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(54) **ZERO-PROFILE EXPANDABLE
INTERVERTEBRAL SPACER DEVICES FOR
DISTRACTION AND SPINAL FUSION AND A
UNIVERSAL TOOL FOR THEIR
PLACEMENT AND EXPANSION**

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC .. A61F 2/442; A61F 2/4425; A61F 2002/443;
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(Continued)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

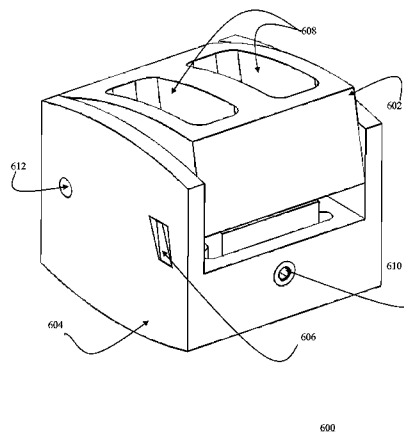
A unique, universal Zero-Profile Expandable Intervertebral
Spacer (ZP-EIS) device for fusion and distraction through-
out the entire spine is provided which can be inserted via
anterior, anterolateral, lateral, far lateral or posterior surgical
approaches dependent on the need and preference. Multiple
ZP-EIS embodiments each with unique mechanisms of
calibrated expansion are provided. Two of these embodi-
ments incorporate bi-directional fixating transvertebral
(BDFT) screws and five other embodiments do not incor-
porate BDFT screws. A tool for implantation into the
intervertebral device and calibrated device expansion is also
disclosed.

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20 Claims, 38 Drawing Sheets



Related U.S. Application Data

continuation of application No. 14/063,197, filed on Oct. 25, 2013, now Pat. No. 9,848,993, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 13/210,150, filed on Aug. 15, 2011, now Pat. No. 9,867,719, and a continuation-in-part of application No. 13/210,157, filed on Aug. 15, 2011, now Pat. No. 9,889,022, and a continuation-in-part of application No. 13/210,162, filed on Aug. 15, 2011, now Pat. No. 9,895,238, and a continuation-in-part of application No. 13/210,168, filed on Aug. 15, 2011, now Pat. No. 9,907,674, and a continuation-in-part of application No. 13/741,361, filed on Jan. 14, 2013, now Pat. No. 9,301,854, said application No. 13/210,150 is a continuation of application No. 13/084,543, filed on Apr. 11, 2011, now Pat. No. 8,353,913, and a continuation of application No. 13/108,982, filed on May 16, 2011, now Pat. No. 9,005,293, said application No. 13/210,157 is a continuation of application No. 13/084,543, and a continuation of application No. 13/108,982, said application No. 13/210,162 is a continuation of application No. 13/084,543, and a continuation of application No. 13/108,982, said application No. 13/210,168 is a continuation of application No. 13/084,543, and a continuation of application No. 13/108,982, said application No. 13/741,361 is a continuation of application No. 13/084,543, and a continuation of application No. 13/108,982, said application No. 13/084,543 is a continuation of application No. 11/842,855, filed on Aug. 21, 2007, now Pat. No. 7,942,903, said application No. 13/108,982 is a continuation of application No. 11/842,855, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 11/536,815, filed on Sep. 29, 2006, now Pat. No. 7,846,188, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 11/208,644, filed on Aug. 23, 2005, now Pat. No. 7,704,279.

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(58) Field of Classification Search

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 See application file for complete search history.

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 International Search Report (ISR) and Written Opinion of the International Searching Authority, dated Jul. 9, 2008, International Application No. PCT/US2007021013.

