102,104** between the vertical front side rods **106,108** are a padded horizontal major posterior support bar **140** and an adjustable minor posterior support bar **142**. A rear cross bar **144** approximately 25½ inches long and 3 inches wide connects the angled rear side rods **114** and **116**.

The major posterior support bar **140** serves to support the posterior of a patient and has an upper panel **160** and a lower panel **162**. Both panels are approximately 25½ inches long and 4½ inches wide and span the distance between the two side frame members **102,104**. The major posterior support bar **140** is bolted or otherwise rigidly attached to the side frame members **102,104**.

The major posterior support bar **140** is attached to the side frame members **102,104** so that the upper panel **160** does not extend above the horizontal upper side rods **118,120**. Each panel **160,162** of the major posterior support bar **140** has a padded outer side **164,166** and a metal inner side **168,170** which provides structural support to the surgical frame **100**. The padded outer sides **164,166** are covered by a protective coating of FDA approved medical grade closed cell foam, although any gas-sterilizable, waterproof, bacteria resistant, non-toxic padding may be used.

The dual panel construction (upper and lower panels **160,162**) provides increased strength to more rigidly support the posterior of the patient and adds stability to the surgical frame **100**. In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the upper and lower panels **160,162** are constructed of a 1.0 mm thick sheet metal, that has a 7.0 mm edge bent at a right angle to the rest of the panel throughout the perimeter of each panel. By having two panels, the middle of the major posterior support bar **140** corresponds to the junction of the upper and lower panels **160,162** where the bent edges of each panel are adjacent to each other and provide a section of sheet metal that is perpendicular to the plane of the panels **160,162** so that the middle of the major posterior support bar **140** better resists the forces exerted by a patient positioned on the surgical frame. Thus the middle area of the major posterior support bar **140**, the area in which the patient comes into the most contact with, is more rigid and the overall stability of the surgical frame **100** is increased.

The minor posterior support bar **142** is similar in construction to the major posterior support **140** but comprises a single panel. A sturdy inner side **172** of minor posterior support bar **142** is covered by a padded outer side **174**. The inner side **172** of the minor posterior support bar **142** also provides structural support to the surgical frame **100**.

The minor posterior support bar **142** is adjustable and lockable as it slides up and down the front of the surgical frame **100** along vertical front side rods **106,108**. The minor posterior support bar **142** has clamps **143,145** riveted on each end thereof for fixing the minor posterior support bar **142** on the vertical front side rods **106,108**. The clamps **143,145** slidably surround the vertical front side rods **106, 108**. However, any movable means capable of being repeatedly affixed in a locked position can be used in lieu of the clamps **143,145**.

In order to lock the minor posterior support bar **142** in place, a pair of thumbscrews **175,176** are positioned at the ends of the minor posterior support bar **142** and are screwed into the threaded holes **122,124** of the minor posterior support bar **142**. Thumbscrews **175,176** extend toward and ultimately come into contact with the front vertical side rods **106,108** of the side frame members **102,104**. As the thumbscrews **175,176** engage the two side frame members **102, 104**, they hold the minor posterior support bar **142** in place.

Shown in FIGS. **3** and **4**, are lateral support panels **182,184** which are angular in nature. The lateral support panels **182,184** are mirror images of each other and the description of one also sets forth the description of the other.

Lateral support panel **184** has three basic components: a padded side support **190**, a slotted attachment bar **192**, and a transition bar **194** that mediates the distance between the padded side support **190** and the slotted attachment bar **192**. The padded side support **190** comprises a rigid side support piece **191** made of metal and a side pad **195** affixed to the front of the side support piece **191**. The side pad **195** is made from a high indentation force deflection foam covered by an outer cover. The padded side support **190** is spaced away from and is at a right angle to the attachment bar **192**. The attachment bar **192** has a slot **212** along its length towards its lower edge, and has a lower portion **193** that is wider than the rest of the attachment bar **192**.

The transition bar **194** is welded or bolted along the length of its back end **196** to the lower portion **193** of the attachment bar **192**. The transition bar **194** angles away from the attachment bar **192** for a short distance along a middle portion **198**, and then angles away from its middle portion **198** along the length of its front end **200**. The front end **200** of transition bar **194** is attached along its length to the side support piece **191** of padded side support **190**. The transition bar **194** is attached along its back end **196** and front end **200** in order to provide greater and more secure support for the patient P while the side support **184** panel is in use.

