

Description

This invention relates to holders for needles and more particularly to holders and packages which provide for the delivery of sutures containing attached needles.

In the packaging of surgical needles including surgical needles to which there are attached sutures, it is important that the needles be sufficiently secured that they will not be jarred or displaced during the packaging operation as well as the shipping of the package and the opening of the package in the operating arena. Jarring or displacement of these very sharp needles will often dull their cutting edges and reduce their efficiency in closing tissue, very often resulting in increased trauma of the tissue. Also, it is preferred that the needles be held in a manner in which they are sufficiently separated and are readily available to the nurse or surgeon at the appropriate time. Also, suture materials, particularly monofilaments such as catgut and polydioxanone, especially the heavier deniers, are known to take a set during storage, i.e. they generally retain the shape of their position in the package when removed from the package. Hence, the package should be designed so that any tight bends or curves required in order to package the suture be eliminated. Also, for economic reasons the suture package should be designed to accept various size needles and sutures.

Packages for armed sutures, i.e. sutures where the needle is attached, which provide for some degree of needle separation, are disclosed, for example, in US-A-4,135,623; US-A-4,034,850; and US-A-3,857,484. These patents are representative of the many patents which show needle separation within the package. Also, packages for use with the heavier denier monofilament sutures which provide a package which substantially reduces undesirable "set" of the suture are described in US-A-3 972 418.

FR-A-1 574 869 discloses a package for sutures material comprising two parts which are snap-fitted together to form a peripheral channel in which the suture material can be retained.

DE-A-2 618 662 discloses a carrier for holding needled sutures. The carrier includes a number of clips for receiving needles and a number of serrated supports on which the sutures can be wound. Each clip comprises a pair of holding means located in close proximity to one another. The individual clips are separated from each other. The clips are of a variety of sizes whereby a number of different sized needles may be accommodated.

The needle holder of DE-A-2 618 662 comprises:

- a planar member; and
- a plurality of holding means disposed from one surface of said planar member.

The needle holder of the present invention is characterised in that:

- each of said holding means has an elongate shape;

adjacent longer sides of adjacent holding means have portions parallel, and each of said holding means is so spaced from adjacent holding means that in use a curved needle placed between any pair of adjacent longer sides is contacted on its inside curved surface at two points and on its outside curved surface at one point to hold the needle in a plane parallel to said planar member.

The present invention thus provides a holder for a plurality of needles in spaced apart relationship and in the same plane. The holder presents the needles so that they are easily accessible to the user and individual needles may be removed without disrupting the other needles in the holder. The present invention also provides a suture package including a needle holder according to the invention for containing monofilament sutures, especially the heavier denier monofilament sutures, in a manner so that they do not take an undesirable set and still allow for the removal of single armed sutures from the package. The holder of the present invention is economical to make and may be used with needles and sutures of various sizes.

The holder of the present invention preferably contains a plurality of sterile, curved, surgical needles in spaced apart relationship with the needles aligned and held in substantially the same plane. The holder comprises a planar member with a plurality of holding means disposed from one surface of the planar member. Each of the holding means has an elongate shape with facing longer sides of adjacent holding means having portions substantially parallel. A curved needle may be placed between the facing longer sides and contacted on its inside curved surface (or its concave surface) in two areas or points and on its outside curved surface (or its convex surface) in one area or point to hold the needle in a plane parallel to the planar member.

In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the holder forms part of a sterile suture package for holding a plurality of sutures with attached curved needles with the needles being removably secured in spaced apart relationship in the holder and the sutures being disposed so as to allow for single strand dispensing of the sutures and substantially reduce detrimental set in the suture strand. In this embodiment, the package comprises a pair of interlocking molded members. One of the molded members comprises the needle holder which has a planar surface with a plurality of raised holding means disposed from the center portion of the planar surface. Each of the holding means has an elongate shape with facing longer sides of adjacent holding means having portions substantially parallel whereby a curved needle placed between facing longer sides is contacted on its inside curved surface at two points and on its outside curved surface at one point to hold the needle in a plane parallel to the planar member. The circumferential edge of this planar member is raised on the same side of the member as said holding means to form a horizontal ledge about the periphery of the member. The planar member

also has a plurality of raised areas disposed from the same side as the holding means and ledge with said raised areas disposed in the area between the holding means and the ledge. The second molded member is also generally planar in shape with an upwardly extending wall about its periphery. Said second planar member is co-extensive with the first planar member to provide a close fit between the upwardly extending wall of the second member and the circumferential ledge of the first member. The second planar member has a plurality of raised areas disposed so as to be frictionally inserted within the raised areas of the first member to lock the two members together. The horizontal ledge of the first member and the circumferential wall of the second member cooperate to form a channel around the outer perimeter of the package in which the sutures attached to the needles are disposed and held.

