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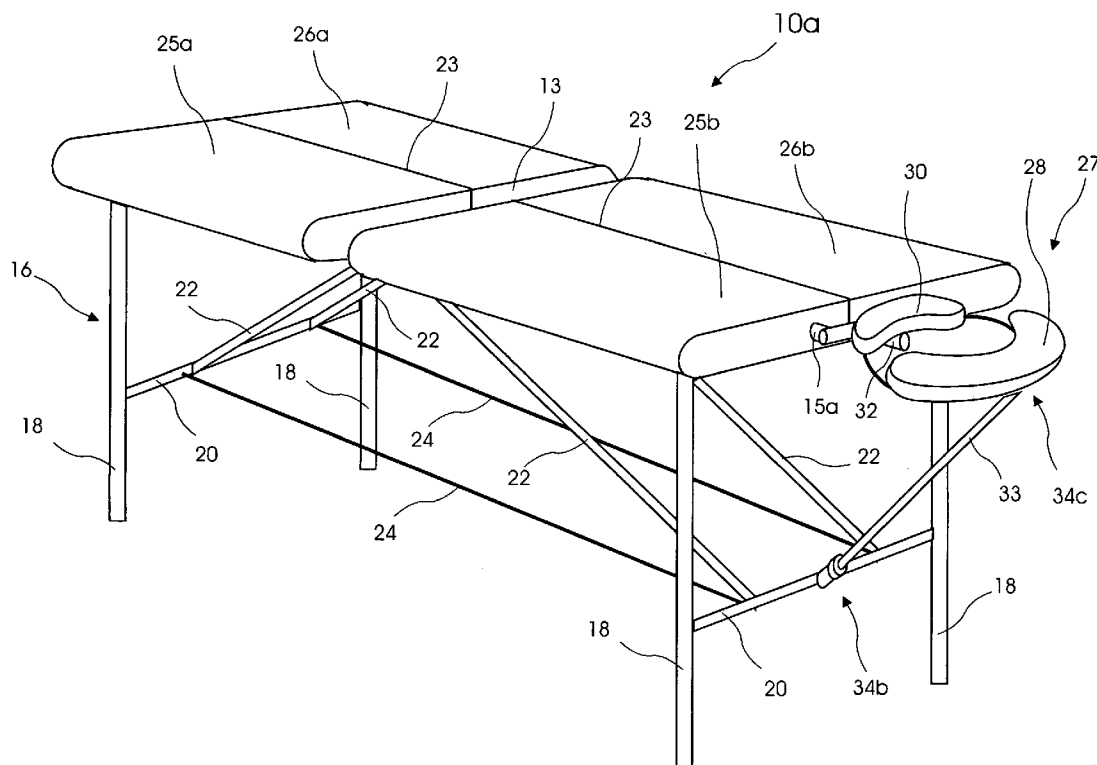
(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication****Lara**(10) **Pub. No.: US 2007/0251010 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Nov. 1, 2007**(54) **MESSAGE TABLE**(52) **U.S. Cl. 5/620**(76) **Inventor: Nicolas Lara, Stanton, CA (US)**(57) **ABSTRACT**

