



US008444696B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Michelson

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 8,444,696 B2**

(45) **Date of Patent:** ***May 21, 2013**

(54) **ANATOMIC SPINAL IMPLANT HAVING
ANATOMIC BEARING SURFACES**

(75) Inventor: **Gary Karlin Michelson**, Venice, CA
(US)

(73) Assignee: **Warsaw Orthopedic, Inc.**, Warsaw, IN
(US)

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this
patent is extended or adjusted under 35
U.S.C. 154(b) by 3 days.

This patent is subject to a terminal dis-
claimer.

(21) Appl. No.: **13/235,998**

(22) Filed: **Sep. 19, 2011**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2012/0071982 A1 Mar. 22, 2012

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Continuation of application No. 12/807,489, filed on
Sep. 7, 2010, now Pat. No. 8,021,430, which is a
continuation of application No. 10/926,766, filed on
Aug. 26, 2004, now Pat. No. 7,789,914, which is a
continuation of application No. 10/237,751, filed on
Sep. 9, 2002, now Pat. No. 7,503,933, which is a
continuation of application No. 09/412,090, filed on
Oct. 4, 1999, now Pat. No. 6,447,544, which is a
continuation of application No. 08/813,283, filed on
Mar. 10, 1997, now Pat. No. 6,302,914, which is a
division of application No. 08/482,146, filed on Jun. 7,
1995, now Pat. No. 5,609,635.

(51) **Int. Cl.**
A61F 2/44 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
USPC 623/17.16

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

USPC 623/17.11-17.16, 16.11, 14.12, 18.11;
606/246-249, 99

See application file for complete search history.

(56) **References Cited**

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

2,372,622 A	3/1945	Fasslo
2,677,369 A	5/1954	Knowles
3,298,372 A	1/1967	Feinberg
3,605,123 A	9/1971	Hahn
3,848,601 A	11/1974	Ma et al.

(Continued)

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

WO	WO 93/01771 A1	2/1993
WO	WO 95/08306	3/1995

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Request for Inter Partes Reexamination of U.S. Patent No. 8,021,430,
dated Sep. 14, 2012, 477 pages.

(Continued)

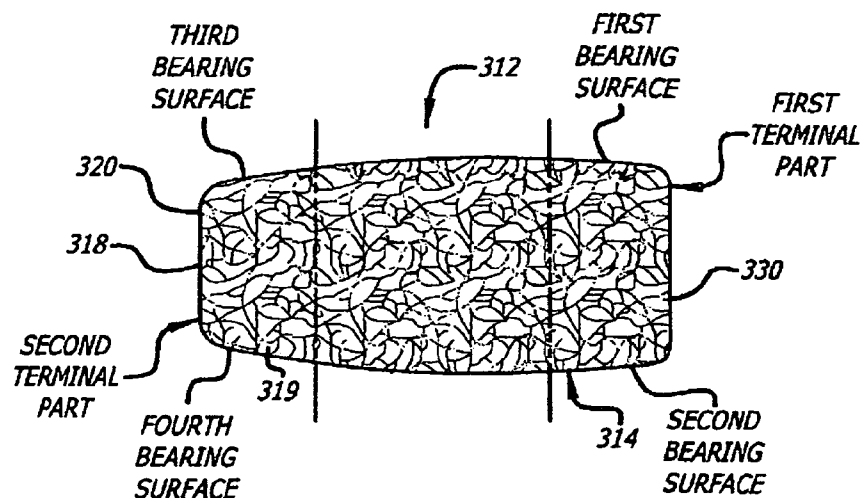
Primary Examiner — Alvin Stewart

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Martin & Ferraro, LLP

(57) **ABSTRACT**

The present application is directed to an interbody spinal
implant having a structural configuration that provides for
maintaining the normal anatomic relationship of two adjacent
vertebrae of the spine. The spinal implant is sized to fit within
the disc space created by the removal of disc material between
two adjacent vertebrae and conform wholly, or in part, to the
disc space created. The spinal implant of the present invention
has first and second sides with upper and lower bearing sur-
faces that form a support structure for bearing against the end
plates of the adjacent vertebrae. The upper and lower bearing
surfaces of the first and second sides are shaped to create an
anatomic fit with the endplates of the adjacent vertebrae.

19 Claims, 11 Drawing Sheets



U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

3,867,728 A	2/1975	Stubstad et al.	5,258,043 A	11/1993	Stone
3,875,595 A	4/1975	Froning	5,304,191 A	4/1994	Gosselin
3,905,047 A	9/1975	Long	5,306,308 A	4/1994	Gross et al.
3,948,262 A	4/1976	Zaffaroni	5,306,309 A	4/1994	Wagner et al.
3,952,334 A	4/1976	Bokros et al.	5,360,430 A	11/1994	Lin
3,987,499 A	10/1976	Scharbach et al.	5,370,697 A	12/1994	Baumgartner
D245,259 S	8/1977	Shen	5,397,364 A	3/1995	Kozak et al.
4,070,514 A	1/1978	Eatherly et al.	5,425,772 A	6/1995	Brantigan
4,168,326 A	9/1979	Broemer et al.	5,443,514 A	8/1995	Steffee
4,309,777 A	1/1982	Patil	5,445,639 A	8/1995	Kuslich et al.
4,349,921 A	9/1982	Kuntz	5,458,638 A	10/1995	Kuslich et al.
4,401,112 A	8/1983	Rezaian	5,458,643 A	10/1995	Oka et al.
4,405,319 A	9/1983	Cosentino	5,484,437 A	1/1996	Michelson
4,439,152 A	3/1984	Small	5,489,307 A	2/1996	Kuslich et al.
4,501,269 A	2/1985	Bagby	5,489,308 A	2/1996	Kuslich et al.
4,507,115 A	3/1985	Kambara et al.	5,499,984 A	3/1996	Steiner et al.
4,535,485 A	8/1985	Ashman et al.	5,514,180 A	5/1996	Heggeness et al.
4,542,539 A	9/1985	Rowe, Jr. et al.	5,522,899 A	6/1996	Michelson
4,545,374 A	10/1985	Jacobson	5,534,028 A	7/1996	Bao et al.
4,547,390 A	10/1985	Ashman et al.	5,554,191 A	9/1996	Lahille et al.
4,553,273 A	11/1985	Wu	5,571,109 A	11/1996	Bertagnoli
4,554,914 A	11/1985	Kapp et al.	5,571,190 A	11/1996	Ulrich et al.
4,566,466 A	1/1986	Ripple et al.	5,607,424 A	3/1997	Tropiano
4,599,086 A	7/1986	Doty	5,609,635 A	3/1997	Michelson
4,604,995 A	8/1986	Stephens et al.	5,609,636 A	3/1997	Kohrs et al.
4,608,052 A	8/1986	Van Kampen et al.	5,609,637 A	3/1997	Biedermann et al.
4,634,720 A	1/1987	Dorman et al.	5,645,596 A	7/1997	Kim et al.
4,636,217 A	1/1987	Ogilvie et al.	5,658,335 A	8/1997	Allen
4,636,526 A	1/1987	Dorman et al.	5,658,337 A	8/1997	Kohrs et al.
4,645,503 A	2/1987	Lin et al.	5,665,122 A	9/1997	Kambin
4,655,777 A	4/1987	Dunn et al.	5,669,909 A	9/1997	Zdeblick et al.
4,661,536 A	4/1987	Dorman et al.	5,683,463 A	11/1997	Godefroy et al.
4,693,721 A	9/1987	Ducheyne	5,766,252 A	6/1998	Henry et al.
4,698,375 A	10/1987	Dorman et al.	5,769,897 A	6/1998	Härle
4,714,469 A	12/1987	Kenna	5,776,199 A	7/1998	Michelson
4,721,103 A	1/1988	Freedland	5,782,919 A	7/1998	Zdeblick et al.
4,743,256 A	5/1988	Brantigan	5,800,547 A	9/1998	Schäfer et al.
4,759,766 A	7/1988	Buettner-Janz et al.	5,824,094 A	10/1998	Serhan et al.
4,759,769 A	7/1988	Hedman et al.	5,861,041 A	1/1999	Tienboon
4,763,644 A	8/1988	Webb	5,888,223 A	3/1999	Bray
4,820,305 A	4/1989	Harms et al.	5,888,224 A	3/1999	Beckers et al.
4,834,757 A	5/1989	Brantigan	5,893,890 A	4/1999	Pisharodi
4,863,476 A	9/1989	Shepperd	5,980,522 A	11/1999	Koros et al.
4,863,477 A	9/1989	Monson	5,984,967 A	11/1999	Zdeblick et al.
4,865,603 A	9/1989	Noiles	6,059,829 A	5/2000	Schläpfer et al.
4,877,020 A	10/1989	Vich	6,149,686 A	11/2000	Kuslich et al.
4,878,915 A	11/1989	Brantigan	6,159,214 A	12/2000	Michelson
4,904,261 A	2/1990	Dove et al.	6,302,914 B1	10/2001	Michelson
4,911,718 A	3/1990	Lee et al.	6,447,544 B1	9/2002	Michelson
4,936,848 A	6/1990	Bagby	6,558,423 B1	5/2003	Michelson
4,955,908 A	9/1990	Frey et al.	6,613,091 B1	9/2003	Zdeblick et al.
4,961,740 A	10/1990	Ray et al.	7,056,342 B2	6/2006	Michelson
5,015,247 A	5/1991	Michelson	7,503,933 B2	3/2009	Michelson
5,026,373 A	6/1991	Ray et al.	7,789,914 B2	9/2010	Michelson
5,055,104 A	10/1991	Ray	8,021,430 B2	9/2011	Michelson
5,062,845 A	11/1991	Kuslich et al.			
5,071,437 A	12/1991	Steffee			
5,122,130 A	6/1992	Keller			
5,123,926 A	6/1992	Pisharodi			
5,171,278 A	12/1992	Pisharodi			
5,190,548 A	3/1993	Davis			
5,192,327 A	3/1993	Brantigan			
5,246,458 A	9/1993	Graham			
5,250,061 A	10/1993	Michelson			
5,258,031 A	11/1993	Salib et al.			