The package with the needles and sutures therein may be placed in a pair of polycoated foil sheets sealed about their periphery. If desired, the package may include an appropriately designed paper member sealed between the two foil sheets and on top of the holder to allow for easy and simple access to the needles and sutures when desired. The package is preferably overwrapped with clear film on one side and a polycoated foil or paper member on the opposite side with the periphery of the film and foil sealed together with a peelable seal. The overwrapped package is sterilized by techniques well known in the art. In use, the overwrap is removed to expose the sterile package. The foil is opened to expose the package which may be removed from the foil. Once the package is removed from the foil, the sutures may be removed from the package simply by picking up a needle with a suitable instrument and drawing the suture through the channel around the circumference of the package. Once removed, the suture is characterized by having only a gentle curve and no coils.

The invention will be more fully described in conjunction with the accompanying drawings wherein:

Figure 1 is an exploded perspective view of a package for needles and sutures in accordance with the present invention showing the holder of the present invention and the various parts of the package;

Figure 2 is a plan view of a portion of a holder of the present invention;

Figure 2a is a greatly enlarged plan view of a portion of the holder of Figure 2;

Figure 3 is a cross-sectional view taken along line 3—3 of Figure 2;

Figure 4 is a cross-sectional view taken along line 4—4 of Figure 2;

Figure 5 is a plan view of another portion of the package including the holder of the present invention;

Figure 6 is a cross-sectional view taken along line 6—6 of Figure 5;

Figure 6a is a cross-sectional view depicting the circumferential edge when the portions depicted

in Figures 2 and 5 are interlocked to form the package of the present invention;

Figure 7 is a perspective view showing a package of the present invention being initially opened in its sterile condition; and

Figure 8 is a perspective view depicting one of the needles with the attached suture being removed from a holder of the present invention.

In Figure 1 there is shown an exploded view of a package 10 of the present invention showing its various portions. In this embodiment the package comprises a needle holder and an intermeshing, interlocking filament or suture holding member 12. The needle holder comprises a planar member 11 which has a plurality of raised areas 13 which are spaced apart in a manner so that a needle 14 placed between the areas is removably secured by the areas. The needle holding member 11 also has a plurality of raised areas 15 for interlocking with complementary raised areas 16 in the filament holding member 12. The periphery 17 of the needle holding member 11 fits into the periphery 18 of the filament holding member 12. There is an opening 19 disposed in the needle holding member 11 so that filaments or sutures 20 attached to each of the needles may pass through this opening and into a channel 21 disposed about the periphery of the interlocking members 11, 12. The filaments are held in the periphery of the members 11, 12 by the raised separator areas 22. Also, as previously mentioned, the filament holding member 12 has complementary raised areas 16 which fit into the raised areas 15 of the needle holding member 11 to lock the two members 11, 12 together.

The needle and suture holder interlocking members 11, 12 are placed in an outer package. In this embodiment the outer package comprises a pair of substantially co-extensive foil members 23 and 24. The foil members are slightly larger than the interlocking members 11, 12. The foil member 24 is dished or hollowed 25 to accept the interlocking member 11, 12 and the foil members include a heat seal adhesive 26 about the periphery of their facing surfaces to seal the interlocking members between the foil members. The package includes a die cut paperboard member 27 which provides ready access to the needle and suture holding members 11, 12 when desired, as hereinafter described. The paperboard member is substantially co-extensive with the interlocking members and includes a tab 28 which may be sealed between the foil members at the periphery thereof. The paperboard member includes a diagonal die cut 29 across the width of the member. The member 27 also includes cut out areas 30 to assist in the alignment of the members 11, 12 in the outer package. The foil members as well as the paperboard member include tear notches 31 disposed adjacent the tab and die cut of the paperboard member.

This configuration allows for ready access to the interlocking members 11, 12 as will be described in conjunction with Figures 7 and 8.

