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(54) **DYNAMIC STABILIZATION CONNECTING MEMBER WITH PRE-TENSIONED SOLID CORE**

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(63) Continuation of application No. 13/317,158, filed on Oct. 11, 2011, now abandoned, which is a continuation of application No. 12/459,492, filed on Jul. 1, 2009, now Pat. No. 8,366,745, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 12/156,260, filed on May 30, 2008, now Pat. No. 7,951,170, said application No. 12/459,492 is a continuation-in-part of application No. 12/148,465, filed on Apr. 18, 2008, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 12/006,460, filed on Jan. 3, 2008, now Pat. No. 8,475,498.

(60) Provisional application No. 61/137,743, filed on Aug. 1, 2008, provisional application No. 61/134,480, filed

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A dynamic longitudinal connecting member assembly includes an anchor member having an integral or otherwise fixed elongate core of circular or non-circular cross-section. The core is pre-tensioned and extends through at least one elastic spacer and at least one outer sleeve. The anchor member and the outer sleeve each attach to at least one bone anchor. In operation, the core is held in tension by the spacer.

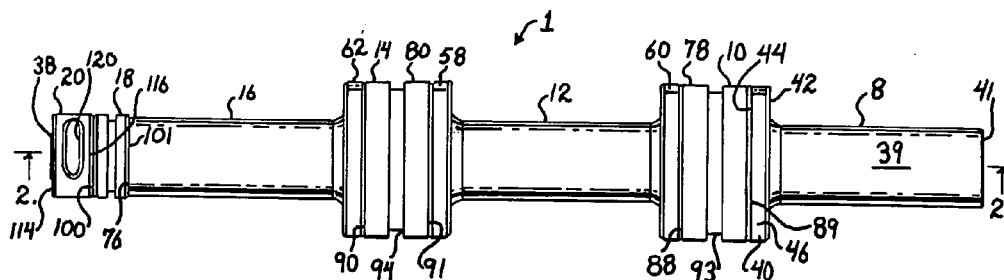


Fig. 1.

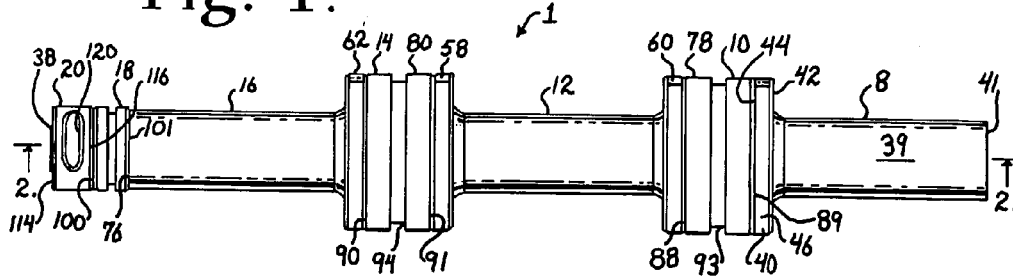


Fig. 2.

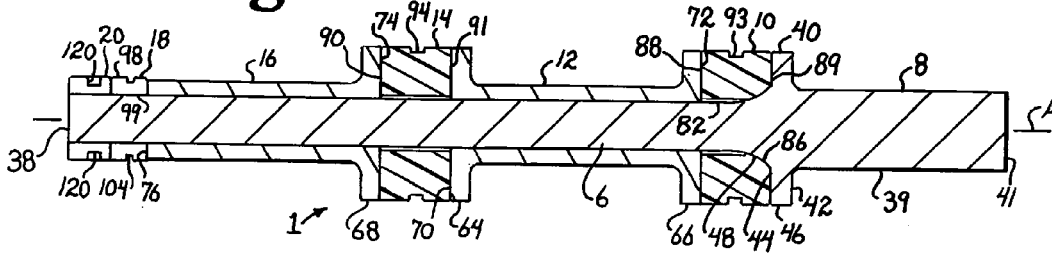


Fig. 3.

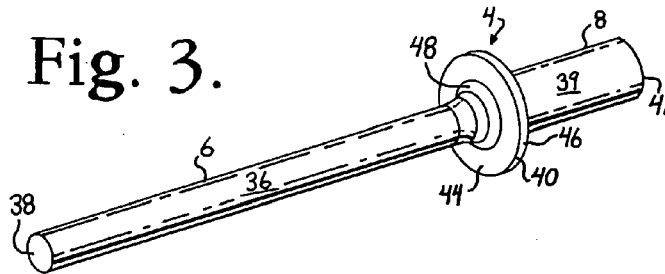


Fig. 4.

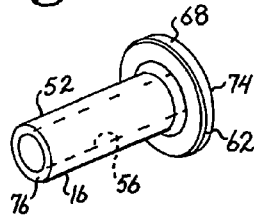
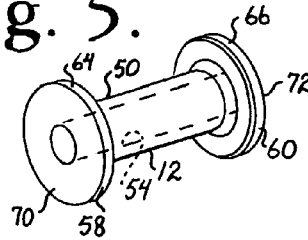


Fig. 5.



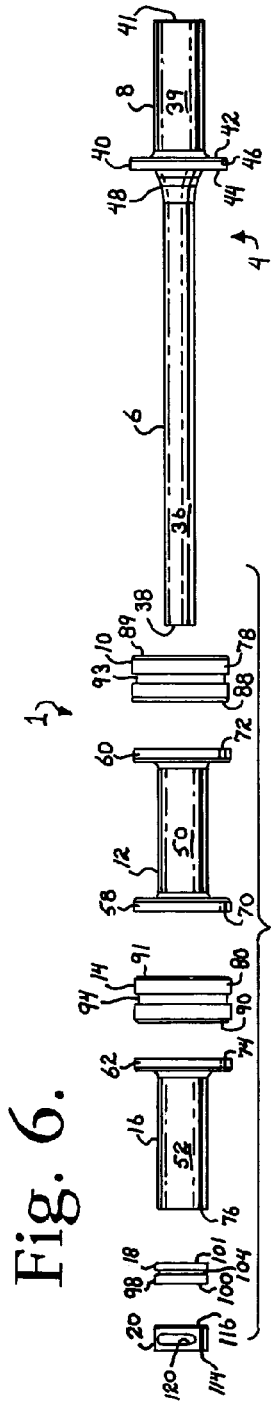


Fig. 6.

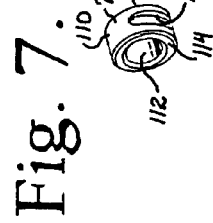


Fig. 7.

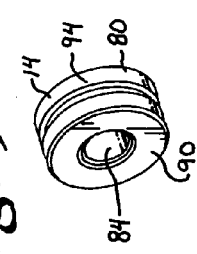


Fig. 9.

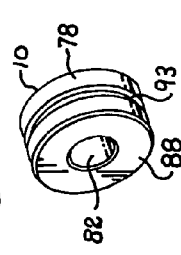


Fig. 11.

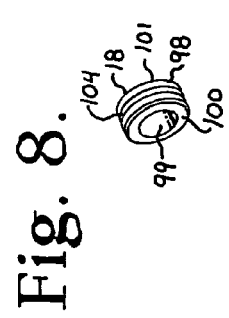


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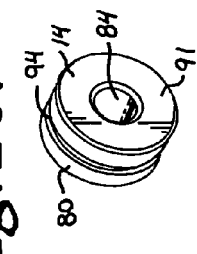


Fig. 10.

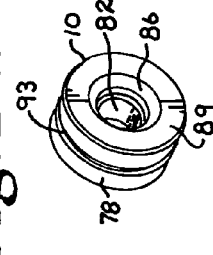


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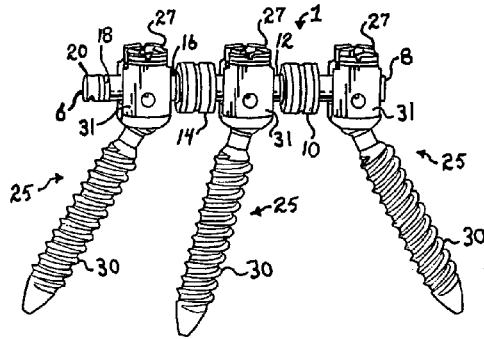


Fig. 13.