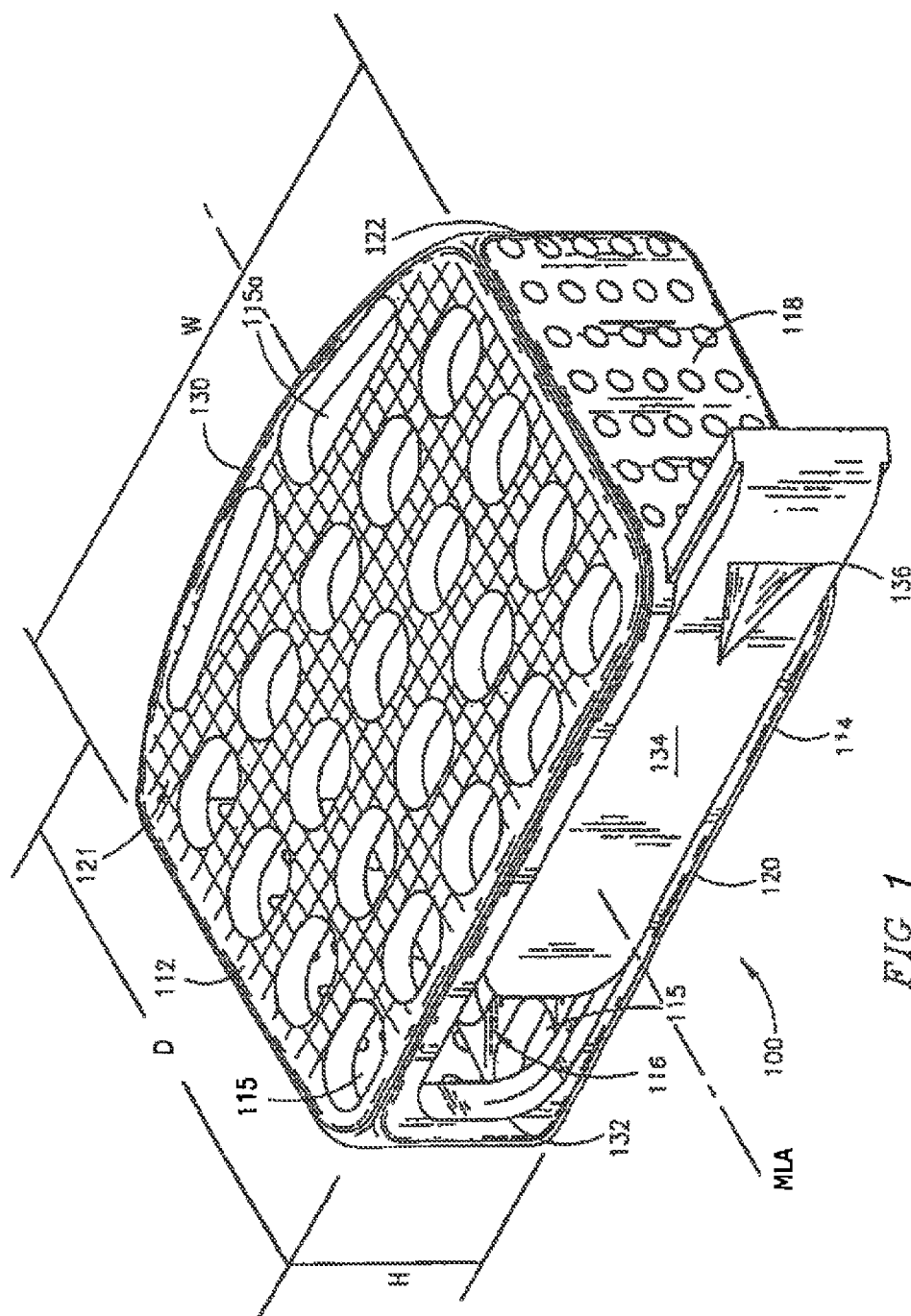
OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Office Action from Reexamination Proceeding No. 95/002,380; mailed Nov. 29, 2012; 18 pages.

Amendment in Reexam Control No. 95/002,380, filed Feb. 19, 2013, 15 pages.

Third Party Comments in Reexam Control No. 95/002,380, filed Mar. 21, 2013, 52 pages.

Decision Expunging Papers in Reexamination Control No. 95/002,380, Mar. 26, 2013, 4 pages.



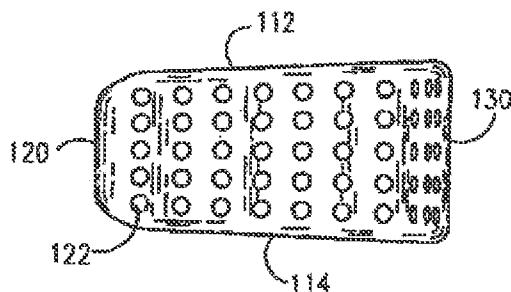


FIG 3

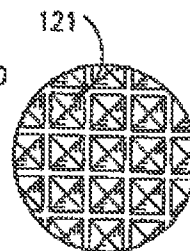


FIG 7

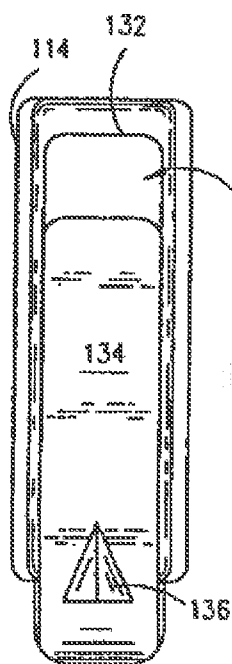


FIG 5

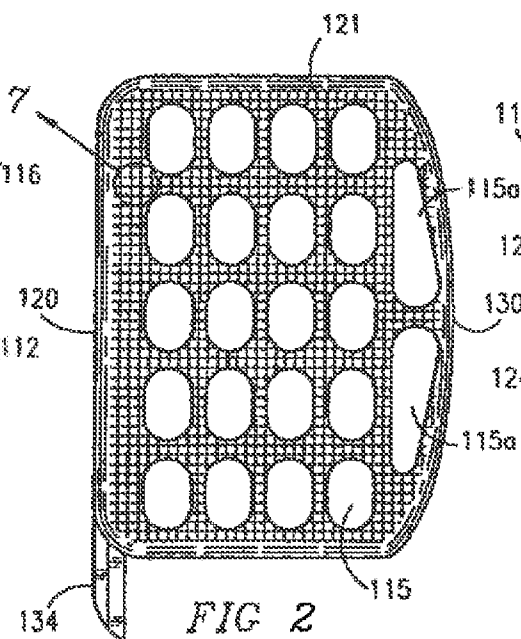


FIG 2

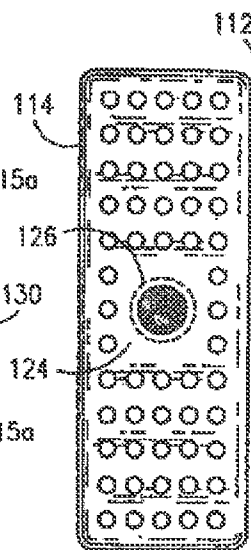


FIG 6

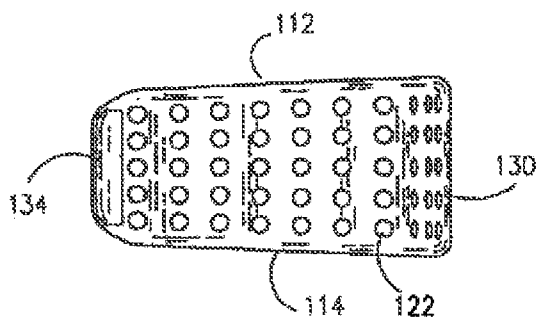


FIG 4

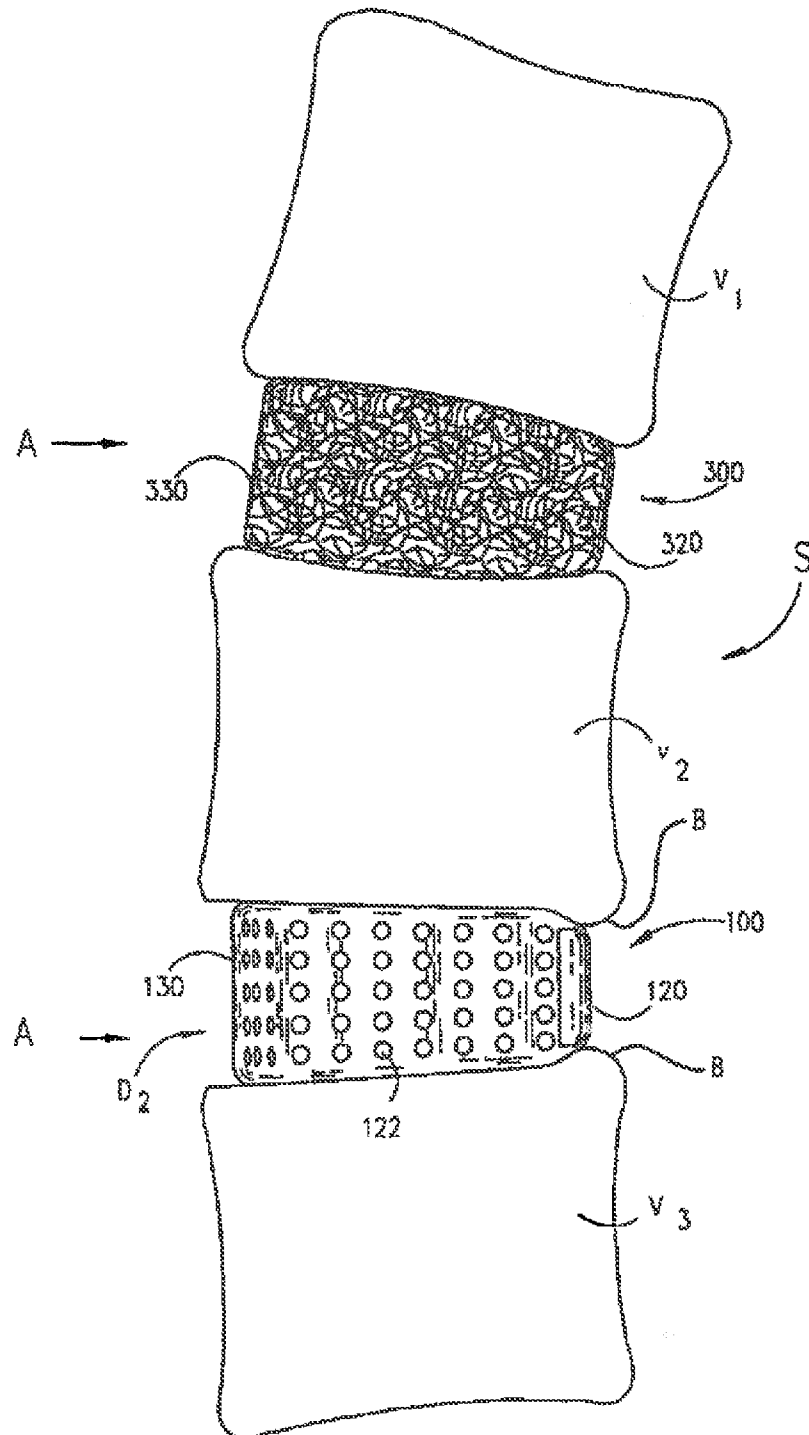
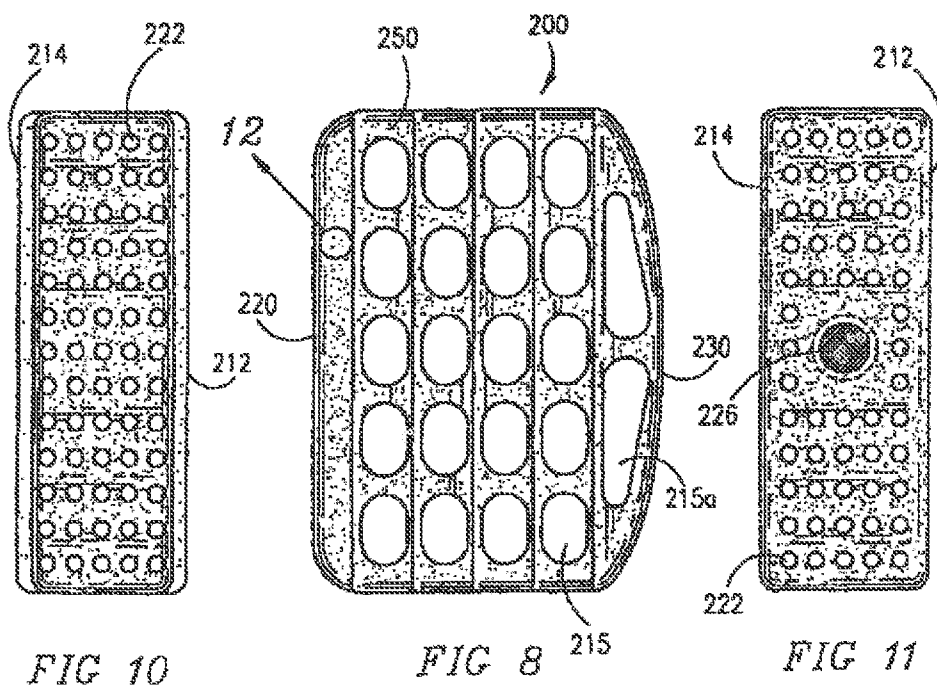
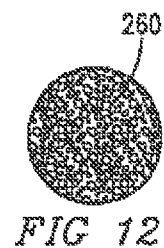
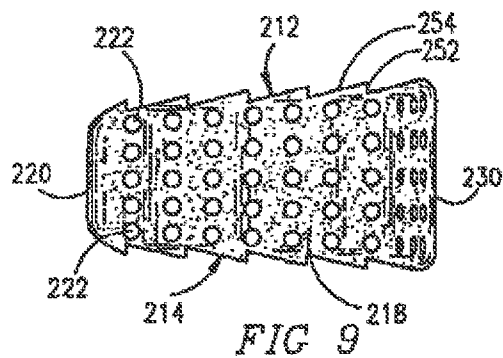
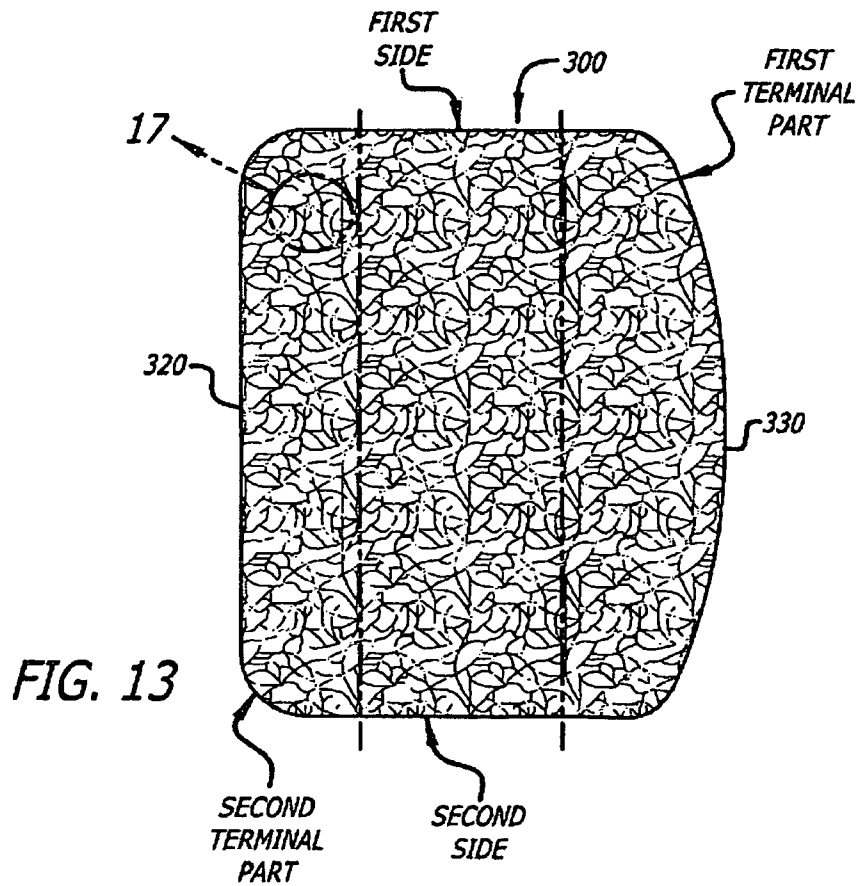
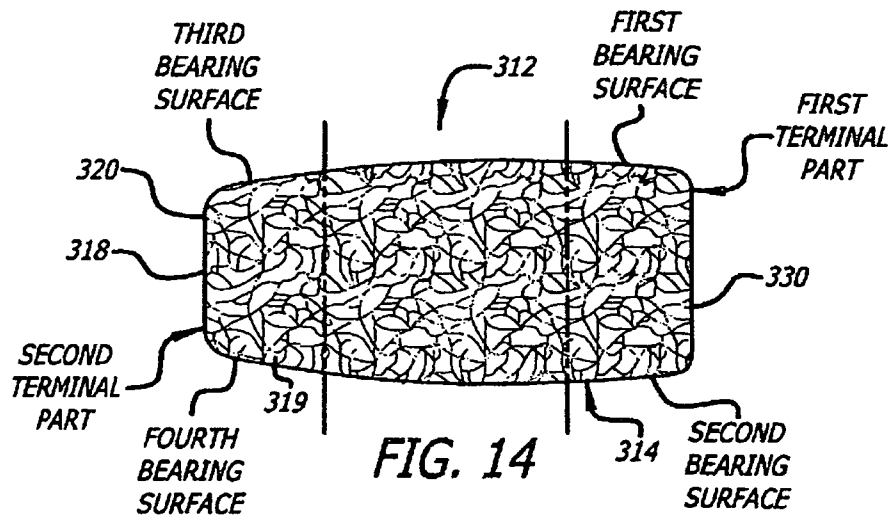


