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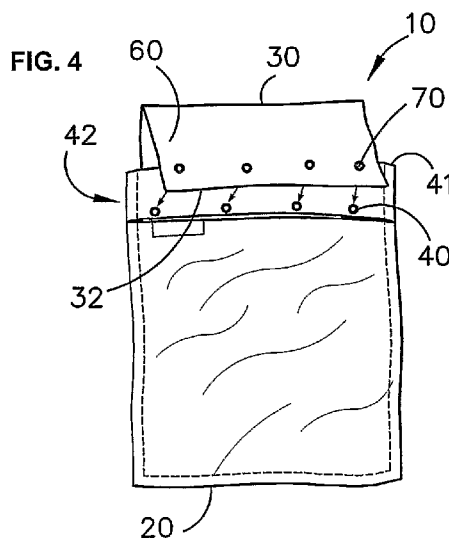
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(54) **Title:** DUVET COVER



(57) **Abstract:** A duvet cover (10) including an envelope portion (20) substantially closable for enveloping a duvet to shield the duvet from soiling. The envelope portion (20) is removable from the duvet for laundering. The duvet cover further includes a sheet portion (30) attachable to the envelope portion (20) to underlie the envelope portion (20) to shield the underside (21) of the envelope portion (20) from soiling. The sheet portion (30) is removable from the envelope portion (20) for laundering. There is also provided a method of minimising duvet cover laundering requirements.

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Duvet Cover

Field of the invention

The invention relates to a duvet cover for shielding a duvet from soiling.

Background of the invention

Traditional western style bedding includes a bottom sheet overlying a mattress. The bottom sheet is typically tightly fitted about the periphery of the mattress. A top sheet then overlies the bottom sheet and is in turn overlaid by one or more blankets. The head end of the sheet (the portion of the sheet towards the head of the bed) is then commonly folded back over the blankets to define a fold back portion protecting the blankets from soiling. The top sheet and blankets are then tucked under the periphery of the mattress about the two sides and the foot end of the bed so that the top sheet and the blankets are tightly held in place.

The daily task of arranging the sheets and blankets on the bed is a tiresome chore. Additionally, many people do not like the 'tight' feeling of being tucked in. A popular alternative to such conventional bedding is the use of a duvet. A duvet (as used herein) is a closed envelope of fabric containing an insulating material such as wool or goose down. The duvet, which is typically rectangular, can be placed over the top of the bed to quickly and easily present a reasonably attractive appearance. The duvet also provides a looser feel that many people prefer.

Laundering a duvet is difficult in that the insulating material is not readily removable. To minimise the requirement for laundering of the duvet often a duvet cover is provided. Typically, duvet covers include two rectangular panels permanently fastened (e.g. by stitching) about their 2 sides and along the head end to define an envelope. The foot end is left open to define an opening for inserting and removing the duvet. The opening is typically held closed by some form of releasable fastener such as a zipper or hook and loop fastening so that the duvet cover is substantially closed and the duvet is retained within the duvet cover.

Inserting and removing the duvet from such a cover can be problematic. It is sometimes difficult to align the corners of the duvet with the inside corners of the cover and, particularly in the case of larger sized duvets, frequently requires two people to locate all four corners and shake out the duvet and duvet cover so that the duvet is evenly spread out within the duvet cover.

UK Patent Application GB 2142233 describes providing a protective sheet attachable to the underside of the duvet to separate the duvet from the occupant of the bed. This approach is thought to provide inadequate protection for the duvet from soiling.

Australian Petty Patent 698265 describes the provision of a protective cover which overlies the top surface of the duvet and includes perimeter edges folded back towards each other to underlie a peripheral margin of the underside of the duvet. These fold back portions frame an opening through which the duvet may be inserted. The opening is closed by a top sheet attachable to the fold back portions. This is thought to be only an incremental advance on the conventional duvet cover in that inserting the duvet requires the protective cover to be laid out and then for the edges of the duvet to be aligned within the fold back portions. This alignment is thought to be troublesome and difficult.