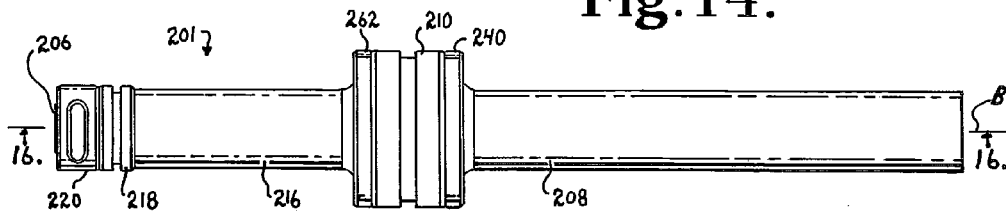


Fig. 14.

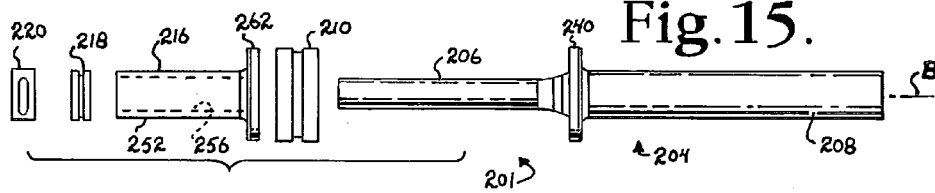


Fig. 15.

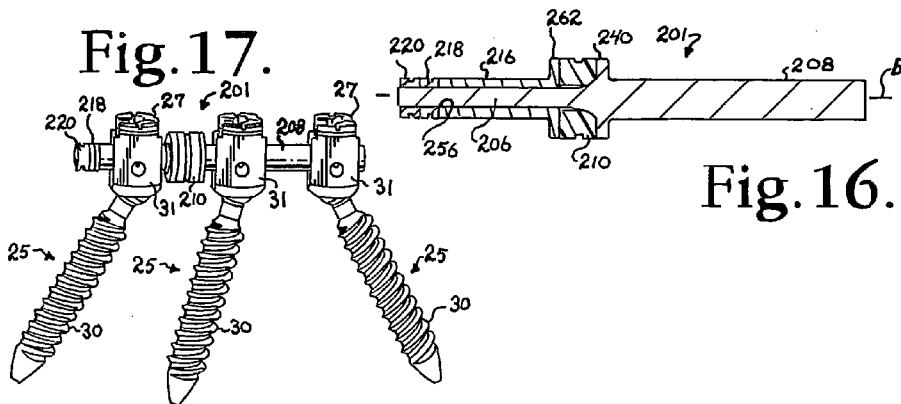


Fig. 17.

Fig. 16.

Fig. 18.

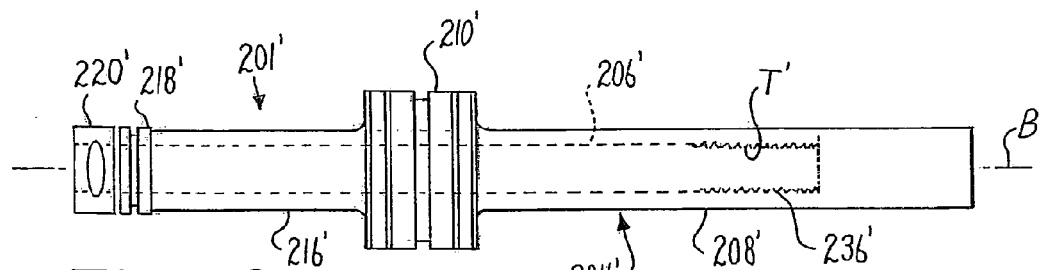
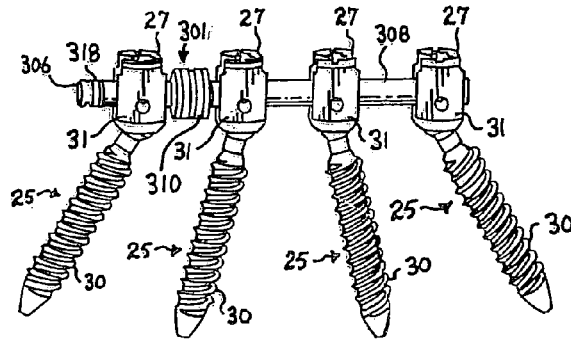
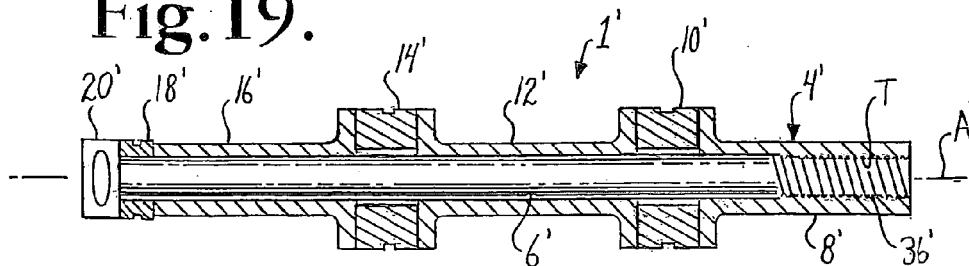


Fig. 20.

Fig. 19.



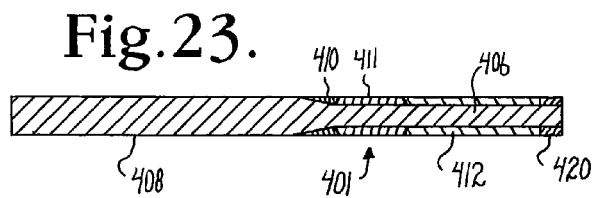
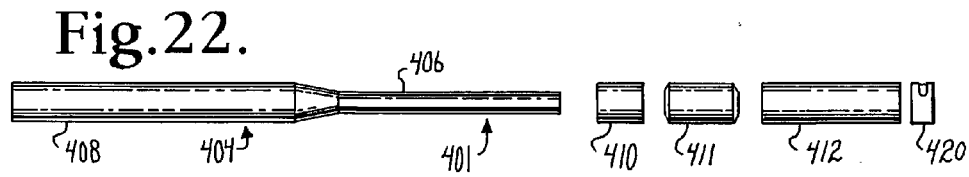
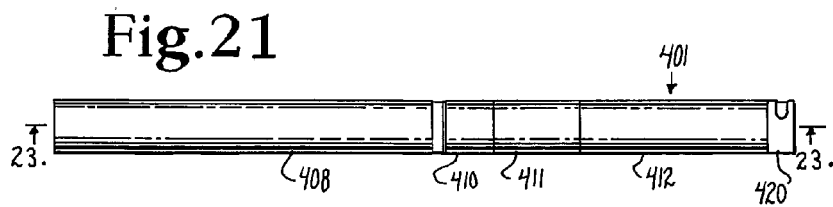
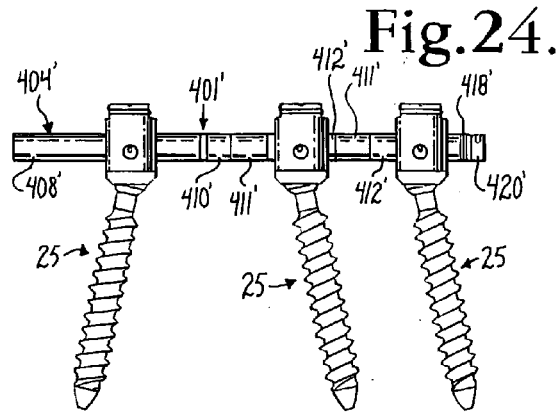


Fig.25.