As may be more clearly seen in Figure 2, the

needle holding member 32 has a plurality of spaced apart, raised, elongated areas 33. Adjacent longer sides of adjacent raised areas have portions parallel. The raised areas may be oval, elliptical, rectangular or similarly shaped.

The spacing between raised areas should be just slightly smaller than the smallest needle curve which it is desired to be used with the holder. As may be seen in the Figures 2 and 3, the needle 34 fits between the raised areas and the sides 35 of the raised areas are thinner than either the bottom edge 36 or the upper edge 37 of the raised areas. This allows for flexing of the raised areas so that various sized needles may be inserted with slight force between the spaced apart areas and held firmly in place. The elliptical configuration of the raised areas causes the raised areas to contact the needle at three points. This is more clearly shown in the enlarged view depicted in Figure 2a where the points are identified by arrows, one point 38 being on the outside curved surface of the needle and two points 39 and 40 being on the inside curved surface of the needle. This contact of the needle also allows for various sized needles to be used in the same package and provides for a positive holding of the needles in a planar configuration in the holder. Our new holder, in many instances, will be used with what are termed control release sutures, that is, sutures which, when a correct amount of pull is given the needle, the needle will disengage from the suture. These control release sutures are desirable so that once the doctor has closed a wound it is a simple matter to remove the needle from the suture with a slight tug. These control release sutures require a package that holds the needle and suture in place during transport, prevents damage to the cutting edge of the needle, yet allows the nurse or surgeon to remove the needle and suture from the package without separating the needle from the suture. Our improved package provides such desirable characteristics in that it holds the needle in the package in a positive and secure manner yet the needle and suture is readily accessible to the nurse or doctor and may be easily removed with little chance of separating the needle from the suture.

The needle holding member 32 also includes a plurality of raised impressions 41 disposed between the elliptical raised areas and the outer periphery of the member 32 for gripping the filament holding member as previously explained. As shown in Figure 4, the outer periphery of the needle holding member 32 ends in a downwardly curved area 42 which is meant to produce a close fit with the filament holding member. This area 42 is attached or disposed from a horizontal ledge 43 attached to the upright leg 44. This portion of the periphery cooperates with the periphery of the filament holding member to produce a channel about the periphery of the members in which the filaments of sutures are encased.

Referring to Figures 5 and 6, there is shown a

filament holding member 50 which intermeshes and interlocks with the needle holding member 32. The filament holding member 50 is substantially the same size and shape and co-extensive with the needle holding member 32. It includes a plurality of raised areas 51 disposed and positioned so as to fit within the raised areas of the needle holding member 32. The filament holding member terminates about its periphery in an upwardly extending vertical wall 52. The filaments are wound about the circumference of the filament holding member and are maintained at the circumference or about the circumference by the separators 53. The separators 53 match or intermesh with the separators 54 positioned about the periphery of the needle holding member 32, as shown in Figure 2, to form a channel in which the sutures are stored. These matching intermeshing separators prevent the sutures from slipping between the top and bottom holding members.

In Figure 6A, there is shown a cross-section of the outer periphery of the needle holding member 32 and the filament holding member 50 in place. The raised area 60 of the filament holding member fits inside the raised area 61 of the needle holding member. The outer periphery of the needle holding member and the outer periphery of the filament holding member form a channel 62 within which the suture filaments 63 lie. The side or very outer edge of this channel is formed by the upwardly extending vertical wall 64 of the filament holding member. The lip 65 at the outer periphery of the needle holding member engages the vertical wall and deflects it outwardly to hold the two members together and confine the filaments within the channel formed by the two members.

The needle holding member and the suture holding member may be formed by various techniques which are well known in the art. It is generally preferred that the members be formed with pressure or vacuum forming or other types of molding as are well known. The holding members may be made from the various materials that are thermoformable, such as the polyolefins, polyethylene, polypropylene, celluloid type materials and vinyls.

The size and shape of the needle holding areas are important to the present invention. The size and shape of the needle holding areas provides that the holder may be used with various sized needles. Also, the size and shape of the needle holding areas allows the various sized needles to be held in a positive manner in a planar position. As previously mentioned, the shape of the members are generally oval or elliptical and are shaped and sized so as to contact a needle at one point on the convex or outside curved surface of the needle and at two points on the convex or inside curved surface of the needle. This allows for smaller needles having tighter curves to be held by the areas as well as the larger needles which have gentler curves to be held by the same areas.

