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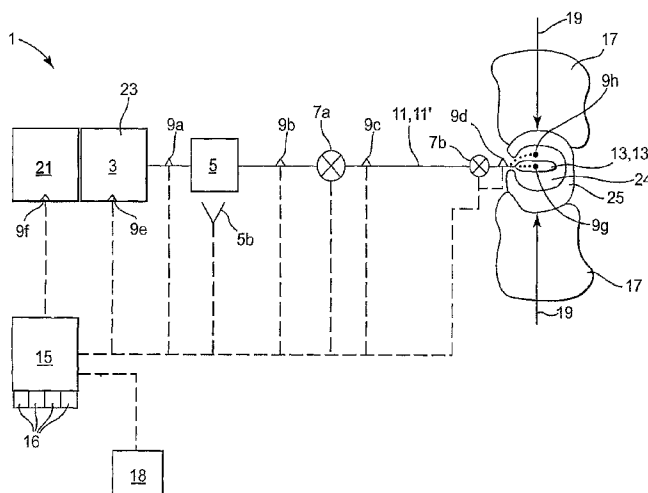
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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: NUCLECTOMY METHOD AND APPARATUS



(57) Abstract: A nucleectomy system for creating a nuclear cavity (24) located in an intervertebral disc space (19) and for preparing the nuclear cavity to receive an intervertebral prosthesis. An opening through the annulus (25) is formed along an annulotomy axis (404) to provide access to a nucleus (29). A portion of the nucleus is removed in a first region surrounding the annulotomy axis using at least a first surgical tool (300). Another portion of the nucleus is removed from a second region using at least a second surgical tool (320/360). An evaluation mold (13, 13') is positioned in the nuclear cavity and a fluid is delivered to the evaluation mold so that the mold substantially fills the nuclear cavity. The amount of nucleus removed is estimated. One or more of the removing steps are optionally repeated as necessary until an adequate amount of the nucleus is removed.



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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

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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)

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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 practical, search terms used)

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C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No
X	US 2005/209602 A1 (BOWMAN BRUCE R [US] ET AL) 22 September 2005 (2005-09-22)	1-6, 8-27
Y	figures 1-19 paragraphs [0002], [0020], [0025], [0034] - [0037], [0065], [0066], [0095], [0096], [0098], [0134], [0154] - [0165]	7
Y	US 4 545 374 A (JACOBSON ROBERT E [US]) 8 October 1985 (1985-10-08) figures 17-19 column 7, line 51 - line 53 column 8, line 6 - line 19	7
P ₅ X	US 2006/135959 A1 (YUAN HANSEN A [US] ET AL) 22 June 2006 (2006-06-22) the whole document	1-27

D Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C



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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

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