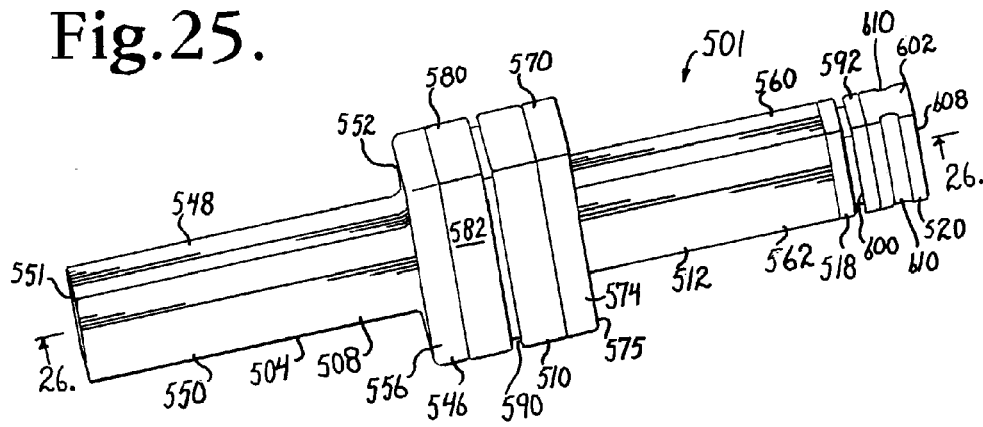


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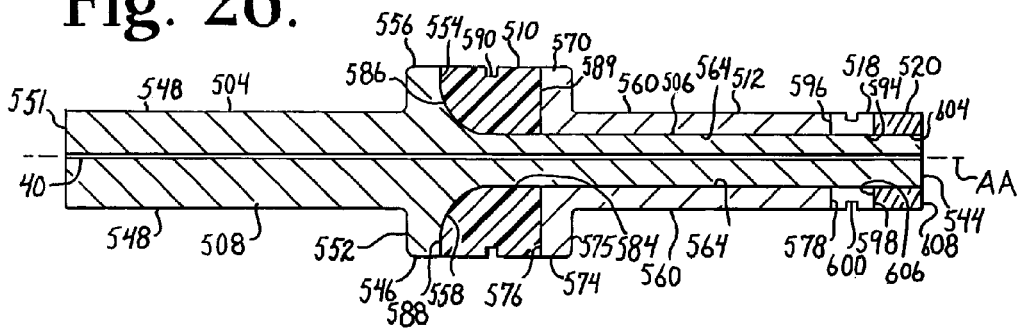


Fig.28.

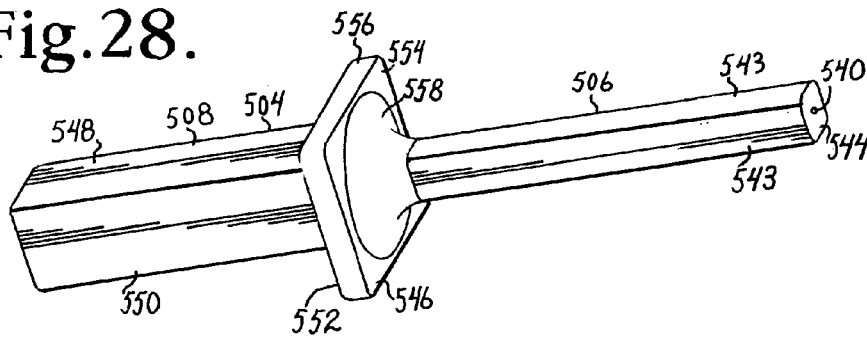


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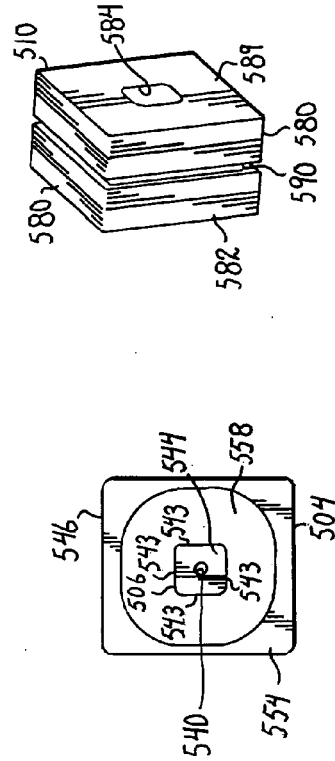
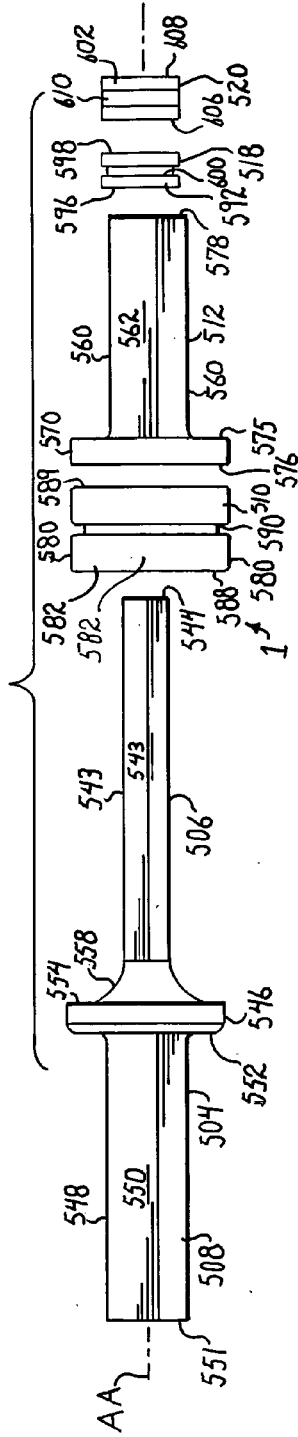


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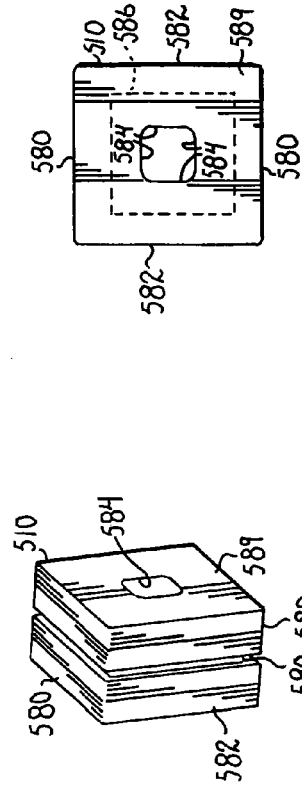


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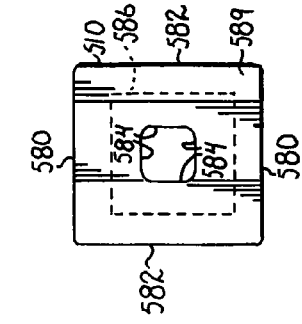


Fig. 31.

Fig.32.

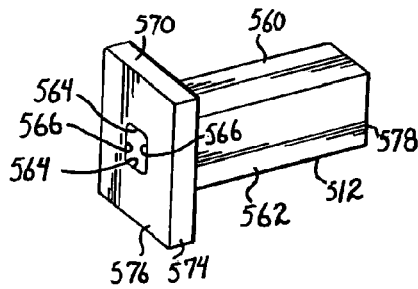


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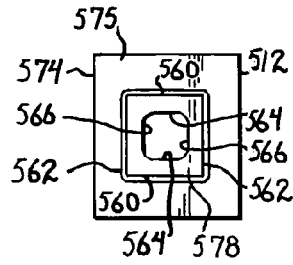


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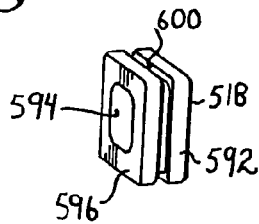


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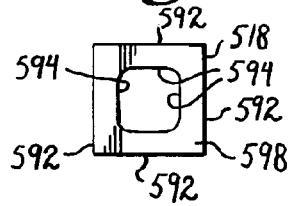


Fig.36.

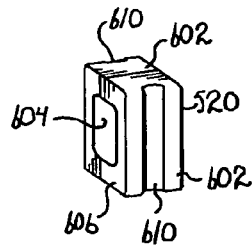


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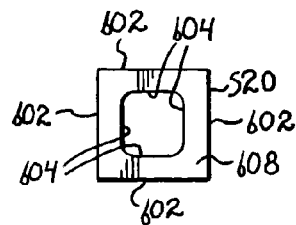


