Abstract: A blade suture needle is adapted for use in a suture needle assembly, and with a suture passer device, for passing a suture needle assembly through tissue. The suture needle includes an elongated resilient sheet body bound by opposite principal surfaces. The body member includes at least one central aperture extending between the principal surfaces, having dimensions to permit of a capturing flange to pass therethrough. The suture needle may be part of a needle assembly further including an elongated suture passing through an aperture in the needle. A suture passer device includes an elongated pusher guide with pair of opposed jaw members disposed at its distal end, which may be opened or closed in response to a user action at its proximal end.
INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No
PCT/US07/ 16751

A CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC. A61B 17/06( 2006 01)
USPC 606/222,223,224,225

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)
US 606/222,223,224,225

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)

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>X</td>
<td>US 4,535,764 A (EBERT) 20 August 1985 (20 08 1985), see entire document</td>
<td>1-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>US 4,527,564 A (EGUCHI et al) 09 July 1985 (09 07 1985), see entire document</td>
<td>1-13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

See patent family annex

Date of the actual completion of the international search
22 August 2008 (22 08 2008)

Date of mailing of the international search report
Q 1 OCT 7nnf

Name and mailing address of the ISA/US
Mail Stop PCT, Attn: ISA/US
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450

Authorized officer
Darwin P. Erezo
Telephone No 703-308-0858

Facsimile No (571) 273-3201

Form PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet) (April 2007)
INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Box No. II Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. [ ] Claims Nos.: because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:

2. [ ] Claims Nos.: because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:

3. [ ] Claims Nos.: because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box No. III Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:
Please See Continuation Sheet

.. [D] As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.

2. [ ] As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying additional fees, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fees.

3. [ ] As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:

4. [X] No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.: 1-13

Remark on Protest [ ] The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest and, where applicable, the payment of a protest fee.

[ ] The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest but the applicable protest fee was not paid within the time limit specified in the invitation.

[ ] No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

Form PCT/ISA/210 (continuation of first sheet(2)) (April 2007)
BOX III. OBSERVATIONS WHERE UNITY OF INVENTION IS LACKING
This application contains the following inventions or groups of inventions which are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1. In order for all inventions to be examined, the appropriate additional examination fees must be paid.

-Group I, claim(s) 1-13, drawn to a suture needle.
-Group II, claim(s) 14-22, drawn to a suture passer device.

This International Searching Authority considers that the international application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention (Rules 13.1, 13.2 and 13.3) for the reasons indicated below: The inventions listed as Groups I and II do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, they lack the same or corresponding special technical features for the following reasons: The invention of Group I does not require the special technical features of Group II, such as an elongated pusher guide or jaw assembly (as evidenced by independent claim 1 or 7 of Group I).