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(54) **BED SAFETY BARRIER**

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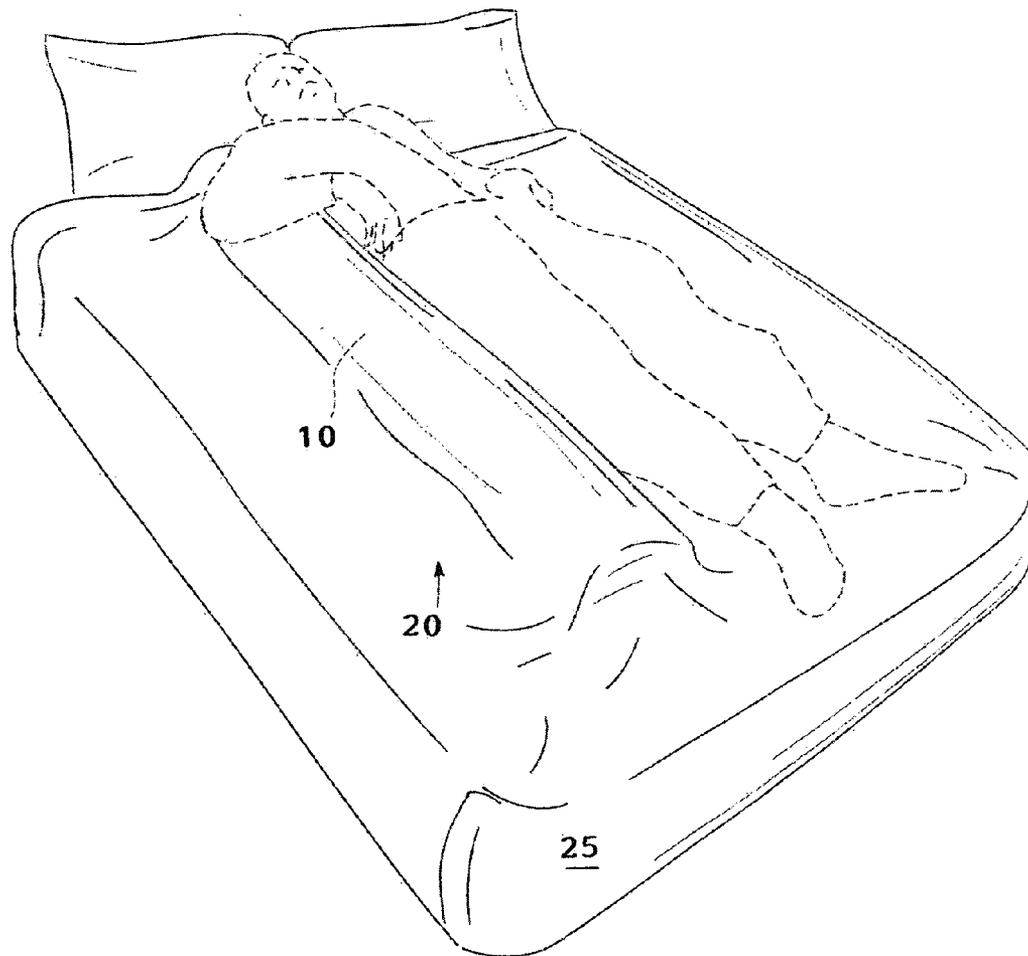
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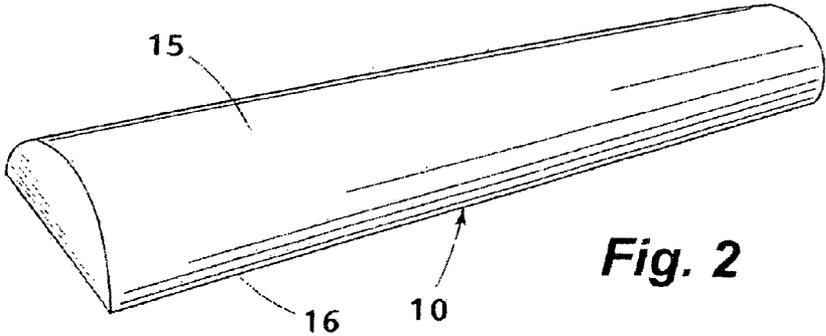
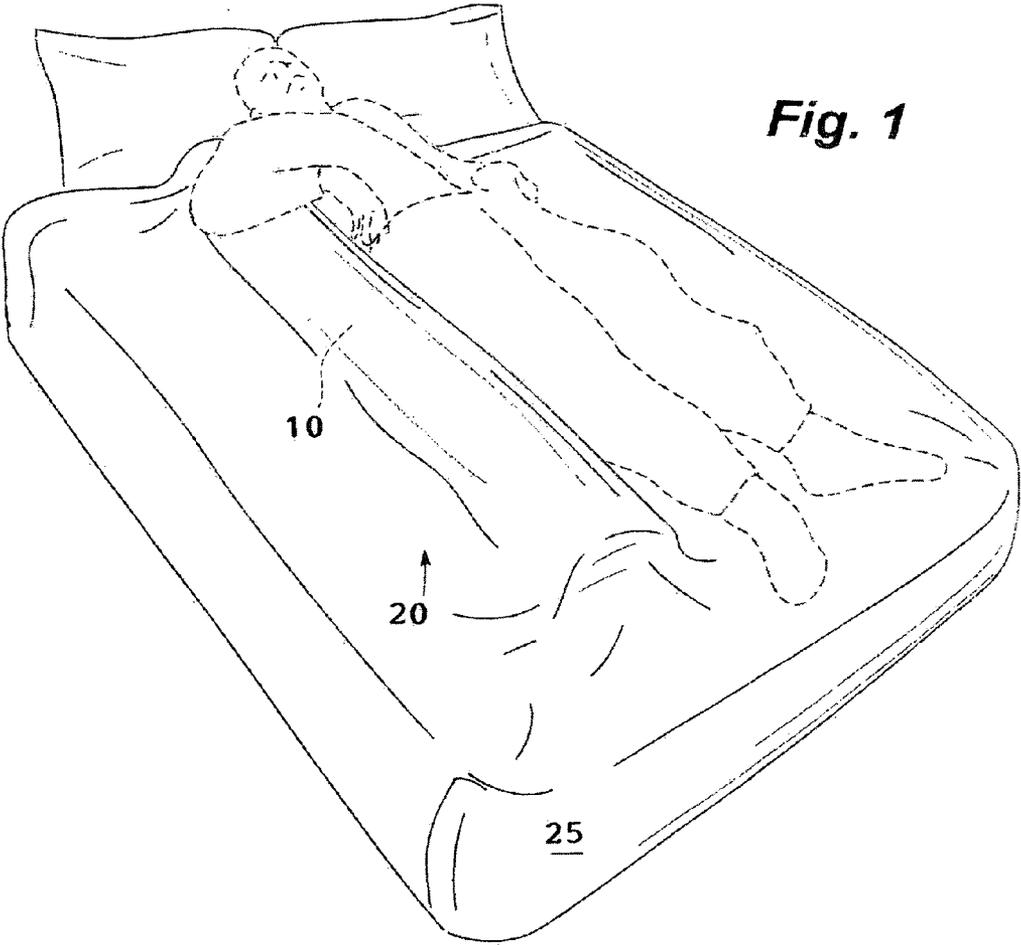
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A casing-free, elongated half bolster, cut from low density polyurethane foam, that, in combination with a conventional fitted sheet and mattress pad or like bedclothes, is sandwiched between them while they are secured to a mattress and enclose its sleeping surface and sides. Juxtaposed between the two bedclothes, the half bolster is positioned atop the sleeping surface and held there in whatever place and for however long the user deems fit. Supplanting mechanical fasteners are surprisingly strong frictional binding/electrostatic clinging forces which act at the interface between the half bolster's convex upper surface and the fitted sheet, as well as at the interface between its flat-faced base and the mattress pad. Even when subjected to substantial lateral force (s), the largely unfettered half bolster, arrayed sandwich-style between bedclothes, holds its ground, making it a much needed time saver for caregivers and a therapeutic boon for care recipients.