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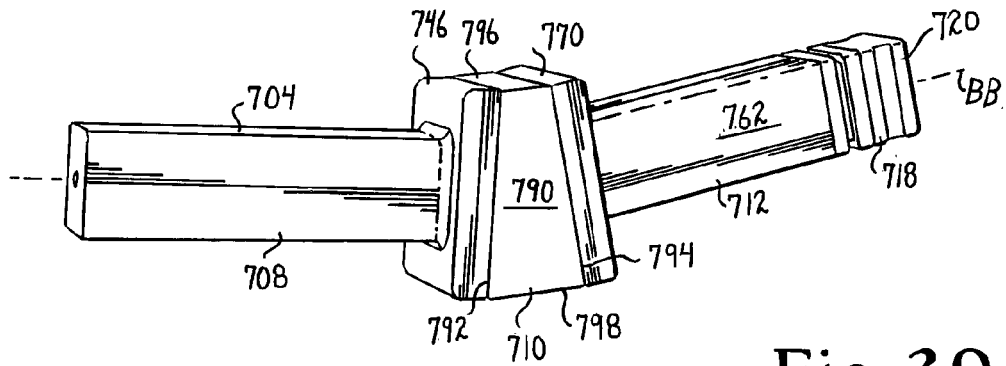
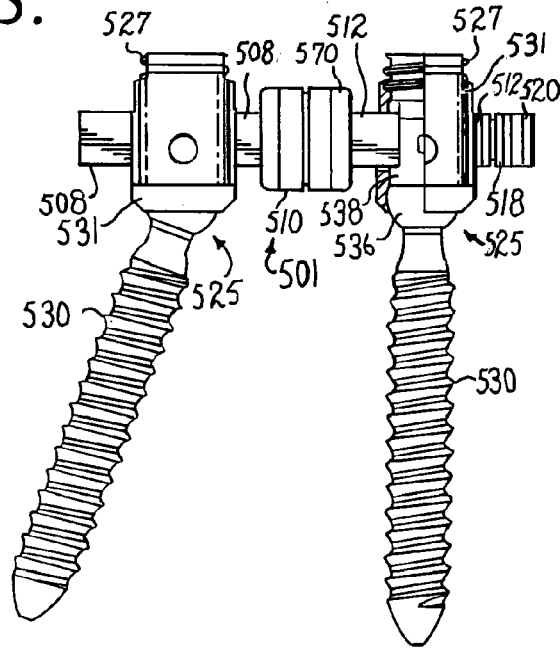


Fig. 39.

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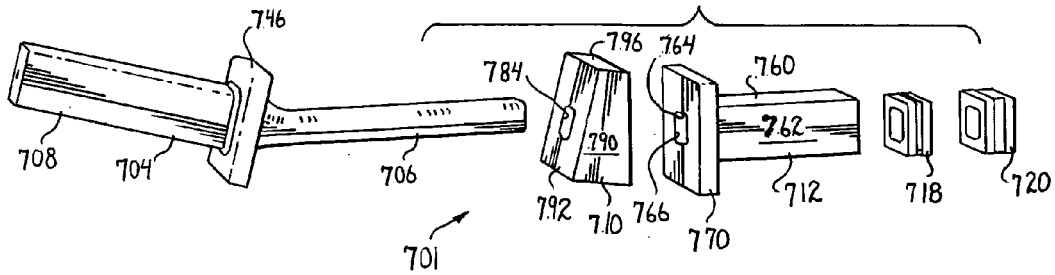


Fig.41.

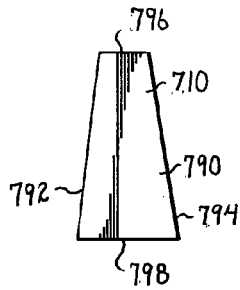


Fig.42.

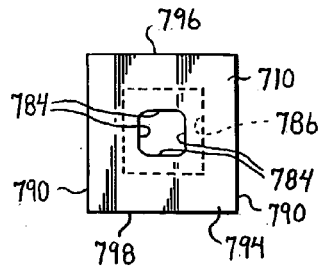


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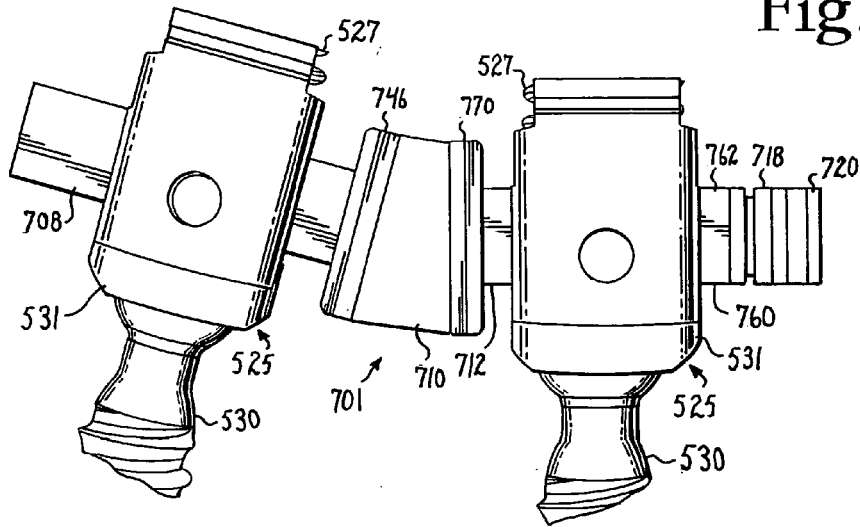


Fig.44

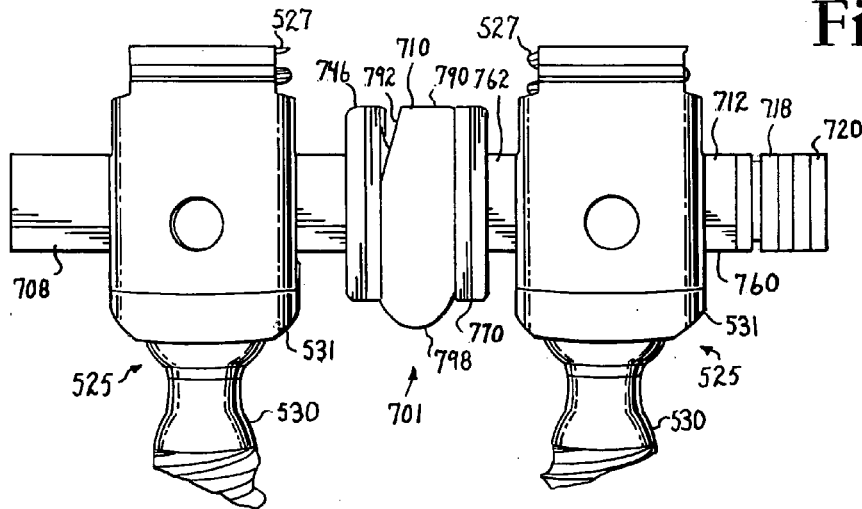


Fig.45.

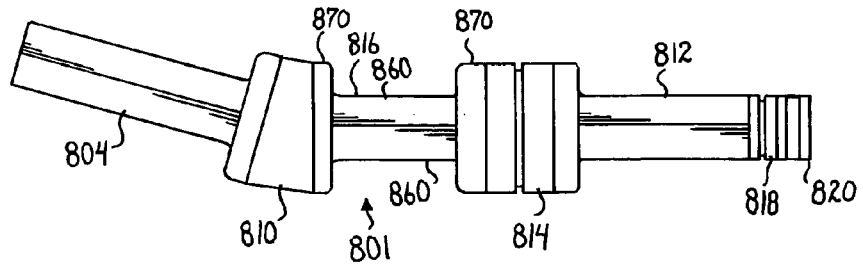


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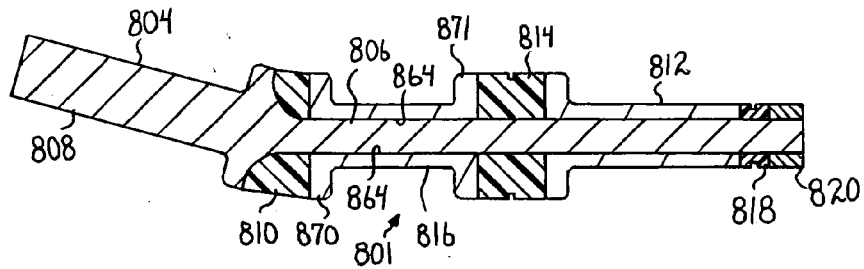


Fig.47.

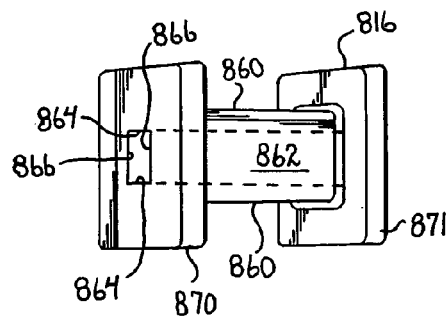


Fig.48.

