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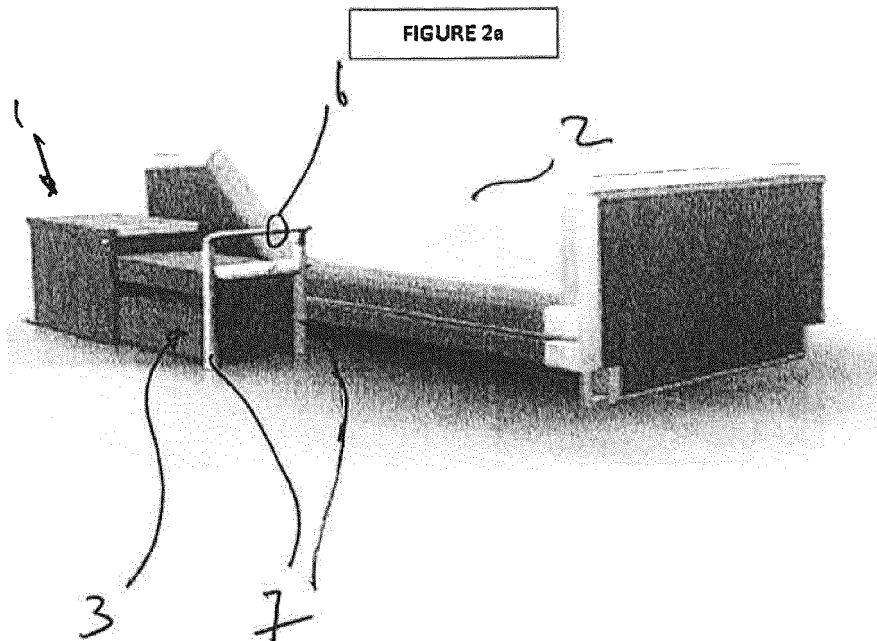
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(54) **A table, cabinet or similar item of furniture**

(57) A table, cabinet or similar item of furniture particularly useful as a bedside cabinet next to a bed for a weak, elderly or infirm person. The cabinet (1) includes

a slideable element (3). The slideable element (3) can be slid into an extended position such that an upwardly extending handle (6) on its front end can be used to help a person get in and out of the bed (2).



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## Description

**[0001]** The present application is concerned with a table, cabinet or similar item of furniture suitable for use alongside a persons support apparatus, such as a bed for an elderly or infirm person.

**[0002]** It can be difficult for an elderly, weak or unwell person to get out of a bed unaided. Beds designed for use by weak, elderly or unwell people (for example beds for use in nursing homes) sometimes have a handle arranged on the side of the bed to help with the initial lifting out from the bed. However, such a handle only helps with the initial lifting up as once the person has lifted themselves more than a small amount, the handle is behind them and therefore difficult to use for further lifting. This is particularly true for the elderly or infirm who typically have weakened muscles.

**[0003]** A separate dedicated lifting apparatus such as crutches, walking sticks or walking frames can be used but these take up space next to a bed or in a room and are usually of an inappropriate height for optimal help to the person lifting himself or herself out of the bed.

**[0004]** A need exists for apparatus to help a person lift themselves out from a bed but which yet does not take up considerable amounts of space when not in use.

**[0005]** The present invention provides a table, cabinet or similar item of furniture, as defined in Claim 1 to which reference should now be made. The preferred features are defined in the dependent claims to which reference should also be made.

**[0006]** The arrangement of Claim 1 allows provides an aesthetically pleasing and space-saving arrangement which helps someone get themselves more easily out of bed. An additional advantage of the invention is that it has less of a hospital-like appearance than the known arrangements. This has potentially important psychological and comfort impact on elderly patients in, for example, nursing homes where one is trying to create an atmosphere and feeling of being in one's home, rather than a hospital.

**[0007]** Preferably, the said first side of the said upper surface is the front of the table, cabinet or similar item of furniture and said handle and said floor engaging element are disposed on the front edge of said slideable element.

**[0008]** This arrangement makes for a simple and aesthetically pleasing item of furniture.

**[0009]** Preferably, the table, cabinet or similar item of furniture includes two downwardly extending floor-engaging elements.

**[0010]** The provision of two downwardly extending floor-engaging elements provides for increased stability when someone is lifting themselves out of bed using the handles.

**[0011]** Preferably, the locking element is controlled by a cam arrangement on the upper proportion of the slideable element.