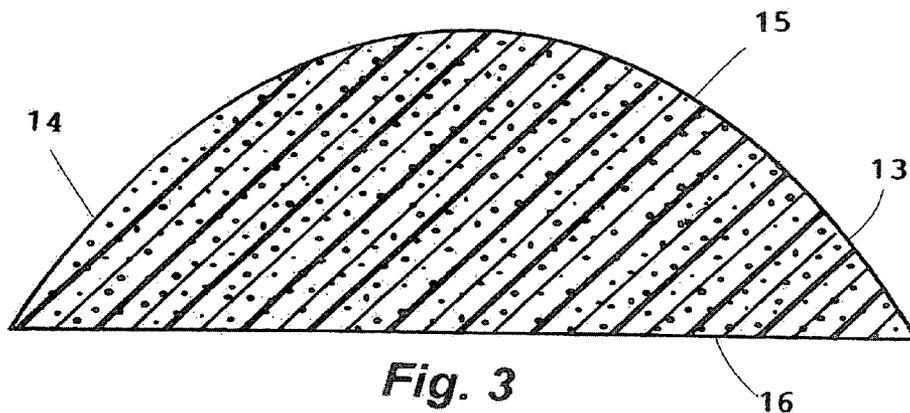


Fig. 3

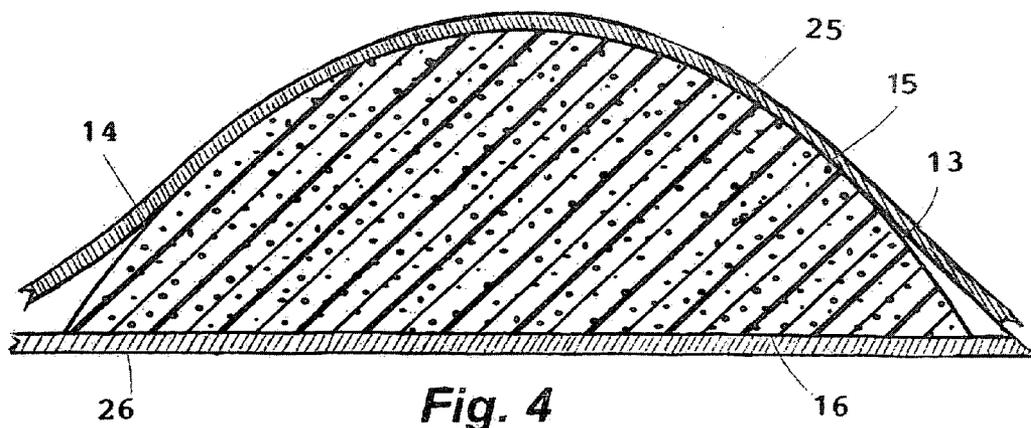
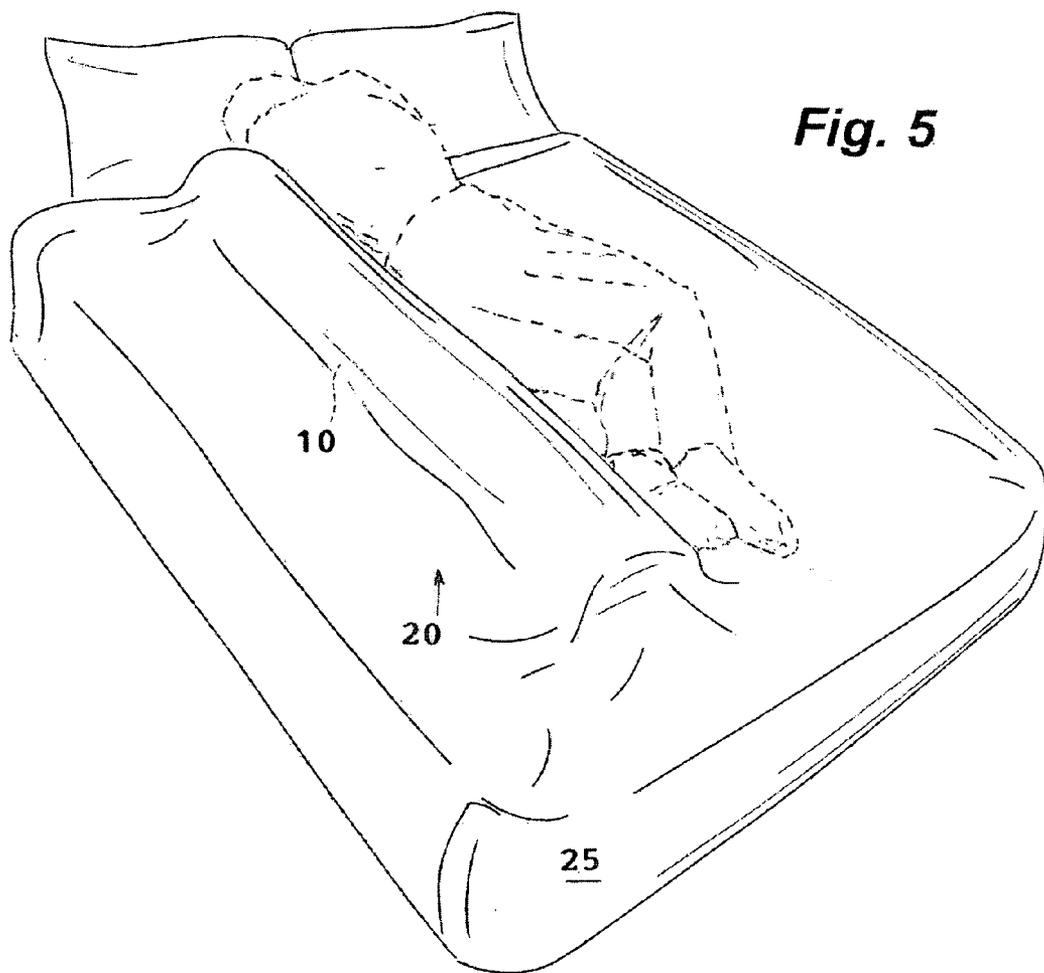