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Our new package may be used with curved needles having a diameter 25.4 μ m (10 mils) or larger and comprising from about one quarter of a circle to five-eighths of a circle.

The sutures may be made from various absorbable or non-absorbable synthetic or natural materials as are well known.

In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the needle and suture or filament holding members 11, 12 are packaged in an appropriate overwrap so that a sterile package with sterile needled sutures are presented to the nurse or surgeon for use. Referring to Figures 7 and 8, the sterile outer package comprises an appropriately designed stiff paper member 70 disposed on top of the needle holding member 71. This paper member serves to aid in the opening of the outer package as will be described hereinafter. The member may be made from a moisture absorbing material, such as Kraft paper, to protect hydrolyzable type sutures from being degraded by minute amounts of moisture. The paper and the needle and suture holding means 71 is totally encased in a foil laminate 72 which is heat sealed about its periphery as is well known in the art. The paper member has an outer tab which is caught in the seal of the periphery of the foil laminate. The paper includes a scored or die cut portion 73 which aids in opening of the package. The opening of the package is depicted in Figure 7. As may be seen, the needle and suture holding member 71 is disposed within the foil laminate 72. The laminate is notched 74 and when the notch is torn the paper and laminate are torn along the score line 73 of the paper member to provide access to the needle and suture holder 71. As more clearly shown in Figure 8, the needle and suture holder 71 has been removed from the outer wrap and it is now a simple matter for the nurse or doctor to remove a needle 75 between the raised holding means 76 and remove the suture 77 from the channel 78 of the needle and suture holder without disturbing the other needles or sutures and provide for single strand delivery of the needled suture. It is important that the sutures be wound in the configuration as shown so that when a needle and suture is removed from the holder any coiling of the suture is away from the point of the needle and does not interfere with the surgeon's use of the needle.

Claims

1. A needle holder for removably securing a plurality of sterile, curved, surgical needles (14) in spaced relationship with said needles (14) lying and being held substantially in the same plane, the needle holder comprising:

a planar member (11); and

a plurality of holding means (13) disposed from one surface of said planar member (11) characterized in that:

each of said holding means (13) has an elongate shape;

adjacent longer sides of adjacent holding

means (13) have portions parallel, and each of said holding means (13) is so spaced from adjacent holding means (13) that in use a curved needle (14) placed between any pair of adjacent longer sides is contacted on its inside curved surface at two points and on its outside curved surface at one point to hold the needle (14) in a plane parallel to said planar member (11).

2. The needle holder of claim 1, wherein the planar member (11) and the holding means (13) are made from a single moulded sheet with the holding means (13) disposed outwardly from the remainder of the sheet.

3. The needle holder of claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the holding means (13) are generally oval in shape with the longer curved sides of each holding means (13) having flattened edges, and the longer curved sides of adjacent holding means (13) are parallel.

4. The needle holder of any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein there is one more holding means (13) than needles (14) to be held.

5. The needle holder of any one of claims 1 to 4, and including at least one needle (14) held between an adjacent pair of holding means (13).

6. A suture package, for returning a plurality of sutures (20) with attached needles (14) with said sutures (20) being disposed within said package (10) so as to allow single strand dispensing of a needled suture (20) from said package (10), the suture package (10) comprising:

(a) a needle holder according to any one of claims 1 to 4 which further includes: a horizontal ledge (43) extending from a vertical wall (44) extending on the same side of the planar member (11) as said holding means (13); and a plurality of raised areas (15) disposed from the same side of the planar member (11) as said holding means (13) and being disposed in the area between said holding means (13) and said horizontal ledge (43); and

(b) a second planar member (12) adapted to interlock with the needle holder, the second member (12) being generally planar in shape and having a plurality of raised areas (16) disposed so as to engage the raised areas (15) of the first planar member (11) to lock the two planar member (11, 12) together, and the circumferential edge of the second planar member (12) terminating in an upwardly extending vertical wall (52) which engages the outer periphery of the horizontal ledge (43) to form a channel (62) around the outer periphery of the package (10) in which sutures (20) attached to needles (14) can be held and disposed.