**[0012]** The provision of a cam arrangement allows for simple and effective movement of the locking element.

This is important where one is concerned with elderly and infirm operators.

**[0013]** Preferably, the cam arrangement includes a handle coupled to a cam follower.

**[0014]** This arrangement allows for easy operation by a person wishing to release and/or secure the slideable element.

**[0015]** Preferably, movement of the handle and the cam element moves the locking element in a direction substantially perpendicular to the floor to thereby raise and lower the locking element to, respectively, release and secure the floor engaging element relative to the floor.

**[0016]** This allows for easy and secure release and securing of the slideable element.

**[0017]** Preferably, the table, cabinet or similar item of furniture is a bedside table or cabinet.

**[0018]** Preferably, the table, cabinet or similar item of furniture is a drawer unit.

**[0019]** The invention will now be described by way of nonlimiting example with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIGS. **1a** and **1b** are, respectively, a perspective side view and a side view of a table, cabinet or similar item of furniture embodying the present invention alongside a patient's support apparatus, which is a bed;

FIGS. **2a** and **2b** are, respectively, a side perspective view and a side view corresponding to FIGS. **1a** and **1b** but in which the slideable element is extended;

FIGS. **3a-3c** illustrate how the extended slideable element can be used to facilitate a person lifting themselves out of a bed placed alongside the table, cabinet or similar item of furniture.

FIG. **4** is a side perspective view of the table, cabinet or similar item of furniture shown in FIGS. ;

FIG. **5** illustrates the sliding mechanism of the unit in FIG. **4**;

FIG. **6** illustrates the floor engaging and locking elements of the table, cabinet or similar item of furniture;

FIG. **7** is a detailed view of the upper portion of FIG. **6**;

FIG. **8** is a detailed view of the floor-engaging element of FIG. **6**; and

FIGS. **9a** and **9b** illustrate the operation of the locking mechanism for the floor-engaging elements.

**[0020]** A bedside table or cabinet **1**, according to one illustrative embodiment of the invention, is shown in FIG.

1. It is based alongside the head end of a hospital, nursing home or long-term care (LTC) bed **2**.

[0021] The cabinet rests on the floor adjacent the bed (it can also be fixed to the side of the bed or a wall behind the head end of the bed). The weight of the cabinet and/or any fixing to the bed or wall mean that its position is substantially fixed, or only moveable when subject to significant force (which are greater than those involved in a person lifting themselves out of the bed in the manner described below).

[0022] A slideable drawer element **3** is supported on drawer rails **4** (see FIG. **5**) and capable of movement out from under the upper or top surface **5** of the cabinet.

[0023] The cabinet's slideable drawer element has an upwardly extending handle **6** at its front edge. The handle is coupled to the top of support pillars **7** whose bottom portions **8** rest on the floor.

[0024] A front facing planar surface element **9** is supported between the two parallel support pillars **7** within channels **10** in the inner surface of each of the support pillars such that it can slide along the channels in the directions as shown in FIG. **8**. The bottom **11** of the front surface element **9** is fixed to the top of a U-shaped bracket **12**. The U-shaped bracket has a rubber pad **13** fixed or coupled to its upper surface by a spring **14** which biases the rubber gripping element **13** downwards. The brackets **12** and corresponding rubber pads **13** can move between an upper position (see FIG. **9a**) in which the pads **13** rest lightly on the floor and a lower position (see FIG. **9b**) in which the pads **13** are pressed down on the floor (see FIG. **9b**) with the springs **14** in a compressed state to increase the gripping action and thereby secure the slideable element **3** against movement relative to and along the floor.

[0025] A cam actuator element or handle **15** is pivotally mounted above the front surface element **9**. A cam and cam follower arrangement (not shown) are provided such that when the cam actuator handle **15** is in the upright position (see FIG. **9b**), the front surface element **9** is pushed down to the lower position and, when it is in an angled position (see FIG. **9a**), the front surface element **9** moves to its upper position under the action of the springs **14**. Movement of the handle **15** raises and/or lowers the bracket **12** and hence, respectively releases or secures the slideable drawer **3** against the floor.

[0026] As shown in FIG. **1**, the slideable element or drawer **3** can be disposed in a retracted position with the handle **6** substantially flush against the front of the remainder of the bedside cabinet **1**, or in an extended position (as in FIGS. **2a** and **2b**) with the front edge of the drawer **3** and handle **6** located thereon separated from the front edge of the remainder of the cabinet.