Referring to FIG. **6**, located on the inner side **170** of the major posterior support bar **140** are two identical locks **178,180**. The locks are positioned on the inner side **170** so that the two lateral support panels **182,184** can engage the locks **178,180**. Thumbscrews **186,188** lock each of the lateral support panels **182,184** in place.

The lock **178** is shown in greater detail FIG. **5**. The lock **178** has a threaded hole **202** at one end to receive the threaded screw portion **204** of thumbscrew **186**. The top end **206** of the lock **178** extends away from the inner side **170** of the major posterior support bar **140** to provide space for the slotted attachment bar **192** of the side support **182**. The main portion **208** of the lock **178** defines a space **210** between it and the inner side **170** of the major posterior support bar **140** that receives the portion of the attachment bar **192** above the

slot **212**. A slot runner **214** projects inwardly toward the inner side **170** from the lower part of the main lock portion **208**. The slot runner **214** is shorter than the top end **206** of the lock **178** and fits into the slot **212** when the attachment bar **192** is inserted into the space **210** between the lock **178** and the inner side **170** of the major posterior support bar **140**.

For use during surgery, the lateral support panels **182** and **184** are inserted into the locks **178,180** so that the lateral support panels **182,184** extend from the outer side **171** of the major posterior support bar **140** with the padded side support **190** facing inwardly toward the patient as shown in FIG. **11**.

The lateral support panels **182,184** of the present invention are novel in that they are self-locking as a result of the angled attachment of the side support **190** to the attachment bar **192** which orients the side support **190** in a cantilevered position with respect to the attachment bar **192**. When a patient is positioned between the lateral support panels **182,184**, so that the hips of the patient contact the side support **190** of the lateral support panels **182,184** a perpendicular force due to the patient's weight is exerted on the side support **190**. This force causes the side support **190** to move in a direction away from the patient so that the end of the attachment bar **192** to which the transition bar **194** is attached, bends slightly in that same general direction. The attachment bar **192** is located within the lock **178** where the space between the lock **178** and the inner side **170** is just slightly greater than the width of the attachment bar **192**. When the attachment bar **192** bends as a result of the force exerted by the patient on the side support **190**, the attachment bar **192** contacts the inside of the lock **178** at an angle so that the attachment bar **192** jams within the lock **178** and no longer slides within the lock **178**.

In addition, the major posterior support bar **140** is made of a thin, flexible material, preferably stainless steel, which is torques as force is applied by the attachment bar **192** against the lock **178**. This torsion of the major posterior support bar **140** further restricts the movement of the attachment bar **192** within the lock **178** because the inner side **170** of the lower panel **162** of the major posterior support bar **140** is no longer flat, but distorted as a result of the torsion forces. The distortion of the lower panel **162** causes the space between the lock and the inner side **170** to no longer have a uniform cross section throughout and further hinders the movement of the attachment bar **192** within the lock **178**. Thus, the attachment bar **192** becomes "locked" within the lock **178**.

The cantilevered orientation of the side support **190** with respect to the attachment bar **192** together with the torsion of the lower panel **162** of the major posterior support bar **140** creates an instant self-locking means for locking the lateral support panels **182,184** in place as soon as the patient's hips contact the side support **190** of the lateral support panels **182,184**. When the patient is no longer exerting any force on the side support **190**, the attachment bar **192** is no longer bent and can again slide within the lock **178**.

Once the desired position for the lateral support panels **182,184** has been attained, and the support panels **182,184** are self-locked, as a precaution the thumbscrews **186,188** are tightened to securely fix the lateral support panels **182,184** into place. Once fixed, the lateral support panels **182,184** do not move as the fit of the attachment bar **192** between the locks **178,180**, and the inner side **170** is very close.

For storage or shipping purposes, the lateral support panels **182,184** are inserted into the locks **178,180** so that the lateral support panels **182,184** extend from the inner side **170** of the major posterior support bar **140** as shown in FIG. **6**. In this position, the lateral support panels **182,184** project into the interior space present between the end frame members **102,104** with each of the lateral support panels **182,184** locked into its correspondingly opposite lock **180,178**. When the lateral support panels **182,184** are positioned in this manner, the surgical frame **100** is more easily stored. Further, the rear cross bar **144** in addition to providing increased structural integrity to the surgical frame **100**, also acts as a guide to align the lateral support panels **182,184** when they are mounted so that they extend from the inner side **170** of the major posterior support bar **140**. As the pivoting legs **146,148,150,152**, described in detail below, are also removable, the surgical frame **100** can be stored and transported in a conveniently modular manner without obstructing projections.

