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Richardson

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[54] **SURGICAL SUTURE CARRIER AND METHOD FOR URINARY BLADDER NECK SUSPENSION**

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[51] Int. Cl.⁵ **A61B 19/00**

[52] U.S. Cl. **604/272; 606/119; 128/898; 600/29**

[58] Field of Search **600/29, 30, 31; 604/272; 606/119, 145, 222, 44, 139, 223**

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A suturing needle assembly used in a surgical operation to correct anatomical stress urinary incontinence, the suturing needle assembly having a needle and a sheath. The needle has an elongated flexible portion and a rigid portion which defines a tip for piercing tissue and an eyelet for removably attaching surgical thread. The sheath may selectively envelop the needle when it is beneficial to protect the patient and surgeon from the sharp tip. The flexibility and length of the needle and the sheath allow the suturing needle assembly to navigate a contoured internal passageway such as a female reproductive tract. According to a method of the present invention, the suturing needle assembly, laden with surgical thread, is inserted into a patient's vagina and guided to an operating site at the superior wall of the vagina below the urinary bladder neck. At the operating site, the needle tip is thrust through the superior wall of the vagina and into the retropubic space a sufficient number of times so that the superior wall of the vagina may be elevated and bound to structures in the retropubic space. As a result, problems of stress urinary incontinence are alleviated using the suturing needle assembly in a procedure which avoids needle stick of the surgeon's fingers.

14 Claims, 2 Drawing Sheets