[0027] As shown in FIGS. **3a-3c**, a person wishing to lift himself or herself out of the bed can locate the slideable element **3** and its handle **6** at a position of his or her choosing alongside the bed **2** such that he or she can use it to lift themselves out of the bed. They can also access the drawer when the slideable **3** element is in its

extended or open position.

[0028] A person wishing to lift themselves out of bed moves the cam actuator element **15** to its unlocking or angled position (as shown in FIG. **9a**) to allow movement of the slideable element **3** relative to the remainder of the fixed cabinet and the floor on which the cabinet sits. The person then positions the slideable element **3** in the desired position before then allowing the cam actuator **15** to return to its upright position and thereby secure the slideable element **3** against further movement. The person can now use the handle **6** arranged alongside the bed to lift themselves out of bed into an upright position or, for example, into a wheelchair or other chair located next to the bed.

[0029] In an alternative embodiment (not shown), the gripper pads **3** could be replaced by a roller or castor element which can be locked into place by movement of a pin into a ratchet or tooth arranged around the castor wheel. The pin or locking element could be controlled by a cam arrangement similar to that described above in connection with the embodiments of FIGS. **6-9b**.

## Claims

1. A table, cabinet or similar item of furniture (**1**) comprising a top surface (**5**), a slideable element (**3**) slideable between a first retracted position in which it is substantially underneath said top surface and at least one further extended position in which it projects out from underneath a first side of said upper surface, and wherein the slideable element includes an upwardly facing handle (**6**), at least one downwardly extending floor engaging element (**13**) and a locking element (**12, 14**) to secure the at least one floor engaging element relative to the floor or surface on which the table, cabinet or similar item of furniture sits.
2. A table, cabinet or similar item of furniture according to claim 1 wherein the said first side of the said upper surface is the front of the table, cabinet or similar item of furniture and said handle (**6**) and said floor engaging element are disposed on the front edge of said slideable element.
3. A table, cabinet or similar item of furniture according to any preceding claim comprising at least two downwardly extending floor-engaging elements (**13**).
4. A table, cabinet or similar item of furniture according to any preceding claim wherein the locking element (**12, 14**) is controlled by a cam arrangement on the upper portion of the slideable element.
5. A table, cabinet or similar item of furniture according to claim 4 wherein the cam arrangement includes a handle (**15**) coupled to a cam element.

- 6. A table, cabinet or similar item of furniture according to claim 5 wherein movement of the handle (15) and the cam element moves the locking element (12, 14) in a direction substantially perpendicular to the floor to thereby raise and lower the locking element to, respectively, release and secure the floor engaging element (13) relative to the floor. 5
- 7. A bedside table or cabinet according to any preceding claim. 10
- 8. A drawer unit according to any preceding claim.
- 9. A table, cabinet or similar item of furniture according to any preceding claim wherein the slideable element is a drawer running on drawer rails. 15