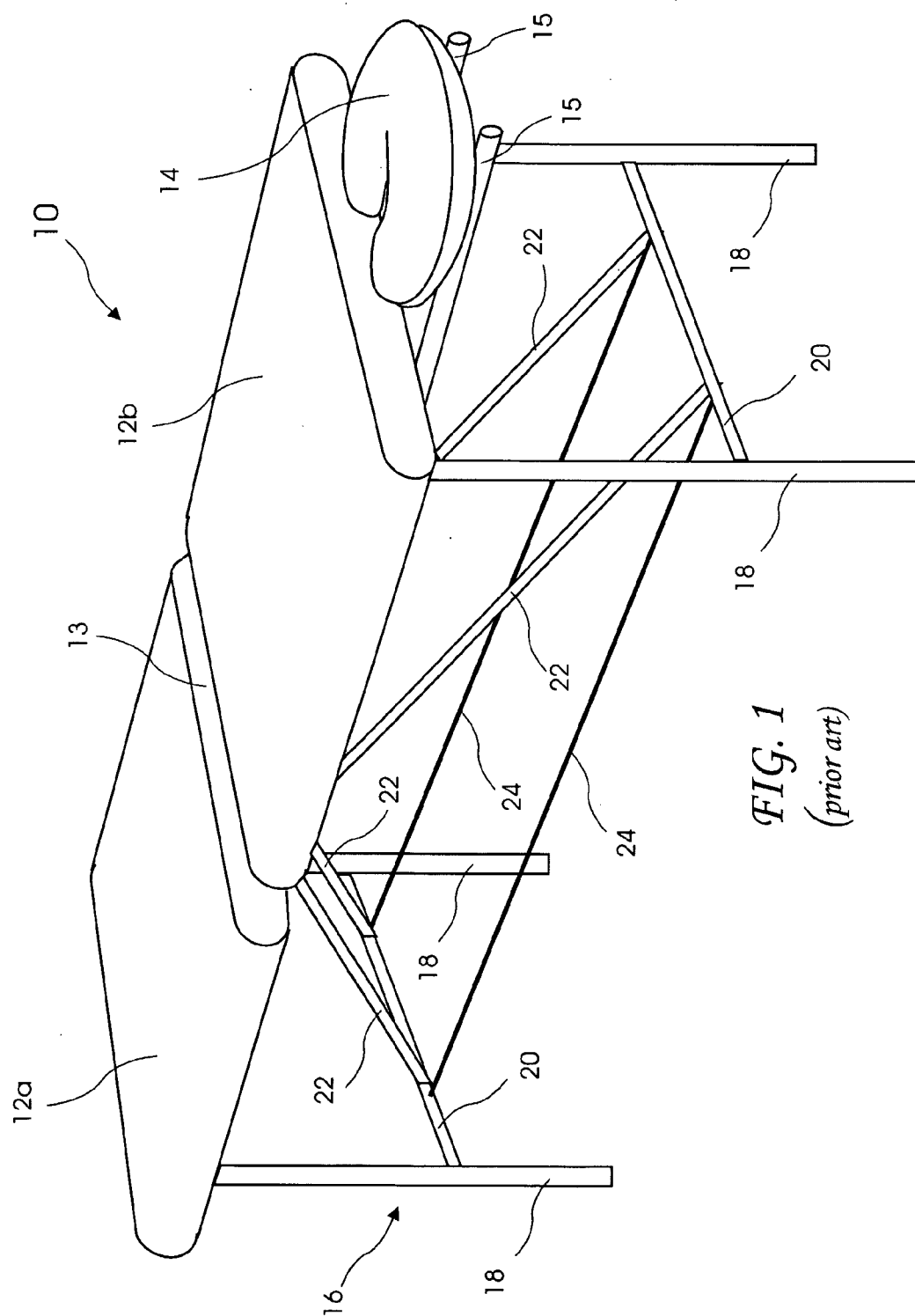
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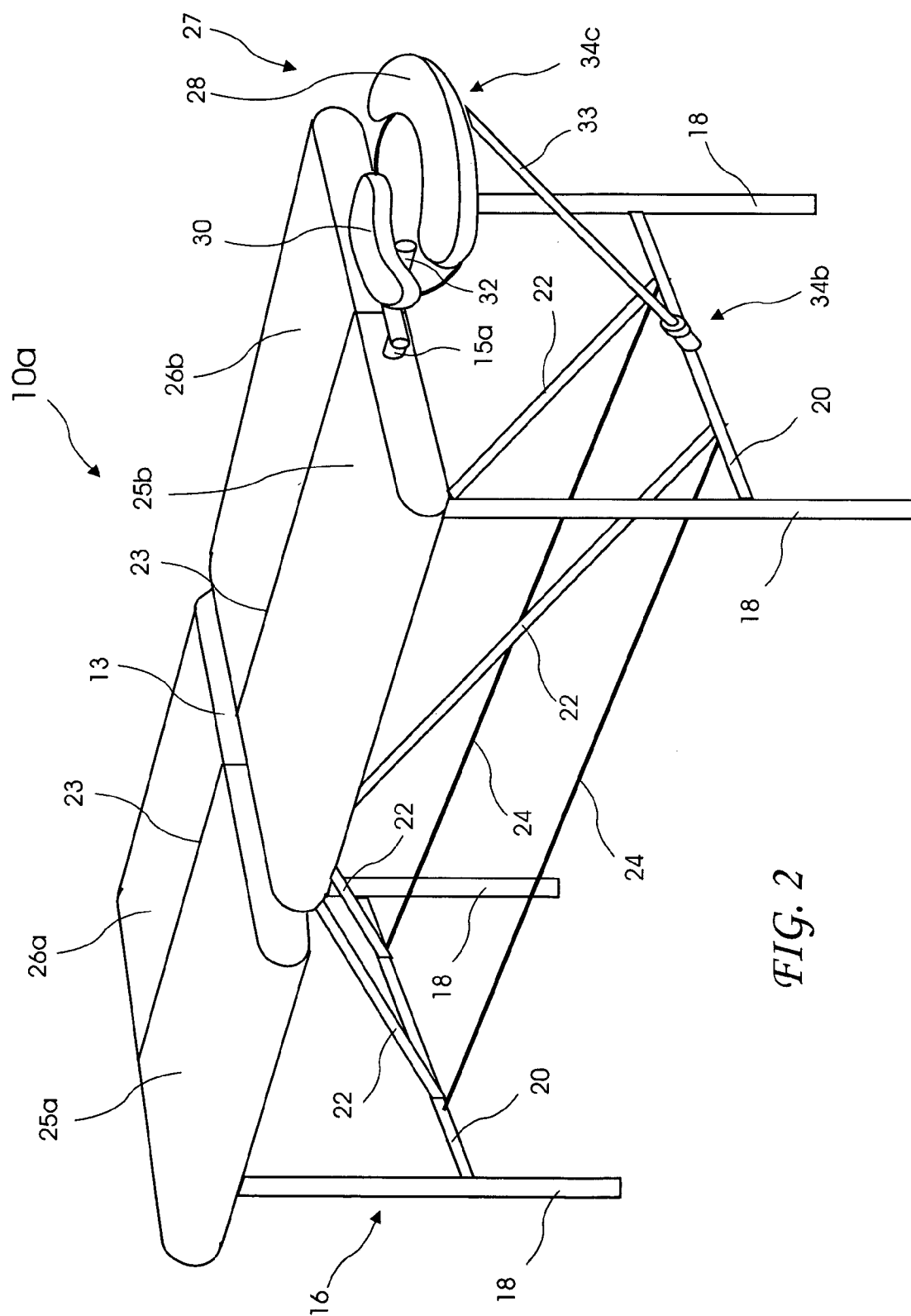
AVERILL & VARN**8244 PAINTER AVE.****WHITTIER, CA 90602 (US)**(21) **Appl. No.: 11/399,134**(22) **Filed: Apr. 6, 2006****Publication Classification**(51) **Int. Cl.****A47B 7/00**

