

Description

This invention relates to improvements in and relating to wheel chairs, particularly folding wheel chair which would enable the user of the wheel chair to be elevated so that the user can more readily reach and see places and areas which are at present inaccessible to the user.

Large numbers of incapacitated people live in their own homes, and these paraplegic people are confined to moving around their homes in a wheel chair and carrying out their household activities from these wheel chairs.

However from the safety point of view the chairs are designed to have a very low centre of gravity so as to increase the stability of the wheel chairs. However this low design is of distinct disadvantage and is considered to be extremely dangerous when household chores and duties are carried out from the low wheel chair, for example cooking, washing or the like.

Thus users of a wheel chair often have to cook on a stove with the top of the stove being at the eye level of the user in the wheel chair and this causes a very dangerous situation.

Folding wheel chairs are known, for example as shown in U.S. Patent Nos. 4166631 and 4140341 which basically comprise two side frames interconnected by cross struts. These struts are connected to the arm rests which are slidable vertically in the side frames. As the chair folds by bringing the side frames together, the arm rests rise due to the movement of the cross struts.

Wheel chairs which have means to elevate the seat are also known, as shown for example in U.S. Patent Nos. 1219834, 3215469, 2988336 and 2578382, but these do not have any provision for folding the wheel chair, and with the construction shown it is not possible to fold the chairs.

U.S. Patent No. 2641306 shows a folding raisable wheel chair with the folding action acting between the main frame base and a side frame on the opposite side and the raising acting between the side frame and the actual seat. Hence when the seat is raised the side frame does not lift and the seat in effect loses its arm rests and the seat is not safe.

Referring now to United Kingdom Patent No. 922175 there is shown a folding wheel chair having a seat portion which is adapted to be elevated. The seat is mounted on a hydraulic ram supported on a frame work which is adapted to be clipped to the side rails of the chair. The seat frame work and hydraulic ram must be removed before the chair can be collapsed. And thus the seat frame work and hydraulic ram must be separately carried and stowed.

However for those patients living at home and those patients who require transport between various places, it is virtually essential for the chair to be collapsible in a simple manner so that they can be easily transported and stowed. Also it is highly desirable that the patient be able to be raised and lowered in the chair for safely carrying out household chores, cooking, preparing meals,

washing, and also for activities in industry and at their places of employment.

It is thus an object of this invention to provide a folding wheel chair or an attachment for fitting to a wheel chair which will enable the seat and back rest portion of the wheel chair to be elevated so that the user can then be raised on the seat.

It is a further object of this invention to provide a mechanism for or incorporated in a folding wheel chair whereby the user himself may raise him or herself in the seat by simple manipulation of a lever or switch, and the chair collapsed when required in the usual manner.

The folding wheel chair of the invention comprises a pair of spaced parallel main side frames each carrying a rear wheel and a forward wheel, a pair of spaced parallel seat and back rest frames one for each main side frame and vertically slidable relative to the main frames and stabilising means foldably interconnecting the two sides of the wheel chair, characterised in that there are provided a pair of secondary side frames one between each said main side frame and its associated seat and back rest frame, means to raise said secondary side frames in their entirety relative to said main side frames to thus raise said seat and back rest frames and elevate same relative to said main side frames whilst the stabilising means maintain the main side frames in spaced parallel position.

In order more fully to describe the invention reference will now be made to the accompanying drawings in which

FIG. 1 is a view of the wheel chair in its lowered position,

FIG. 2 is a view of the wheel chair in its raised position, and

FIG. 3 is side elevation of one of the sides of the wheel chair.

The wheel chair 1 comprises frame works on each side of the wheel chair for convenience the majority of the description will refer only to one side.

The frame work comprises a pair of spaced parallel main side frames 2 each having a base portion 3, forward upright portion 4 and a rear upright portion 5, the forward upright portion 4 carrying a socket 6 for the front castor wheel 7 while the rear wheels 8 are mounted on a main axle 9 in axle carrier hole 10 in the rear upright portion 5.

The flexible seat 11 is attached to the rising seat and back rest frame 12 supported on the front and rear upright portions by guide rods 13 mounted in holes 14 in the seat and back rest frame 12 and slidable in that which is 15 in the front and rear upright portions 4 and 5. The seat and back rest frames are adapted to rise relative to the main frame during the folding of the chair in the usual manner.

Between the main frame 2 and the seat and back rest frame 12 there is provided a secondary side frame 16. Guide rods 17 are mounted in holes 18 in the main frame 2 and slide in holes 19 in the secondary side frame 16.

The cross stabilising struts 20 are each pivoted to the lower portions of the secondary side frame 16 and the seat and back rest frame 12 so that the chair can then be folded in a manner similar to conventional chairs.

An elevating device such as a "Saginaw" jacked screw 21 is provided on each side between the secondary side frame 16 and the main frame 2, these being mounted on the main frame and having the nut member mounted on the secondary side frame. These elevating devices can be driven by an electric motor and gear box 22 or manually by a handle (not shown).

