



US 20050080486A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication** (10) **Pub. No.: US 2005/0080486 A1**

Fallin et al.

(43) **Pub. Date:** **Apr. 14, 2005**

(54) FACET JOINT REPLACEMENT

(76) Inventors: **T. Wade Fallin**, Hyde Park, UT (US);
E. Marlowe Goble, Alta, WY (US);
Robert W. Hoy, Paradise, UT (US);
Daniel F. Justin, Logan, UT (US);
Alan Chervitz, Palm Harbor, FL (US);
Jude V. Paganelli, San Diego, CA
(US); **Dan Triploft**, Providence, UT
(US)

Correspondence Address:
MEDICINELODGE INC.
180 SOUTH 600 WEST
LOGAN, UT 84321 (US)

(21) Appl. No.: **10/687,865**

(22) Filed: **Oct. 17, 2003**

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation-in-part of application No. 10/421,078,
filed on Apr. 23, 2003, which is a continuation of

application No. 09/726,169, filed on Nov. 29, 2000,
now Pat. No. 6,579,319.

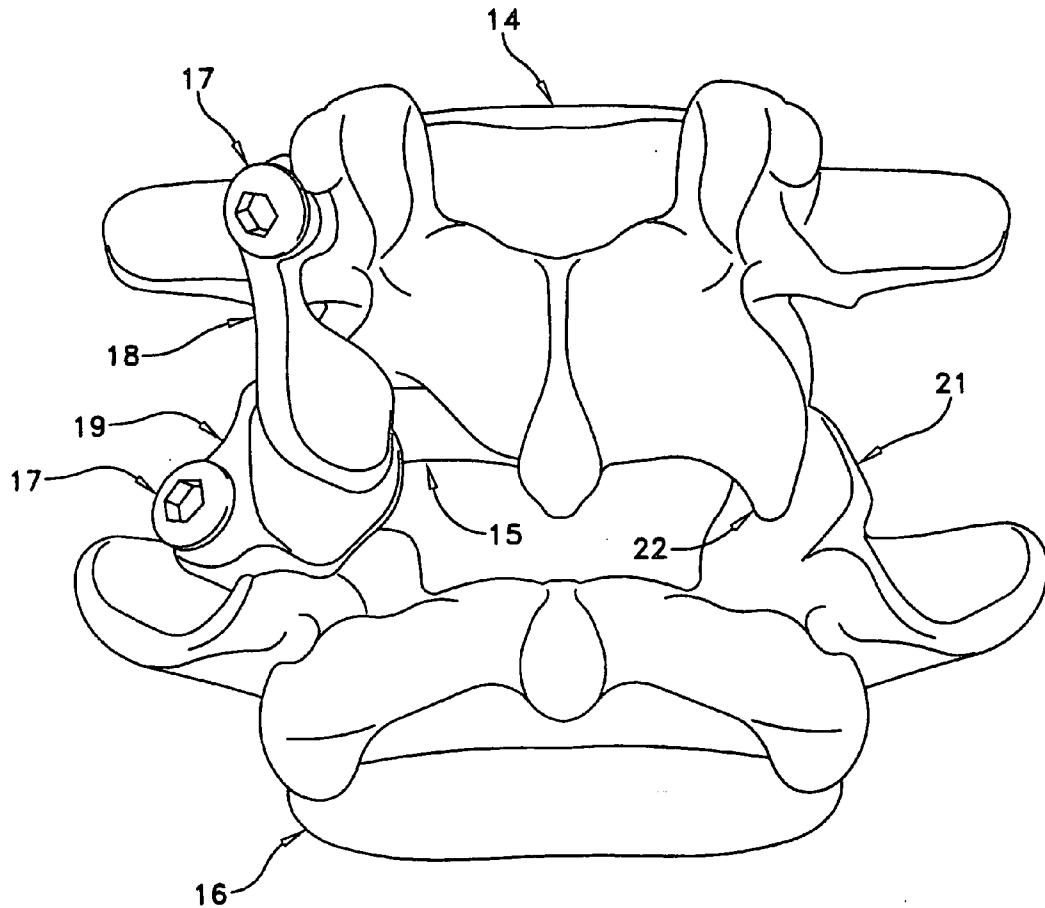
(60) Provisional application No. 60/505,199, filed on Sep.
23, 2003.

Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.⁷** **A61F 2/44**
(52) **U.S. Cl.** **623/17.11**

(57) ABSTRACT

A prosthesis for the replacement of at least a portion of the bone of a facet located on a mammalian vertebra, comprising: an articulating surface that articulates with another facet; a bone contacting surface that contacts a surface of the vertebra, the articulating surface being connected to the bone contacting surface; and a fixation element that attaches the bone contacting surface to the vertebra, the fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra; wherein the prosthesis is configured so that no portion of the prosthesis contacts the posterior arch of the vertebra.