Fig. 4



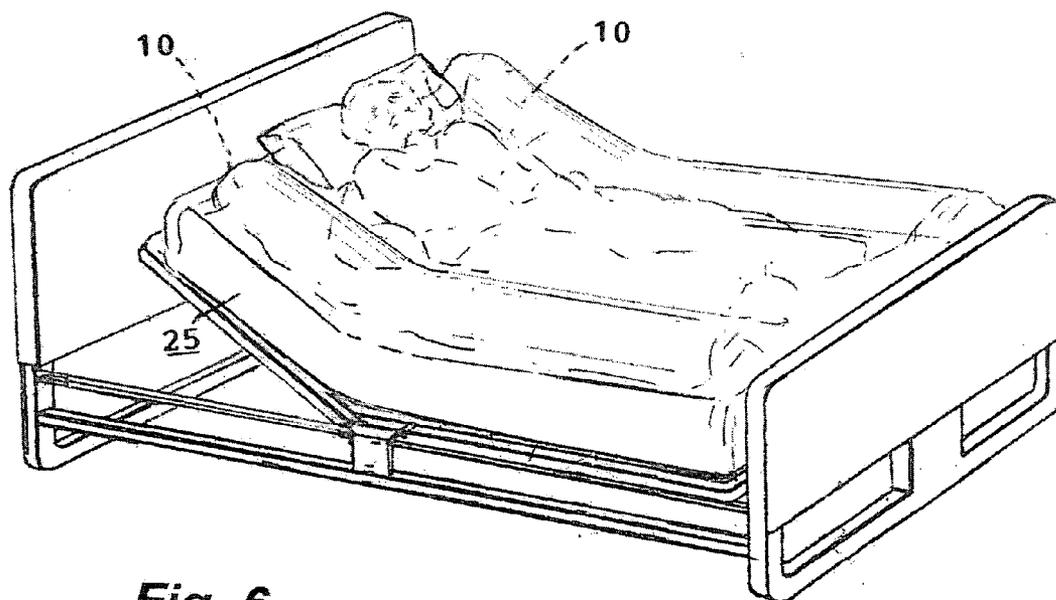


Fig. 6

BED SAFETY BARRIER

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application is a continuation-in-part application of pending U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/999,467, filed Mar. 3, 2014.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to a portable device which can be sandwiched between bedding which defines the bed's sleeping surface and held firmly in place there, as well as readily repositioned if need be, in any one of a wide variety of orientations with respect to the bed mattress' edges. More particularly, the invention relates to such a device which can be deployed as a safety barrier to help keep a young child or a sick or elderly adult, while asleep on the bed, from inadvertently rolling off of it, or, alternately, can be used as a therapeutic aid for a bedridden individual whose caregiver(s) have been tasked with repositioning him or her at frequent intervals, as well as with helping said individual maintain proper body alignment.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Bed safety barriers, each of which has an elongated body fabricated from a cellular solid such as foam rubber have been known for years. Mounted atop a bed's sleeping surface such a barrier is held in a fixed position there with respect to the bed mattress' edges by mechanical fasteners or, alternately, by a casing—a de facto mechanical fastener which is itself fixedly attached to either a form fitting sheet or mattress pad or else the mattress' own upper cover.

[0004] Of special interest is a casing-free support member for a bed's sleeping surface, as taught by Sarnie and Vartanian in U.S. Pat. No. 3,148,387 (the '387 patent). Made of foam rubber, this support member has an elongated, generally flat bottom face which, depending upon the geometry of a particular support member's transverse cross-section, measures between 6 inches and 1 foot in width. In distinct contrast to the applicant's casing-free barrier disclosed in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/999,467, the '387 patent's support member, notwithstanding its extensive flat bottom face, does not exhibit any significant tendency to frictionally bind or otherwise cling to a conventional sheet tautly fitted onto a bed's mattress. Indeed, Sarnie and Vartanian, while calling for the distal ends of the support member to be attached securely to the sheet by zippers or the like, purposely leave the support member's-central portion unattached, so that a user is then free to pass bedclothes under it.

[0005] If, on the other hand, the '387 patent's support member were in fact prone to frictionally bind itself or otherwise self-adhere to such a fitted sheet, then one would not find Sarnie and Vartanian suggesting that a bedmaker pass bedclothes under the support member's central portion. Having her do so would require her to forcibly abut the bedclothes against the flat bottom face/fitted sheet interface, thus wasting her time trying to gain passage beneath the self-adhering support member, when all she really needed to do was unzip one or both of the zippers holding the support member's distal ends in place and then lift this member upwardly and out of her way.

[0006] Also taught by Sarnie and Vartanian in the '387 patent is a casing-enclosed support member. It, too, includes

zippers which are used to securely attach its distal ends to the fitted sheet; but rather than having one track of each zipper attached to the body of the support member itself, said track is attached to the casing.

[0007] A subsequent plethora of variations on this casing-enclosed support member has been generated over the past 50 years. However, instead of each support member being securely attached, to some form of bedding, at only the casing's distal ends, each variant's casing is fixedly attached along substantially its entire length to either a complex fitted sheet, an expensive-to-manufacture mattress pad, or an otherwise specially designed upper cover for a mattress of which it is an integral part.

[0008] Unfortunately, when the casing is so fixedly attached, the user can no longer readily remove the support member from the bed at will; and any efforts to deploy the support member on an intermittent basis over short time periods—on the order of at most a few hours per use—are necessarily curtailed. Moreover, these shortcomings are compounded by the restrictions which a fixed coupling between a support member and a fitted sheet, mattress pad, or upper cover impose. Specifically, whether the latter is a sheet, pad or cover, it must be designed so that it can be secured to the mattress in such a way as to enclose its sleeping surface and sides, thus largely predetermining both the orientation, of the support member's longitudinal centerline with respect to the mattress' edges and the spacing, if any, between them and the support member. As a consequence, repositioning the support member to accommodate the specific needs of an individual bed occupant is virtually eliminated.

[0009] Over time, then, the advantages of having a support member, whether casing-free or casing enclosed, attached only at its distal ends, with the attachments there being readily disengageable as in the '387 patent, have been forgotten. Instead, bed safety barriers, akin to physical restraints for the less able-bodied, especially when such a barrier is mounted on a bed in such a way that it effectively raises the bed mattress' edge height, have proliferated.

[0010] Meanwhile, the long-term bedridden and others susceptible to the ravages of pressure sores—arguably, the people who have the most to gain from the advent of repositionable support members—continue to find themselves being turned under doctors' orders and on an individual basis, approximately once every two hours and propped up, on first one side and then the other, by pillowcase-covered pillows. Rather than keeping a recumbent bed occupant so propped up and off of her back, all too often the pillows slip out of position and do so in less time than it took to wedge them, en masse, between her backside and the sheet under her.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0011] The present invention overcomes these and other disadvantages of the prior art by providing in combination with a set of bedclothes variously fabricated of cotton, breathable polyester, or a blend thereof, a versatile, casing-free, elongated and elevated structure formed of an open cell, low density foam, the elevated structure, in assembled relation with any two members of said set, being sandwiched between them while they are secured to a mattress in such a way that they enclose its sleeping surface and sides, so that the elevated structure, once it has been positioned atop the mattress and is so sandwiched, holds its place there, without the use of mechanical fasteners, even when the elevated structure is subjected to a substantial lateral force.