It will be seen that on elevation of the seat that the elevating device will lift the secondary side frames 16 which will in turn lift the seat and back rest frames and thus the seat. These will be guided in their movement by the side frame guide rod 17 and the seat and back rest frame guide rods 13. The elevating devices are located on the line of the centre of gravity of the patient for minimum strain and balancing of the moments of force.

The seat and back rest frame 12 in the seat is provided with a back rest 23, the handles 24 thus can be detached and be mounted in sockets 25 in the back rest 23.

The foot rest 26 can be pivoted to arm 27 on the secondary side frame 16, and adjustably positioned by stabilising arm 28 which is adjustably positioned by adjusting nut 29.

The height of the foot rest can be positioned by telescopic arms and clamp 30 while the rests 31 themselves are pivoted to the ends of the telescopic arms.

If the elevating devices are electrically driven the chair would be provided with a bracket or the like to carry the battery which is preferably a re-chargable dry cell. When the chair is to be collapsed this battery may have to be removed, but could be positioned so that removal is not necessary, so that the chair collapses in a manner similar to known chairs, the seat and back rest frames 16 rising in its guide rods 13 during the collapsing motion.

The chair can be constructed to any suitable material, either strong light weight metal or plastics material. For example the side frames and main frames could be made from a material sold under the trade name "Lexan".

In an alternative form rams having a piston and cylinder arrangement can interconnect the respective frames at the front and rear of the frames to elevate the seat frame. Thus two frames may be added to an existing wheel chair and two or four rams would be interconnected so that they operate simultaneously on the supply of fluid pressure.

This fluid pressure could be hydraulic with the pump drawing the hydraulic fluid from a hydraulic reservoir, or alternatively air could be used in which case on release of the air pressure from the pneumatic pistons and cylinders the air would just be released through a bleed valve.

It will be realised that the invention would have

to be varied to be adapted to various forms of current folding wheel chairs, or to other speciality folding wheel chair.

The fluid rams can be interconnected to either a hydraulic pump if hydraulic rams are used, or a pneumatic pump either of the reciprocating or rotary variety which can be operated by a lever or the like situated adjacent the arm rest of the wheel chair.

In those wheel chairs which are driven by electric motors from batteries, the pumps could be driven from a small electric motor driven by the battery or alternatively there could be incorporated in the lifting frames a mechanical lifting arrangement in which, a screw and nut arrangement can be utilised to raise and lower the seat, the screw and nut arrangement being driven by appropriate electric motors.

It is realised that this may be a severe drain on the battery, but in certain situations depending upon the invalidity of the patient, this may well be desirable.

In these folding chairs, the stabilising and locking bars would be situated on the frame work to lock the wheel chair and stabilise the wheel chair in the spread position particularly when the weight of the user is in the chair, but that the frame work would be such that the seat portion could be raised and lowered as desired.

In some folding wheel chairs this may require the addition of a separate stabilising or locking part to be inserted between the two frames to allow the wheel chair seat to be raised, particularly in those chairs where the stabilising bars acts on the upper part of the frame or on the lower portion of the seat portion. This would vary depending upon the make and type of wheel chair and the locking and stabilising arrangement.

It will be seen that by raising the seat even ten or twenty centimetres would enable the user to have access to a larger number of areas in situations, and to work in these areas and situations with greater degrees of safety.

Of course the seat could be elevated up to thirty centimetres, but it is realised that as the height increases then the stability of the wheel chair has to be taken into consideration due to the much higher centre of gravity of the wheel chair user combination.

The invention can also be incorporated in the chairs during manufacture and the chair frame itself could be used as the pipe work for conducting the fluid from the pump to the rams.

Although various forms of the invention have been described in some detail it is to be realised that the invention is not to be limited thereto but is to include various modifications falling within the scope of the appended claims.

Claims

1. A folding wheel chair (1) comprising a pair of spaced parallel main side frames (2) each carrying a rear wheel (8) and a forward wheel (7), a pair of spaced parallel seat and back rest frames (12) one

The cross stabilising struts 20 are each pivoted to the lower portions of the secondary side frame 16 and the seat and back rest frame 12 so that the chair can then be folded in a manner similar to conventional chairs.

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for each main side frame and vertically slidable relative to the main frames and stabilising means (20) foldably interconnecting the two sides of the wheel chair, characterised in that there are provided a pair of secondary side frames (16) one between each said main side frame and its associated seat and back rest frame, means to raise said secondary side frames in their entirety relative to said main side frames to thus raise said seat and back rest frame (12) and elevate same relative to said main side frames (2) whilst the stabilising means (20) maintain the main side frames (2) in spaced parallel position.

2. A folding wheel chair as defined in claim 1 characterised in that said stabilising means are cross struts (20) interconnecting the lower portion of the secondary side frames to the seat and back rest frames so that on elevation of the secondary side frames the seat and back rest frames and secondary side frames raise as a unit.