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FIGURE 1a

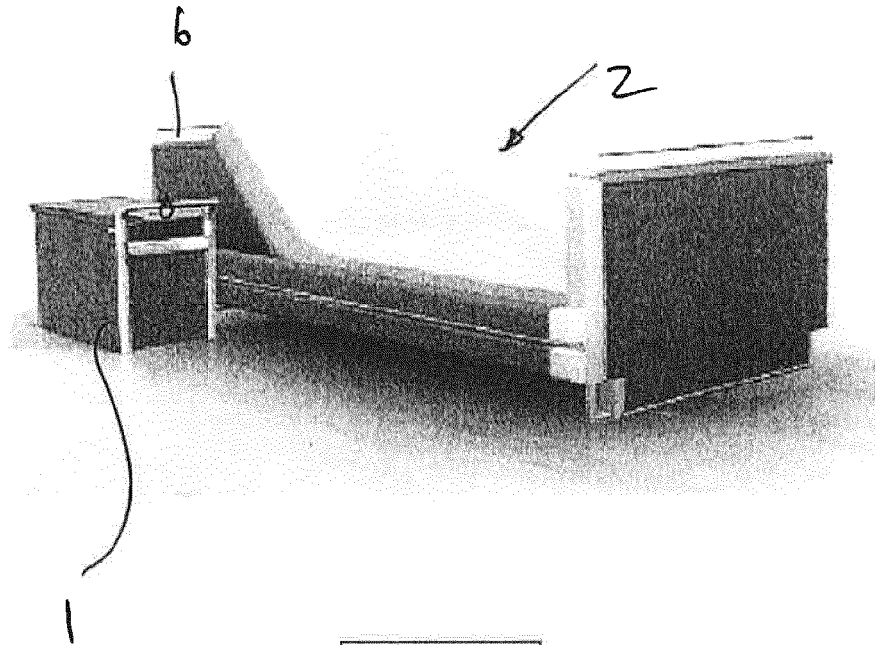