The features of the removable pivoting legs **146,148,150, 152** are shown in detail in FIGS. **7–10**. Pivoting leg **146** is identical in construction to the other legs **148,150,152** so that they are interchangeable. The pivoting leg **146** has an extension plate **220** that receives a hex bolt **215** at one end and has an attachment post **222** that projects perpendicularly from the other end of the extension plate **220**. The extension plate **220** is flat and fits closely with the horizontal lower side rods **110,112** of the side frame members **102,104**. In order to loosen and secure the pivoting leg **146**, the hex bolt **215** attaches the extension plate **220** of the pivoting leg **146** to the bottom of the side frame members **102,104**. The hex bolt **215** may be tightened or loosened by a hex key K. FIGS. **7** and **9** show the pivoting leg **146** pivoting about the central axis of the hex bolt **215** with respect to side frame member **102**.

In the preferred embodiment, the extension plate **220** is approximately two inches long and three quarters of an inch wide, and is made of surgical stainless steel. The attachment post **222** of the pivoting leg **146** is approximately six inches long so that it may fit within a securing device such as a universal rail clamp **300** as set forth below. As shown in FIG. **10**, at the end of the attachment post **222** is a caster **224**. The caster **224** articulates within the attachment post **222** so that the attachment post **222** may more easily travel over the surfaces which the caster **224** comes into contact with. As shown in FIG. **10**A, the caster **224** has a ball **225** within a recess **226** surrounded by five bearings **227** located in a race **228**. The ball **225** sits on the bearings **227** so that the ball **225** easily rolls within the caster **224** even in the presence of dust or wax normally found on an operating room floor.

The pivoting legs **146,148,150,152** pivot about the central axis of the hex bolt **215** to enable the surgical frame **100** to swivel in an adjustable range of positions with respect to the operating table T. As the hex bolt **215** is offset from the attachment post **222** by a distance approximately equal to the length of the extension plate **220**, the surgical frame **100** may be swiveled so that it is adjustable and may be secured to a number of differing widths of operating tables. Along the sides of most modern surgical operating tables are side rails R to which a number of devices for use in surgery may be securely fixed with respect to the patient for the duration of the operation. However, not all of the side rails R of operating tables are spaced apart from each other at the same distance. The distance of the extension plate **220** on each of the pivoting legs **146,148,150,152** extends or reduces the attachment points of the side frame members **102,104** by a maximum approximately equal to the length of the extension plate **220** and any distance in between that maximum length so that the attachment points may reach the side rails R.

For example, if the surgical frame **100** were to be mounted to side rails R that are spaced apart a distance that is wider

than the distance between the two side frame members **102,104**, the surgical frame **100** may be pivoted about the central axis of the hex bolt **215** so that the extension plate **220** extends away from the side frame member **102** or **104** as shown in FIG. **9**. In this position, the attachment post **222** reaches the side rail R and may be secured to the side rail R by a securing means such as a clamp. Depending on the distance separating the side rails R of the operating table, the surgical frame **100** may be swiveled so that the pivoting legs **146,148,150,152** on one side frame member **102** or **104** may be pivoted or the pivoting legs on both side frame members **102,104** may be pivoted to extend the extension plate **220** of all of the pivoting legs. Conversely, if the side rails R are spaced apart at a distance that is less than the distance between the side frame members **102,104**, then the surgical frame **100** may be swiveled so that the extension plate **220** extends towards the interior of the surgical frame **100**. If the distance between the side rails R is equal to the distance between the side frame members **102,104**, then the surgical frame **100** is swiveled so that the extension plates **220** are parallel to the horizontal lower support rods **110,112** of side frame member **102,104** and the attachment posts **222** are aligned to correspond to the width of the side rails R.

It is appreciated that the length of the extension plate **220** may be varied so that the surgical frame **100** may be attached to a variety of operating tables having different widths and thus different distances separating the side rails R. It also appreciated that the attachment post **222** may be pivoted along a circle having a radius equal to the distance between the attachment post **222** and the hex bolt **215** so that it may be positioned at any angle in between the perpendicular and the parallel to the horizontal lower side rods **110,112** of the side frame members **102,104** and attach to a variety of different distances separating the side rails R. Thus, the surgical frame **100** is universally adaptable to attach to virtually any conventional operating table.