* cited by examiner

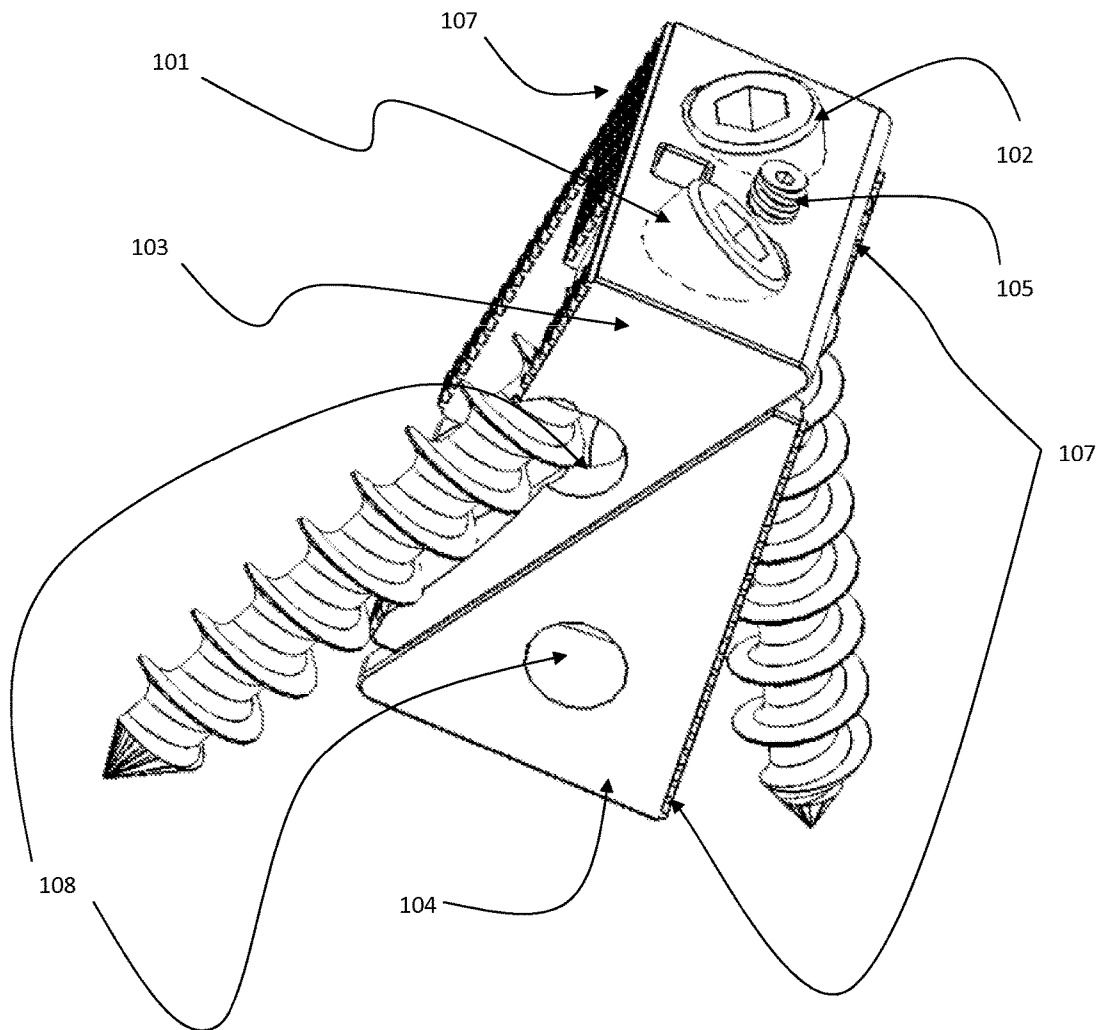


Fig. 1A

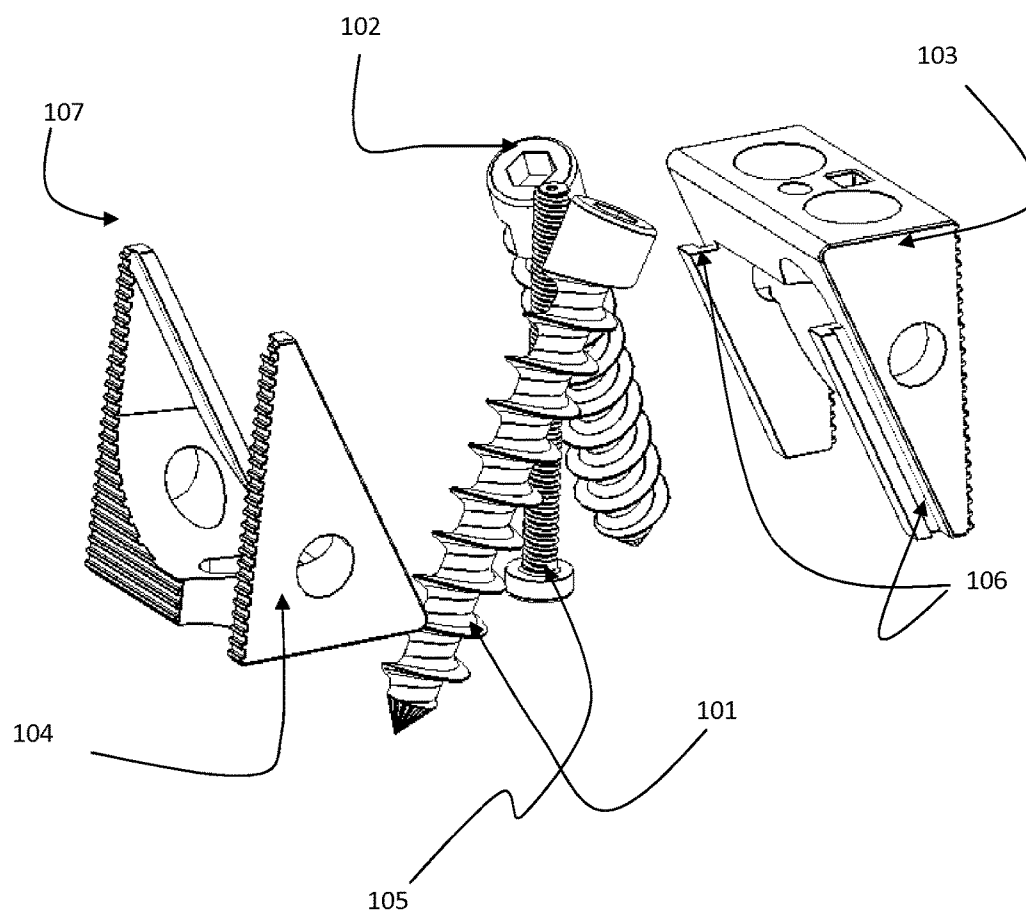


Fig. 1B

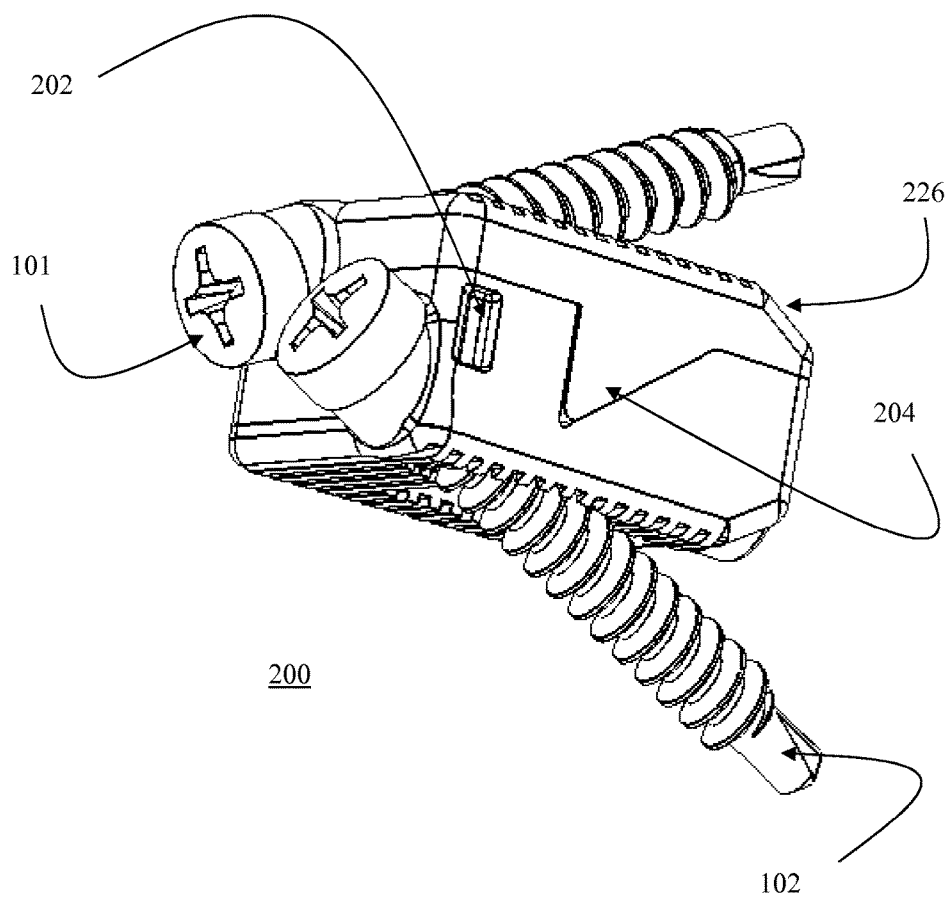


Fig. 2A

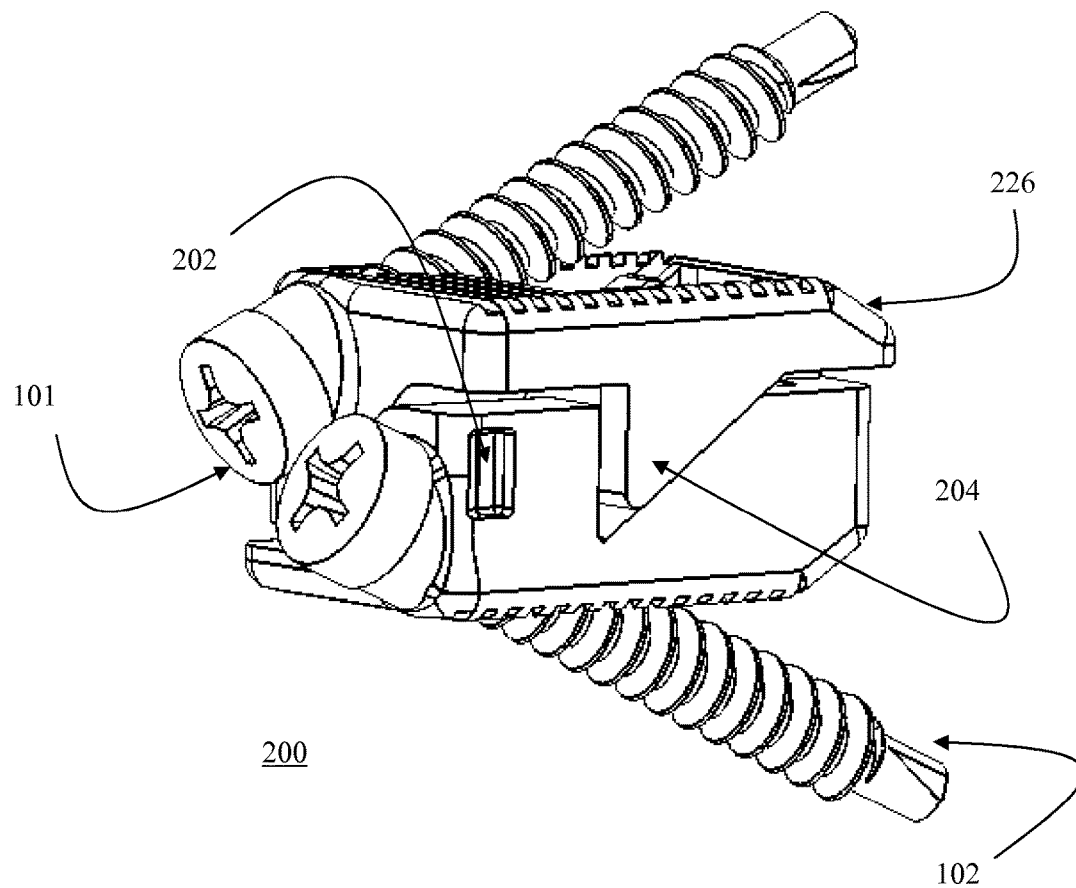


Fig. 2B

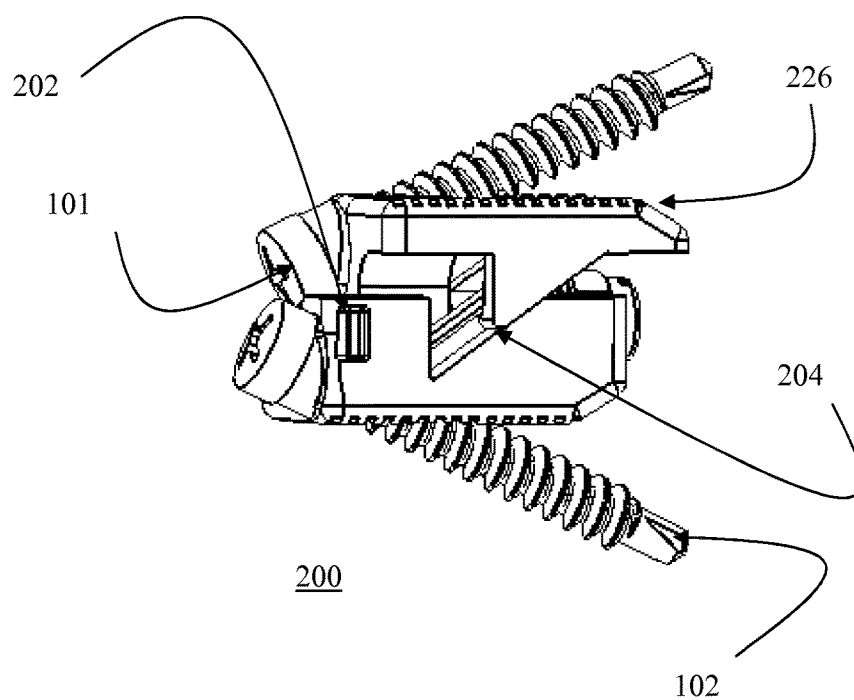


Fig. 2C

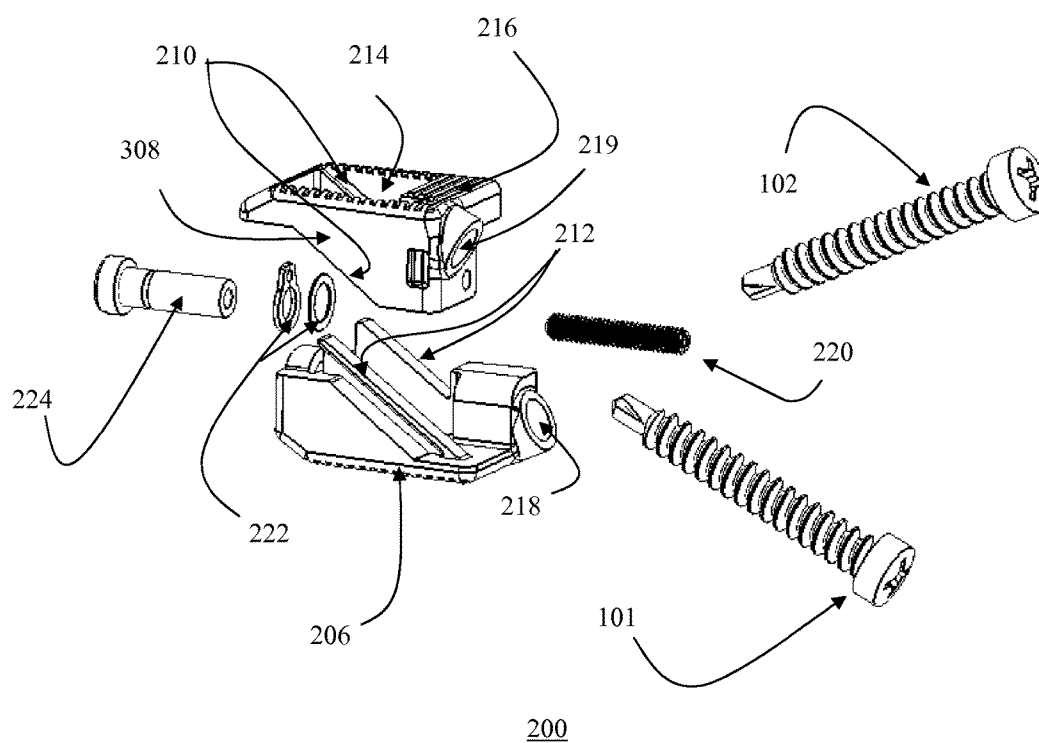


Fig. 2D

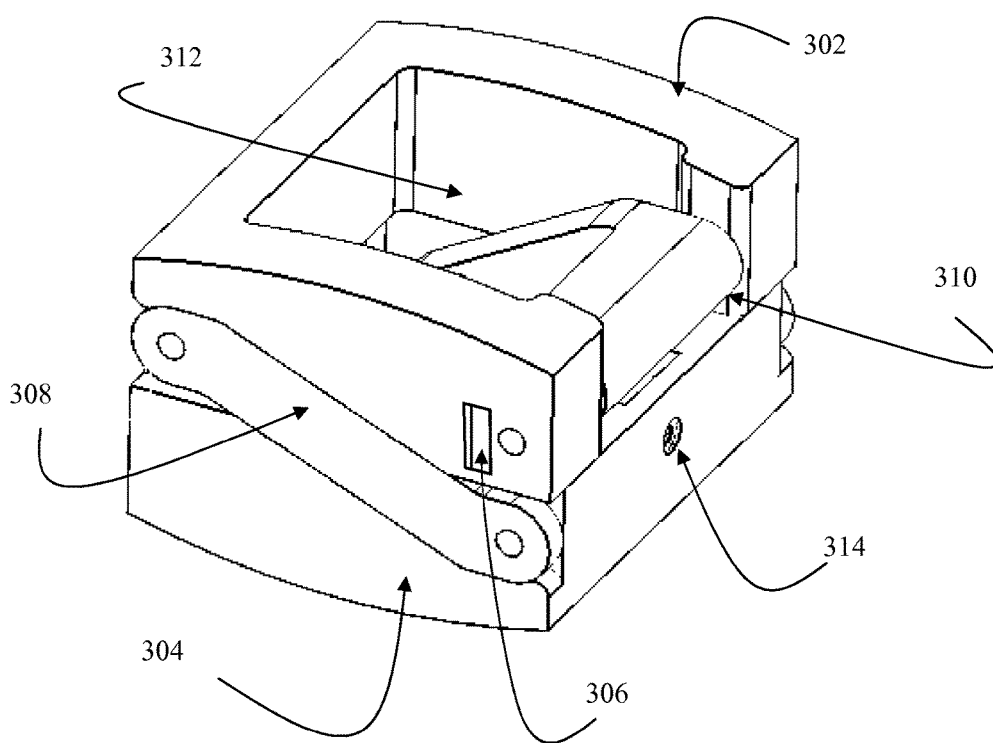


Fig. 3A

300

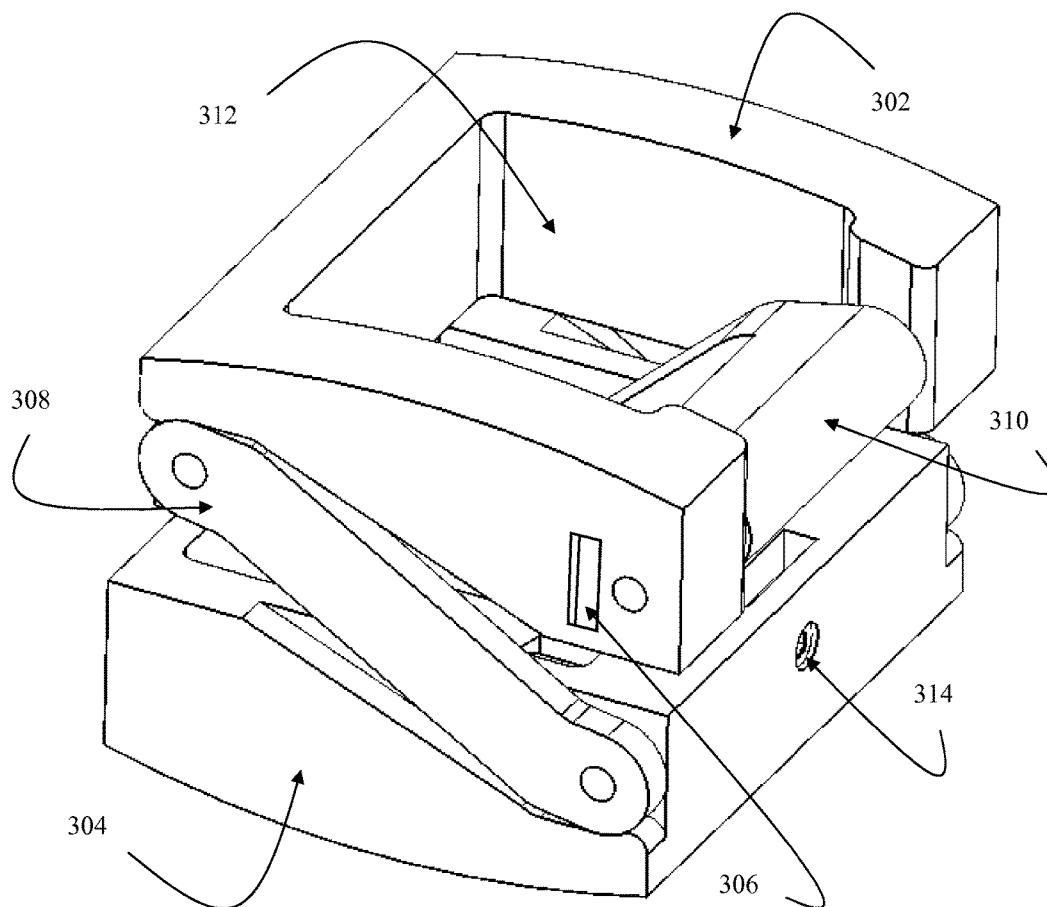


Fig. 3B

300

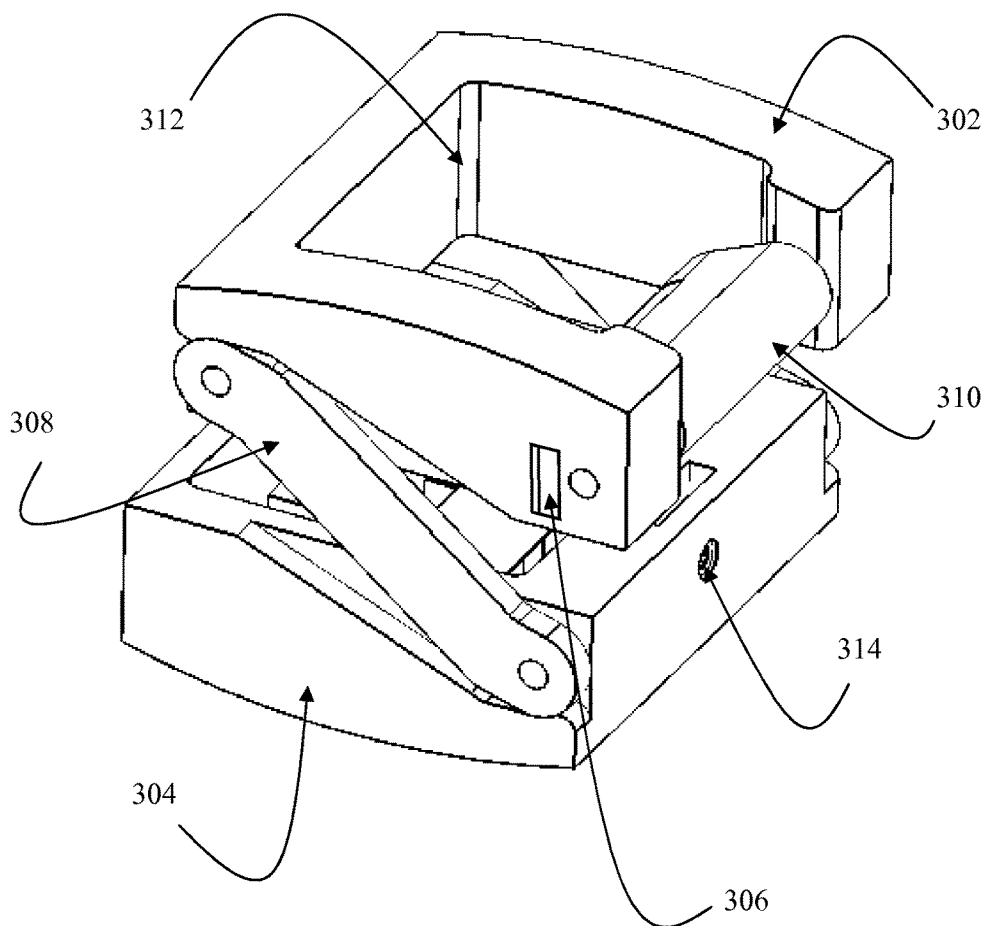


Fig. 3C

400

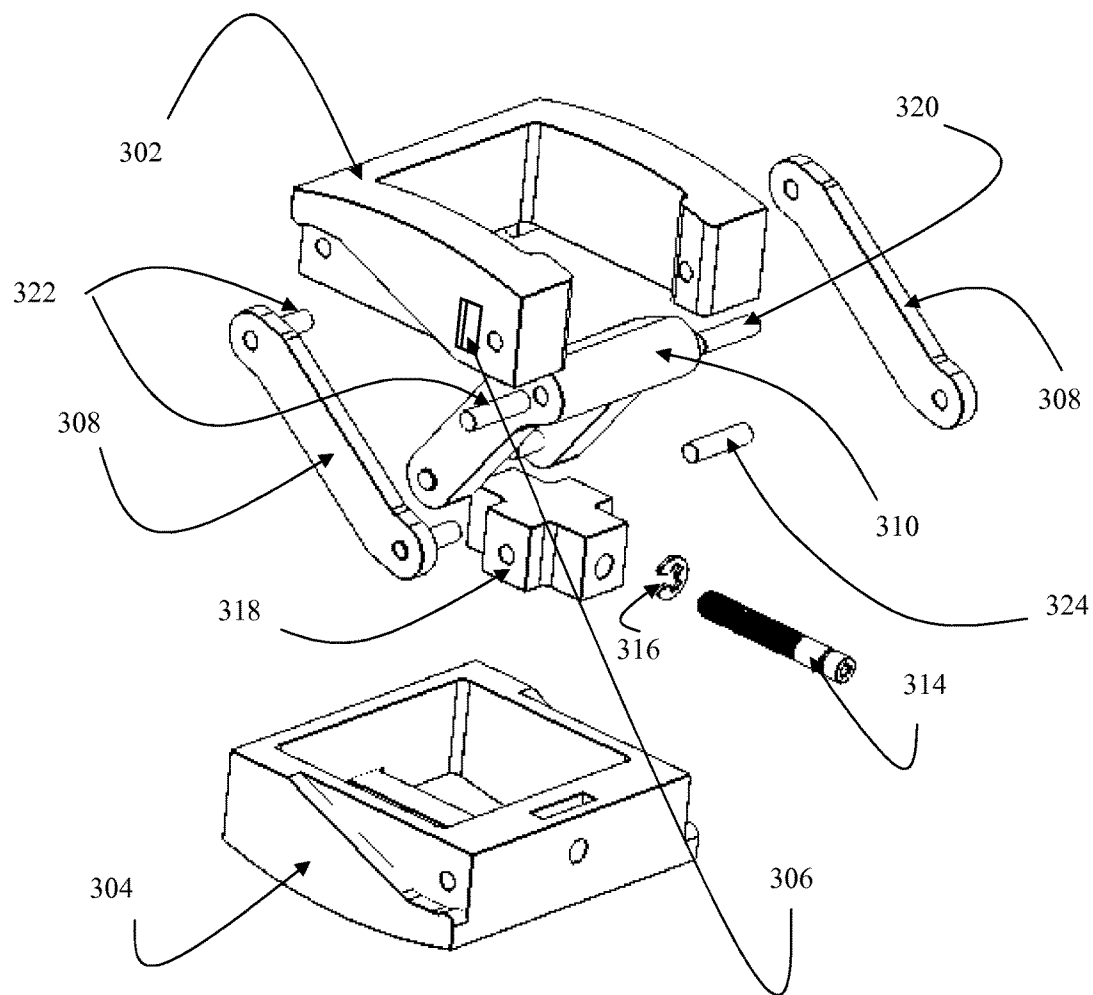


Fig. 3D

300

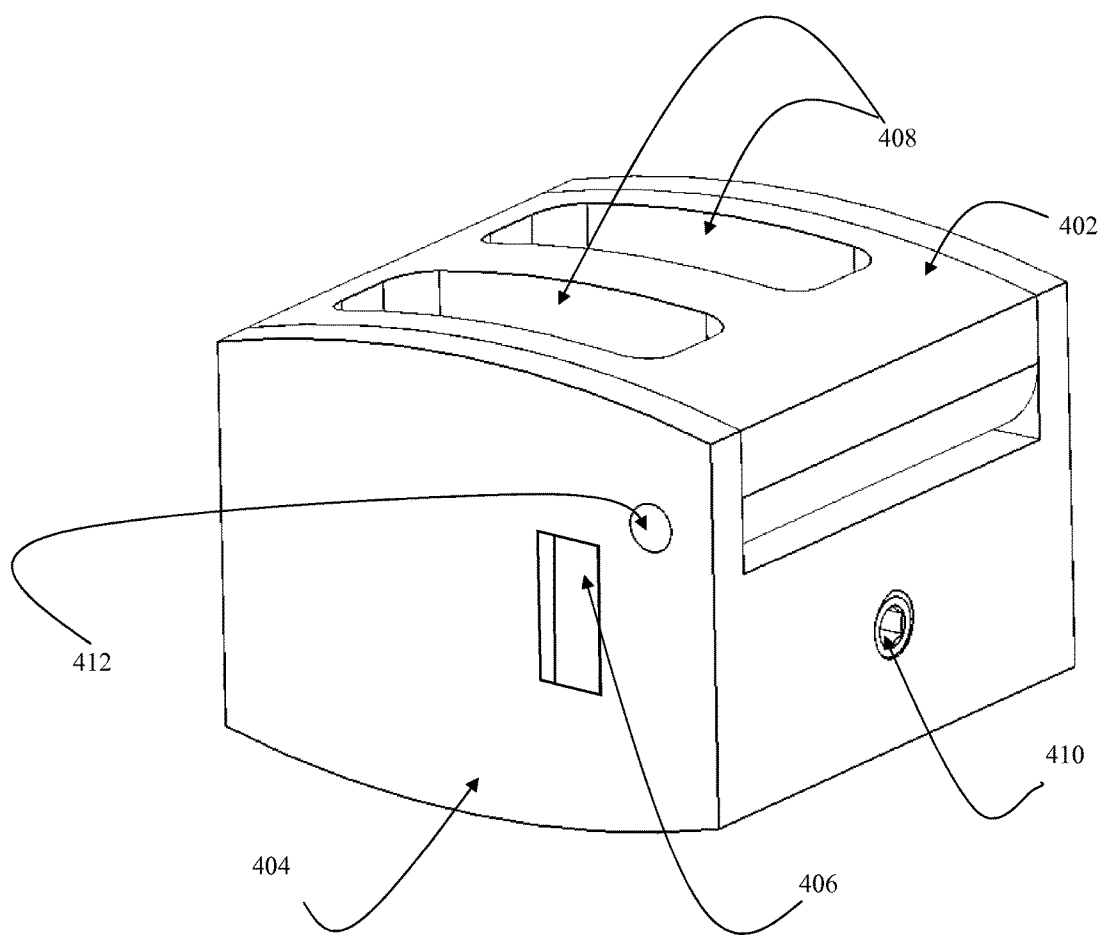


Fig. 4A

400

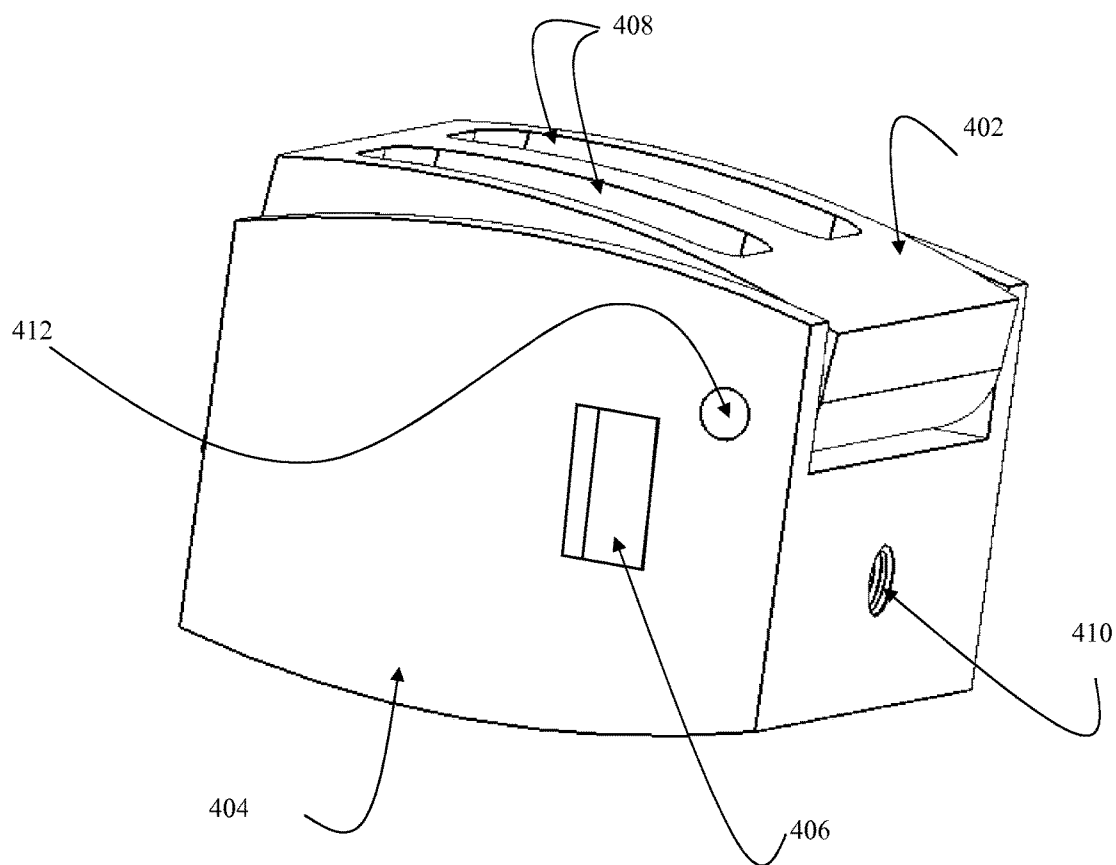
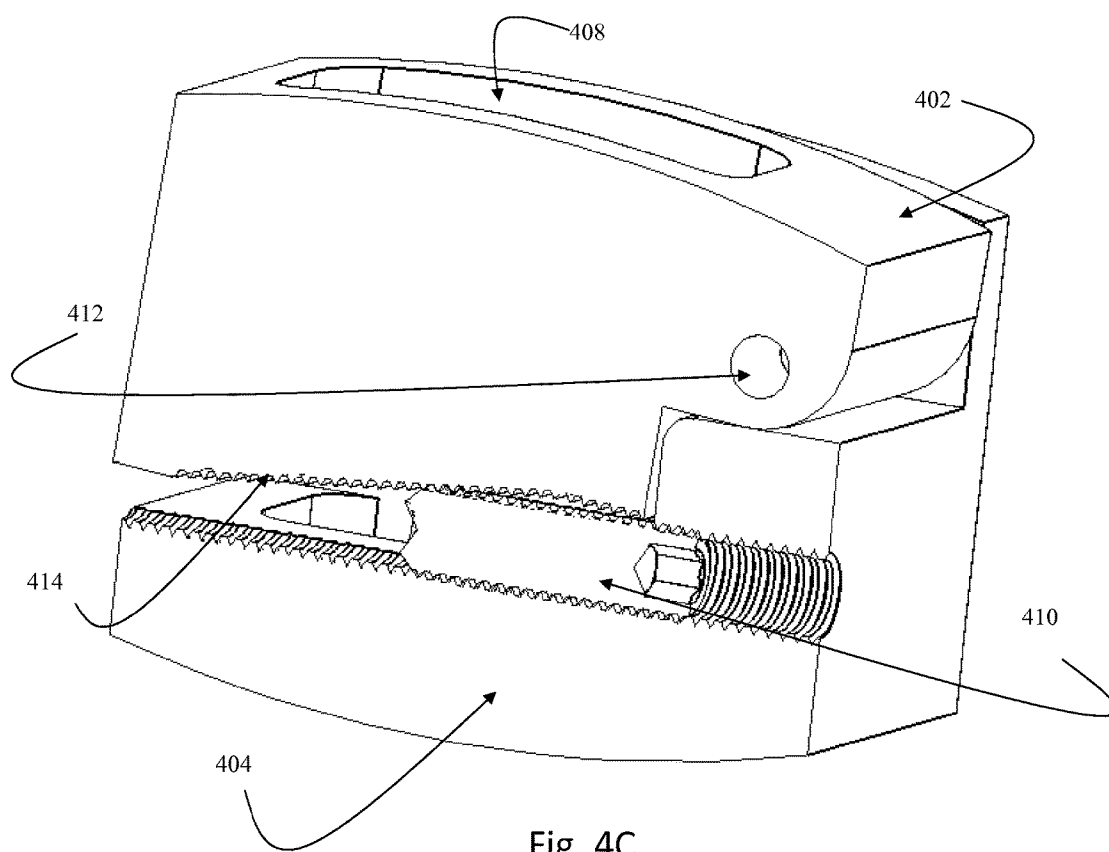