(2006.01)

A massage table includes a two piece face cradle with a wide range of adjustment. The face cradle comprises a chin support and a forehead support. The chin and forehead supports are connected by rods which allow an open field-of-view to a patient lying prone on the massage table. The face cradle is connected to the massage table using a ball-joint providing a broad range of adjustability. A diagonal strut connected between the forehead support portion of the face cradle and the massage table and provide stability. The massage table may further have adjustable width by allowing the table to separate along a longitudinal axis and one or more leafs inserted into a gap between table halves.







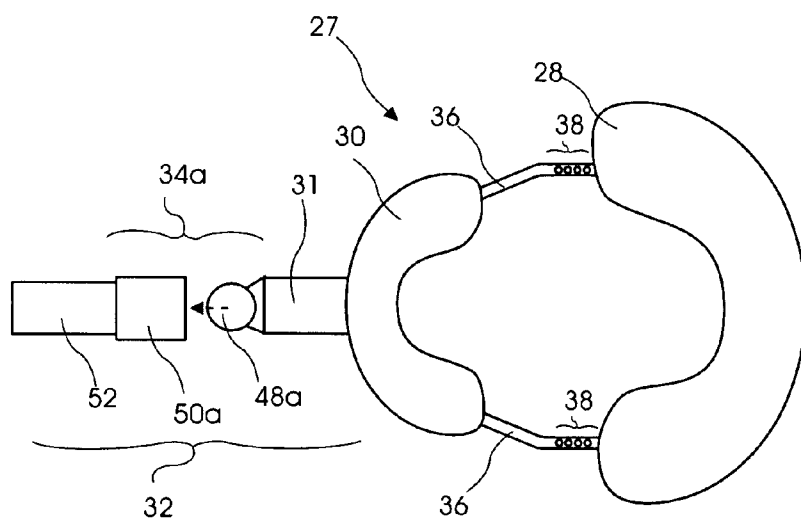


FIG. 3A

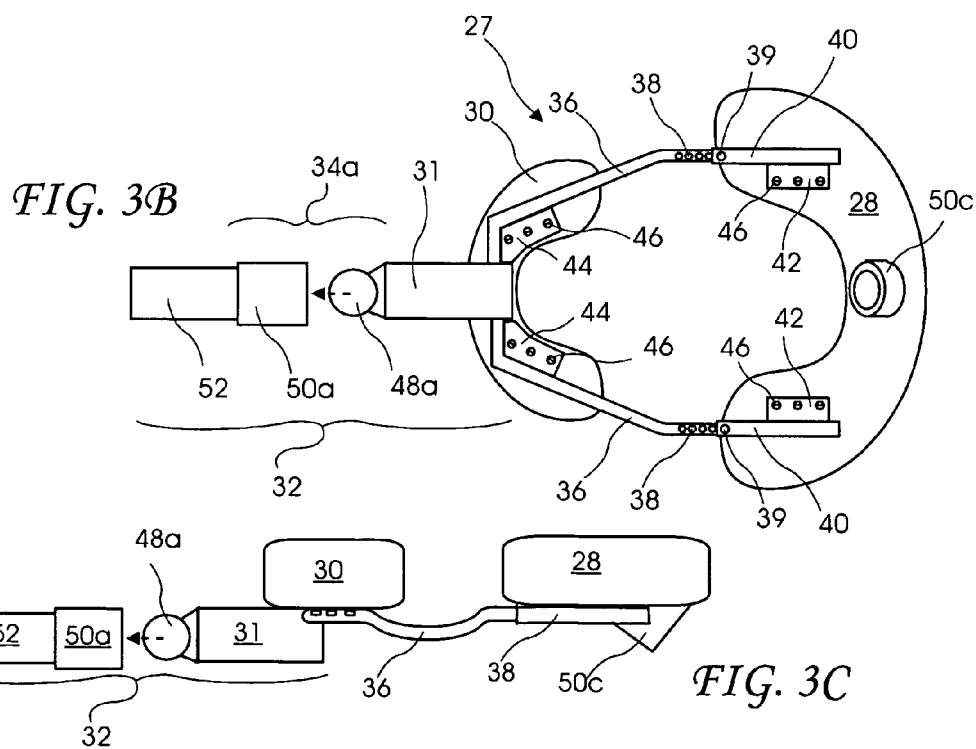


FIG. 3B

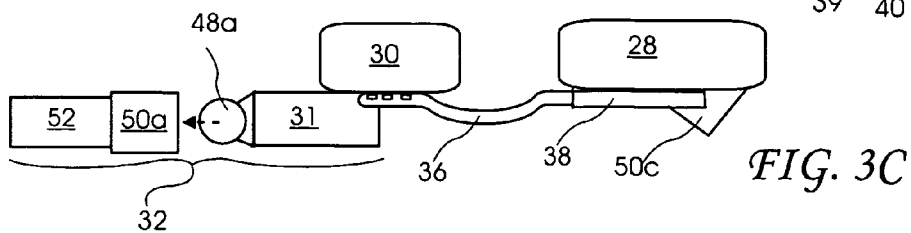
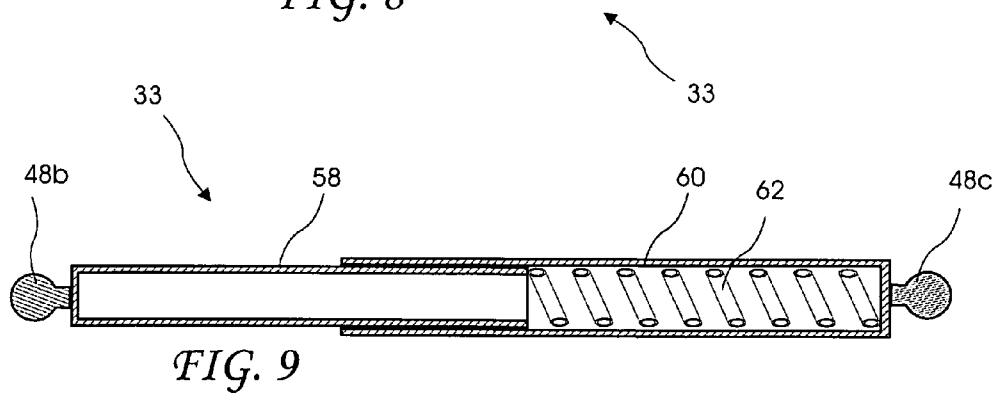
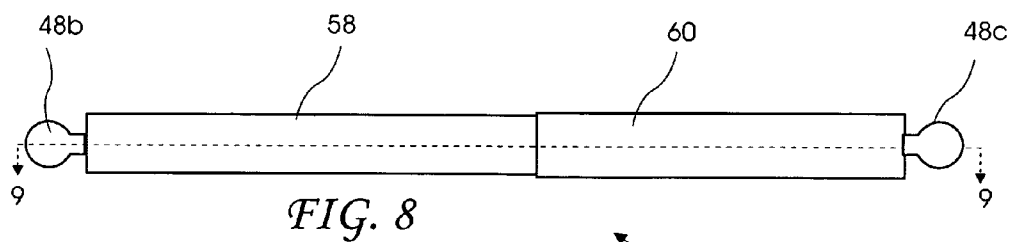
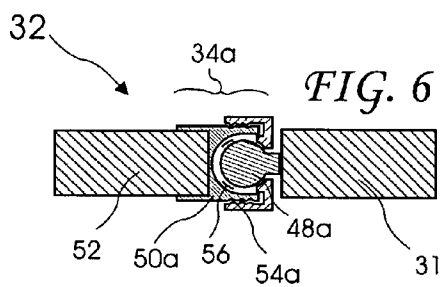
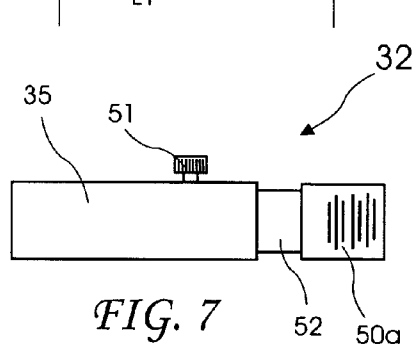
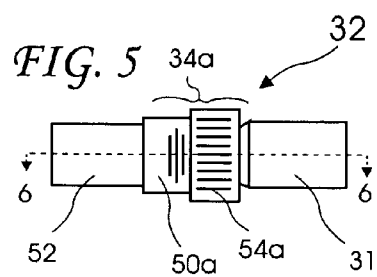
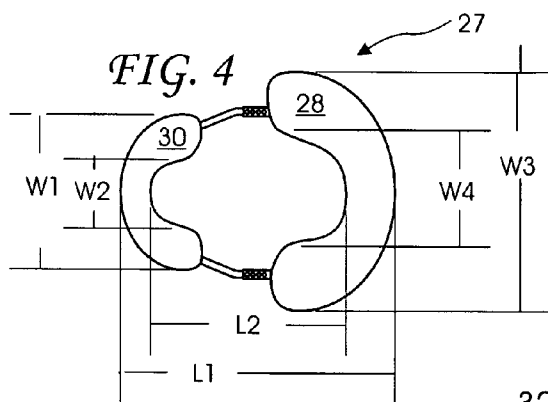
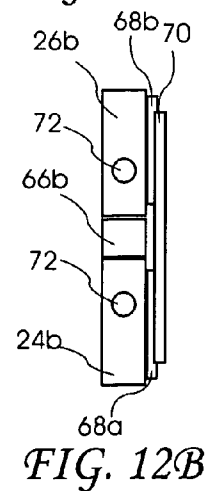
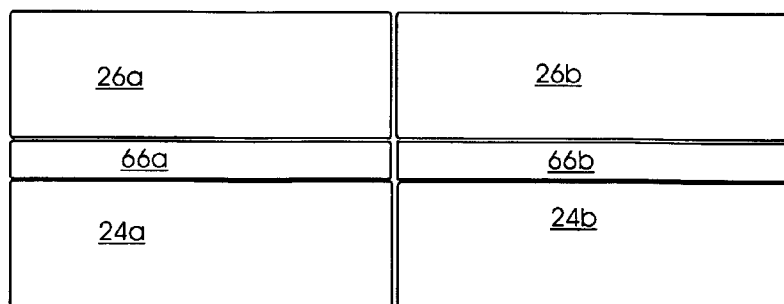
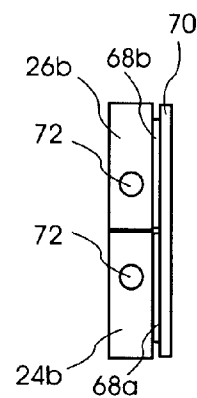
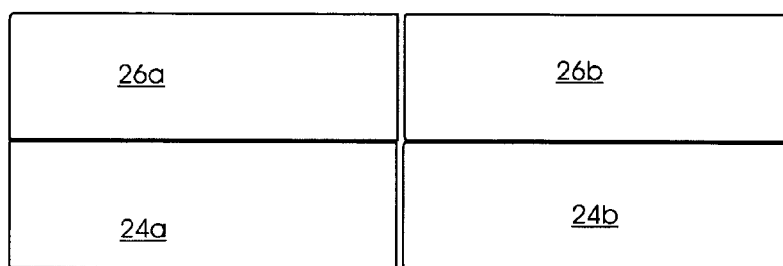
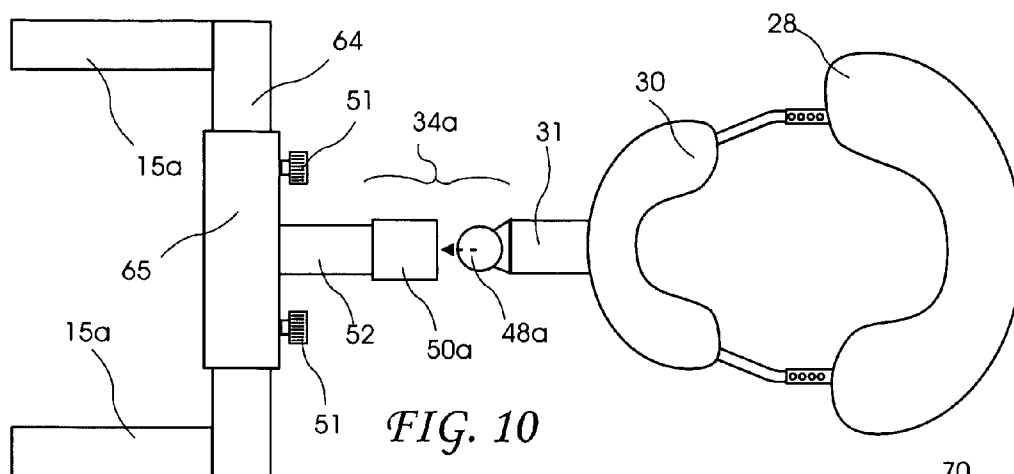