FIG 7A





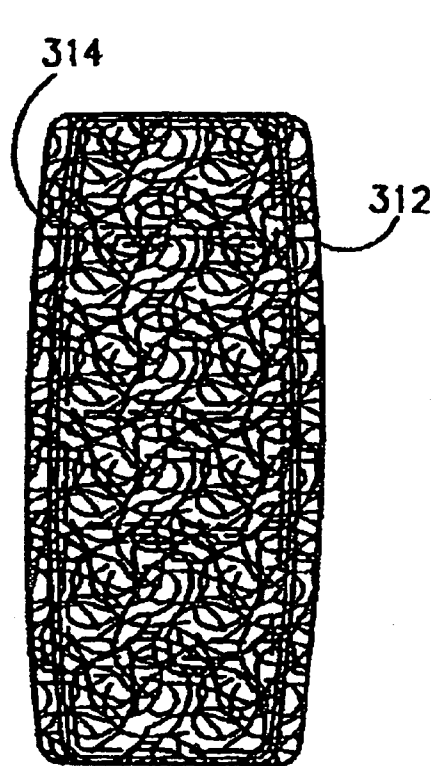


FIG 15

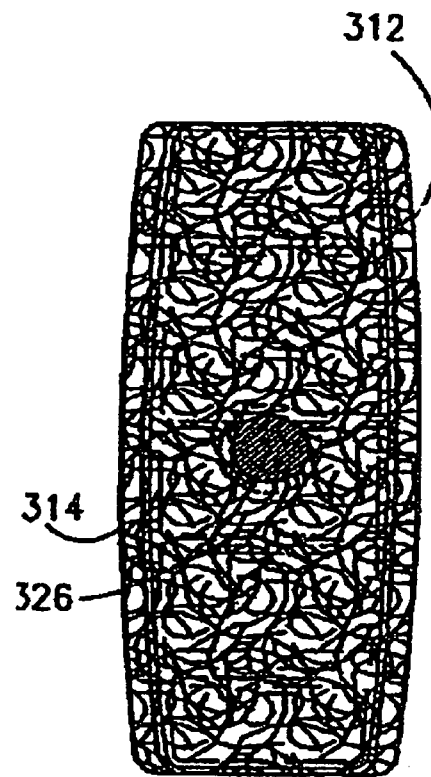


FIG 16

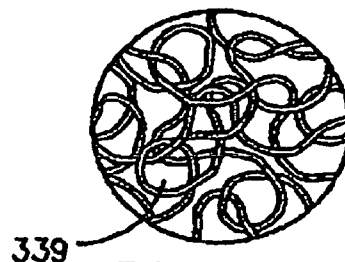


FIG 17

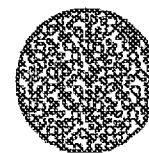
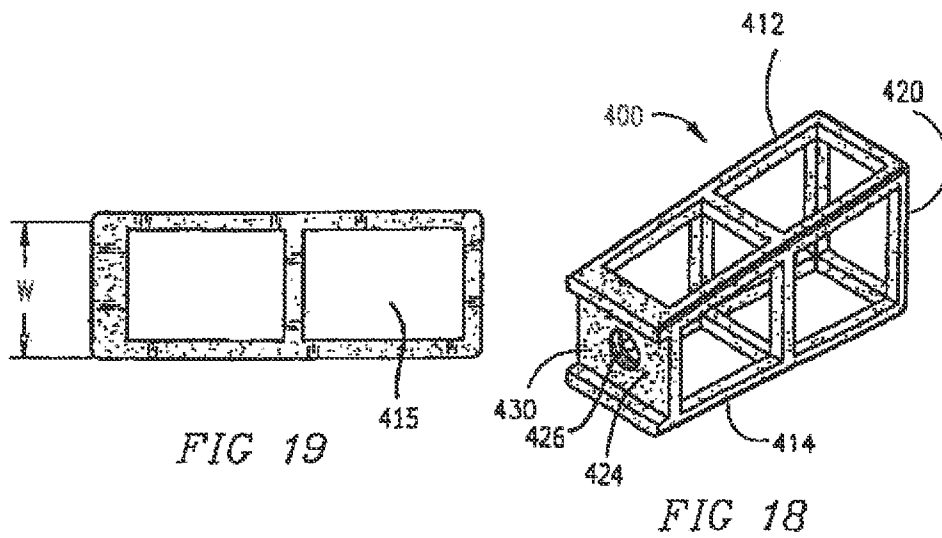
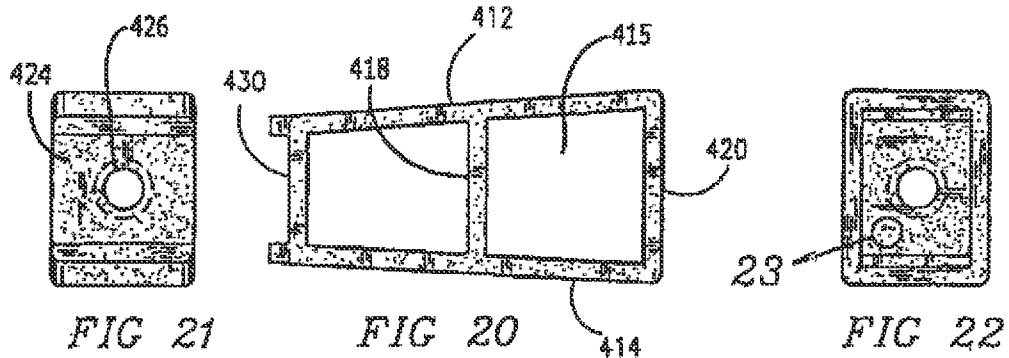


