

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
23 July 2009 (23.07.2009)

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2009/091960 A3

(51) International Patent Classification:
A61B 17/14 (2006.01) *A61B 17/56* (2006.01)

(21) International Application Number:
PCT/US2009/031225

(22) International Filing Date:
16 January 2009 (16.01.2009)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
61/011,478 16 January 2008 (16.01.2008) US

(63) Related by continuation (CON) or continuation-in-part (CIP) to earlier application:
US 61/011,478 (CIP)
Filed on 16 January 2008 (16.01.2008)

(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): **VERTI-FLEX, INC.** [US/US]; 1351 Calle Avanzado, San Clemente, CA 92673 (US).

(72) Inventors; and

(75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): **REGLOS, Joey, Camia** [US/US]; 22896 Willard Avenue, Lake Forest, CA 92630 (US). **ALTARAC, Moti** [IL/US]; 67 Coriander, Irvine, CA 92603 (US).

(74) Agent: **LUKAS, Rimas**; 1351 Calle Avanzado, San Clemente, CA 92673 (US).

(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AO, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KM, KN, KP, KR, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LY, MA, MD, ME, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RS, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, ST, SV, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

- with international search report (Art. 21(3))
- before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments (Rule 48.2(h))

(88) Date of publication of the international search report:
15 October 2009

(54) Title: TISSUE SPLITTER

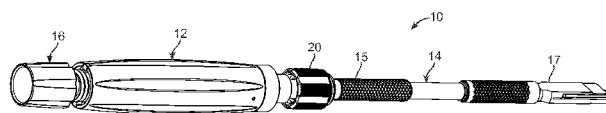


FIG. 1a

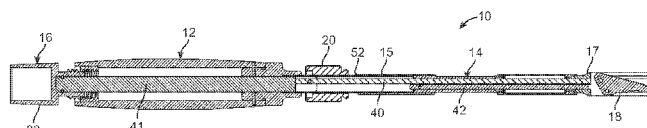


FIG. 1b

(57) Abstract: A tissue splitter for creating a subcutaneous cut is disclosed. The tissue splitter is insertable into a slotted cannula that is placed via an incision to a location proximate a patient's spine. An actuator at the proximal end of the instrument projects the blade located at the distal end from its retracted state through the slot of the cannula to an extracted state to subcutaneously cut tissue at a location outside the cannula. The blade is movable inside the slot of the cannula by a distance such that the cut created by the blade remains subcutaneous and does not puncture the skin of the patient. The distance is adjustable for the length of the cut and is limited by an adjustment collar. The tissue splitter is ideally suited for creating a pathway for the subcutaneous implantation of a spinal stabilization rod between two bone anchors placed in vertebral bodies.

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PCT/US2009/031225**A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER****A61B 17/14(2006.01)i, A61B 17/56(2006.01)i**

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

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC A61B

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

Korean Utility models and applications for Utility models since 1975

Japanese Utility models and applications for Utility models since 1975

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

eKOMPASS(KPA, PAJ, FPD, USPTFULL) in KIPO, CA online & keywords: tissue, vertebra, splitter, shaft, blade, rod, actuator

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X A	US 06740090 B1 (GRAGG et al.) 25 May 2004 See the abstract; column 10, line 56- column 11, line 41; column 20, line 36-column 22, line 28; figures 9, 37-42; claims 20-26	1,7,8,13 2-6, 9-12, 14-19
X A	US 05062845 A (KUSLICH et al.) 05 November 1991 See the abstract; column 5, lines 19-44, column 6, lines 23-48; column 8, lines 40-53; figure 16	1,7 2-6, 8-19
A	US 2005-0137602 A1 (ASSEL et al.) 23 June 2005 See the abstract; paragraphs [0022],[0208],[0231],[0232],[0234]; figure 15,16A,16B	1-19
A	US 2004-0133208 A1 (WEIKEL et al.) 08 July 2004 See the abstract; paragraphs [0027],[0087],[0115],[0117]; figures 16A,16B	1-19
A	US 06261293 B1 (NICHOLSON et al.) 17 July 2001 See the abstract; column 13, lines 14-37; figures 11A, 11B; claim 19	1-19
A	US 05449355 A (RHUM et al.) 12 September 1995 See the abstract; column 3, line 55-column 4, line 8; column 4, lines 45-58; column 6, lines 56-61; figures 6,8; claim 1	1-19



Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.



See patent family annex.

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

28 AUGUST 2009 (28.08.2009)

Date of mailing of the international search report

31 AUGUST 2009 (31.08.2009)

Name and mailing address of the ISA/KR

Korean Intellectual Property Office
Government Complex-Daejeon, 139 Seonsa-ro, Seo-
gu, Daejeon 302-701, Republic of Korea

Facsimile No. 82-42-472-7140

Authorized officer

Jang, Ki Wan

Telephone No. 82-42-481-5567



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