[0012] A further object of the invention is to provide in combination with conventional upper and lower bedclothes, so fabricated, which may consist, respectively, of a fitted mattress pad draped over said elevated structure and an upper cover forming an integral part of the mattress itself, such an elevated structure which, once it has been placed atop the mattress and is sandwiched between said bedclothes, not only holds its working position and can be left there, virtually unattended, for months at a time, but also never once moves away from said working position or fails to keep a sleeping bed occupant in bed, even when said occupant is a young child who daily climbs onto the elevated structure each time she enters or exits the bed.

[0013] Yet another object of the invention is to provide such an elevated structure in which not only do forces acting at its interfaces with the two bedcloths between which it is so sandwiched keep it from sliding sideways, but also the elevated structure possesses sufficient structural strength and height and is configured in such a way that a longitudinally extending portion of it, which during use is covered by the upper of the two bedcloths, can be utilized as a wedge to keep a bedridden person turned first on the right side and then on her left side, with the bed occupant in each of these postures facing away from the elevated structure, and wherein the latter can be readily repositioned during each successive side-to-side turning of her body, thus giving rise to an improved caregiving procedure which substantially reduces sleep disruption/deprivation, long considered an unavoidable aspect of a pressure sore-susceptible person's lot.

[0014] A still further object of the invention is to provide in combination with conventional upper and lower bedcloths which are so fabricated, a pair of elongated and elevated structures formed of said open cell, low density foam, said pair's structures, in assembled relation with the upper and lower bedcloths, being sandwiched between them while they are secured to a mattress in such a way that they enclose its sleeping surface and sides, so that the elongated and elevated structures, once they have been so sandwiched and positioned atop the mattress' sleeping surface at locations which are spaced apart laterally from each other by a generally uniform span that measures substantially less than the mattress' width, hold their respective positions at said locations, without the use of mechanical fasteners, even when the mattress' mid-section is bent so as to tilt about one-half of the mattress' sleeping surface upwardly in the direction of the head of the bed, thus facilitating the task of keeping a bedridden individual's body in proper alignment, when such a person, because of a medical condition, needs to sleep with her head and upper body raised, rather than slumping to one side of the other across the inclined half of the mattress' sleeping surface as pillows deployed there to maintain said proper alignment slip and slide out of position.

[0015] In accordance with the present invention, there is provided in combination with upper and lower bedclothes which belong to a set of conventional sheets, mattress pads, and covers adapted for use on a bed that are variously fabricated of cotton, breathable polyester, or a blend thereof, a casing-free elevated structure which, in assembled relation with said upper and lower bedclothes, is both positioned atop a bed mattress and sandwiched between them when they are secured to the mattress in such a way that they enclose its sleeping surface and sides, and wherein the elevated structure consists of an elongated, solid core body made of an open cell polyurethane foam having a density of only approximately

1.1 pounds per cubic foot and a high degree of softness with an ILD (Indentation Load Deflection) rating of only about 30. Formed by cutting a cylindrically-shaped cellular solid of said polyurethane foam in half longitudinally after the latter has previously been so shaped with the use of sophisticated and expensive contour foam cutting machinery, the elongated solid core body defines a half bolster which has two longitudinally extending exterior surfaces: a wide, flat-faced base and a convex upper surface, the lower edges of which intersect the base's outer periphery. Arching upwardly therefrom, the convex upper surface spans each of the half bolster's transverse cross-sections along an arc which has a radius of curvature that is approximately one-half as long as the base is wide.

[0016] Spurred on by a growing market for his novel, largely unfettered bed safety barrier, which he disclosed in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/999,467, the inventor has conducted extensive testing directed towards determining whether a usable product, capable of meeting the hereinabove-described objectives, could in fact be created using a casing-free, elongated body having a solid core formed of a softer or less dense—and hence less expensive—polyurethane foam than that which is known commercially as the “1130” product. (The latter is so identified because its density is 1.1 pounds per cubic foot and its measure of softness is “30”.)

[0017] The applicant's test results have shown that in the event naturally-occurring forces of adhesion, whether caused by frictional binding and/or electrostatic phenomena, whenever they can be brought to bear at each of the interfaces where the upper and lower bedclothes, as they sandwich the elongated body, contact it directly, these forces of adhesion weaken, in proportion, as the density of the polyurethane foam falls off. Indeed, an elongated body with a solid core formed of a polyurethane foam having a lower density than 1.1 pounds per cubic foot fails to create strong enough forces of adhesion at said interfaces; and as a consequence, such an elongated body cannot be kept, under real life conditions, from moving away from its working position on a mattress' sleeping surface.

[0018] Moreover, the applicant has found that when an open cell polyurethane foam having a density just 10 (ten) percent greater than that of the “1130” product is used to make up the elongated body, it proves to be too firm for its intended uses. Not only does it then keep a less able-bodied person from getting into and out of the bed without assistance, but also the bed occupant who comes into contact with this denser foam body is more likely to view it as being a physical restraint than as a comfortable amenity designed to relax a person and promote sleep and other therapeutic benefits.

[0019] Not limiting himself to varying the density and softness of the polyurethane foam in the elevated structure's elongated body, the applicant also tested it to see how it would perform if it were still made of the “1130” product but, instead of its having a convex upper surface, had one with an angular profile. Opting to cut out an elongated body, made of the “1130” product, but sculpted to form a wedge which, in transverse cross-section, resembles an obtuse triangle (similar to that) disclosed by Wilson in U.S. Pat. No. 6,848,130, he then proceeded to mount the elongated body with its flat bottomed-face on top of the fitted mattress pad and located just inside one of the mattress' elongated edges—that is, in the position in which prior art bed safety barriers have been placed.