Fig. 4B

400



400

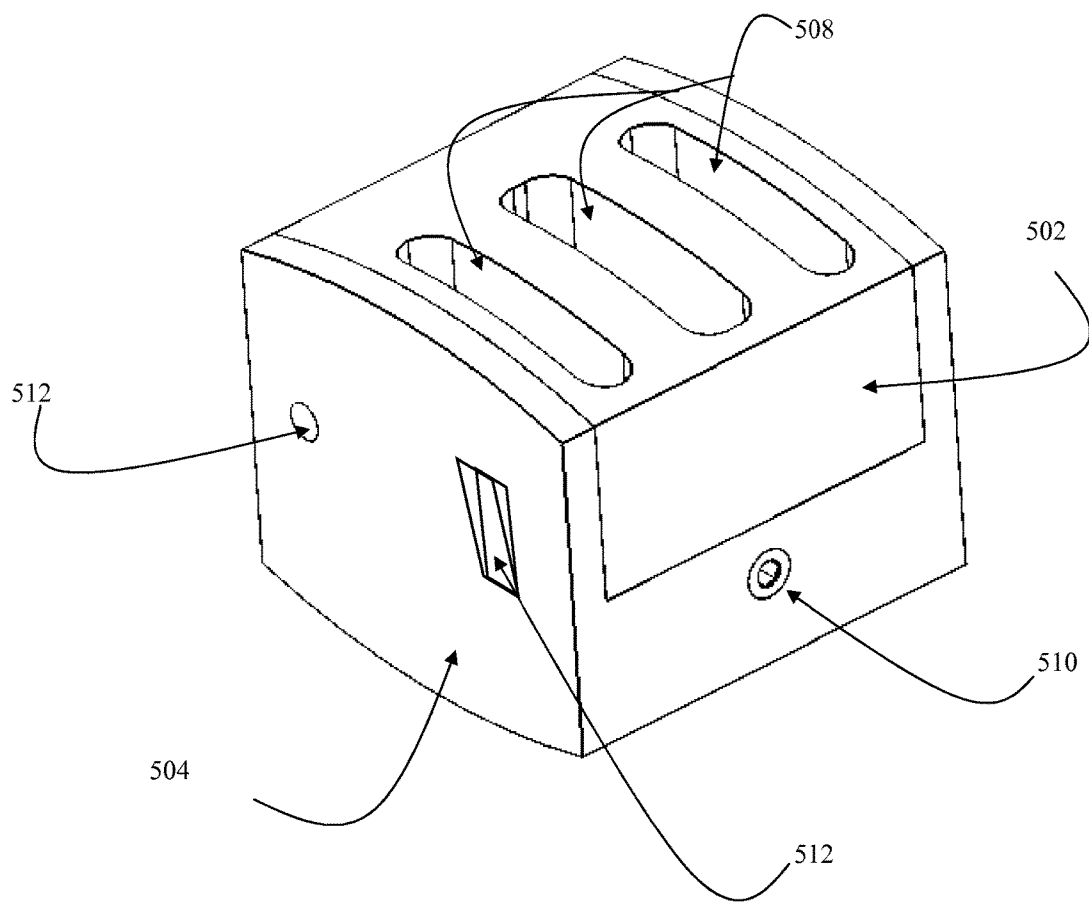
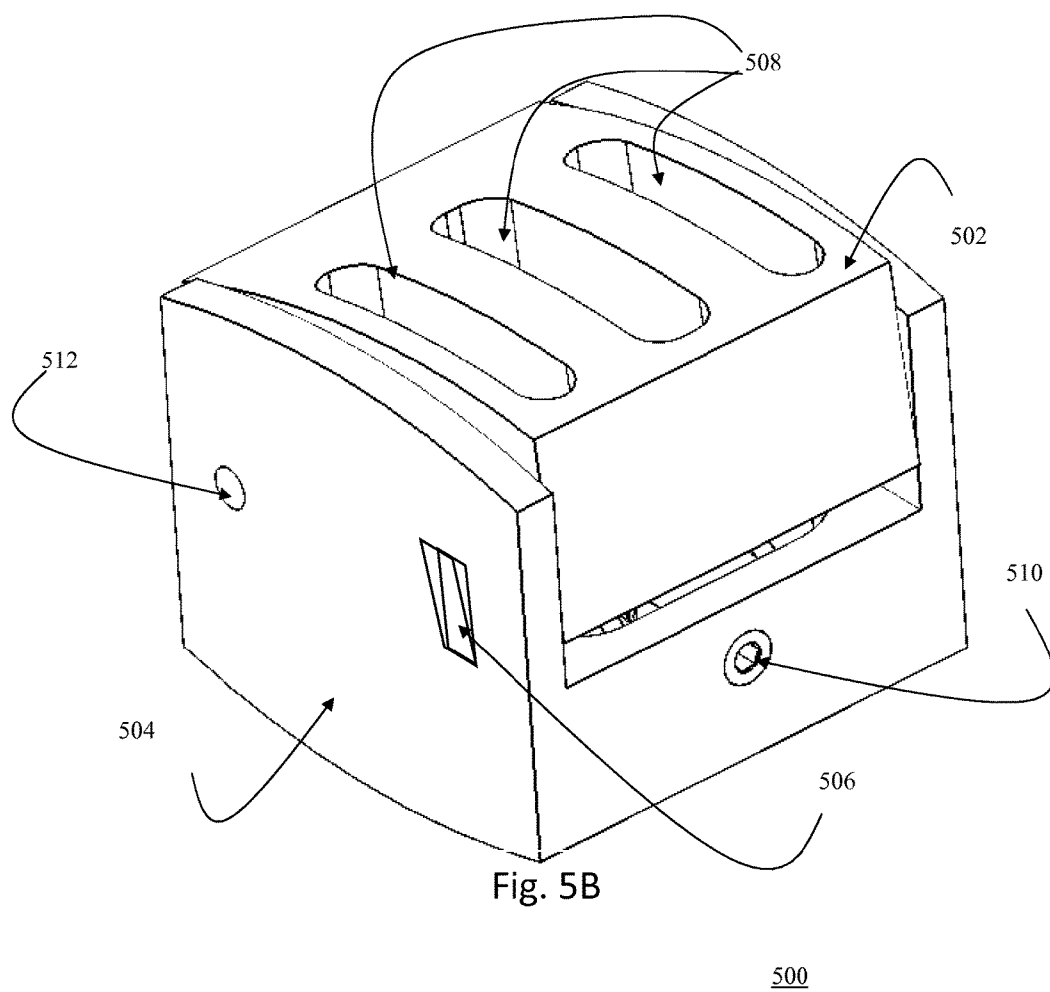