It is not admitted that any of the information in this specification is common general knowledge, or that the person skilled in the art could be reasonably expected to have ascertained, understood, regarded it as relevant or combined it in anyway at the priority date.

It is an object of the invention to provide an improved duvet cover, or at least to provide an alternative in the market.

Summary of the invention

In one aspect of the invention there is provided a duvet cover including:

an envelope portion substantially closable for enveloping a duvet to shield the duvet from soiling, the envelope portion having an in use upwardly disposed upper

surface and an in use downwardly disposed underside and being removable from the duvet for laundering; and

a sheet portion attachable to the envelope portion to underlie the envelope portion to shield the underside of the envelope portion from soiling, the sheet portion being removable from the envelope portion for laundering.

The envelope portion and the sheet portion may each include complementary fastening means for releasably fastening the sheet portion and the envelope portion at least about a peripheral margin of an underside of the envelope portion. Preferably the fastening means is a plurality of press studs spaced about the peripheral margin.

The sheet portion may be dimensioned to in use lie within at least 3 edges of the envelope portion. Advantageously, the sheet portion may include a portion that in use extends beyond a head edge of the envelope portion and is folded to define a fold back portion to shield a head portion of an upper surface of the envelope portion adjacent to the head edge from soiling. The fold back portion and the head portion of the upper surface of the envelope portion may each include complementary fold back portion fastening means for fastening the fold back portion to the head portion of the upper surface. The fold back fastening means is preferably a plurality of press studs. An opening may extend transversely across the upper surface of the envelope portion for inserting and removing the duvet from the envelope portion. The opening may be proximal and substantially parallel to an edge of the fold back portion. Opening fastening means for releasably closing the opening may be provided. The opening fastening means is preferably a plurality of press studs.

Advantageously, the sheet portion may be of a contrasting colour and/or pattern to the envelope portion.

In another aspect of the invention there is provided a method of minimising duvet cover laundering requirements including the step of releasably fastening a sheet portion to an underside of a substantially closed envelope portion of a duvet cover. Preferably this includes the use of a duvet cover according to the invention.

It will be understood that the invention disclosed and defined in this specification extends to all alternative combinations of two or more of the individual features mentioned or evident from the text or drawings. All of these different combinations constitute various alternative aspects of the invention.

Brief description of the drawings

The invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying figures in which:

Figure 1 is a top view of the envelope portion of a duvet cover in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention;

Figure 2 is a top view of a sheet portion of a duvet cover in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention;

Figure 3 is a bottom view illustrating the attachment of the sheet portion of Figure 2 to the envelope portion of Figure 1;

Figure 4 is a top view illustrating the attachment of the fold back portion of the sheet portion of Figure 2 to the envelope portion of Figure 1;

Figure 5 is a top view of the assembled duvet cover including the envelope portion of Figure 1 and the sheet portion of Figure 2;

Figure 6 is a bottom view of the assembled duvet cover of Figure 5; and

Figure 7 is a perspective view of the duvet cover of Figure 5 in situ.

Detailed description of the embodiments

As illustrated, the duvet cover 10 includes two principal components: an envelope portion 20 and a sheet portion 30. The envelope portion 20 is configured to receive a duvet (not shown). The sheet portion 30 is attachable to the envelope portion 20 to shield the envelope portion 20 from soiling.

The envelope portion 20 includes a rectangular lower surface 21 and a rectangular upper surface 22 fastened about their 4 edges respectively to define a rectangular envelope dimensioned to receive a duvet (not shown). An opening 50, in the form of a slit extends transversely across the upper surface 22 of the envelope portion 20 and provides an access point for inserting and removing the duvet.