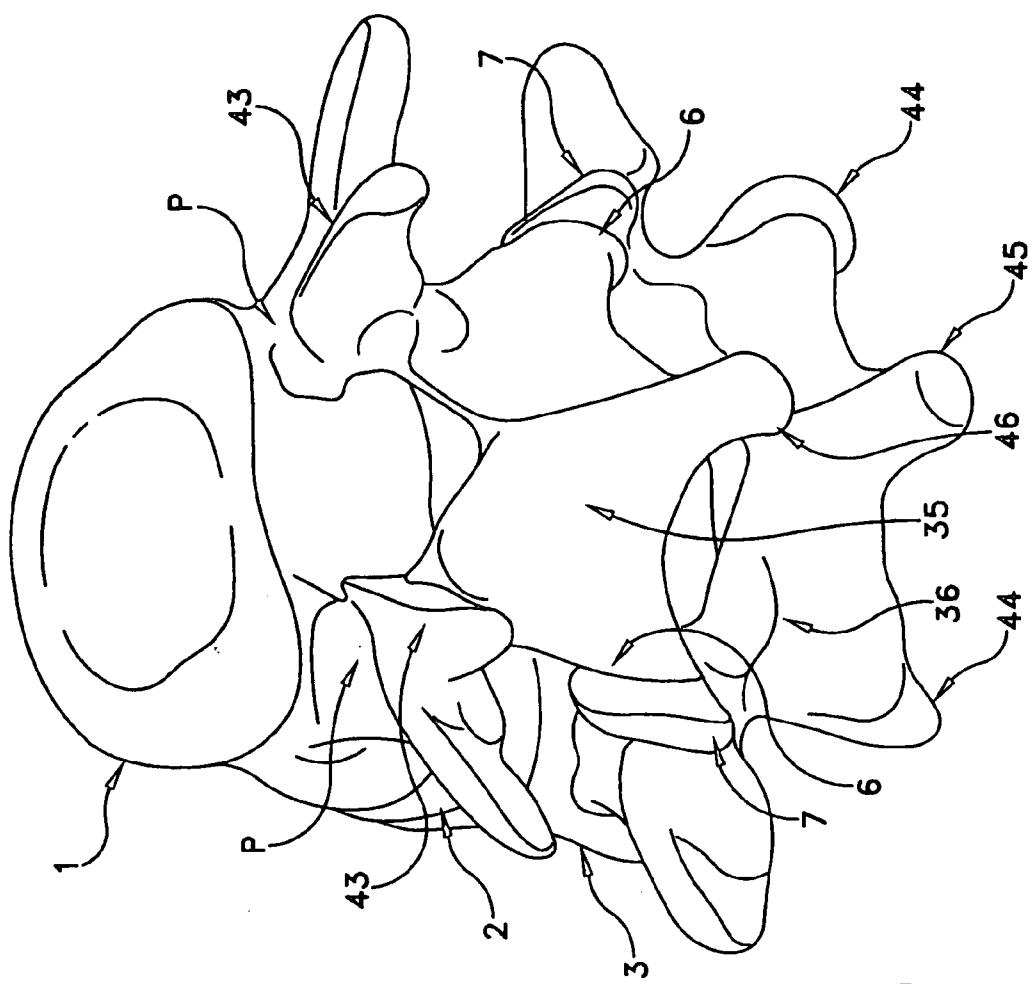


FIG. 1

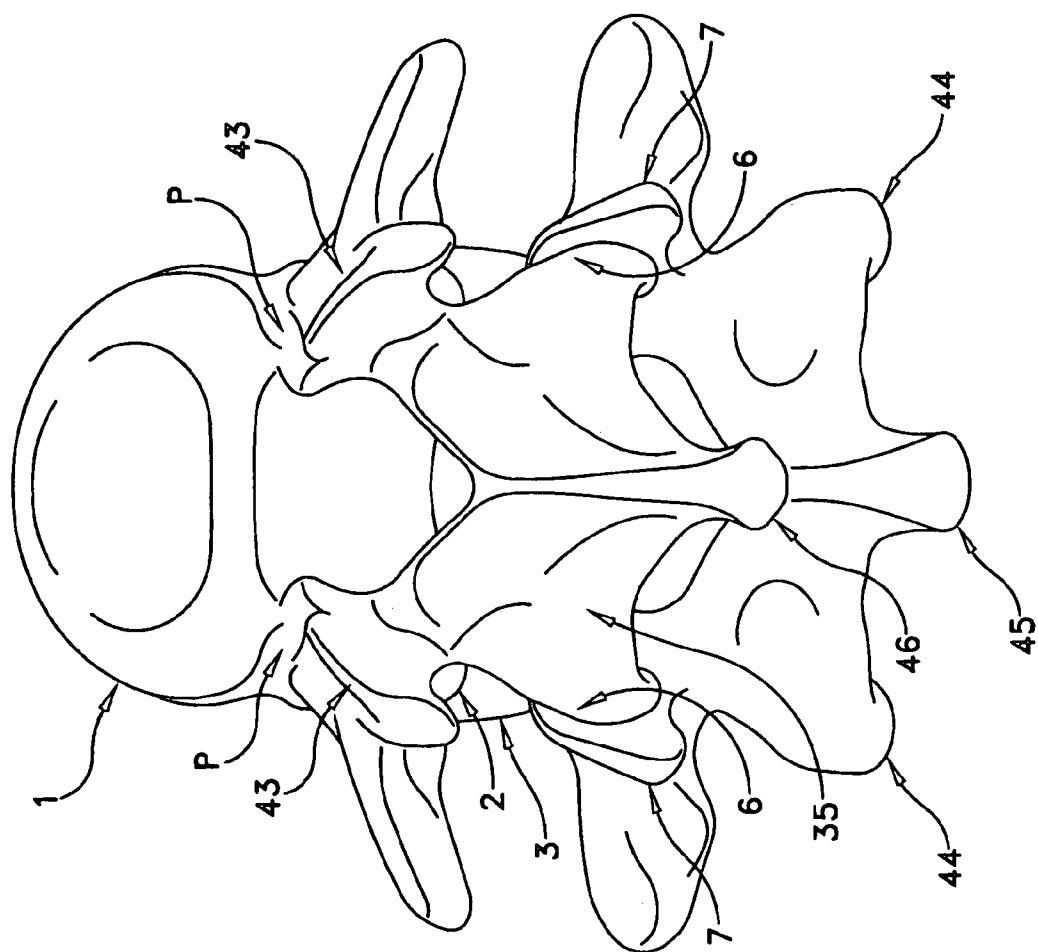


FIG. 1A



FIG. 2

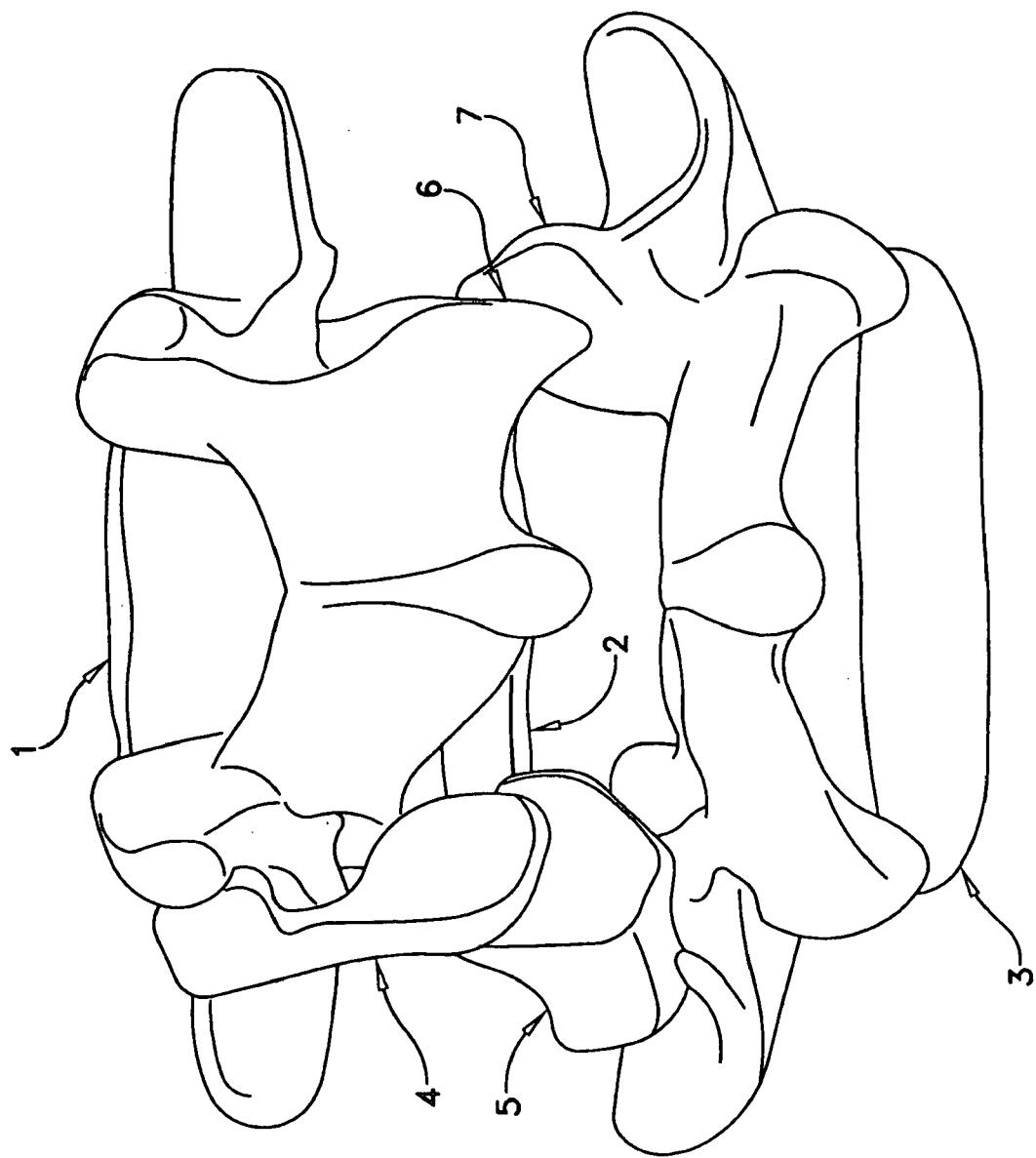


FIG. 3

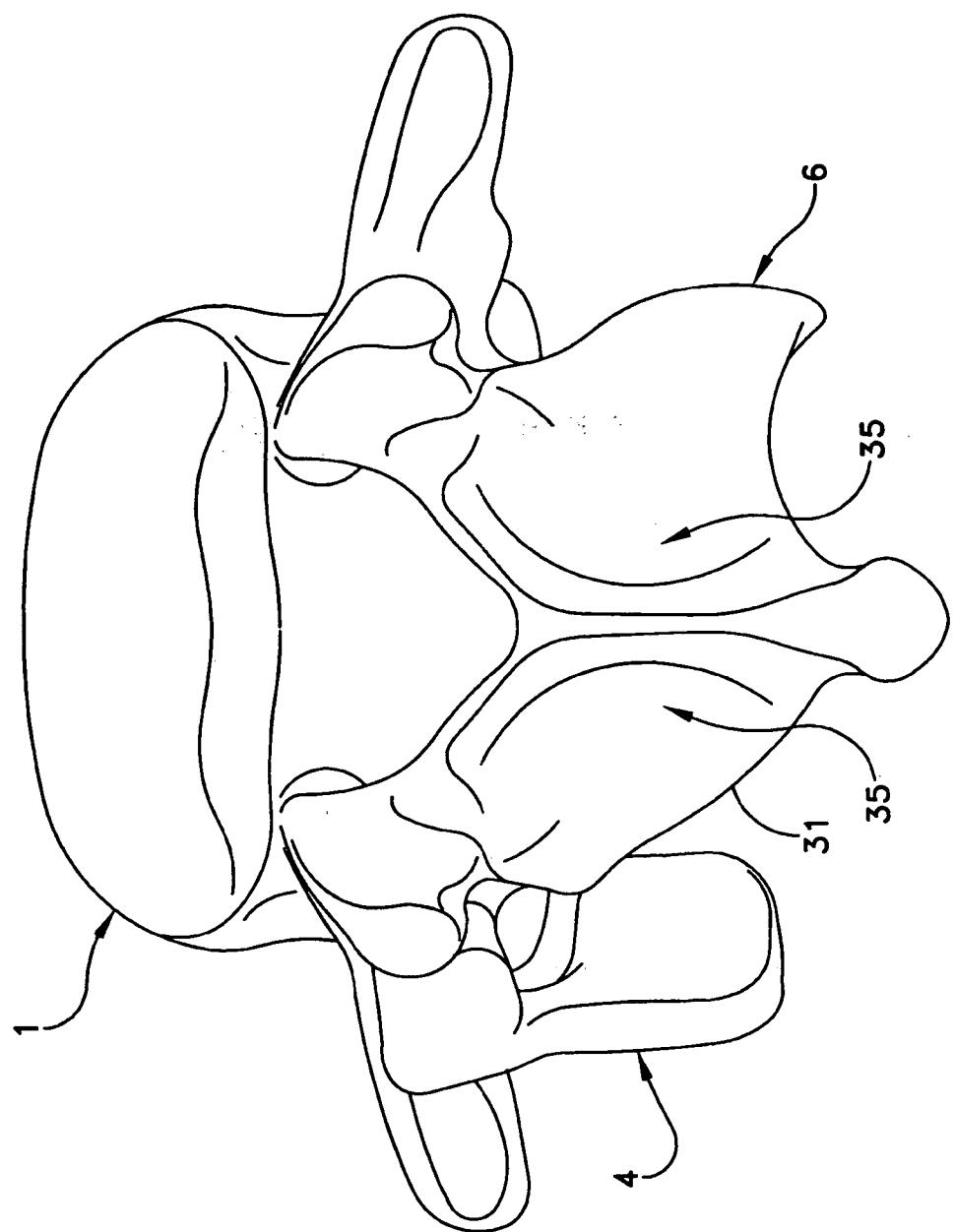


FIG. 4

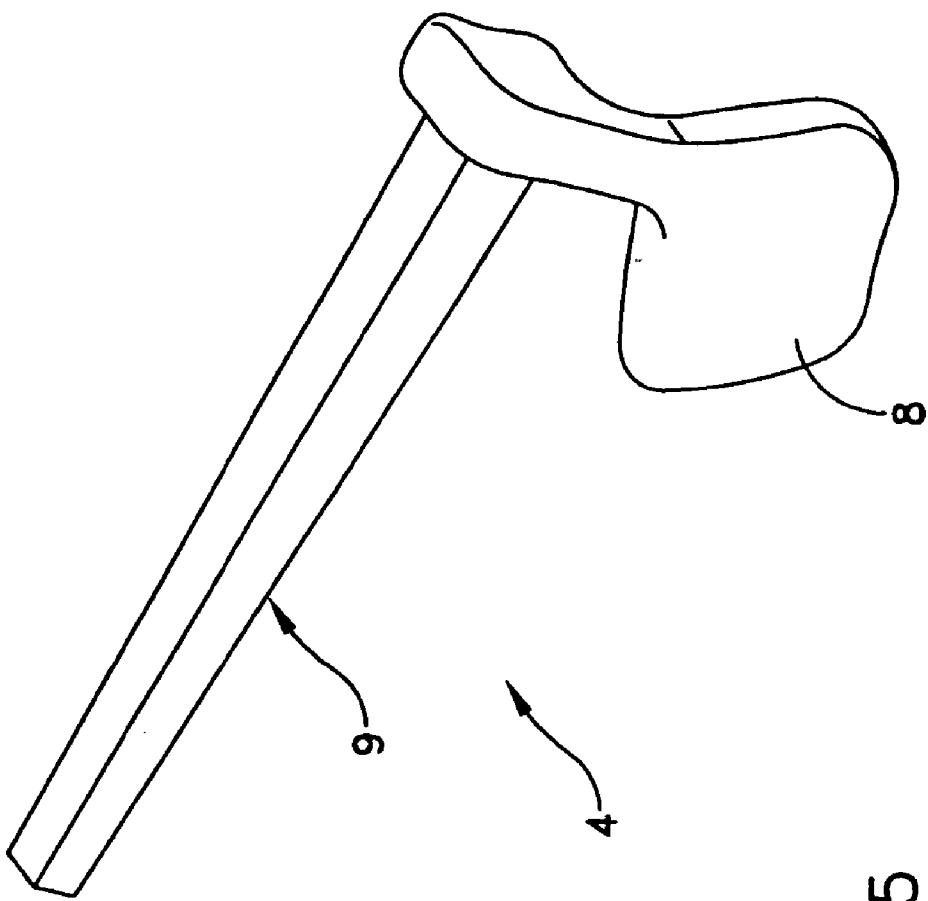


FIG. 5

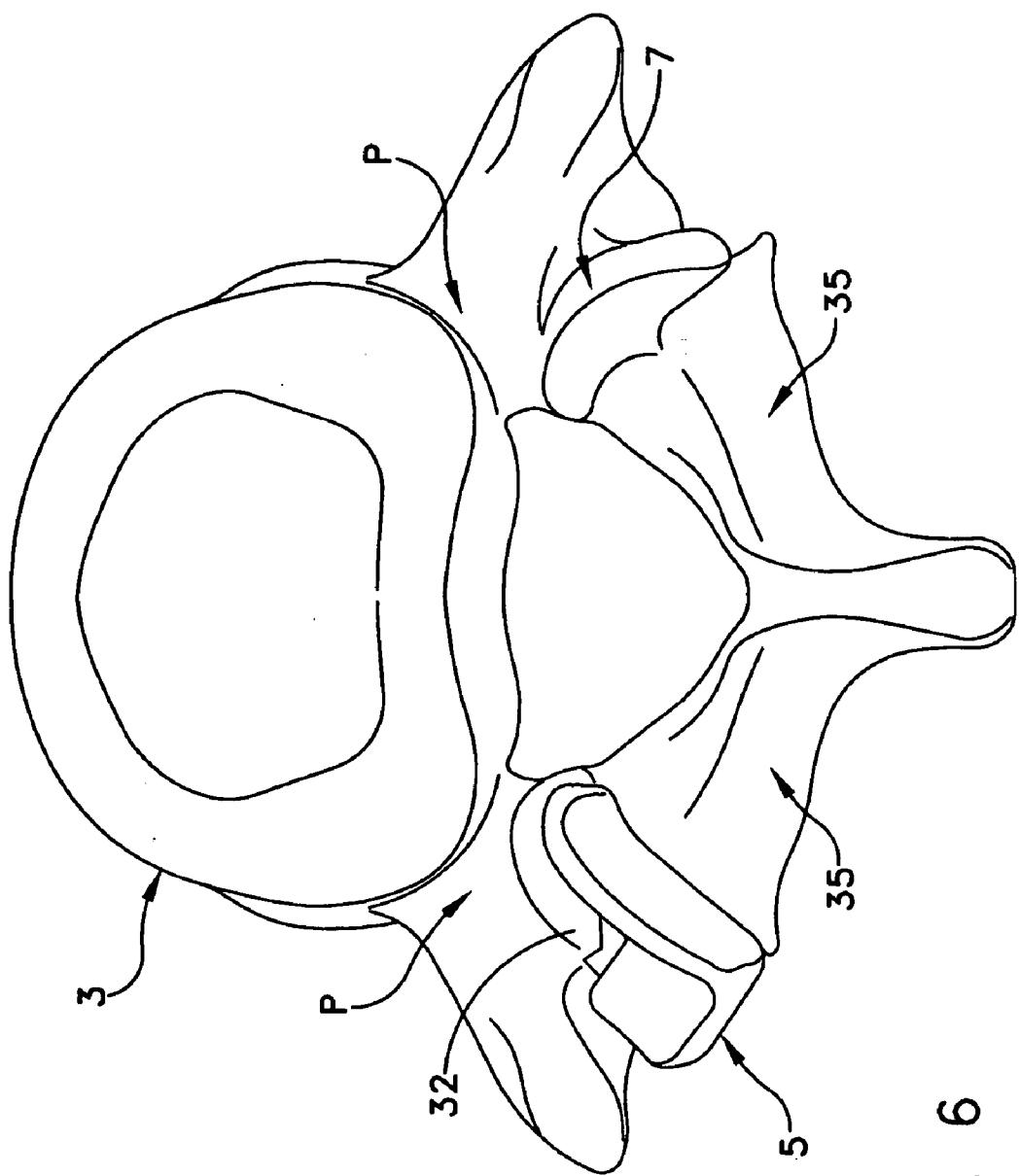


FIG. 6

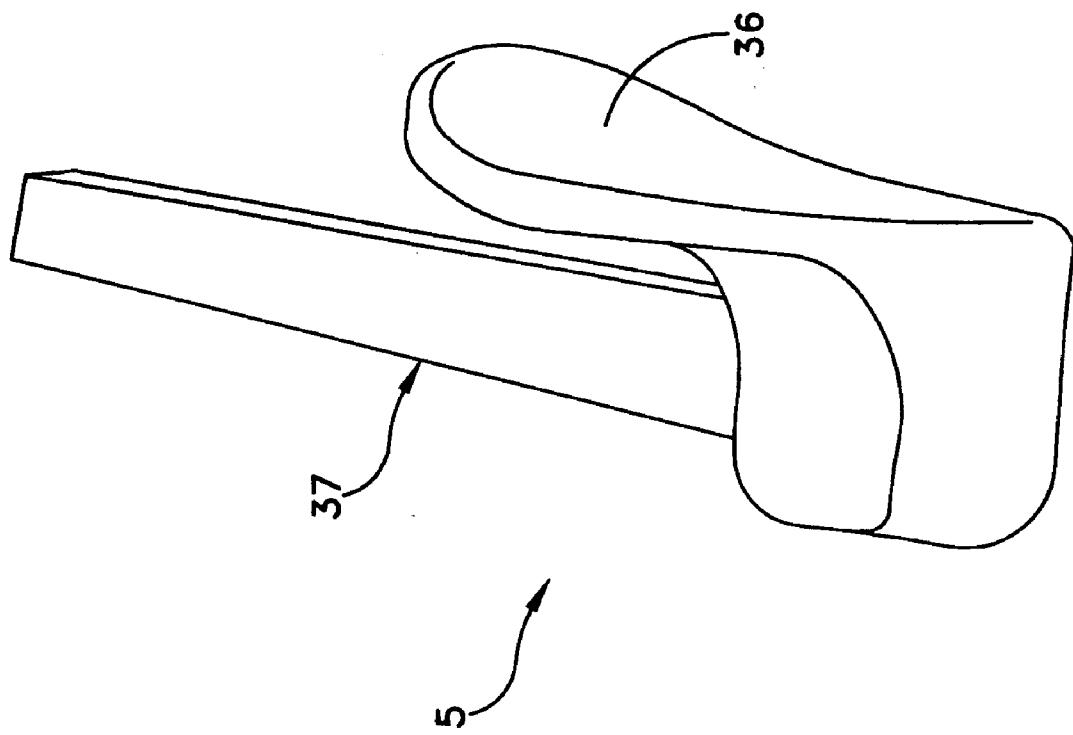


FIG. 7

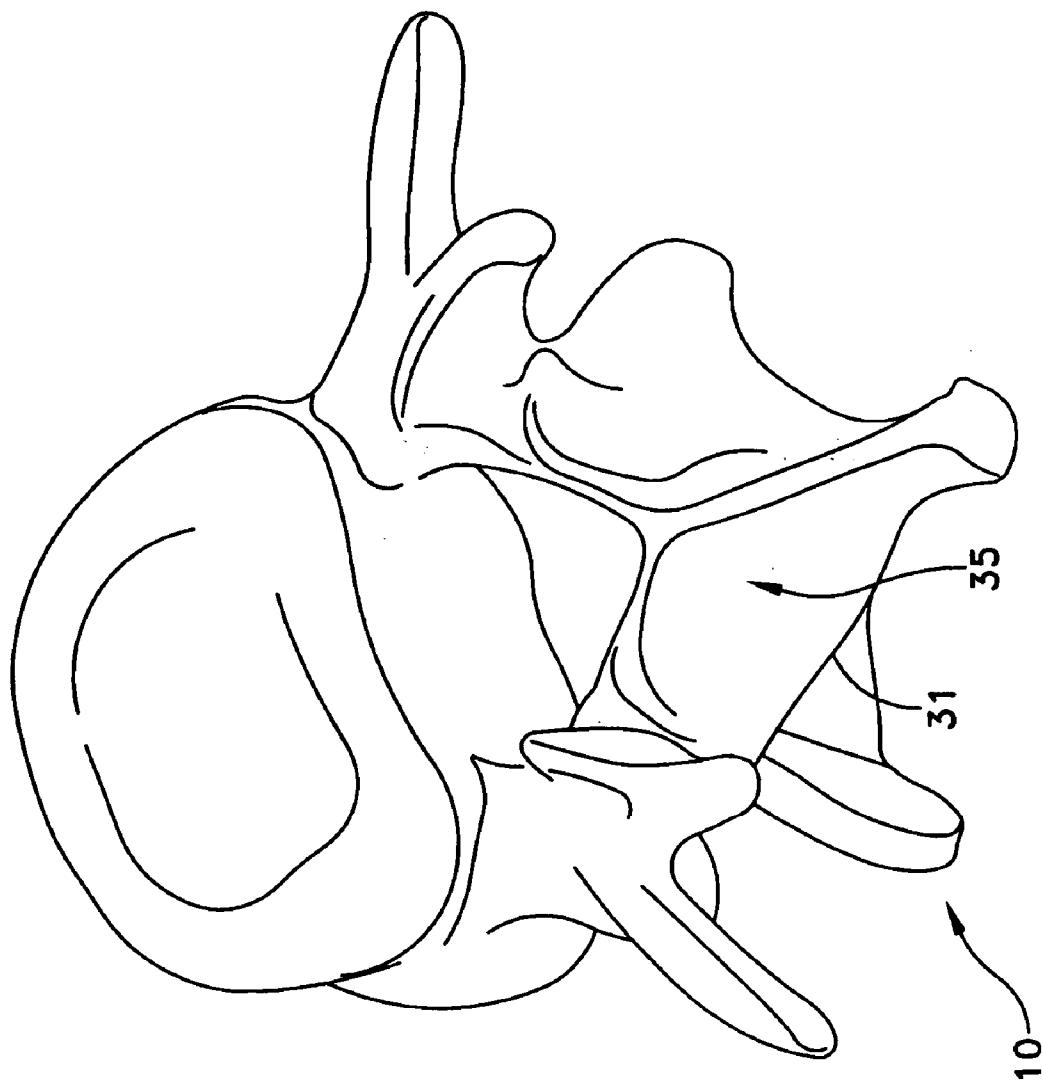


FIG. 8

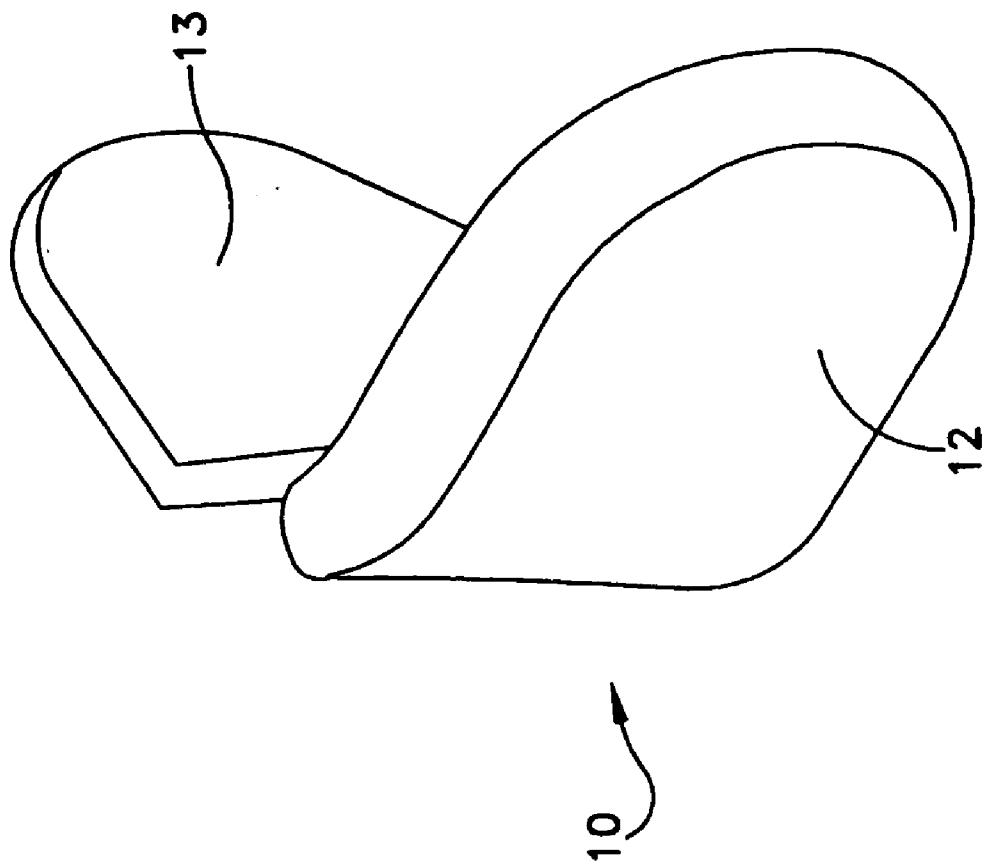
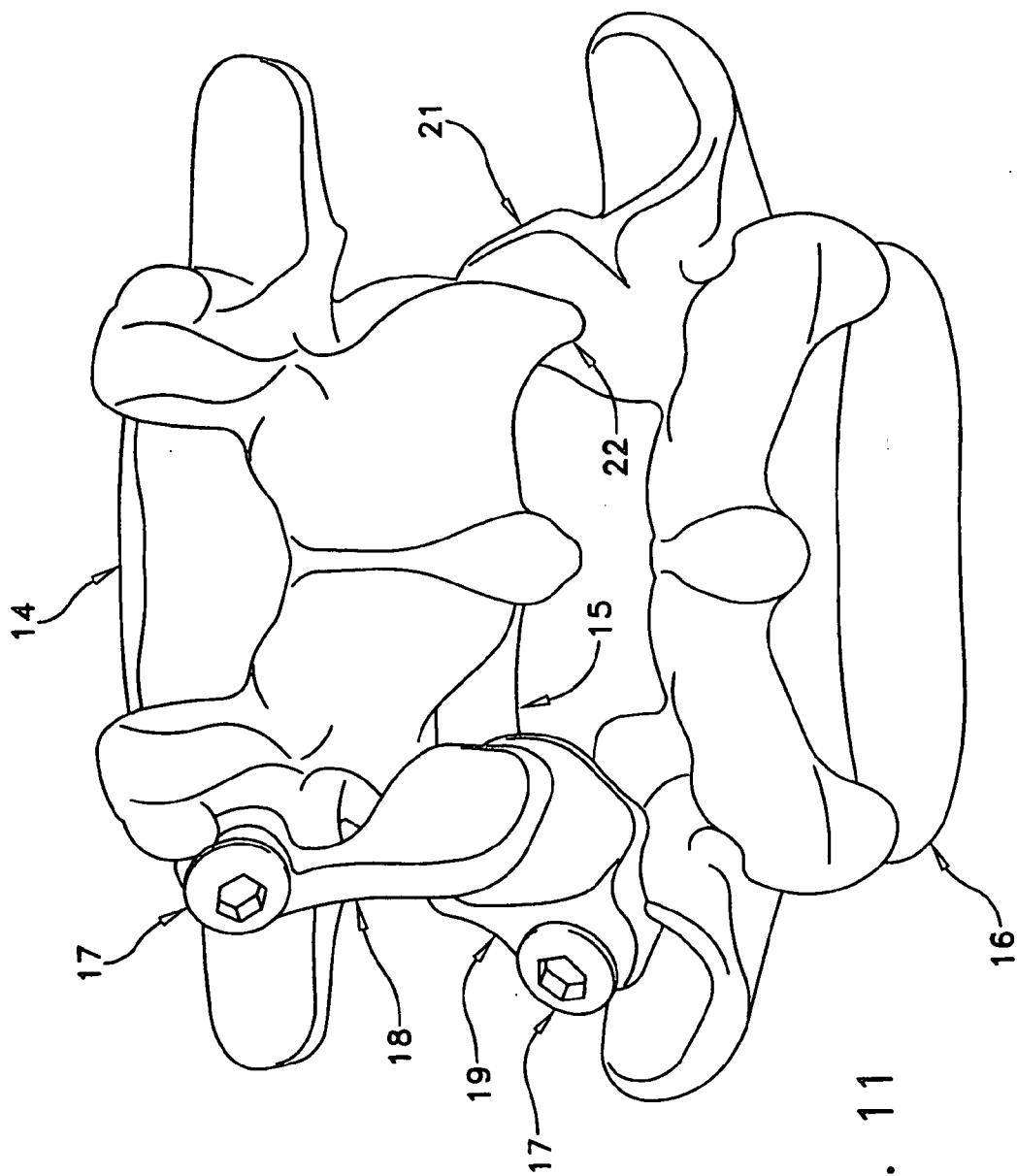


FIG. 9



FIG. 10



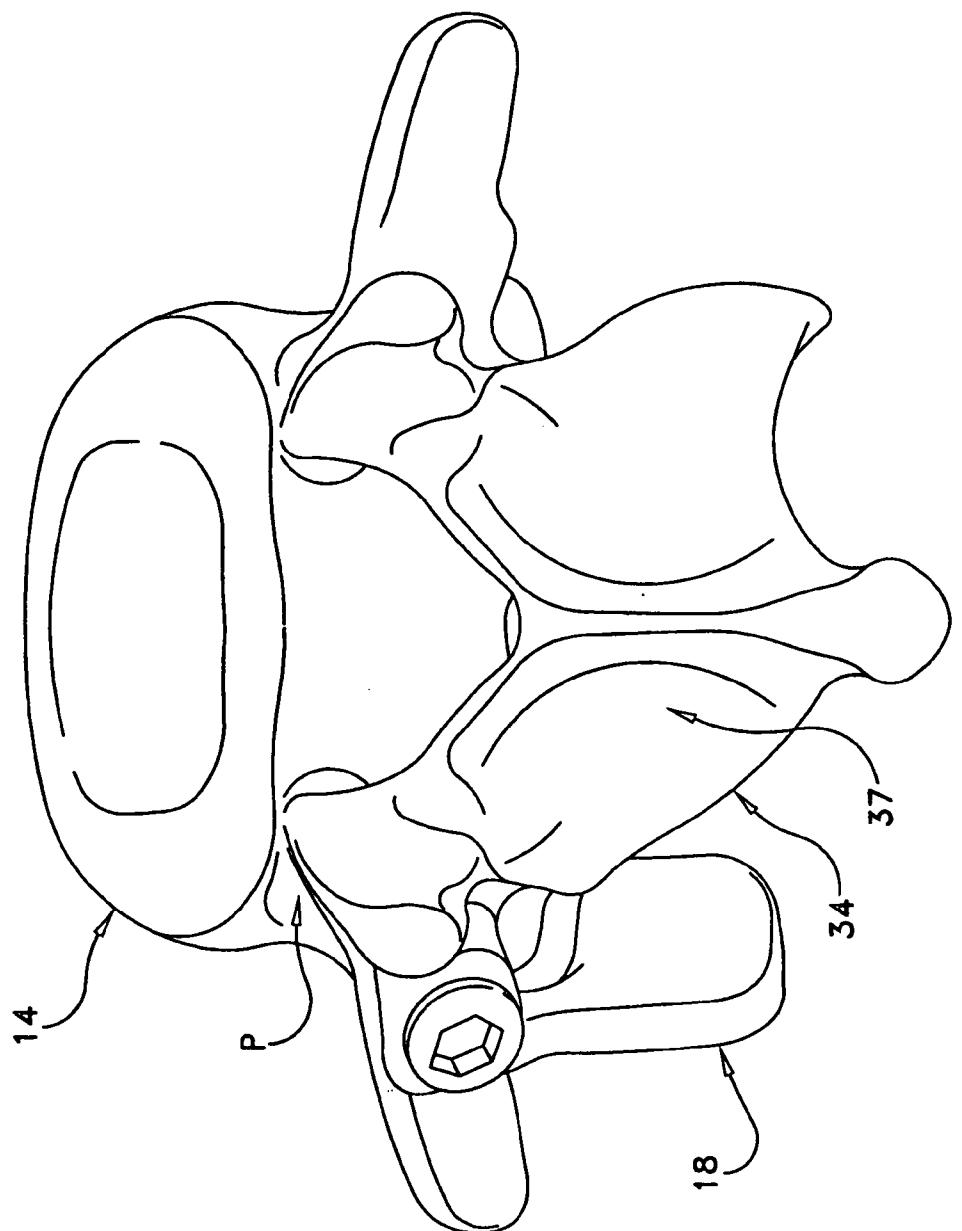


FIG. 12

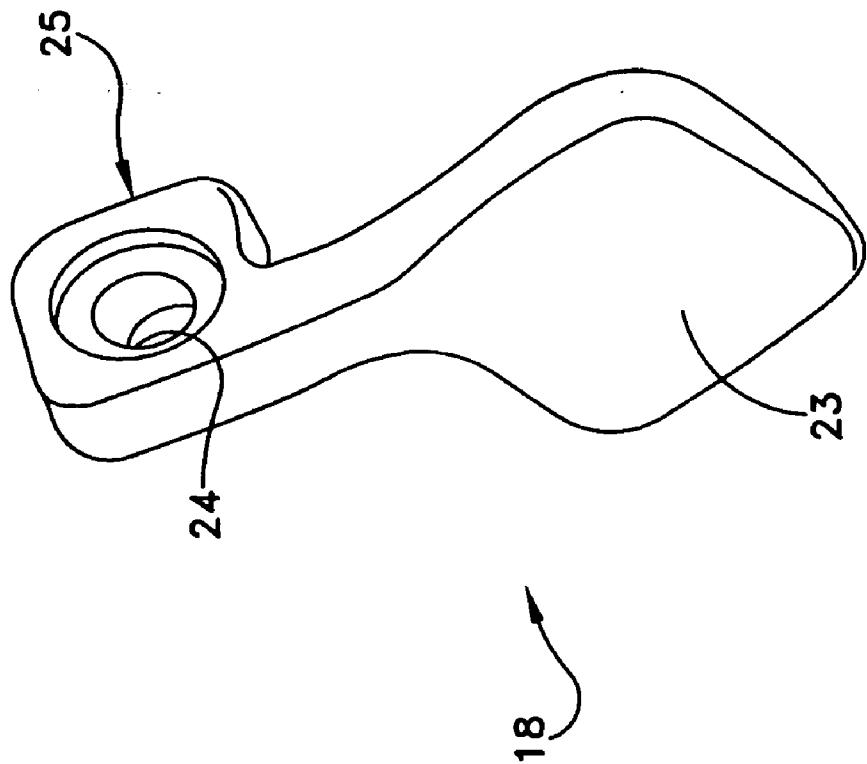
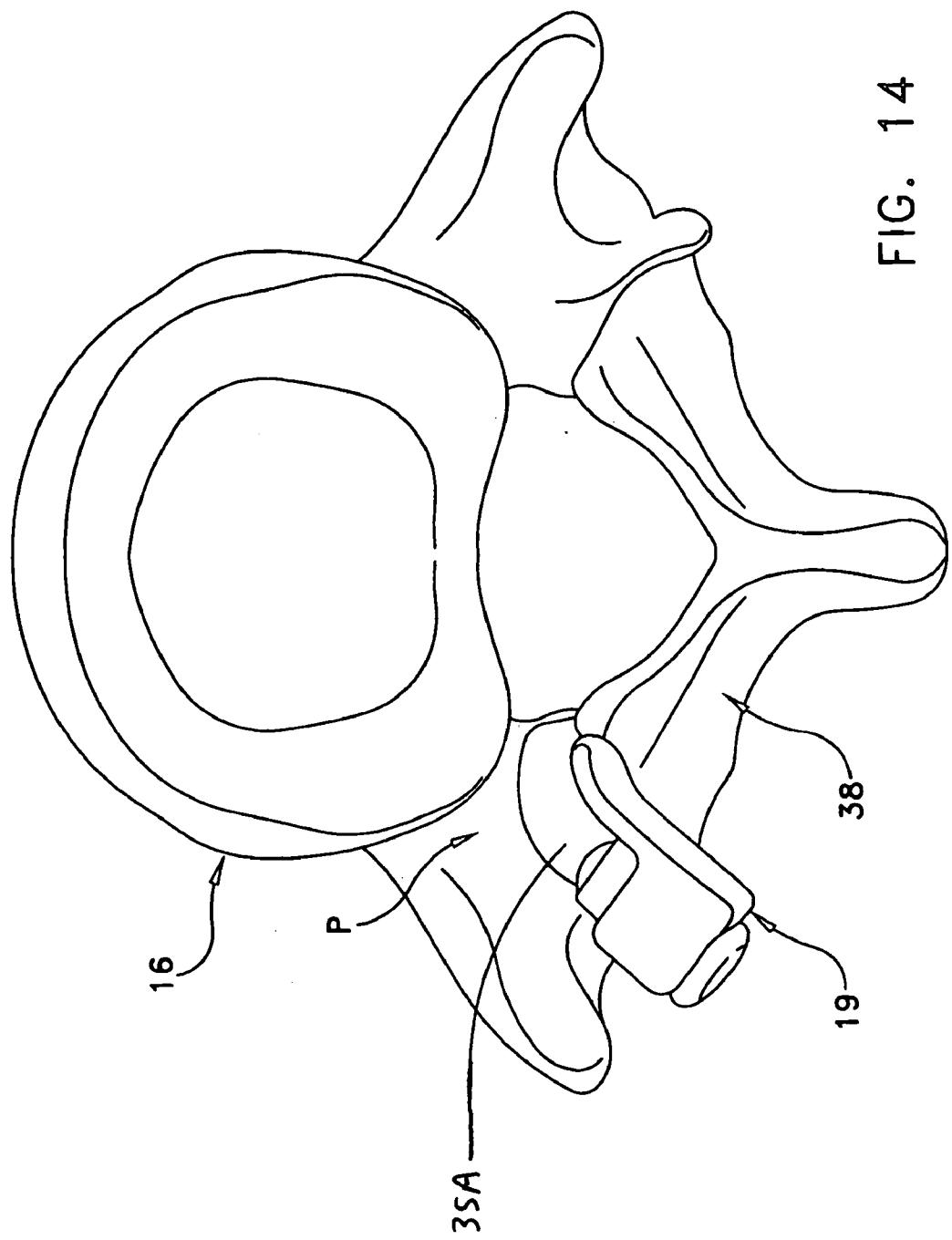