Another feature of the pivoting legs **146,148,150,152** is the ability to extend part of the surgical frame **100** off the end of an operating table. The rearmost end **400** of the surgical frame **100** may be extended beyond the edge **410** of the operating table T by swiveling the surgical frame **100** on the pivoting legs **146,148,150,152** so that the surgical frame **100** is cantilevered to extend beyond the point of attachment on the operating table a distance approximately equal to the distance between the attachment post **222** and the hex bolt **215** on the extension plate **220** as shown in FIG. **11**. This arrangement, together with the 45 degree pitch of the operating table, significantly lowers the height of the patient so that the spine is at a lower height than previously possible providing a surgeon with easy access to the spine so that a supporting platform such as a stool is no longer needed by the surgeon to reach the spine of the patient.

For example, pivoting legs **146,148,150,152** having an extension plate **220** that is approximately 6 inches long may be used to cantilever the surgical frame **100** approximately 5 inches (the distance between the attachment post **222** and the hex bolt **215**) from the end of the operating table T. If the operating table T is then tilted in a reverse 45 degree angle, the height of the patient P relative to the floor is lowered by approximately 5 inches as a result of the 5 inch cantilever of the surgical frame **100** in accordance with the Pythagorean theorem. It is appreciated that various pivoting legs having varying lengths of extension plates **220** may be used in order to further vary the height of the patient P when the surgical frame **100** is cantilevered from the end of an operating table T.

In addition, the attachment post **222** also serves to vary the height of the surgical frame **100** relative to the operating table to accommodate patients of different heights. For example, in the preferred embodiment the attachment post **222** is approximately six inches in length so that the surgical frame **10** may be raised from the operating table by approximately six inches for use with taller patients. Conversely, or the surgical frame **100** may be lowered so that the bottom of the side frame members **102,104** rests on the operating table for use with shorter patients. It is appreciated that the height of the surgical frame **100** may be adjusted by varying the point of attachment to the operating table T along the length of the attachment post **222** so that it is positioned at various heights relative to the surface of the operating table T.

Having set forth the elements and features of the surgical frame **100**, the description of the universal rail clamp **300** as shown in FIGS. **11–15** is now set forth.

Many devices that are used in the operating room that are commonly attached to operating table side rails R have standardized components which allow some predictability with respect to the requirements necessary for a rail clamp. However, as the side rails R differ in size especially with the different operating tables used in Europe, there is a need for a clamp having a socket capable of being attached to sides rails R having a variety of different heights.

FIG. **11** shows the surgical frame **100** attached to an operating table T. As shown in FIGS. **12–15**, a universal rail clamp **300** for attaching devices to the operating table T has three main portions: a crank **302**, an inner rail-engaging member **304**, and an outer rail-engaging member **306**. The outer rail-engaging member **306** has an outer sleeve **340**. The inner rail-engaging member **304** has a block **322** and a universal socket **330**.

The crank **302** has a threaded bolt **310** which threads into the block **322** through threaded block hole **320**. The unthreaded end **312** of the threaded bolt **310** has a hole **314** through which the shaft **315** of a handle **316** is slidably attached.

The block **322** of the inner rail-engaging member **304** has an internal instrument space **324** through which a portion of an instrument or device such as an attachment post **222** to be clamped to the side rails R may pass. The instrument space **324** is typically vertical and perpendicular to the block hole **320**. The block hole **320** communicates with the instrument space **324** so that the threaded bolt **310** comes into contact with an instrument or device present in the instrument space **324**.

The outer sleeve **340** of the outer rail-engaging member **306** fits slidably over the block **322** and encloses the instrument space **324**. The outer sleeve **340** has on either side of, and coaxial with the instrument space **324** two holes **344,346** through which a portion of a device (in this case the attachment post **222** of the surgical frame **100**) may pass entirely through the rail clamp **300**. As seen in FIGS. **12, 14**, and **15**, the attachment post **222** passes through the top hole **344**, through the instrument space **324**, and through the bottom hole **346**. The diameter of the holes **344,346** is slightly smaller than the diameter of the instrument space **324** and the two holes **344,346** have rounded edges **343** for conforming to the curvature of the attachment post **222**, toward the rail-engaging end of the universal rail clamp **300**.