FIG. 3C





MESSAGE TABLE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to massage tables and in particular to a massage table with an improved face cradle.

[0002] Massage tables are commonly used to support patients receiving massages. It is important to support the patient in a natural and comfortable manner to allow the patient to relax so that the patient's muscles may be worked to the greatest benefit. Such massages are generally received by patients laying in a prone position (i.e., face down) with the patient's face supported by a face cradle attached to one end of the massage table. Known face cradles may be adjusted in one dimension, either closer or farther from an end of the table. Such face cradle adjustment often does not provide adequate adjustment to allow the patient's head to be supported in a natural and comfortable manner. As a result, the patient may contract muscles and reduce the effectiveness of the massage.

[0003] Further, known face cradles comprise a substantially oval cushion which presents a tunnel-like field-of-view to the patient. A result is that some patients feel confined and therefore uncomfortable, and as a result have difficulty completely relaxing. Known massage tables may also lack sufficient width to comfortably support patients having large girth.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] The present invention addresses the above and other needs by providing a massage table which includes a two piece face cradle with a wide range of adjustment. The face cradle comprises a chin support and a forehead support. The chin and forehead supports are connected by rods which allow an open field-of-view to a patient lying prone on the massage table. The face cradle is connected to the massage table using a ball-joint providing a broad range of adjustability. A diagonal strut is connected between the forehead support portion of the face cradle and a table leg assembly of the massage table to provide stability. The massage table may further have adjustable width by allowing the table to separate along a longitudinal axis and one or more leafs inserted into a gap between table halves.

[0005] In accordance with one aspect of the invention, there is provided an improved massage table. The massage table includes a table top, a table leg assembly supporting the table top, and an adjustable face cradle. The face cradle includes an arced chin support, an arced forehead support, and two adjustable bars connecting the forehead support to the chin support. The adjustable bars provide adjustment of the separation of the forehead support from the chin support. A face cradle arm connects the face cradle to the table through a first ball joint, thereby allowing vertical and horizontal adjustment of the face cradle with respect to the table top. A telescoping diagonal brace is connected to the face cradle by a third ball joint at one end, and to the table leg assembly by a second ball joint at an opposite end. The telescoping diagonal brace includes a brace spring resisting compression of the diagonal brace.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWING

[0006] The above and other aspects, features and advantages of the present invention will be more apparent from the

following more particular description thereof, presented in conjunction with the following drawings wherein:

[0007] FIG. 1 is a prior art massage table.

[0008] FIG. 2 is a massage table according to the present invention.

[0009] FIG. 3A is a top view of a face cradle according to the present invention.

[0010] FIG. 3B is a bottom view of the face cradle according to the present invention.

[0011] FIG. 3C is a side view of the face cradle according to the present invention.

[0012] FIG. 4 shows dimensions for the face cradle.

[0013] FIG. 5 shows a ball joint used to position the face cradle.

[0014] FIG. 6 is a cross-sectional view of the ball joint taken along line 6-6 of FIG. 5.

[0015] FIG. 7 is a telescoping apparatus for positioning the face cradle.

[0016] FIG. 8 is a side view of a diagonal brace according to the present invention for the face cradle.

[0017] FIG. 9 is a cross-sectional view of the diagonal brace taken along line 9-9 of FIG. 8.

[0018] FIG. 10 is a face cradle with mounting apparatus for known massage tables.

[0019] FIG. 11A is a top view of an expanding table top according to the present invention in a narrow position.

[0020] FIG. 11B is an end view of the expanding table top in the narrow position.

[0021] FIG. 12A is a top view of the expanding table top according to the present invention in an expanded position.

[0022] FIG. 12B is an end view of the expanding table top in the expanded position.

[0023] Corresponding reference characters indicate corresponding components throughout the several views of the drawings.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0024] The following description is of the best mode presently contemplated for carrying out the invention. This description is not to be taken in a limiting sense, but is made merely for the purpose of describing one or more preferred embodiments of the invention. The scope of the invention should be determined with reference to the claims.

[0025] A prior art massage table 10 is shown in FIG. 1. The massage table 10 includes an oval or horseshoe shaped face cradle 14 attached to the massage table 10 by face cradle supports 15. The massage table 10 is preferably a portable and foldable table and includes table tops 12a and 12b comprising two cushions (or two cushion portions), wherein the table 10 folds at a junction 13 of the table tops 12a and 12b. The table 10 is supported by a table leg assembly 16 comprising legs 18, horizontal braces 20 residing laterally between pairs of the legs 18, diagonal braces 22 extending between the horizontal braces 20 to the table tops

12a and **12b** at a point proximal to the junction **13**. Cables **24** connect the horizontal braces and are in tension to prevent the table **10** from collapsing.

[0026] Unfortunately, the known face cradle **14** presents a closed or tunnel view to the patient. Such visual effect often is psychologically stressful and makes relaxing more difficult. As a result, the benefits from a massage are reduced. Further, known massage tables are generally about 30 inches wide. Some patients with large girth are not comfortably supported by such tables.

[0027] While the table **10** is described here with a single pair of cables **24**, portable and foldable massage tables generally include a multiplicity of cables to ensure that the table does not collapse under the weight of a patient. An example of a portable and foldable massage table **10** is the Salon/Massage Combo table made by Pisces Productions in Sebastopol, Calif.

[0028] A massage table **10a** according to the present invention is shown in FIG. 2. The massage table **10a** preferably utilize a table leg assembly substantially similar to the massage table **10** (see FIG. 1) or may include any leg assembly suitable for a portable and foldable massage table. The table **10a** includes a face cradle **27** according to the present invention. The face cradle **27** comprises a forehead support **28** and a separate chin support **30**, both according to the present invention. The face cradle **27** is connected to the massage table **10a** by second cradle supports **15a**, and preferably receives additional support from a diagonal cradle support **33**. The diagonal cradle support (or brace) **33** is preferably connected to the massage table **10a** through a second ball joint **34b** attached at a lower end of the brace **33** to the horizontal braces **20**, and to the face cradle **27** through a third ball joint **34c** (not shown) attached to an upper end of the brace **33**. The table **10a** includes right table tops **25a** and **25b**, and left table tops **26a** and **26b**. The table **10a** is foldable at the junction **13** of the table tops **25a** and **26a** with the table tops **25b** and **26b**. Further, the table **10a** is separable along a centerline **23** to allow the table **10a** to be widened (i.e., an expandable table top), for large girth patients.