FIG. 13



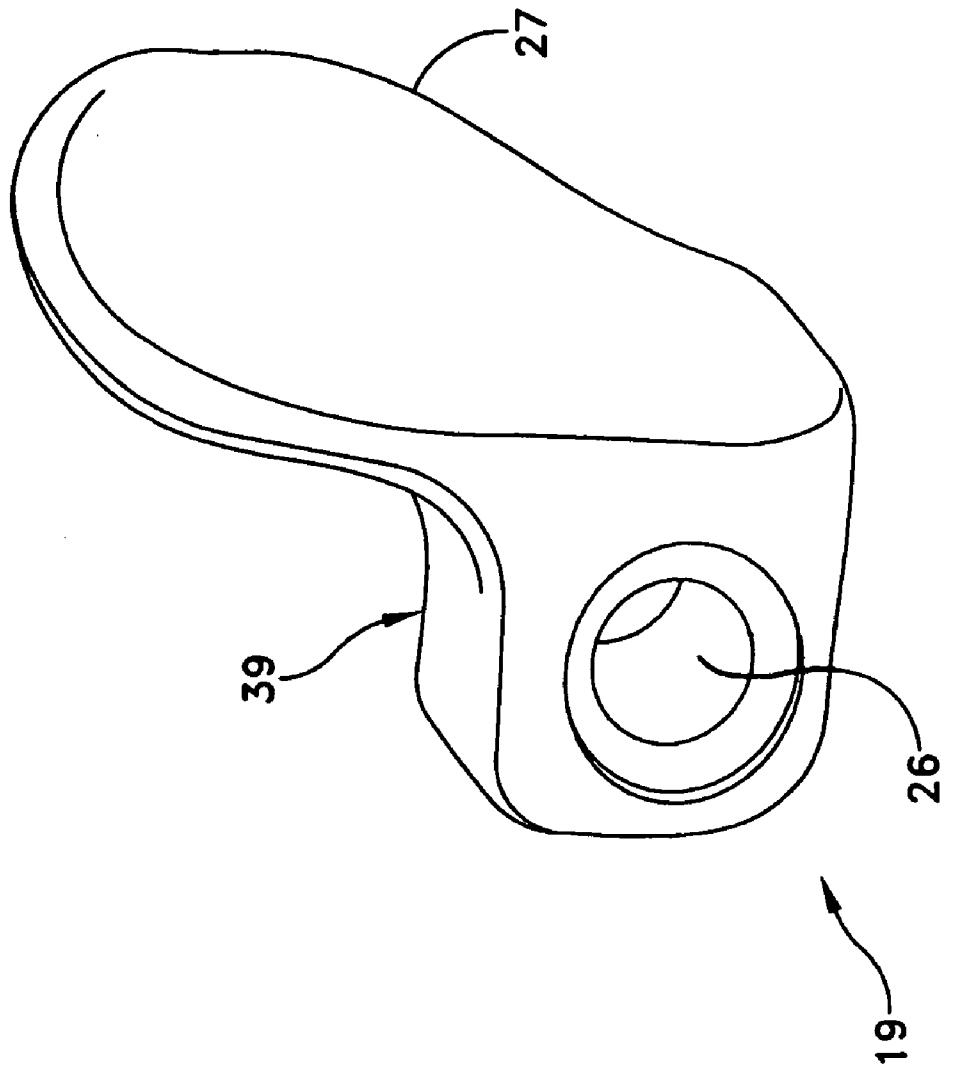


FIG. 15

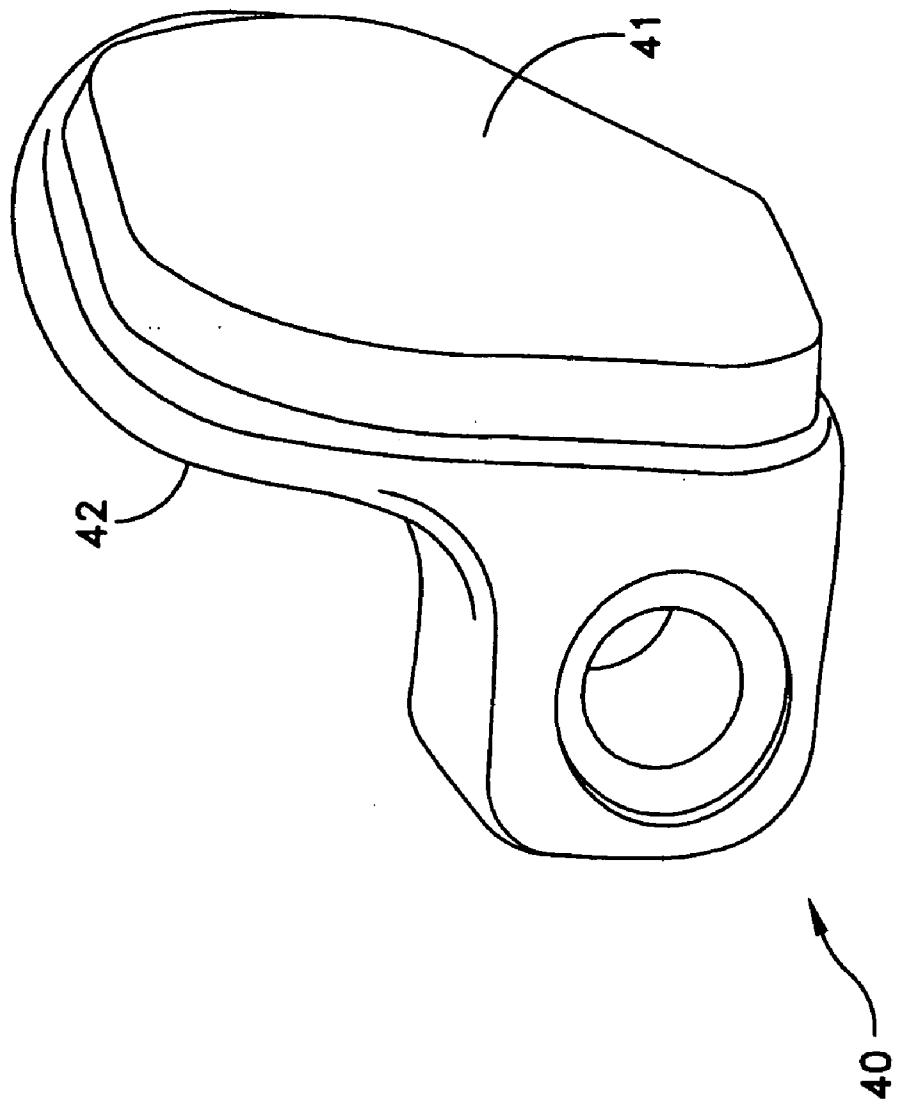


FIG. 16

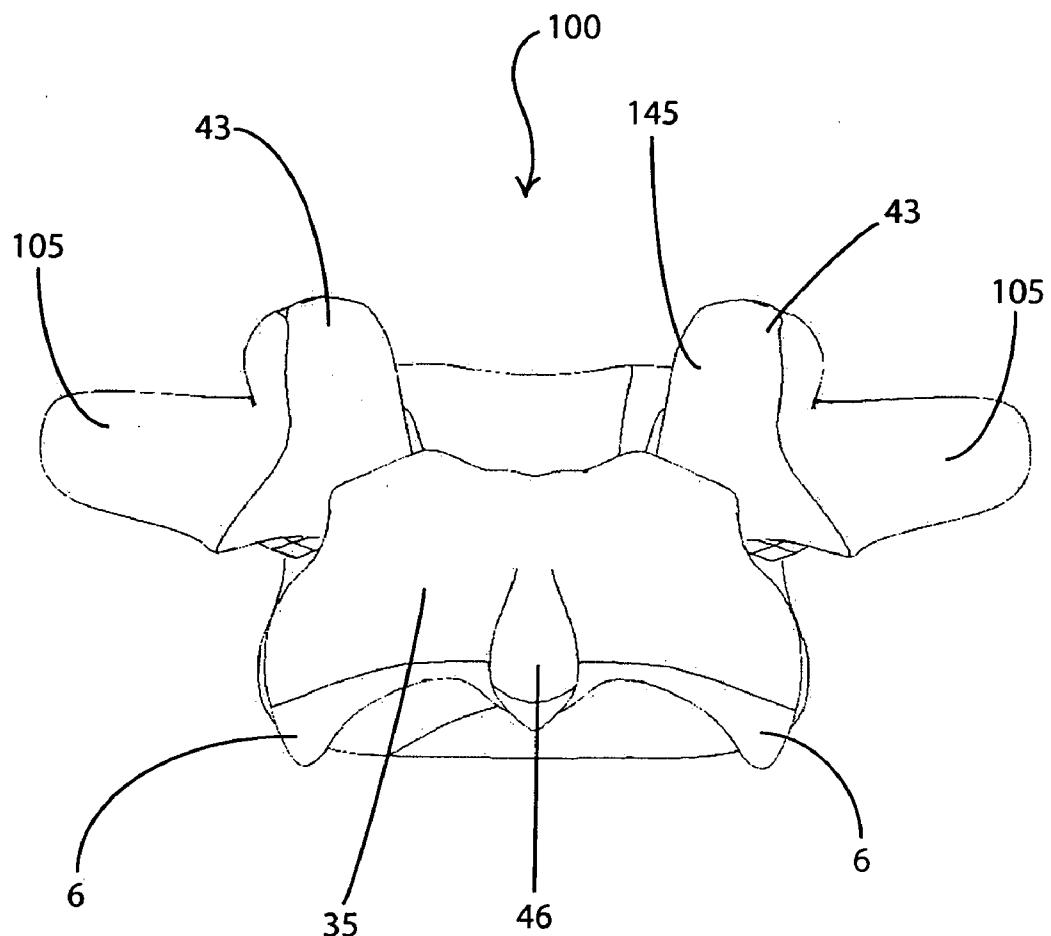


Fig. 17

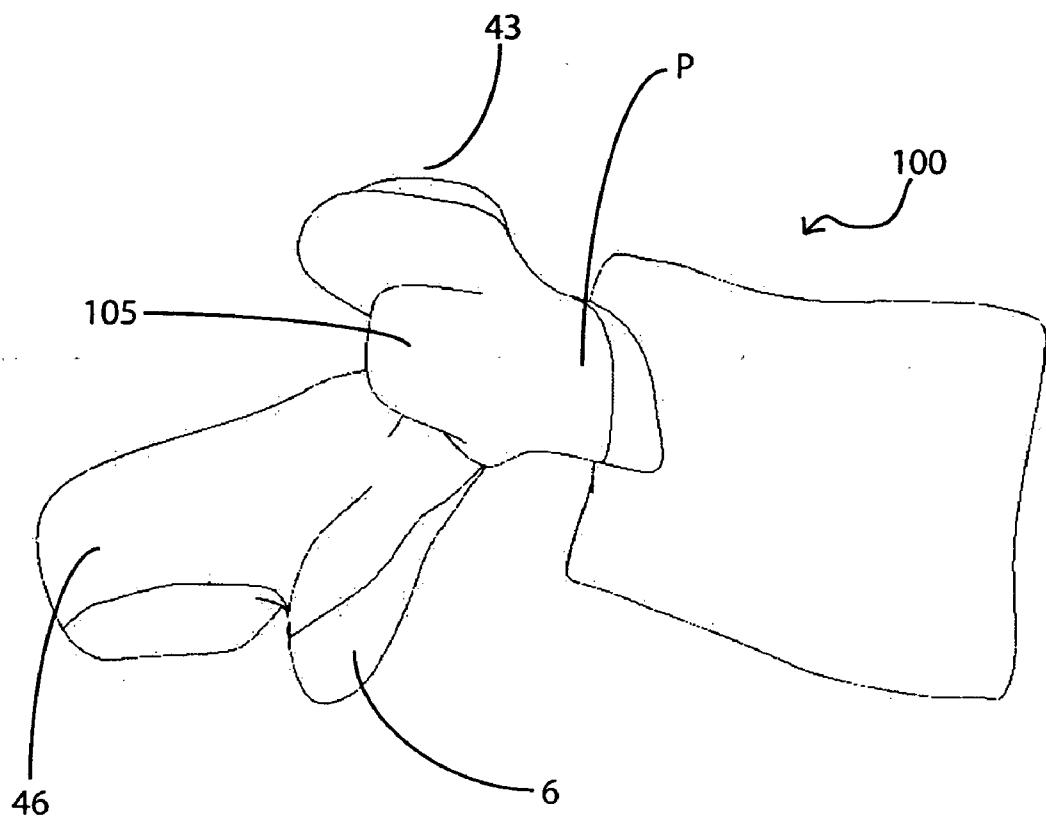


Fig. 18

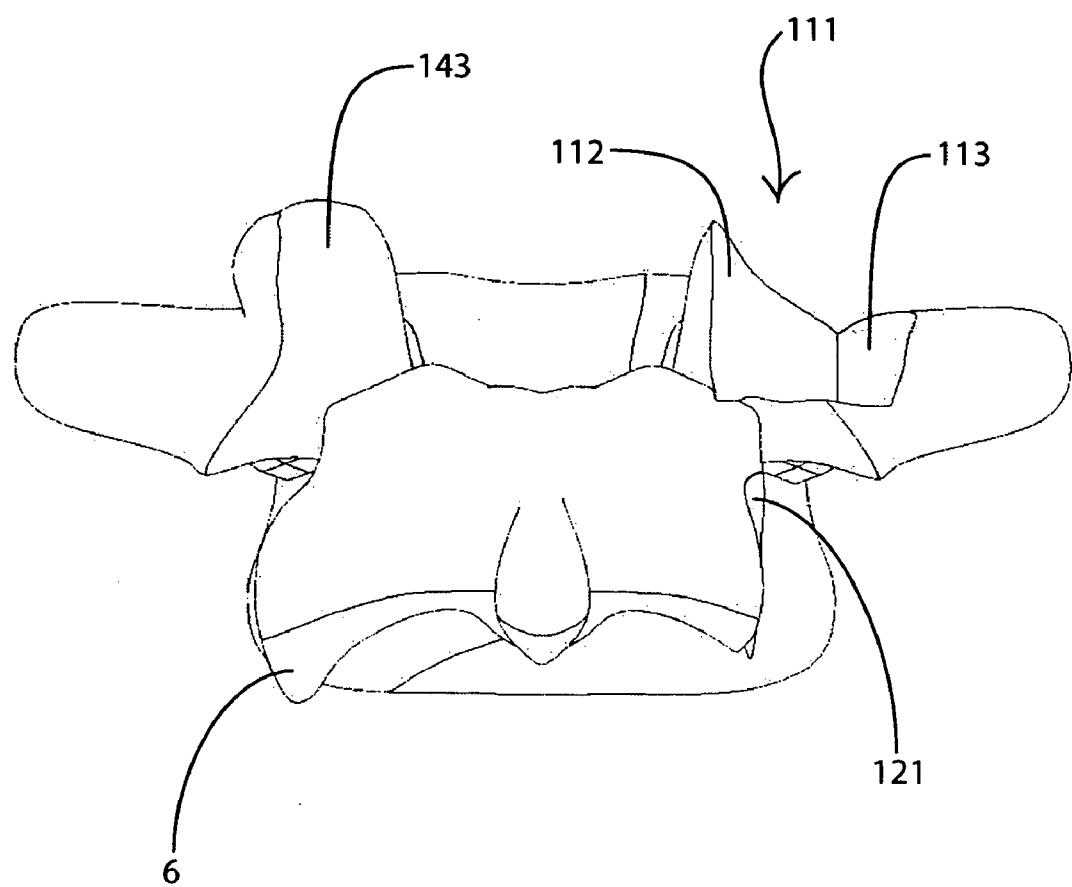


Fig. 19

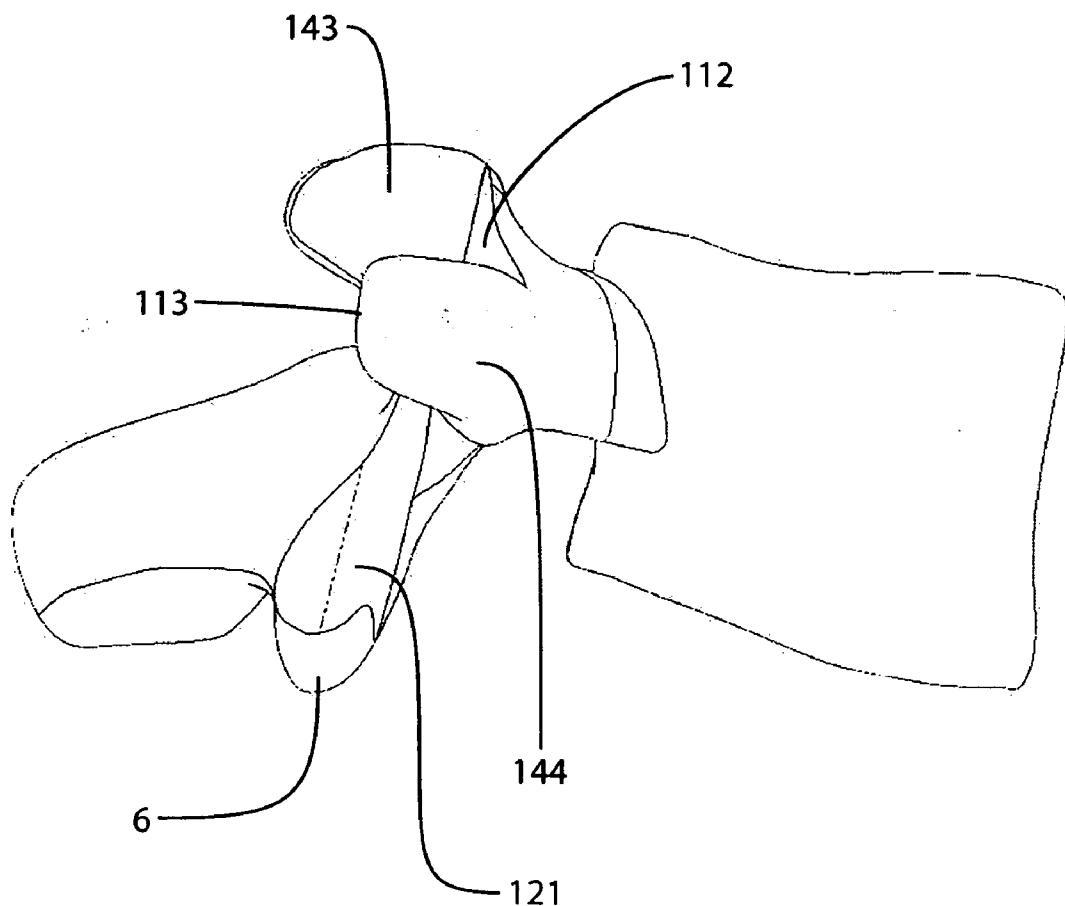


Fig. 20

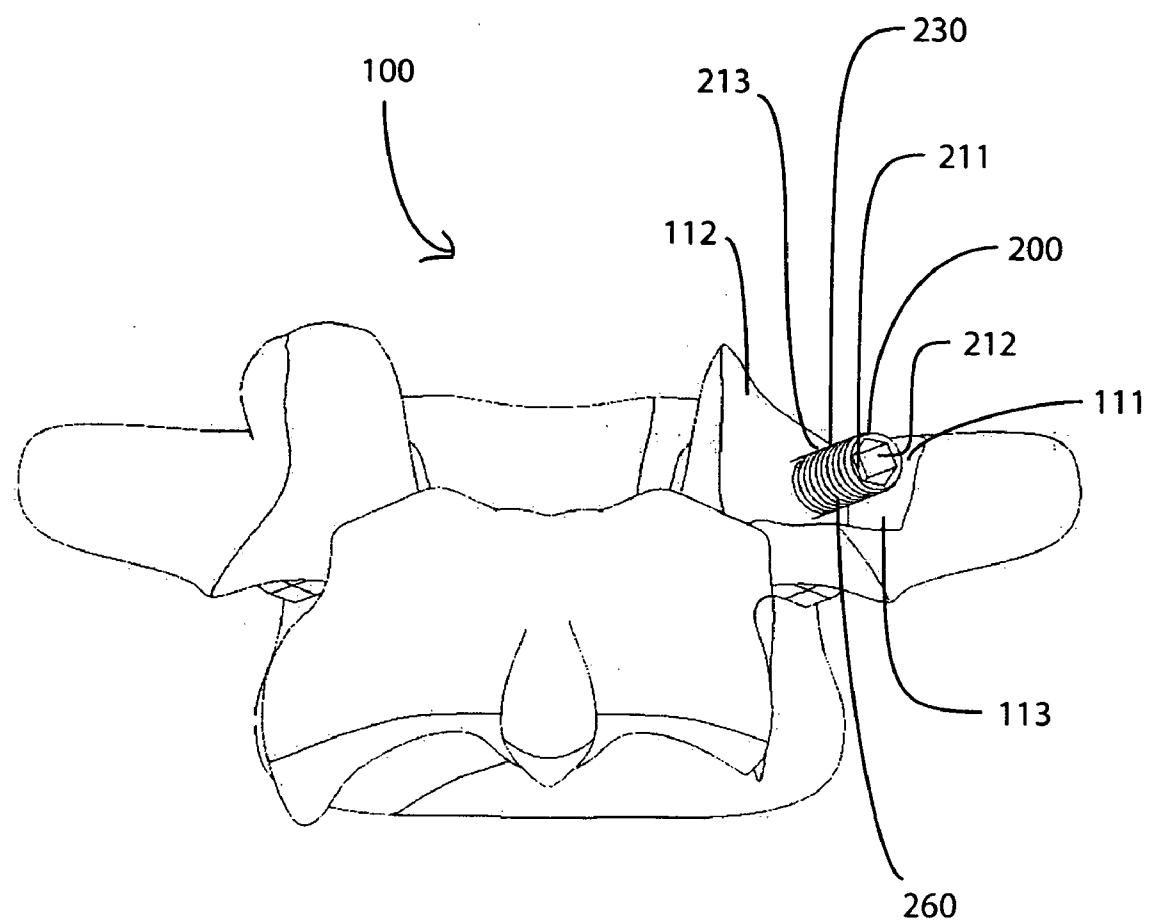


Fig. 21

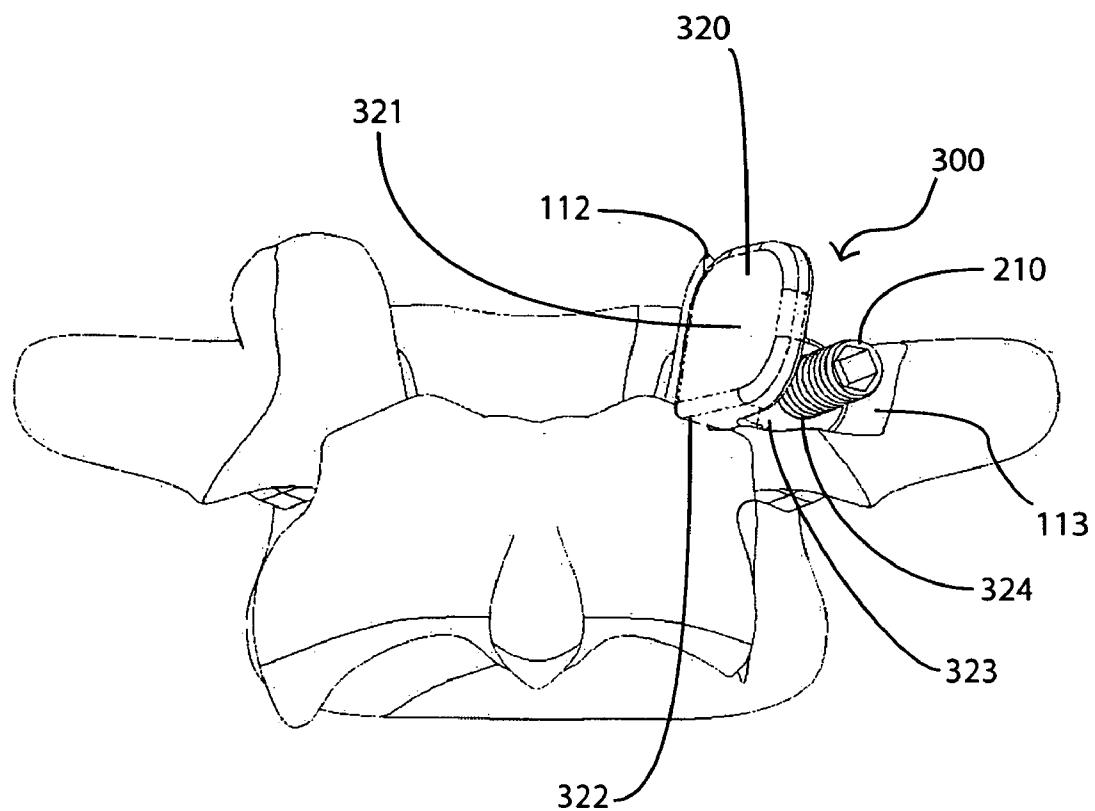


Fig. 22

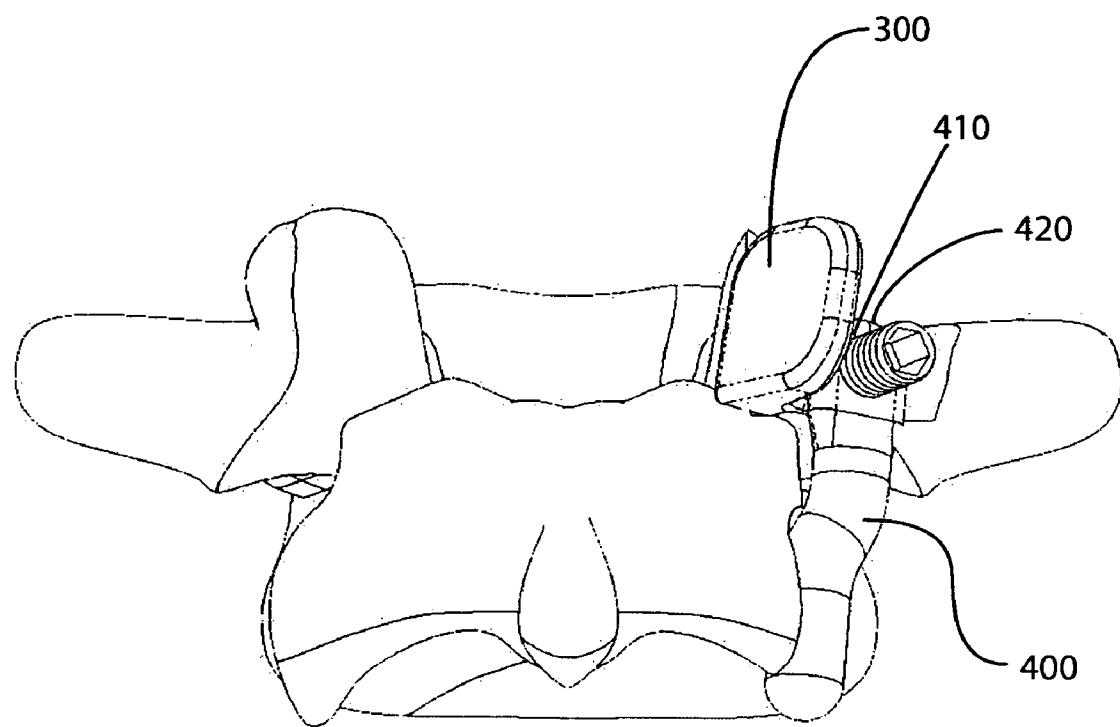


Fig. 23

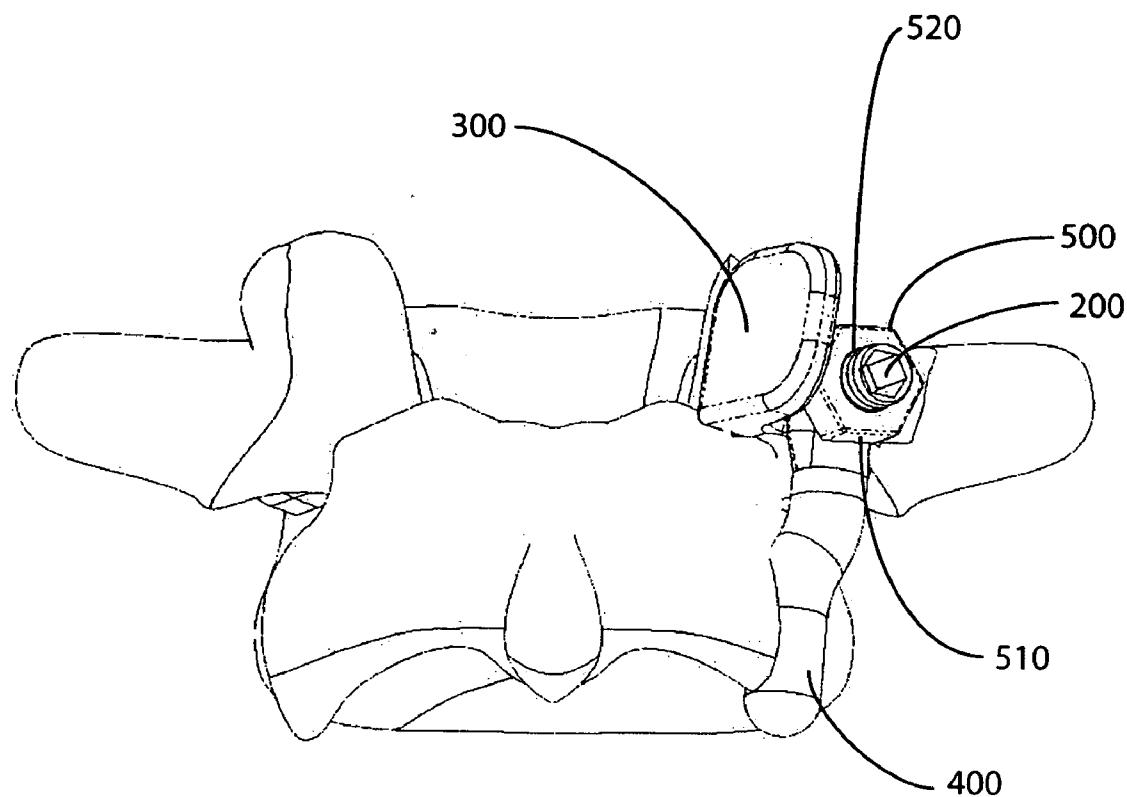


Fig. 24

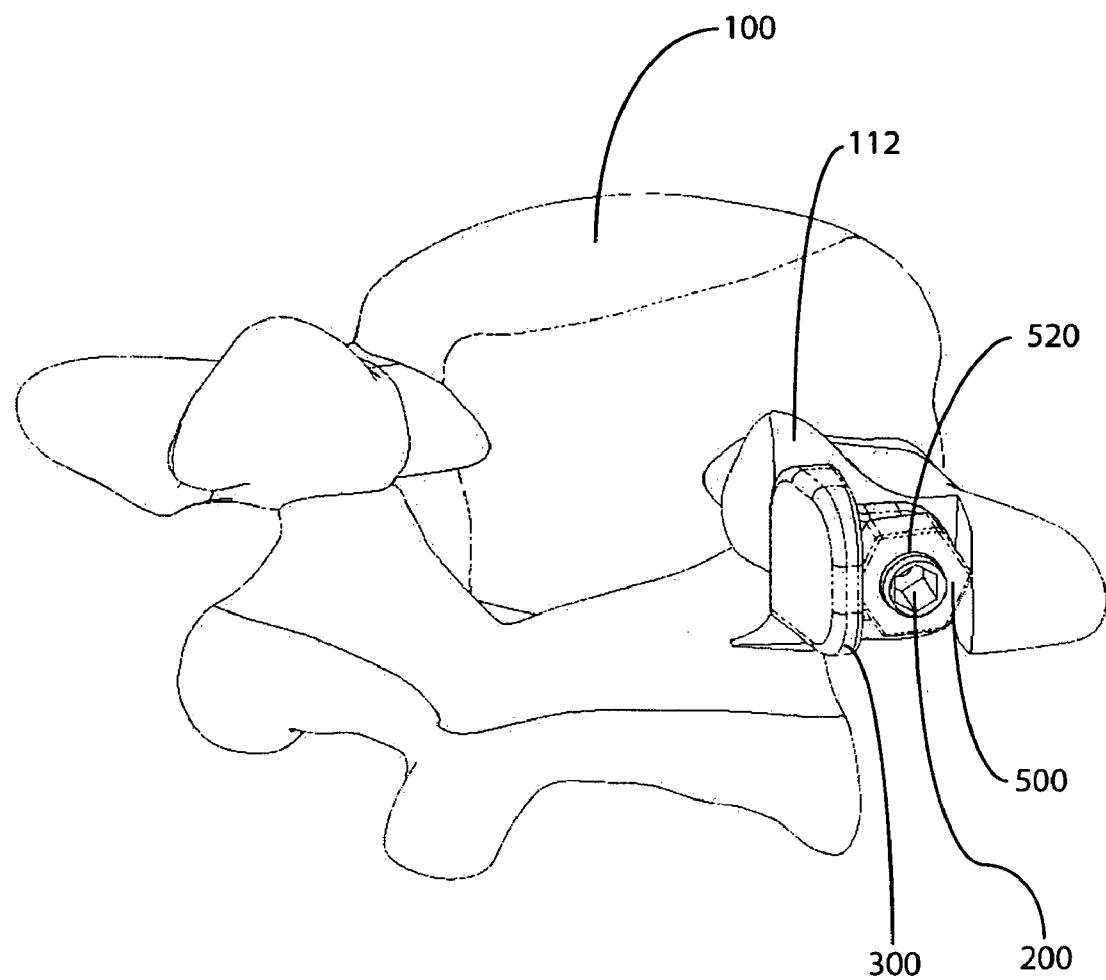


Fig. 25

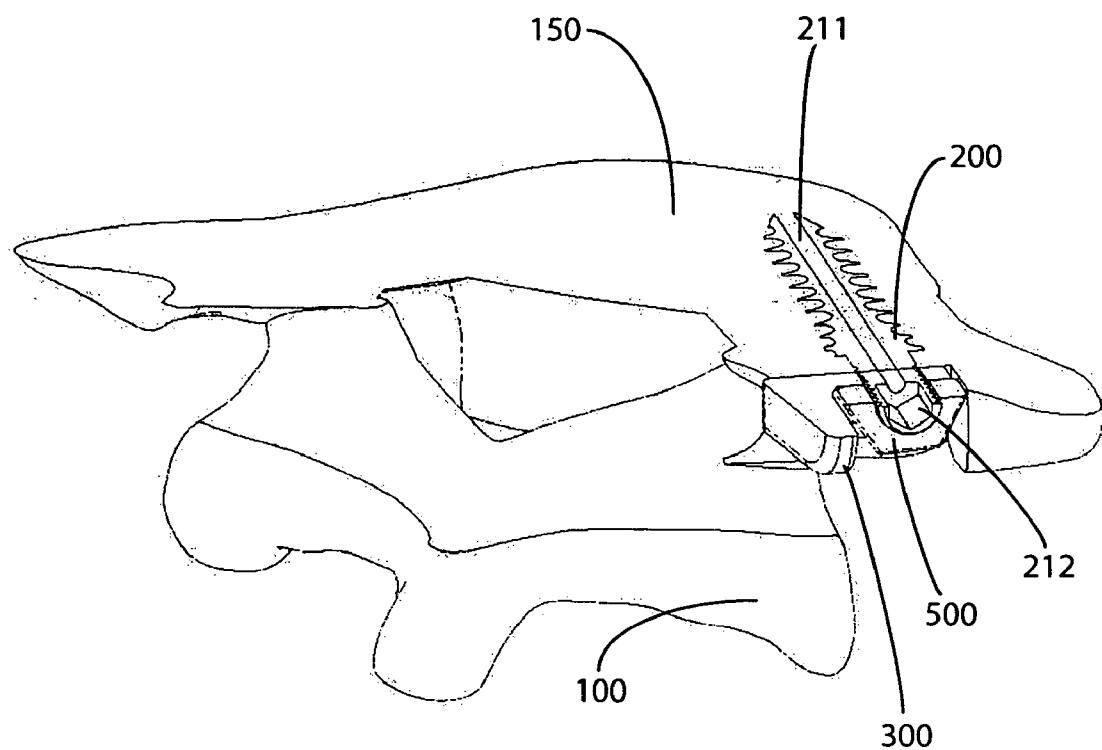


Fig. 26

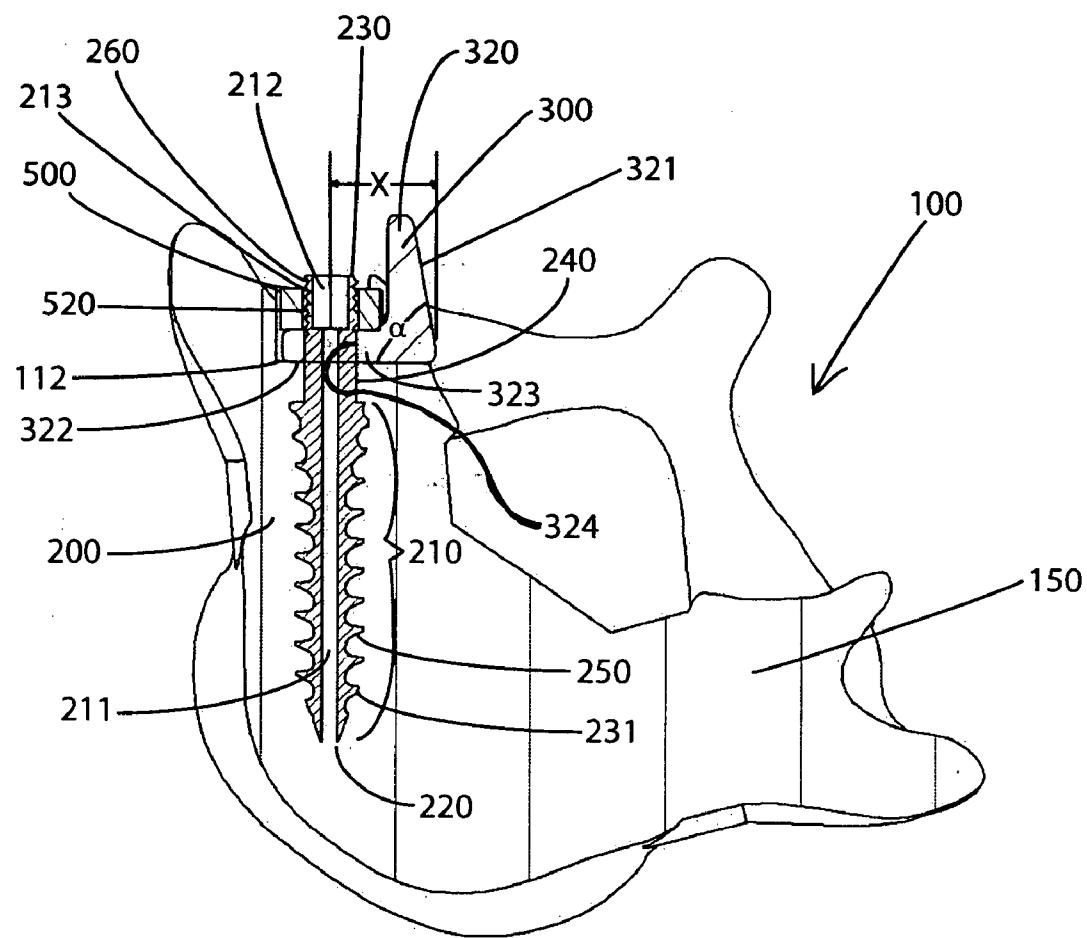


Fig. 27

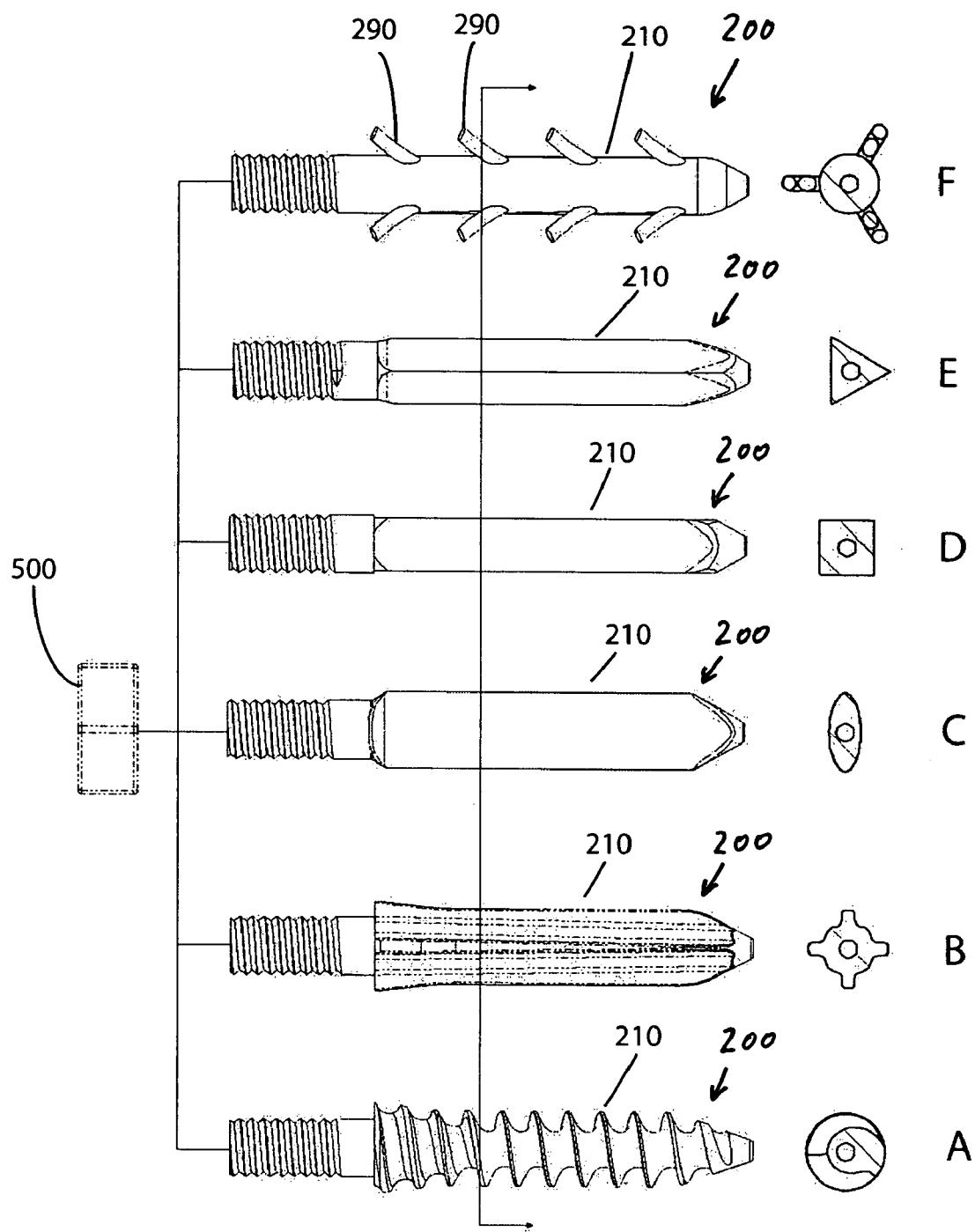


Fig. 28

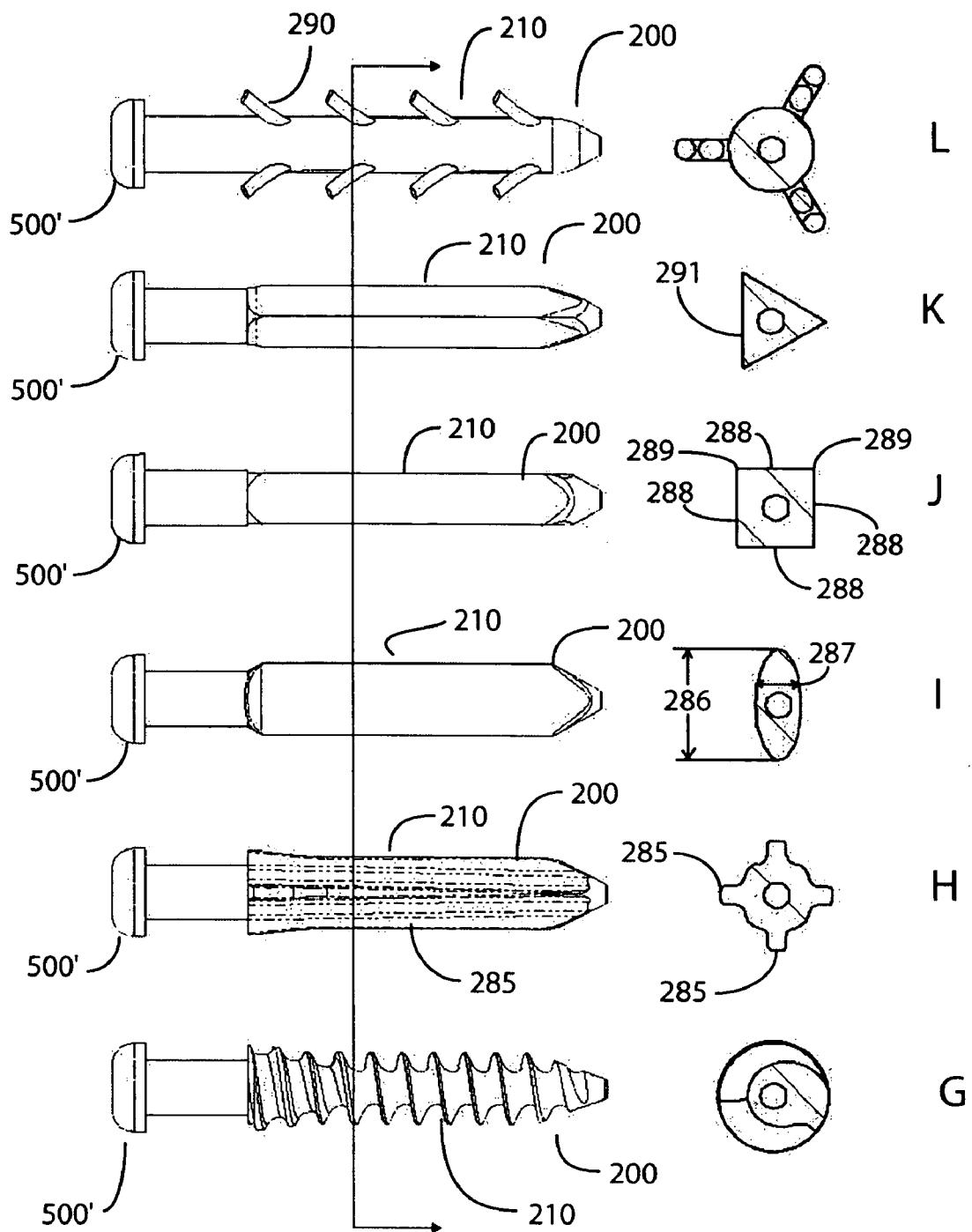


Fig. 28A

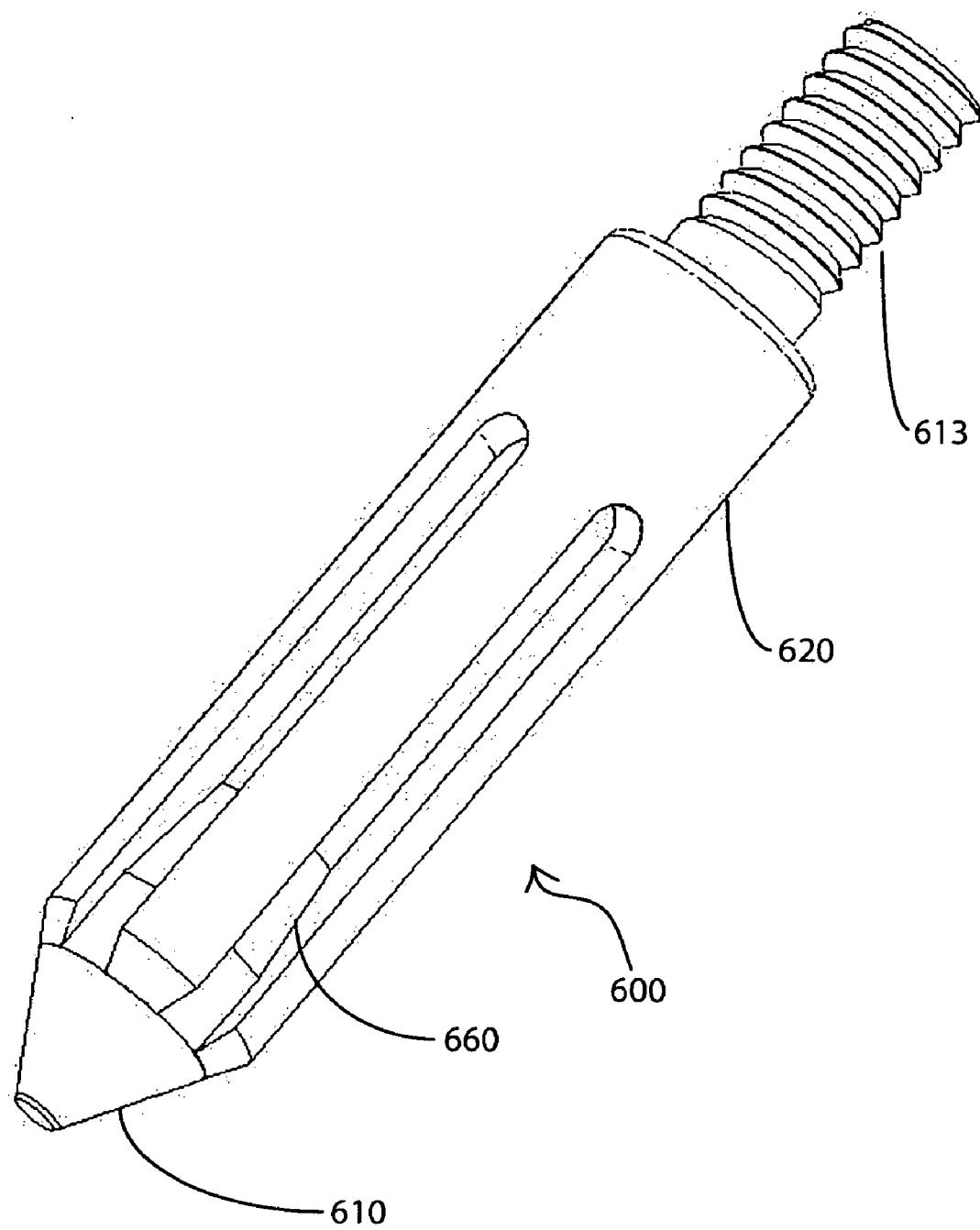


Fig. 29

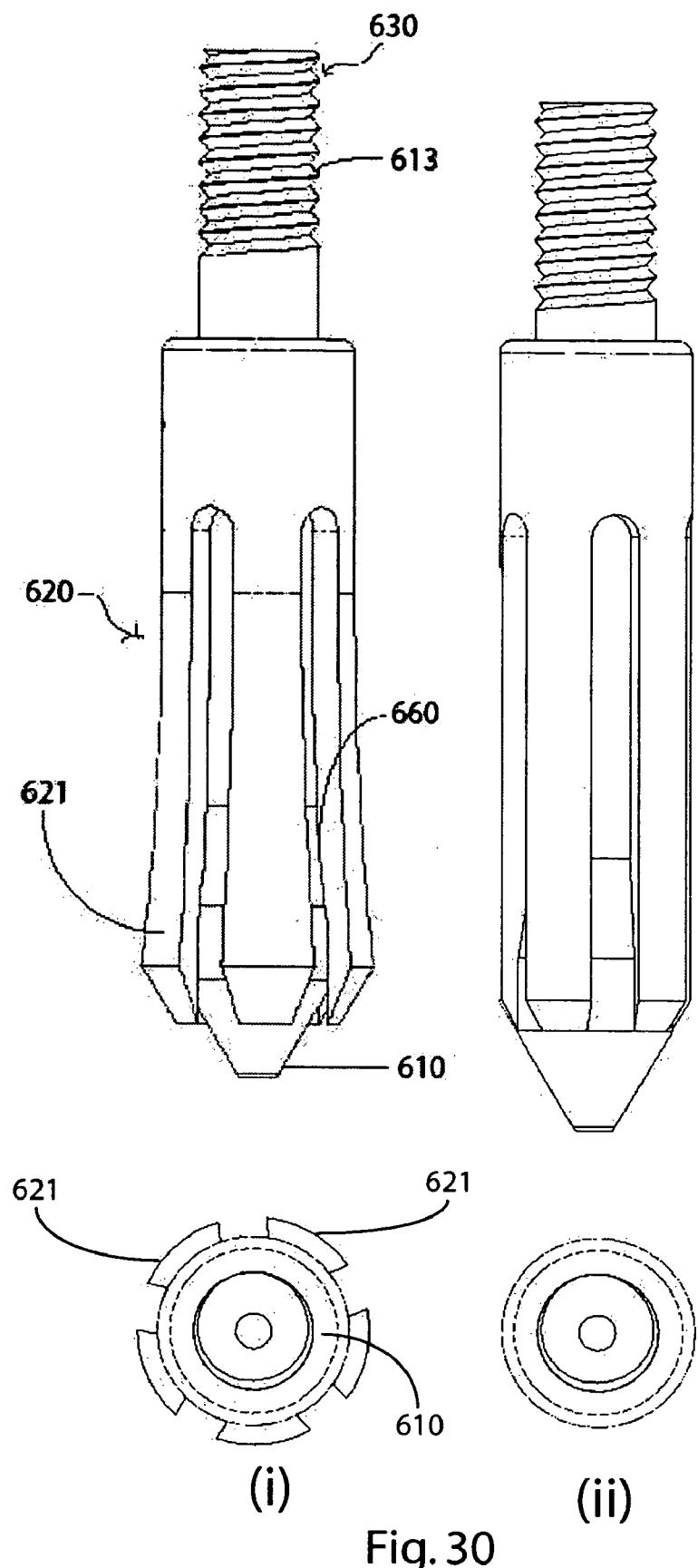


Fig. 30

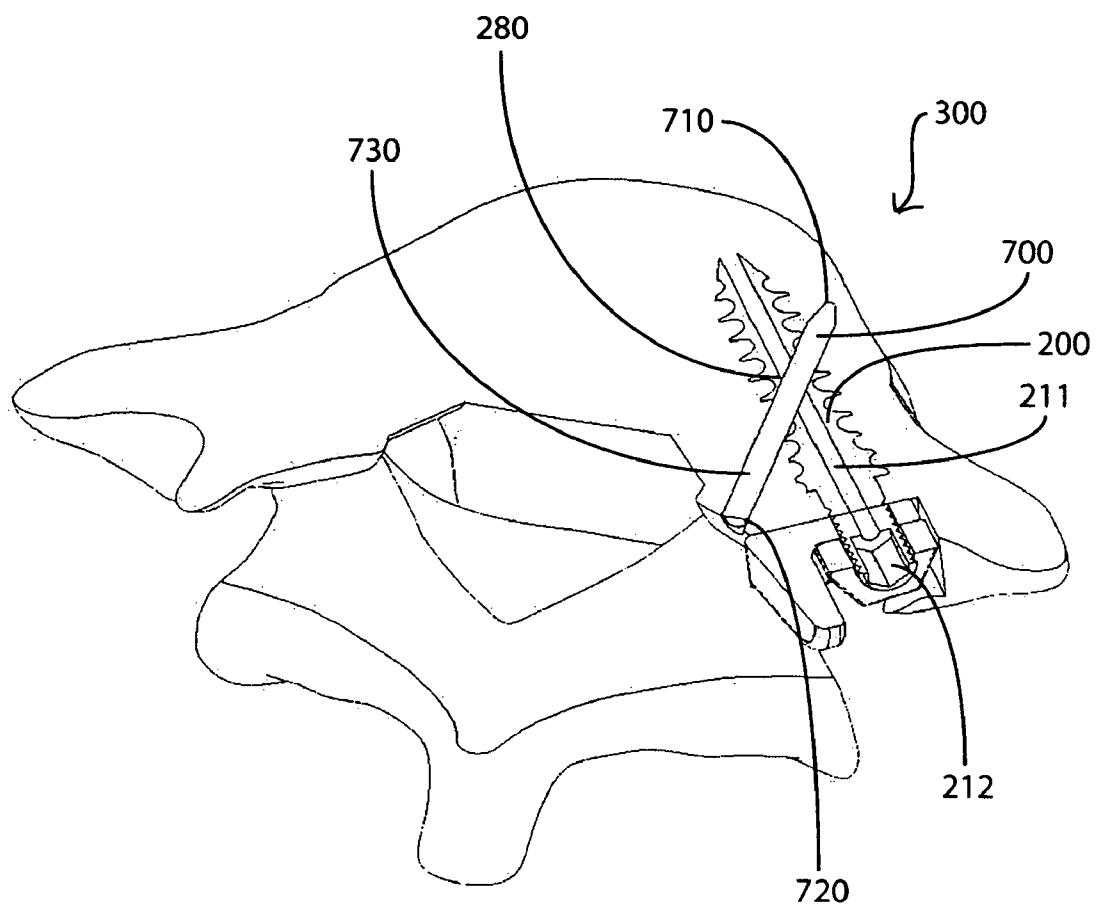


Fig. 31

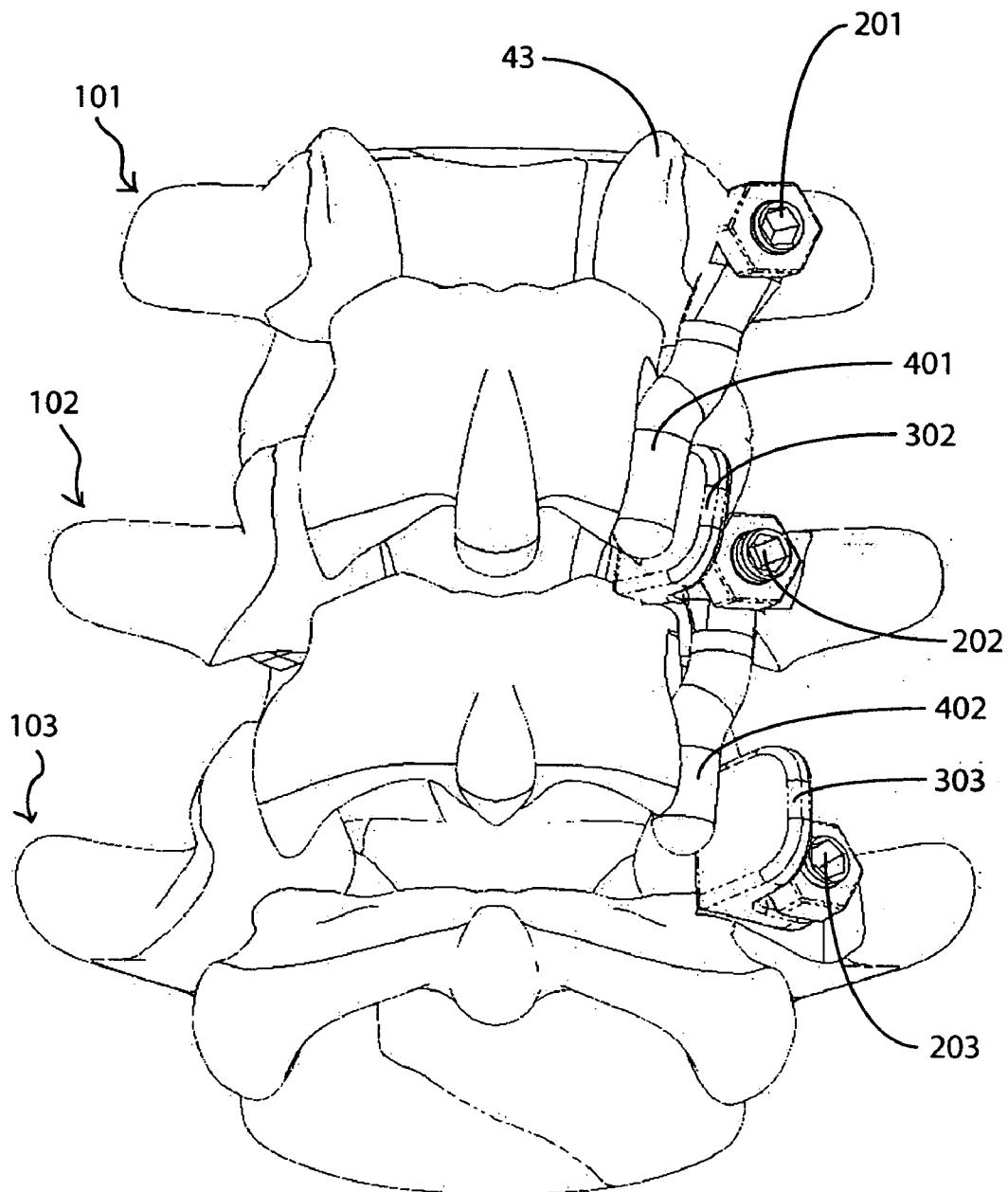


Fig. 32

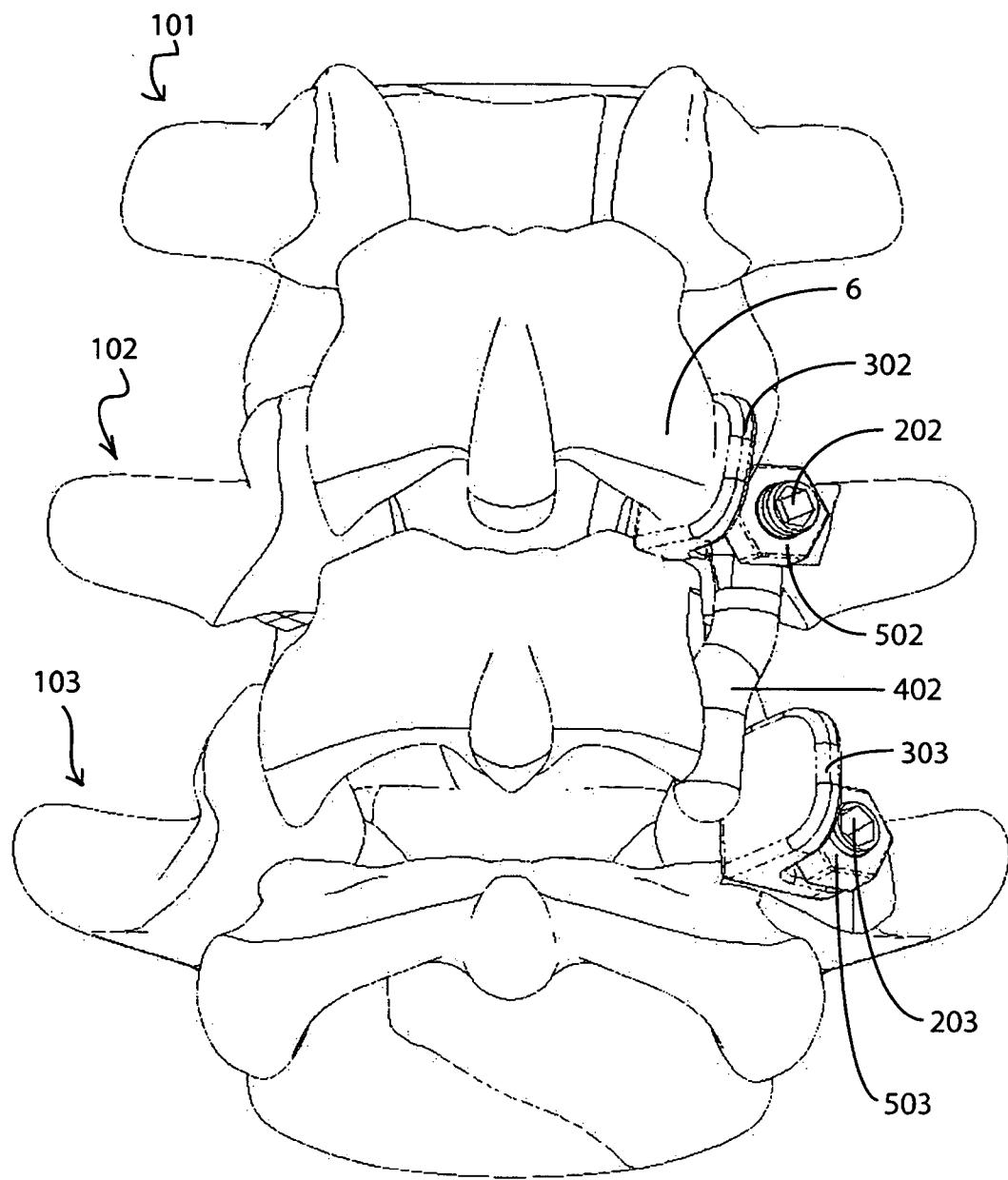


Fig. 33

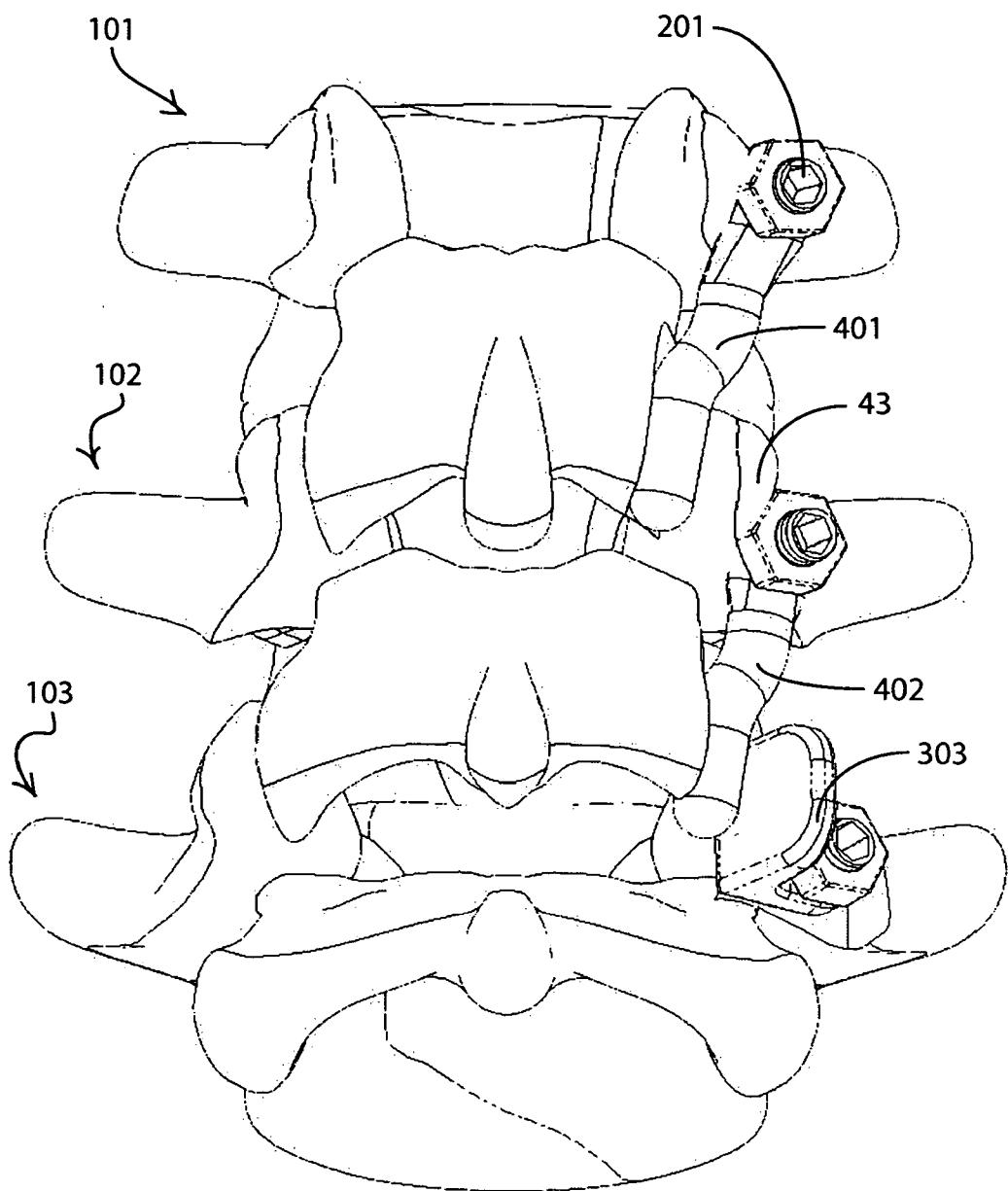


Fig. 34

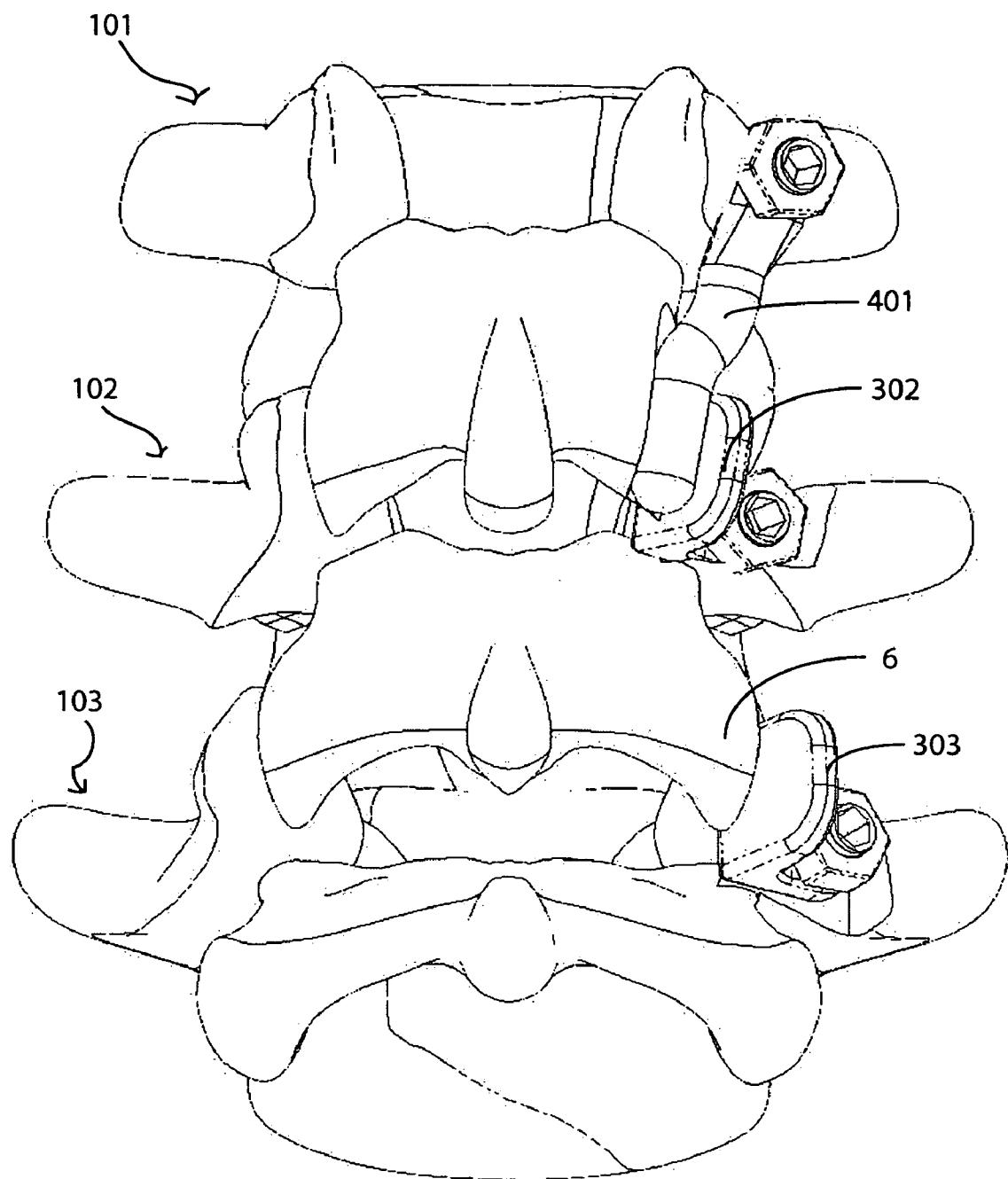


Fig. 35

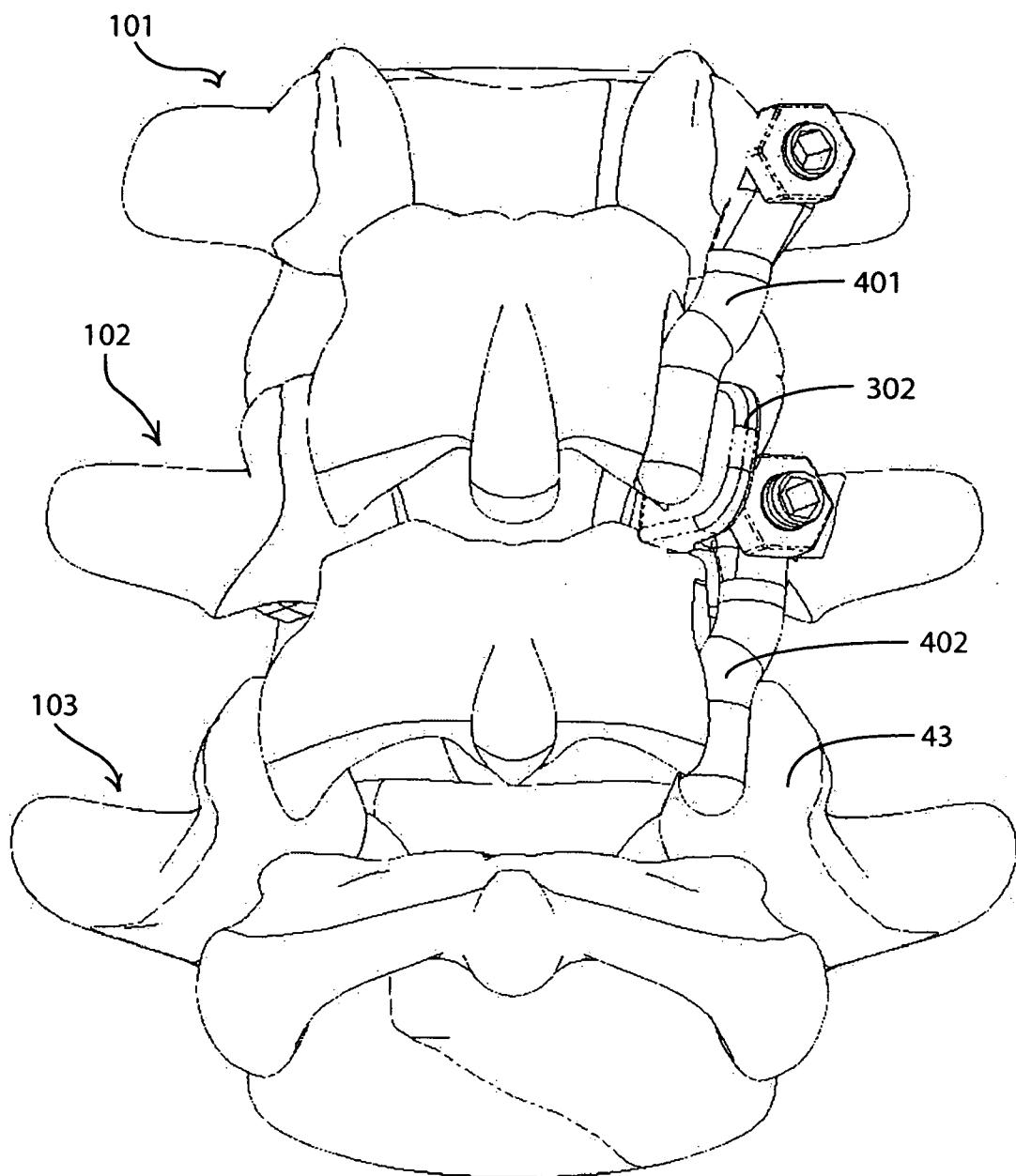


Fig. 36

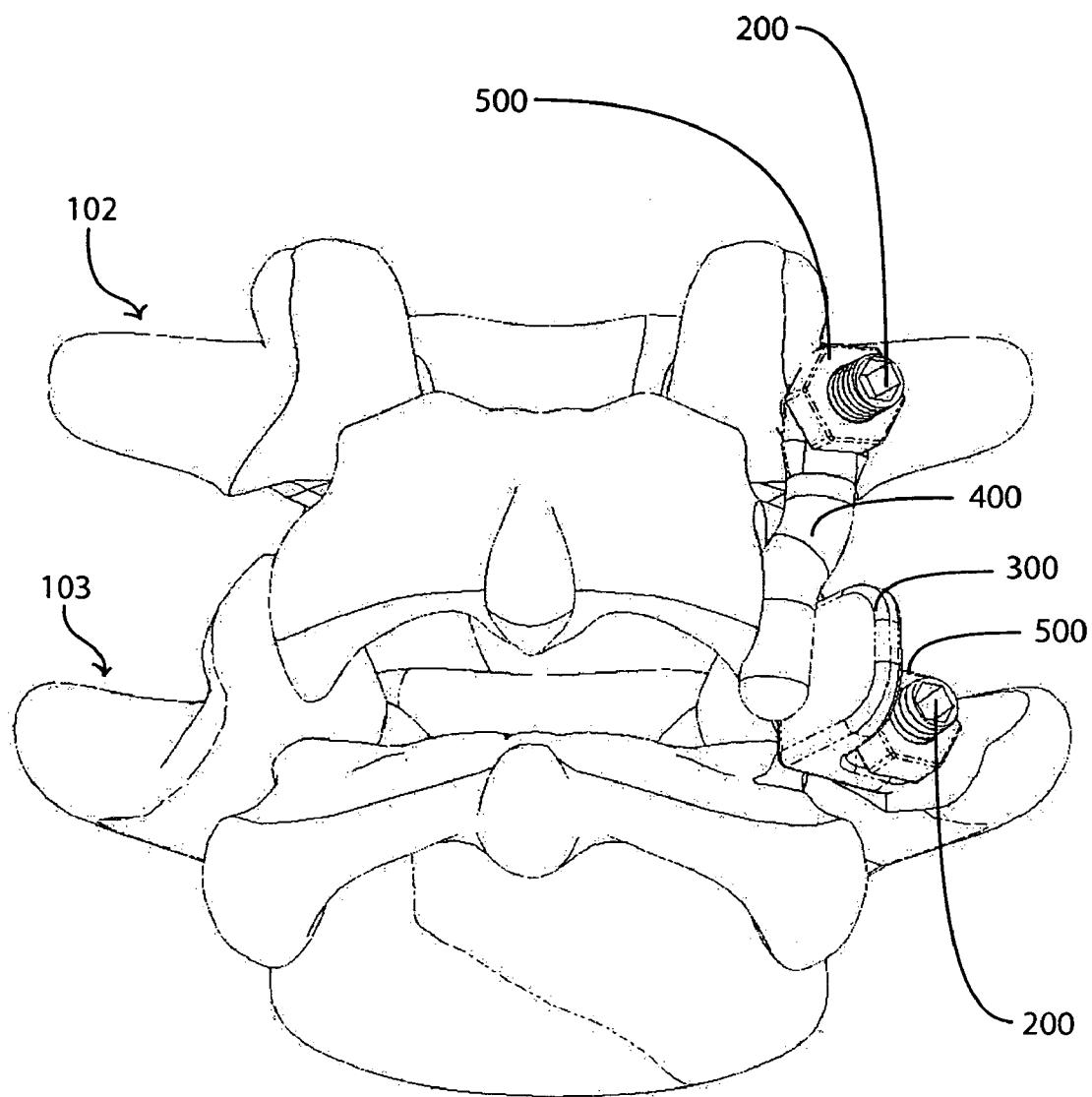


Fig. 37

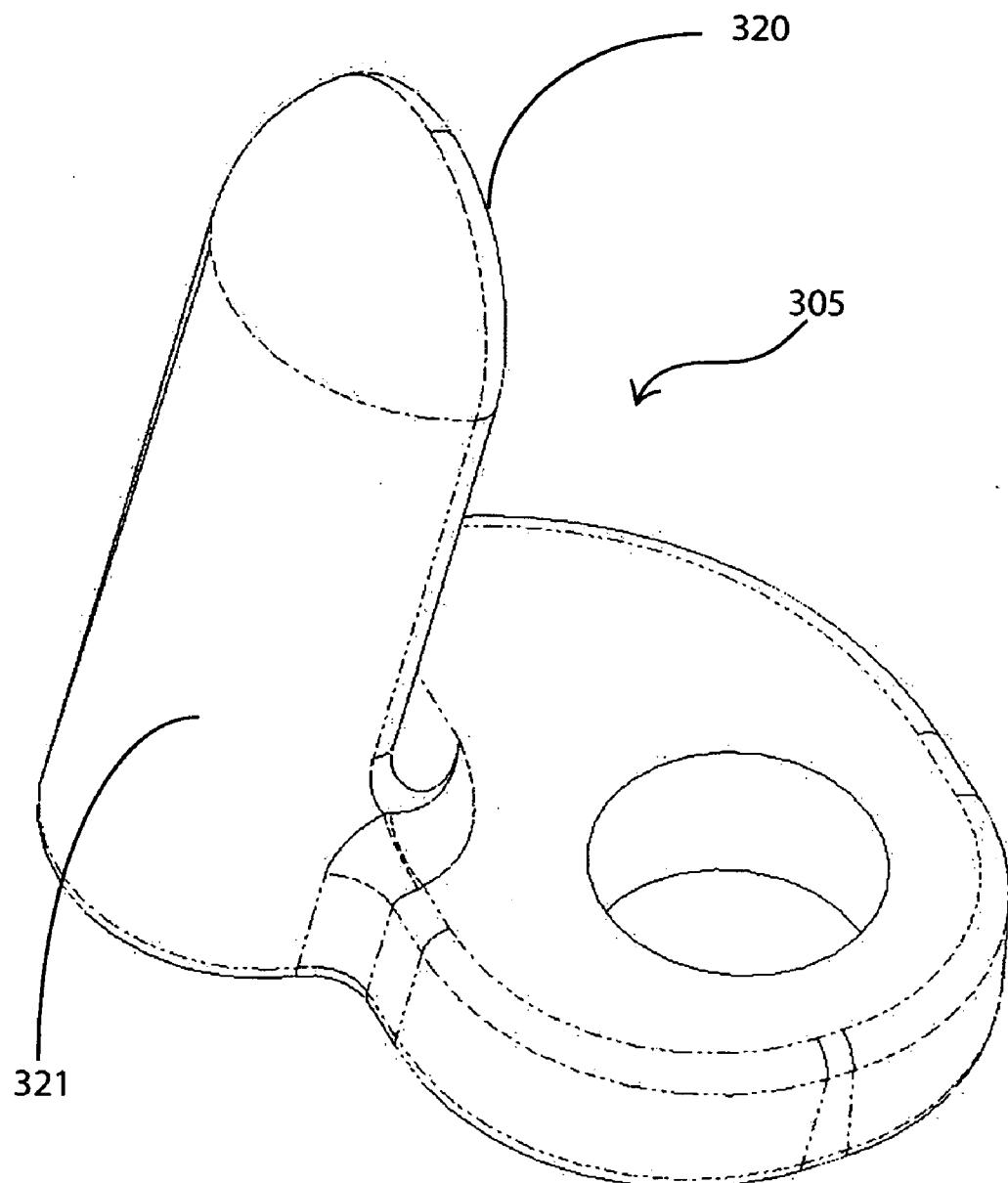


Fig. 38

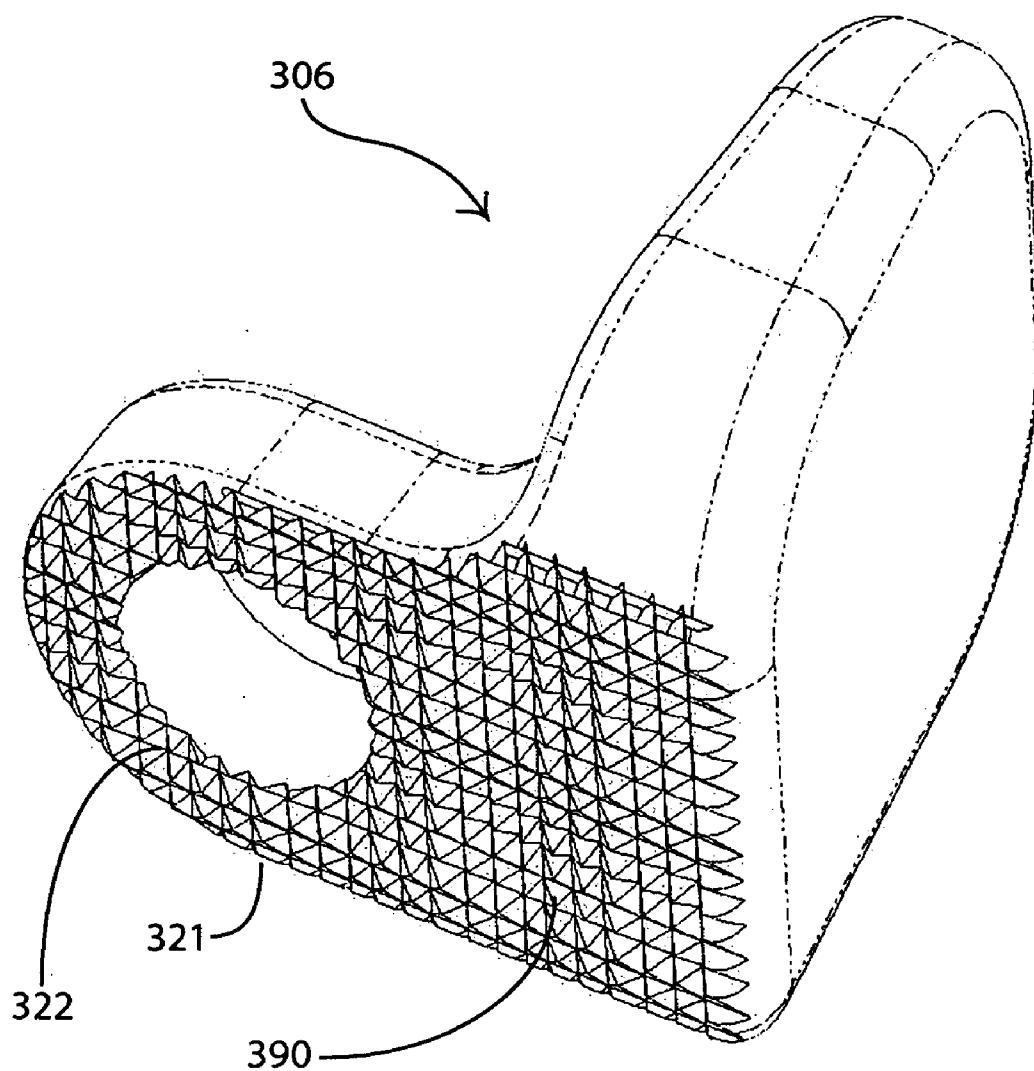


Fig. 39

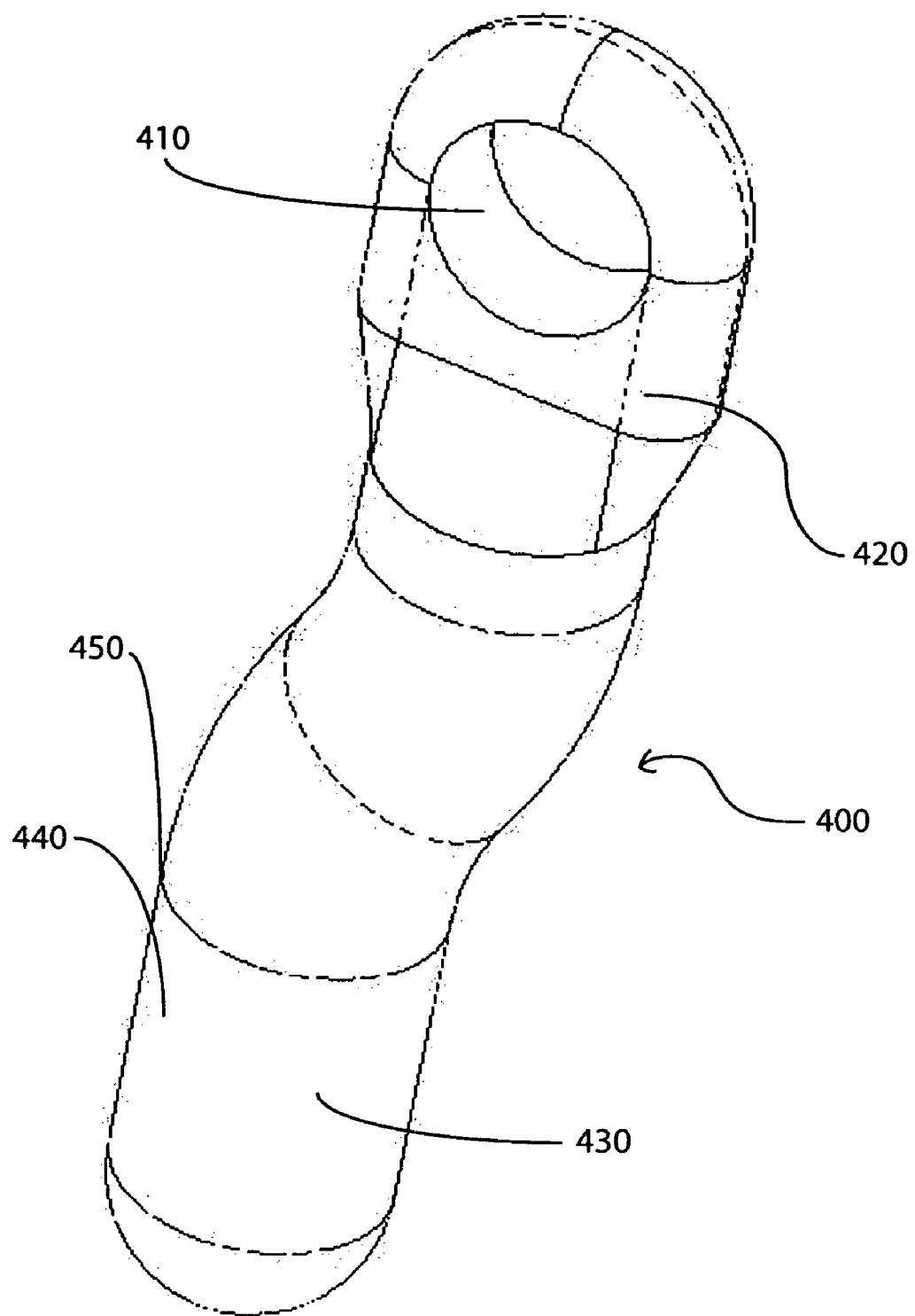


Fig. 40

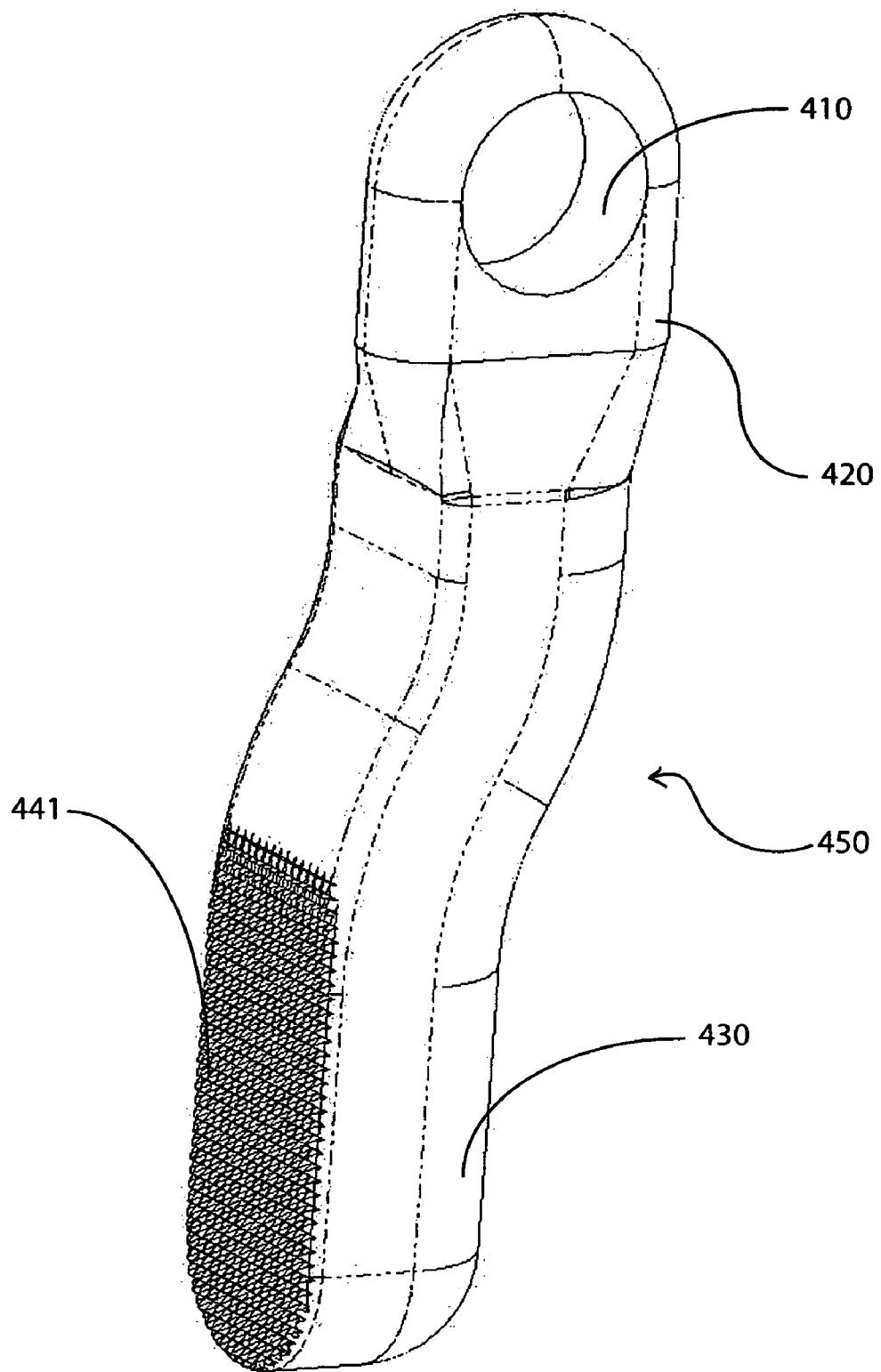


Fig. 41

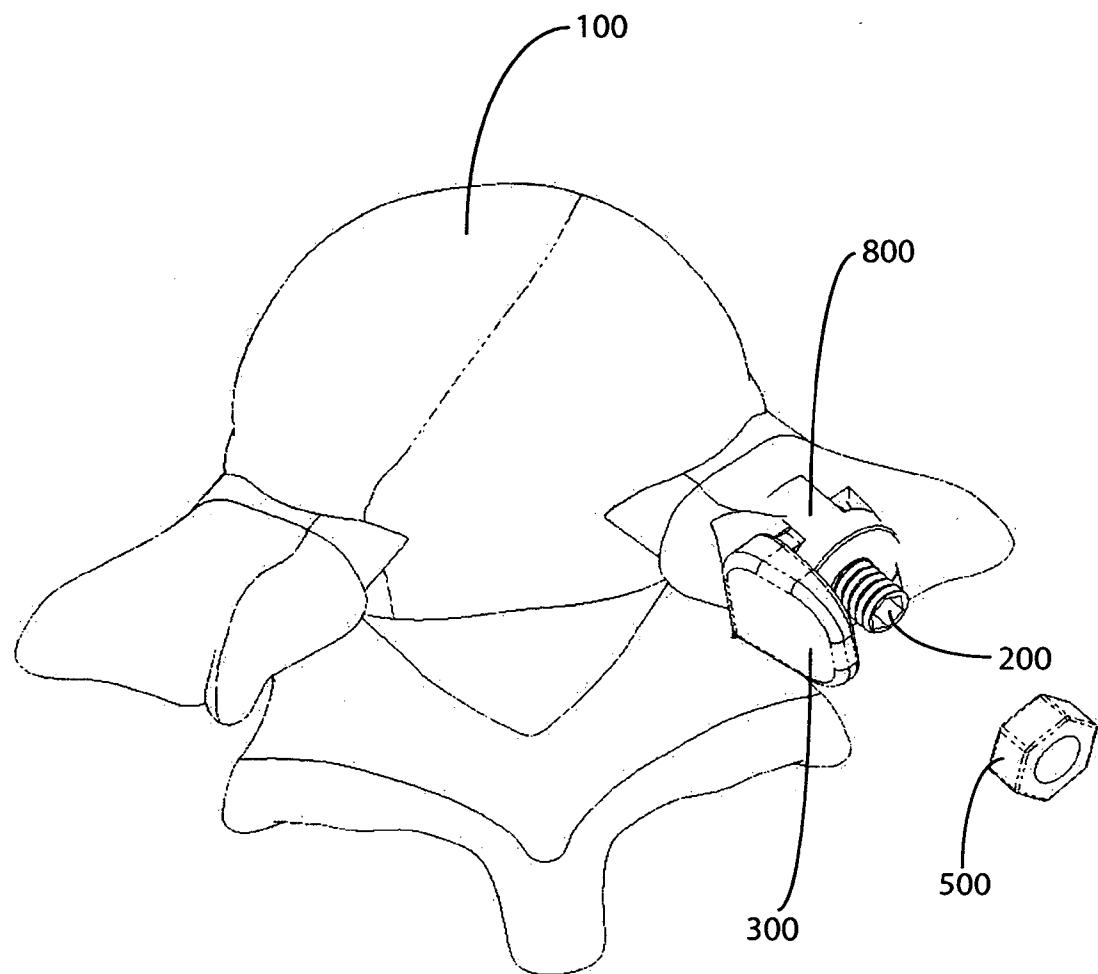


Fig. 42

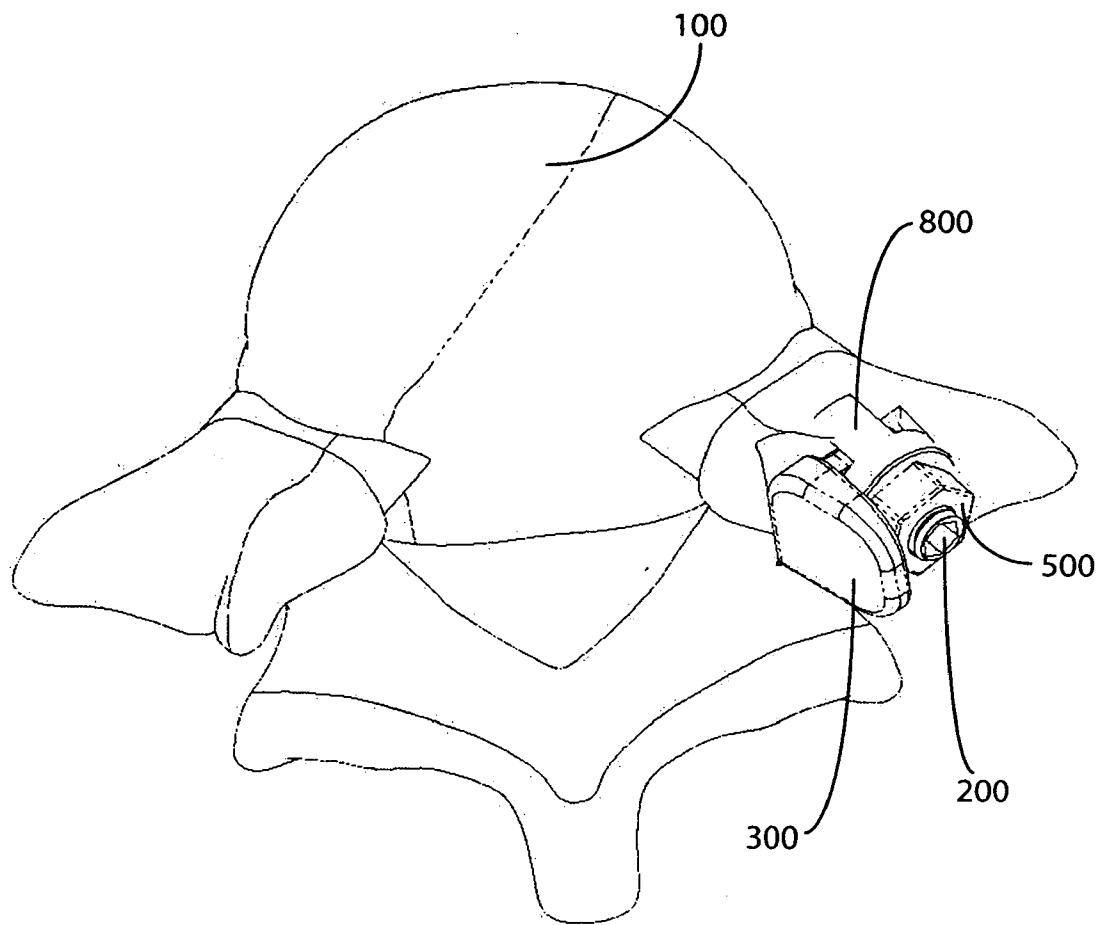


Fig. 43

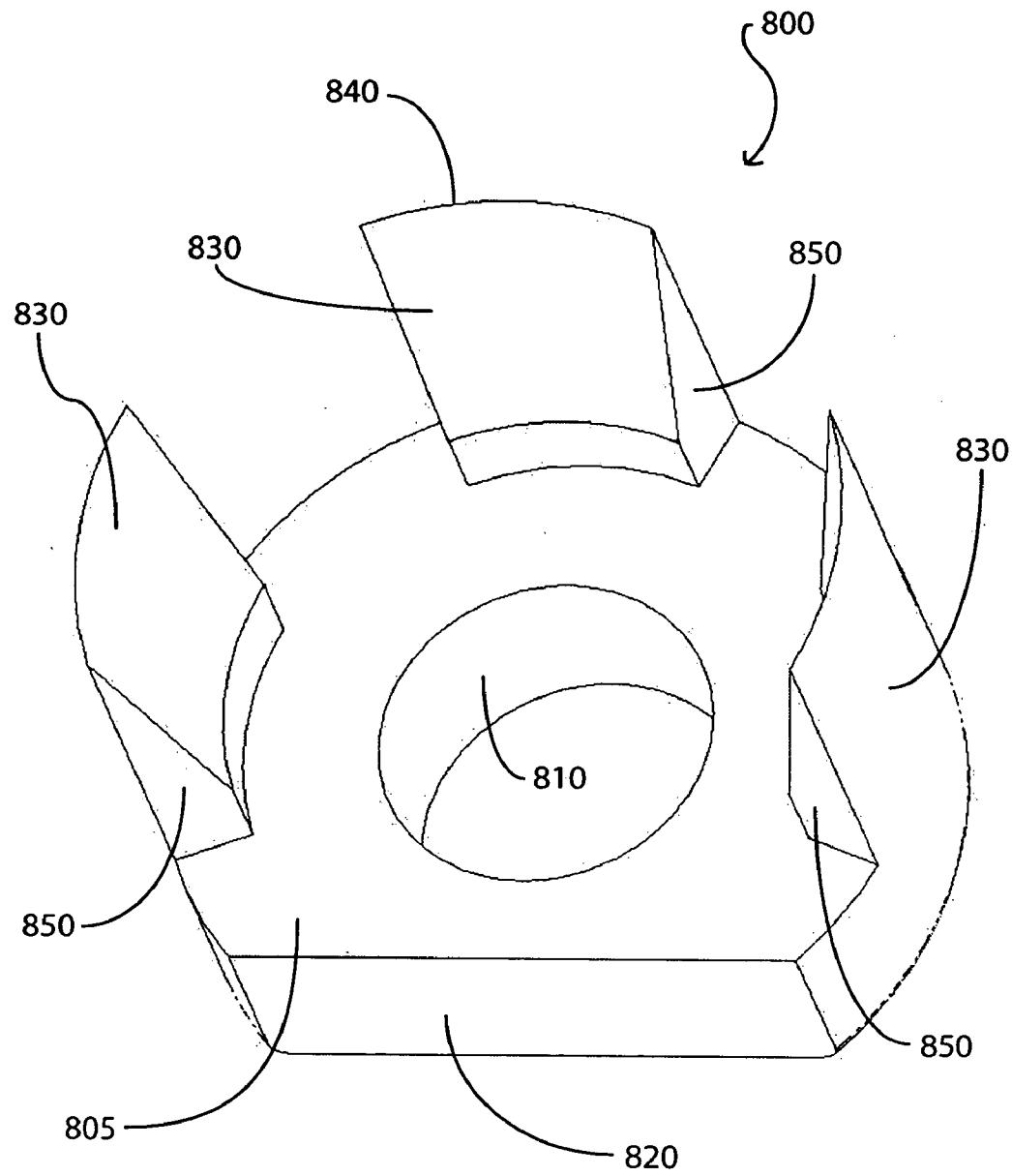


Fig.44

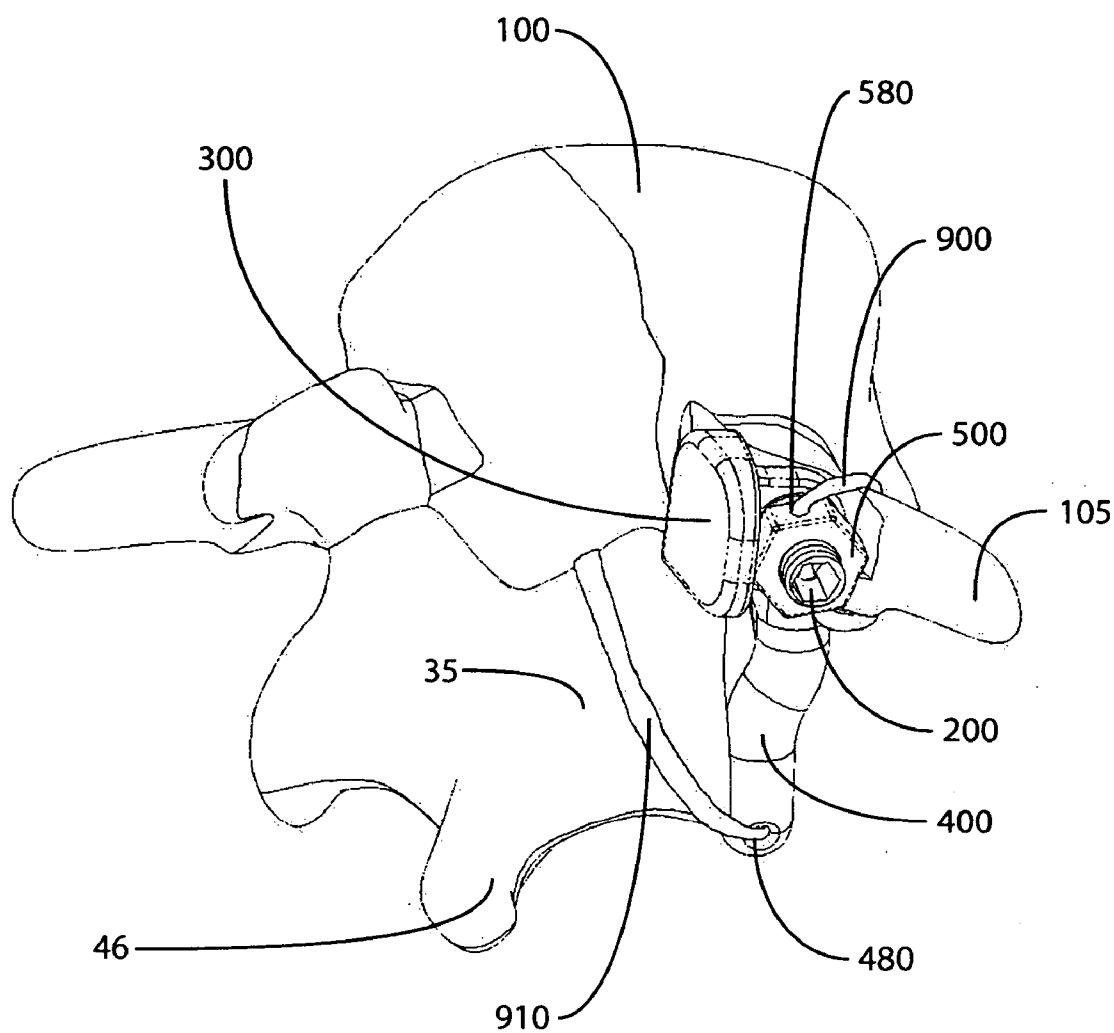


Fig. 45

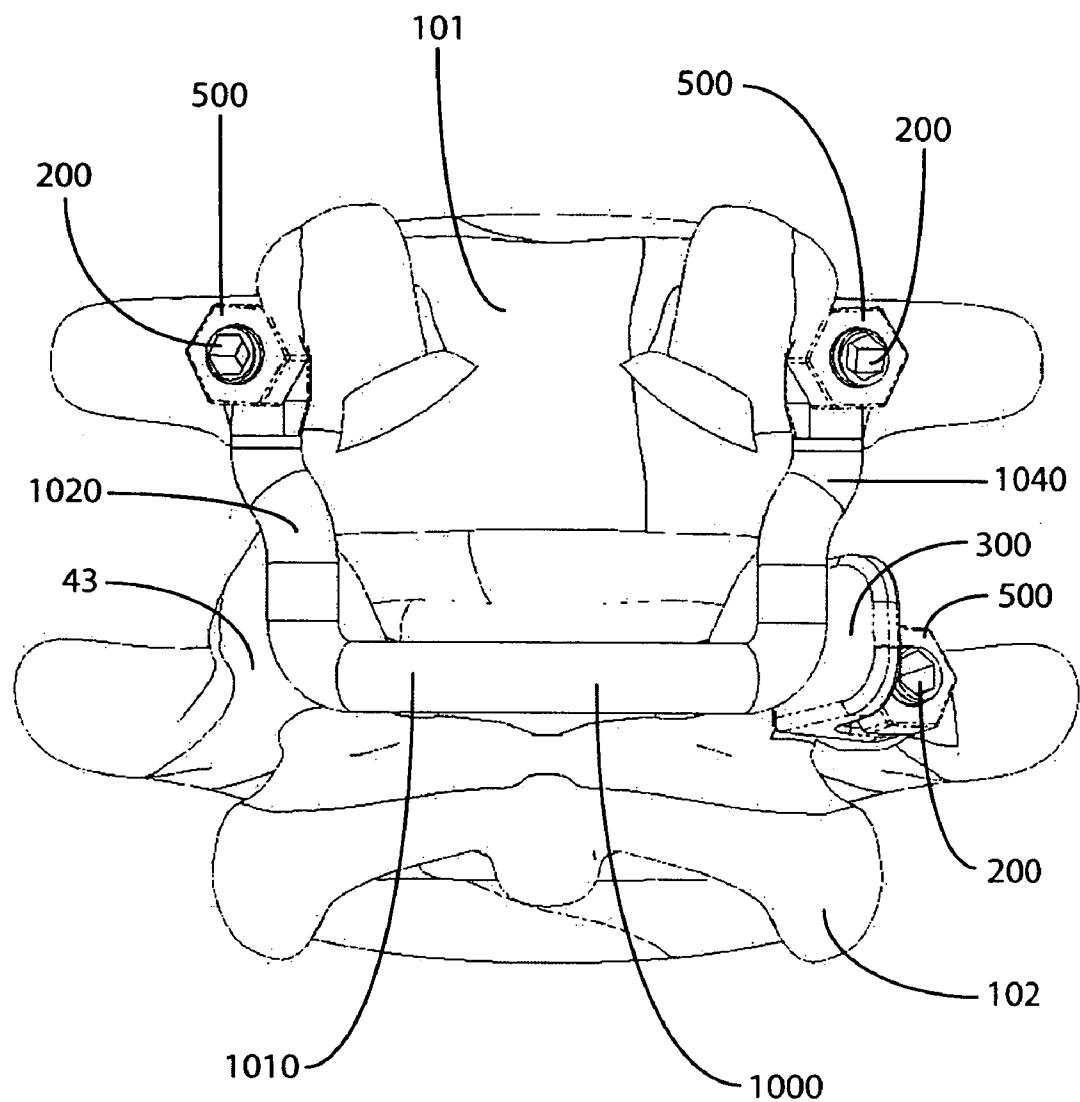


Fig. 46

FACET JOINT REPLACEMENT**REFERENCE TO PENDING PRIOR APPLICATIONS**

[0001] The present application claims the benefit of:

[0002] (i) pending prior U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/421,078, filed Apr. 23, 2003 by E. Marlowe Goble et al. for FACET JOINT REPLACEMENT (Attorney's Docket No. MED-1 CON); and

[0003] (ii) pending prior U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 60/505,199, filed Sep. 23, 2003 by E. Marlowe Goble et al. for FACET JOINT REPLACEMENT (Attorney's Docket No. MED-1 CIP PROV).

[0004] The two above-identified documents are hereby incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0005] 1. Field Of The Invention

[0006] The present invention relates to surgical devices and methods to replace a damaged, diseased, or otherwise painful spinal facet joint.

[0007] 2. Description Of Related Art

[0008] Traumatic, inflammatory, metabolic, and degenerative disorders of the spine can produce debilitating pain that can have severe socioeconomic and psychological effects. One of the most common surgical interventions today is arthrodesis, or spine fusion, of one or more motion segments, with approximately 300,000 procedures performed annually in the U.S. Clinical success varies considerably, depending upon technique and indications, and consideration must be given to the concomitant risks and complications. For example, Tsantrizos and Nibu have shown that spine fusion decreases function by limiting the range of motion for patients in flexion, extension, rotation, and lateral bending. Furthermore, Khoo and Nagata have shown that spine fusion creates increased stresses and, therefore, accelerated degeneration of adjacent non-fused motion segments. Additionally, pseudoarthrosis, as a result of an incomplete or ineffective fusion, may reduce or even eliminate the desired pain relief for the patient. Finally, the fusion device, whether artificial or biological, may migrate out of the fusion site.

[0009] Recently, several attempts have been made to recreate the natural biomechanics of the spine by use of an artificial disc. Artificial discs provide for articulation between vertebral bodies to recreate the full range of motion allowed by the elastic properties of the natural intervertebral disc that directly connects two opposed vertebral bodies.

[0010] However, the artificial discs proposed to date do not fully address the mechanics of motion of the spinal column. In addition to the intervertebral disc, posterior elements called the facet joints help to support axial, torsional and shear loads that act on the spinal column. Furthermore, the facet joints are diarthrodial joints that provide both sliding articulation and load transmission features. The effects of their absence as a result of facetectomy was observed by Goh to produce significant decreases in the stiffness of the spinal column in all planes of motion: flexion and extension, lateral bending, and rotation. Furthermore,

contraindications for artificial discs include arthritic facet joints, absent facet joints, severe facet joint tropism or otherwise deformed facet joints, as noted by Lemaire.

[0011] U.S. Pat. No. 36,758 to Fitz discloses an artificial facet joint where the inferior facet, the mating superior facet, or both, are resurfaced.

[0012] U.S. Pat. No. 6,132,464 to Martin discloses a spinal facet joint prosthesis that is supported on the posterior arch of the vertebra. Extending from this support structure are inferior and/or superior blades that replace the cartilage at the facet joint. Like the Fitz design, the Martin prosthesis generally preserves existing bony structures and therefore does not address pathologies that affect the bone of the facets in addition to affecting the associated cartilage. Furthermore, the Martin invention requires a mating condition between the prosthesis and the posterior arch (also known as the lamina) that is a thin base of curved bone that carries all four facets and the spinous process. Since the posterior arch is a very complex and highly variable anatomic surface, it would be very difficult to design a prosthesis that provides reproducible positioning to correctly locate the cartilage-replacing blades for the facet joints.

[0013] Another approach to surgical intervention for spinal facets is provided in WO9848717A1 to Villaret. While Villaret teaches the replacement of spine facets, the replacement is interlocked in a manner to immobilize the joint.

[0014] Facet joint replacement in conjunction with artificial disc replacements represent a holistic solution to recreating a fully functional motion segment that is compromised due to disease or trauma. Together, facet joint and disc replacement can eliminate all sources of pain, return full function and range of motion, and completely restore the natural biomechanics of the spinal column. Additionally, degenerative or traumatized facet joints may be replaced in the absence of disc replacement when the natural intervertebral disc is unaffected by the disease or trauma.

[0015] It would therefore be an improvement in the art to provide a vertebral facet replacement device and method that replaces a bony portion of the facets so as to remove the source of arthritic, traumatic, or other disease mediated pain.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0016] It is an object of the invention to provide an artificial vertebral facet that replaces the cartilage and a portion of the bone of a facet.