Releasable fasteners (not shown) are used to hold the opening 50 closed. In this embodiment, press studs (not shown) are spaced along the length of the opening 50. Of course, other fasteners, such as zippers or hook and loop fastening, may be used. A zipper is the preferred option for children's bedding. A zipper is less likely to break loose from the fabric than other forms of fasteners such as press studs. Loose fasteners are a choking hazard and are therefore particularly undesirable in the context of children's bedding.

The envelope portion 20 is preferably formed by a single strip of fabric folded at a foot edge 29 of the envelope portion 20 and at a head edge 41 of the envelope portion 20. The ends 24, 25 of the strip meet at the opening 50. Stitching 23 along the sides 27, 28 and the foot edge 29 of the envelope portion 20 assist in maintaining the shape of the envelope portion 20. The ends 24, 25 of the strip forming opening 50 are suitably hemmed.

As best illustrated in Figure 3, the envelope portion 20 includes press studs 90 spaced around peripheral margins of the lower surface 21 of the envelope portion 20 adjacent to the foot edge 29 and side edges 27, 28. In this embodiment, the press studs 90 are each positioned about 50mm from the nearest edge 27, 28, 29.

The sheet portion 30 is a suitably dimensioned rectangular web of fabric. Each edge 31, 32, 33, 34 is suitably hemmed. Spaced about peripheral margins adjacent the foot edge 34 and the side edges 31, 33 of the sheet portion 30 are press studs 80 which are complementary to the press studs 90. The press studs 80 are positioned within about 15mm of the nearest edge 31, 33, 34 of the sheet portion 30.

The press studs 90 may be carried by tabs. According to this preferred form of the invention, the press studs 90 are carried by short loops of fabric (not shown) stitched to

the underside 21 of the envelope portion 20. Each loop is formed by a strip of fabric about 10 mm wide by about 40 mm long doubled back on itself to form a loop about 20 mm long. Each press stud 90 is mechanically engaged with one wall of a respective loop (i.e. one thickness of the fabric forming the strip) using conventional means. This arrangement is thought to make it easier to separate the press studs 80 and press studs 90 than if the press studs 90 were directly engaged with the underside 21 of the envelope portion 20.

In use the press studs along the opening 50 are released and the duvet (not shown) is inserted into the envelope portion 20. The press studs along the opening 50 are subsequently fastened to hold closed the envelope portion 20. Then, as best illustrated in Figure 3, the press studs 80 and 90 are aligned and fastened so that the sheet portion 30 is attached to the envelope portion 20.

The sheet portion 30 is preferably longer than the envelope portion 20. The additional length provides an end portion foldable back over the head edge 41 of the envelope portion 20 to form a fold back portion 60 to overlie a head portion 42 of the upper surface 22 of the envelope portion 20. The head portion 42 is preferably about 300 mm wide. This protects the head portion 42 of the upper surface 22 from soiling and creates an attractive appearance more in line with conventional bedding.

The upper surface 22 of the envelope portion 20 includes a series of spaced press studs 40 along the length of and adjacent to the opening 50. The press studs 40 are spaced about 20mm from the opening 50 towards the head edge 41 of the envelope portion 20. The sheet portion 30 includes press studs 70 complementary to the press studs 40 spaced along an end edge 32 of the fold back portion 60. As best illustrated in Figure 4, the press studs 40 and 70 are engagable to hold the fold back portion 60 in position on the upper surface 22 of the duvet cover 20.

According to an alternative embodiment (not shown), the press studs 40 are spaced from the opening 50 toward the foot edge 29 whereby the fold back portion 60 overlies and conceals the opening 50.

As best illustrated in Figure 6, the sheet portion 30 is dimensioned to lie within the edges 27, 28, 29 of the envelope portion 20 so that the duvet and duvet cover 10 in use can be easily thrown over the bed, as per a conventional duvet cover, without presenting an untidy edge of the sheet portion 30. Of course, other variations are possible. For example, the edges 31, 33, 34 of the sheet portion 30 may extend beyond the edges 27, 28, 29 of the envelope portion 20 to create the appearance of valance. Alternatively, these extended edges could be tucked into the mattress to create a tight feel, like conventional bedding, that is preferred by some people.

