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(54) Title: METHODS, DEVICES, AND PREPARATIONS FOR INTERVERTEBRAL DISC TREATMENT

(57) Abstract: A therapeutic method for treating mammalian intervertebral discs (30). A preparation of cross-linked collagen (39) is injected under pressure into the intradiscal space. The intervertebral distance in injected discs is immediately increased by the treatment. At least some mechanical properties of the treated vertebral column are preserved or partially restored. The method may be used to relieve back pain in patients, to increase patient height and to stabilize the spinal column. The therapeutic method may result in at least a partial regeneration of the nucleus pulposus (34), and/or development of cartilaginous or fibrocartilaginous tissues or dense fibrous tissues.
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For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.
INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(7) : A61F 2/44
US CL : 623/17.11

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 623/17.11,16.11,17.12,17.16

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

EAST

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages</th>
<th>Relevant to claim No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>US 5,955,438 A (PITARU et al.) 21 September 1999 (21.09.1999), see entire document.</td>
<td>1-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>US 4,971,954 A (BRODSKY et al.) 20 November 1990 (20.11.1990), see lines 24-60 of column 8 and abstract.</td>
<td>38-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1-37,40-87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. See patent family annex.

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Date of the actual completion of the international search: 17 May 2003 (17.05.2003)

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