3. A folding wheel chair as defined in claim 2 characterised in that said seat and back rest frames (12) are slidable vertically relative to said secondary side frames (16) so that the seat and back rest frames (12) rise relative to the secondary side frames during folding of the chair.

4. A folding wheel chair as defined in any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein said elevating means comprises a screw (21) and nut driven by an electric motor (22), said motor and screw being mounted on each said main side frame and said nut on each said secondary side frame.

Revendications

1. Un fauteuil roulant repliable (1) comprenant une paire de cadres latéraux principaux parallèles et écartés (2) présentant chacun une roue arrière (8) et une roue avant (7), une paire de cadres parallèles et espacés formant siège et dossier (12), un pour chaque cadre latéral principal et pouvant coulisser verticalement par rapport aux cadres principaux et des moyens de stabilisation (20) reliant de manière repliable les deux côtés du fauteuil roulant, caractérisé en ce que l'on prévoit une paire de cadres latéraux secondaires (16), un entre chaque cadre latéral principal et son cadre associé formant siège et dossier, des moyens pour lever lesdits cadres latéraux secondaires en bloc par rapport auxdits cadres latéraux principaux afin de soulever ainsi ledit cadre formant siège et dossier (12) et le lever par rapport auxdits cadres latéraux principaux (2) pendant que les moyens de stabilisation (20) maintiennent les cadres latéraux principaux (2) dans une position parallèle et écartée.

2. Un fauteuil roulant repliable selon la revendication 1, caractérisé en ce que lesdits moyens de stabilisation sont des traverses (20) reliant entre eux la partie inférieure des cadres latéraux secondaires et les cadres formant siège et dossier de telle manière que, lors du soulèvement des cadres latéraux secondaires, les cadres formant siège et dossier ainsi que les cadres latéraux secondaires se lèvent d'un bloc.

3. Un fauteuil roulant repliable selon la revendication 2, caractérisé en ce que lesdits cadres formant siège et dossier (12) peuvent coulisser verticalement par rapport auxdits cadres latéraux secondaires (16) de sorte que les cadres formant siège et dossier (12) se lèvent par rapport aux cadres latéraux secondaires pendant le repliage du fauteuil.

4. Un fauteuil roulant repliable selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 3, dans lequel lesdits moyens de soulèvement comprennent une vis (21) et un écrou entraîné par un moteur électrique (22), ledit moteur et ladite vis étant montés sur chaque cadre latéral principal et ledit écrou sur chaque cadre latéral secondaire.

Patentansprüche

1. Zusammenklappbarer Rollstuhl (1), bestehend aus einem Paar beabstandeter, paralleler Hauptseitenrahmen (2), die jeweils ein hinteres Rad (8) und ein vorderes Rad (7) tragen, einem Paar beabstandeter, paralleler Sitz- und Rückenlehnenrahmen (12), von denen jeweils einer für jeden Hauptseitenrahmen vorgesehen und vertikal verschiebbar relativ zu den Hauptrahmen ist, sowie Stabilisierungsmittel (20), die die beiden Seiten des Rollstuhls zusammenklappbar miteinander verbinden, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß ein Paar zusätzlicher Seitenrahmen (16), die jeweils zwischen dem Hauptseitenrahmen und seinem zugehörigen Sitz- und Rückenlehnenrahmen angeordnet sind, sowie Mittel zum Anheben der zusätzlichen Seitenrahmen in ihrer Gesamtheit relativ zu den Hauptseitenrahmen vorgesehen sind, um so den Sitz- und Rückenlehnenrahmen (12) anzuheben und denselben relativ zu den Hauptseitenrahmen (2) zu erhöhen, während die Stabilisierungsmittel (20) die Hauptseitenrahmen (2) in beabstandeter, paralleler Position halten.

2. Zusammenklappbarer Rollstuhl nach Anspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Stabilisierungsmittel Strebenkreuze (20) sind, die den unteren Teil der zusätzlichen Seitenrahmen mit den Sitz- und Rückenlehnenrahmen verbinden, so daß bei Anhebung der zusätzlichen Seitenrahmen die Sitz- und Rückenlehnenrahmen und die zusätzlichen Seitenrahmen als eine Einheit angehoben werden.

3. Zusammenklappbarer Rollstuhl nach Anspruch 2, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Sitz- und Rückenlehnenrahmen (12) relativ zu den zusätzlichen Seitenrahmen (16) vertikal verschiebbar angeordnet sind, so daß die Sitz- und Rückenlehnenrahmen (12) während des Zusammenklappens des Stuhls relativ zu den zusätzlichen Seitenrahmen angehoben werden.

4. Zusammenklappbarer Rollstuhl nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 3, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Hebemittel aus einer Schraube (21) und einer Mutter bestehen und von einem Elektromotor (22) angetrieben werden, wobei der Motor und die Schraube an jedem Seitenrahmen und die Mutter an jedem zusätzlichen Seitenrahmen befestigt ist.