According to an alternative embodiment of the invention (not shown), the upper surface 22 of the envelope portion 20 is formed by attractively patterned fabric. About the side and foot edges a 50 mm wide margin is folded under and stitched at its free edge to the fabric at a seam to define an about 50 mm wide margin portion displaying the aesthetic pattern on its upper and lower sides. The underside 21 of the envelope portion 20 is formed by a plain white sheet of fabric stitched to the upper side along the seam on the side and foot edges. An interior of the envelope portion 20 is thereby defined by the seam, and an attractive margin portion projects beyond the seam.

According to this alternative embodiment, the short loops of fabric carrying the press studs 90 are stitched into the seam and the sheet portion 30 is dimensioned so that its side and foot edges 31, 33 and 34 substantially align with the seam. The sheet portion 30 is thereby in use effectively concealed by the attractive margin portion.

On the upper surface 22 of the envelope portion 20, piping follows the seam to conceal the stitching and present an outwardly attractive appearance.

Preferred embodiments of the invention allow for the duvet to be fully protected from soiling by the envelope portion 20 and for the envelope portion 20 to be protected from soiling via direct contact with a person by the sheet portion 30. The sheet portion 30 can be readily removed, by releasing the press studs, 80, 90 and 40, 70, for more frequent laundering. This construction means that hygiene is maintained by regular washing of the sheet portion 30 and that the difficulties of inserting the duvet into the envelope portion 20 occur less frequently. A further advantage of this construction is the ability to mix and match colours – having an envelope portion 20 and a sheet portion 30 of

differing contrasting colours has been found to be particularly attractive, and of course a variety of sheet portions 30 of differing colours may be separately used with an envelope portion 20.

THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. A duvet cover including:

an envelope portion substantially closable for enveloping a duvet to shield the duvet from soiling, the envelope portion having an in use upwardly disposed upper surface and an in use downwardly disposed underside and being removable from the duvet for laundering; and

a sheet portion attachable to the envelope portion to underlie the envelope portion to shield the underside of the envelope portion from soiling, the sheet portion being removable from the envelope portion for laundering.

2. The duvet cover of claim 1 wherein the envelope portion and the sheet portion each include complementary fastening means for releasably fastening the sheet portion and the envelope portion at least about a peripheral margin of an underside of the envelope portion.

3. The duvet cover of claim 2 wherein the fastening means is a plurality of press studs spaced about the peripheral margin.

4. The duvet cover of claim 1, 2 or 3 wherein the sheet portion is dimensioned to in use lie within at least 3 edges of the envelope portion.

5. The duvet cover of any one of the preceding claims wherein the sheet portion includes a portion that in use extends beyond a head edge of the envelope portion and is folded to define a fold back portion to shield a head portion of an upper surface of the envelope portion adjacent to the head edge from soiling.

6. The duvet cover of claim 5 wherein the fold back portion and the head portion of the upper surface of the envelope portion each include complementary fold back portion fastening means for fastening the fold back portion to the head portion of the upper surface of the envelope portion.

7. The duvet cover of claim 6 wherein the fold back fastening means is a plurality of press studs.
8. The duvet cover of any one of claims 5 to 7 wherein an opening extends transversely across the upper surface of the envelope portion for inserting and removing the duvet from the envelope portion, the opening being proximal and substantially parallel to an edge of the fold back portion.
9. The duvet cover of any one of claims 1 to 5 including an opening extending transversely across the upper surface of the envelope portion for inserting and removing the duvet from the envelope portion.
10. The duvet cover of claims 8 or 9 including opening fastening means for releasably closing the opening.
11. The duvet cover of claim 10 wherein the opening fastening means is a plurality of press studs.
12. The duvet cover of any one of claims 1 to 11 wherein the sheet portion is of a contrasting colour and/or pattern to the envelope portion.
13. A method of minimising duvet cover laundering requirements including the step of releasably fastening a sheet portion to an underside of a substantially closed envelope portion of a duvet cover.
14. The method of claim 13 including the use of a duvet cover according to any one of claims 1 to 12.