[0017] It is a further object of the invention to provide a method for preparing a vertebra for the installation of an artificial vertebral facet.

[0018] It is another object to provide a method for replacing a spinal facet.

[0019] It is yet another object of the invention to provide a total vertebral facet joint replacement.

[0020] In the preferred embodiment, an inferior facet of a superior vertebra is resected at the base of the facet where it connects to the posterior arch. The fin of a prosthetic inferior facet is pressed into the interior bone space of the posterior arch. Alternatively, a tool, such as a broach or punch, may be used to first prepare a space for the fin within the posterior arch.

[0021] Alternatively, or in addition, a superior facet of an inferior vertebra that articulates with the inferior facet is resected at the base of the facet where it connects to the pedicle. The post of a prosthetic superior facet is pressed into the interior bone space of the pedicle. Alternatively, a tool, such as a broach or punch, may be used to first prepare a space for the post within the pedicle.

[0022] The post and the fin may be porous coated to promote bone ingrowth in order to achieve long term fixation. Long term fixation is provided by a press fit between the post or fin and the internal surface of the bone. The porous coating may carry osteoconductive agents, such as hydroxylapatite, calcium sulfate, or demineralized bone matrix. Alternatively, the porous coating may carry osteoinductive agents, such as bone morphogenic proteins, including rhBMP-2 and rhBMP-7.

[0023] Another embodiment of the present invention provides a flange extending from the prosthetic facet. The flange is oriented relative to the body of the prosthesis such that when the flange is placed against the pedicle and in a manner such that the planar surface of the flange is perpendicular to the axis of the pedicle interior bone canal, the articulating surface of the prosthesis will be properly positioned to match the articulating surface of the natural facet. The flange includes a hole for the passage of a fastener to securely attach the prosthesis to the pedicle. The fastener can be a screw, spike, tack, staple, or the like.

[0024] In one form of the invention, there is provided a prosthesis for the replacement of at least a portion of the bone of a facet located on a mammalian vertebra, comprising:

[0025] an articulating surface that articulates with another facet;

[0026] a bone contacting surface that contacts a surface of the vertebra, said articulating surface being connected to said bone contacting surface; and

[0027] a fixation element that attaches said bone contacting surface to the vertebra, said fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra;

[0028] wherein said prosthesis is configured so that no portion of said prosthesis contacts the posterior arch of said vertebra.

[0029] In another form of the present invention, there is provided a prosthesis for the replacement of at least a portion of the bone of a facet located on a mammalian vertebra, comprising:

[0030] an articulating surface that articulates with another facet;

[0031] a bone contacting surface that contacts a surface of the vertebra, said articulating surface being connected to said bone contacting surface; and

[0032] a fixation element that attaches said bone contacting surface to the vertebra, said fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra;

[0033] wherein said bone contacting surface is configured to engage a resected surface of the vertebra.

[0034] In another form of the present invention, there is provided a prosthesis for the replacement of at least a portion of the bone of a facet located on a mammalian vertebra, comprising:

[0035] an articulating surface that articulates with another facet;

[0036] a bone contacting surface that contacts a surface of the vertebra, said articulating surface being connected to said bone contacting surface; and

[0037] a fixation element that attaches said bone contacting surface to the vertebra, said fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra;

[0038] wherein said bone contacting surface has a smaller surface area than said articulating surface.

[0039] In another form of the present invention, there is provided a prosthesis for the replacement of at least a portion of the bone of a facet located on a mammalian vertebra, comprising:

[0040] an articulating surface that articulates with another facet;

[0041] a bone contacting surface that contacts a surface of the vertebra, said articulating surface being connected to said bone contacting surface; and

[0042] a fixation element that attaches said bone contacting surface to the vertebra, said fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra;

[0043] wherein said articulating surface comprises a wing ear extending upward from said bone contacting surface.

[0044] In another form of the present invention, there is provided a prosthesis for the replacement of at least a portion of the bone of a facet located on a mammalian vertebra, comprising:

[0045] an articulating surface that articulates with another facet;

[0046] a bone contacting surface that contacts a surface of the vertebra, said articulating surface being connected to said bone contacting surface; and

[0047] a fixation element that attaches said bone contacting surface to the vertebra, said fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra;

[0048] wherein said articulating surface is substantially planar and extends adjacent to the pedicle.

[0049] In another form of the present invention, there is provided a prosthesis for the replacement of at least a portion of the bone of a facet located on a mammalian vertebra, comprising:

[0050] an articulating surface that articulates with another facet;

[0051] a bone contacting surface that contacts a surface of the vertebra, said articulating surface being connected to said bone contacting surface; and

[0052] a fixation element that attaches said bone contacting surface to the vertebra, said fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra;

[0053] wherein said articulating surface is substantially planar and extends substantially parallel to said fixation element.

[0054] In another form of the present invention, there is provided a prosthesis for the replacement of at least a portion of the bone of a facet located on a mammalian vertebra, comprising:

[0055] an articulating surface that articulates with another facet;

[0056] a bone contacting surface that contacts a surface of the vertebra, said articulating surface being connected to said bone contacting surface; and

[0057] a fixation element that attaches said bone contacting surface to the vertebra, said fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra;

[0058] wherein said fixation element clamps said bone contacting surface to a resected surface of the vertebra.