7. The suture package of claim 6, wherein the circumferential edge of the horizontal ledge (43) terminates in a downwardly extending lip (42) configured to engage frictionally the upwardly extending vertical wall (52) at the circumferential edge of said second planar member (12).

8. The suture package of claim 6 or claim 7, and including at least one needled suture wherein the needle (14) is held between an adjacent pair of holding means (13) and the suture (20) is dis-

Our new package may be used with curved needles having a diameter 25.4 μ m (10 mils) or larger and comprising from about one quarter of a circle to five-eighths of a circle.

The sutures may be made from various absorbable or non-absorbable synthetic or natural materials as are well known.

In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the needle and suture or filament holding members 11, 12 are packaged in an appropriate overwrap so that a sterile package with sterile needled sutures are presented to the nurse or surgeon for use. Referring to Figures 7 and 8, the sterile outer package comprises an appropriately designed stiff paper member 70 disposed on top of the needle holding member 71. This paper member serves to aid in the opening of the outer package as will be described hereinafter. The member may be made from a moisture absorbing material, such as Kraft paper, to protect hydrolyzable type sutures from being degraded by minute amounts of moisture. The paper and the needle and suture holding means 71 is totally encased in a foil laminate 72 which is heat sealed about its periphery as is well known in the art. The paper member has an outer tab which is caught in the seal of the periphery of the foil laminate. The paper includes a scored or die cut portion 73 which aids in opening of the package. The opening of the package is depicted in Figure 7. As may be seen, the needle and suture holding member 71 is disposed within the foil laminate 72. The laminate is notched 74 and when the notch is torn the paper and laminate are torn along the score line 73 of the paper member to provide access to the needle and suture holder 71. As more clearly shown in Figure 8, the needle and suture holder 71 has been removed from the outer wrap and it is now a simple matter for the nurse or doctor to remove a needle 75 between the raised holding means 76 and remove the suture 77 from the channel 78 of the needle and suture holder without disturbing the other needles or sutures and provide for single strand delivery of the needled suture. It is important that the sutures be wound in the configuration as shown so that when a needle and suture is removed from the holder any coiling of the suture is away from the point of the needle and does not interfere with the surgeon's use of the needle.

Claims

1. A needle holder for removably securing a plurality of sterile, curved, surgical needles (14) in spaced relationship with said needles (14) lying and being held substantially in the same plane, the needle holder comprising:

- a planar member (11); and
- a plurality of holding means (13) disposed from one surface of said planar member (11) characterised in that:
 - each of said holding means (13) has an elongate shape;
 - adjacent longer sides of adjacent holding

means (13) have portions parallel, and each of said holding means (13) is so spaced from adjacent holding means (13) that in use a curved needle (14) placed between any pair of adjacent longer sides is contacted on its inside curved surface at two points and on its outside curved surface at one point to hold the needle (14) in a plane parallel to said planar member (11).

2. The needle holder of claim 1, wherein the planar member (11) and the holding means (13) are made from a single moulded sheet with the holding means (13) disposed outwardly from the remainder of the sheet.

3. The needle holder of claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the holding means (13) are generally oval in shape with the longer curved sides of each holding means (13) having flattened edges, and the longer curved sides of adjacent holding means (13) are parallel.

4. The needle holder of any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein there is one more holding means (13) than needles (14) to be held.

5. The needle holder of any one of claims 1 to 4, and including at least one needle (14) held between an adjacent pair of holding means (13).

6. A suture package, for returning a plurality of sutures (20) with attached needles (14) with said sutures (20) being disposed within said package (10) so as to allow single strand dispensing of a needled suture (20) from said package (10), the suture package (10) comprising:

(a) a needle holder according to any one of claims 1 to 4 which further includes: a horizontal ledge (43) extending from a vertical wall (44) extending on the same side of the planar member (11) as said holding means (13); and a plurality of raised areas (15) disposed from the same side of the planar member (11) as said holding means (13) and being disposed in the area between said holding means (13) and said horizontal ledge (43); and

(b) a second planar member (12) adapted to interlock with the needle holder, the second member (12) being generally planar in shape and having a plurality of raised areas (16) disposed so as to engage the raised areas (15) of the first planar member (11) to lock the two planar member (11, 12) together, and the circumferential edge of the second planar member (12) terminating in an upwardly extending vertical wall (52) which engages the outer periphery of the horizontal ledge (43) to form a channel (62) around the outer periphery of the package (10) in which sutures (20) attached to needles (14) can be held and disposed.