Fig. 5A

500



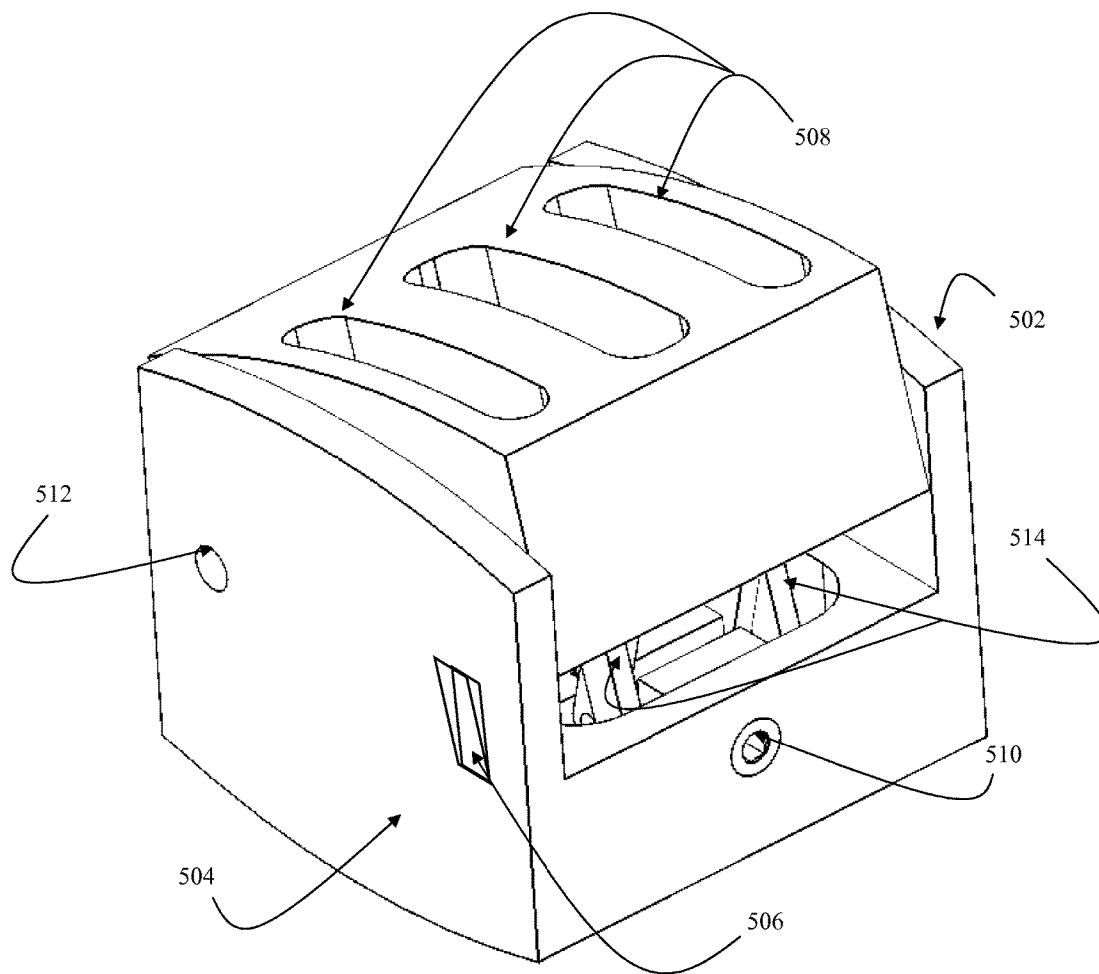


Fig. 5C

500

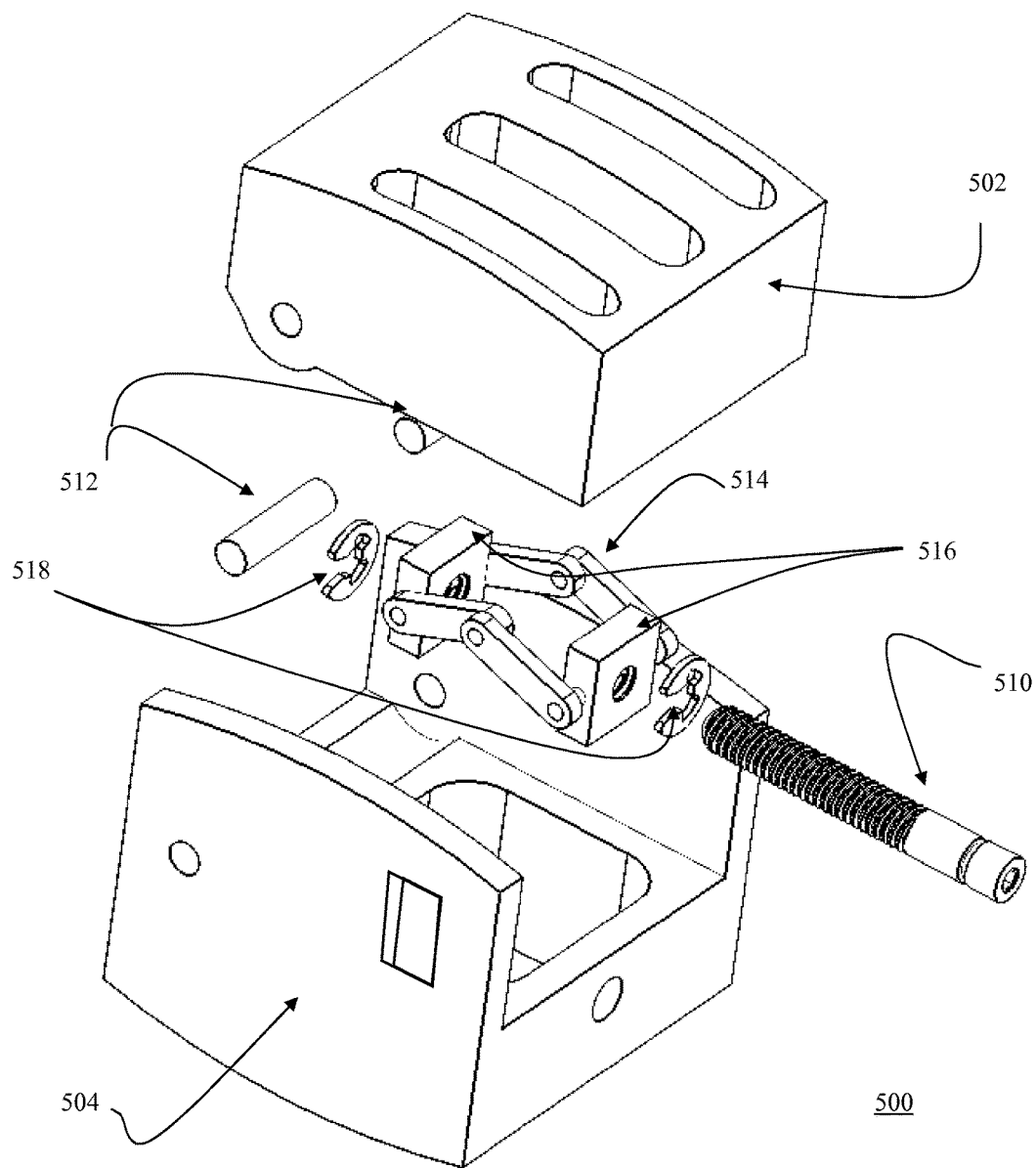


Fig. 5D

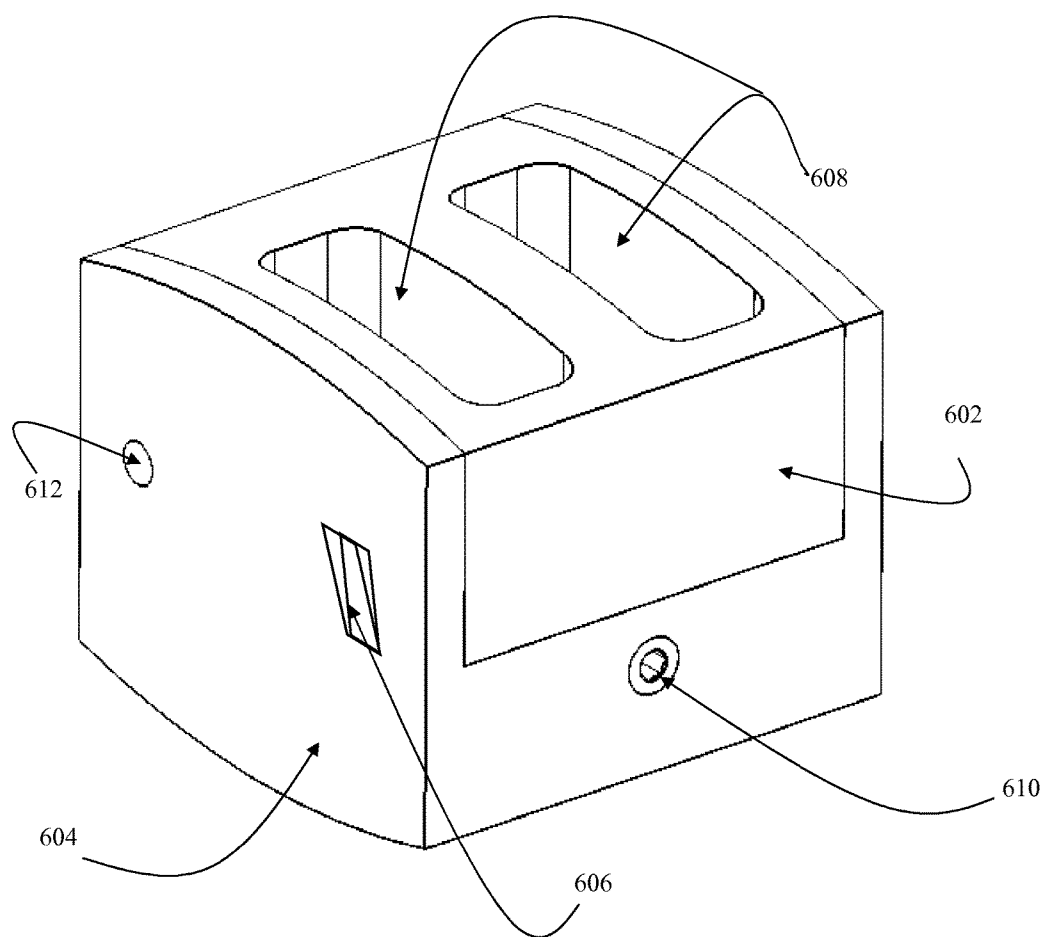


Fig. 6A

600

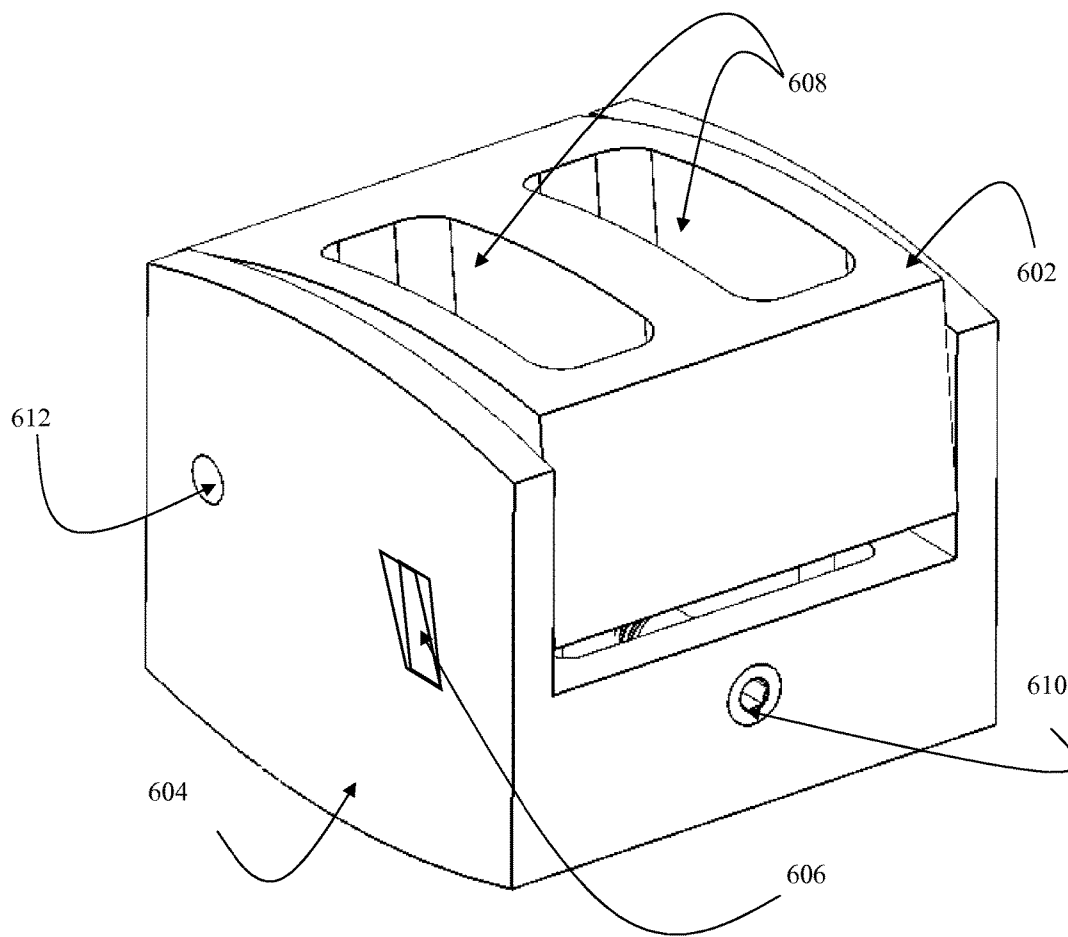


Fig. 6B

600

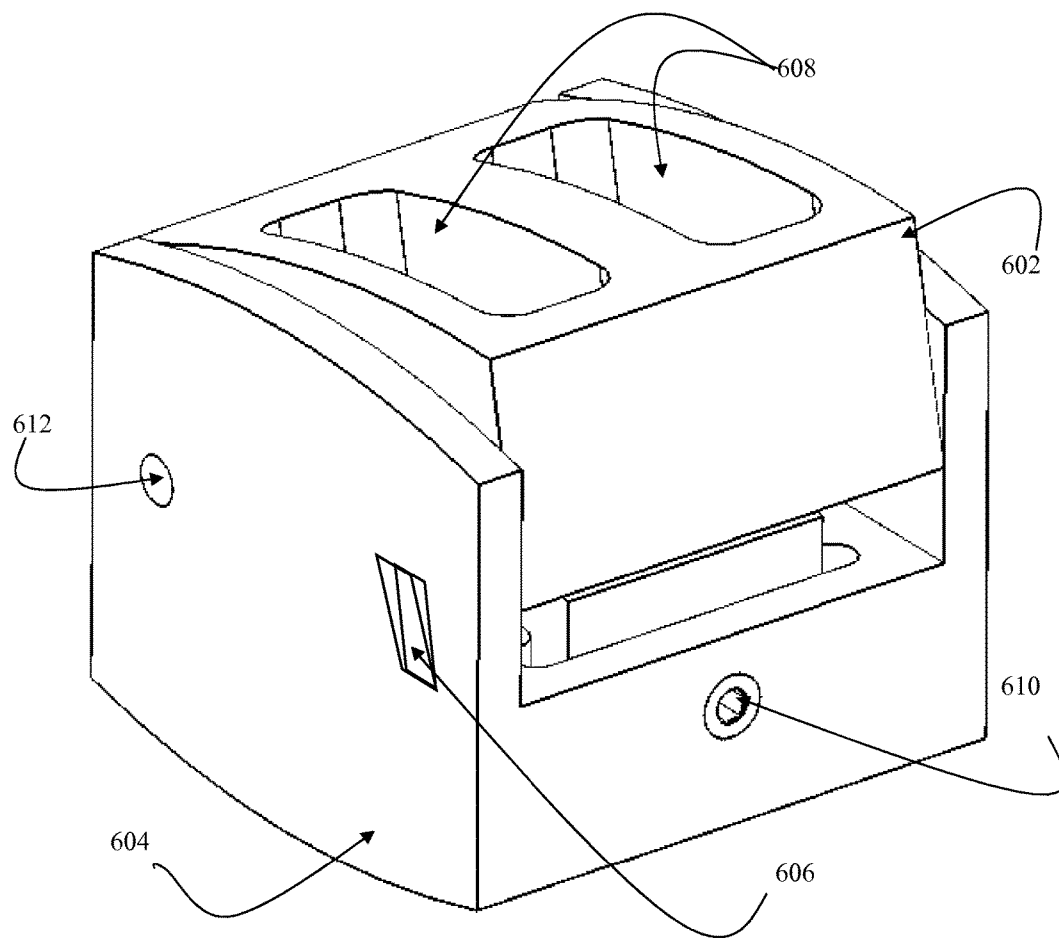


Fig. 6C

600

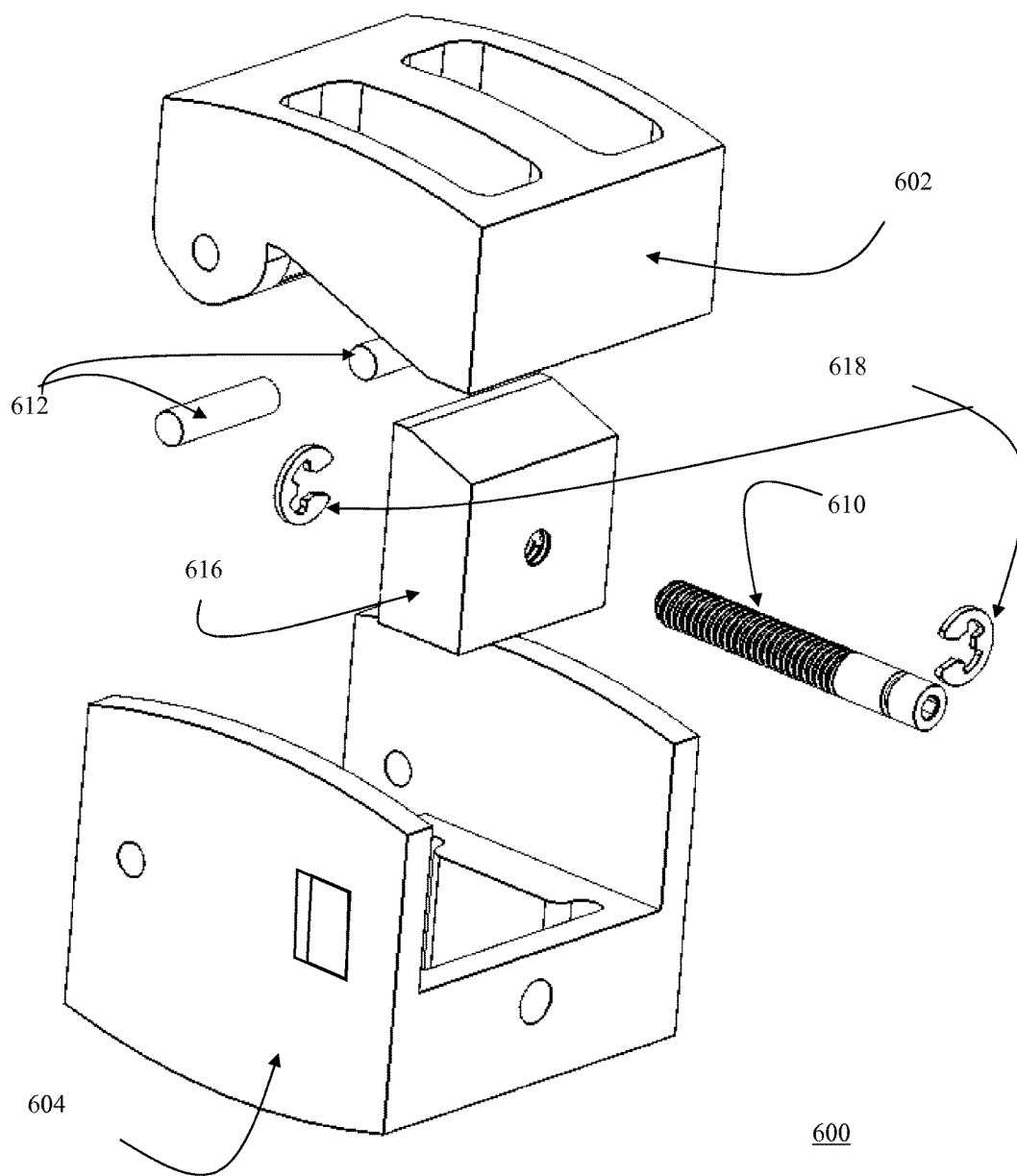


Fig. 6D

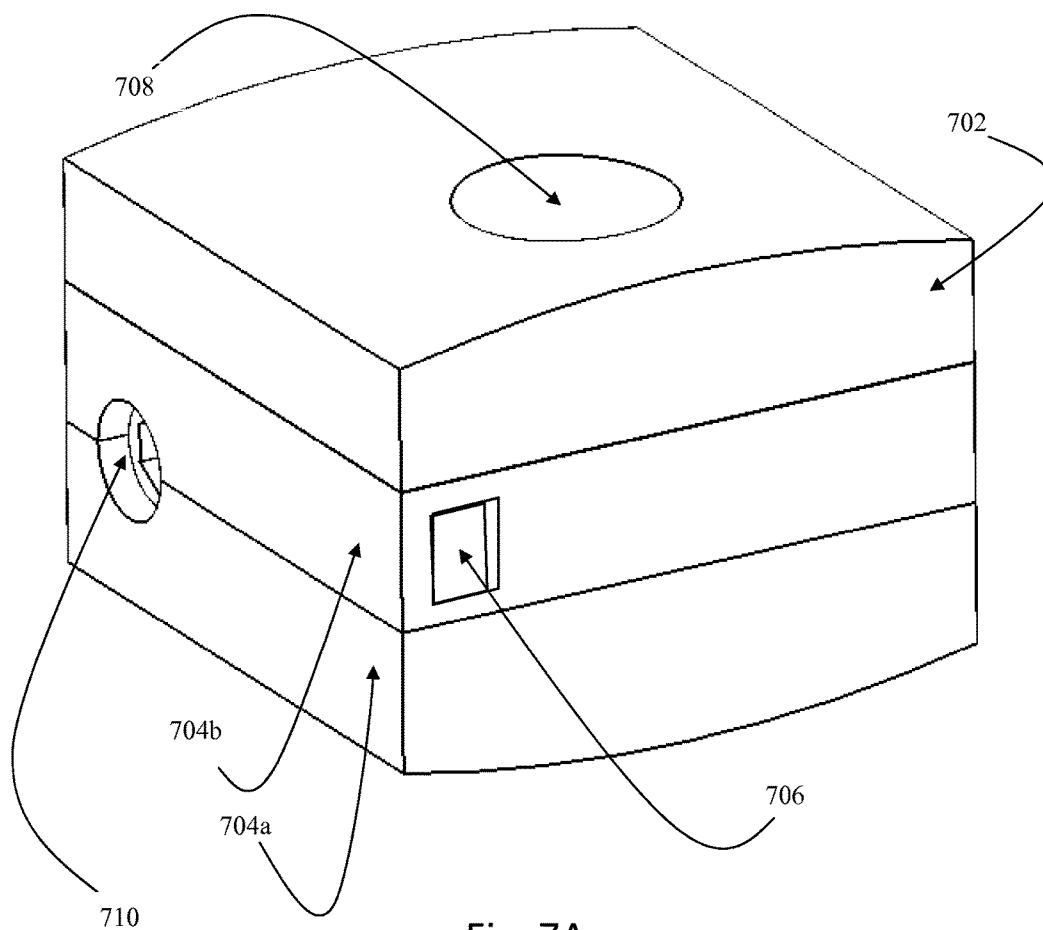


Fig. 7A

700

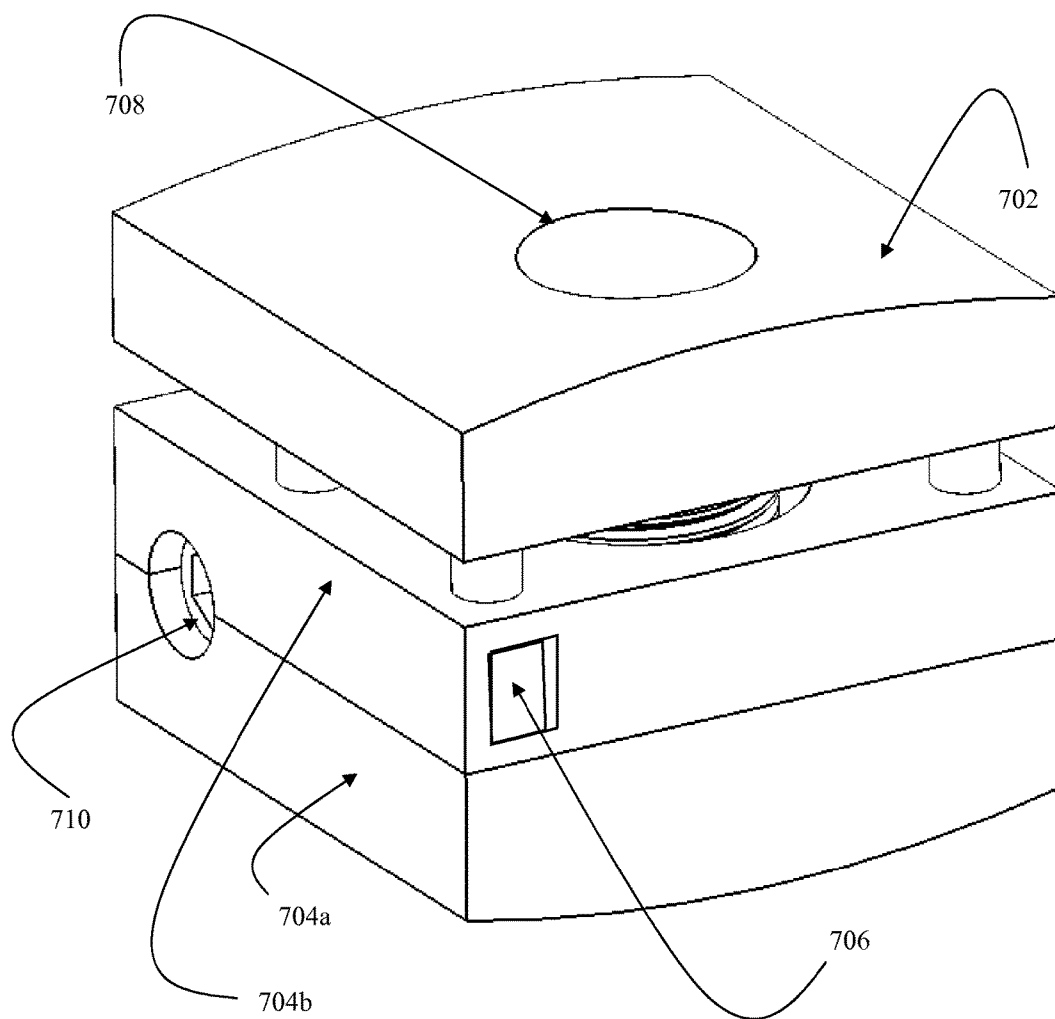
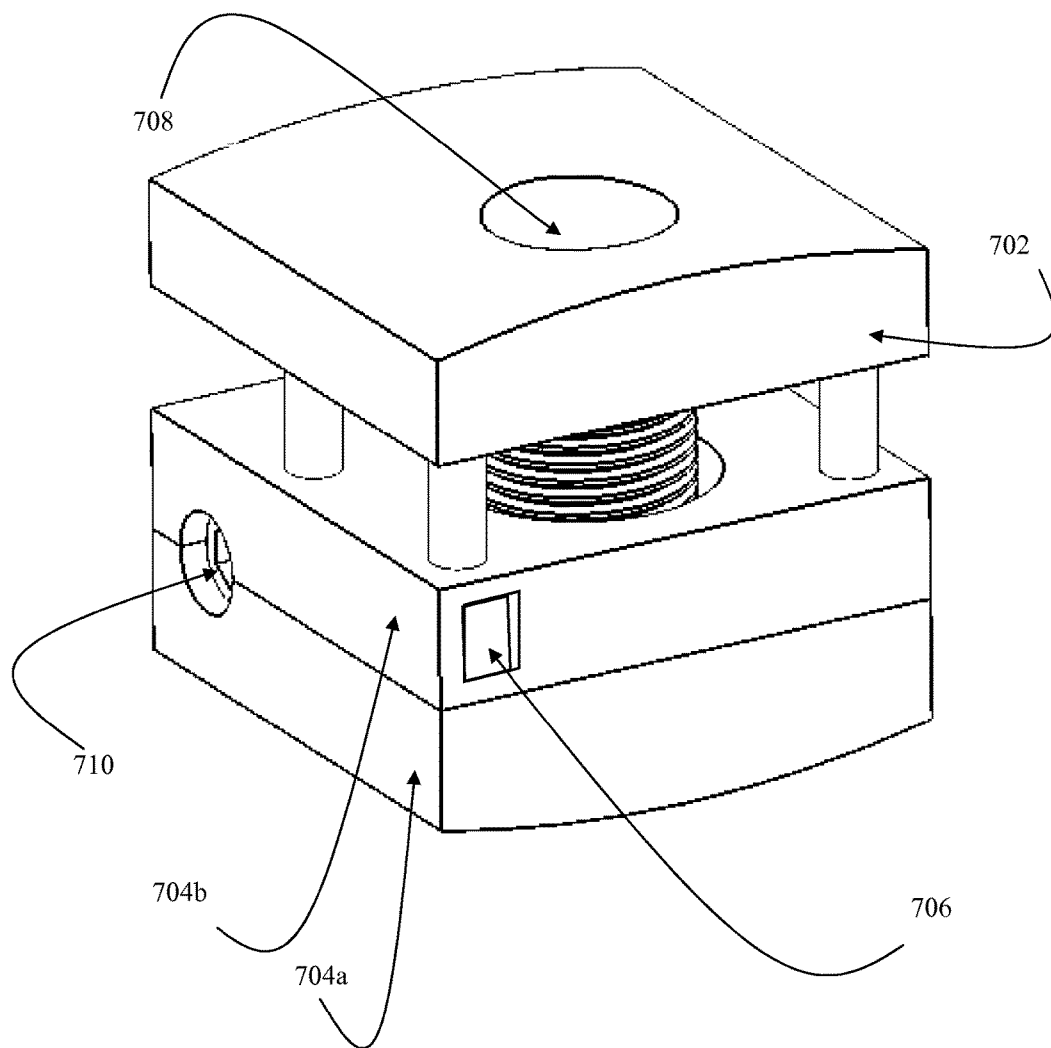
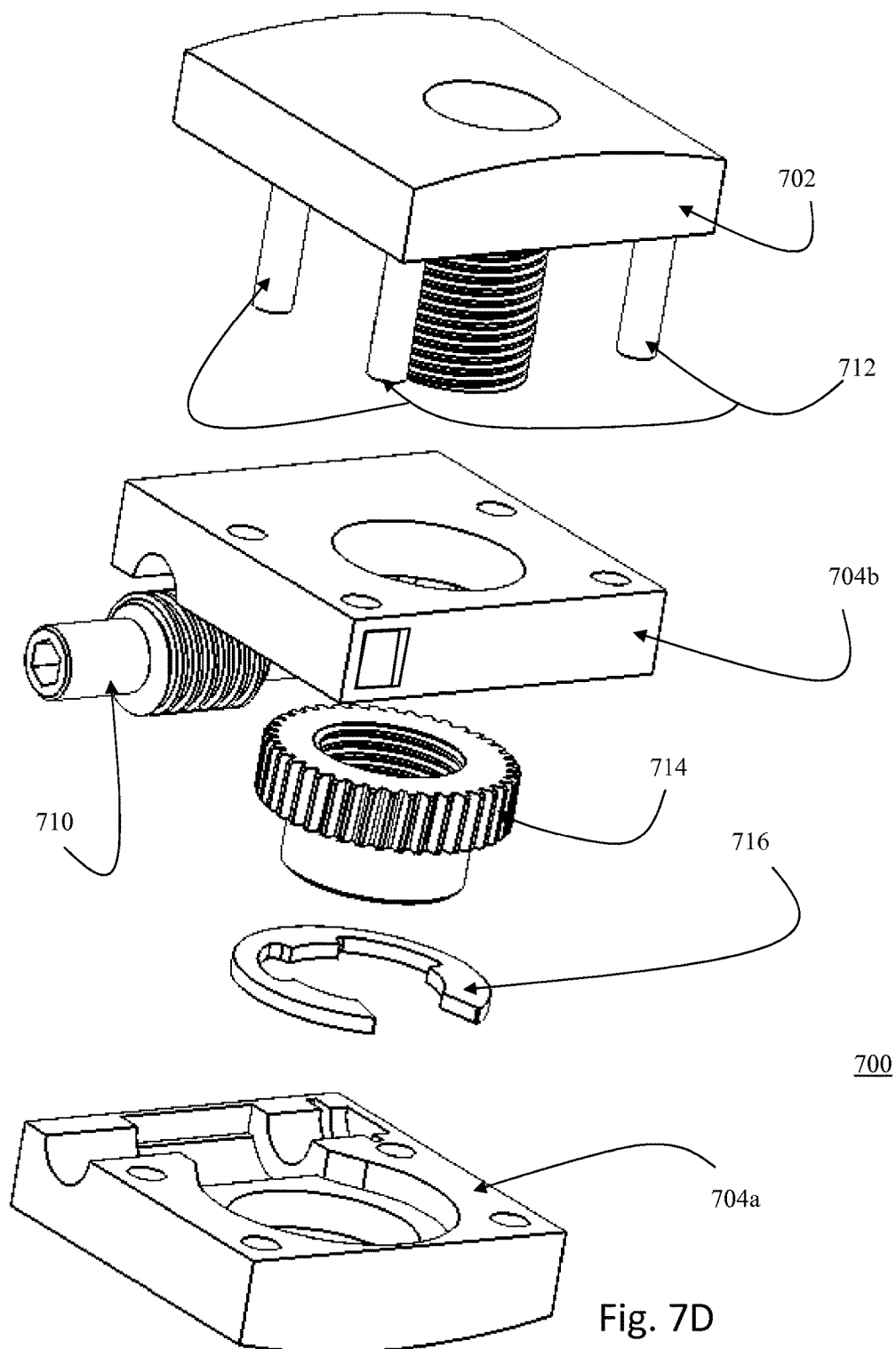