[0059] In another form of the present invention, there is provided a prosthesis for the replacement of at least a portion of the bone of a facet located on a mammalian vertebra, comprising:

[0060] an articulating element that articulates with another facet;

[0061] a bone contacting element that contacts a surface of the vertebra, said articulating element being connected to said bone contacting element; and

[0062] a fixation element that attaches said bone contacting element to the vertebra, said fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra;

[0063] wherein said prosthesis is configured so that no portion of said prosthesis contacts the posterior arch of said vertebra.

[0064] In another form of the present invention, there is provided a prosthesis for the replacement of at least a portion of the bone of a superior facet located on a mammalian vertebra and for replacement of at least a portion of the bone of an inferior facet located on the same mammalian vertebra, comprising:

[0065] a superior articulating element that articulates with another facet;

[0066] a superior bone contacting element that contacts one of a surface of the vertebra or another element contacting a surface of the vertebra, said superior articulating element being connected to said superior bone contacting element; and

[0067] an inferior articulating element that articulates with another facet;

[0068] an inferior bone contacting element that contacts one of a surface of the vertebra or another element contacting a surface of the vertebra, said inferior articulating element being connected to said inferior bone contacting element; and

[0069] a fixation element that attaches said superior bone contacting element and said inferior bone contacting element to the vertebra, said fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra;

[0070] wherein said prosthesis is configured so that no portion of said prosthesis contacts the posterior arch of said vertebra.

[0071] In another form of the present invention, there is provided a prosthesis for the replacement of at least a portion of the bone of a superior facet located on a first mammalian vertebra and for replacement of at least a portion of the bone of an inferior facet located on a second mammalian vertebra, comprising:

[0072] a superior articulating element that articulates with another facet;

[0073] a superior bone contacting element that contacts one of a surface of the first vertebra or another element contacting a surface of the vertebra, said superior articulating element being connected to said superior bone contacting element;

[0074] a first fixation element that attaches said superior bone contacting element to the first vertebra, said first fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra; and

[0075] an inferior articulating element that articulates with another facet;

[0076] an inferior bone contacting element that contacts one of a surface of the second vertebra or another element contacting a surface of the vertebra, said inferior articulating element being connected to said inferior bone contacting element; and

[0077] a second fixation element that attaches said inferior bone contacting element to the second vertebra, said second fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra; and

[0078] wherein said prosthesis is configured so that no portion of said prosthesis contacts the posterior arches of said first and second vertebrae.

[0079] In another form of the present invention, there is provided a method for replacing at least a portion of the bone of a facet located on a mammalian vertebra, comprising:

[0080] providing;

[0081] an articulating surface that articulates with another facet;

[0082] a bone contacting surface that contacts a surface of the vertebra, said articulating surface being connected to said bone contacting surface; and

[0083] a fixation element that attaches said bone contacting surface to the vertebra, said fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra;

[0084] wherein said prosthesis is configured so that no portion of said prosthesis contacts the posterior arch of said vertebra; and

[0085] positioning said bone contacting surface against a surface of the vertebra; and

[0086] attaching said bone contacting surface to the vertebra using said fixation element.

[0087] In another form of the present invention, there is provided a prosthesis for the replacement of at least a portion of the bone of a facet located on a mammalian vertebra, comprising:

[0088] an articulating element that articulates with another facet;

[0089] a bone contacting element that contacts a surface of the vertebra or another element contacting a surface of the vertebra, said articulating element being connected to said bone contacting element; and

[0090] a fixation element that attaches said bone contacting element to the vertebra, said fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra;

[0091] wherein said prosthesis is configured so that no portion of said prosthesis contacts the posterior arch of said vertebra.

[0092] In another form of the present invention, there is provided a method for replacing at least a portion of the bone of a facet located on a mammalian vertebra, comprising:

[0093] an articulating element that articulates with another facet;

[0094] a bone contacting element that contacts a surface of the vertebra or another element contacting a surface of the vertebra, said articulating element being connected to said bone contacting element; and

[0095] a fixation element that attaches said bone contacting element to the vertebra, said fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra;

[0096] wherein said prosthesis is configured so that no portion of said prosthesis contacts the posterior arch of said vertebra;

[0097] positioning said bone contacting surface against a surface of the vertebra or another element contacting a surface of the vertebra; and

[0098] attaching said bone contacting surface to the vertebra using said fixation element.

[0099] Because the present invention allows for the individual replacements of facets, only comprised facets need be replaced. For example, if only one facet is affected by

disease or trauma, it can be resected and replaced with a facet prosthesis that articulates with an opposing natural facet.

[0100] The present invention has numerous advantages over the prior art. One advantage is that the quality of attachment of the prosthesis is improved. The present invention provides a precise press fit into bones, as opposed to relying on prosthetic surfaces mating with highly complex and variable external surfaces of the vertebra, such as the posterior arch or facet. Another advantage is that the optional porous coating is placed into interior bone spaces where porous coatings have proven to achieve bone ingrowth for excellent long term fixation strength. This ability to achieve bone ingrowth is uncertain for the prior art devices that engage the external bone surfaces of the vertebra. Yet another advantage lies in the removal of the facet bone structure; where the facet bone is involved in the disease pathology or the trauma that compromised the articular or cartilaginous surface of the facet, resection provides a means for ensuring that all pain associated with the disease or trauma is removed.