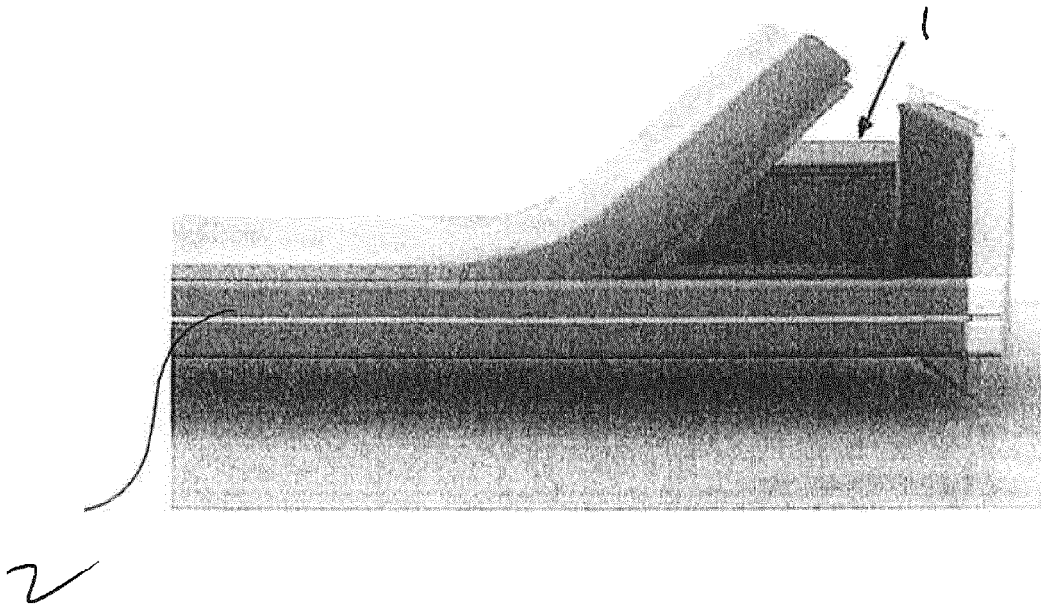


FIGURE 1b



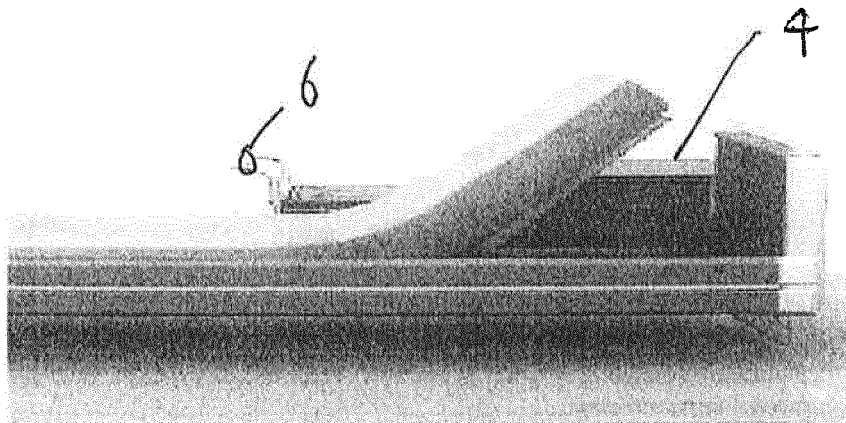
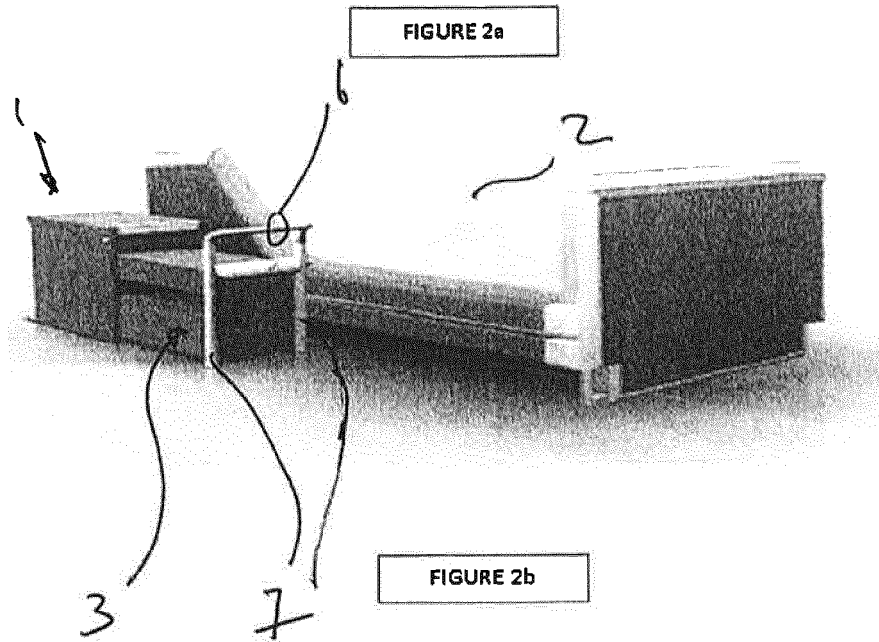