Fig. 7B

700



700



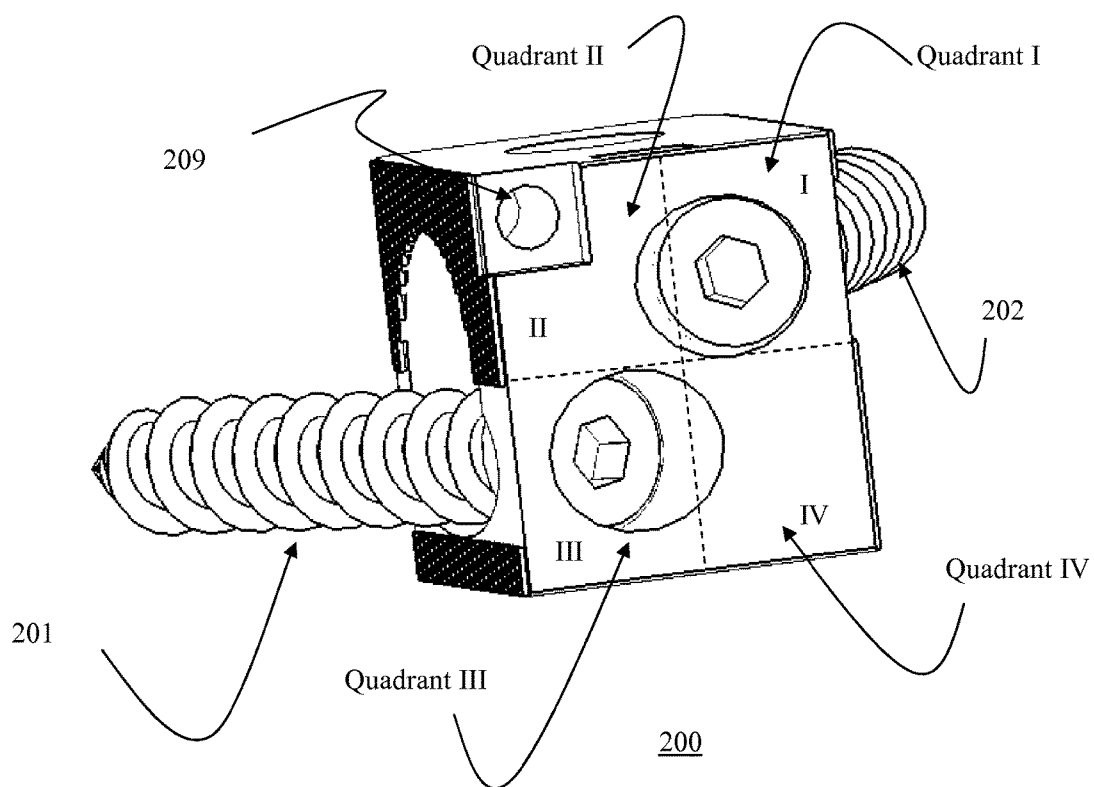


Fig. 7E(i)

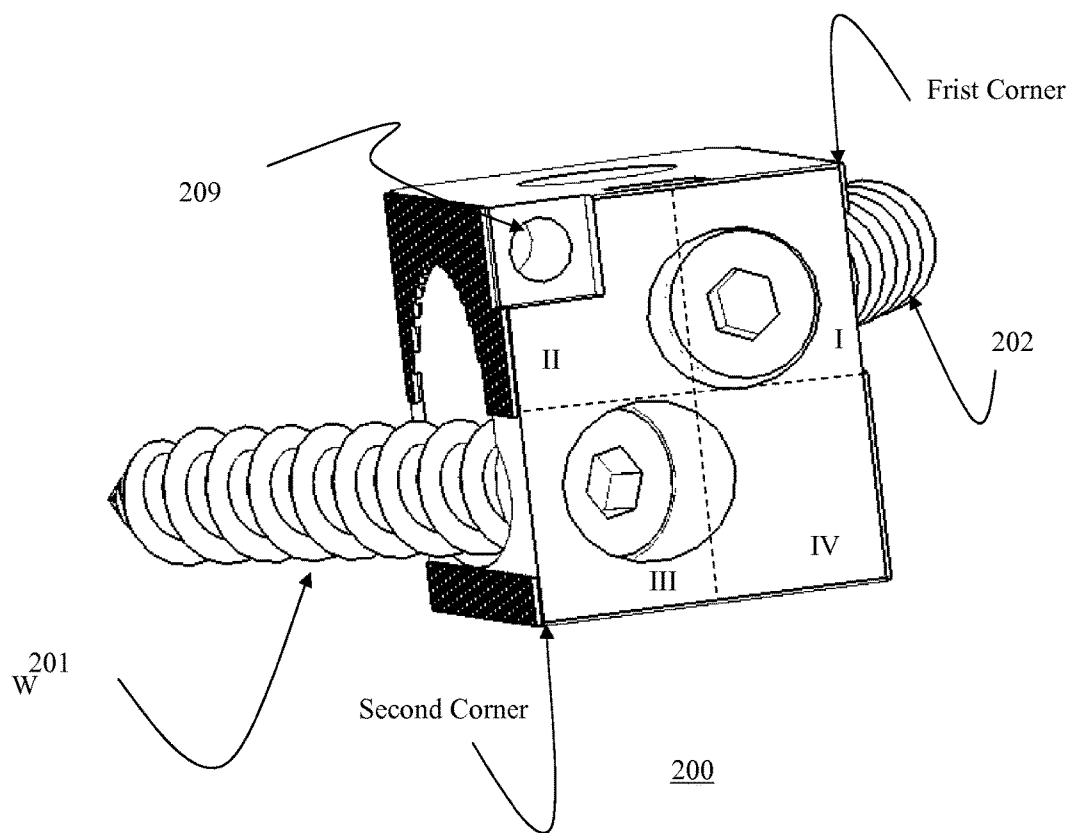


Fig. 7E(ii)

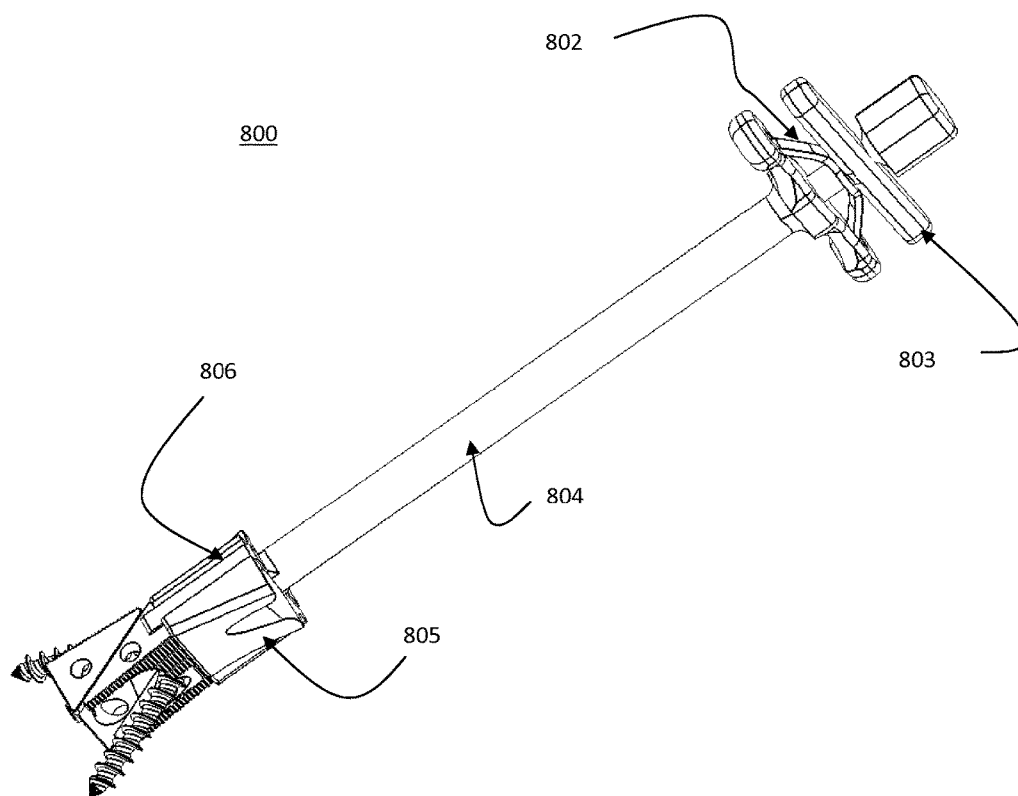


Fig. 8A

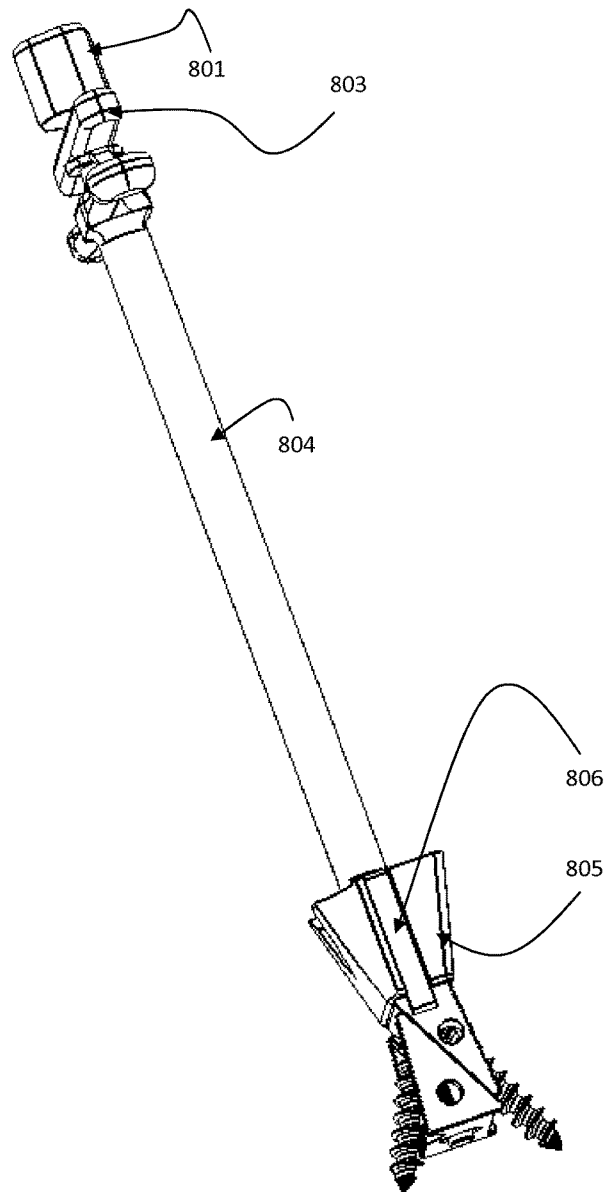


Fig. 8B

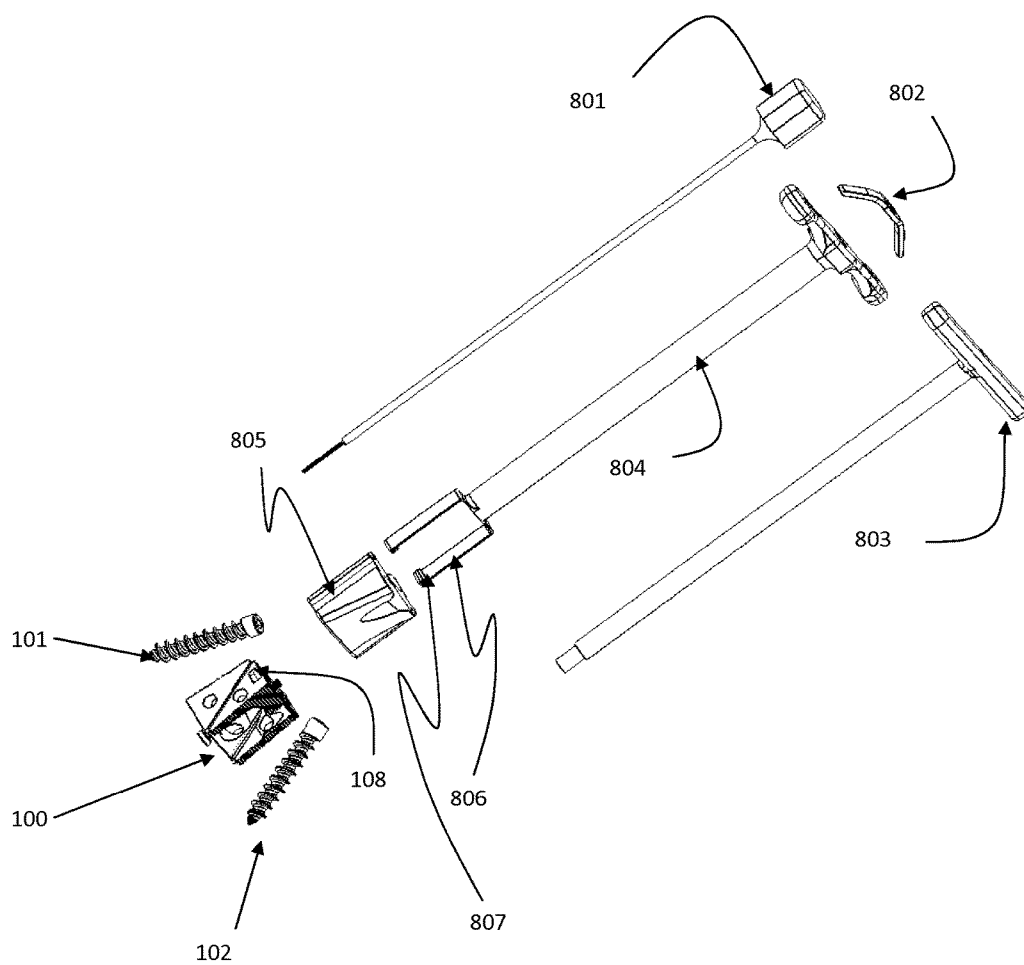


Fig. 8C

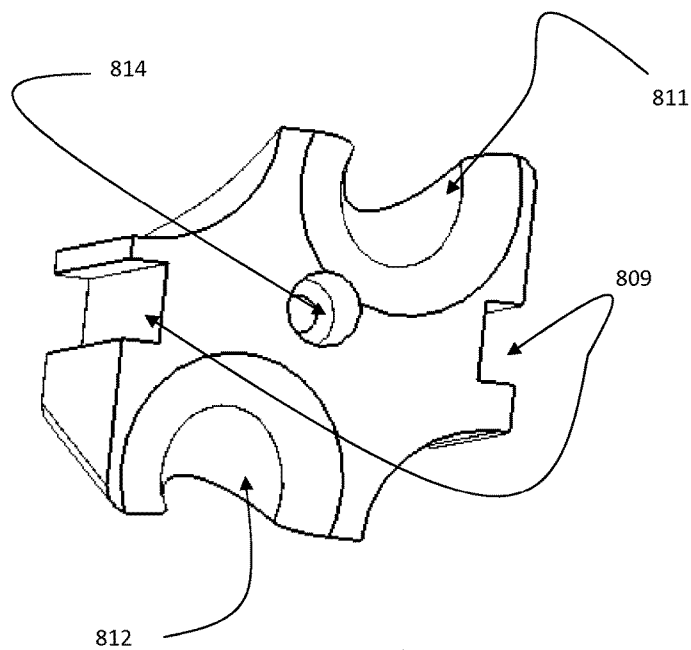


Fig. 8D(i)

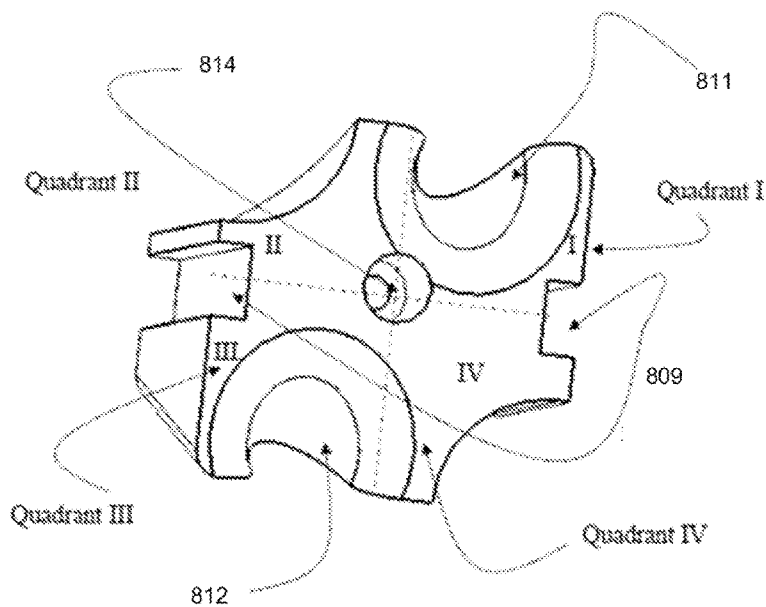


Fig. 8D(ii)