[0101] The above, and other objects, features and advantages of the present invention, will become apparent from the following description which is to be read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0102] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a portion of the spine;

[0103] FIG. 1A is a dorsal view of the portion of the spine shown in FIG. 1;

[0104] FIG. 2 is a lateral view of a facet joint reconstructed in accordance with the present invention;

[0105] FIG. 3 is a dorsal view of the facet joint shown in FIG. 2;

[0106] FIG. 4 is a perspective view of the implanted left inferior facet prosthesis shown in FIGS. 2 and 3;

[0107] FIG. 5 is a perspective view of the left inferior facet prosthesis shown in FIGS. 2 and 3;

[0108] FIG. 6 is a cranial view of the implanted left superior facet prosthesis shown in FIGS. 2 and 3;

[0109] FIG. 7 is a perspective view of the left superior facet prosthesis shown in FIGS. 2 and 3;

[0110] FIG. 8 is a perspective view of an alternate implanted left inferior facet prosthesis;

[0111] FIG. 9 is a perspective view of an alternate left inferior facet prosthesis;

[0112] FIG. 10 is a lateral view of an alternative reconstructed facet joint;

[0113] FIG. 11 is a dorsal view of an alternative reconstructed facet joint;

[0114] FIG. 12 is a perspective view of the implanted left inferior facet prosthesis shown in FIGS. 10 and 11;

[0115] FIG. 13 is a perspective view of the alternative left inferior facet prosthesis shown in FIGS. 10 and

[0116] **FIG. 14** is a cranial view of the alternative implanted left superior facet prosthesis shown in **FIGS. 10 and 11**;

[0117] **FIG. 15** is a perspective view of the alternative left superior facet prosthesis shown in **FIGS. 10 and 11**;

[0118] **FIG. 16** is a perspective view of an alternate bearing surface for the superior facet prosthesis shown in **FIG. 15**;

[0119] **FIG. 17** is a dorsal view of a single intact vertebra;

[0120] **FIG. 18** is a lateral view of the same intact vertebra shown in **FIG. 17**;

[0121] **FIG. 19** is a dorsal view of the same vertebra of **FIG. 17** and **FIG. 18**, with a portion of the superior facet resected and a portion of the inferior facet resected;

[0122] **FIG. 20** is a lateral view of the resected vertebra shown in **FIG. 19**;

[0123] **FIG. 21** is a dorsal view of the same resected vertebra shown in **FIG. 18** and **FIG. 19** with a fixation element placed through the first superior resection surface and into the pedicle bone;

[0124] **FIG. 22** is a dorsal view showing the resected vertebra, the fixation element, and a superior facet prosthesis;

[0125] **FIG. 23** is a dorsal view of the vertebra and the implant of **FIG. 22** and also showing the addition of an inferior facet prosthesis;

[0126] **FIG. 24** is a dorsal view of the implant and vertebra of **FIG. 23** and also showing the addition of an enlarged head that has the shape of a locking nut;

[0127] **FIG. 25** is an isometric posterolateral view of a vertebra with an assembled implant comprising a fixation element, superior facet prosthesis, and a locking nut;

[0128] **FIG. 26** is a cross-sectional view of the same vertebra and implant of **FIG. 25** showing the result of a cross-sectional view cut aligned with the axis of the fixation element;

[0129] **FIG. 27** is a view of the same cross-section described in **FIG. 26**, aligned to face the viewer;

[0130] **FIG. 28** is a side view of embodiments A, B, C, D, E, and F of the fixation element, and a cross-sectional view of the same embodiments, and a side view of the enlarged head in the shape of a locking nut;

[0131] **FIG. 28A** is a side view of embodiments G, H, I, J, K, and L of the fixation element with attached enlarged heads, and a cross-sectional view of the same embodiments;

[0132] **FIG. 29** is an isometric view of a radially expanding fixation element in its unexpanded state;

[0133] **FIG. 30** is a side view and a bottom view of (i) an expanded radially expanding fixation element and (ii) an unexpanded radially expanding fixation element;

[0134] **FIG. 31** is an isometric cross-sectional view of a vertebra and a facet implant showing a cross-pin torsionally and axially securing the fixation element;

[0135] **FIG. 32** is a dorsal view of a spinal section showing a top, middle, and bottom vertebra with unilateral

facet replacements on the right side of the spine section, both between the top and middle vertebra, and between the middle and bottom vertebra;

[0136] **FIG. 33** is a dorsal view of a spine section showing a superior hemiplasty facet replacement between the top and the middle vertebra and unilateral replacement between the middle and the bottom vertebra;

[0137] **FIG. 34** is a dorsal view of a spinal section showing an inferior facet hemiplasty replacement between the top and the middle vertebra and a unilateral replacement on the right side between the middle and the bottom vertebra;

[0138] **FIG. 35** is a dorsal view of a spinal section showing a unilateral replacement between the top and the middle vertebra on the right side, and an inferior facet hemiplasty replacement between the middle and the bottom vertebra on the same side;

[0139] **FIG. 36** is a dorsal view of a spinal section showing a unilateral replacement between the top and the middle vertebra on the right side and a superior facet hemiplasty replacement on the right side between the middle and the bottom vertebra on the same side;

[0140] **FIG. 37** is a spinal section of two vertebra showing the inferior facet of the top vertebra and the superior facet of the joining bottom vertebra replaced by an articulating facet implant;

[0141] **FIG. 38** is an isometric view of a curved superior facet prosthesis;

[0142] **FIG. 39** is an isometric view of the bone ingrowth surface on a superior facet prosthesis;

[0143] **FIG. 40** is an isometric view of an inferior facet prosthesis;

[0144] **FIG. 41** is an isometric view of an inferior facet prosthesis with a bone ingrowth surface;

[0145] **FIG. 42** shows the addition of a locking washer to the construction of the implant shown in **FIG. 25**;

[0146] **FIG. 43** shows the assembly of the construct shown in **FIG. 42**;

[0147] **FIG. 44** shows an isometric view of the locking washer shown in **FIG. 42**;

[0148] **FIG. 45** shows superior and inferior facet prostheses held to a vertebra by flexible fixation elements; and

[0149] **FIG. 46** is a dorsal view of a bilateral inferior implant.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0150] Referring now to **FIGS. 1 and 1A**, there is shown a superior vertebra 1 and an inferior vertebra 3, with an intervertebral disc 2 located in between. Vertebra 1 has superior facets 43, inferior facets 6, posterior arch (or lamina) 35 and spinous process 46. Vertebra 3 has superior facets 7, inferior facets 44, posterior arch (or lamina) 36 and spinous process 45.