While the outer sleeve **340** encloses the instrument space **324** and surrounds a portion of the inner rail-engaging member **304**, the outer sleeve **340** is not bonded or permanently affixed to the inner rail-engaging member **304** but slidably engages the inner rail-engaging member **304**. The range of this sliding engagement between the outer sleeve **340** and the inner rail-engaging member **304** is determined

by a channel **350** cut within the outer sleeve **340**. A pin **352** descends into the channel **350** and is connected to the inner rail-engaging member **304**. As the pin **352** cannot escape from the channel **350**, the confinement of the pin **352** by the channel **350** also determines the sliding displacement enjoyed between the inner rail-engaging member **304** and the outer sleeve **340**.

The universal socket **330** of the universal clamp **300** has an upper jaw **360** and a lower jaw **362** which are spaced apart at a predetermined and fixed distance so that the opening **364** between the two jaws is slightly smaller than the height of the smallest side rail R typically used in an operating table. In the preferred embodiment, the distance of the opening **364** between the upper jaw **360** and the lower jaw **362** is approximately 11/16 inches and ensures that once the universal socket **330** is placed on the free end of the rail R, it cannot come off at any other portion along the side rail R as the rail R cannot pass through the opening **364**.

The opening **364** also permits the universal socket **330** to pass over securing pins that are typically used to secure the side rails R to the sides of an operating table. This feature permits the attachment of the universal rail clamp **300** at the free end of the side rails R after which the universal rail clamp **300** can be moved over to any location on the side rails R without being removed from the side rails R and unimpeded by the securing pins that pass through the opening **364**.

When a device is passed through the universal rail clamp **300**, the crank **302** is turned to tighten the universal rail clamp **300** upon the device and to secure the universal rail clamp **300** to the side rail R. As the crank **302** turns, the threaded bolt **310** descends into the threaded block hole **320** to engage the portion of the device present within the instrument space **324**. As the threaded bolt **310** presses against the device portion, the device portion simultaneously presses against and pushes the outer sleeve **340** of the outer rail-engaging member **306** at the rounded edges **343** of the holes **344,346** while the threaded bolt **310** pulls on the block **322** of the inner rail-engaging member **304**. As the side rail R is located between the inner **304** and outer **306** rail-engaging members, the tightening of the threaded bolt **310** causes an excursion of the outer sleeve **340** toward the side rail R and compresses the side rail R between the inner **304** and outer **306** rail-engaging members. In this way, a very secure attachment is achieved between the device and the universal rail clamp **300** as well as between the universal rail clamp **300** and the side rail R. The device portion is securely entrapped between the threaded bolt **310** and the outer sleeve **340** of the outer rail-engaging member **306**. The side rail R is securely entrapped between the inner **304** and outer **306** rail-engaging members.

The height of the surgical frame **100** can be further adjusted by inserting only a portion of the attachment post **222** through the instrument space **324** universal rail clamp **300** to keep the surgical frame **100** positioned relatively high on the operating table T. If it is desired to lower the surgical frame **100**, a larger portion of the attachment post **222** may be inserted through the instrument space **324** of the universal rail clamp **300**.

If it is desired to keep the universal rail clamp **300** fixed to the side rail R after the universal clamp **300** is untightened so that the side rail R is no longer securely entrapped between the inner **304** and outer **30** rail-engaging members, a thumbscrew **370** which is threaded into the lower jaw **362** may be tightened to firmly engage the side rail R against the upper jaw **360** of the universal socket **330** and the end of the thumbscrew **370**. The thumb screw **370** may be used to position the universal clamp **300** at a desired location on the side rails R prior to inserting a device portion or the attachment post **222** of one of the pivoting legs **146,148, 150,152**.

While the present invention has been described in detail with regards to the preferred embodiment, it is appreciated that other variations of the present invention may be devised which do not depart from the inventive concept of the present invention.

What is claimed is:

1. An adjustable surgical frame for supporting a patient during spinal surgery on an operating table having side rails, comprising:

first and second side frame members each comprising a forward vertical member and a bottom horizontal member, said first and said second side frame members set apart in a parallel relationship;

means for supporting the posterior of the patient;

a plurality of pivoting legs pivotally attached to each of said first and said second side frame members, the position of said pivoting legs being movable relative to said first and said second side frame members;

said first and said second side frame members comprising a top horizontal member parallel to said bottom horizontal member, a rearward vertical member parallel to said forward vertical member, and an angled rearward member connected to said top horizontal member and connected to said rear vertical member.