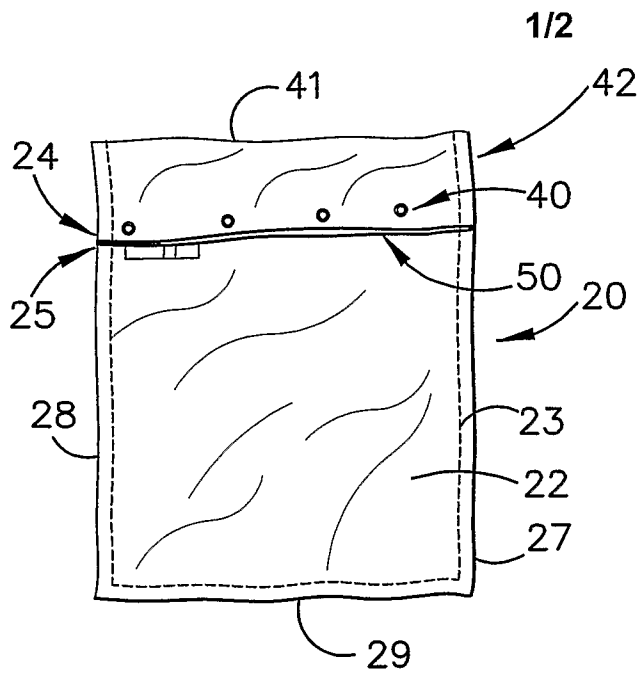


FIG. 1

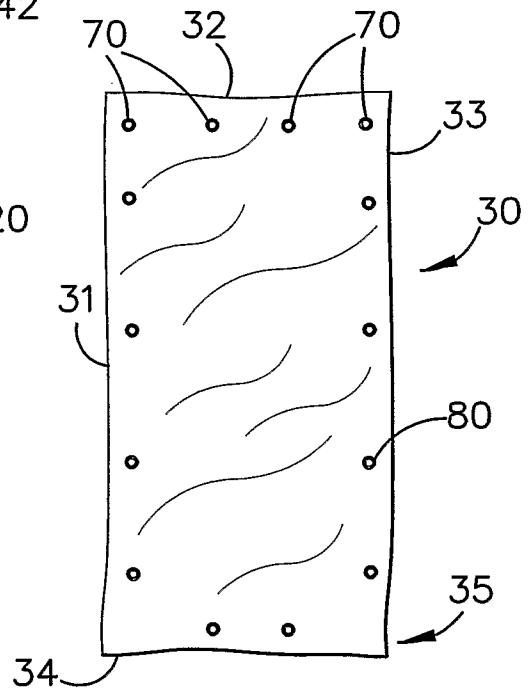


FIG. 2

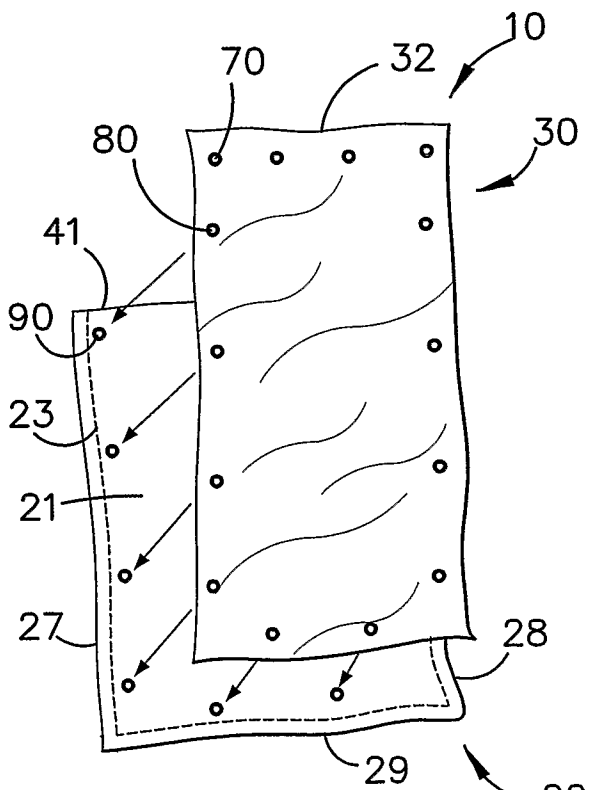


FIG. 3