7. The suture package of claim 6, wherein the circumferential edge of the horizontal ledge (43) terminates in a downwardly extending lip (42) configured to engage frictionally the upwardly extending vertical wall (52) at the circumferential edge of said second planar member (12).

8. The suture package of claim 6 or claim 7, and including at least one needled suture wherein the needle (14) is held between an adjacent pair of holding means (13) and the suture (20) is dis-



posed in the peripheral channel (62).

9. The suture package of claim 8, which is disposed between a pair of foil sheets (23, 24), the periphery of said foil sheets (23, 24) extending beyond the outer edge of the first and second planar member (11, 12) and being sealed together at said periphery to seal hermetically the first and second planar members (11, 12) between said foil sheets (23, 24).

10. The suture package of claim 9, including a piece of Kraft paper (27) substantially co-extensive with the first and second planar member (11, 12) and being disposed between said foil sheets (23, 24), said paper (27) including a tab (28) disposed in the area where the foil sheets (23, 24) are sealed and said paper (27) including a scored portion (29) to assist in the opening of the package and presentation of the sutures.

Patentansprüche

1. Nadelhalter zum entfernbaren Befestigen einer Mehrzahl von sterilen, gekrümmten chirurgischen Nadeln (14) im Abstand voneinander, wobei die genannten Nadeln (14) im wesentlichen in derselben Ebene liegen und gehalten werden, und wobei der Nadelhalter umfaßt:

einen ebenen Teil (11); und

eine Mehrzahl von Halterungseinrichtungen (13), welche von einer Oberfläche des genannten ebenen Teiles (11) ausgehend angeordnet sind; dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß:

jede der genannten Halterungseinrichtungen (13) eine langgestreckte Form hat;

benachbarte längere Seiten von nebeneinander befindlichen Halterungseinrichtungen (13) zueinander parallele Teile aufweisen, und jede der genannten Halterungseinrichtungen (13) von benachbarten Halterungseinrichtungen (13) in einem solchen Abstand angeordnet ist, daß im Gebrauch eine gekrümmte Nadel (14), welche zwischen irgendeinem Paar von benachbarten längeren Seiten eingelegt ist, auf ihrer gekrümmten Innenseite an zwei Punkten berührt wird, und auf ihrer gekrümmten Außenseite an einem Punkt berührt wird, um die Nadel (14) in einer Ebene festzuhalten, welche zu dem genannten ebenen Teil (11) parallel verläuft.

2. Nadelhalter nach Anspruch 1, bei welchem der ebene Teil (11) und die Halterungseinrichtungen (13) aus einem einzigen geformten Blatt ausgebildet sind, wobei die Halterungseinrichtungen (13) in bezug auf die restlichen Teile des Blattes erhoben von denselben angeordnet sind.

3. Nadelhalter nach Anspruch 1 oder Anspruch 2, bei welchem die Halterungseinrichtungen (13) im allgemeinen ovalförmig sind, wobei die längeren, gekrümmten Seiten von jeder Halterungseinrichtung (13) abgeflachte Kanten haben, und wobei die längeren gekrümmten Seiten von benachbarten Halterungseinrichtungen (13) parallel zueinander verlaufen.

4. Nadelhalter nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 3, bei welchem um eine Halterungseinrichtung

(13) mehr vorhanden ist, als die Anzahl der festzuhaltenden Nadeln (14) ausmacht.

5. Nadelhalter nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 4, welcher wenigstens eines Nadel (14) enthält, die zwischen einem Paar von benachbarten Halterungseinrichtungen (13) festgehalten wird.