2. The adjustable surgical frame of claim **1** in which said means for supporting the posterior of the patient includes at least one major posterior support member connected and extending from said first side frame member to said second side frame member at said forward vertical members.

3. The adjustable surgical frame of claim **1** further comprising an adjustable minor posterior support member slideably connected to said forward vertical members of said first and said second side frame members, said adjustable minor support member capable of being fixed at any position along said forward vertical members.

4. The adjustable surgical frame of claim **1** further comprising means for removably mounting the adjustable surgical frame to a variety of conventional operating tables having different widths and different distances between the side rails.

5. The adjustable surgical frame of claim **1** including means for adjusting the height of said adjustable surgical frame relative to the surface of an operating table.

6. An adjustable surgical frame for supporting a patient during spinal surgery on an operating table having side rails, comprising:

first and second side frame members each comprising a forward vertical member and a bottom horizontal member, said first and said second side frame members set apart in a parallel relationship;

means for supporting the posterior of the patient;

a plurality of pivoting legs pivotally attached to each of said first and said second frame members;

a pair of lateral support panels for supporting the hips of a patient on the adjustable surgical frame, said lateral panels extending from said forward vertical member for supporting the sides of a patient's hips;

said lateral support panels comprising a side support member, an attachment bar, and a transition bar attaching said side support member at an angle to said attachment bar.

7. The adjustable surgical frame of claim 6 in which said pair of lateral support panels include a self-locking means.

8. The adjustable surgical frame of claim 7 in which said self-locking means comprises a pair of locks positioned on said major posterior support member, each of said pair of locks having means for receiving and holding said attachment bar, said attachment bar being slideably inserted within said means for receiving and holding.

9. An adjustable surgical frame for supporting a patient during spinal surgery on an operating table having side rails, comprising:

first and second side frame members each comprising a forward vertical member and a bottom horizontal member, said first and said second side frame members set apart in a parallel relationship;

means for supporting the posterior of the patient;

a plurality of pivoting legs pivotally attached to each of said first and said second frame members, said plurality of pivoting legs each including an extension plate, each said extension plate includes means for pivotally attaching each said extension plate to one of said first and said second side frame members and an attachment post, said means for pivotally attaching being offset from said attachment post along said extension plate.

10. The adjustable surgical frame of claim 9 in which the position of said attachment post relative to said first and said second side frame members is changed by pivoting said extension plate about said means for pivotally attaching.

11. The adjustable surgical frame of claim 9 in which each of said plurality of pivoting legs includes a caster means at the end of each said attachment posts for rollably moving said adjustable surgical frame.

12. An adjustable surgical frame for supporting a patient during spinal surgery on an operating table having side rails, comprising:

first and second side frame members each comprising a forward vertical member and a bottom horizontal member, said first and said second side frame members set apart in a parallel relationship, said first and said second side frame members further comprising a top horizontal member parallel to said bottom horizontal member, a rearward vertical member parallel to said forward vertical member, an angled rearward member connected to said top horizontal member and connected to said rear vertical member;

at least one major posterior support member connected and extending from said first side frame member to said second side frame member at said forward vertical members;

a plurality of legs extending downward from said bottom horizontal members, said legs being pivotably attached to said bottom horizontal members; and

a plurality of universal rail clamps for removably mounting the surgical frame to a variety of conventional operating tables having different widths and different sized side rails.

13. An adjustable surgical frame for supporting a patient during spinal surgery on an operating table having side rails, comprising:

first and second side frame members each comprising a forward vertical member and a bottom horizontal member, said bottom horizontal member being substantially shorter than said forward vertical member said first and said second side frame members set apart in a parallel relationship;

at least one major posterior support member connected and extending from said first side frame member to said second side frame member at said forward vertical members;

a plurality of legs extending downward from said bottom horizontal members;

a plurality of universal rail clamps for removably mounting the surgical frame to a variety of conventional operating tables having different widths and different sized side rails;

a pair of lateral support panels for supporting the hips of a patient on the adjustable surgical frame, said lateral panels extending from said major posterior support member for supporting the sides of a patient's hips;

said lateral support panels comprising a side support member, an attachment bar, and a transition bar attaching said side support member at an angle to said attachment bar.

14. The adjustable surgical frame of claim 13 in which said pair of lateral support panels include a self-locking means.

15. The adjustable surgical frame of claim 14 in which said self-locking means comprises a pair of locks positioned on said major posterior support member, each of said pair of locks having means for receiving and holding said attachment bar, said attachment bar being slideably inserted within said means for receiving and holding.