[0151] Referring now to **FIG. 2**, the left inferior facet 6 of vertebra 1 shown in **FIG. 1** and **FIG. 1A** has been resected

and inferior facet prosthesis 4 has been attached to vertebra 1. Similarly, the left superior facet 7 of vertebra 3 has been resected and a superior facet prosthesis 5 has been attached to vertebra 3.

[0152] FIG. 3 illustrates a dorsal view of the elements shown in FIG. 2. It can be appreciated that inferior facet prosthesis 4 replicates the natural anatomy when compared to the contralateral inferior facet 6 of vertebra 1. Similarly, it can be appreciated that superior facet prosthesis 5 replicates the natural anatomy when compared to the contralateral superior facet 7 of vertebra 3. Neither inferior facet prosthesis 4 nor superior facet prosthesis 5 rests on the lamina.

[0153] Turning now to FIG. 4, a perspective view of vertebra 1 with implanted inferior facet prosthesis 4 is provided. A bone resection on the left side of the vertebra 1, shown as resection 31, has removed the natural inferior facet 6 at the bony junction between the inferior facet 6 and the posterior arch (or lamina) 35. In this manner, any bone pain associated with a disease, such as osteoarthritis, or trauma of the left inferior facet 6 will be eliminated as the involved bony tissue has been osteotomized.

[0154] FIG. 5 illustrates a perspective view of inferior facet prosthesis 4. Surface 8 replicates the natural articular surface of the replaced inferior facet 6. Post 9 provides a means to affix inferior facet prosthesis 4 to vertebra 1. Post 9 is implanted into the interior bone space of the left pedicle on vertebra 1 and may or may not extend into the vertebral body of vertebra 1 to provide additional stability.

[0155] FIG. 6 illustrates a cranial view of vertebra 3 with implanted superior facet prosthesis 5. Resection surface 32 represents the bony junction between the natural superior facet 7 and the posterior arch 35.

[0156] FIG. 7 illustrates a perspective view of superior facet prosthesis 5. Surface 36 replicates the natural articular surface of the replaced superior facet 7. Post 37 provides a means for affixing superior facet prosthesis 5 to vertebra 3. Post 37 is implanted into the interior bone space of the left pedicle P (FIG. 6) on vertebra 3 and may or may not extend into the vertebral body of vertebra 3 to provide additional stability.

[0157] When the total facet joint is replaced, as shown in FIGS. 2 and 3, then surface 8 (FIG. 5) articulates with surface 36 (FIG. 7) to recreate the natural biomechanics of the spine motion segment made up of vertebra 1, vertebra 3, and intervertebral disc 2. Neither inferior facet prosthesis 4 nor superior facet prosthesis 5 rests on the lamina.

[0158] FIG. 8 illustrates an alternative inferior facet prosthesis 10 which is implanted into the interior bone space of posterior arch (or lamina) 35. The interior bone space is accessed from the resection 31.

[0159] FIG. 9 shows details of alternative inferior facet prosthesis 10, including the fin 13 that extends into the interior bone space of posterior arch 35. Surface 12 replicates the natural articular surface of the replaced facet.

[0160] The surfaces of post 9 (FIG. 5), post 37 (FIG. 7) and fin 13 (FIG. 9) may or may not include porous coatings to facilitate bone ingrowth to enhance the long term fixation of the implant. Furthermore, such porous coatings may or

may not include osteoinductive or osteoconductive substances to further enhance the bone remodeling into the porous coating.

[0161] Referring now to FIG. 10, there is shown a lateral view of a superior vertebra 14 and an inferior vertebra 16, with an intervertebral disc 15 located in between. The left inferior facet of vertebra 14 has been resected and an inferior facet prosthesis 18 has been attached to vertebra 14 by means of a screw fastener 17. Similarly, the left superior facet of vertebra 16 has been resected and a superior facet prosthesis 19 has been attached to vertebra 16 by means of a screw fastener 17.

[0162] FIG. 11 illustrates a dorsal view of the elements of FIG. 10. It can be appreciated that inferior facet prosthesis 18 replicates the natural anatomy when compared to the contralateral inferior facet 22 of vertebra 14. Similarly, it can be appreciated that superior facet prosthesis 19 replicates the natural anatomy when compared to the contralateral superior facet 21 of vertebra 16. Neither inferior facet prosthesis 18 nor superior facet prosthesis 19 rests on the lamina.

[0163] Turning now to FIG. 12, there is provided a perspective view of vertebra 14 with implanted inferior facet prosthesis 18. Resection 34 has removed the natural inferior facet at the bony junction between the inferior facet and the posterior arch 37. In this manner, any bone pain associated with a disease, such as osteoarthritis, or trauma of the natural inferior facet 22 will be eliminated inasmuch as the involved bony tissue has been osteotomized.

[0164] FIG. 13 illustrates a perspective view of inferior facet prosthesis 18. Surface 23 replicates the natural articular surface of the replaced facet. Flange 25 contacts the pedicle P (FIG. 12) and hole 24 receives a screw fastener 17 to attach inferior facet prosthesis 18 to vertebra 14.

[0165] FIG. 14 illustrates a cranial view of vertebra 16 with implanted superior facet prosthesis 19. Resection surface 35A represents the bony junction between the natural superior facet 21 (FIG. 11) and the posterior arch 38.

[0166] FIG. 15 illustrates a perspective view of superior facet prosthesis 19. Surface 27 replicates the natural articular surface of the replaced facet. Flange 39 contacts the pedicle P (FIG. 14) and hole 26 receives a screw fastener 17 to attach superior facet prosthesis 19 to vertebra 16.

[0167] FIG. 16 illustrates an alternative superior facet prosthesis 40 with a bearing surface 41 that mounts to substrate 42. The bearing surface 41 is a biocompatible polymeric material, such as ultra high molecular weight polyethylene. Alternately, the bearing surface can be ceramic, such as zirconia or alumina. The substrate is a biocompatible metal alloy, such as an alloy of titanium, cobalt, or iron.

[0168] Referring to FIG. 17 and FIG. 18, a single intact vertebra 100 is shown. FIG. 17 is a dorsal view of the vertebra 100. FIG. 18 is a lateral view of the same vertebra 100. Similar to the two vertebra shown in the portion of the spine illustrated in FIGS. 1 through 3, the vertebra 100 has posterior anatomy comprising left and right superior facets 43 on the superior, or top side in this view of the dorsal vertebra 100, left and right inferior facets 6 on the inferior or bottom side of the posterior vertebra 100, left and right transverse processes 105 extending laterally from the pos-

terior portion of vertebra **100**, and left and right pedicles **P**. The posterior portion of vertebra **100** also has a posterior arch (or lamina) **35**, and a spinous process **46** that protrudes from the posterior arch **35** posteriorly, out of the page in **FIG. 17** and to the left in **FIG. 18**. In **FIG. 17**, the bony structure of the superior facets **43** and the inferior facets **6** are intact, as it would be presented in a vertebra without significant tissue degeneration or remodeling resulting from facet joint disease. Although the vertebra **100** is shown in **FIG. 17** as a generally structurally healthy and intact vertebra, if the vertebra **100** were a diseased vertebra, the vertebra could exhibit signs of facet joint disease.

[0169] Consequently, structural pathology related to facet joint disease would likely be visible. For example, the left superior facet **43** and the right superior facet **43** of the vertebra **100** are symmetrical in **FIG. 17** and **FIG. 18**. But in the case of a vertebra **100** with only one diseased joint, the facet on the diseased side would likely be showing pathological signs of disease such as tissue degeneration or inflammation resulting in an asymmetrical structural comparison between the two facets. Also, in more extreme cases the facet disease could progress to a state in which the articular process of the facet is eroded or inflamed resulting in anatomic morphology that is unique to the pathology of a particular facet joint of an individual patient. This could present unusual facet morphology that could be different from what is shown in **FIGS. 17 and 18**. Furthermore, the facet disease could eventually disable the biomechanics of a patient such that the facet joint is essentially non-articulating and immobile. In this case, one superior facet of a first vertebra could essentially be fused to one inferior facet of a second vertebra.

[0170] Since the structural pathology of the diseased facet is variable, a surgeon may determine that the best bone apposition surface or foundation for securing a facet implant is a resected bone surface. Referring to **FIG. 19** and **FIG. 20** which are dorsal and lateral views of the same vertebra shown in **FIG. 17** and **FIG. 18** after a portion of the right superior facet **43** and a portion of the right inferior facet **6** have been resected. The removal of a portion of the superior facet **43** by resection results in a superior facet resection **111**. In the resection shown in **FIG. 19** and **FIG. 20**, the superior resection **111** has two resulting faces, a first resection surface **112** and a second resection surface **113**. Likewise, the inferior facet resection results in an inferior facet resection surface **121**.

[0171] Tissue removal tools (not shown) such as a bone burr, rasp, reamer, mill, saw, ronger, osteotome or similar tools designed to cut and remove bone tissue can be used to create these resection surfaces. The surgeon uses anatomic landmarks such as the pedicle **P** or transverse process **105** to align the tissue removal tools in such a way as to remove the portion of the facet necessary to provide a superior resection **111** that serves as a bone apposition surface or foundation to eventually support the superior facet prosthesis **300**, as shown in **FIG. 22**. The left superior facet **43** is shown intact in both **FIG. 19** and **FIG. 20**, but a portion of the right superior facet **43** is resected resulting in the first resection surface **112** and the adjacent second resection surface **113** (**FIG. 19**). The shape of superior resection **111** will vary in accordance with the structure of the tissue removal tool. In this embodiment shown in **FIG. 19** and **FIG. 20**, the first resection surface **112** and the second resection surface **113**

are on approximately perpendicular planes. However, the geometry of the resections surfaces are a function of the patient anatomy, the pathology of the diseased tissue, the technique of the surgeon, and other factors such as the type of tissue removal tools used to prepare the resection. In general, the first resection surface **112** will be formed in such a way that it will serve as a foundation to support the superior facet prosthesis **300** (**FIG. 22**). The second resection surface **113** or other additional resection surfaces may or may not be present.

[0172] **FIG. 19** and **FIG. 20** also show that a portion of the inferior facet **6** is resected by tissue removal instruments resulting in an inferior resection surface **121**. Such resection is preferably effected so that resection is confined to the tissue of inferior facet **6** and does not extend into the tissue of posterior arch (or lamina) **35**. In **FIGS. 19 and 20**, the left inferior facet **6** is intact, while a portion of the right inferior facet **6** is resected resulting in an inferior resection surface **121** on the right side. The bone surrounding the inferior resection surface **121** is formed by tissue removal tools in a shape designed to cradle and support the inferior facet prosthesis **400** (**FIG. 23**) on the medial side such that when the inferior facet prosthesis **400** is loaded on the lateral side it compresses against and is supported by the inferior resection surface **121**.

[0173] Alternatively, inferior facet **6** can be resected, and inferior facet prosthesis **400** sized and shaped, so that inferior facet prosthesis **400** does not engage inferior resection surface **121**.

[0174] **FIG. 21** shows the vertebra **100** with a fixation element **200** portion of the facet implant placed through the superior resection **111** and into the bone of the pedicle **P**. The fixation element **200** is aligned and placed into the pedicle, similar to how other pedicle screws for posterior stabilization involved with vertebrae fusion are placed in the pedicle. In one method, a long guide wire (not shown), with a diameter sized to fit freely into a cannulation **211** (as shown in **FIG. 26** and **FIG. 27**) in the fixation element **200**, is placed through the first resection surface **112** and into the pedicle bone **P**. The alignment of the long guide wire can be confirmed by x-ray. The fixation element **200** is then guided over the guide wire and driven into the vertebra by a driver (not shown) engaged with the drive feature **212** (**FIG. 21**) on the proximal post **230** of the fixation element **200**. The fixation element **200** is driven into the vertebra until a connection feature **213** (e.g., a screw thread) is just above the first resection surface **112**. This connection feature **213** is eventually used to secure the superior facet prosthesis **300** to the vertebra **100**.

[0175] In a second method for guiding the fixation element **200** in the pedicle **P**, a long guide wire (not shown), with a diameter sized to fit freely into a cannulation in a bone preparation instrument (not shown) such as a tap, drill, broach or reamer, is placed through the first resection surface **112** and into the pedicle bone **P**. The alignment of the long guide wire can be confirmed by x-ray. The bone preparation instrument is then guided over the guide wire and driven into the pedicle **P** bone to prepare a cavity for the fixation element **200**. The guide wire and bone preparation instrument are then removed and the fixation element **200** is guided into the prepared cavity in the pedicle bone **P** by a driver (not shown) engaged with the drive feature **212** on the

proximal post 230 of the fixation element 200. Like in the first method, the fixation element 200 is driven into the vertebra until a connection feature 213 (e.g., a screw thread) is just above the first resection surface 112. This connection feature 213 is eventually used to secure the superior facet prosthesis 300 to the vertebra 100.

[0176] In yet a third method of placing the fixation element 200 in the pedicle, the surgeon aligns the fixation element 200 with anatomic landmarks and simply drives the fixation element 200 through the first resected surface 112 and into the pedicle bone P. As with the first and second methods, the fixation element 200 is driven into the vertebra until a connection feature 213 (e.g., a screw thread) is just above the first superior resection surface 112.

[0177] In FIG. 22, a superior facet prosthesis 300 is shown placed around the fixation element 200. The superior facet prosthesis 300 has a facet articulating component 320 that articulates with the inferior facet articulating surface of the vertebra above it. Facet articulating component 320 is preferably formed in the general shape of a blade or wing ear. The superior facet prosthesis 300 also has a bone apposition surface 322 that has been placed on the first resection surface 112 and an opening 324 in a flange 323 that surrounds the fixation element 200. The superior facet articulating component 320 has an articulating surface 321 generally adjacent to the flange 323 that is orientated in a direction that faces approximately the same direction that the original anatomic superior articulating surface 145 faced prior to resection. This orientation of the articulating surface 321 allows the superior facet prosthesis 300 to function as either a hemiplasty implant and articulate against a natural anatomic inferior facet 6 or act as a unilateral prosthesis and articulate against an inferior facet prosthesis 400 on the vertebra superior (cephalad) to it. No portion of superior facet prosthesis 300 rests on the lamina.

[0178] FIG. 23 shows the addition of the inferior facet prosthesis 400 to the construct described in FIG. 22. The inferior facet prosthesis 400 generally has a shape similar to a longitudinal rod that is curved to match the contour of the inferior resection 121 (FIGS. 19 and 20). The inferior facet prosthesis 400 has an opening 410 through its superior end 420 that is shaped to surround the portion of the fixation element 200 that protrudes from the first resection surface 112. In FIG. 23, the inferior facet prosthesis 400 is placed over the superior facet prosthesis 300. However, the order of the placement of the prostheses can be reversed such that the inferior prosthesis 400 is placed on the fixation element 200 first followed by the superior prosthesis 300. When only the inferior facet 6 or the superior facet 43 is being replaced, only the appropriate (superior or inferior) facet prosthesis is placed on the fixation element 200 without the other (inferior or superior) facet prosthesis.

[0179] Because the various components of the implant are modular, many combinations of configurations and implant size, structure and shapes are feasible. For example, in a patient with unusual anatomy, the inferior facet prosthesis 400 may need to be larger than expected to conform to a particularly unusual or exceptionally large morphology of the inferior resection surface 121, and the superior facet prosthesis 300 may need to have an unusual angle to its articulating surface to conform to particular anatomic constraints. If this is the case, the modularity of the system

allows for the surgeon to assemble an implant specifically designed to match the patient's anatomic structures during the surgery. This flexibility of a modular implant design allows the implant manufacturer to accommodate a large variation in anatomic structures with a limited selection of implant component sizes, shapes, and material types.

[0180] The modularity of the implant design also allows different components of the implant to be fabricated from different materials. Traditionally bone fixation implants such as the fixation element 300 are fabricated from biocompatible metals or alloys that provide sufficient strength and fatigue properties, such as cobalt chrome alloys, titanium and titanium alloys, and stainless steels. However, the fixation element 300 may be fabricated from ceramics, polymers, or biological materials such as allograft bone, composites, or other biocompatible structural materials. Likewise the superior facet prosthesis 300 and the inferior facet prosthesis 400 may be fabricated from metals, alloys, ceramics, polymers, biological materials, composites, or other biocompatible structural materials.

[0181] In FIG. 24, an enlarged head 500 is added to the fixation element 200 and is tightened down to force the prosthesis or prostheses into the bone to stabilize them. The enlarged head 500 shown in FIG. 24 has a hexagonal geometry on its external surface that is shaped to accept a driver (not shown) that is used to force an internal connection feature 520 (e.g., a screw thread) of the enlarged head 500 onto the connection feature 213 of the fixation element 200. In the case of the threaded embodiment of the connection feature 213, the enlarged head 500 is provided with a threaded connection feature 520 and is driven onto the fixation element 200 by turning the enlarged head 500 and allowing the threads to drive all components of the implant between the enlarged head 500 and the first resection surface 112 into the bone at or near the resection surface 112.

[0182] FIG. 25 is an isometric posterior view of the assembly of the fixation element 200, the superior facet prosthesis 300, and the enlarged head 500 placed on the first resection surface 112. FIG. 26 is the same construct shown in FIG. 25, but with the implants and the vertebra 100 cut by a cross-sectioning plane 150 placed along an axis that passes through the center of the fixation element 200. The cross-section plan 150 shown cutting through the vertebra 100 and the implant in FIG. 26 is shown for visualization purposes to illustrate, using a cross-sectioned view, how the vertebra 100, fixation element 200, superior facet prosthesis 300 and the enlarged head 500 engage with each other. In actual surgery, it is highly unlikely that a surgeon would make a cut as illustrated by the cross-section 150 shown in FIG. 26.

[0183] FIG. 27 is a view of the vertebra 100 and the implant wherein the cross-section 150 shown in FIG. 26 is orientated such that the cross-section plane is facing the viewer. In FIG. 27, the fixation element 200 is in the vertebra 100. The embodiment of the fixation element 200 in FIG. 27 comprises a distal end 220 that is shaped to guide the fixation element 200 into bone tissue, a bone stabilizing portion 210 adjacent and proximal to the distal end, a shaft portion 240 adjacent and proximal to the bone stabilizing portion 210, a connection feature 213 adjacent and proximal to the shaft portion 240, and a drive feature 212.

[0184] The distal end 220 shown in FIG. 27 has a frustroconical shape that allows the fixation element 200 to be

driven or guided into the vertebra **100**. The distal end **220** could be shaped in the form of a spade tip, trochar tip, or twist drill tip to assist in the guidance of the fixation element **200** in the vertebra **100**. The fixation element **200** may also have a cutting flute (not shown) formed in the distal end **220** to help remove bone tissue and accommodate the guidance of the fixation element **200** in the vertebra **100**. The fixation element **200** has a stabilizing portion **210** to help secure the fixation element **200** to the vertebra **100**. This stabilizing portion **210** is a structure that can be the shape of various features that are designed to anchor into bone such as threads, ribs, grooves, slots, fins, barbs, splines, bone ingrowth surfaces, roughened surfaces, or any geometric feature that helps to engage the fixation element **200** with the bone tissue to help stabilize the fixation element **200**. In **FIG. 27**, the stabilizing portion **210** is shown as a unitary continuous bone thread **231**. However, other types of threads such as multiple lead threads, variable pitched thread, non-uniform pitch thread, buttress thread, or other thread forms used on bone screws may be used. Because **FIG. 27** is a cross-sectional view, the full length of the cannulation **211** is seen passing from the distal end **220** of the fixation element **200** to the proximal post **230** of the fixation element **200**.

[0185] The drive feature **212** in the embodiment shown in **FIG. 27** is an internal hex. However, any shape of drive feature **212** that transmits the loads necessary to drive the fixation element **200** into the vertebra can be formed on the proximal post **230** of the fixation element **200**. The depth of the drive feature **212** formed in the proximal post **230** of the fixation element **200** is seen in the cross-sectional view of **FIG. 27**. The drive feature **212** may be an internal drive feature such as the hex socket shown in this embodiment, or an external drive feature with geometry on the periphery of the proximal post **230** of the fixation element **200** that engages with a corresponding internal drive feature on a driver tool (not shown). In this embodiment the depth of the drive feature **212** is slightly longer than its cross-section is wide. This depth can be adjusted based on the material properties of the fixation element **200** and the drive tool (not shown).

[0186] The fixation element **200** is fabricated from biocompatible base materials that allow for the structural rigidity and strength needed. Examples of base materials that the fixation element **200** are made from include titanium, titanium alloys, cobalt-chrome alloys, stainless steel alloys, zirconium alloys, other biocompatible metal materials, biocompatible ceramics, biocompatible composites, and biocompatible polymers. The fixation element **200** may also have surface materials formed on the base material that allow for material properties specific to a particular portion of the fixation element **200**. For example, the bone stabilization portion **210** could be coated with materials that allow for improved bone ingrowth into the implant surface such as a hydroxylapatite, bioceramic, Bioglass®, or other calcium phosphate derived material. The tribological bearing properties of the material in the areas that the fixation element **200** interfaces with other artificial elements may be improved by applying surface hardening techniques to the material of the fixation element **200** in these areas. Surface hardening techniques known in the materials science and materials engineering arts such as anodizing, ion implantation, and other techniques could be applied to these isolated areas.

[0187] A connection feature **213** is formed on the portion of the fixation element **200** that protrudes from the first resection surface **112**. This connection feature **213** is designed to connect the enlarged head **500** to the fixation element **200**. In the embodiment of the connection feature **213** shown in **FIG. 21**, threads **260** are on the external surface of this proximal section of the fixation element **200**. These threads **260** engage with the threads on the internal connection feature **520** (**FIG. 27**) of the enlarged head **500**. Although this connection feature **213** in this embodiment is threaded, other mechanical locking features (not shown) capable of locking the fixation element **200** and the enlarged head **500** together, such as press fit, taper fit, bonding fit by cement or glue, interference fit, expansion fit and mechanical interlocking fit such as a bayonet connection, can be used as the connection feature **213** (and a corresponding construction used on connection feature **520** of head **500**).

[0188] Also shown in **FIG. 27** is a cross-sectional view of an embodiment of the superior facet prosthesis **300**. This embodiment of the superior facet prosthesis **300** has a flange **323** that has an opening **324** that wraps around the fixation element **200**. In the assembled and implanted configuration of this embodiment, the flange **323** is positioned such that its bone contacting surface **322** makes contact with the first resection surface **112**. Although not shown in this embodiment, other embodiments of the superior facet prosthesis **300** have structures (e.g., spikes) that protrude into the first resection surface **112** to help resist torsion and other anatomic loads. Protruding from the flange **323** at a given angle α , and a given distance X from the opening **324**, is an articulating component **320**. The articulating component **320** has an articulating surface **321** that replicates the natural articular surface of the replaced facet. Once the surgeon assesses the anatomy of the superior facet **43** that is being replaced, a particular superior facet prosthesis **300** is selected that has the angle α and the distance X that best fits the anatomy of the level of vertebra, the left or right side, and the size of the patient's anatomy being replaced. Thus a kit containing various sizes and shapes of superior facet prostheses **300** are provided to the surgeon and the surgeon selects the superior facet prosthesis **300** that best suits the situation.

[0189] After the fixation element **200** and the superior facet prosthesis **300** are selected and placed, they are locked to the vertebra by the enlarged head **500**. As shown in **FIG. 24**, the enlarged head **500** in this embodiment has an internal connection feature **520** and a hexagonal shaped external drive feature **510** that is used to drive the enlarged head **500** over the fixation element **200** and against the superior facet prosthesis **300**. The specific shape of the external drive feature **510** is dependent on the mating shape of the driver (not shown).

[0190] Referring to **FIG. 28**, six different embodiments of the bone stabilization portion **210** of the fixation element **200** are shown that are labeled A, B, C, D, E, and F. The figure shows a side view of each fixation element **200** embodiment and a cross-sectional view of each embodiment to the right of the respective side view. To the left of the six embodiments is a representative enlarged head **500**. Embodiment A is the threaded fixation element **200** embodiment shown in **FIGS. 26 and 27** and described above. Embodiments B through E are various designs of fixation elements with non-circular cross-sections. Embodiment B is

a four rib cruciate design with four longitudinal fins configured to resist torsion when the fixation element 200 is in the vertebra 100. Embodiment C is an oval shaped cross-section design that is wider in the first direction than the second direction to resist torsion. If the dimension of the width in the first and second directions is equal, the cross-section shape becomes more of a circle and bone stabilization portion 210 becomes more of a press-fit peg. Embodiment D is a square cross-section design with four approximately perpendicular sides. The corners of the sides help to resist torsion. Embodiment E is a triangular cross-section design with three sides to resist torsion. Embodiment F is an anchor-like design that is driven into the vertebra, with the wire arches or bars 290 being compressed against the host bone and applying a radial expansion force so as to lock the structure to the bone.

[0191] Referring to **FIG. 28A**, six more different embodiments of the bone stabilization portion 210 of the fixation element 200 are shown that are labeled G, H, J, K, L, and I. **FIG. 28A** shows a side view of each fixation element 200 embodiment and a cross-sectional view of each embodiment to the right of the respective side view. Each embodiment has an attached enlarged head 500. Embodiment G is similar to the threaded fixation element 200 embodiment shown in **FIGS. 10, 11, 12 and 24** and described above. Embodiments H through K are various designs of fixation elements 200 with non-circular cross-sections. Embodiment H is a four rib cruciate design with four longitudinal fins 285 configured to resist torsion when the fixation element 200 is in the vertebra 100. Embodiment I is an oval shaped cross-section design that is wider in the first direction 286 than the second direction 287 to resist torsion. If the dimension of the width in the first direction 286 and second direction 287 is equal, the cross-section shape becomes more of a circle and bone stabilization portion 210 becomes more of a press-fit peg. Embodiment J is a square cross-section design with four approximately perpendicular sides 288. The corners 289 of the sides 288 help to resist torsion. Embodiment K is a triangular cross-section design with three sides 291 to resist torsion.

[0192] Embodiment L is an anchor-like design that is similar to Embodiment F in **FIG. 28**, but with an attached enlarged head 500'. As embodiment L is driven into the vertebra, wire arches or bars 290 are compressed and apply radial expansion force against the wall of the prepared bone and into the pedicle bone P resulting in a locking anchor.

[0193] **FIG. 29** is an isometric view of a radially expanding fixation element 600. The radially expanding fixation element 600 comprises two main elements, an expansion sleeve 620 and a central element 610 that is inside of the expansion sleeve 620. The radially expanding fixation element 600 is placed into the vertebra and then the central element 610 is pulled relative to the expansion sleeve 620 resulting in radial expansion of the fixation element 600. This is shown in **FIG. 30**. As the proximal post 630 of the central element 610 is pulled axially along its longitudinal axis, and the expansion sleeve is held axially in the bone by compression fit, talons 621 on the expansion sleeve 620 are radially expanded outward by a mandrel 660 on the central element 610. The talons or fingers 621 provide both torsional and axial stability to the radially expanding fixation element 600. This provides a secure fixation element for fixation of the remaining components of the implant.

[0194] **FIG. 31** shows a cross-pin element 700 engaged with the fixation element 200 to help secure the fixation element 200 both torsionally and axially. The cross-pin element 700 is columnar in shape having a distal end 710, mid section 730 (with a length along its longitudinal axis that is longer than its transverse cross-sectional width), and a proximal post 720. The distal end 710 is shaped to penetrate through bone tissue and into a cross hole 280 formed in the fixation element 200. Instrumentation (not shown) is used to align the cross-pin element 700 with the cross-hole 280 by fixing to the drive feature 212 or the cannulation 211 on the fixation element 200 and aligning the direction of insertion of the cross-pin element 700 with the cross-hole 280. Once the cross-pin element 700 is in place in the bone and through the fixation element 200, the torsional and axial stability of the fixation element 200 is improved.

[0195] The various embodiments of the fixation element 200 described above and shown in **FIG. 28** through **FIG. 31** function in conjunction with the enlarged head 500 to hold the inferior facet prosthesis 400 and/or the superior facet prosthesis 300 to their respective resection surfaces. Various combinations of this modular implant will be described below and shown in **FIGS. 32 through 37**. Although these figures show a fixation element 200 and enlarged head 500 as the means of securing the prostheses to the vertebra, other clamping means such as the screw fastener 17 (**FIG. 10**) may be used to mount the prosthesis to the bone. For example, the screw prostheses 17 shown in **FIGS. 10 through 12** passes through either the opening 324 (**FIG. 22**) in the superior facet prosthesis 300 or the opening 410 (**FIG. 23**) in the inferior facet prosthesis 400 or through both of these openings wherein the head of the screw fastener 17 acts as the securing means pressing the inferior facet prostheses 400 and the superior facet prosthesis 300 against their respective resection surfaces.

[0196] **FIGS. 32 through 37** demonstrate different combinations of assemblies of the facet replacement prosthesis. The basic components of the prosthesis are the fixation element 200, superior facet prosthesis 300, inferior facet prosthesis 400, and the enlarged head 500. However, as described above, a screw fastener 17 can replace the fixation element 200 and the enlarged head 500.