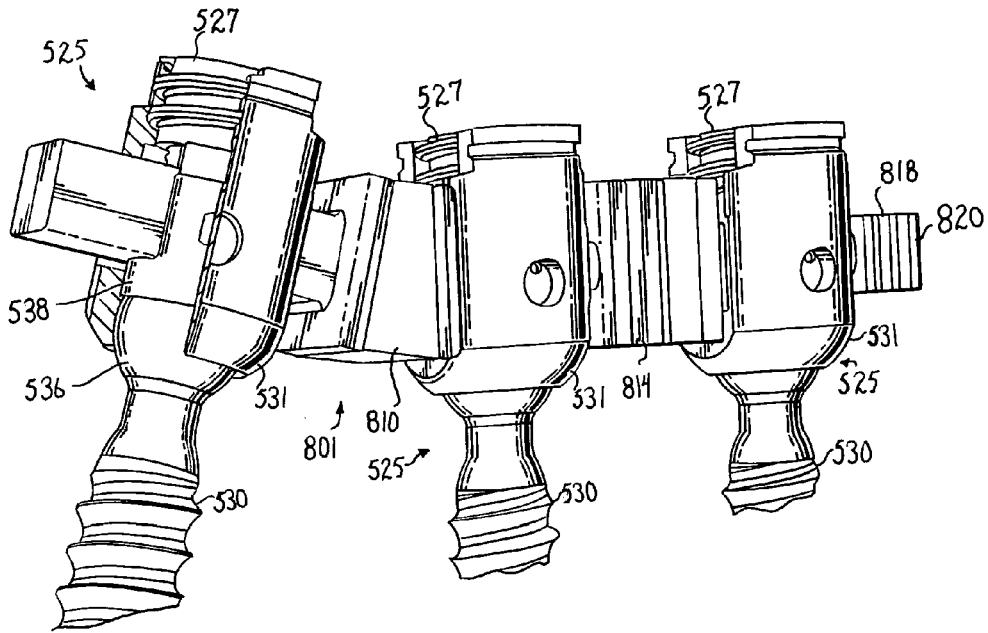


Fig.49.

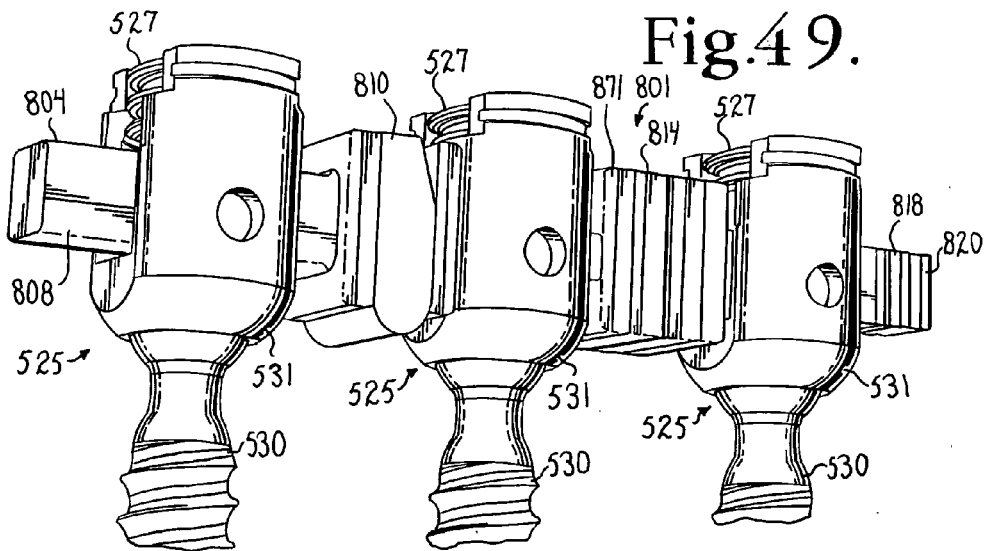


Fig. 50.

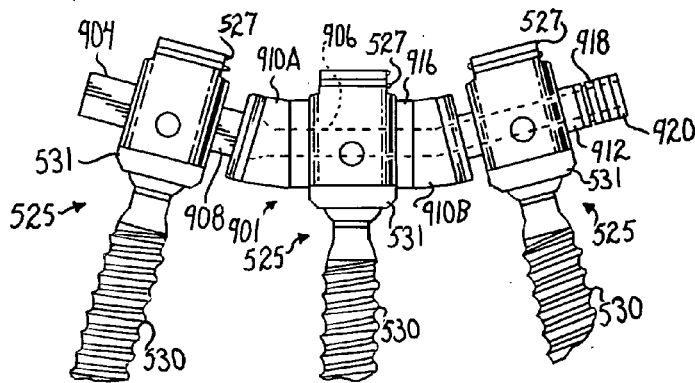
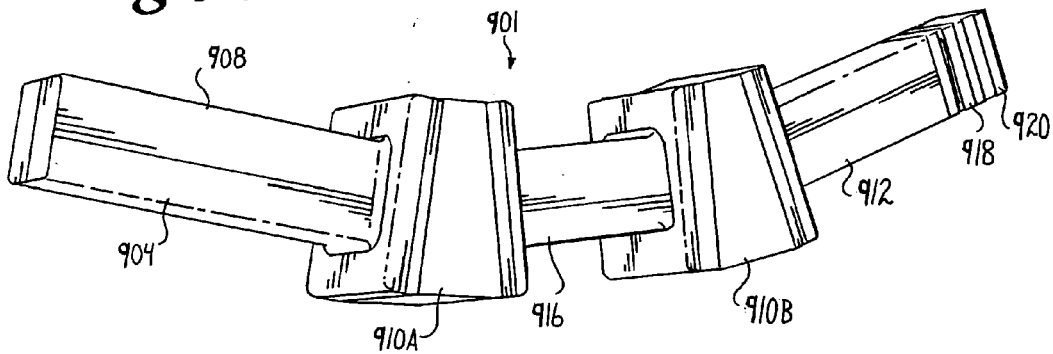
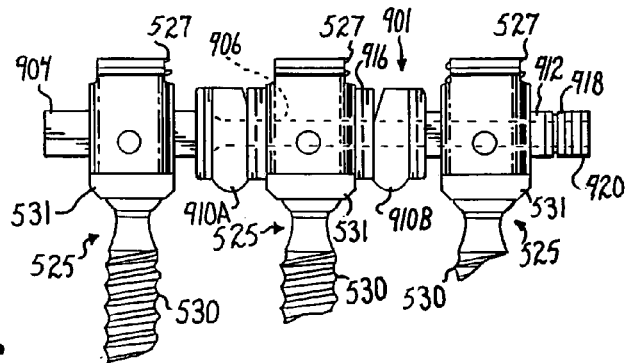


Fig. 51.

Fig. 52.



DYNAMIC STABILIZATION CONNECTING MEMBER WITH PRE-TENSIONED SOLID CORE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 12/459,492, filed Jul. 1, 2009, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. application Ser. No. 12/156,260, filed May 30, 2008 that claimed the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/932,567 filed May 31, 2007, all of which are incorporated by reference herein. U.S. application Ser. No. 12/156,260 also claimed the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/994,068 filed Sep. 17, 2007, which is incorporated by reference herein. U.S. application Ser. No. 12/459,492 also claimed the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/134,480, filed Jul. 10, 2008 and claimed the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/137,743, filed Aug. 1, 2008. U.S. application Ser. No. 12/459,492 was also a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/148,465, filed Apr. 18, 2008 that claimed the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 60/927,111, filed May 1, 2007, all of which are incorporation by reference herein.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention is directed to dynamic fixation assemblies for use in bone surgery, particularly spinal surgery, and in particular to longitudinal connecting members for such assemblies, the connecting members being attached to at least two bone fasteners.

[0003] Historically, it has been common to fuse adjacent vertebrae that are placed in fixed relation by the installation therealong of bone screws or other bone anchors and cooperating longitudinal connecting members or other elongate members. Fusion results in the permanent immobilization of one or more of the intervertebral joints. Because the anchoring of bone screws, hooks and other types of anchors directly to a vertebra can result in significant forces being placed on the vertebra, and such forces may ultimately result in the loosening of the bone screw or other anchor from the vertebra, fusion allows for the growth and development of a bone counterpart to the longitudinal connecting member that can maintain the spine in the desired position even if the implants ultimately fail or are removed. Because fusion has been a desired component of spinal stabilization procedures, longitudinal connecting members have been designed that are of a material, size and shape to largely resist flexure, extension, torsion, distraction and compression, and thus substantially immobilize the portion of the spine that is to be fused. Thus, longitudinal connecting members are typically uniform along an entire length thereof, and usually made from a single or integral piece of material having a uniform diameter or width of a size to provide substantially rigid support in all planes.