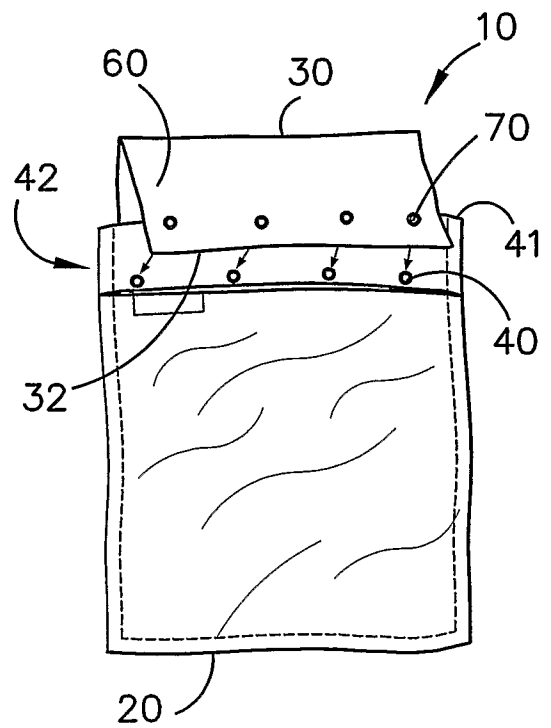


FIG. 4

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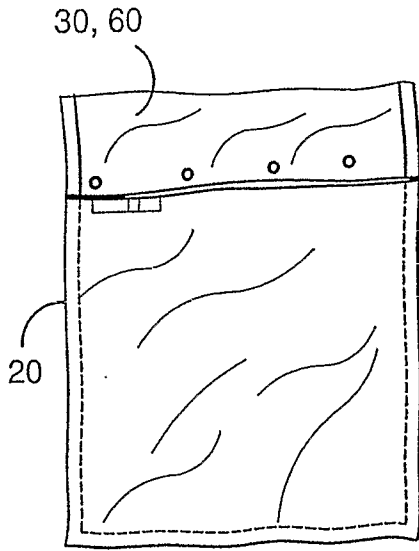