FIG 23



FIG 26

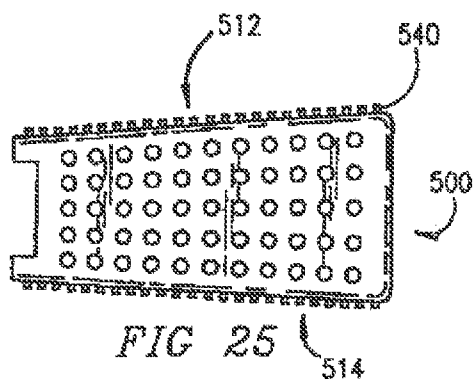


FIG 25

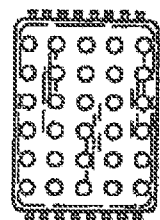


FIG 27

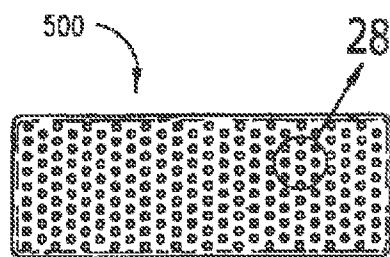


FIG 24

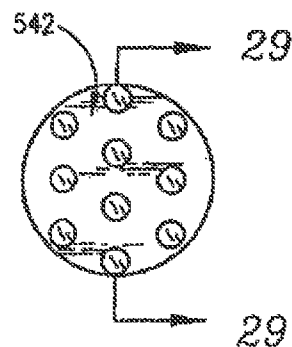


FIG 28

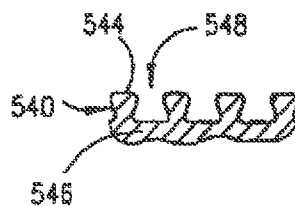


FIG 29

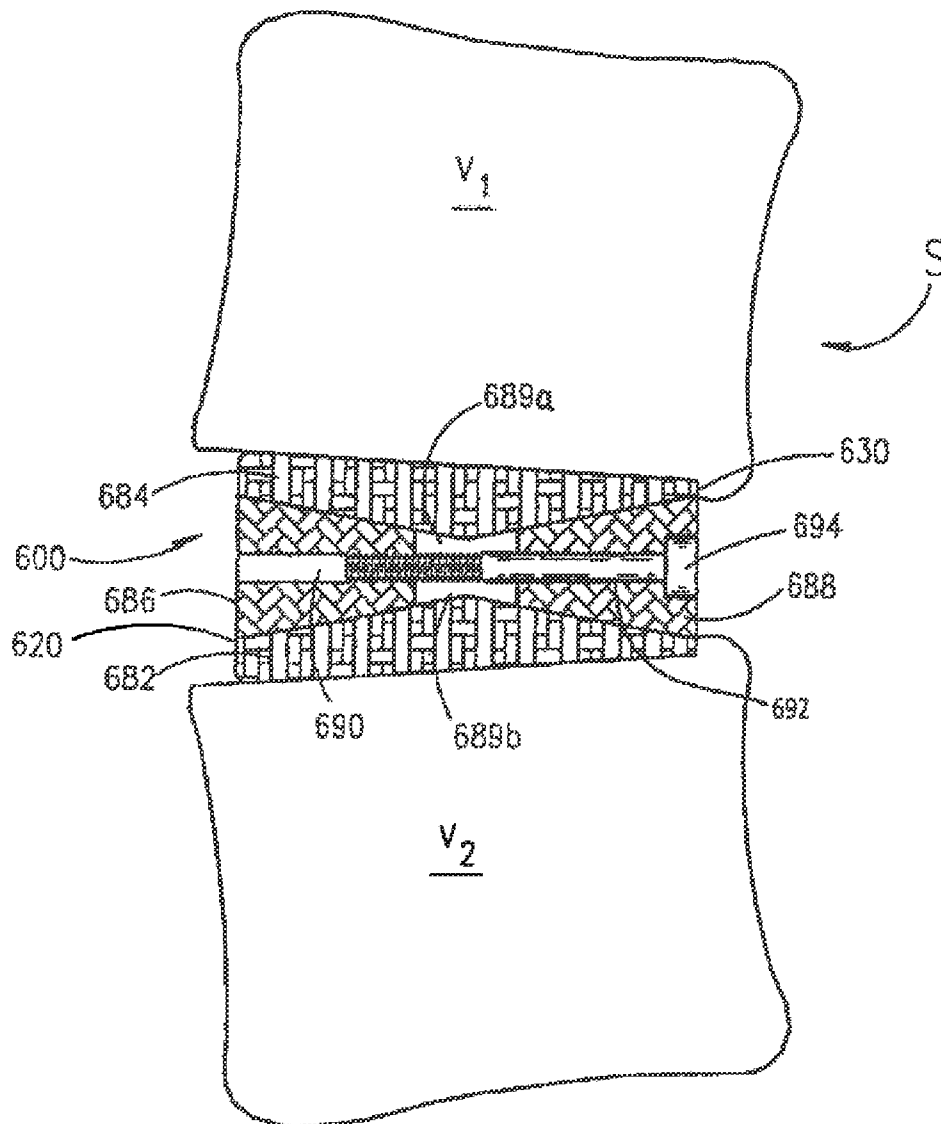


FIG 30

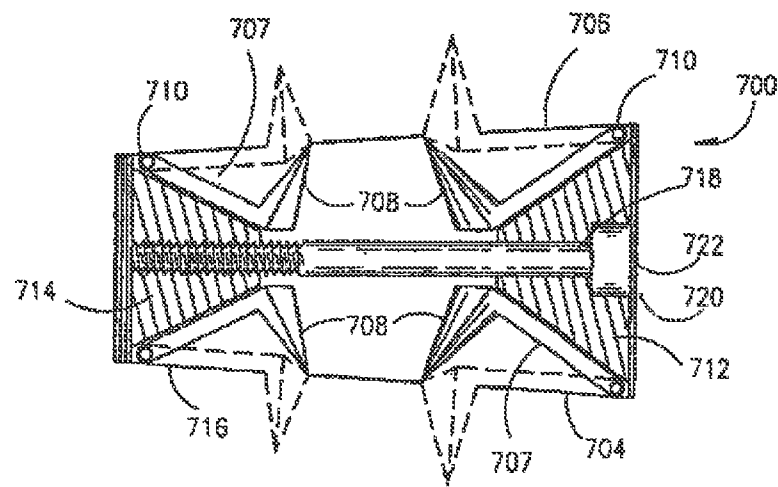


FIG 31

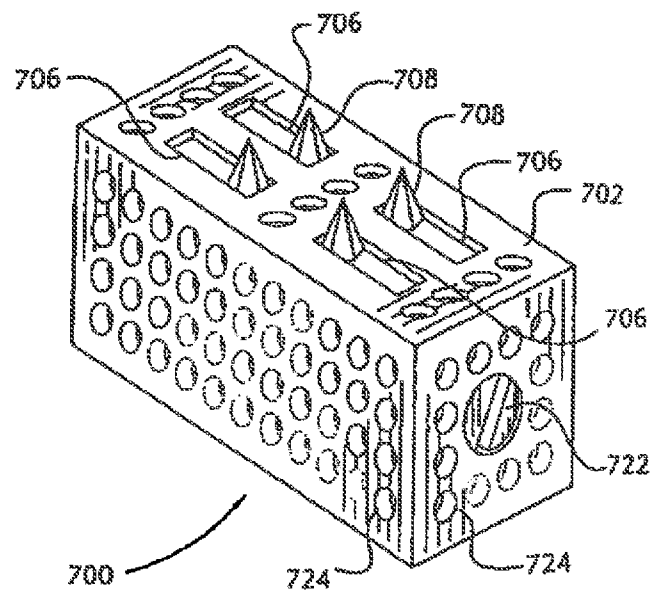


FIG 32

1

ANATOMIC SPINAL IMPLANT HAVING ANATOMIC BEARING SURFACES

This application is a continuation of application Ser. No. 12/807,489, filed Sep. 7, 2010, now U.S. Pat. No. 8,021,430; which is a continuation of application Ser. No. 10/926,766, filed Aug. 26, 2004, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,789,914; which is a continuation of application Ser. No. 10/237,751, filed Sep. 9, 2002 now U.S. Pat. No. 7,503,933; which is a continuation of application Ser. No. 09/412,090, filed Oct. 4, 1999, now U.S. Pat. No. 6,447,544; which is a continuation of application Ser. No. 08/813,283, filed Mar. 10, 1997, now U.S. Pat. No. 6,302,914; which is a divisional of application Ser. No. 08/482,146, filed Jun. 7, 1995, now U.S. Pat. No. 5,609,635; all of which are incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates generally to interbody spinal fusion implants, and in particular to spinal fusion implants configured to restore and maintain two adjacent vertebrae of the spine in correct anatomical angular relationship.

2. Description of the Prior Art

Both the cervical and lumbar areas of the human spine are, in a healthy state, lordotic such that they are curved convex forward. It is not uncommon that in degenerative conditions of the spine that lordosis is lost. This effectively shortens the spinal canal which decreases its capacity. Further, the absence of lordosis moves the spinal cord anteriorly where it may be compressed against the posterior portions of the vertebral bodies and discs. Finally, such a loss of lordosis disturbs the overall mechanics of the spine which may cause cascading degenerative changes throughout the adjacent spinal segments.

The surgical treatment of those degenerative conditions of the spine in which the spinal discs are in various states of collapse, and out of lordosis, commonly involves spinal fusion. That is the joining together of adjacent vertebrae through an area of shared bone. When the shared bone is in the area previously occupied by the intervertebral disc that is referred to as an interbody fusion. Further history in this regard is provided in application Ser. No. 08/263,952 entitled Artificial Spinal Fusion Implants ("Parent Application") incorporated herein by reference.

The Parent Application taught the use of artificial spinal fusion implants that were capable of being placed between adjacent vertebrae, and which implants were capable of containing and providing fusion promoting substances including bone at the fusion site. These devices were further capable of restoring the height of the disc space and of supporting the spine, and were self-stabilizing as well as being stabilizing to the spinal area where implanted.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is directed to interbody spinal fusion implants having a structural configuration that provides for the maintaining and creating of the normal anatomic angular relationship of two adjacent vertebrae of the spine to maintain and create spinal lordosis. The spinal fusion implants of the present invention are sized to fit within the disc space created by the removal of disc material between two adjacent vertebrae and conform wholly or in part to the disc space created. The spinal fusion implants of the present invention have upper and lower surfaces that form a support structure for bearing against the end plates of the adjacent vertebrae. In the

2

preferred embodiments, the upper and lower surfaces are disposed in a converging angular relationship to each other such that the implants of the present invention have an overall "wedged-shape" in an elevational side view. The angular relationship of the upper and lower surfaces places and maintains the vertebrae adjacent to those surfaces in an angular relationship to each other, creating and maintaining the desired lordosis.

The implants of the present invention may have surface irregularities to increase their surface area, and/or to further engage the adjacent vertebrae and to enhance stability. The lordotic implants of the present invention may have surface irregularities that are uniform in height along the longitudinal axis of the upper and lower vertebrae engaging surfaces, or may increase in height from one end of the implant to the other. That is, the implant body and the surface formed and the projections may be similarly wedged. The outer contour of the surface projections may be more or less rectangular while the underlying implant may be wedge-shaped; or the reverse wherein the underlying implant body is more or less rectangular while the contour of the surface projections are wedge-shaped from one end of the implant to the other.

The implants of the present invention have various faces which may be curved so as to conform to the shape of the vertebral surfaces adjacent to the area of the disc removal. Specifically the upper and/or lower surfaces may be convex, and/or the front and/or rear surfaces may be convex. The surfaces of the implants of the present invention may have openings which may or may not pass all the way through them, and a central chamber in communication to the surface through holes. The openings may be of random sizes, and/or shapes, and/or distributions. The implants themselves may be composed of materials, and/or have surface treatments, to encourage microscopic bone ingrowth into the implants.

In the performing of a posterior lumbar interbody fusion, it is not possible to replace the removed portions of the disc, if a total nuclear discectomy has been performed, with a single large implant as the delicate dural sac containing the spinal cord, and the nerve roots cover at all times at least some portion of the posterior disc space. As set forth in the Parent Application, the use of "modular implants" is appropriate in such cases. The modular implants being approximately as long as the depth of the disc material removed, but being considerably narrower, such that they can be introduced into the disc space from the posterior aspect to either side of the dural sac, and then aligned side to side within the disc space so that a number of them each having a length consistent with the depth of the disc removed in that area would in combination have a width equal to the width of the disc material removed.