[0004] An alternative to fusion, which immobilizes at least a portion of the spine, and the use of more rigid longitudinal connecting members or other rigid structure has been a "soft" or "dynamic" stabilization approach in which a flexible loop-, S-, C- or U-shaped member or a coil-like and/or a spring-like member is utilized as an elastic longitudinal connecting member fixed between a pair of pedicle screws in an attempt to create, as much as possible, a normal

loading pattern between the vertebrae in flexion, extension, distraction, compression, side bending and torsion. Another type of soft or dynamic system known in the art includes bone anchors connected by flexible cords or strands, typically made from a plastic material. Such a cord or strand may be threaded through cannulated spacers that are disposed between adjacent bone anchors when such a cord or strand is implanted, tensioned and attached to the bone anchors. The spacers typically span the distance between bone anchors, providing limits on the bending movement of the cord or strand and thus strengthening and supporting the overall system. Such cord or strand-type systems require specialized bone anchors and tooling for tensioning and holding the cord or strand in the bone anchors. Although flexible, the cords or strands utilized in such systems do not allow for elastic distraction of the system once implanted because the cord or strand must be stretched or pulled to maximum tension in order to provide a stable, supportive system.

[0005] The complex dynamic conditions associated with spinal movement create challenges for the design of elongate elastic longitudinal connecting members that exhibit an adequate fatigue strength to provide stabilization and protected motion of the spine, without fusion, and that allow for some natural movement of the portion of the spine being reinforced and supported by the elongate elastic or flexible connecting member. A further challenge are situations in which a portion or length of the spine requires a more rigid stabilization, possibly including fusion, while another portion or length may be better supported by a more dynamic system that allows for protective movement.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] Longitudinal connecting member assemblies according to the invention for use between at least two bone attachment structures or anchors provide dynamic, protected motion of the spine. A longitudinal connecting member assembly according to the invention has an inner pre-tensioned core of circular or non-circular cross-section that is integral or otherwise fixed to a first bone anchor attachment portion. At least one elastic spacer surrounds the core and is slidable along the core at a location between a pair of adjacent bone anchors. At least one outer sleeve also surrounds the core and is in sliding relationship with the core. The outer sleeve also engages at least one bone anchor. The inner core and outer elastic spacer cooperate dynamically, with the outer sleeve being in compression while the core is in tension. The assembly may further include an elastic end bumper that also is in compression and places distractive force on the core.

[0007] In one embodiment, an improved medical implant assembly having at least two bone anchor attachment structures cooperating with a longitudinal connecting member is provided, including an anchor member portion that is in engagement with one of the at least two bone anchor attachment structures, at least one compressible outer spacer, and at least one sleeve. The anchor member portion has a pre-tensioned member portion of reduced diameter that extends from an end thereof. The pre-tensioned member portion is received in the spacer, and the spacer is positioned between the at least two bone anchor attachment structures. The pre-tensioned member portion is also received within the sleeve and in slidable relationship therewith. The sleeve is in engagement with the other of the at least two bone

anchor attachment structures. The improvement may further include an elastic bumper that engages the sleeve and receives the pre-tensioned member portion therein. The improvement may further include a fixation structure that is secured to the pre-tensioned member portion at an end thereof opposite the anchor member portion.

[0008] In another embodiment, an improved medical implant assembly having at least two bone attachment structures cooperating with a longitudinal connecting member is provided, the improvement wherein the longitudinal connecting member includes an anchor member portion in engagement with one of the at least two bone attachment structures, the anchor member portion having a pre-tensioned bendable core extension of reduced diameter along a length thereof, the core extension attached to and extending from the anchor member portion and having a linear and a non-linear configuration; at least one compressible outer spacer, the core extension being received in the spacer, the spacer being positioned between the at least two bone attachment structures; and at least one sleeve, the core extension being received within the sleeve and in slidable relationship therewith, the sleeve being in engagement with the other of the at least two bone attachment structures.

[0009] In yet another embodiment, an improved medical implant assembly having at least two bone anchor attachment structures cooperating with a longitudinal connecting member is provided, the improvement wherein the longitudinal connecting member includes an anchor member portion in engagement with one of the at least two bone anchor attachment structures, the anchor member portion having a pre-tensioned member portion of reduced diameter extending from an end thereof; at least one compressible outer spacer, the pre-tensioned member portion being received in the spacer, the spacer being positioned between the at least two bone anchor attachment structures; and at least one sleeve, the pre-tensioned member portion being received within the sleeve and in slidable relationship therewith, the sleeve being in engagement with the other of the at least two bone anchor attachment structures. In some embodiments, the longitudinal connecting member also includes one or more of an elastic bumper and a fixation structure. Further, the pre-tensioned member portion is fixed to the anchor member portion at an end thereof, in some embodiments.

[0010] In still another embodiment, a medical implant assembly having at least two bone attachment structures cooperating with a longitudinal connecting member is provided, the improvement wherein the longitudinal connecting member includes an anchor member portion in engagement with one of the at least two bone attachment structures, the anchor member portion having a pre-tensioned bendable core extension of reduced diameter along a length thereof, the core extension attached to and extending from the anchor member portion and having a linear and a non-linear configuration; at least one compressible outer spacer, the core extension being received in the spacer, the spacer being positioned between the at least two bone attachment structures; and at least one sleeve, the core extension being received within the sleeve and in slidable relationship therewith, the sleeve being in engagement with the other of the at least two bone attachment structures.

[0011] In another embodiment, a medical implant assembly is provided, the assembly including a longitudinal connecting member having a stiff portion secured to at least a first bone attachment structure, the stiff portion being coaxial

with a less stiff core extension portion of reduced width relative to the stiff portion, the core extension being in slidable relation with at least a second end bone attachment structure; at least one solid non-slitted outer spacer positioned entirely outside of the core extension and between the at least first and second end bone attachment structures, the spacer being in slidable relation with the core extension; and at least one end fixing structure and at least one elastic bumper, both the end fixing structure and the elastic bumper being positioned entirely outside of the at least second end bone attachment structure, wherein the bumper is positioned around the core extension and between the fixing structure and the at least second end bone attachment structure, and wherein the bumper is in slidable relation with the core extension; and wherein the fixing structure is slidable on the core section, compressible against the bumper and securable to the core extension.

[0012] In a further embodiment, the core extension is in tension. In some further embodiments, the core extension is maintained in tension by axial elastic distraction from the bumper. In some further embodiments, the core extension is made of at least one of a polymer, PEEK and a non-metal. In some further embodiments, at least one sleeve is positioned around and between the core extension and the bone attachment structure, the sleeve being secured to at least the bone attachment structure. In some further embodiments, the tensioned core extension is adapted to provide resilient bending stiffness for the longitudinal connecting member while cooperating with the bone attachment structures. In some further embodiments, the end fixing structure is positioned entirely outside of the bumper. In some further embodiments, the bumper and the spacer are positioned entirely outside of the sleeve.

Objects and Advantages of the Invention

[0013] An object of the invention is to provide dynamic medical implant stabilization assemblies having longitudinal connecting members that include a pre-tensioned inner core that allows for some bending, torsion, compression and distraction of the assembly. Another object of the invention is to provide such an assembly including an elastic pre-compressed outer spacer or sleeve. A further object of the invention is to provide dynamic medical implant longitudinal connecting members that may be utilized with a variety of bone screws, hooks and other bone anchors. Additionally, it is an object of the invention to provide a lightweight, reduced volume, low profile assembly including at least two bone anchors and a longitudinal connecting member therebetween. Furthermore, it is an object of the invention to provide apparatus and methods that are easy to use and especially adapted for the intended use thereof and wherein the apparatus are comparatively inexpensive to make and suitable for use.

[0014] Other objects and advantages of this invention will become apparent from the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings wherein are set forth, by way of illustration and example, certain embodiments of this invention.

[0015] The drawings constitute a part of this specification and include exemplary embodiments of the present invention and illustrate various objects and features thereof.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0016] FIG. 1 is an enlarged front elevational view of a dynamic fixation connecting member assembly according to

the invention including an anchor member integral with an inner core, two elastic spacers, two sleeves, an elastic bumper and a crimping ring.

[0017] FIG. 2 is a cross-sectional view taken along the line 2-2 of FIG. 1.

[0018] FIG. 3 is an enlarged perspective view of the anchor member of FIG. 1.

[0019] FIG. 4 is an enlarged perspective view of one of the sleeves of FIG. 1.

[0020] FIG. 5 is an enlarged perspective view of another of the sleeves of FIG. 1.

[0021] FIG. 6 is an enlarged exploded front elevational view of the assembly of FIG. 1.

[0022] FIG. 7 is an enlarged perspective view of the crimping ring of FIG. 1.

[0023] FIG. 8 is an enlarged perspective view of the elastic bumper of FIG. 1.

[0024] FIG. 9 is an enlarged front perspective view of an elastic spacer of FIG. 1.

[0025] FIG. 10 is an enlarged rear perspective view of the elastic spacer of FIG. 9.