FIG. 5

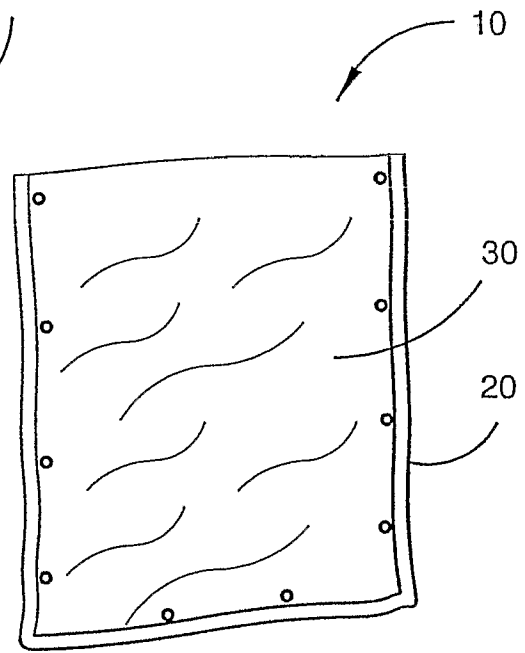


FIG. 6

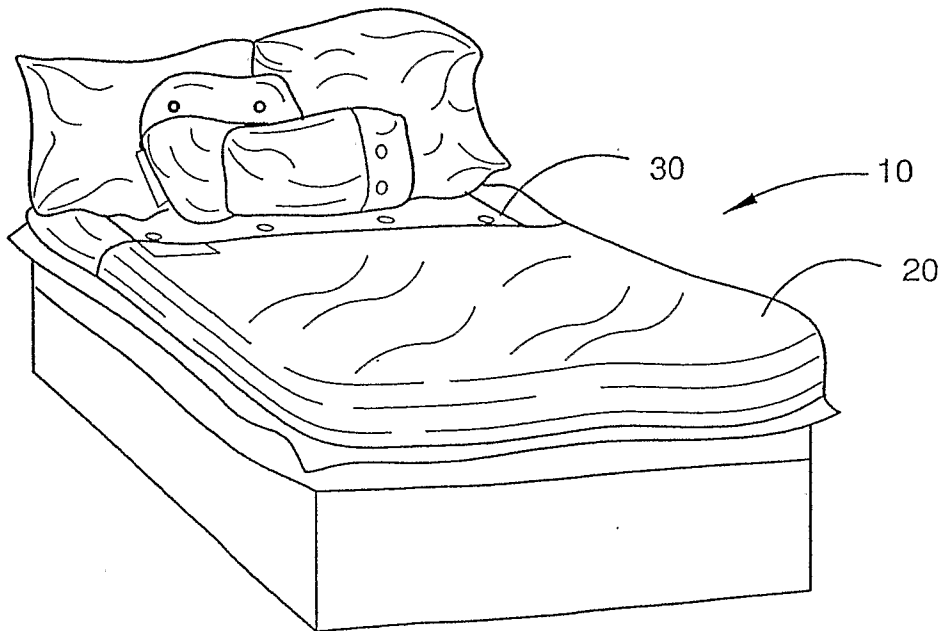


FIG. 7

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/AU2009/001093

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER		
Int. Cl. <i>A47G 9/02</i> (2006.01) <i>A47G 9/04</i> (2006.01)		
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)		
Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched		
Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used) WPI, EPODOC <i>A47G 9/02, 9/04</i> key words COVER+, PROTECTOR, CASE, ENVELOP+, SLIP, SHEET?, REMOV+, DETACH+, WASH+, LAUND+		
C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 2004/0031098 A1 (HOLLANDER) 19 February 2004 Please refer to figs 1-5	1-14
A	GB 2389523 A (TURNER BLANCA PLC) 17 December 2003 Please refer to figs 1 & 2	1-14
A	US 2005/0144721 A1 (LINNANE) 7 July 2005 Please refer to figs 1-3	1-14
<input type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> See patent family annex		
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"E"	earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date	"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
"L"	document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
"O"	document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	"&" document member of the same patent family
"P"	document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	
Date of the actual completion of the international search 02 September 2009		Date of mailing of the international search report 17 SEP 2009
Name and mailing address of the ISA/AU AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE PO BOX 200, WODEN ACT 2606, AUSTRALIA E-mail address: pct@ipaaustralia.gov.au Facsimile No. +61 2 6283 7999		Authorized officer SARAVANAMUTHU PONNAMPALAM AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE (ISO 9001 Quality Certified Service) Telephone No : (02) 6283 2070

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No.

PCT/AU2009/001093

This Annex lists the known "A" publication level patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned international search report. The Australian Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

Patent Document Cited in Search Report		Patent Family Member					
US	2004031098	NONE					
GB	2389523	NONE					
US	2005144721	AU	2003207339	EP	1478260	GB	2385521
		US	7228578	WO	03070069		
Due to data integration issues this family listing may not include 10 digit Australian applications filed since May 2001.							
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