The modular implants of the present invention may be generally wedge-shaped and may have upper and lower surfaces conforming to the contours of the vertebral endplates, which contours include but are not limited to being relatively flat or convex. As the disc spaces in the lumbar spine are generally lordotic, said implants in the preferred embodiment would be taller anteriorly, that is at the implant's insertion end, and less tall posteriorly, that is at the implant's trailing end. To introduce an implant that is taller at its insertion end than the space available at the posterior aspect of the disc space, even when that disc space is optimally distracted, is problematic.

The modular implants of the present invention provide two solutions to the problem. In the first embodiment, the modular implants may have a reduced size at their insertion end, including but not limited to a bullet nose, a convexity, and a chamfer to a smaller front surface. This then provides that the

3

implant has an area small enough to be introduced into the posterior aspect of the disc space when the disc space is adequately distracted and the contour of that specialized leading portion of the implant is such that it then allows for a ramping up of the adjacent vertebrae relative to the implant as the implant is advanced forward into the disc space.

The implants of the present invention provide a second solution to this same problem. In the preferred embodiment of the modular implant, the implant is again wedge-shaped in the side elevational view and is taller at its insertion end than at its trailing end. However, the implant incorporates at its trailing end a means for engaging insertion instrumentation such as the box and threaded opening configuration disclosed in the Parent Application. Since in the preferred embodiment these implants are wedge-shaped in the side elevational view when upright but are generally rectangular when viewed from the top plan view, these implants are therefore designed to be introduced into the disc space on their side such that the side walls of the implants are adjacent to the end plates of the adjacent vertebrae. The implants have a side-to-side dimension that is less than the dimension through the insertion end of the implant when upright, it is possible to easily insert these implants with them on their side and then to use the insertion instrument engaged to the implant to rotate the implants ninety degrees into the fully upright position, once they have been fully inserted. Once inserted, the upper and lower surfaces are adjacent to the endplates of the adjacent vertebrae and create and maintain the desired angular relationship of the adjacent vertebrae as the upper and lower walls are angled with respect to each other.

In an alternative embodiment of the present invention, a mechanical implant which may be inserted in a collapsed position and which may then be adjusted to increase in height so as to provide for the optimal restoration of the height of the space between the adjacent vertebrae is disclosed. The mechanical implant may be wedge-shaped, and have upper and lower surfaces, the contours of which generally conform to the contacted areas of the adjacent vertebral endplates and which contours may include but are not limited to being relatively flat, or convex. Further, the mechanical implant may be wedge-shaped or generally rectangular, but capable of increasing in both height and the extent of wedging when adjusted. This may easily be achieved by having one of the two wedge mechanisms employed in the example given being larger, or steeper than the other. Alternatively, a single wedge may be utilized, and if it is desired to achieved increased height at one end of the implant while restricting the height at the other, then the end of the implant may incorporate a hinge means and the height expansion at the other end achieved by drawing a wedge member, bar, ball, or other means from the far end toward the hinged end so as to drive said upper and lower surfaces apart in a wedged fashion.

In an alternative embodiment of the present invention, an implant having a mechanically deployable bone engaging means is taught. Such an implant is generally wedge-shaped in the side elevational view and has upper and lower surfaces generally conforming to the contour of the vertebral endplates where contacted by the implant, and which upper and lower surfaces may be but are not limited to being either flat or convex. The use of such deployable bone engaging means are particularly of value in that the largest possible implant may be inserted into a disc space and the vertebral engaging means, which if fixed to the surface would have blocked the insertion of the implant, may then be deployed after the insertion such that the distance from the tip of the upper and lower bone engagement means exceeds the height of the space available for insertion. Such a feature is of particular

4

value when the implant itself is wedge-shaped as the considerable compressive loads across the lumbar spine would tend to drive a wedge-shaped implants out of the disc space.

OBJECTS OF THE PRESENT INVENTION

It is an object of the present invention to provide a spinal fusion implant that is easily inserted into the spine, having a tapered leading end;

It is another object of the present invention to provide a spinal fusion implant that tapers in height from one end to the other consistent with the taper of a normal spinal disc;

It is yet another object of the present invention to provide a spinal fusion implant that is capable of maintaining anatomic alignment and lordosis of two adjacent vertebrae during the spinal fusion process;

It is still another object of the present invention to provide a spinal fusion implant that is self stabilizing within the spine;

It is yet another object of the present invention to provide a spinal fusion implant that is capable of providing stability between adjacent vertebrae when inserted;

It is further another object of the present invention to provide a spinal fusion implant that is capable of spacing apart and supporting adjacent vertebrae in an angular relationship during the spinal fusion process;

It is still further another object of the present invention to provide a spinal fusion implant that fits between to adjacent vertebrae and preserves the end plates of those vertebrae; and

It is another object of the present invention to provide a spinal fusion implant having a shape which conforms to the endplates of the adjacent vertebrae; and

These and other objects of the present invention will become apparent from a review of the accompanying drawings and the detailed description of the drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of the present invention with a slidable door shown in a partially open position providing access to the internal chamber of the implant.

FIG. 2 is a top plan view of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of the present invention.

FIG. 3 is a left side elevational view of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of the present invention.

FIG. 4 is a right side elevational view of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of the present invention.

FIG. 5 is a front end view of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of the present invention showing the slidable door in a partially open position.

FIG. 6 is a rear end view of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of the present invention showing the means for engaging insertion instrumentation.

FIG. 7 is an enlarged fragmentary view along line 7 of FIG. 2 illustrating the bone engaging surface configuration of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of the present invention.

FIG. 7A is an elevational side view of a segment of the spinal column having the lordotic implant of the present invention inserted in the disc space at different disc levels between adjacent vertebrae to restore and maintain the correct anatomical alignment of the adjacent vertebrae.

FIG. 8 is a top plan view of an alternative embodiment of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of the present invention.

FIG. 9 is a left side elevational view of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of FIG. 8.

5

FIG. 10 is a front end view of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of FIG. 8.

FIG. 11 is a rear end view of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of FIG. 8 showing the means for engaging insertion instrumentation.

FIG. 12 is an enlarged fragmentary view along line 12 of FIG. 8 illustrating the surface configuration the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of the present invention.

FIG. 13 is a top plan view of an alternative embodiment of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of the present invention made of a mesh-like material.

FIG. 14 is a left side elevational view of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of FIG. 13.

FIG. 15 is a front end view of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of FIG. 13.

FIG. 16 is a rear end view of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of FIG. 13 showing the means for engaging insertion instrumentation.

FIG. 17 is an enlarged fragmentary view along line 17 of FIG. 13 illustrating the surface configuration of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of the present invention.

FIG. 18 is a perspective view of an alternative embodiment of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of the present invention.

FIG. 19 is a top plan view of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of FIG. 18.

FIG. 20 is a left side elevational view of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of FIG. 18.

FIG. 21 is a rear end view of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of FIG. 18.

FIG. 22 is a front end view of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of FIG. 18.

FIG. 23 is an enlarged fragmentary view along line 23 of FIG. 22 illustrating the surface configuration the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of the present invention.

FIG. 24 is a top plan view of an alternative embodiment of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of the present invention.

FIG. 25 is a left side elevational view of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of FIG. 24.

FIG. 26 is a rear end view of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of FIG. 24.

FIG. 27 is a front end view of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of FIG. 24.

FIG. 28 is an enlarged fragmentary view along line 28 of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of FIG. 24 illustrating the surface configuration of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of the present invention.

FIG. 29 is a sectional view along lines 29-29 of FIG. 28 the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of the present invention.

FIG. 30 is a side elevational view of a segment of the human spinal column shown with an alternative embodiment of the lordotic spinal fusion implant of the present invention that is adjustable and expandable shown in sectional view inserted in the disc space levels to restore and maintain the correct anatomical alignment of the adjacent vertebrae.

FIG. 31 is a side cross sectional view of, an alternative embodiment of the lordotic implant of the present invention having movable projections, in the form of spikes 708, which are movable from a first position within the implant 700 to a second position extending to the exterior of the implant.

FIG. 32 is a perspective view of the embodiment of FIG. 31.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring to FIGS. 1 through 7 the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of the present invention for use in the disc

6

space between two adjacent vertebrae, generally referred to by the numeral 100, is shown. The implant 100 has a generally rectangular configuration, having an upper surface 112 and a lower surface 114. In the preferred embodiment, the upper and lower surfaces 112 and 114 of implant 100 are disposed in a converging angular relationship toward each other such that the implant 100 appears "wedge-shaped" from a side elevational view as shown in FIGS. 3 and 4. The upper and lower surfaces 112 and 114 have an interior surface which form a support structure for bearing against the endplates of the adjacent vertebrae between which the implant 100 is inserted. The angular relationship of the upper and lower surfaces 112 and 114 places and maintains the vertebrae adjacent to those surfaces in an angular relationship, creating and maintaining the desired lordosis of the spine.

The upper and lower surfaces 112 and 114 of the implant 100 may be flat or curved to conform to the shape of the end plates of the adjacent vertebrae between which the implant 100 is inserted. The implant 100 conforms to the shape of the nucleus pulposus and a portion of the annulus fibrosus removed from the vertebrae. The upper and lower surfaces 112 and 114 comprise surface roughenings that provide a surface suitable for engaging the adjacent vertebrae to stabilize the implant 100 within the disc space once surgically implanted. The surface roughenings of the upper and lower surfaces 112 and 114 comprise a surface knurling 121 and/or grooves.

Referring to FIG. 7, an enlarged fragmentary view of the surface knurling 121 of the implant 100 is shown as a diamond-shaped bone engaging pattern. The implant 100 may have surface knurling 121 throughout the entire upper and lower surfaces 112 and 114, throughout only a portion of the upper and lower surfaces 112 and 114, or any combination thereof, without departing from the scope of the present invention. It is also appreciated that the surface knurling 121 may have various configuration other than the configuration shown.

In this embodiment, the implant 100 is hollow and comprises a plurality of openings 115 of passing through the upper and lower surfaces 112 and 114 and into a central hollow chamber 116. The openings 115 provide for bone growth to occur from the vertebrae through the openings 115 to the internal chamber 116. While the openings 115 have been shown in the drawings as being circular, it is appreciated that the openings 115 may have any shape, size, configuration or distribution suitable for use in a spinal implant without departing from the scope of the present invention. For example, the openings may have a tear-drop configuration as shown in opening 115a in FIGS. 1 and 2. The upper and lower surfaces 112 and 114 of the implant 100 are supported and spaced apart by a side wall 118, which may also comprise a plurality of openings 122.

The implant 100 has an insertion end 120 and a trailing end 130 both of which may be curved or flat. The trailing end 130 of the implant may be convex to conform to the curvature of the vertebrae and has a means for engaging an implant insertion instrument comprising a depressed portion 124 with a central threaded opening 126 for receiving the engaging end of a driving instrument. The insertion end 120 of the implant 100 comprises an access opening 132 and a slidable door 134 which closes the opening 132. The slidable door 134 covers the opening 132 into the chamber 116 and permits the insertion of autogenous bone material into the chamber 116.

In use, the slidable door 134 is placed in the open position for loading material into the chamber 116. The slidable door 134 has a depression 136 for facilitating the opening and closing of the door 134. The internal chamber 116 can be

filled and hold any natural or artificial osteoconductive, osteoinductive, osteogenic, or other fusion enhancing material. Some examples of such materials are bone harvested from the patient, or bone growth inducing material such as, but not limited to, hydroxyapatite, hydroxyapatite tricalcium phosphate; or bone morphogenic protein. The implant **100** itself is made of material appropriate for human implantation such as titanium and/or may be made of, and/or filled and/or coated with a bone ingrowth inducing material such as, but not limited to, hydroxyapatite or hydroxyapatite tricalcium phosphate or any other osteoconductive, osteoinductive, osteogenic, or other fusion enhancing material.