[0020] This time, he found, however, that the task of sandwiching the elongated body between a fitted sheet and said mattress pad (functioning as the upper and lower bedclothes, respectively) could not be completed. Rather, in the simple act of pulling the fitted sheet downwardly across the wedge-shaped body's steeply inclined outer face in order to secure the sheet's lower edge by tucking it under the mattress, he automatically dislodged the elongated body's flat-bottomed face.

[0021] In such a failure, the downward pull on the sheet, as the latter, stretched across the steeply inclined outer face, is induced to adhere to it, overpowers the forces of adhesion present at the flat-bottomed face/mattress pad interface, thus causing the elongated body as a whole to pivot about its outer edge and pull most of the flat-bottomed face upwardly and away from the mattress' sleeping surface.

[0022] On the other hand, in the case of an elongated body, also made of the "1130" product, but formed with a convex upper surface, no such failure occurs; and the sandwiching of the elongated body between the upper and lower bedclothes can be routinely carried out in such a way that the elongated body is kept in its working position even when it is subsequently subjected to a substantial lateral force, thus highlighting yet another critical feature of said elongated body in which a polyurethane foam having a density of approximately 1.1 pounds per cubic foot is massed, beneath the body's convex upper surface, in a generally symmetrical fashion with respect to its longitudinal centerline.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0023] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the half bolster covered by a fitted sheet which encloses a mattress' sleeping surface and sides, the half bolster, in assembled relation with the fitted sheet and a fitted mattress pad also covered by the sheet, being sandwiched between it and the pad, in accordance with the present invention, the half bolster being shown held in place on top of the mattress at a substantial distance apart from one of its elongated side edges and positioned next to a reclining person, so that if he is awake, he can roll over it and land within the space between it and the mattress' edge or, alternately, so that he can be prevented from inadvertently rolling, from his right side, off of the bed during his sleep;

[0024] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the half bolster according to FIG. 1, showing the half bolster's longitudinally extending convex upper surface;

[0025] FIG. 3 is a transverse cross-section, on an enlarged scale, of the half bolster according to FIG. 2;

[0026] FIG. 4 is a transverse cross-section, on an enlarged scale, of the half bolster and of fragmentary portions of the fitted sheet and of a fitted mattress pad between which the half bolster, depicted as being covered by the former in FIG. 1, is sandwiched;

[0027] FIG. 5 is a perspective view of the half bolster covered by a fitted sheet as illustrated in FIG. 1, the half bolster being shown held in place on top of the mattress and positioned next to a disabled person's backside so as to keep him, while he is in a prone position, turned on his left side rather than flat on his back; and

[0028] FIG. 6 is a perspective view of a pair of half bolsters, each of which is covered by a fitted sheet which encloses a mattress' sleeping surface and sides, the pair's half bolsters, in assembled relation with the fitted sheet and a fitted mattress pad also covered by the sheet, being sandwiched between it and the pad, in accordance with the present invention, with the

pair's half bolsters being shown held in place on top of the mattress' sleeping surface when about one-half of the latter has been tilted upwardly in the direction of the head of the bed, and with the half bolsters also being shown spaced apart from each other by a wide enough span that a person can sleep comfortably between them and, even though her head and upper body are elevated, still maintain proper body alignment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0029] In the drawings, a casing-free, half bolster in combination with any two conventional bedclothes, belonging to a set of such articles variously fabricated of cotton, breathable polyester, or a blend thereof, which can be secured to a mattress in such a way that they enclose its sleeping surface and sides, is indicated generally by the reference numeral 20. Made of an open cell, low density polyurethane foam that has been cut to form an elongated, solid core body which is semicircular in transverse cross-section, the half bolster 10, in assembled relation with the two bedclothes 25, 26 when they are so secured, is sandwiched between them, holding its place atop the mattress, without the use of mechanical fasteners or the like, even when the half bolster is subjected to a substantial lateral force.

[0030] Indeed, testing conducted by the applicant and others has shown that when the half bolster's flat-faced base 16 directly contacts a lower bedcloth 26 securely attached to the mattress and the half bolster 10 is also sandwiched between such a lower bedcloth—which may be an upper cover formed as an integral part of the mattress' own casing—and a common fitted sheet 25 stretched over the half bolster's upper surface 15, a person lying in bed and rolling against the half bolster cannot, by so rolling, cause it to move sideways. Rather, the more weight that is applied to the half bolster 10, the more resistance it offers to its being dislodged from the working position in which it has been set, thereby making it sufficiently stable that it is virtually impossible for a recumbent bed occupant to create any lateral movement of the half bolster.

[0031] Regardless of the elongated body's overall length, the half bolster 10, being semi-circular in transverse cross-section, is limited to those configurations in which the free-standing half bolster's height is about one-half the width of its broad, flat-faced base 16. For those half bolsters 10 which, when stretched out lengthwise, extend across nearly the full length of a standard size mattress, an elongated body which measures, by way of example, 4.5 inches in height and 9 inches in transverse base width has been found to be more than adequate for keeping an able-bodied adult from inadvertently rolling over it in his sleep.