[0026] FIG. 11 is an enlarged front perspective view of another elastic spacer of FIG. 1.

[0027] FIG. 12 is an enlarged rear perspective view of the elastic spacer of FIG. 11.

[0028] FIG. 13 is a reduced front elevational view of the assembly of FIG. 1 shown with three cooperating bone screws.

[0029] FIG. 14 is an enlarged front elevational view of a second embodiment of a dynamic fixation connecting member assembly according to the invention including an anchor member integral with an inner core, an elastic spacer, a sleeve, an elastic bumper and a crimping ring.

[0030] FIG. 15 is a reduced exploded front elevational view of the assembly of FIG. 14.

[0031] FIG. 16 is a cross-sectional view taken along the line 16-16 of FIG. 14.

[0032] FIG. 17 is a reduced front elevational view of the assembly of FIG. 14 shown with three cooperating bone screws.

[0033] FIG. 18 is front elevational view of a third embodiment of a dynamic fixation connecting member assembly according to the invention shown with four cooperating bone screws.

[0034] FIG. 19 is a front elevational view of a fourth embodiment of a dynamic fixation connecting member assembly according to the invention with portions broken away to show the detail thereof.

[0035] FIG. 20 is a front elevational view of a fifth embodiment of a dynamic fixation connecting member assembly according to the invention with an inner threaded core shown in phantom.

[0036] FIG. 21 is a front elevational view of a sixth embodiment of a dynamic fixation connecting member assembly according to the invention.

[0037] FIG. 22 is a reduced exploded front elevational view of the connecting member of FIG. 21.

[0038] FIG. 23 is a reduced cross-sectional view taken along the line 23-23 of FIG. 21.

[0039] FIG. 24 is a front elevational view of a seventh embodiment of a dynamic fixation connecting member assembly according to the invention shown with three bone screws.

[0040] FIG. 25 is an enlarged perspective view of an eighth embodiment of a dynamic fixation connecting member assembly according to the invention including an anchor member integral with an inner core, an elastic spacer, a sleeve, an elastic bumper and a crimping member.

[0041] FIG. 26 is a cross-sectional view taken along the line 26-26 of FIG. 25.

[0042] FIG. 27 is an enlarged exploded front elevational view of the assembly of FIG. 25.

[0043] FIG. 28 is an enlarged perspective view of the anchor member of FIG. 25.

[0044] FIG. 29 is an enlarged side elevational view of the anchor member of FIG. 25.

[0045] FIG. 30 is an enlarged perspective view of the spacer of FIG. 25.

[0046] FIG. 31 is an enlarged side elevational view of the spacer of FIG. 25.

[0047] FIG. 32 is an enlarged perspective view of the sleeve of FIG. 25.

[0048] FIG. 33 is an enlarged side elevational view of the sleeve of FIG. 25.

[0049] FIG. 34 is an enlarged perspective view of the elastic bumper of FIG. 25.

[0050] FIG. 35 is an enlarged side elevational view of the elastic bumper of FIG. 25.

[0051] FIG. 36 is an enlarged perspective view of the crimping member of FIG. 25.

[0052] FIG. 37 is an enlarged side elevational view of the crimping member of FIG. 25.

[0053] FIG. 38 is an enlarged front elevational view of the assembly of FIG. 25 shown with two cooperating bone screws with portions broken away to show the detail thereof.

[0054] FIG. 39 is an enlarged perspective view of a ninth embodiment of a dynamic fixation connecting member assembly according to the invention including an anchor member integral with an inner core, an elastic spacer with a trapezoidal face, a sleeve, an elastic bumper and a crimping member.

[0055] FIG. 40 is a reduced exploded perspective view of the assembly of FIG. 39.

[0056] FIG. 41 is an enlarged front elevational view of the elastic spacer of FIG. 39.

[0057] FIG. 42 is an enlarged side elevational view of the elastic spacer of FIG. 39.

[0058] FIG. 43 is an enlarged and partial front elevational view of the assembly of FIG. 39 shown cooperating with a pair of bone screws.

[0059] FIG. 44 is an enlarged and partial front elevational view similar to FIG. 43 showing the assembly in a loaded condition.

[0060] FIG. 45 is an enlarged front elevational view of a tenth embodiment of a dynamic fixation connecting member assembly according to the invention including an anchor member integral with an inner core, a first elastic spacer with a trapezoidal face, a first sleeve, a second elastic spacer, a second sleeve, an elastic bumper and a crimping member.

[0061] FIG. 46 is an enlarged front elevational view similar to FIG. 45 with portions broken away to show the detail thereof.

[0062] FIG. 47 is an enlarged perspective view of the first sleeve of FIG. 45.

[0063] FIG. 48 is an enlarged and partial perspective view of the assembly of FIG. 45 shown cooperating with three bone screws and with portions broken away to show the detail thereof.

[0064] FIG. 49 is an enlarged and partial perspective view similar to FIG. 48 showing the assembly of FIG. 45 under a load.

[0065] FIG. 50 is an enlarged perspective view of an eleventh embodiment of a dynamic fixation connecting member assembly according to the invention including an anchor member integral with an inner core, a first elastic spacer with a trapezoidal face, a first sleeve, a second elastic spacer with a trapezoidal face, a second sleeve, an elastic bumper and a crimping member.

[0066] FIG. 51 is a reduced and partial front elevational view of the assembly of FIG. 50 shown cooperating with three bone screws.

[0067] FIG. 52 is a partial front elevational view similar to FIG. 51 showing the assembly of FIG. 50 under a load.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0068] As required, detailed embodiments of the present invention are disclosed herein; however, it is to be understood that the disclosed embodiments are merely exemplary of the invention, which may be embodied in various forms. Therefore, specific structural and functional details disclosed herein are not to be interpreted as limiting, but merely as a basis for the claims and as a representative basis for teaching one skilled in the art to variously employ the present invention in virtually any appropriately detailed structure. It is also noted that any reference to the words top, bottom, up and down, and the like, in this application refers to the alignment shown in the various drawings, as well as the normal connotations applied to such devices, and is not intended to restrict positioning of the connecting member assemblies of the application and cooperating bone anchors in actual use.

[0069] With reference to FIGS. 1-13, the reference numeral 1 generally designates a non-fusion dynamic stabilization longitudinal connecting member assembly according to the present invention. The connecting member assembly 1 includes an anchor member, generally 4, having an elongate segment or inner core 6 and a bone anchor attachment portion 8; a first elastic spacer 10; a first sleeve 12; a second elastic spacer 14; a second sleeve 16; an elastic bumper 18; and a crimping ring 20; all substantially symmetrically aligned with respect to a central axis A of the anchor member 4. The elongate core 6 of the anchor member 4 is receivable within the spacer 10, the first sleeve 12, the second spacer 14, the second sleeve 16, the bumper 18 and the crimping ring 20. Thus, the axis A of the anchor member 4 is also the axis of the fully assembled assembly 1. As will be described in greater detail below, when fully assembled and fixed with all components fixed in position as shown in FIG. 1, the inner core 6 is in tension and the spacers 10 and 14 and the bumper 18 are in compression.

[0070] As illustrated in FIG. 13, the dynamic connecting member assembly 1 cooperates with at least three bone anchors, such as the polyaxial bone screws, generally 25 and cooperating closure structures 27, the assembly 1 being captured and fixed in place at the anchor portion 8, the sleeve 12 and the sleeve 16 by cooperation between the bone screws 25 and the closure structures 27. Because the anchor

portion 8 and the sleeves 12 and 16 have substantially solid cylindrical surfaces, the connecting member assembly 1 may be used with a wide variety of bone screws and other bone anchors already available for cooperation with more rigid rods including fixed, monoaxial bone screws, hinged bone screws, polyaxial bone screws, and bone hooks and the like, with or without compression inserts, that may in turn cooperate with a variety of closure structures having threads, flanges, or other structure for fixing the closure structure to the bone anchor, and may include other features, for example, external or internal drives, break-off tops and inner set screws. The bone anchors, closure structures and the connecting member assembly 1 are then operably incorporated in an overall spinal implant system for correcting degenerative conditions, deformities, injuries, or defects to the spinal column of a patient.