The fusion enhancing material that is packed within the chamber **116** of the implant **100** serves to promote bone ingrowth between the implant **100** and the adjacent vertebrae. Once the bone ingrowth occurs, the implant **100** will be a permanent fixture preventing dislodgement of the implant as well as preventing any movement between the adjacent vertebrae.

The slidable door **134** is then closed prior to implantation. In the closed position, the slidable door conforms to the curvature of the insertion end **120** of the implant **100**. Various methods of packing the implant **100** with the autogenous bone material may be used to obtain a completely packed implant **100**.

The method of inserting the implant **100** is set forth in detail in application Ser. No. 08/263,962, incorporated herein by reference. The threaded end of a driving instrument is attached to the threaded opening **126** in the trailing end **130** of the implant **100** and the fitting of the driving instrument into the depressed portion **124** prevents movement of the implant **100** in relationship to the driving instrument. The implant **100** is then placed at the entrance to the disc space between the two adjacent vertebrae **V**. The driver instrument is then tapped with a hammer sufficiently hard enough to drive the implant **100** into the disc space.

The size of the implant **100** is substantially the same size as the disc material that it is replacing and thus will be larger or smaller depending on the amount of disc material removed to create the disc space in which it is to be used. In the preferred embodiment in regard to the lumbar spine the implant **100** has a width **W** approximately 28-48 mm wide, approximately 36 mm being preferred. The implant **100** has a height **H** conforming to the restoration of the anatomic height of the disc space the average height would range from 8-16 mm, with 10-12 of which being the preferred average height. The depth **D** along mid-longitudinal axis **MLA** would at its maximum range from 20 to 34 mm with 26 to 32 being the preferred maximum depth. In the cervical spine the width of the implant is in the range of approximately 14-28 mm, with the preferred width being 18-22 mm. The implant has a height in the range of approximately 5-10 mm with the preferred height being 6 mm. The implant has a depth in the range of approximately 11-21 mm with the preferred depth being 11-13 mm.

Referring to FIG. 7A, a side elevational view of the lateral aspect of a segment of the spinal column **S** is shown with the implant **100** inserted in the disc space **D₂** between two adjacent vertebrae **V₂** and **V₃**. The implant **100** is inserted in the direction of arrow **A** into the disc space **D₂** and maintains the two vertebrae **V₂** and **V₃** in angular relationship to each other such that the natural lordosis of that segment of the spinal column **S** is restored. The forward advancement of the implant **100** is blocked by the natural bone processes **B** in the endplates of the vertebrae **V₂** and **V₃**. Backing out of the implant **100** is prevented by the bone engaging surface knurling **121** of the upper and lower surfaces **112** and **114**.

Referring to FIGS. 8-12, an alternative embodiment of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of the present invention, generally referred to by the numeral **200**, is shown. The implant **200** has a similar overall configuration as the implant **100** described above. In the preferred embodiment, the implant **200** is solid and comprises a plurality of channels **215** passing from the upper surface **212** to the lower surface **214** through the implant **200**. The channels **215** provide for bone ingrowth and facilitate the incorporation of the implant **200** into the spinal fusion mass. The channels may also be loaded with fusion promoting materials such as those described above, prior to implantation. It is appreciated that the channels **215** need not pass all the way through the implant **200**, but can have a configuration similar to wells, which may hold fusion promoting materials and permit bone ingrowth into the upper and lower surfaces **212** and **214** of the implant **200**.

In addition to the channels **215**, the implant **200** may have small openings **222** on the side wall **218** which may or may not pass through the entire implant **200**. The same openings **222** may be in communication with the channels **215** such that bone ingrowth may occur from the openings **222** to the channels **215** to lock the implant **200** into the fusion mass. If the openings **222** do not pass through the entire implant **200**, they may function as small wells for holding fusion promoting materials or described above.

In the preferred embodiment of implant **200**, the channels **215** have a diameter in the range of 0.1 mm to 6 mm, with 2-3 mm being the preferred diameter. The openings **222** have a diameter in the range of 0.1 mm to 6 mm, with 1-3 mm being the preferred diameter range. It is appreciated that although the channels **215** and openings **222** are shown having a generally rounded configuration, it is within the scope of the present invention that the channels **215** and openings **222** may have any size, shape, configuration, and distribution suitable for the intended purpose.

The implant **200**, has a plurality of ratchetings **250** on the upper and lower surface **212** and **214** for engaging the bone of the adjacent vertebrae. The ratchetings **250** comprise a bone engaging edge **252** and angled segment **254**.

Referring specifically to FIG. 9, the implant **200** has a wedge-shaped elevational side view in which the trailing end **230** is taller than the insertion end **220**. The plurality of ratchetings **250** are oriented in the direction of the insertion end **220** to provide for a one-way insertion of the implant **200** as the bone engaging edge **252**, or ridge, engages the vertebrae and prevents the implant from backing out once implanted. Alternatively, the trailing end ratchetings could be of a lesser height such that the overall shape of the ratchetings as a group is convex.

Referring to FIG. 11, the trailing end **230** of implant **200** has means for engaging insertion instrumentation comprising a thread opening **226** as described above for implant **100**.

Referring to FIG. 12, an enlarged fragmentary view along line **12** of FIG. 8 illustrating the surface configuration the implant **200** is shown. The upper and lower surfaces **212** and **214** of implant **200**, in addition to the ratcheting **250** comprise a porous texture **260** to present an irregular surface to the bone to promote bone ingrowth. The porous texture **260** is also able to hold fusion promoting materials and provides for an increased surface area to engage the bone in the fusion process and to provide further stability. The porous texture **260** may also be present on the side walls **218**. It is appreciated that the outer surface and/or the entire implant **200**, may comprise any other porous material or roughened surface sufficient to hold fusion promoting substances and/or allow for bone ingrowth and/or engage the bone during the fusion process. The implant **200** may be further coated with bioac-

tive fusion promoting substances including, but not limited to, hydroxyapatite compounds, osteogenic proteins and bone morphogenic proteins or may be from bioabsorbable material.

Referring to FIGS. 13-17, an alternative embodiment of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant, generally referred to by the numeral 300, is shown. The implant 300 is made of a mesh-like material comprising strands, which may be made of metal, that are pressed together and molded. The upper and lower surfaces 312 and 314 may be convex and conform to the natural surface curvature of the end plates of the vertebrae. In addition, the entire implant 300 may be molded to a shape that conforms to the shape of the disc space created by the removal of disc material from between two adjacent vertebrae. In this manner, the implant 300 has curved upper and lower surfaces 312 and 314, a curved side wall 318 and chamfered edges 319.

As shown in FIGS. 13 and 14, the implant 300 includes an insertion end 320 and a trailing end 330. Furthermore, as shown in FIGS. 13 and 14, the implant 300 includes a first terminal part defining a first bearing surface adapted to bear against an endplate of the vertebrae V_1 , and an opposite second bearing surface adapted to bear against an endplate of the vertebrae V_2 . The implant 300 also includes a second terminal part opposite the first terminal part. The second terminal part defines a third bearing surface adapted to bear against the endplate of the vertebrae V_1 and a fourth bearing surface adapted to bear against the endplate of the vertebrae V_2 .

In addition to the first and second terminal parts, the implant 300 also includes a first side extending between the first terminal part and the second terminal part, and a second side opposite the first side and extending between the first terminal part and the second terminal part.

Referring to FIG. 7A, the implant 300 is shown inserted in the direction of arrow A into the disc space D_1 between adjacent vertebrae V_1 and V_2 . The implant 300 conforms to the endplates of the adjacent vertebrae V_1 and V_2 as the upper and lower surfaces 312 and 314 are convex, and the side wall 318 are curved to conform to the natural curvature of the vertebrae V_1 and V_2 . In this manner, the implant 300 has the same dimensions as the disc material removed from between the two adjacent vertebrae V_1 and V_2 .

The implant 300 may be made wholly or in part of a solid material and/or a porous material, and/or a mesh-like material. The implant 300 may have a surface comprising of a porous material, a mesh-like material, or have a surface that is roughened. It is appreciated that the implant 300 may be solid or may be partially hollow and include at least one internal chamber in communication with said upper and lower surfaces.

As shown in FIG. 17, the mesh-like material comprises strands that are formed and pressed together such that interstices 339, capable of retaining fusion promoting material and for allowing for bone ingrowth, are present between the strands in at least the outer surface of implant 300. Alternatively, it is appreciated that the implant 300 may be made of a cancellous material, similar in configuration to human cancellous bone, having interstices allowing for bone ingrowth. As the implant 300 may be made entirely or in part of the cancellous material, the interstices may be present in the outer surface of the implant 300 and/or within the entire implant to promote bone ingrowth and hold bone fusion promoting materials.

Referring to FIGS. 18-23 an alternative embodiment of the implant of the present invention, generally referred to by the numeral 400, is disclosed. The implant 400 has a substantially

rectangular shape having upper and lower surfaces 412 and 414. The upper and lower surfaces 412 and 414 support the adjacent vertebrae and are disposed in a converging angular relationship to each other in the same manner described above.

The implant 400 has a width W that is substantially less than the width of the implants 100-300 such that a series of such implants 400 are used as the interbody spinal implant, each placed closely adjacent to one another to approximate the size of the removed disc. The size of the implant 400 is approximately 26 millimeters in length and is wide enough so that four of them will substantially fill the intervertebral space, depending on which vertebrae are fused.

In the performing of a posterior lumbar interbody fusion, it is not possible to replace the removed portions of the disc, if a total nuclear discectomy has been performed, with a single large implant as the, delicate dural sac containing the spinal cord and nerve roots covers at all times at least some portion of the posterior disc space. The use of modular implants 400 that are inserted separately into the disc space is appropriate in such case. The modular implants 400 being approximately as long as the depth of the disc material removed, but being considerably narrower, such that they could be introduced into the disc space from the posterior aspect to either side of the dural sac, and then realigned side to side with the disc space so that a number of them each having a length consistent with the depth of the disc removed in that area would in combination have a width equal to the width of the disc material removed. As the disc spaces in the lumbar spine are generally lordotic, the insertion end 420 of the modular implants 400 would have to be taller and less tall posteriorly at the trailing end 430.

To introduce the modular implant 400 that is taller at its insertion end 420 than the space available at the posterior aspect of the disc space, even when that disc space is optimally distracted, is problematic. The modular implants 400 of provide two solutions to the problem. The modular implants 400 may have a reduced size at their Insertion end 420, including but not limited to, a bullet nose, a convexity, and a chamfer to a smaller front surface. This then provides that the implant 400 has an area small enough to be introduced into the posterior aspect of the disc space when the disc space is adequately distracted and the contour of that specialized insertion end of the implant 400 is such that it then allows for a ramping up of the adjacent vertebrae relative to the implant 400 as the implant is advanced forward into the disc space.

Alternatively, or in combination with the above, since in the preferred embodiment the implants 400 are wedge-shaped in the side elevational view when upright but are generally rectangular when viewed from the top plan view, these implants may be introduced into the disc space on their side such that the side walls of the implants are adjacent to the end plates of the adjacent vertebrae. The implants 400 have a side-to-side dimension that is less than the dimension through the insertion end of the implant 400 when upright. It is possible to easily insert the implant 400 first on their side and then to use the insertion instrument engaged to the implant 400 to rotate the implant ninety degrees into the fully upright position, once it has been fully inserted. Once inserted, the upper and lower surfaces 412 and 414 are adjacent to the endplates of the adjacent vertebrae and create and maintain the desired angular relationship of the adjacent vertebrae as the upper and lower surfaces 412 and 414 of the implant 400 are angled with respect to each other.