[0029] A top view of the face cradle **27** is shown in FIG. 3A, a bottom view of the face cradle **27** is shown in FIG. 3B, and a side view of the face cradle **27** is shown in FIG. 3C. The forehead support **28** is connected to the chin support **30** by bars **36**. The face cradle **27** is preferably adjustable, wherein the bars **36** cooperate with adjusters **40** to adjust the separation of the forehead support **28** from the chin support **30**. For example, the bars **36** may include first adjustment holes **38**, and the adjusters **40** may include second adjustment holes **39**. The holes **38** and **39** may be held in alignment by screws, pins, detents, etc. The holes may alternatively comprise a single hole in each bar **36** and a multiplicity of holes in the adjusters **40**. The adjuster plates **42** are attached to the adjusters **40** and preferably to the forehead support **28** by screws **46**. Bar plates **44** are attached to the bars **36** and to the chin supports **30**, preferably by additional screws **46**. The bars **36** are preferably bowed downward (see FIG. 3C) and therefore away from a patient's face to provide a more open feeling to the patient.

[0030] The face cradle arm **32** includes a first ball joint **34a** to allow adjustment of the face cradle **27**. A first ball **48a** and ball extension **31** are connected to the chin support **30**, and preferably connected to the bars **36** and/or the plates **44**.

A first socket **50a** cooperates with the ball **48a** and is attached to a socket extension **52** which cooperates with the table through the second cradle supports **15a** (see FIG. 10) or may be directly connected to the table. A third socket **50c** is attached to the forehead support **28** to receive a third ball **48c** residing on the upper end of the diagonal cradle support **33** (see FIGS. 8, 9). While the ball joint **34a** is herein described having the ball **48a** attached to the face cradle **27** and the socket **50a** attached to the table, the ball **48a** may alternatively be attached to the table and the socket **50a** may be attached to the face cradle.

[0031] Preferred dimensions of the face cradle **27** are shown in FIG. 4. The chin support **30** has a first outside width **W1** which is preferably approximately six inches and a second inside width **W2** which is preferably approximately two inches. The forehead support **28** has a third outside width **W3** which is preferably approximately nine inches and a fourth inside width **W4** which is preferably approximately five inches. The outside length **L1** of the forehead and chin supports **28** and **30** is preferably approximately eight inches, and the inside length **L2** of the separation of the forehead and chin supports **28** and **30** is preferably approximately four inches. The face cradle **27** is further preferably adjustable to longer lengths, and is more preferably adjustable to lengthen by approximately ½ inches and by approximately one inch. Thus the inside length **L2** may be adjusted to approximately four inches, to approximately 4½ inches, and to approximately five inches.

[0032] A side view of the face cradle arm **33** with the ball joint **34a** used to position the face cradle is shown in FIG. 5 and a cross-sectional view of the face cradle arm **32** with the ball joint **34a** taken along line 6-6 of FIG. 5 is shown in FIG. 6. A knurled cap **54a** holds the ball **48a** in the socket **50a**. The cap **54a** preferably includes inside threads, and the socket **50a** preferably includes outside threads, which threads cooperate to hold the ball **48a** in the socket **50a**, and allow the ball joint **34a** to be tightened to lock the ball **48a** in position. The cap **54a** preferably is a knurled cap to assist in hand tightening, but may also include features (for example, a hexagon shape) for using a wrench to tighten. A washer **56** may reside between the ball **48a** and the socket **50a** providing friction between the ball and socket to reduce slipping. The ball joints **34b** and **34c** are substantially similar to the ball joint **34a**.

[0033] The present invention may further include telescoping apparatus for positioning the face cradle **27** with respect to an end of the table **10a**, which telescoping apparatus is shown in FIG. 7. The socket extension **52** telescopically cooperates with support extension **35** to adjust the face cradle position. The support extension **35** is preferably connected to the second cradle supports **15a** or may connect directly to the table. A lock, for example a knurled screw **51**, may be used to lock the position of the face cradle **27** with respect to the table, but any locking means is acceptable.

[0034] A side view of the diagonal brace **33** (see FIG. 2 also) is shown in FIG. 8, and a cross-sectional view of the diagonal brace taken along line 9-9 of FIG. 8 is shown in FIG. 9. The brace **33** includes an inner tube **58** in telescoping cooperation with outer tube **60**. A spring **62** resides in the outer tube **60** and biases the inner tube **58** away from the outer tube **60**. The spring **62** has a spring constant of

approximately 10 pounds per inch. Balls **48b** and **48c** are attached to opposite ends of the brace **33** for cooperation in ball sockets **50b** and **50c** (see FIGS. 2, 3B, 3C). Alternatively, sockets may be attached to the ends of the brace **33**, and balls may be attached to the face cradle **27** and the table leg assembly **16** to provide ball joints.