6. Verpackung für Nahtmaterial, zum Festhalten einer Mehrzahl von Nahtmaterialien (20) mit daran befestigten Nadeln (14), wobei die genannten Nahtmaterialien (20) in der genannten Verpackung (10) derart angeordnet sind, daß dadurch die Abgabe von einem einzelnen Strang eines mit einer Nadel versehenen Nahtmaterials (20) aus der genannten Verpackung (10) ermöglicht wird, wobei die Verpackung (10) für Nahtmaterial umfaßt:

(a) einen Nadelhalter nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 4, wobei der Nadelhalter weiterhin aufweist: eine horizontale Leiste (43), welche sich von einer vertikalen Wand (44) erstreckt, welche letztere sich auf der gleichen Seite des ebenen Teiles (11) erstreckt wie die genannten Halterungseinrichtungen (13); und eine Mehrzahl von erhabenen Bereichen (15), welche auf der gleichen Seite des ebenen Teiles (11) angeordnet sind wie die genannten Halterungseinrichtungen (13), und welche in dem Bereich zwischen den genannten Halterungseinrichtungen (13) und der genannten horizontalen Leiste (43) angeordnet sind; und

(b) einen zweiten ebenen Teil (12), der zum Eingriff in den Nadelhalter geeignet ist, wobei der zweite Teil (12) im allgemeinen eben ausgebildet ist und eine Mehrzahl von erhabenen Bereichen (16) aufweist, welche derart angeordnet sind, daß sie in die erhabenen Bereiche (15) des ersten ebenen Teiles (11) eingreifen und so die zwei ebenen Teile (11, 12) miteinander verriegeln, und wobei die Umfangskante des zweiten ebenen Teiles (12) in eine sich nach oben erstreckende, vertikale Wand (52) ausläuft, welche mit dem Außenumfang der horizontalen Leiste (43) unter Bildung eines Kanals (62) rund um den Außenumfang der Verpackung (10) herum in Eingriff kommt, in welchem Kanal (62) an Nadeln (14) befestigte Nahtmaterialien (20) festgehalten und angeordnet werden können.

7. Verpackung für Nahtmaterial nach Anspruch 6, bei welcher die Umfangskante der horizontalen Leiste (43) in eine sich nach unten erstreckende Lippe (42) ausläuft, welche eine Konfiguration von solcher Art aufweist, daß sie an der Umfangskante des genannten zweiten ebenen Teiles (12) in Reibungseingriff mit der sich nach oben erstreckenden vertikalen Wand (52) kommt.

8. Verpackung für Nahtmaterial nach Anspruch 6 oder 7, welche wenigstens ein mit einer Nadel versehenes Nahtmaterial enthält und bei welcher die Nadel (14) zwischen einem Paar von benachbarten Halterungseinrichtungen (13) festgehalten ist und das Nahtmaterial (20) in dem Umfangskanal (62) angeordnet ist.

9. Verpackung für Nahtmaterial nach Anspruch 8, welche zwischen einem Paar von Folienblättern (23, 24) angeordnet ist, wobei sich der Umfang



der genannten Folienblätter (23, 24) über den Außenrand des ersten und zweiten Teiles (11, 12) hinaus erstreckt, und welche Folienblätter an dem genannten Umfang miteinander versiegelt sind, um den ersten und den zweiten ebenen Teil (11, 12) zwischen den genannten Folienblättern (23, 24) hermetisch einzusiegeln.

10. Verpackung für Nahtmaterial nach Anspruch 9, welche ein Stück eines starken Packpapiers (27) enthält, welches Stück Papier im wesentlichen gleich groß wie der erste und der zweite ebene Teil (11, 12) ist und zwischen den genannten Folienblättern (23, 24) angeordnet ist, wobei dieses Papier (27) eine Lasche (28) aufweist, welche in jenem Bereich angeordnet ist, wo die Folienblätter (23, 24) versiegelt sind, und wobei das genannte Papier (27) einen gekerbten Abschnitt (29) aufweist, welcher dazu dient, das Öffnen der Verpackung und die Entnahme der Nahtmaterialien zu erleichtern.

Revendications

1. Porte-aiguilles pour maintenir de manière amovible une pluralité d'aiguilles chirurgicales stériles courbes (14) écartées les unes des autres, lesdites aiguilles (14) étant placées et maintenues sensiblement dans le même plan, le porte-aiguilles comprenant:

un élément plan (11); et

une pluralité de moyens de maintien (13) disposés à partir d'une première surface dudit élément plan (11)

caractérisé par le fait que chacun des moyens de maintien (13) possède une forme allongée, les côtés adjacents les plus longs desdits moyens de maintien (13) ont des parties parallèles et par le fait que chacun desdits moyens de maintien (13) est écarté de l'élément de maintien adjacent (13) de manière qu'au cours de l'utilisation, une aiguille courbe (14), placée entre une quelconque paire de côtés plus longs adjacents soit en contact sur sa surface courbe intérieure en deux points et sur sa surface courbe extérieure en un seul point, afin de maintenir l'aiguille (14) dans un plan parallèle audit élément plan (11).