The implant 400 has large openings 415 in the form of rectangular slots for holding fusion promoting materials to promote bone growth from the vertebrae through the upper

11

and lower surfaces **412** and **414** and into the interior of the implant **400**. As the implant **400** is modular and more than one is implanted at a time, the large openings **415** are also present in the side walls **418** of the implant **400** to provide for bone growth from one implant to another implant such that after successful fusion, the modular implants **400** are interconnected to form a single unit.

Referring to FIG. **21**, the trailing end **430** of the implant **400** is shown having an insertion instrument engaging means comprising a rectangular slot **424** and threaded opening **426**.

Referring to FIG. **23**, an enlarged fragmentary view along line **23** of FIG. **22** illustrating the surface configuration the implant **400** is shown. The surface configuration of the implant **400** is the same as the porous texture **260** described above.

Referring to FIG. **24**, an alternative embodiment of the lordotic interbody spinal fusion implant of the present invention, generally referred to by the numeral **500**, is shown. The implant **500** is a modular implant and has a similar overall configuration as implant **400**. The implant **500** instead of having slots **415** has an upper and lower surfaces **512** and **514** that are capable of receiving and holding bone, or other materials capable of participating in the fusion process and/or capable of promoting bone ingrowth. In the preferred embodiment, the upper and lower surfaces **512** and **514** comprise a plurality of posts **540** that are spaced apart to provide a plurality of interstices **542** which are partial wells with incomplete walls capable of holding and retaining milled bone material or any artificial bone ingrowth promoting material. The implant **500** may be prepared for implantation by grouting or otherwise coating the surface **538** with the appropriate fusion promoting substances.

Referring to FIGS. **28** and **29**, an enlarged view of the upper surface **512** of the implant **500** and a partial cross section thereof are shown. In the preferred embodiment, the posts **540** have a head portion **544** of a larger diameter than the remainder of the posts **540**, and each of the interstices **542** is the reverse configuration of the posts **544**, having a bottom **546** that is wider than the entrance **548** to the interstices **542**. Such a configuration of the posts **540** and interstices **542** aids in the retention of bone material in the surface **538** of the implant **500** and further assists in the locking of the implant **500** into the bone fusion mass created from the bone ingrowth. As the bone ingrowth at the bottom **546** of the interstices **542** is wider than the entrance **548**, the bone ingrowth cannot exit from the entrance **548** and is locked within the interstice **542**. The surface **538** of the implant **500** provides for an improvement in the available amount of surface area which may be still further increased by rough finishing, flocking or otherwise producing a non smooth surface.

In the preferred embodiment, the posts **540** have a maximum diameter in the range of approximately 0.1-2 mm and a height of approximately 0.1-2 mm and are spaced apart a distance of 0.1-2 mm such that the interstices **542** have a width in the range of approximately 0.1 to 2 mm. The post sizes, shapes, and distributions may be varied within the same implant.

It is appreciated that the implant **500** shares the same structure and features of the implant **400** described above.

FIG. **30** is a side elevational view of a segment of the human spinal column **S** shown in lordosis with an alternative embodiment of the lordotic spinal fusion implant referred to by the numeral **600**, that is adjustable and expandable shown inserted in a space to restore and maintain the correct anatomical alignment of the adjacent vertebrae. The implant **600** comprises a lower member **682** and an upper member **684** which when fitted together form an essentially rectangular

12

implant. The upper member **684** and the lower member **682** have hollow portions that face one another and receive tapered wedges **686** and **688** that fit within the hollow portion of the upper and lower members **682** and **684**. The upper and lower members **682** and **684** each have a wedged interior surface **689a** and **689b** which are angled towards the interior of the implant **600**. The wedges **682** and **684** are such that at their large end, they are higher than the combined hollow space between the upper and lower members **684** and **682**, and shallower at the other end than the hollow space between the upper and lower members.

The wedges **686** and **688** have a central threaded opening **690** and **692** in alignment with each other for receiving threaded screw **694**. As the screw **694** is threaded into the opening **690**, the wedges **686** and **688** abut the interior sloped surfaces **689a** and **689b** of the upper and lower members **682** and **684**. As the screw **694** is turned, the wedges **686** and **688** are drawn together, and the sloped portions of the wedges force the upper member **682** away from the lower member **684**. As the interior sloped surfaces **689a** and **689b** have a greater slope near the trailing end **630**, than near the insertion end **620**, the upper and lower members **682** and **684** are forced apart more at the insertion end **620** than at the trailing end **630**. As a result, the upper and lower members **682** and **684** are disposed at a converging angular relationship to each other and support the adjacent vertebrae V_1 and V_2 in the same angular relationship.

Referring to FIG. **31**, an alternative embodiment of the implant of the present invention, generally referred to by the numeral **700**, is shown. The implant **700** has movable projections, in the form of spikes **708**, which are movable from a first position within the implant **700** to a second position extending outside of the implant. The implant **700** is of a generally rectangular configuration, having a top surface **702** and a bottom surface **704** of the implant with slots **706** for permitting pivotal member **707** having spikes **708** at their ends to project through said slots **706**. The spikes **708** are pinned at one end **710** within the implant **700**.

The implant **700** has opposing wedge shaped members **712** and **714** having a central threaded opening **716** for receiving a threaded screw **718** having a head **720** and a slot **722**. The wedges **712** and **714** are facing each other so that upon turning of the screw **718**, will the two wedges **712** and **714** are drawn together to cause the spikes **708** to pivot about their end **710** and project to the exterior of the implant **700** through the aligned slots **706**. The implant **700** may comprise a series of holes **724** on its surfaces for promoting bone ingrowth and fusion.

In use, after the removal of the disc material, the implant **700** with the spikes **708** in their withdrawn position, is inserted into the disc space. Then the screw **718** is turned until the spikes **708** are forced to enter the vertebrae and the implant **700** is thus held firmly in place.

While the invention has been described with regards to the preferred embodiment and a number of alternative embodiments, it is recognized that other embodiments of the present invention may be devised which would not depart from the scope of the present invention.

I claim:

1. A spinal fusion implant for insertion between a first vertebra and a second vertebra adjacent the first vertebra, the first vertebra having a generally vertically extending first peripheral wall and a first endplate and the second vertebra having a generally vertically extending second peripheral wall and a second endplate, wherein the implant comprises:
a first terminal part defining a trailing face, a first bearing surface adapted to bear against a portion of the first

13

endplate, and an opposite second bearing surface adapted to bear against a portion of the second, said trailing face extending between said first bearing surface and second bearing surface, said trailing face having a recessed portion and a threaded opening configured to receive an insertion instrument for inserting said implant between the first vertebra and the second vertebra;

a second terminal part opposite said first terminal part, said second terminal part having an insertion face extending between a third bearing surface and a fourth bearing surface, said implant having a longitudinal axis extending through said trailing face of said first terminal part and said insertion face of said second terminal part, and having a cross section in a first plane extending through said first bearing surface and said second bearing surface, and along the longitudinal axis, said implant having a length between said trailing face of said first terminal part and said insertion face of said second terminal part and parallel to the longitudinal axis, said implant having a width and a height each perpendicular to the length of said implant, the width of said implant being greater than the height of said implant;

a first side and an opposite second side, said first side and said second side extending from said first terminal part to said second terminal part, portions of said first side and said second side being substantially flat, said substantially flat portions intersecting a second plane that is perpendicular to the first plane and extends through said insertion face and said trailing face, wherein said substantially flat portions of said first side and said second side are symmetrical about the first plane;

an opening between said trailing face and said insertion face and between said first and second sides to permit for the growth of bone through said implant from the first vertebra to the second vertebra;

upper and lower bearing surfaces each having a length measured parallel to the longitudinal axis of said implant, said upper and lower bearing surfaces having portions proximate each of said first and second sides and being convex along the entire length of said upper and lower bearing surfaces relative to the second plane and in a direction parallel to the longitudinal axis, said trailing face having a height less than and measured parallel to a maximum height measured between said upper and lower bearing surfaces proximate one of said first and second sides;

ratchetings on each of said upper and lower bearing surfaces adapted to engage the first vertebra and the second vertebra, respectively, each of said ratchetings having a ridge oriented in a direction generally parallel to the width of said implant, said ratchetings on each of said upper and lower bearing surfaces facing one direction; and

said implant being adapted to hold bone fusion promoting materials.

2. The implant of claim 1, wherein said implant has a plurality of openings between said trailing face and said insertion face and between said first and second sides to permit for the growth of bone through said implant from the first vertebra to the second vertebra.

3. The implant of claim 1, wherein said convex portions of said upper and lower bearing surfaces are convex along a continuous uninterrupted majority of the lengths of said upper and lower bearing surfaces.

4. A spinal fusion implant for insertion between a first vertebra and a second vertebra adjacent the first vertebra, the first vertebra having a generally vertically extending first

14

peripheral wall and a first endplate and the second vertebra having a generally vertically extending second peripheral wall and a second endplate, wherein the implant comprises:

a first terminal part defining a trailing face, a first bearing surface adapted to bear against a portion of the first endplate, and an opposite second bearing surface adapted to bear against a portion of the second endplate, said trailing face extending between said first bearing surface and second bearing surface, said trailing face having a recessed portion and a threaded opening configured to receive an insertion instrument for inserting said implant between the first vertebra and the second vertebra;

a second terminal part opposite said first terminal part, said second terminal part having an insertion face extending between a third bearing surface and a fourth bearing surface, said implant having a longitudinal axis extending through said trailing face of said first terminal part and said insertion face of said second terminal part, and having a cross section in a first plane extending through said first bearing surface and said second bearing surface, and along the longitudinal axis, said implant having a length between said trailing face of said first terminal part and said insertion face of said second terminal part and parallel to the longitudinal axis, said implant having a width and a height each perpendicular to the length of said implant;

a first side and an opposite second side, said first side and said second side extending from said first terminal part to said second terminal part, portions of said first side and said second side being substantially flat, said substantially flat portions intersecting a second plane that is perpendicular to the first plane and extends through said insertion face and said trailing face, wherein said substantially flat portions of said first side and said second side are symmetrical about the first plane;

an opening between said trailing face and said insertion face and between said first and second sides to permit for the growth of bone through said implant from the first vertebra to the second vertebra;

upper and lower bearing surfaces each having a length measured parallel to the longitudinal axis of said implant, said upper and lower bearing surfaces having portions proximate each of said first and second sides and being convex along the entire length of said upper and lower bearing surfaces relative to the second plane and in a direction parallel to the longitudinal axis, the width of said implant being greater than the height measured between said upper and lower bearing surfaces proximate one of said first and second sides of said implant;

ratchetings on each of said upper and lower bearing surfaces adapted to engage the first vertebra and the second vertebra, respectively, each of said ratchetings having a ridge oriented in a direction generally parallel to the width of said implant, said ratchetings on each of said upper and lower bearing surfaces facing one direction; and

said implant being adapted to hold bone fusion promoting materials.

5. The implant of claim 4, wherein said implant has a plurality of openings between said trailing face and said insertion face and between said first and second sides to permit for the growth of bone through said implant from the first vertebra to the second vertebra.

6. The implant of claim 4, wherein said convex portions of said upper and lower bearing surfaces are convex along a

15

continuous uninterrupted majority of the lengths of said upper and lower bearing surfaces.

