WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A headgear connection element for a patient interface for use with respiratory therapy, the headgear connection element comprising:

   a first end adapted to interface with headgear,

   a second end adapted to interface with a frame of the patient interface, and

   a body extending between the first and second ends substantially along a first axis,

   wherein the second end comprises a projection comprising a first portion extending along a second axis substantially transverse to the first axis and a second portion extending from the first portion in a direction substantially parallel to the first axis, wherein a first section of the second portion extends back towards a middle of the body and a second section of the second portion extends away from the middle of the body, and wherein the second portion is wider than the first portion, and the projection adapted to protrude through the frame of the patient interface.

2. The headgear connection element of claim 1, wherein the body is substantially rigid.

3. The headgear connection element of any one of the preceding claims, wherein the first end comprises a headgear retainer defined by a slot.

4. The headgear connection element of any one of the preceding claims, wherein the body is substantially arcuate.

5. The headgear connection element of any one of the preceding claims, wherein the body has a curved shape that is configured to extend substantially horizontally from the second end and then substantially upwardly and horizontally along a user’s face from about halfway along the body to the first end.

6. The headgear connection element of any one of the preceding claims, wherein the projection is substantially rigid.

7. A frame for a patient interface for use in a respiratory therapy system, the frame comprising:

    a frame body,

    a gases aperture in the frame body,

    a first pair of left and right connection slots in the frame body, and

    a pair of headgear connection elements according to any one of the preceding claims, each connected to a respective one of the first pair of left and right connection slots.

8. The frame of claim 7 further comprising a second pair of left and right connection slots in the frame body, wherein:

    the first pair of left and right connection slots comprises left and right upper connection slots, and

    the second pair of left and right connection slots comprises left and right lower connection slots.

9. The frame of claim 7 or claim 8, wherein the pair of headgear connection elements curve inwardly in a direction towards the frame body.

10. The frame of any one of claims 7 to 9, wherein the pair of headgear connection elements are symmetrical with respect to each other.

11. The frame of any one of claims 7 to 10, wherein portions of a wall of the frame that define the first pair of left and right connection slots each include a recess adapted to hold the second portion of a respective headgear connection element of the pair of headgear connection elements connected thereto.

12. The frame of claim 11, wherein the second portion of the projection of each headgear connection element of the pair of headgear connection elements is forced through the respective one of the first pair of left and right connection slots such that it rests in the recess.

13. The frame of any one of claims 7 to 12, wherein the pair of headgear connection elements are fixed to the frame by ultrasonic welding or high-frequency welding.

14. The frame of any one of claims 7 to 13, wherein the pair of headgear connection elements are fixed to the frame by a mechanical fastening or interlocking arrangement.

15. The frame of any one of claims 7 to 14, wherein the pair of headgear connection elements are rigidly connected to the frame.

16. The frame of any one of claims 7 to 12, wherein the pair of headgear connection elements are flexibly connected to the frame.

17. A patient interface for use in a respiratory therapy system, the patient interface comprising:

the frame of any one of claims 7 to 16, and

a cushion module which engages with the frame, the cushion module comprising:

a pliable cushion member configured to engage with a user's face, and a shell which is relatively more rigid than the cushion member and adapted to help reinforce and maintain a shape of the cushion member when the cushion module is linked to the frame, wherein the shell is integral with or in the form of a single piece with the cushion member.

18. The patient interface of claim 17 further comprising a venting area, the venting area comprising vent apertures that permit a leak flow to escape the patient interface, wherein the vent apertures are covered by a media adapted to diffuse sound generated by flow passing through the vent apertures and/or to diffuse the flow passing through the vent apertures by scattering or distributing the flow in a number of directions.

19. The patient interface of claim 18 wherein the venting area is provided on the frame.

20. The patient interface of claim 18 further comprising an elbow component, wherein the gases aperture is adapted to receive the elbow component, the elbow component adapted to swivel or rotate relative to the frame, and the venting area is provided on the elbow component.

21. The patient interface of any one of claims 17 to 20, wherein an outer wall of the frame defines the gases aperture, an inner wall of the shell defines a brace aperture, and the outer wall and the inner wall are removably connectable by a snap-fit, interference fit or interlocking arrangement to mechanically interlock the frame with the cushion module.

22. The patient interface of any one of claims 17 to 21, wherein the pliable cushion member comprises:

    a nasal gases passageway, nasal recess and left and right upper cushion ridges configured such that an under-the-nose seal is attained, and

    an opening, left and right side portions and a bottom portion configured such that an around-the-mouth seal is attained.

23. The patient interface of any one of claims 17 to 22, when directly or indirectly dependent from claim 9, further comprising headgear which interfaces with the frame in a four-point connection using the first pair of left and right connection slots and the second pair of connection slots to retain the patient interface on a head of the user, wherein the headgear interfaces with the first pair of left and right connection slots through the pair of headgear connection elements.

24. The patient interface of claim 23, wherein the headgear comprises:

    a back panel adapted to rest at a back of the head, over an occiput and/or trapezius of the head,

    a crown strap portion adapted to generally extend from the back panel upwardly along the head, over a sternocleidomastoid, aricularis posterior,

aricularis superior and/or temporalis, behind the user's ears to a top of the head,

left and right top straps adapted to generally extend along respective sides of the head, over the aricularis anterior, auricularis superior and/or temporal fascia, towards the back of the head over the user's ears,

left and right bottom straps adapted to generally extend along the respective sides of the head, over the user's sternocledidomastoid, platysma, risorius and/or buccinator, towards the back of the head under the user's ears.

25. The patient interface of claim 24, wherein:

the left and right top straps are secured to the frame using the respective first ends of the pair of headgear connection elements, and

the left and right bottom straps are secured to the second pair of left and right connection slots using hooks, resealable adhesives or mechanical fasteners.

26. The patient interface of claim 24 or claim 25, wherein the pair of headgear connection elements are configured to decrease vertical forces exerted by the left and right upper straps upon the frame.