FIGURE 3a

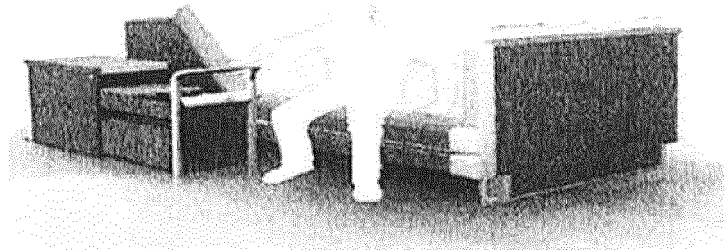


FIGURE 3b

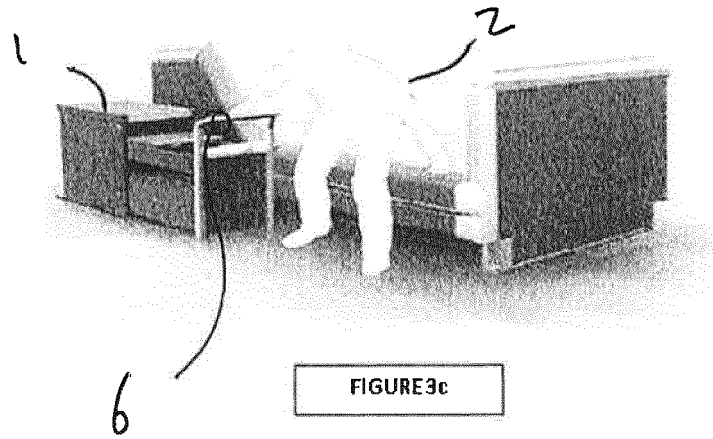


FIGURE 3c

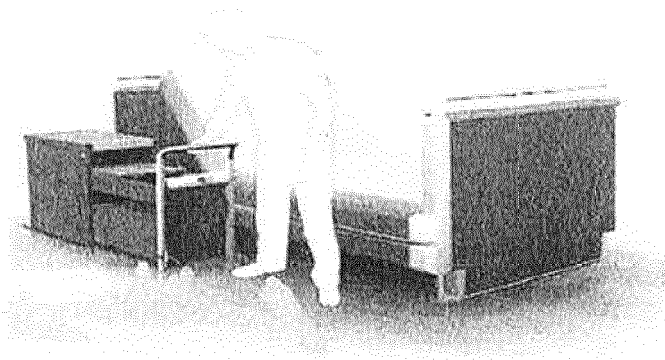


FIGURE 4

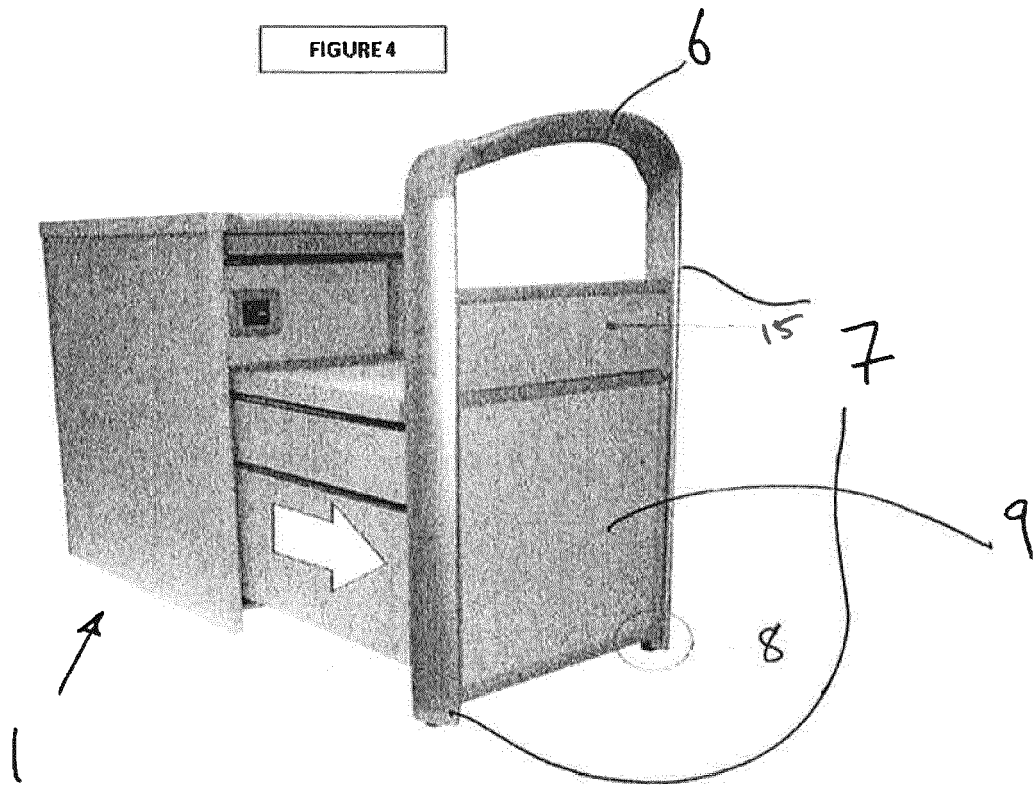


FIGURE 5

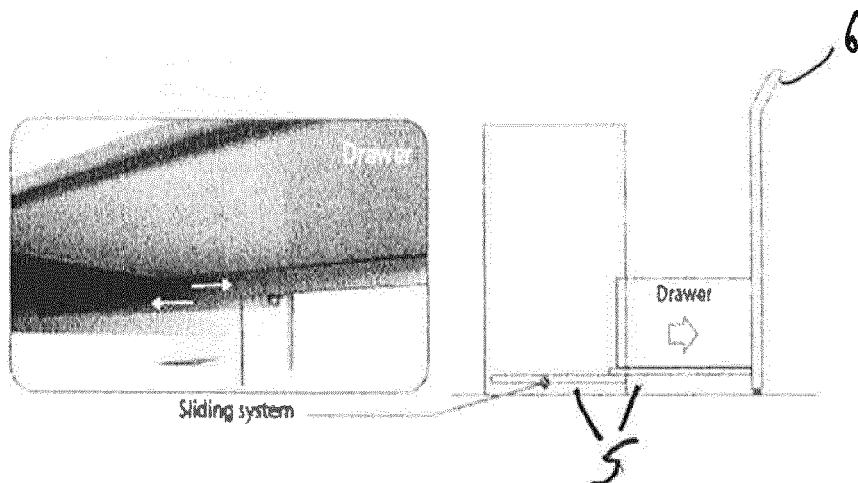


FIGURE 6

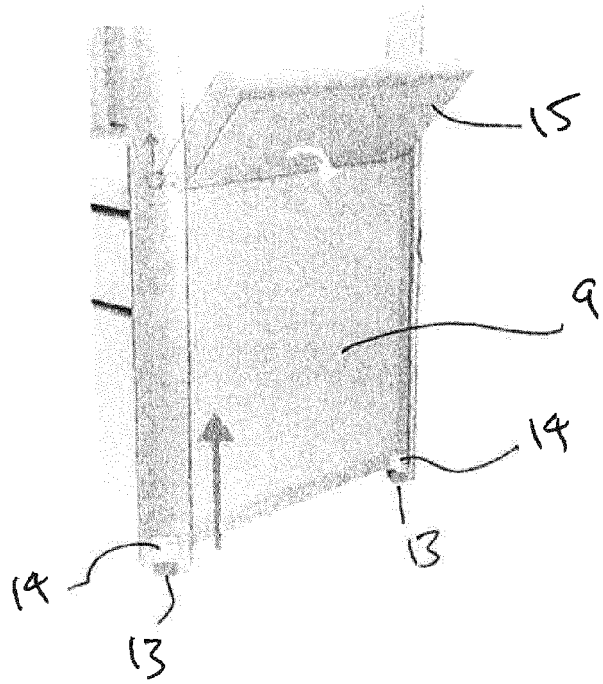


FIGURE 7

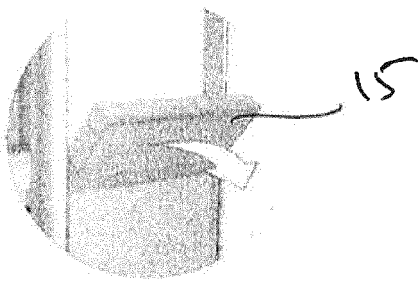


FIGURE 8

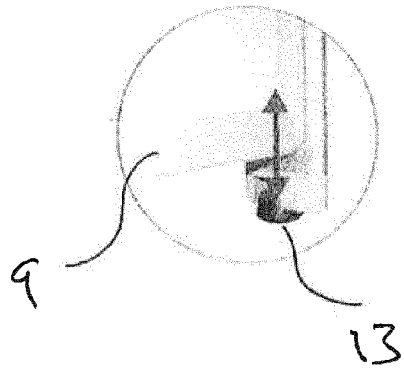


FIGURE 9a

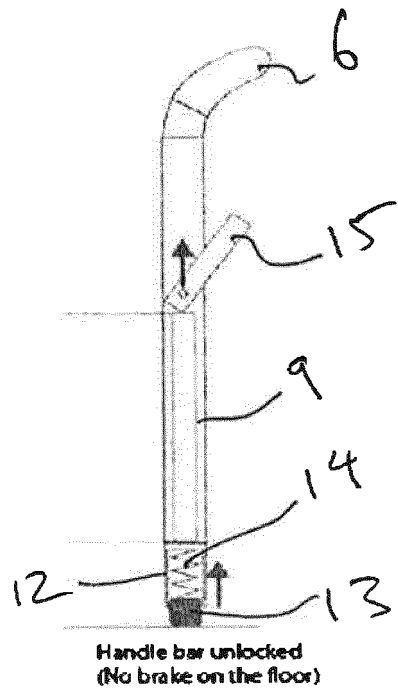
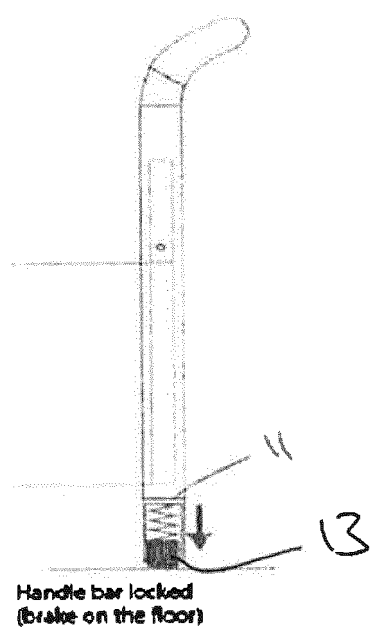


FIGURE 9b





EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number  
EP 12 16 8519

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC)
A	GB 1 232 649 A (ITAL-BED) 19 May 1971 (1971-05-19) * the whole document * -----	1-9	INV. A47B79/00 A61G7/053
A	US 2006/016014 A1 (THAXTON BART J [US]) 26 January 2006 (2006-01-26) * abstract; figures * -----	1-9	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC)
			A47B A61G
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search The Hague		Date of completion of the search 27 September 2012	Examiner Ottesen, Rune
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons ..... & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	
X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document			

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EPO FORM 1503.03.82 (P04G01)

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT  
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 12 16 8519

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.  
The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on  
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27-09-2012

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