16. An adjustable surgical frame for supporting a patient during spinal surgery on an operating table having side rails comprising:

first and second side frame members each comprising a closed loop having a forward vertical member and a bottom horizontal member, said first and said second side frame members set apart in a parallel relationship, said first and said second side frame members further comprising a top horizontal member parallel to said bottom horizontal member, a rearward vertical member parallel to said forward vertical member, an angled rearward member connected to said top horizontal member and connected to said rear vertical member;

at least one major posterior support member connected and extending from said first said side frame member to said second side frame member at said forward vertical members;

an adjustable minor posterior support member slideably connected to said forward vertical members of said first and said second side frame members, said adjustable minor support member capable of being fixed at any position along said forward vertical members;

a plurality of pivoting legs pivotally attached to said first and said second side frame members, said pivoting legs extending downward from said bottom horizontal members, said legs being pivotably attached to said bottom horizontal members; and

a plurality of universal rail clamps for removably mounting the adjustable surgical frame to a variety of conventional operating tables having different widths and different sized side rails.

17. An adjustable surgical frame for supporting a patient during spinal surgery on an operating table having side rails, comprising:

first and second side frame members each comprising a closed loop having a forward vertical member and a bottom horizontal member, said first and said second side frame members set apart in a parallel relationship;

at least one major posterior support member connected and extending from said first said side frame member to said second side frame member at said forward vertical members;

an adjustable minor posterior support member slideably connected to said forward vertical members of said first and said second side frame members, said adjustable minor support member capable of being fixed at any position along said forward vertical members;

a plurality of pivoting legs Pivotally attached to said first and said second side frame members, said pivoting legs extending downward from said bottom horizontal members;

a plurality of universal rail clamps for removably mounting the adjustable surgical frame to a variety of conventional operating tables having different widths and different sized side rails;

a means for adjusting the height of said adjustable surgical frame relative to the surface of an operating table;

a pair of lateral support panels for supporting the hips of a patient on the adjustable surgical frame, said lateral panels extending from said major posterior support member for supporting the sides of a patient's hips;

said lateral support panels comprising a side support member, an attachment bar, and a transition bar attaching said side support member at an angle to said attachment bar.

18. The adjustable surgical frame of claim **17** in which said pair of lateral support panels include a self-locking means.

19. The adjustable surgical frame of claim **18** in which said self-locking means comprises a pair of locks positioned on said major posterior support member, each of said pair of locks having means for receiving and holding said attachment bar, said attachment bar being slideably inserted within said means for receiving and holding.

20. An adjustable surgical frame for supporting a patient during spinal surgery on an operating table having side rails, comprising:

first and second side frame members each comprising a forward vertical member and a bottom horizontal member, said first and said second side frame members set apart in a parallel relationship;

at least one major posterior support member connected and extending from said first side frame member to said second side frame member at said forward vertical members;

a plurality of legs extending downward from said bottom horizontal members, said legs being pivotably attached to said bottom horizontal members, said plurality of pivoting legs each including an extension plate; and

a plurality of universal rail clamps for removably mounting the surgical frame to a variety of conventional operating tables having different widths and different sized side rails.

21. The adjustable surgical frame of claim **20** in which each of said plurality of pivoting legs includes a caster means at the end of each said attachment posts for rollably moving said adjustable surgical frame.

22. A surgical frame for supporting a patient during spinal surgery on an operating table, comprising:

first and second side frame members each comprising a closed loop having a forward vertical member, a bottom horizontal member, a top horizontal member parallel to said bottom horizontal member, a rearward vertical member parallel to said forward vertical member, an angled rearward member connected to said top horizontal member and connected to said rear vertical member, said first and said second side frame members set apart in a parallel relationship;

at least one major posterior support member connected to said first and said second side frame members at said forward vertical members;

a pair of lateral support panels for supporting the hips of a patient on the surgical frame, said lateral panels extending from said major posterior support member for supporting the sides of a patient's hips; said lateral support panels comprising a side support member, an attachment bar, and a transition bar attaching said side support member at an angle to said attachment bar.

23. The surgical frame of claim **22** in which said pair of lateral support panels include a self-locking means.

24. The surgical frame of claim **23** in which said self-locking means comprises a pair of locks positioned on said major posterior support member, each of said pair of locks having means for receiving and holding said attachment bar, said attachment bar being slideably inserted within said means for receiving and holding.

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