7. A lordotic spinal fusion implant for insertion between a first vertebra and a second vertebra adjacent the first vertebra, the first vertebra having a generally vertically extending first peripheral wall and a first endplate and the second vertebra having a generally vertically extending second peripheral wall and a second endplate, wherein the implant comprises:

a first terminal part defining a trailing face, a first bearing surface adapted to bear against a portion of the first endplate, and an opposite second bearing surface adapted to bear against a portion of the second endplate, said trailing face extending between said first bearing surface and second bearing surface;

a second terminal part opposite said first terminal part, said second terminal part having an insertion face extending between a third bearing surface and a fourth bearing surface, said implant having a longitudinal axis extending through said trailing face of said first terminal part and said insertion face of said second terminal part, and having a cross section in a first plane extending through said first bearing surface and said second bearing surface, and along the longitudinal axis, said implant having a length between said trailing face of said first terminal part and said insertion face of said second terminal part and parallel to the longitudinal axis, said implant having a width and a height each perpendicular to the length of said implant;

a first side and an opposite second side, said first side and said second side extending from said first terminal part to said second terminal part, portions of said first side and said second side being substantially flat, said substantially flat portions intersecting a second plane that is perpendicular to the first plane and extends through said insertion face and said trailing face, wherein said substantially flat portions of said first side and said second side are symmetrical about the first plane, said implant being adapted to be inserted between the first vertebra and the second vertebra with said first side and said second side of said implant being oriented toward the first endplate and the second endplate, respectively, and then rotated ninety degrees into an upright position, said trailing face having a recessed portion intersecting each of said first and second sides and being configured to receive an insertion instrument for inserting said implant between the first vertebra and the second vertebra;

an opening between said trailing face and said insertion face and between said first and second sides to permit for the growth of bone through said implant from the first vertebra to the second vertebra;

upper and lower bearing each surfaces having a length measured parallel to the longitudinal axis of said implant, said upper and lower bearing surfaces having portions proximate each of said first and second sides and being convex along the entire length of said upper and lower bearing surfaces relative to the second plane and in a direction parallel to the longitudinal axis, said trailing face having a height less than and measured parallel to a maximum height measured between said upper and lower bearing surfaces proximate one of said first and second sides, said upper and lower bearing surfaces being disposed in a converging angular relationship toward each other such that said implant appears wedge-shaped from a side view, the converging angular relationship of said upper and lower bearing surfaces maintaining the first vertebra and the second vertebra adjacent to said upper and lower bearing sur-

16

faces in an angular relationship to maintain the desired lordosis between the first vertebra and the second vertebra;

ratchetings on each of said upper and lower bearing surfaces adapted to engage the first vertebra and the second vertebra, respectively, each of said ratchetings having a ridge oriented in a direction generally parallel to the width of said implant, said ratchetings on each of said upper and lower bearing surfaces facing one direction; and

said implant being adapted to hold bone fusion promoting materials.

8. The implant of claim 7, wherein said implant has a plurality of openings between said trailing face and said insertion face and between said first and second sides to permit for the growth of bone through said implant from the first vertebra to the second vertebra.

9. The implant of claim 7, wherein said convex portions of said upper and lower bearing surfaces are convex along a continuous uninterrupted majority of the lengths of said upper and lower bearing surfaces.

10. A spinal fusion implant for insertion between a first vertebra and a second vertebra adjacent the first vertebra, the first vertebra having a generally vertically extending first peripheral wall and a first endplate and the second vertebra having a generally vertically extending second peripheral wall and a second endplate, wherein the implant comprises:

a first terminal part defining a trailing face, a first bearing surface adapted to bear against a portion of the first endplate, and an opposite second bearing surface adapted to bear against a portion of the second endplate, said trailing face extending between said first bearing surface and second bearing surface;

a second terminal part opposite said first terminal part, said second terminal part having an insertion face extending between a third bearing surface and a fourth bearing surface, said implant having a longitudinal axis extending through said trailing face of said first terminal part and said insertion face of said second terminal part, and having a cross section in a first plane extending through said first bearing surface and said second bearing surface, and along the longitudinal axis, said implant having a length between said trailing face of said first terminal part and said insertion face of said second terminal part and parallel to the longitudinal axis, said implant having a width and a height each perpendicular to the length of said implant;

a first side and an opposite second side, said first side and said second side extending from said first terminal part to said second terminal part, portions of said first side and said second side being substantially flat, said substantially flat portions intersecting a second plane that is perpendicular to the first plane and extends through said insertion face and said trailing face, wherein said substantially flat portions of said first side and said second side are symmetrical about the first plane, said implant being adapted to be inserted between the first vertebra and the second vertebra with said first side and said second side of said implant being oriented toward the first endplate and the second endplate, respectively, and then rotated ninety degrees into an upright position, said trailing face having a recessed portion intersecting each of said first and second sides and being configured to receive an insertion instrument for inserting said implant between the first vertebra and the second vertebra;

an opening between said trailing face and said insertion face and between said first and second sides to permit for

17

the growth of bone through said implant from the first vertebra to the second vertebra;
 upper and lower bearing surfaces each having a length measured parallel to the longitudinal axis of said implant, said upper and lower bearing surfaces having portions proximate each of said first and second sides and being convex along the entire length of said upper and lower bearing surfaces relative to the second plane and in a direction parallel to the longitudinal axis, said trailing face having a height less than and measured parallel to a maximum height measured between said upper and lower bearing surfaces proximate one of said first and second sides;
 ratchetings on each of said upper and lower bearing surfaces adapted to engage the first vertebra and the second vertebra, respectively, each of said ratchetings having a ridge oriented in a direction generally parallel to the width of said implant, said ratchetings on each of said upper and lower bearing surfaces facing one direction; and
 said implant being adapted to hold bone fusion promoting materials.

11. The implant of claim 10, wherein said implant has a plurality of openings between said trailing face and said insertion face and between said first and second sides to permit for the growth of bone through said implant from the first vertebra to the second vertebra.

12. The implant of claim 10, wherein said convex portions of said upper and lower bearing surfaces are convex along a continuous uninterrupted majority of the lengths of said upper and lower bearing surfaces.

13. A spinal fusion implant for insertion between a first vertebra and a second vertebra adjacent the first vertebra, the first vertebra having a generally vertically extending first peripheral wall and a first endplate and the second vertebra having a generally vertically extending second peripheral wall and a second endplate, wherein the implant comprises:

a first terminal part defining a trailing face, a first bearing surface adapted to bear against a portion of the first endplate, and an opposite second bearing surface adapted to bear against a portion of the second endplate, said trailing face extending between said first bearing surface and second bearing surface, said trailing face having a recessed portion and an opening configured to receive an insertion instrument for inserting said implant between the first vertebra and the second vertebra;

a second terminal part opposite said first terminal part, said second terminal part having an insertion face extending between a third bearing surface and a fourth bearing surface, said implant having a longitudinal axis extending through said trailing face of said first terminal part and said insertion face of said second terminal part, and having a cross section in a first plane extending through said first bearing surface and said second bearing surface, and along the longitudinal axis, said implant having a length between said trailing face of said first terminal part and said insertion face of said second terminal part and parallel to the longitudinal axis, said implant having a width and a height each perpendicular to the length of said implant, the width of said implant being greater than the height of said implant;

a first side and an opposite second side, said first side and said second side extending from said first terminal part to said second terminal part, portions of said first side and said second side being substantially flat, said substantially flat portions intersecting a second plane that is perpendicular to the first plane and extends through said

18

insertion face and said trailing face, wherein said substantially flat portions of said first side and said second side are symmetrical about the first plane;

an opening between said trailing face and said insertion face and between said first and second sides to permit for the growth of bone through said implant from the first vertebra to the second vertebra;

upper and lower bearing surfaces each having a length measured parallel to the longitudinal axis of said implant, said upper and lower bearing surfaces having portions proximate each of said first and second sides and being convex along the entire length of said upper and lower bearing surfaces relative to the second plane and in a direction parallel to the longitudinal axis, said trailing face having a height less than and measured parallel to a maximum height measured between said upper and lower bearing surfaces proximate one of said first and second sides;

a plurality of raised pyramid-like projections on each of said upper and lower bearing surfaces for engaging the implant to the first vertebra and the second vertebra once implanted; and

said implant being adapted to hold bone fusion promoting materials.

14. The implant of claim 13, wherein said implant has a plurality of openings between said trailing face and said insertion face and between said first and second sides to permit for the growth of bone through said implant from the first vertebra to the second vertebra.

15. The implant of claim 13, wherein said convex portions of said upper and lower bearing surfaces are convex along a continuous uninterrupted majority of the lengths of said upper and lower bearing surfaces.

16. A lordotic spinal fusion implant for insertion between a first vertebra and a second vertebra adjacent the first vertebra, the first vertebra having a generally vertically extending first peripheral wall and a first endplate and the second vertebra having a generally vertically extending second peripheral wall and a second endplate, wherein the implant comprises:

a first terminal part defining a trailing face, a first bearing surface adapted to bear against a portion of the first endplate, and an opposite second bearing surface adapted to bear against a portion of the second endplate, said trailing face extending between said first bearing surface and second bearing surface, said implant having a recessed portion configured to receive an insertion instrument for inserting said implant between the first vertebra and the second vertebra;

a second terminal part opposite said first terminal part, said second terminal part having an insertion face extending between a third bearing surface and a fourth bearing surface, said implant having a longitudinal axis extending through said trailing face of said first terminal part and said insertion face of said second terminal part, and having a cross section in a first plane extending through said first bearing surface and said second bearing surface, and along the longitudinal axis, said implant having a length between said trailing face of said first terminal part and said insertion face of said second terminal part and parallel to the longitudinal axis, said implant having a width and a height each perpendicular to the length of said implant;

a first side and an opposite second side, said first side and said second side extending from said first terminal part to said second terminal part, portions of said first side and said second side being substantially flat, said substantially flat portions intersecting a second plane that is

19

perpendicular to the first plane and extends through said insertion face and said trailing face, wherein said substantially flat portions of said first side and said second side are symmetrical about the first plane, said implant being adapted to be inserted between the first vertebra and the second vertebra with said first side and said second side of said implant being oriented toward the first endplate and the second endplate, respectively, and then rotated ninety degrees into an upright position, said trailing face having a recessed portion intersecting each of said first and second sides and being configured to receive an insertion instrument for inserting said implant between the first vertebra and the second vertebra;

an opening between said trailing face and said insertion face and between said first and second sides to permit for the growth of bone through said implant from the first vertebra to the second vertebra;

upper and lower bearing surfaces each having a length measured parallel to the longitudinal axis of said implant, said upper and lower bearing surfaces having portions proximate each of said first and second sides and being convex along the entire length of said upper and lower bearing surfaces relative to the second plane and in a direction parallel to the longitudinal axis, said trailing face having a height less than and measured parallel to a maximum height measured between said upper and lower bearing surfaces proximate one of said first and second sides, said upper and lower bearing

20

surfaces being disposed in a converging angular relationship toward each other such that said implant appears wedge-shaped from a side view, the converging angular relationship of said upper and lower bearing surfaces maintaining the first vertebra and the second vertebra adjacent to said upper and lower bearing surfaces in an angular relationship to maintain the desired lordosis between the first vertebra and the second vertebra;

a plurality of raised pyramid-like projections on each of said upper and lower bearing surfaces for engaging the implant to the first vertebra and the second vertebra once implanted; and

said implant being adapted to hold bone fusion promoting materials.

17. The implant of claim 16, wherein said implant has a plurality of openings between said trailing face and said insertion face and between said first and second sides to permit for the growth of bone through said implant from the first vertebra to the second vertebra.

18. The implant of claim 16, wherein said convex portions of said upper and lower bearing surfaces are convex along a continuous uninterrupted majority of the lengths of said upper and lower bearing surfaces.

19. The implant of claim 16, wherein said substantially flat portions of said first and second sides are parallel to one another.

* * * * *