[0032] Supplanting mechanical fasteners and the like are surprisingly strong frictional binding/electrostatic clinging forces which can be induced to act at the interface between the half bolster's convex upper surface 15 and the upper bedcloth 25 and at the interface between the half bolster's flat-faced base 16 and the lower bedcloth 26. For such forces to be sufficiently strong that they can keep the half bolster 10, arrayed sandwich-style between the bedclothes 25, 26, immobilized there in its working position atop a mattress' sleeping surface, the polyurethane foam from which the half bolster's elongated body is cut must be dense enough (specifically, at least approximately 1.1 pounds per cubic foot in density); and the cloth(s) or fabric(s) which each of the upper

and lower bedclothes brings to its respective interface with the half bolster must not only be made of cotton, breathable polyester, or a blend thereof, but also exhibit a significant degree of coarseness in texture, as opposed to having a surface like that of taffeta which is slickly smooth to the touch.

[0033] Once these conditions have been met, an installer can induce the frictional binding/electrostatic clinging forces to act at the interface between the half bolster's flat-faced base **16** and the lower bedcloth **26** by slideably moving the half bolster's base across or, alternately, pressing it against the lower bedcloth. While this induction can be performed with the use of almost no effort, it, nevertheless, is significantly enhanced by simply rubbing the half bolster's base **16** back and forth a few times across the lower bedcloth **26** as it is being stretched tautly across the mattress' sleeping surface.

[0034] The phenomena which make such an induction process possible stem from the fact that a multitude of tiny open pores, which constitute an intrinsic part of the open cell polyurethane's cellular structure, lines the half bolster's underside. Otherwise present as air-filled pockets, these open pores can be easily deformed; and in the process, they become tiny suction cups which grip the lower bedcloth **26**—whether it is a fitted sheet or mattress pad or an upper cover formed as an integral part of the mattress' casing—when the flat-faced base **16** is slideably moved across and/or pressed against it. Augmenting the gripping action of these tiny suction cups are the electrostatic clinging forces which, although less well understood, also arise because of differences in the material properties of the polyurethane foam and of the cloth or fabric that makes up the lower bedcloth **26**.

[0035] Induction of the frictional binding/electrostatic clinging forces at the interface between the half bolster's convex upper surface **15** and the upper bedcloth **25**, on the other hand, is carried out by keeping the half bolster's base **16** as stationary as possible with respect to the lower bedcloth **26**. Instead of moving the half bolster **10**, the installer first drapes the upper bedcloth **25** over it as it is being held in place at its interface with the lower bedcloth **26** and then slideably moves the upper bedcloth across the half bolster's convex upper surface **15**, while simultaneously pulling a lower edge of the upper bedcloth generally downwardly so that it can be tucked under the mattress. In addition, a smoothing out and/or rubbing of the upper bedcloth **25** against the half bolster's convex upper surface **15** where it directly contacts the latter can be performed to enhance the frictional binding/electrostatic clinging forces acting there. The latter forces, like those induced at the interface between the half bolster's flat-faced base **16** and the lower bedcloth **26**, work to keep the half bolster **10** immobilized.

[0036] Notwithstanding the capacity of the half bolster **10**, arrayed sandwich-style between the bedclothes **25**, **26**, to hold its working position even when subjected to a substantial lateral force, it can still be readily repositioned, if need be, and held atop a mattress' sleeping surface in whatever place and for however long the user deems fit. Alternately, the half bolster **10** can be quickly removed from the bed altogether if, for example, a caregiver needs to assist an elderly person who can no longer get into and out of her bed because that would require her to roll or otherwise lift herself over a half bolster **10** stationed on top of it. In any case, removal of the half bolster **10** is straightforward: one simply withdraws the upper bedcloth's lower edge from the mattress' underside where it was tucked in earlier, folds the upper bedcloth **25** back and lifts the lightweight half bolster off of the bed. Moreover, the

entire removal process can be accomplished without dislodging a recumbent bed occupant from her bed.

[0037] Aware that a seemingly infinite number of combinations of foam types and shapes exists from which a fabricator could conceivably choose to make an elevated structure's elongated body, which would be potentially deployable, much as the largely unfettered half bolster **10** is, by being arrayed sandwich-style between bedclothes **25**, **26**, the applicant, after testing a wide variety of such combinations, continues to view the one which he chose for his preferred embodiment, as disclosed in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/999,467, as being the only one that actually works when the elongated body of which it is made is so deployed.

[0038] Specifically, the combination which he has thus singled out has as its shape, an elongated body that is semi-circular in transverse cross-section and has a flat-faced base **16** that is greater than said body's overall height by a ratio of about 2:1. The foam type of this singular combination is an open cell polyurethane foam manufactured by the Austin Co. and known as product No. 1130. The "1130" assigned to this product stands for the fact that the density of the material is 1.1 pounds per cubic foot and its measure of softness is "30".

[0039] However, any expectations that an older person might need a bed safety barrier with an elongated body made of a more firm material than the relatively soft "1130" product have since been proven to be unfounded. It turns out that whether the person trying to get into or out of bed is a toddler or Someone more advanced in years, such a barrier's elongated body presents substantially less of an impediment to the would-be bed occupant/exiting bed occupant when said body is made of a less dense—and hence less firm—polyurethane foam. This situation exists whether the toddler, in the process of getting into bed, must climb onto and over the barrier's elongated body positioned so close to a mattress' edge that it effectively raises it edge height, or the adult is one who simply needs to roll over a half bolster **10** stationed interiorly of the mattress' edge as is illustrated in FIG. 1. Even so, use of the relatively soft "1130" product to make up the barrier's elongated body has not compromised its basic function of keeping an individual regardless of age, while he or she is asleep and reclining on the bed, from inadvertently falling off of it.