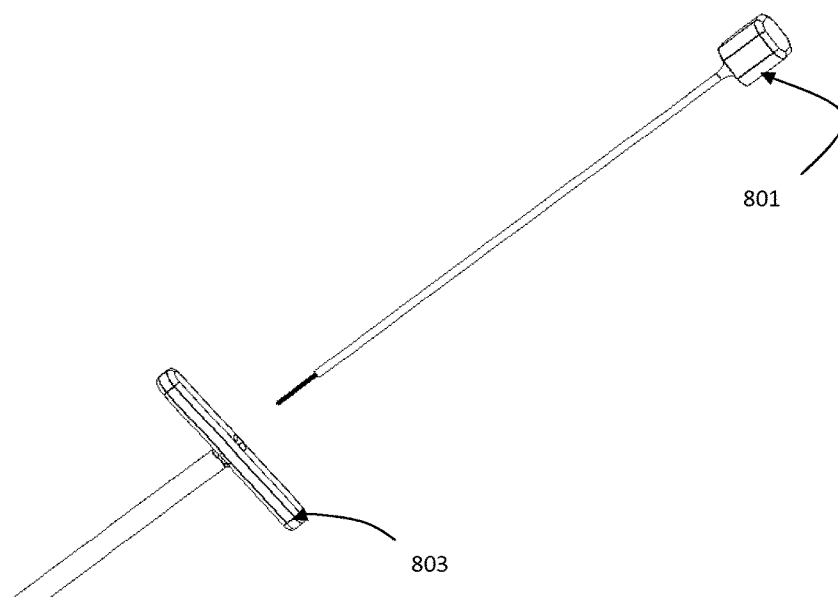


Fig. 8E

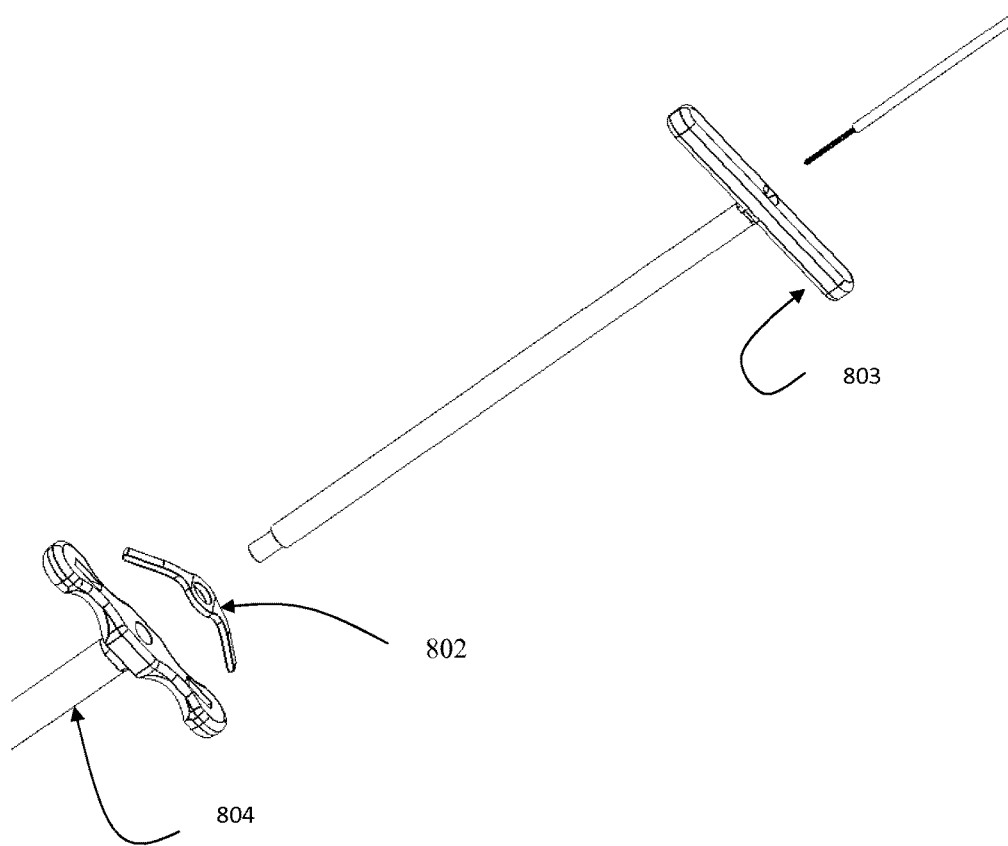


Fig. 8F

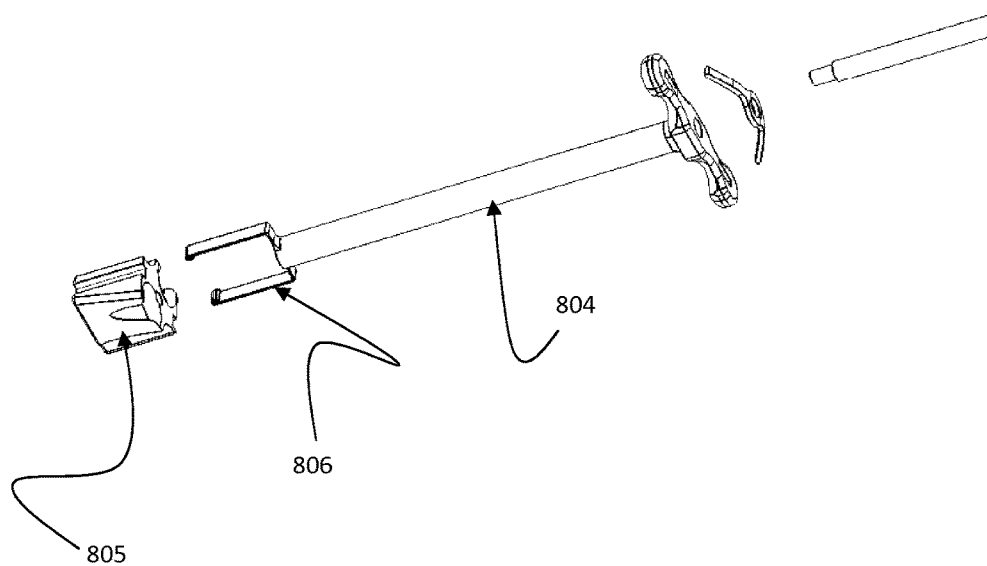


Fig. 8G

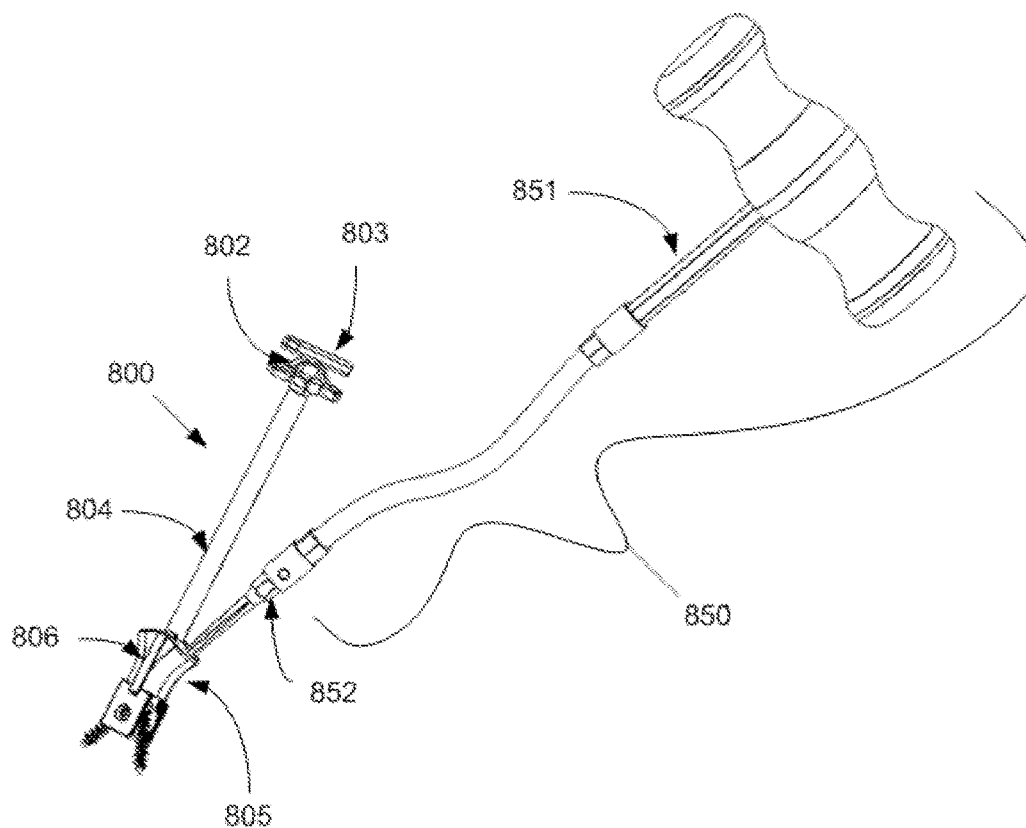


Fig. 8H

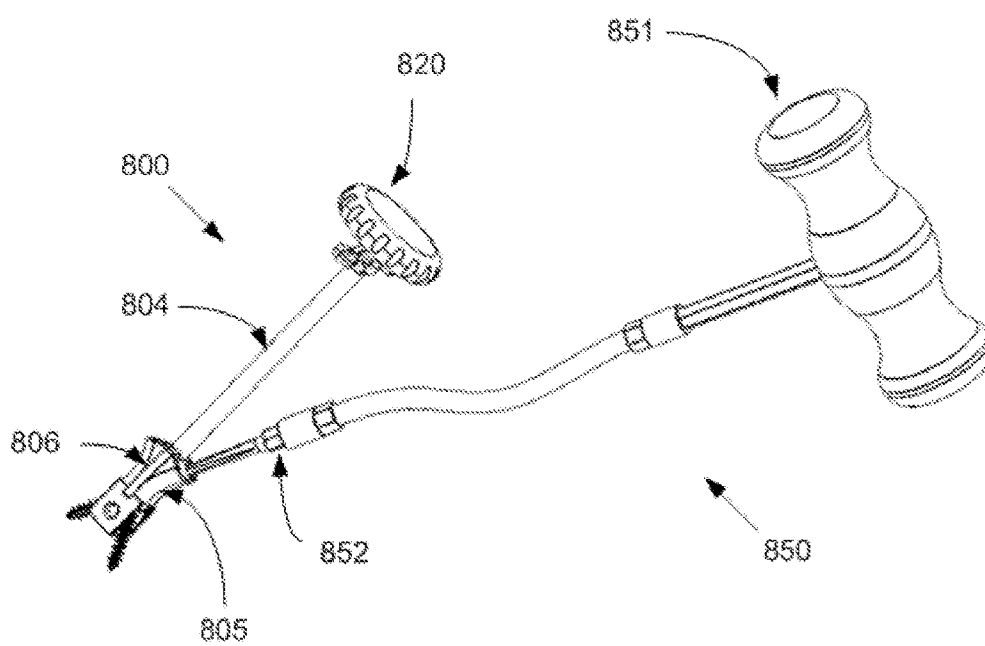


Fig. 8I

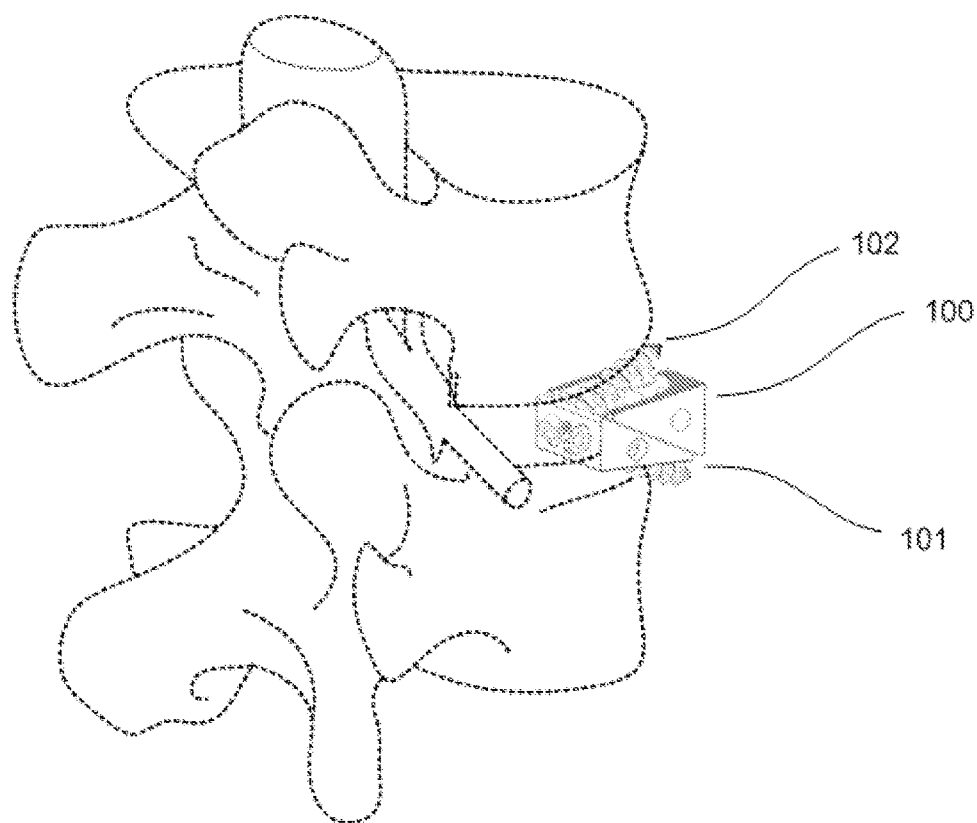


Fig. 8J

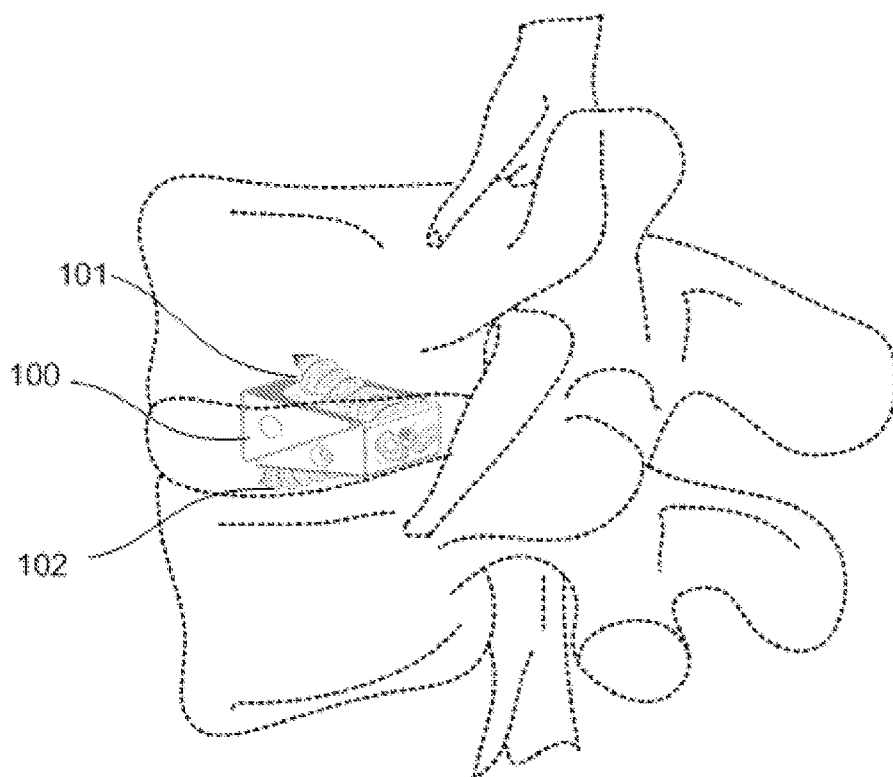


Fig. 8K

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**ZERO-PROFILE EXPANDABLE
INTERVERTEBRAL SPACER DEVICES FOR
DISTRACTION AND SPINAL FUSION AND A
UNIVERSAL TOOL FOR THEIR
PLACEMENT AND EXPANSION**

**CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED
APPLICATIONS**

This application is a Continuation Application of application Ser. No. 15/820,232, filed on Nov. 21, 2017, now U.S. Pat. No. 10,016,284 issued Jul. 10, 2018, which is a Continuation Application of application Ser. No. 14/063,197, filed on Oct. 25, 2013, which is a Continuation-in-part application of application Ser. No. 13/210,150, filed on Aug. 15, 2011, now U.S. Pat. No. 9,867,719 issued Jan. 16, 2018, and a Continuation-in-part Application of application Ser. No. 13/210,157, filed on Aug. 15, 2011, now U.S. Pat. No. 9,889,022 issued Feb. 13, 2018, and a Continuation-in-part Application of application Ser. No. 13/210,162, filed on Aug. 15, 2011, now U.S. Pat. No. 9,895,238 issued Feb. 20, 2018 and a Continuation-in-part Application of application Ser. No. 13/210,168, filed on Aug. 15, 2011, now U.S. Pat. No. 9,907,674 issued Mar. 6, 2018, and a Continuation-in-part Application of application Ser. No. 13/741,361, filed on Jan. 14, 2013, now U.S. Pat. No. 9,301,854 issued Apr. 5, 2016.

Ser. No. 14/063,197, filed on Oct. 25, 2013, claims priority under U.S.C. § 119 (e) of U.S. provisional application No. 61/801,783, filed Mar. 15, 2013 and 61/718,707, filed Oct. 25, 2012.

Ser. No. 13/210,150, filed Aug. 15, 2011, is a Continuation of application Ser. No. 13/084,543, filed on Apr. 11, 2011, now U.S. Pat. No. 8,353,913 issued on Jan. 15, 2013, and is a Continuation of 13/108,982, filed May 16, 2011, now U.S. Pat. No. 9,005,293 issued Apr. 14, 2015.

Ser. No. 13/210,157, filed Aug. 15, 2011, is a Continuation of application Ser. No. 13/084,543, filed Apr. 11, 2011, now U.S. Pat. No. 8,353,913 issued on Jan. 15, 2013, and is a Continuation of 13/108,982, filed May 16, 2011, now U.S. Pat. No. 9,005,293 issued Apr. 14, 2015.

Ser. No. 13/210,162, filed Aug. 15, 2011, is a Continuation of application Ser. No. 13/084,543, filed Apr. 11, 2011, now U.S. Pat. No. 8,353,913 issued on Jan. 15, 2013, and is a Continuation of 13/108,982, filed May 16, 2011, now U.S. Pat. No. 9,005,293 issued Apr. 14, 2015.

Ser. No. 13/210,168, filed Aug. 15, 2011, is a Continuation of application Ser. No. 13/084,543, filed Apr. 11, 2011, now U.S. Pat. No. 8,353,913 issued on Jan. 15, 2013, and is a Continuation of 13/108,982, filed May 16, 2011, now U.S. Pat. No. 9,005,293 issued Apr. 14, 2015.

Ser. No. 13/741,361, filed Jan. 14, 2013, is a Continuation of application Ser. No. 13/084,543, filed Apr. 11, 2011, now U.S. Pat. No. 8,353,913 issued on Jan. 15, 2013, and is a Continuation of 13/108,982, filed May 16, 2011, now U.S. Pat. No. 9,005,293 issued Apr. 14, 2015.

Ser. No. 13/084,543, filed Apr. 11, 2011, is a Continuation of application Ser. No. 11/842,855, filed on Aug. 21, 2007, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,942,903 issued on May 17, 2011.

Ser. No. 13/108,982, filed on May 16, 2011, is a Continuation of application Ser. No. 11/842,855, filed on Aug. 21, 2007, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,942,903 issued on May 17, 2011, which is a Continuation-In-Part of application Ser. No. 11/536,815, filed on Sep. 29, 2006, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,846,188 issued on Dec. 7, 2010, which is a Continuation-In-Part of application Ser. No. 11/208,644, filed on Aug. 23, 2005, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,704,279 issued Apr. 27, 2010,

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which claims priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) of U.S. provisional application No. 60/670,231, filed on Apr. 12, 2005; the entire contents of all the above identified patent applications are hereby incorporated by reference.

U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/084,543, filed on Apr. 11, 2011, U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/842,855, filed on Aug. 21, 2007, U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/536,815, filed on Sep. 29, 2006, and U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/208,644, filed on Aug. 23, 2005, each claim the benefit of priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/670,231, filed on Apr. 12, 2005, and this application hereby incorporates the claim of priority to this provisional application under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) from the aforementioned intermediate applications (for which priority of each intermediate application is claimed under 35 U.S.C. § 120); and the entire contents of all of the above identified patent applications are hereby incorporated by reference in their entirety.

FIELD OF DISCLOSURE

The present invention relates to unique, universal Zero-Profile Expandable Intervertebral Spacer (ZP-EIS) devices for fusion and distraction throughout the entire spine which can be inserted via anterior, anterolateral, lateral, far lateral or posterior surgical approaches dependent on the need and preference. Multiple ZP-EIS embodiments each with unique mechanisms of calibrated expansion are presented. Two of these embodiments incorporate bi-directional fixating transvertebral (BDFT) screws and five other embodiments do not incorporate BDFT screws. A universal tool for their intervertebral placement and device expansion is also described.

The ZP-EIS embodiments with incorporated BDFT screws can be used as stand-alone intervertebral devices. These exemplary embodiments combine the dual functions of intervertebral calibrated expandable distraction, and segmental vertebral body spinal fusion. These embodiments can include bone cavities which can be filled with bone fusion material(s) to promote segmental spinal fusion.

The calibrated ZP-EIS embodiments without incorporated BDFT screws can also be used as stand-alone devices for calibrated intervertebral expansion and segmental vertebral body fusion. The exemplary devices can include bone cavities which can be filled with bone fusion material. If desirable, the exemplary devices can be supplemented with other forms of screw stabilization.

The exemplary ZP-EIS embodiments, especially those with incorporated BDFT screws, may obviate the need for supplemental pedicle screw fixation in many situations. The exemplary embodiments allow nuanced, fine-tuned incremental and calibrated distraction of the disc space to allow nerve root decompression in a minimally invasive and safe manner, as well as promoting segmental spinal fusion.

In the related applications in the Cross-Reference to Related Applications, Applicants first introduced the terminology "zero-profile" relating to spinal fusion devices. Applicants also have described zero-profile non-expandable and expandable stand-alone intervertebral spinal fusion device embodiments with incorporated BDFT screws. As described in greater detail below, exemplary embodiments of advanced ZP-EIS devices with BDFT screws are provided which have an improved contoured body with tapered edges to more precisely insert into and conform to the biconcave disc space. The present application also provides exemplary embodiments of more advanced ZP-EIS devices without accompanying BDFT screws each with very unique calibrated expandable mechanisms allowing minimally

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invasive intervertebral expansion, vertebral body distraction and segmental spinal fusion. An exemplary embodiment of a universal tool also is described that can be adapted to implant one or more (e.g., all) of the intervertebral device

BACKGROUND

The history and evolution of instrumented spinal fusion in the entire human spine has been reviewed in Applicants' copending applications set forth in the Cross-Reference to Related applications (for example in U.S. Ser. Nos. 14/536,815, filed on Sep. 29, 2006, and 11/208,644, filed on Aug. 23, 2005). Currently, the majority of spinal fusion techniques are typically supplemented with posterior pedicle screw placement and/or anterior (or lateral) plating. Complications of pedicle screw placement in the spine may include duration of procedure, significant tissue dissection and muscle retraction, misplaced screws with neural and/or vascular injury, excessive blood loss, need for transfusions, prolonged recovery, incomplete return to work, and excess rigidity leading to adjacent segmental disease requiring further fusions and re-operations. Recent advances in pedicle screw fixation including minimally invasive and image-guided technology, and the development of flexible rods, imperfectly may address some but not all of these issues.

Anterior/and or lateral plating because of the plates' elevated profiles can be complicated by esophageal, or major vascular injury. The zero-profile devices described herein with reference to the exemplary embodiments avoid these complications.

Current non-expandable intervertebral spacers must be manufactured with different heights, and the most appropriate sized spacer is selected for insertion. In these situations, the vertebral bodies are forcefully distracted to allow placement of an imperfectly fitting spacer. These are most often supplemented with pedicle screw and/or plate fixation.

SUMMARY

The exemplary embodiments described herein can allow a more precisely tailored complimentary fit between spacer and disc space, allowing the spacer to expand gradually in a calibrated manner, and to incrementally achieve the precise fit and degree of distraction desirable. Thus, the process according to the present invention can be more individualized for every patient and apply less forceful disruption to the intervertebral space thereby improving safety and enhancing effectiveness of the placement of intervertebral spacers. The exemplary embodiments are zero-profile, and thus, do not damage or indent overlying soft tissue or vascular structures further decreasing morbidity.

Herein described are exemplary embodiments of multiple ZP-EIS devices which combine in a single construct the dual functions of calibrated expandable intervertebral spacer distraction maintaining disc space height, and simultaneous segmental vertebral body spinal fusion.

To achieve safe, effective zero-profile and minimally invasive segmental spinal fusion, the exemplary embodiments of the present invention use of novel zero-profile calibrated expandable spacer (ZP-EIS) devices with or without BDFT screws which can be strategically inserted into the intervertebral disc space via anterior, antero-lateral, lateral, far lateral or posterior surgical approaches.

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In Applicants' applications set forth in the Cross-Reference to Related Applications, exemplary embodiments are directed to expanding intervertebral spacers which incorporated BDFT screws. One of these embodiments includes two sliding triangular bases to house two screws driven in two opposing directions which can be expanded in two simultaneous directions, height and depth, by turning a built-in screw adjuster. This was facilitated by a combined external drill/screw guide/cage expander to further enhance trajectory precision and to simultaneously expand the screw box in height and depth to custom-fit the individual disc space height. Applicants' copending applications set forth in the Cross-Reference to Related Applications further describe an exemplary embodiment of a universal tool and the adaptability of the tool, for example, to exemplary embodiments of sliding boxes, as well as to the exemplary embodiments described herein, including those with and without BDFT screws.

The evolved zero-profile expandable intervertebral spacer (ZP-EIS) embodiments with incorporated BDFT screws presented herein are more finely tapered and contoured to more easily allow insertion and conformation to the biconcave disc space.

The exemplary embodiments of ZP-EIS devices without incorporated BDFT screws described herein have the ability to incrementally and uniformly separate and distract the vertebral bodies. Each embodiment has a very unique mechanically designed mechanism of incremental expansion. The devices are all designed with cavities for bone fusion giving the surgeon the option to use these as stand-alone fusion/spacer devices or as supplemental devices if other screw fixation is deemed necessary. These innovations represent a continued evolution of our concept of zero-profile calibrated expandable intervertebral distraction/fusion spacers described in Applicants' applications, for example, as set forth in the Cross-Reference to Related Applications.

