Abstract: The present invention provides methods and apparatus in which a surgical retractor comprises a plurality of mechanically coupled tissue retaining walls that are guided into position along one or more guides previously implanted into the patient. The walls are preferably coupled by pivots, so that separating some of the walls from one another opens an operating space. There are preferably two guides, which are driven or screwed into the pedicles of vertebrae, or other bone. Since practical considerations will usually mean that the guides are not generally parallel to one another, the guides are capable of polychaeraxial movement with respect to the pedicles, and retractor is provided with oversized channels to receive the guides. The channels may be conveniently disposed in a frame, which also serves to hold lock the walls apart. Various convenience features are contemplated including a web disposed between the walls, which expands as the walls are separated. Also contemplated are projections from near the bottoms of one or more of the walls, which can alternatively or additionally help to hold the underlying tissue in place.
For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.
INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
   IPC(7) : A61 F 5/04; A61 B 17/56, 1/52
   US CL : 606/86, 53, 600/201
   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)

   EAST

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages</th>
<th>Relevant to claim No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Y, P US 2003/0 236 447 A1 (RITLAND) 25 December 2003, see entire document.</td>
<td>4-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y US 6 354 995 B1 (HOFTMAN et al.) 12 March 2002, see entire document.</td>
<td>4-6</td>
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Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

- Special categories of cited documents:
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Date of actual completion of the international search: 21 June 2005 (21.06.2005)

Authorized officer: LINDA SHOLL
Telephone No.: 703-522-391

Date of mailing of the international search report: 5 AUG 2005

Form PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet) (January 2004)