[0040] Surprisingly, test results have also shown that a polyurethane foam having a density of just 1.2 pounds per cubic foot is too firm for use in the half bolster **10**, even though this density is well below the densities of foams typically found in mattresses. As those skilled in the art of foam making know, the latter densities fall in the range of 1.5 to 1.8 pounds per cubic foot with the 1.8 being closer to the norm and the 1.5 being used only on the cheapest mattresses.

[0041] As is further illustrated in FIG. 1, a user has the option of positioning the half bolster **10** anywhere on a mattress' sleeping surface he deems fit, including setting it back from the mattress' edge by a wide margin. In doing so, he may be able to leave enough space between the half bolster **10** and the mattress edge that he can get out of the bed in stages: first, by rolling over the half bolster and landing within the setback and then by proceeding as one normally would without the half bolster present. In this way, he can avoid altogether the rigors of having to lift himself over a bed safety barrier that, wherever it is held at the mattress' very edge, always effectively raises the latter's height, thus creating a significant obstacle for many would-be bed occupants.

[0042] Moreover, the softness of the low density polyurethane foam from which the half bolster's elongated body is

cut makes positioning the half bolster 10 in such a way that it invades the interior of the mattress' sleeping space, rather than its being relegated to the mattress' periphery, an attractive option—and one that would not be available if the polyurethane foam from which it had been cut were firm enough to give the elongated body the attributes of a physical restraint. Instead, the softness of the half bolster's elongated body makes it feel like an amenity, conducive to the bed occupant's comfort, relaxation and sleep.

[0043] In addition, medical settings in which caregivers can take advantage of the fact that they can quickly reposition, or, alternately, readily remove the half bolster from a mattress' sleeping surface abound. For example, a half bolster 10, arrayed sandwich-style with bedclothes 25, 26 and held in a setback position as shown in FIG. 1, can be utilized by physical therapists and other caregivers working with the frail elderly, each time such a person gets into or out of bed, to help him or her maintain/regain muscle strength in the process of rolling over the half bolster. Moreover, in the event, the half bolster 10, so arrayed, proves to be too much of an obstacle for a particular patient, it can always be readily removed to allow that individual egress from or ingress into the bed and then repositioned on it, if need be.

[0044] Another such example can be seen in FIG. 5. There a prone person is shown facing away from the half bolster 10, sandwiched between a fitted sheet 25 which covers it and a lower bedcloth 26. Configured with longitudinally extending, downwardly tapered structures 13, 14 which are formed integrally with the half bolster's elongated, solid core body and which are disposed bilaterally symmetrically with respect to its longitudinal centerline (FIGS. 2-4), the half bolster 10 can be utilized as a wedge, supplanting multiple pillows commonly used by caregivers to keep a bedridden care recipient turned first on one side and then on the other. Unlike the pillow case-covered pillows, which readily slip and slide out of position when they are deployed as wedges, the presence of the bilaterally symmetrical, tapered structures 13, 14 insures that a recumbent person, as he lies back and begins to push against the half bolster 10, will simultaneously put a substantial portion of his body weight onto one of the downwardly tapered structures 13, 14. As a consequence, this structure will then be pinched against the lower bedcloth 26, adding to the frictional binding forces acting at its interface with the half bolster's flat-faced base 16 and further keeping the half bolster 10 from sliding sideways. Importantly, a caregiver, dur-

ing each side-to-side turning of the care recipient's body, can readily remove the half bolster 10 and then reposition it on the opposite side of the bed, properly sandwiched between the bedclothes 25, 26, without dislodging the care recipient from the bed, thus substantially improving upon a well-known procedure which has been unduly disruptive for care recipients.

[0045] As illustrated in FIG. 6, a pair of half bolsters 10, arrayed sandwich-style with bedclothes 25, 26, have been deployed at locations which are spaced apart laterally from each other by a generally uniform span. This spacing between the half bolsters' respective working positions has been retained even as about one-half of the mattress' sleeping surface, initially disposed generally horizontally, was subsequently tilted upwardly. Reclining between the two half bolsters 10 in a semi-upright position is a care recipient who, if she were to fall asleep, would likely slump to one side or the other, except for the presence of the two half bolsters. If, in their stead, pillows had been placed to prop her up, they most likely would have failed. With the half bolsters 10 so arrayed, such slumping can be largely prevented, thus giving the care recipient a chance to maintain proper body alignment and enjoy better health generally.

1. In combination with upper and lower bedclothes which belong to a set of conventional sheets, mattress pads, and covers adapted for use on a bed mattress that are variously fabricated of cotton, breathable polyester, or a blend thereof, a casing-free elevated structure which, in assembled relation with said upper and lower bedclothes, is both positioned atop the bed mattress and sandwiched between them when they are secured to the mattress in such a way that they enclose its sleeping surface and sides, the elevated structure consisting of an elongated, solid core body made of an open cell polyurethane foam having a density of only approximately 1.1 pounds per cubic foot and a high degree of softness, the elongated solid core body having two longitudinally extending exterior surfaces, formed by cutting a cellular solid of said polyurethane foam, which define a wide, flat-faced base and a convex upper surface, which, along its lower edges, intersects the base's outer periphery and arches upwardly therefrom, with the convex upper surface spanning each of the elongated solid core body's transverse cross-sections along an arc which has a radius of curvature that is approximately one-half as long as the base is wide.

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