In the exemplary ZP-EIS embodiments with incorporated BDFT screws, a rostral-directed screw is passed through one built-in screw guide of the device which then is inserted and screwed into the superior vertebral body. Next, a caudally directed screw is passed through an adjacent built-in screw guide, which then is inserted and screwed into the inferior vertebral body. One of many novel features of this design is the built-in prescribed angles of the integral screw guides which allow the transvertebral penetration into the vertebral bodies. This is a truly amazing feat accomplished particularly in the posterior or lateral/far lateral lumbar spine considering the small anatomically restricted work zone within which to work, which is very narrowly prescribed by obtuse angulations between screw and intervertebral bone surfaces, and by nerve root, facet joint and pedicle. Applicants' applications set forth in the Cross-Reference to Related Applications included an angled screw driver specifically designed to fit these devices if a straight screw driver impedes screw placement. Hence, these external tools can provide the means in any circumstance to accomplish precision screw trajectory.

The exemplary zero-profile embodiments of the present invention can provide enhanced individualized intervertebral conformation, and multiple methods of finely calibrating intervertebral expansion, and vertebral body distraction further reducing morbidity and enabling more minimally invasive surgical methods of vertebral body distraction and segmental fusion compared to Applicants' applications set forth in the Cross-Reference to Related Applications.

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The exemplary embodiments of box casings can include perforations to allow bone packing for fusion. These exemplary devices can prevent subsidence. In an exemplary embodiment, both the inside of the denuded intervertebral space, and the devices can be packed with autologous or allograft bone, BMP, DBX or similar osteoconductive material.

The zero-profile EIS embodiments, in particular those with incorporated BDFT screws, can provide as strong or stronger segmental fusion as pedicle screws without the complications arising from pedicle screw placement which include screw misplacement with potential nerve and/or vascular injury, violation of healthy facets, possible pedicle destruction, blood loss, and overly rigid fusions. In the case of the posterior Lumbar spine by placing screws across the intervertebral space from vertebral body to vertebral body, engaging anterior and middle spinal columns, and not the vertebral bodies via the transpedicular route, the healthy facet joints, if they exist, are preserved. Because the exemplary techniques accomplish both anterior and middle column fusion, without rigidly fixating the posterior column, the exemplary embodiments in essence create a flexible fusion. This exemplary devices therefore can provide a flexible fusion device because the preserved posterior facet joints retain their function achieving at least a modicum of mobility and hence a less rigid (i.e. a flexible) fusion.

The very advantage of transpedicular screws which facilitate a strong solid fusion by rigidly engaging all three spinal columns is the same mechanical mechanism whereby complete inflexibility of all columns is incurred thereby leading to increasing rostral and caudal segmental stress which leads to an increased rate of re-operation.

Transvertebral fusion also leads to far less muscle retraction, blood loss, and significant reduction in operating room (O.R.) time. Thus, the complication of pedicular screw pull-out and hence high re-operation rate associated with the conventional flexible fusion pedicle screws/rods is obviated.

Although the exemplary embodiments can be supplemented with transpedicular screws, there would be no absolute need for supplemental pedicle screw fixation with these operative techniques. The expandable spacers without BDFT screws can be supplemented with other screw stabilization if desired.

Because the exemplary embodiments are zero-profile, these devices also obviate the morbidity involved with profiled anterior or lateral plating. Multi-level fusions can be performed with all of the exemplary embodiments described herein.

Currently failed anterior lumbar arthroplasties are salvaged by combined anterior and posterior fusions. The exemplary ZP-EIS embodiments with incorporated BDFT screws could be utilized as a one-step salvage operation for failed/extruded anteriorly placed lumbar artificial discs obviating the above salvage procedure which has far greater morbidity.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

These and other aspects and features of embodiments of the present invention will be better understood after a reading of the following detailed description, together with the attached drawings, wherein:

FIGS. 1A-1B illustrate an exemplary embodiment (Embodiment I) of a non-tapered sliding base ZP-EIS device with incorporated BDFT screws in sagittal-oblique (FIG. 1A), and exploded (FIG. 1B) views.

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FIGS. 2A-2D illustrate an exemplary embodiment (Embodiment II) of a tapered sliding base ZP-EIS device with incorporated BDFT screws in closed (FIG. 2A), semi-expanded (FIG. 2B), and fully expanded (FIG. 2C) positions, and in an exploded view (FIG. 2D).

FIGS. 3A-3D illustrate an exemplary embodiment (Embodiment III) of a scissors jack driven ZP-EIS device without incorporated BDFT screws in closed (FIG. 3A), semi-expanded (FIG. 3B), and fully expanded (FIG. 3C) positions, and in exploded view (FIG. 3D).

FIGS. 4A-4C illustrate an exemplary embodiment (Embodiment IV) of a tapered thread driven ZP-EIS device without incorporated BDFT screws in closed (FIG. 4A), semi-expanded/fully expanded positions (FIG. 4B), and in cross-sectional view (FIG. 4C).

FIGS. 5A-5D illustrate an exemplary embodiment (Embodiment V) of a dry anchor driven ZP-EIS device without incorporated BDFT screws in closed (FIG. 5A), semi-expanded (FIG. 5B), and fully expanded (FIG. 5C) positions, and in an exploded view (FIG. 5D).

FIGS. 6A-6D illustrate an exemplary embodiment (Embodiment VI) of a modified wedge driven ZP-EIS device without incorporated BDFT screws in closed (FIG. 6A), semi-expanded (FIG. 6B), and fully expanded (FIG. 6C) positions, and in an exploded view (FIG. 6D).

FIGS. 7A-7D illustrate an exemplary embodiment (Embodiment VII) of a worm drive ZP-EIS device without incorporated BDFT screws in closed (FIG. 7A), semi-expanded (FIG. 7B), and fully expanded (FIG. 7C) positions, and in an exploded view (FIG. 7D).

FIGS. 7E(i) and 7E(ii) illustrate top, perspective views of an intervertebral cage construct according to an exemplary embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 8A-8C illustrate a positioning tool/screw guide/box expander in oblique perspective (FIG. 8A), lateral (FIG. 8B), and exploded (FIG. 8C) views according to an exemplary embodiment, which is shown coupled to the exemplary non-tapered sliding base ZP-EIS device illustrated in FIGS. 1A-1B.

FIGS. 8D(i) and 8D(ii) illustrate superior oblique perspective views of the positioning tool/drill guide/box expander component, according to an exemplary embodiment, which may be optionally used for the exemplary embodiments illustrated in FIGS. 1A-1B and 2A-2D.

FIGS. 8E-8G illustrate sequential steps (I-III: Step I (FIG. 8E), step II (FIG. 8F), and step III (FIG. 8G)) of the positioning tool/screw guide/box expander assembly according to an exemplary embodiment.

FIGS. 8H-8I illustrate three-dimensional views of positioning tools, according to exemplary embodiments, for impaction and placement of two transvertebral screws, for example, of the exemplary embodiments illustrated in FIGS. 1A-1B and 2A-2D.

FIGS. 8J-8K illustrate the insertion of expandable Lumbar bi-directional screw box with two BDFT screws into the Lumbar spine in oblique (FIG. 8J) and lateral (FIG. 8K) views.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The present invention now is described more fully hereinafter with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which embodiments of the invention are shown. This invention may, however, be embodied in many different forms and should not be construed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein; rather, these embodiments are provided so that

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this disclosure will be thorough and complete, and will fully convey the scope of the invention to those skilled in the art.

1. The Medical Device

Referring now to the drawings, FIGS. 1A-8K illustrate exemplary embodiments of ZP-EIS devices that can solve the above described problems and others in the spine by insertion of the ZP-EIS devices into the denuded intervertebral disc space according to the features illustrated in the exemplary embodiments (I-VII).

FIGS. 1A-1B illustrate three-dimensional views of a ZP-EIS device **100** according to embodiment I, with two BDFT screws **101**, **102**.

The expandable ZP-EIS device **100** includes of top and bottom triangular sliding bases **103**, **104** (FIGS. 1A-1B). The superior and inferior segments of the height/depth adjusting screw **105** are integrated and connected to the two separate top and bottom triangular bases **103**, **104**, respectively. By turning this adjusting (rotation) screw **105** back and forth, i.e. clock-wise, and counter clockwise, the sliding rails **106** of the top triangular base **103** (FIGS. 1A-1B) slide up and down the rail inserts **107** on the bottom triangular base **104** (FIGS. 1A-1B). This action will simultaneously alter the intervertebral height and depth of the device **100** allowing individualized custom fitting of the ZPEIS device **100** conforming to the dimensions of the disc space.

A transvertebral screw **101** penetrates the top base **103**, and a transvertebral screw **102** traverses the bottom base **104** of the screw box (device **100**). The two screws **101**, **102** traverse the screw box **100** in opposing directions, bi-directionally. The external edges of the triangular bases **103**, **104** in contact with vertebral body surfaces can include ridges **107**, which facilitates the ZP-EIS device **100** incorporation into and fusion with the superior and inferior vertebral bodies (FIGS. 1A-1B). Both top and bottom ZP-EIS bases **103**, **104** can be perforated with holes **108** to allow bone placement for fusion. In an exemplary embodiment, the entire construct, furthermore, can be hollow to allow filling with bone filling material. Hence, the exemplary device functions as both an intervertebral bone fusion spacer and bi-directional transvertebral screw fusion device.

FIGS. 2A-2D illustrate a ZP-EIS device **200** according to exemplary embodiment II. This exemplary device **200** incorporates BDFT screws and employs a fusion wedge mechanism of expansion.

The device **200** includes a contoured top **208** and bottom **206** housing which have tapered edges and are coupled to each other by a diagonal dovetail interface **204** which constrains the components **208**, **206** to translate linearly relative to each other. The linear translation causes a vertical separation of the top **208** and bottom **206** housing surfaces which are parallel to each other. The position is secured and adjusted by a threaded rotation screw **220** coupled to a nut **224** and a retaining ring **222** and passed through the top **208** and bottom **206** housing pieces. As the threaded rotation screw **220** is rotated further into the nut **224**, the housing pieces **208**, **206** expand vertically.

By turning this adjusting (rotation) screw **220** back and forth i.e. clock-wise, and counter clockwise, the sliding rails **210** of the top housing piece **208** slide up and down the rail inserts **212** on the bottom housing piece **206**. This action will simultaneously alter the intervertebral height and depth of the device **200** allowing individualized custom fitting of the ZP-EIS conforming to the dimensions of the disc space. A transvertebral screw **101** penetrates the top housing piece **208**, and a transvertebral screw **102** traverses the bottom housing piece **206** of the device **200**. The two screws **101**, **102** traverse the device **200** in opposing directions, bi-

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directionally. The external edges of the housing pieces in contact with vertebral body surfaces include ridges **216**. This facilitates the ZP-EIS device **200** incorporation into and fusion with the superior and inferior vertebral bodies (FIGS. 2A-2D). Both top and bottom ZP-EIS housing bases **208**, **206** are perforated with holes **214** to allow bone placement for fusion. The entire device **200**, furthermore, can be hollow to allow bone filling. Hence, the exemplary device **200** functions as both an intervertebral bone fusion spacer and bi-directional transvertebral screw fusion device.

The device **200** can include a tapered edge **226** (shown for example in FIGS. 2A-2B), which allows easier introduction and insertion of the device **200** into the disc space.

FIGS. 3A-3D illustrate a ZP-EIS device **300** according to exemplary embodiment III, which employs a scissor jack expansion mechanism.

In this embodiment the top **302** and bottom **304** housing are attached by one internal linkage arm **310**, and two external linkage arms **308**. The device **300** can include indentations **306** on each lateral side close to the top of the device **300** to mate with the prongs of the universal tool (for example, as described in FIGS. 8A-8I) to assist in grasping, inserting and impacting the device **300**. A lead screw or rotation screw **314** is mounted in the bottom housing **304** and secured in place with a retaining ring **316**. When the lead (rotation) screw **314** is rotated by an external tool (for example, as described in FIGS. 8A-8I), the screw **314** causes the linear displacement of the separation block **318** which is hinged to the internal linkage **310**. The horizontal motion of the separation block causes the top **302** and bottom **304** housing pieces to separate vertically. The separation distance depends on the amount of rotation of the lead (rotation) screw **314**, and is limited by the freedom of the separation block **318** to move within the bottom housing **304**. The exemplary embodiment can include a plurality of pins, such as eight pins **320**, **322**, **324**, to secure the external linkage arms **308** to the top **302** and bottom **304** housing units and to the separation block **318**. The top housing **302** and bottom housing **304** can include one or more cavities **312** for bone incorporation/fusion.

FIGS. 4A-4C illustrate a ZP-EIS device **400** according to exemplary embodiment IV, which employs a tapered thread mechanism of expansion.

The exemplary device **400** can include a top housing **402** and bottom housing **404**, which can be attached by one or more pins, such as two pins **412**, which allow rotation of the top housing **402** and bottom housing **404** relative to each other about the axis of the pins **412**. The top housing **402** and/o bottom housing **404** can include indentations **406** on their lateral sides close to the top of the device **400** to mate with the prongs of a tool or universal tool (e.g., prongs **806** in FIGS. 8A-8I) to assist in grasping, inserting and impacting the device **400**. The bottom housing **404** can include a mount for the rotation screw **410** (FIG. 4C), which can control the relative angular orientation of the two housing pieces **402**, **404**. When the screw **410** is rotated by an external tool (e.g. as shown in FIGS. 8A-8I), the screw **410** engages the internal teeth/ridges **414** of the top housing **402** and acts as a wedge to rotate the top housing **402** away from the bottom housing **404**. More particularly, the device **400** can include a sloped ridge **414**, as exemplary illustrated in FIG. 4C. When the rotating screw **410** advances, the top housing **402** rotates further and further away from the bottom housing **404**. The device **400** can include one or more bone cavities in the top housing **402** and bottom housing **404** for bone fusion.

FIGS. 5A-5D illustrate exemplary embodiments of a ZP-EIS device according to embodiment V, which employs an anchor mechanism of expansion.

The top housing 502 and bottom housing 504 can be coupled or attached by one or more pins, such as two pins 512, which allow rotation of the top housing 502 and bottom housing 504 relative to each other about the axis of the pins 512. The top housing 502 and/or the bottom housing 504 can include indentations 506 on their lateral sides close to the top of the device 500 to mate with the prongs of a tool or universal tool (e.g. see FIGS. 8A-8I) to assist in grasping, inserting and impacting the device 500. The bottom housing 504 can include, for example, a mount for the lead (rotation) screw 510, which can control the relative angular orientation of the two housing pieces 502, 504. The lead (rotation) screw 510 can be secured with one or more retaining rings, such as two retaining rings 518. When the screw 510 is rotated by an external tool (not illustrated)(e.g., such as the tool shown in FIGS. 8A-8I), the screw 510 causes lateral motion of a translation nut 516, which is attached to two linkage bars 514 to a second nut 516 fixed to the bottom housing. A plurality of pins, such as six pins 512, can secure the linkage bars or arms 514 to each other and to translation nuts 516. When the translation nuts 516 move, the linkage bars or arms 514 extend outside of the bottom housing 504, pushing against the top housing 502. Alternatively, in other embodiments, the linkage bars or arms 514 can be replaced by a solid material such as spring steel which can bend to produce the same effect. The device 500 can include one or more bone cavities that can be incorporated into the top housing 502 and the bottom housing 504 for bone fusion.

FIGS. 6A-6D illustrate exemplary embodiments of a ZP-EIS device 600 according to embodiment VI which employs a modified wedge expansion mechanism.

The device 600 includes a top housing 602 and a bottom housing 604 that can be attached or coupled by one or more pins, such as two pins 612, which allow rotation of the top housing 602 and the bottom housing 604 relative to each other about the axis of the pins 612. The top housing 602 and/or the bottom housing 604 can include indentations 606 on their lateral sides close to the top of the device 600 to mate with the prongs of a tool, such as prongs 806 of the universal tool shown in FIGS. 8A-8I, to assist in grasping, inserting and impacting the device 600. The bottom housing 604 can include a mount for the lead (rotation) screw 610, which can control the relative angular orientation of the two housing pieces 602, 604. The lead (rotation) screw 610 can be secured with one or more retaining rings, such as two retaining rings 618. When the screw 610 is rotated by an external tool (e.g., the tool shown in FIGS. 8A-8I), the screw 610 causes lateral motion of a wedge-shaped translation nut 616. The nut 616 engages an inner tapered surface of the top housing 602 and forces the top housing piece 602 to rotate away from the bottom housing 604. The device 600 can include one or more bone cavities 608 incorporated into the top housing 602 and/or bottom housing 604 for bone fusion.

FIGS. 7A-7D illustrate exemplary embodiments of a ZP-EIS device 700 according to embodiment VII, which employs a worm drive (gear) mechanism.

According to the invention, the device 700 includes a worm drive design that allows a user to rotate a worm gear/drive 712 with an external tool (FIG. 8) to control the translation of the top housing 702 relative to the bottom housing 704a, 704b. The worm gear drive 712 engages a spur gear mount 714 which has internal threading for engaging a corresponding part, such as a threaded stud of bolt 720, to couple the spur gear mount 714 to the top

housing 702. The top housing 702 can include a plurality of pins, such as four pins 712, which extend into the bottom housing 704a, 704b. These pins 712 prevent the top housing 702 from rotating with the spur gear 714, and constrain the spur gear 714 to translate linearly. The bottom housing 704 can include two halves 704a, 704b to secure the worm drive 710 and spur mount 714 in place. A worm retaining ring and a spur retaining ring 716 also can be used to secure the worm gear drive 710 and the spur gear mount 714. The device 700 can include one or more bone cavities 708 that are incorporated into the top housing 702 and/or bottom housing 704a, 704b for bone fusion. The top housing 702 and/or bottom housing 704a, 704b can include one or more indentations 706 on its lateral sides close to the top of the device 700 to mate with prongs of a tool, such as prongs 806 of the universal tool 800 in FIGS. 8A-8I, to assist in grasping, inserting and impacting the device 700.

FIGS. 8A-8C illustrate three-dimensional views of exemplary embodiments of the external drill/screw guide-box expander universal tool 800 which can be used to assist in both screw trajectory and box expansion of an expandable device, such as the exemplary embodiments of devices illustrated in embodiments I and II, and for device expansion of the devices illustrated in embodiments III-VII. The same universal tool 800 can be utilized for all the exemplary embodiments illustrated in embodiments I-VII. In some embodiments, the external drill/screw guide 850 may not be needed or used for embodiments II-VII. The prongs 806 can be inserted into the indentations (e.g., 202, 306, 406, 506, 606, 706) of the sides of the devices (e.g., 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700) according to one or all of the exemplary embodiments illustrated in embodiments I-VII, and implant the device into the intervertebral space. Once implanted and impacted, an Allen key (e.g., as shown in FIG. 8) can be used to expand the device (e.g., 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700) by turning the adjustment (rotation) screw (e.g., 105, 220, 314, 410, 510, 610, 710).

The exemplary tool can include, among other things, an Allen key 801, a spring 802, a handle 803, a gripper 804 and a screw guide 805. The Allen key 801, when inserted in the insertion 814 and turned, can turn the rotation screws (e.g., 105, 220, 314, 410, 510, 610, 710) of one or all of the exemplary embodiments I-VII. The gripper 804 includes gripper prongs 806, which insert into grooves 509 of the screw guide 805 and the screw box indentations (e.g., 202) in the exemplary embodiment illustrated in embodiment I (as shown in FIGS. 8A-8D), as well as in similar indentations (e.g., 306, 406, 506, 606, 706) of devices (e.g., 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700) illustrated in embodiments II-VII (not shown).

As shown in FIG. 8C, each longitudinal end of the screw box 100 can include a slot or indentation 108 formed adjacent to an edge of an upper surface of the screw box 100 for engaging a protuberant extension of a tool, such as the protuberant extension 807 of the tool 800.

FIG. 8D illustrates a superior oblique view of the screw guide 805 demonstrating insertions 809 for gripper prong 806, built-in trajectory guides 811, 812 for insertion of screws 101 and 102, and the Allen key 801. This exemplary embodiment can be limited, for example, to use with the devices of embodiments I and II, which includes BDFT screws.

FIGS. 8E-8G illustrate three-dimensional views of the sequential steps necessary for the external guide assembly. FIG. 8E illustrates the insertion of the Allen key 801 into the handle 803. FIG. 8F illustrates the insertion of the handle 803 through the spring 802 and gripper 804. FIG. 8G illus-

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trates insertion of the griper **804** into the screw guide **805**. The griper prongs **806** can include medially oriented male protuberant extensions **807** that engage the slot or indentation of a device, such as indentation **108** of device **100**, thereby perfectly aligning the prongs **805** of the tool **800** with the device (e.g., **100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700**). This exemplary embodiment can be limited, for example, to use with the devices of embodiments I and II.