2. Porte-aiguilles selon la revendication 1, caractérisé par le fait que l'élément plan (11) et les moyens de maintien (13) sont fabriqués à partir d'une seule feuille moulée avec les moyens de maintien (13) disposés vers l'extérieur par rapport au reste de la feuille.

3. Porte-aiguilles selon l'une des revendications 1 ou 2, caractérisé par le fait que les moyens de maintien (13) ont généralement une forme ovale avec les côtés courbes les plus longs de chacun des moyens de maintien (13) ayant des arêtes aplaties, et par le fait que les côtés courbes les plus longs des moyens de maintien adjacents (13) sont parallèles.

4. Porte-aiguilles selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 3, caractérisé par le fait qu'il y a davantage de moyens de maintien (13) que d'aiguilles (14) à maintenir.

5. Porte-aiguilles selon l'une quelconques des

revendications 1 à 4, comprenant encore au moins une aiguille (14) maintenue entre une paire adjacente de moyens de maintien (13).

6. Emballage pour sutures, destiné à retenir un ensemble de sutures (20) auxquelles sont fixées des aiguilles (14), lesdites sutures (20) étant disposées à l'intérieur dudit emballage (10) de façon à permettre de distribuer un seul brin d'une suture enfilée (20) à la sortie dudit emballage (10), l'emballage pour sutures (10) comprenant:

(a) un porte-aiguilles selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 4 qui comprend encore: un rebord horizontal (43) s'élevant à partir d'une paroi verticale (44), s'étendant du même côté de l'élément plan (11) que lesdits moyens de maintien (13); et une pluralité de zones surélevées (15) disposées à partir de la même face de l'élément plan (11) que lesdits moyens de maintien (13) et se trouvant disposées dans la zone comprise entre lesdits moyens de maintien (13) et ledit rebord horizontal (43); et

(b) un second élément plan (12) adapté pour se verrouiller avec le porte-aiguilles, le second élément (12) ayant généralement une forme plane et comportant une pluralité de zones surélevées (16) placées de façon à s'emboîter avec les zones surélevées (15) du premier élément plan (11) de manière à verrouiller les deux éléments plans (11, 12) entre eux, et l'arête circonférentielle du second élément plan (12) se terminant en une paroi verticale orientée vers le haut (52) qui s'emboîte avec la périphérie extérieure du rebord horizontal (43) pour former un canal (62) autour de la périphérie extérieure de l'emballage (10) dans lequel des sutures (20) fixées à des aiguilles (14) peuvent être maintenues et disposées.

7. Emballage pour sutures selon la revendication 6, caractérisé par le fait que l'arête circonférentielle du rebord horizontal (43) se termine en un bord orienté vers le bas (42) configuré de manière à s'emboîter en frottant avec la paroi verticale orientée vers le haut (52) de l'arête circonférentielle dudit second élément plan (12).

8. Emballage pour sutures selon la revendication 6 ou 7, comprenant encore au moins une suture enfilée d'une aiguille dans laquelle l'aiguille (14) est maintenue entre une paire de moyens de maintien adjacents (13) et la suture (20) est placée dans le canal périphérique (62).

9. Emballage pour sutures selon la revendication 8, disposé entre une paire de feuilles planes (23, 24), la périphérie desdites feuilles planes (23, 24) s'étendant au-delà du bord extérieur du premier et du second éléments plan (11, 12) et étant scellées entre elles sur ladite périphérie pour fermer hermétiquement lesdits premier et second éléments plans (11, 12) entre lesdites feuilles planes (23, 24).

10. Emballage pour sutures selon la revendication 9, comprenant un morceau de papier Kraft (27) sensiblement de même dimension que le premier et le second éléments plan (11, 12) et placé entre lesdites feuilles planes (23, 24), ledit papier (27) comprenant une languette (28) dispo-



sée dans la région où les feuilles planes (23, 24)
sont scellées et ledit papier (27) comprenant une

partie rainurée (20) pour faciliter l'ouverture de
l'emballage et la présentation des sutures.

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