[0197] Referring to **FIG. 32**, three sequential layers of vertebra are shown, the top vertebra 101 is above the middle vertebra 102 that is shown above the bottom vertebra 103. Portions of some of the facets on the right side of the vertebrae are replaced by prostheses. Looking at the facet joint between the top vertebra 101 and the middle vertebra 102, inferior facet prosthesis 401 is articulating against superior facet prosthesis 302 to form an artificial unilateral joint. The inferior facet of the middle vertebra 102 is replaced by inferior facet prosthesis 402 and the superior facet of the bottom vertebra 103 is replaced by superior facet prosthesis 303. Thus, a second unilateral prosthetic joint is formed that is also on the right side and is located at the level between the middle vertebra 102 and the bottom vertebra 103. **FIG. 32** demonstrates the difference in shape of the inferior facet prosthesis 401 that is implanted around the fixation element 201 without a superior facet prosthesis 300 and an inferior facet prosthesis 402 that is implanted around a fixation element 202 and over a superior facet prosthesis 302. The opening 410 of the inferior facet prosthesis 401 on

the top vertebra **101** in this assembly is offset more laterally than the opening **410** in the inferior facet prosthesis **402** for the middle vertebra **102**. This is because the fixation element **201** is implanted more laterally on the top vertebra **101** to preserve more of the superior facet since it is not replaced by a prosthesis at this level.

[0198] Referring to **FIG. 33**, the top vertebra **101** is left intact without resection of the facets. Portions of both the superior and inferior facets on the right side of the middle vertebra **102** are replaced by superior facet prosthesis **302** and an inferior facet prosthesis **402**. Only the right superior facet of the bottom vertebra **103** is replaced (i.e., by a superior facet prosthesis **303**) in **FIG. 33**. Thus, a hemiplasty replacement results on the right facet joint between the top vertebra **101** and the middle vertebra **102** and a unilateral replacement results between the middle vertebra **102** and the bottom vertebra **103**. This assembly shown in **FIG. 33** demonstrates how the superior facet prosthesis **302** can articulate against a natural inferior facet **6** or superior facet prosthesis **303** can articulate against an inferior facet prosthesis **402**.

[0199] **FIG. 34** shows how an inferior facet prosthesis **401** can articulate against a natural superior facet **43**, or an inferior facet prosthesis **402** can articulate against superior facet prosthesis **303**. The right facet joint between the top vertebra **101** and the middle vertebra **102** is a hemiplasty replacement with the inferior facet replaced by an inferior facet prosthesis **401**. The right facet joint between the middle vertebra **102** and the bottom vertebra **103** is a unilateral replacement with the inferior facet replaced by an inferior facet prosthesis **402** and the superior facet of the bottom vertebra **103** replaced by a superior facet prosthesis **303**.

[0200] **FIG. 35** shows another example of how the superior facet prosthesis **303** can articulate against a natural inferior facet **6** or superior facet prosthesis **302** can articulate against an inferior facet prosthesis **401**. In this assembly of the implant, the right side between the top vertebra **101** and the middle vertebra **102** is a unilateral replacement and the right side between the middle vertebra **102** and the bottom vertebra **103** is a hemiplasty replacement.

[0201] **FIG. 36** shows another example of how an inferior facet prosthesis **402** can articulate against a natural superior facet **43**, or an inferior facet prosthesis **401** can articulate against superior facet prosthesis **302**. The right facet joint between the top vertebra **101** and the middle vertebra **102** is an unilateral replacement with the inferior facet replaced by an inferior facet prosthesis **401** and the superior facet of the middle vertebra **102** replaced by a superior facet prosthesis **302**. The right facet joint between the middle vertebra **102** and the bottom vertebra **103** is a hemiplasty replacement with the inferior facet replaced by an inferior facet prosthesis **402**.

[0202] The assembly of the implant shown in **FIG. 37** demonstrates only one level, that between the middle vertebra **102** and the bottom vertebra **103**, being replaced on the right side.

[0203] **FIG. 38** and **FIG. 39** show two embodiments of the superior facet prosthesis. The embodiment shown in **FIG. 38** is curved superior facet prosthesis **305** with a curved articulating component **320** that has a curved articulating surface **321**. This curved articulating surface **321**

allows for a more distributed contact load between an inferior facet prosthesis **400** and the curved articulating surface **321**. This allows slightly more flexibility in the position that the surgeon places the curved superior facet prosthesis **305** than the superior facet prosthesis **300** previously described. The articulating surface **321** of the superior facet prosthesis **300** previously described is relatively flat. The articulating surface **321** of the curved superior facet prosthesis **305** is curved. Since the bearing portion of the inferior facet prosthesis **400** is columnar, the two prosthesis can be aligned on a slight mismatch and make more of an anatomic contact if the articulated surface is curved as in **FIG. 38**.

[0204] **FIG. 39** illustrates bone ingrowth feature **390** on the superior facet prosthesis **306**. This bone ingrowth feature can be any surface that allows bone to grow into the implant between the first resection **111** of the vertebra and the **322** bone-contacting surface **321** of the implant. Examples of bone ingrowth features **390** include porous coating of beads or meshes, electrochemically etched shapes and porous pads pressed onto the implant surface made from tantalum, titanium, cobalt chrome alloys or and other biocompatible material such as hydroxylapatite or calcium phosphate ceramics.

[0205] **FIG. 40** shows an isometric view of an inferior facet prosthesis **400** formed in the general shape of a finger or talon. More particularly, inferior facet prosthesis **400** is formed with a flange **420** on its superior side shaped to either fit between the superior facet prosthesis **300** and the enlarged head **500**, or between the first resection surface **112** and the enlarged head **500**. The flange **420** has an opening **410** through it that is dimensioned to allow the inferior facet prosthesis **400** to fit over the proximal end **210** of the fixation element **200** and around the post of the fixation element **200**. The inferior facet prosthesis **400** also has an inferior portion **450** on the opposite side of the flange **420** that has a bone apposition side **440** that is shaped to contact the surface of the resected bone **121** (**FIG. 19**) and joint articulation side **430** that is shaped to articulate with a natural or prosthetic superior facet.

[0206] **FIG. 41** shows an isometric view of an inferior facet prosthesis **400** also formed in the general shape of a finger or talon. Inferior facet prosthesis **400** is formed with a superior end **420** having an opening **410** that is dimensioned and shaped to accept the fixation element **200**. The inferior facet prosthesis is generally columnar in shape, having a curved length designed to conform to the prepared anatomy of the vertebra **100**. The inferior facet prosthesis **400** of **FIG. 41** has an inferior portion **450**, which is shown opposite the superior end **420**, and slightly medially offset from the superior end **420**. This medial offset of the opening **410** relative to the inferior portion **450** allows the inferior facet prosthesis **400** to be anchored to the bone by the fixation element **200** and secured to the bone by the enlarged head **500**, or the superior facet prosthesis **300** in combination with the enlarged head **500**, at an anatomical position that allows optimal bone fixation. The inferior facet prosthesis embodiment of **FIG. 41** has a bone ingrowth surface **441** and an articulating surface **430** on its inferior end **450**. In this embodiment, the bone ingrowth surface **441** is a textured structure that permits bone cells to grow into the implant surface. The shape of the bone ingrowth surface **441** can be a uniform textured surface as shown in **FIG. 41**, or can be

a non-uniform randomized structure such as a open cell foam structure, a porous beaded structure, a wire mesh structure, an electrochemical etched structure, or other bone ingrowth structures known in the design of orthopedic implants. The bone ingrowth surface is shaped to mate with the inferior resected bone surface 121 such as shown in **FIG. 19** and **FIG. 20**.

[0207] **FIG. 42** shows a posterior isometric view of an embodiment of the superior facet implant 300 that has an additional locking washer 800 to assist in stabilizing the superior facet implant to the first resection surface 112. The construction of the implant assembly shown in **FIG. 42** is similar to that of the assembly shown in **FIG. 25** with the addition of the locking washer 800 that is placed over and around the superior facet implant 300.

[0208] **FIG. 43** shows the same implant of **FIG. 42** with the enlarged head 500 locked onto the fixation element 200 and pushing the locking washer 800 against the superior prosthesis 300 and into the bone tissue. This added bone penetration of the locking washer 800 helps to fix the superior prosthesis 300 such that the entire assembly is more mechanically stable with respect to the vertebra 100.

[0209] **FIG. 43** shows a further step in the assembly of the implant construct described in **FIG. 42**. In **FIG. 43**, the locking washer 800 is secured over the fixation element 200 and into the bone tissue by the enlarged head 500. Although this embodiment of the locking washer 800 is only shown with the superior facet prosthesis 300, the locking washer 800 can also be used to mechanically secure the inferior facet prosthesis 400 and the combination of the inferior facet prosthesis 400 and the superior facet prosthesis 300. In the embodiment of the locking washer 800 shown in **FIG. 42** and **FIG. 43**, the locking washer 800 is placed over the superior facet prosthesis 300. However, the locking washer 800 may be placed under the superior facet prosthesis 300 or under any other combination of inferior facet prosthesis 400 and superior facet prosthesis 300, or between the superior facet prosthesis 300 and the inferior facet prosthesis 400 to stabilize the implant construct.

[0210] **FIG. 44** shows an isometric view of the locking washer 800. The locking washer 800 has an opening 810 in the body 805 that is dimensioned to fit over the proximal post 230 of the fixation element 200. The locking washer 800 also has an anti-rotation feature 820 that mates with either the superior facet prosthesis 300 or the inferior facet prosthesis 400 or a combination of both the inferior facet prosthesis 400 and the superior facet prosthesis 400. The anti-rotation feature 820 shown in this embodiment is a flat surface, however, any feature that would rotationally constrain the locking washer 800 to the other components of the implant (such as a tab, groove, taper or other geometric shape) can be formed on the washer as a anti-rotation feature 820. The locking washer 800 also has prongs 830 that pass into the bone tissue of vertebra 100 to help stabilize the implant construct. The prongs in this embodiment of the locking washer 800 are elongated protrusions that taper to a tissue penetration tip 840. The prongs have sidewalls 850 that provide a surface to resist torsion once the locking washer 800 penetrates the bone tissue. The prongs 830 may also be simple spikes that are either symmetrical or non-symmetrical in cross-section that protrude from the locking washer body 805. The shape and length of the locking

washer prongs 830 is dependent on how the locking washer is used. The prongs 830 of the locking washer 800 that holds only one of the inferior facet prosthesis 400 or the superior facet prosthesis 300 to the vertebra 100 may be shorter than the prongs 830 of the locking washer 800 that holds both the inferior facet prosthesis 400 and the superior facet prosthesis 300 to the vertebra 100.

[0211] **FIG. 45** shows the superior facet prosthesis 300 and inferior facet prosthesis 400 held to the vertebra 100 by adjunctive flexible fixation element 900 and secondary flexible fixation element 910. These flexible fixation elements 900 and/or 910 may be made from such constructs as suture, braided cable, wire, ribbon, and other constructs that have longer lengths than cross-sections and withstand larger loads in tension than in compression. The flexible fixation element 900 and/or 910 may be manufactured from biocompatible metals, alloys such as cobalt chrome alloys, titanium alloys, stainless steel alloys, polymers, bioabsorbable materials, composites, or other materials that are biocompatible and can be formed into a flexible element structure 900 and/or 910 such as those shown in **FIG. 45**. The adjunctive flexible element 900 shown in **FIG. 45** is shown attached to and securing the elongated head 500. A flexible element attachment portion 580 (e.g., including an opening) mates the flexible element 900 to the elongated head. However, the adjunctive flexible fixation element 900 may attach to and add adjunctive fixation element 900 to the fixation element 200, the superior facet prosthesis 300, the inferior facet prosthesis 400 or a combination of the above listed elements of the prosthesis. A flexible fixation attachment portion 480 (e.g., including an opening) in the inferior facet prosthesis 400 allows the secondary flexible fixation element 910 to secure the inferior facet prosthesis 400 to the vertebra 100. The flexible fixation elements 900 and/or 910 may be secured to the vertebra 100 by physically wrapping around anatomic features such as the posterior arch 35, the spinous process 46, or transverse process 105 or a combination of these anatomic features. The flexible element 900 and secondary flexible element 910 may also be secured to the vertebra by bone anchors such as anchors designed to anchor flexible fixation elements (such as suture) to bone. Suture anchors such as threaded suture anchors, barbed suture anchors, toggle suture anchors or any other means of anchoring a flexible fixation element to bone may be used to anchor the flexible fixation element 900 or the secondary flexible fixation element 910 to the vertebra 100.

[0212] **FIG. 46** is a dorsal view of a bilateral inferior facet prosthesis 1000. The bilateral inferior facet prosthesis 1000 is a one-piece inferior facet prosthesis that has both a right inferior side 1040 and a left inferior side 1020 connected by a stabilizing bar 1010. Both the right inferior side 1040 and the left inferior side 1020 are designed to fix to the vertebra at the respective inferior resection surface 121 (**FIG. 19**) and the first resection surface 112. The bilateral inferior prosthesis is a design that allows replacement of both the left and the right inferior facet. In this embodiment, the bilateral inferior prosthesis is placed over the left and right fixation elements 200 which extend into the top vertebra 101. In this embodiment shown in **FIG. 46**, the right inferior side is articulating with a right superior facet prosthesis 300 attached to the lower vertebra 102. Also in this embodiment, the left inferior side 1020 is articulating with the left natural superior facet 43 of the lower vertebra 102. The stabilizing

bar **1010** of the bilateral inferior prosthesis **1000** is designed to stabilize the left side **1020** and the right side **1040** so that they are secure.

[0213] Having described preferred embodiments of the invention with reference to the accompanying drawings, it is to be understood that the embodiments shown herein are by way of example, and that various changes and modifications may be effected by one skilled in the art without departing from the scope or spirit of the invention as defined in the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A prosthesis for the replacement of at least a portion of the bone of a facet located on a mammalian vertebra, comprising:

an articulating surface that articulates with another facet; a bone contacting surface that contacts a surface of the vertebra, said articulating surface being connected to said bone contacting surface; and a fixation element that attaches said bone contacting surface to the vertebra, said fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra;

wherein said prosthesis is configured so that no portion of said prosthesis contacts the posterior arch of said vertebra.

2. A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the surface of said vertebra contacted by said bone contacting surface comprises an exterior surface of the vertebra.

3. A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein the surface of the vertebra contacted by said bone contacting surface comprises a resected surface of said vertebra.

4. A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein said fixation element comprises a post, said bone contacting surface defines an opening therein, and further wherein said post attaches said bone contacting surface to the vertebra by extending through said opening.

5. A prosthesis according to claim 4 wherein said fixation element comprises an enlarged head attached to said post for capturing said bone contacting surface against the surface of the vertebra.

6. A prosthesis according to claim 5 wherein said enlarged head is permanently attached to said post.

7. A prosthesis according to claim 5 wherein said enlarged head is selectively attachable to said post.

8. A prosthesis according to claim 7 wherein said post is threaded at its outer end, and further wherein said enlarged head comprises a nut adapted to be selectively screwed onto said threaded post.

9. A prosthesis according to claim 4 wherein said post comprises a non-circular recess on its outer end for turning said post into the vertebra.

10. A prosthesis according to claim 9 wherein said non-circular recess comprises a hexagonal cross-section.

11. A prosthesis according to claim 4 wherein said post is cannulated to facilitate delivery to the vertebra over a guidewire.

12. A prosthesis according to claim 4 wherein said post is threaded on its inner end to facilitate attachment to the vertebra.

13. A prosthesis according to claim 4 wherein said post is ribbed on its inner end to facilitate attachment to the vertebra.

14. A prosthesis according to claim 13 wherein said ribbing extends parallel to the longitudinal axis of said post.

15. A prosthesis according to claim 13 wherein said ribbing extends transverse to the longitudinal axis of said post.

16. A prosthesis according to claim 4 wherein said post is barbed on its inner end to facilitate attachment to the vertebra.

17. A prosthesis according to claim 4 wherein said post has a circular cross-section along at least a portion of its length.

18. A prosthesis according to claim 4 wherein said post has a non-circular cross-section along at least a portion of its length.

19. A prosthesis according to claim 18 wherein said post has an oval cross-section along at least a portion of its length.

20. A prosthesis according to claim 18 wherein said post has a polygonal cross-section along at least a portion of its length.

21. A prosthesis according to claim 20 wherein said post has a rectangular cross-section along at least a portion of its length.

22. A prosthesis according to claim 20 wherein said post has a triangular cross-section along at least a portion of its length.

23. A prosthesis according to claim 4 wherein said post has an expandable cross-section along at least a portion of its length.

24. A prosthesis according to claim 23 wherein said post comprises an inner member and an outer member, said inner member is slidably received within said outer member, and further wherein said outer member expands relative to said member according to the longitudinal position of said inner member relative to said outer member.

25. A prosthesis according to claim 24 wherein said outer member comprises a plurality of talons which are cammed outward by said inner member depending on the longitudinal position of said inner member relative to said outer member.

26. A prosthesis according to claim 4 wherein said prosthesis further comprises a supplemental holding element for holding said fixation element to said vertebra.

27. A prosthesis according to claim 26 wherein said supplemental holding element comprises a transverse pin, and further wherein said post comprises a transverse hole for receiving said transverse pin.

28. A prosthesis according to claim 26 wherein said supplemental holding element comprises a spiked washer, said fixation element comprises an enlarged head for capturing said bone contacting surface against the surface of the vertebra, and further wherein said spiked washer is captured to said vertebra by said enlarged head.

29. A prosthesis according to claim 26 wherein said supplemental holding element comprises a filament extending through a filament opening formed in said fixation element.

30. A prosthesis according to claim 29 wherein said filament opening is formed in said post.

31. A prosthesis according to claim 29 wherein said fixation element comprises an enlarged head for capturing

said bone contacting surface against the surface of the vertebra, and further wherein said filament opening is formed in said enlarged head.

32. A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein said prosthesis comprises a superior facet prosthesis.

33. A prosthesis according to claim 32 wherein said articulating surface comprises a blade.

34. A prosthesis according to claim 4 wherein said articulating surface comprises a blade, and further wherein said blade is laterally offset from said opening.

35. A prosthesis according to claim 1 wherein said prosthesis comprises an inferior facet prosthesis.

36. A prosthesis according to claim 35 wherein said articulating surface comprises a talon.

37. A prosthesis according to claim 4 wherein said articulating surface comprises a talon, and further wherein at least a portion of said talon is laterally offset from said opening.

38. A prosthesis for the replacement of at least a portion of the bone of a facet located on a mammalian vertebra, comprising:

an articulating surface that articulates with another facet;

a bone contacting surface that contacts a surface of the vertebra, said articulating surface being connected to said bone contacting surface; and

a fixation element that attaches said bone contacting surface to the vertebra, said fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra;

wherein said bone contacting surface is configured to engage a resected surface of the vertebra.

39. A prosthesis according to claim 38 wherein the resected surface of the vertebra is recessed relative to the surrounding portions of the vertebra, and further wherein said bone contacting surface is configured to engage the recessed surface.

40. A prosthesis for the replacement of at least a portion of the bone of a facet located on a mammalian vertebra, comprising:

an articulating surface that articulates with another facet;

a bone contacting surface that contacts a surface of the vertebra, said articulating surface being connected to said bone contacting surface; and

a fixation element that attaches said bone contacting surface to the vertebra, said fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra;

wherein said bone contacting surface has a smaller surface area than said articulating surface.

41. A prosthesis for the replacement of at least a portion of the bone of a facet located on a mammalian vertebra, comprising:

an articulating surface that articulates with another facet;

a bone contacting surface that contacts a surface of the vertebra, said articulating surface being connected to said bone contacting surface; and

a fixation element that attaches said bone contacting surface to the vertebra, said fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra;

wherein said articulating surface comprises a wing ear extending upward from said bone contacting surface.

42. A prosthesis for the replacement of at least a portion of the bone of a facet located on a mammalian vertebra, comprising:

an articulating surface that articulates with another facet;

a bone contacting surface that contacts a surface of the vertebra, said articulating surface being connected to said bone contacting surface; and

a fixation element that attaches said bone contacting surface to the vertebra, said fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra;

wherein said articulating surface is substantially planar and extends adjacent to the pedicle.

43. A prosthesis for the replacement of at least a portion of the bone of a facet located on a mammalian vertebra, comprising:

an articulating surface that articulates with another facet;

a bone contacting surface that contacts a surface of the vertebra, said articulating surface being connected to said bone contacting surface; and

a fixation element that attaches said bone contacting surface to the vertebra, said fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra;

wherein said articulating surface is substantially planar and extends substantially parallel to said fixation element.

44. A prosthesis for the replacement of at least a portion of the bone of a facet located on a mammalian vertebra, comprising:

an articulating surface that articulates with another facet;

a bone contacting surface that contacts a surface of the vertebra, said articulating surface being connected to said bone contacting surface; and

a fixation element that attaches said bone contacting surface to the vertebra, said fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra;

wherein said fixation element clamps said bone contacting surface to a resected surface of the vertebra.

45. A prosthesis for the replacement of at least a portion of the bone of a facet located on a mammalian vertebra, comprising:

an articulating element that articulates with another facet;

a bone contacting element that contacts a surface of the vertebra, said articulating element being connected to said bone contacting element; and

a fixation element that attaches said bone contacting element to the vertebra, said fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra;

wherein said prosthesis is configured so that no portion of said prosthesis contacts the posterior arch of said vertebra.

46. A prosthesis for the replacement of at least a portion of the bone of a superior facet located on a mammalian vertebra and for replacement of at least a portion of the bone of an inferior facet located on the same mammalian vertebra, comprising:

a superior articulating element that articulates with another facet;

a superior bone contacting element that contacts one of a surface of the vertebra or another element contacting a surface of the vertebra, said superior articulating element being connected to said superior bone contacting element; and

an inferior articulating element that articulates with another facet;

an inferior bone contacting element that contacts one of a surface of the vertebra or another element contacting a surface of the vertebra, said inferior articulating element being connected to said inferior bone contacting element; and

a fixation element that attaches said superior bone contacting element and said inferior bone contacting element to the vertebra, said fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra;

wherein said prosthesis is configured so that no portion of said prosthesis contacts the posterior arch of said vertebra.

47. A prosthesis for the replacement of at least a portion of the bone of a superior facet located on a first mammalian vertebra and for replacement of at least a portion of the bone of an inferior facet located on a second mammalian vertebra, comprising:

a superior articulating element that articulates with another facet;

a superior bone contacting element that contacts one of a surface of the first vertebra or another element contacting a surface of the vertebra, said superior articulating element being connected to said superior bone contacting element;

a first fixation element that attaches said superior bone contacting element to the first vertebra, said first fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra; and

an inferior articulating element that articulates with another facet;

an inferior bone contacting element that contacts one of a surface of the second vertebra or another element contacting a surface of the vertebra, said inferior articulating element being connected to said inferior bone contacting element; and

a second fixation element that attaches said inferior bone contacting element to the second vertebra, said second fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra; and

wherein said prosthesis is configured so that no portion of said prosthesis contacts the posterior arches of said first and second vertebrae.

48. A method for replacing at least a portion of the bone of a facet located on a mammalian vertebra, comprising:

providing:

an articulating surface that articulates with another facet;

a bone contacting surface that contacts a surface of the vertebra, said articulating surface being connected to said bone contacting surface; and

a fixation element that attaches said bone contacting surface to the vertebra, said fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra;

wherein said prosthesis is configured so that no portion of said prosthesis contacts the posterior arch of said vertebra; and

positioning said bone contacting surface against a surface of the vertebra; and

attaching said bone contacting surface to the vertebra using said fixation element.

49. A method according to claim 48 wherein the surface of said vertebra contacted by said bone contacting surface comprises an exterior surface of the vertebra.

50. A method according to claim 48 wherein the surface of the vertebra contacted by said bone contacting surface comprises a resected surface of said vertebra.

51. A method according to claim 48 wherein said fixation element comprises a post, said bone contacting surface defines an opening therein, and further wherein said post attaches said bone contacting surface to the vertebra by extending through said opening.

52. A method according to claim 51 wherein said fixation element comprises an enlarged head attached to said post for capturing said bone contacting surface against the surface of the vertebra.

53. A method according to claim 52 wherein said enlarged head is permanently attached to said post.

54. A method according to claim 52 wherein said enlarged head is selectively attachable to said post.

55. A method according to claim 54 wherein said post is threaded at its outer end, and further wherein said enlarged head comprises a nut adapted to be selectively screwed onto said threaded post.

56. A method according to claim 51 wherein said post comprises a non-circular recess on its outer end for turning said post into the vertebra.

57. A method according to claim 56 wherein said non-circular recess comprises a hexagonal cross-section.

58. A method according to claim 51 wherein said post is cannulated to facilitate delivery to the vertebra over a guidewire.

59. A method according to claim 51 wherein said post is threaded on its inner end to facilitate attachment to the vertebra.

60. A method according to claim 51 wherein said post is ribbed on its inner end to facilitate attachment to the vertebra.

61. A method according to claim 60 wherein said ribbing extends parallel to the longitudinal axis of said post.

62. A method according to claim 60 wherein said ribbing extends transverse to the longitudinal axis of said post.

63. A method according to claim 51 wherein said post is barbed on its inner end to facilitate attachment to the vertebra.

64. A method according to claim 51 wherein said post has a circular cross-section along at least a portion of its length.

65. A method according to claim 51 wherein said post has a non-circular cross-section along at least a portion of its length.

66. A method according to claim 65 wherein said post has an oval cross-section along at least a portion of its length.

67. A method according to claim 65 wherein said post has a polygonal cross-section along at least a portion of its length.

68. A method according to claim 67 wherein said post has a rectangular cross-section along at least a portion of its length.

69. A method according to claim 67 wherein said post has a triangular cross-section along at least a portion of its length.

70. A method according to claim 51 wherein said post has an expandable cross-section along at least a portion of its length.

71. A method according to claim 70 wherein said post comprises an inner member and an outer member, said inner member is slidably received within said outer member, and further wherein said outer member expands relative to said inner member according to the longitudinal position of said inner member relative to said outer member.

72. A method according to claim 71 wherein said outer member comprises a plurality of talons which are cammed outward by said inner member depending on the longitudinal position of said inner member relative to said outer member.

73. A method according to claim 51 wherein said prosthesis further comprises a supplemental holding element for holding said fixation element to said vertebra.

74. A method according to claim 73 wherein said supplemental holding element comprises a transverse pin, and further wherein said post comprises a transverse hole for receiving said transverse pin.

75. A method according to claim 73 wherein said supplemental holding element comprises a spiked washer, said fixation element comprises an enlarged head for capturing said bone contacting surface against the surface of the vertebra, and further wherein said spiked washer is captured to said vertebra by said enlarged head.

76. A method according to claim 73 wherein said supplemental holding element comprises a filament extending through a filament opening formed in said fixation element.

77. A method according to claim 76 wherein said filament opening is formed in said post.

78. A method according to claim 76 wherein said fixation element comprises an enlarged head for capturing said bone contacting surface against the surface of the vertebra, and further wherein said filament opening is formed in said enlarged head.

79. A method according to claim 48 wherein said prosthesis comprises a superior facet prosthesis.

80. A method according to claim 79 wherein said articulating surface comprises a blade.

81. A method according to claim 51 wherein said articulating surface comprises a blade, and further wherein said blade is laterally offset from said opening.

82. A method according to claim 51 wherein said prosthesis comprises an inferior facet prosthesis.

83. A method according to claim 82 wherein said articulating surface comprises a finger.

84. A method according to claim 51 wherein said articulating surface comprises a finger, and further wherein at least a portion of said finger is laterally offset from said opening.

85. A prosthesis for the replacement of at least a portion of the bone of a facet located on a mammalian vertebra, comprising:

an articulating element that articulates with another facet;

a bone contacting element that contacts a surface of the vertebra or another element contacting a surface of the vertebra, said articulating element being connected to said bone contacting element; and

a fixation element that attaches said bone contacting element to the vertebra, said fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra;

wherein said prosthesis is configured so that no portion of said prosthesis contacts the posterior arch of said vertebra.

86. A prosthesis according to claim 85 wherein said prosthesis comprises a superior facet prosthesis.

87. A prosthesis according to claim 86 wherein said bone contacting element is adapted to contact a resected surface of a pedicle or another element contacting a resected surface of a pedicle.

88. A prosthesis according to claim 85 wherein said articulating element comprises a blade.

89. A prosthesis according to claim 85 wherein said prosthesis comprises an inferior facet prosthesis.

90. A prosthesis according to claim 89 wherein said bone contacting element is adapted to contact a resected surface of a pedicle or another element contacting a resected surface of a pedicle.

91. A prosthesis according to claim 89 wherein said articulating element comprises a finger.

92. A prosthesis according to claim 91 wherein said articulating element is configured to engage a resected surface of an inferior facet.

93. A prosthesis according to claim 89 wherein at least a portion of said finger is laterally offset from said bone contacting element.

94. A method for replacing at least a portion of the bone of a facet located on a mammalian vertebra, comprising:

an articulating element that articulates with another facet;

a bone contacting element that contacts a surface of the vertebra or another element contacting a surface of the vertebra, said articulating element being connected to said bone contacting element; and

a fixation element that attaches said bone contacting element to the vertebra, said fixation element being adapted for implantation into an interior bone space of a pedicle of the vertebra;

wherein said prosthesis is configured so that no portion of said prosthesis contacts the posterior arch of said vertebra;

positioning said bone contacting surface against a surface of the vertebra or another element contacting a surface of the vertebra; and

attaching said bone contacting surface to the vertebra using said fixation element.

95. A method according to claim 85 wherein said prosthesis comprises a superior facet prosthesis.

96. A method according to claim 95 wherein said bone contacting element is adapted to contact a resected surface of a pedicle or another element contacting a resected surface of a pedicle.

97. A method according to claim 94 wherein said articulating element comprises a blade.

98. A method according to claim 94 wherein said prosthesis comprises an inferior facet prosthesis.

99. A method according to claim 98 wherein said bone contacting element is adapted to contact a resected surface of a pedicle or another element contacting a resected surface of a pedicle.

100. A method according to claim 98 wherein said articulating element comprises a finger.

101. A method according to claim 100 wherein said articulating element is configured to engage a resected surface of an inferior facet.

102. A method according to claim 98 wherein at least a portion of said finger is laterally offset from said bone contacting element.

* * * * *