FIG. 8H illustrates a three-dimensional view of another exemplary embodiment of a positioning tool **800** for impaction and placement of two transvertebral screws **201, 202** for example, for use with the exemplary embodiments I and II.

With reference again to FIGS. 8A-8K, the screw guide **805** can include insertions **809** for receiving the griper prong **806**, built-in trajectory guides **811, 812** for insertion of screws **101** and **102**, and the Allen key **801**.

The driver assembly **850** can include a screw driver **851**, a flexible shaft **852** and a square recess bit **853**. This exemplary device can facilitate turning the screws **101, 102** into the bone. The flexible shaft **852** can facilitate the avoidance of spinous processes which might hinder the screw driving if the shaft **852** were straight. The positioning tool **800** can have a rectangular handle, as shown for example in Embodiment I, or a circular handle, as exemplary shown in Embodiment II. This exemplary embodiment can serve to position a screw box within the intervertebral space, and screws **101, 102** within the screw box or device. Once positioned, the screw box or device (e.g., **100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700**) can be impacted by tapping the handle **803** with a mallet (not shown). The griper handle **803** inserts into the screw guide and the screw box or device (e.g., **100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700**), which maintains alignment.

2. The Surgical Method

Exemplary embodiments of a surgical method for utilizing the exemplary devices described herein, will now be described. The procedures can be performed open, microscopic, closed tubular or endoscopic. Fluoroscopic guidance can be used with any of these procedures.

An exemplary embodiment of a ZP-EIS device, as illustrated in embodiments (I-VII), can be inserted into the intervertebral space (for example as shown in FIGS. 8J and 8K) after an adequate discectomy is performed in any disc space throughout the entire spine upon their exposure anteriorly, anterio-laterally, laterally, far laterally or posteriorly.

For exemplary embodiments I-II of the ZP-EIS devices can be inserted into the disc space by a tool or universal tool, such as the universal tool **800** in FIGS. 8A-8I. In operation, the grab prongs of tool **800** can attach to the insets or indentations (e.g., **202, 306, 406, 506, 606, 706**) on the side of the devices. Once in the disc space, the rotation screw (e.g., **105, 220, 314, 410, 510, 610, 710**) of each embodiment is turned by rotating the Allen key **801** of the tool **800** to expand the device (e.g., **100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700**) to the desirable disc height achieving the desirable intervertebral distraction deemed necessary for the individual patient and disc space. Once this is achieved, BDFT screws **101, 102** are inserted and screwed into the vertebral body above and below securing the device (e.g., **100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700**) to the vertebral bodies with screws **101, 102**. Prior to implantation of the device (e.g., **100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700**), the bone cavities of each device can be filled with any type of bone fusion material.

For the exemplary embodiments III-VII, the ZP-EIS device (e.g., **100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700**) can be inserted into the disc space by the same universal tool, such as tool **800**. The grabs prongs **806** of the tool **800** attach to

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the insets or indentations (e.g., **202, 306, 406, 506, 606, 706**) on the side of the devices (e.g., **100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700**) on the side of the devices (e.g., **100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700**). Once in the disc space, the rotation screw (e.g., **105, 220, 314, 410, 510, 610, 710**) is turned by rotating the Allen key **801** of the tool **800** expanding the device (e.g., **100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700**) to the desirable disc height achieving the desirable intervertebral distraction deemed necessary for the individual patient and disc space. Prior to implantation of the device (e.g., **100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700**) the bone cavities of each device (e.g., **100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700**) can be filled with any type of bone fusion material.

The exemplary embodiments of the present invention may provide effective and safe techniques that overcome the problems associated with current transpedicular and/or plated fusion technology employed for many degenerative stable and unstable spine diseases. These exemplary embodiments may replace much pedicle screw-based and plated based instrumentation in many but not all degenerative spine conditions.

The speed and simplicity of the surgical implantation of the exemplary embodiments of the ZP-EIS devices far exceeds that of conventional pedicle screw technology. Furthermore, the exemplary embodiments of zero-profile devices can provide markedly significantly decreased risk of misguided screw placement, and hence decreased risk of neural and vascular injury, and blood loss. The exemplary embodiments can provide decreased recovery and back to work time. The exemplary embodiments of devices may lead to similar if not equal fusion with significantly less morbidity, and hence overall make the exemplary devices a major advance in the evolution of spinal instrumented technology leading to advances in the care of the spinal patient.

According to the exemplary embodiments, such as the embodiments in embodiments I and II, an intervertebral fusion device is provided that uses a threaded rod mechanism located at the peripheral of the box to control expansion of the device. The device can include a cavity within the walls for placement of bone material for fusion.

In another embodiment, an intervertebral fusion device can include a threaded rod which can obstruct (inhibit) expansion of the device when it is not being turned. The threaded rod can be disposed at the front anterior part of the box or device.

In yet another embodiment, an intervertebral fusion device can include a threaded rod, which exerts a clamping force to expand the device until the device properly accommodates the dimensions of the intervertebral disc space and distracts the space based on individual anatomy and surgical judgment. The device can include a cavity for bone in-between the walls of the box.

In another embodiment, an expandable intervertebral fusion device can include indentations on its sides to accommodate a placement tool.

In another embodiment, an expandable intervertebral fusion device can be adjusted by using a threaded rod as a wedge to pivot components within the device. The threaded rod can be accessible from the front anterior of the box or device.

In another embodiment, an expandable fusion device can include a threaded rod to expand a spacer. The threaded rod can be used as a wedge to mechanically separate the pieces. The threaded rod can be accessible from the front anterior of the box or device.

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In another embodiment, an expandable fusion device can include wedge components which translate relative to each other along a contact. The degree of expansion can be determined by an adjustment rod located at the peripheral of the box or device.

In another embodiment, an expandable fusion device includes components which are mechanically linked together. The expansion of the device is controlled by the user via an adjustment rod coupled to a mechanical transmission that causes mechanical components within the device to separate. The threaded rod is accessible from the front anterior of the box or device.

In another embodiment, an expandable fusion device can be provided wherein the position of the device is secured and adjusted by a threaded rod that is mechanically linked to housing pieces. When the threaded rod is rotated, the threaded rod forces the pieces to separate.

In another embodiment, an intervertebral fusion device is provided wherein the two internal screw guides are in the top housing unit.

In another embodiment, an intervertebral fusion expansile device is provided wherein the center of the two internal screw guides could be in quadrants I and III or II and IV.

In another embodiment, an expandable fusion device can be provided that uses a threaded rod (rotation screw) to expand the device using a metal driver as the wedge to mechanically separate the pieces.

In another embodiment, an expandable fusion device can be adjusted by using a threaded rod (rotation screw) as a wedge to offset the opposing cages.

In another embodiment, an expandable intervertebral fusion device can be provided wherein its position is secured and adjusted by a threaded rod (rotation screw) coupled to a nut and passed through the top and bottom housing pieces. As the threaded rod is rotated further into the nut, the pieces separate.

In another embodiment, an expandable intervertebral fusion device can include a tapered edge to allow contoured insertion into the disc space.

In another embodiment, an intervertebral fusion device can be provided wherein the internal screw guides for screw insertion within the device are diagonal to each other within the xyz plane.

In another embodiment, an intervertebral fusion device wherein the internal screw guides can be adjacent and somewhat diagonal to each other within the xyz plane.

In another embodiment, an intervertebral fusion device can be provided wherein the majority each of the 2 screw holes can be in quadrant I and III or II and IV within the xyz plane.

In another embodiment, an intervertebral fusion device can be provided wherein the screw guides can have approximately the same xy coordinates and have different z coordinates or vice versa.

In another embodiment, an intervertebral fusion device can be provided wherein the center of the two internal screw guides could be in quadrants I and III or II and IV within the xyz plane.

In another embodiment, an intervertebral fusion device can be provided wherein one screw guide is in the top housing unit, and another screw guide is in the bottom housing unit.

In another embodiment, an intervertebral fusion device can be provided that uses a threaded rod (rotation screw) to engage a moveable component which engages a linkage to expand the device.

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In another embodiment, an intervertebral fusion device can be provided that uses a threaded rod (rotation screw) to engage a wedge which engages its attaching linkages to expand the device.

In another embodiment, an expandable fusion device can be provided that can be adjusted using a threaded rod (rotation screw) coupled to a scissor-jack linkage.

In another embodiment, an expandable fusion device can be held together with fastener (s). These fasteners constrain the box to one degree of freedom. Part of the mechanism contains a mount for the rotation screw, which can control the movement of the pieces. As the screw is turned, it engages the teeth of the mechanism and acts as a wedge to rotate the pieces away from each other.

In another embodiment, an expandable fusion device adjusted by using a threaded rod (rotation screw) can be used as a wedge to offset the opposing cage surfaces.

In another embodiment, an expandable fusion device can be provided that uses a threaded rod (rotation screw) to expand the device using a metal driver as the wedge to mechanically separate the pieces.

In another embodiment, an expandable fusion device can be provided that can be adjusted by a threaded rod (rotation screw) coupled to a nut which translates to deform an elastomeric material used to force the expansion of the device.

In another embodiment, an expandable fusion device can be provided that has a threaded rod (rotation screw) that engages a wedge to control the expansion of the device.

In another embodiment, an expandable fusion device can be provided that can be contained by fasteners and retaining rings.

In another embodiment, an expandable fusion device can be provided that can be adjusted by a threaded rod (rotation screw) coupled to a wedge that can move the opposing cage surfaces.

In another embodiment, an expandable fusion device can be provided that uses a worm drive to turn a gear that acts as a wedge to expand the device.

In another embodiment, an expandable fusion device can be provided that includes fasteners and retaining rings containing and constraining the device pieces.

In another embodiment, an expandable fusion device can be provided that can be adjusted by a worm gear coupled to an internally threaded spur gear which, upon rotation, linearly advances a threaded component.

In another embodiment, a tool includes a handle, a gripper cooperating with the handle and having a plurality of prongs, a screw guide held in place the plurality of prongs, for controlling the direction of self-drilling screws that are screwed into the vertebral bodies, and an Allen key which expands expandable intervertebral devices.

The present invention has been described herein in terms of several preferred embodiments. However, modifications and additions to these embodiments will become apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art upon a reading of the foregoing description. It is intended that all such modifications and additions comprise a part of the present invention to the extent that they fall within the scope of the several claims appended hereto.

We claim:

1. An expandable intervertebral fusion device comprising: a first movable portion extending from a first end to a second end, wherein the first movable portion has first and second end portions positioned at the first and second ends, respectively, and has first and second side portions extending between the first and second end

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portions, wherein the first movable portion has a first vertebral body engagement surface and has a first interior surface positioned on an opposite side of the first movable portion than the first vertebral body engagement surface;

- a second movable portion extending from a third end to a fourth end, wherein the second movable portion has third and fourth end portions positioned at the third and fourth ends, respectively, and has third and fourth side portions extending between the third and fourth end portions, wherein the second movable portion has a second vertebral body engagement surface and has a second interior surface positioned on an opposite side of the second movable portion than the second vertebral body engagement surface, wherein the first movable portion is aligned with the second movable portion such that the first end of the first movable portion is axially aligned with the third end of the second movable portion and the second end of the first movable portion is axially aligned with the fourth end of the second movable portion, wherein the first end portion of the first movable portion is hingedly connected to the third end portion of the second movable portion such that the first movable portion can pivot with respect to the second movable portion so as to move the second end portion of the first movable portion away from the fourth end portion of the second movable portion, wherein the second movable portion defines a slot in the fourth end portion between the third and fourth side portions that is sized to receive the second end portion of the first movable portion such that the second end of the first movable portion and the fourth end of the second movable portion are axially aligned; and
- a mechanism that pivotably moves the first movable portion and the second movable portion with respect to each other to expand a dimension of the expandable intervertebral fusion device, wherein the mechanism comprises:

a wedge extending from a fifth end to a sixth end and having an angled wedge surface extending along at least a portion of a distance between the fifth end and the sixth end, wherein the wedge is positioned between the first movable portion and the second movable portion with the angled wedge surface facing the first interior surface of the first movable portion, wherein the first interior surface of the first movable portion has an angled movable portion surface shaped to engage the angled wedge surface of the wedge, wherein a distance from the fifth end to the sixth end of the wedge is less than a distance from the first end to the second end of the first movable portion and is less than a distance from the third end to the fourth end of the second movable portion, wherein the wedge is configured to slide within a space defined between the first and second movable portions in a direction toward the second and fourth ends of the first and second movable portions from a first wedge position that allows the first and second movable portions to pivot to a device position that is substantially closed to a second wedge position whereby the angled wedge surface presses against the first interior surface of the first movable portion to hingedly open the first movable portion with respect to the second movable portion whereby the wedge remains axially confined within the space defined by the first and second movable portions in the first and second wedge positions; and

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a rotation screw operably connected to the wedge and to the second movable portion, wherein rotation of the rotation screw moves the wedge in an axially translating direction with respect to the first movable portion and the second movable portion within the space defined between the first and second movable portions from the first wedge position to the second wedge position.

2. The device of claim 1, wherein the first movable portion defines a first bone material receiving area between the first and second end portions and the first and second side portions, wherein the second movable portion defines a second bone material receiving area between the third and fourth end portions and the third and fourth side portions, and wherein the first bone material receiving area is aligned with the second bone material receiving area and sized such that a path between the first and second bone material receiving areas is only partially blocked by the wedge.

3. The device of claim 1, and further comprising means for retaining the rotation screw to the second movable portion.

4. The device of claim 1, and further comprising means for mating the second movable portion with prongs of a tool.

5. The device of claim 1, wherein the wedge comprises a threaded hole that engages with a threaded surface around a circumferential perimeter of the rotation screw.

6. The device of claim 1, and further comprising first and second retaining rings connected to the rotation screw so as to retain the rotation screw in place when the rotation screw rotates.

7. The device of claim 1, wherein the third and fourth side portions define first and second indentations that extend into but not through the third and fourth side portions and that are configured to be grabbed by an insertion tool.

8. A system comprising the device of claim 7, wherein the system further comprises:

means for gripping and inserting the device.

9. The system of claim 8, and further comprising:

means for turning the rotation screw with respect to the second movable portion and the wedge.

10. The device of claim 1, and further comprising:

means for pivotably attaching the first movable portion to the second movable portion.

11. The device of claim 1, wherein the first movable portion has a thickness that varies between the first end and the second end such that the first interior surface comprises a curved portion and a straight portion.

12. The device of claim 1, wherein the wedge comprises opposing first and second side surfaces with first and second substantially flat portions, wherein the angled wedge surface extends between the first and second side surfaces and is substantially flat across the angled wedge surface from the first side surface to the second side surface.

13. A method of operating the device of claim 1, the method comprising:

inserting the device in a target surgical location between two vertebrae of a human patient; and

turning the rotation screw to drive the wedge against the first movable portion to push and pivot the first movable portion away from the second movable portion while the device is positioned between the vertebrae of the human patient.

14. An expandable interbody device comprising:

a top housing extending from a first end to a second end, wherein the top housing has first and second end portions positioned at the first and second ends, respectively, and has first and second side portions extending

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between the first and second end portions, wherein the top housing has a first vertebral body engagement surface that is at least partially convex and has a first interior surface positioned on an opposite side of the top housing than the first vertebral body engagement surface, wherein the top housing defines at least one first bone material receiving area extending through the top housing between the first and second end portions and the first and second side portions;

a bottom housing extending from a third end to a fourth end, wherein the bottom housing has third and fourth end portions positioned at the third and fourth ends, respectively, and has third and fourth side portions extending between the third and fourth end portions, wherein the bottom housing has a second vertebral body engagement surface that is at least partially convex and has a second interior surface positioned on an opposite side of the bottom housing than the second vertebral body engagement surface, wherein the bottom housing defines at least one second bone material receiving area extending through the bottom housing between the third and fourth end portions and the third and fourth side portions, wherein the top housing is aligned with the bottom housing such that the first end of the top housing is axially aligned with the third end of the bottom housing and the second end of the top housing is axially aligned with the fourth end of the bottom housing, wherein the first end portion of the top housing and the third end portion of the bottom housing are hingedly interconnected such that the top housing can pivot with respect to the bottom housing so as to move the second end portion of the top housing away from the fourth end portion of the bottom housing, wherein a first length of the top housing from the first end to the second end is substantially equal to a second length of the bottom housing from the third end to the fourth end, and wherein the second end portion of the top housing is smaller than the fourth end portion of the bottom housing such that the second end portion of the top housing is positionable between the third and fourth side portions of the bottom housing at the fourth end of the bottom housing;

a wedge extending from a fifth end to a sixth end and having an angled wedge surface extending along at least a portion of a distance between the fifth end and the sixth end, wherein the wedge is positioned between the top housing and the bottom housing with the angled wedge surface facing the first interior surface of the top housing, wherein the first interior surface of the top housing has an angled housing surface shaped to engage the angled wedge surface of the wedge, wherein a distance from the fifth end to the sixth end of the wedge is less than a distance from the first end to the second end of the top housing and is less than a distance from the third end to the fourth end of the bottom housing, wherein the wedge is configured to slide within a space defined by the top and bottom housings in a direction toward the second and fourth ends of the top and bottom housings from a first wedge position that allows the top and bottom housings to pivot to a housing position that is substantially closed to a second wedge position whereby the angled wedge surface presses against the first interior surface of the top housing to hingedly open the top housing with respect to the bottom housing whereby the wedge remains

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axially confined within the space defined by the top and bottom housings in the first and second wedge positions; and

a rotation screw operably connected to the wedge and to the bottom housing, wherein rotation of the rotation screw moves the wedge in an axially translating direction with respect to the top housing and the bottom housing within the space defined by the first and bottom housings from the first wedge position to the second wedge position.

15. The device of claim 14, wherein the first end portion of the top housing and the third end portion of the bottom housing are hingedly interconnected via at least two pins.

16. The device of claim 14, wherein the top housing has a thickness that varies between the first end and the second end such that the first interior surface comprises a curved portion and a straight portion.

17. The device of claim 14, and further comprising means for attaching the first end portion of the top housing to the third end portion of the bottom housing.

18. A method of operating the device of claim 14, the method comprising:

inserting the device in a target surgical location between two vertebrae of a human patient; and

turning the rotation screw to drive the wedge to pivot the top housing away from the bottom housing while the device is positioned between the vertebrae of the human patient.

19. An expandable interbody device comprising:

a first housing extending from a first end to a second end, wherein the first housing has first and second end portions positioned at the first and second ends, respectively, and has first and second side portions extending between the first and second end portions, wherein the first housing has a first vertebral body engagement surface and has a first interior surface positioned on an opposite side of the first housing than the first vertebral body engagement surface, wherein the first housing defines a first bone material receiving area between the first and second end portions and the first and second side portions;

a second housing extending from a third end to a fourth end, wherein the second housing has third and fourth end portions positioned at the third and fourth ends, respectively, and has third and fourth side portions extending between the third and fourth end portions, wherein the second housing has a second vertebral body engagement surface and has a second interior surface positioned on an opposite side of the second housing than the second vertebral body engagement surface, wherein the second housing defines a second bone material receiving area between the third and fourth end portions and the third and fourth side portions, wherein the third and fourth side portions define first and second indentations configured to be grabbed by an insertion tool, wherein the first housing is aligned with the second housing such that the first end of the first housing is axially aligned with the third end of the second housing and the second end of the first housing is axially aligned with the fourth end of the second housing, wherein the first end portion of the first housing is hingedly connected to the third end portion of the second housing such that the first housing can pivot with respect to the second housing so as to move the second end portion of the first housing away from the fourth end portion of the second housing, wherein the second housing defines a slot in the fourth end

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portion between the third and fourth side portions that is sized to receive the second end portion of the first housing such that the second end of the first housing and the fourth end of the second housing are axially aligned;

- a wedge extending from a fifth end to a sixth end with an angled wedge surface extending along a portion of a distance between the fifth end and the sixth end and with first and second opposing side surfaces on opposite sides of the angled wedge surface, wherein the wedge is positioned between the first housing and the second housing with the angled wedge surface facing the first interior surface of the first housing, wherein the first interior surface of the first housing has an angled housing surface shaped to engage the angled wedge surface of the wedge, wherein a distance from the fifth end to the sixth end of the wedge is less than a distance from the first end to the second end of the first housing and is less than a distance from the third end to the fourth end of the second housing, wherein the wedge is configured to slide within a space defined between the first and second housings in a direction toward the second and fourth ends of the first and second housings from a first wedge position that allows the first and

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second housings to pivot to a housing position that is substantially closed to a second wedge position whereby the angled wedge surface presses against the first interior surface of the first housing to hingedly open the first housing with respect to the second housing whereby the wedge remains axially confined within the space defined between the first and second housings in the first and second wedge positions; and a rotation screw operably connected to the wedge and to the second housing, wherein rotation of the rotation screw moves the wedge in an axially translating direction with respect to the first housing and the second housing within the space defined between the first and second housings from the first wedge position to the second wedge position.

20. A system comprising the device of claim 19, wherein the device further comprises means for attaching the first end of the first housing to the third end of the second housing and wherein the system further comprises:

- means for gripping and inserting the device; and
- means for turning the rotation screw with respect to the second movable portion and the wedge.

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