[0035] A face cradle **27** with the second cradle supports **15a** attached is shown in FIG. 10. The socket extension **52** is attached to a telescoping cross brace outer tube **65**, and telescoping cross brace inner tubes **64** are attached to cradle supports **15a**. The telescoping tubes **64**, **65** allow the second cradle supports **15a** to be adjusted in separation when necessary to cooperate with the table. Locks, for example a knurled screws, **51** may be used to lock the outer tube **65** with respect to the inner tubes **64**.

[0036] A top view of the expandable table top comprising sections **24a**, **24b**, **26a**, and **26b** in a narrow (or closed) position is shown in FIG. 11A, and an end view of the expandable table top in the narrow position is shown in FIG. 11B. A top view of the expandable table top in an expanded position with leafs **66a** and **66b** residing between sections **24a** and **24b**, and **26a** and **26b**, is shown in FIG. 12A, and an end view of the expandable table top in the expanded position is shown in FIG. 12B. The sections **24a**, **24b**, **26a**, and **26b** are preferably attached to runners **68a** and **68b** which cooperate with a guide **70** to allow lateral movement of the sections **24a** and **24b**, and **26a** and **26b**. The leafs **66a** and **66b** preferably include pins which engage the sections **24a** and **24b**, and **26a** and **26b** when the leafs are in place. Mounting holes **72** are provided for connecting the second cradle supports **15a** to the sections **24b** and **26b**.

[0037] While the invention herein disclosed has been described by means of specific embodiments and applications thereof, numerous modifications and variations could be made thereto by those skilled in the art without departing from the scope of the invention set forth in the claims.

I claim:

1. A massage table comprising;
 - a table top;
 - a table leg assembly supporting the table top;
 - a face cradle comprising:
 - a chin support;
 - a forehead support;
 - at least one bar connecting the forehead support to the chin support; and
 - a face cradle arm connecting the face cradle to the table top through a first joint, the first joint allowing vertical and horizontal adjustment of the face cradle with respect to the table top.
2. The massage table of claim 1, wherein the first joint is a first ball joint.
3. The massage table of claim 1, further including a brace between the face cradle and the table legs.
4. The massage table of claim 3, wherein the brace is a diagonal brace between the forehead support and the table leg assembly.
5. The massage table of claim 4, wherein the diagonal brace is connected to the table leg assembly by a second ball joint and to the forehead support by a third ball joint.

6. The massage table of claim 5, wherein the diagonal brace is a telescoping diagonal brace having a brace spring resisting compression of the diagonal brace.

7. The massage table of claim 1, wherein the forehead support is arced to provide a comfortable resting place for a forehead.

8. The massage table of claim 1, wherein the chin support is arced to provide a comfortable resting place for a chin.

9. The massage table of claim 1, wherein the at least one bar comprises two bars residing on opposite side of the face cradle.

10. The massage table of claim 9, wherein the two bars comprise two bowed downward bars.

11. The massage table of claim 1, wherein:

the table top comprises a right table top and a left table top;

the right table top and the left table top are connected to the table legs by sliding elements allowing the right table top and the left table top to slide laterally apart; and

the massage table includes at least one leaf which may reside between the right table top and the left table top to provide a wider massage table.

12. A massage table comprising;

a table top;

a table leg assembly supporting the table top;

a face cradle comprising:

an arced chin support;

an arced forehead support;

two bars connecting the forehead support to the chin support;

a face cradle arm connecting the face cradle to the table top through a first ball joint, the first joint allowing vertical and horizontal adjustment of the face cradle with respect to the table top; and

a telescoping diagonal brace connected between the face cradle and the table leg assembly, and having a brace spring resisting compression of the diagonal brace.

13. The massage table of claim 12, wherein the diagonal brace is connected to the face cradle through a third ball joint.

14. The massage table of claim 13, wherein the diagonal brace is connected to the table leg assembly through a second ball joint

15. The massage table of claim 13, wherein the separation of the forehead support from the chin support is adjustable.

16. The massage table of claim 13, wherein the diagonal brace is connected between the table leg assembly and the forehead support.

17. A massage table comprising;

a table top;

a table leg assembly supporting the table top;

an adjustable face cradle comprising:

an arced chin support;

an arced forehead support;

two adjustable bars connecting the forehead support to the chin support, the adjustable bars providing adjustment of the separation of the forehead support from the chin support;

a face cradle arm connecting the face cradle to the table top through a first ball joint, the first ball joint allowing vertical and horizontal adjustment of the face cradle with respect to the table top; and

a telescoping diagonal brace connected at a first end to the forehead support by a third ball joint and to the table leg

assembly at a second end opposite the first end, and having a brace spring resisting compression of the diagonal brace.

18. The massage table of claim 17, wherein the table top is a laterally expandable table top.

19. The massage table of claim 17, wherein the laterally expandable table top comprises laterally separable sections and at least one leaf to fill a gap between the section.

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