[0071] The illustrated polyaxial bone screws 25 each include a shank 30 for insertion into a vertebra (not shown), the shank 30 being pivotally attached to an open receiver or head 31. The shank 30 includes a threaded outer surface and may further include a central cannula or through-bore disposed along an axis of rotation of the shank. The through bore provides a passage through the shank interior for a length of wire or pin inserted into the vertebra prior to the insertion of the shank 30, the wire or pin providing a guide for insertion of the shank 30 into the vertebra. The receiver 31 includes a pair of spaced and generally parallel arms that form an open generally U-shaped channel therebetween that is open at distal ends of such arms. The receiver arms each include radially inward or interior surfaces that have a discontinuous guide and advancement structure mateable with cooperating structure on the closure structure 27. The guide and advancement structure may be a partial helically wound flangeform configured to mate under rotation with a similar structure on the closure structure 27 or a buttress thread, a square thread, a reverse angle thread or other thread like or non-thread like helically wound advancement structures for operably guiding under rotation and advancing the closure structure 27 downward between the receiver arms and having such a nature as to resist splaying of the receiver arms when the closure 27 is advanced between the receiver arms.

[0072] The shank 30 and the receiver 31 may be attached in a variety of ways. For example, a spline capture connection as described in U.S. Pat. No. 6,716,214, and incorporated by reference herein, may be used wherein the bone screw shank includes a capture structure mateable with a retaining structure disposed within the receiver. The retaining structure includes a partially spherical surface that is slidably mateable with a cooperating inner surface of the receiver 31, allowing for a wide range of pivotal movement between the shank 30 and the receiver 31. Polyaxial bone screws with other types of capture connections may also be used according to the invention, including but not limited to, threaded connections, frictional connections utilizing frustoconical or polyhedral capture structures, integral top or downloadable shanks, and the like. Also, as indicated above, polyaxial and other bone screws for use with connecting members of the invention may have bone screw shanks that attach directly to the connecting member or may include compression members or inserts that engage the bone screw shank and cooperate with the shank, the receiver and the closure structure to secure the connecting member assembly to the bone screw and/or fix the bone screw shank at a

desired angle with respect to the bone screw receiver that holds the longitudinal connecting member assembly. Furthermore, although the closure structure 27 of the present invention is illustrated with the polyaxial bone screw 25 having an open receiver or head 31, it is foreseen that a variety of closure structure may be used in conjunction with any type of medical implant having an open or closed head or receiver, including monoaxial bone screws, hinged bone screws, hooks and the like used in spinal surgery.

[0073] To provide a biologically active interface with the bone, the threaded shank 30 may be coated, perforated, made porous or otherwise treated. The treatment may include, but is not limited to a plasma spray coating or other type of coating of a metal or, for example, a calcium phosphate; or a roughening, perforation or indentation in the shank surface, such as by sputtering, sand blasting or acid etching, that allows for bony ingrowth or ongrowth. Certain metal coatings act as a scaffold for bone ingrowth. Bio-ceramic calcium phosphate coatings include, but are not limited to: alpha-tri-calcium phosphate and beta-tri-calcium phosphate ($\text{Ca}_3(\text{PO}_4)_2$), tetra-calcium phosphate ($\text{Ca}_4\text{P}_2\text{O}_9$), amorphous calcium phosphate and hydroxyapatite ($\text{Ca}_{10}(\text{PO}_4)_6(\text{OH})_2$). Coating with hydroxyapatite, for example, is desirable as hydroxyapatite is chemically similar to bone with respect to mineral content and has been identified as being bioactive and thus not only supportive of bone ingrowth, but actively taking part in bone bonding.

[0074] With reference to FIG. 13, the closure structure 27 can be any of a variety of different types of closure structures for use in conjunction with the present invention with suitable mating structure on the interior surface of the upstanding arms of the receiver 31. The illustrated closure structure 27 is rotatable between the spaced arms, but could be a slide-in closure structure. The illustrated closure structure 27 is substantially cylindrical and includes an outer helically wound guide and advancement structure in the form of a flange form that may take a variety of forms, including those described in Applicant's U.S. Pat. No. 6,726,689, which is incorporated herein by reference. It is also foreseen that according to the invention the closure structure guide and advancement structure could alternatively be a buttress thread, a square thread, a reverse angle thread or other thread like or non-thread like helically wound advancement structure for operably guiding under rotation and advancing the closure structure 27 downward between the receiver arms and having such a nature as to resist splaying of the arms when the closure structure 27 is advanced into the U-shaped channel formed by the arms. The illustrated closure 27 further includes an inner set screw with an internal drive in the form of an aperture utilized for assembly of the set screw and removal of the entire closure 27. It is foreseen that the closure structure 27 may alternatively include an external drive, such as a break-off head designed to allow such a head to break from a base of the closure at a preselected torque, for example, 70 to 140 inch pounds. Such a closure structure would also include a base having an internal drive to be used for closure removal.

[0075] Returning to the longitudinal connecting member assembly 1 illustrated in FIGS. 1-13, the assembly 1 is elongate, with the inner core 6 being a substantially solid, smooth and uniform cylinder or rod having an outer cylindrical surface 36 and a substantially circular cross-section. The core 6 and integral anchor attachment portion 8 may be made from metal, metal alloys or other suitable materials,

including plastic polymers such as polyetheretherketone (PEEK), ultra-high-molecular weight-polyethylene (UHMWP), polyurethanes and composites, including composites containing carbon fiber. It is noted that although an anchor member 4 is illustrated in which the components 6 and 8 are integral, the core 6 and the anchor attachment portion 8 may be made from different materials, for example, the core 6 may be made out of PEEK and fixed or adhered to a bone anchor attachment portion 8 made out of titanium. The core 6 and attachment portion 8 may include a small central lumen or through-bore (not shown) extending along the central axis A. Such a lumen may be used as a passage through the entire assembly 1 interior for a length of a guide wire for aiding insertion of the assembly 1 between implanted bone screws 25 in a percutaneous or less invasive procedure.

[0076] With particular reference to FIG. 3, the anchor member 4 is substantially cylindrical along an entire length thereof along the axis A and includes at least two or more circular cross-sections along the length thereof. The illustrated member 4 includes the slender and thus more flexible core 6 of a first circular cross-section and the bone anchor attachment portion 8 that has a second circular cross-section that is larger than the core 6 cross-section and thus is more rigid than the core 6. The core 6 terminates at an end 38. Prior to final assembly, the core 6 is typically of a length greater than that shown in the drawing figures so that the core 6 may be grasped by a tool (not shown) near the end 38 and pulled along the axis A in a direction away from the anchor attachment portion 8 in order to place tension on the core 6 as will be described in greater detail below.

[0077] With particular reference to FIGS. 2-3, between the core 6 and the portion 8 is a buttress plate 40 that has a third circular cross-section that is larger than the attachment portion 8 cross-section. The buttress plate 40 is integral with and disposed between the core 6 and the portion 8. Although the illustrated anchor member 4 is substantially cylindrical, it is foreseen that the core 6, the portion 8 and the plate 40 may have other forms, including but not limited to oval, square and rectangular cross-sections as well as other curved or polygonal shapes. The bone anchor attachment portion 8 is of a length along the axis A for cooperating with at least one and up to a plurality of bone attachment members, such as the bone screws 25, hooks or other types of bone anchors. The portion 8 is substantially solid and rigid, with an outer cylindrical surface 39 that terminates at an end 41. The plate 40 includes a first substantially flat and annular face 42 facing away from the core 6 and an opposed parallel substantially flat face 44 facing toward the core 6. The faces 42 and 44 are disposed substantially perpendicular to the axis A. An outer cylindrical surface 46 extends between the faces 42 and 44. A gently sloping transition surface or flange 48 bridges between and connects the outer cylindrical surface 36 of the core 6 with the substantially flat face 44 of the buttress plate 40.

[0078] With particular reference to FIGS. 4 and 5, the sleeves 12 and 16 are each sized and shaped to be slidably received over the core 6 along the axis A and each have a length measured along the axis A that is sufficient for the attachment of at least one bone screw 25 thereon. Similar to the anchor member 4, the sleeves 12 and 16 may be made from metal, metal alloys or other suitable materials, including plastic polymers such as polyetheretherketone (PEEK), ultra-high-molecular weight-polyethylene (UHMWP), poly-

urethanes and composites, including composites containing carbon fiber. The sleeves 12 and 16 may be made of the same material as the cooperating core 6, for example, the anchor member 4 and the sleeves 12 and 16 may all be made from PEEK; or, for example, the core 6 may be made from one material, such as PEEK, while the sleeves 12 and 16 may be made from another material, such as a metal (e.g. stainless steel or titanium). In order to have low or no wear debris, the sleeve 12 and 16 inner surfaces and/or cooperating core 6 outer surfaces may be coated with an ultra thin, ultra hard, ultra slick and ultra smooth coating, such as may be obtained from ion bonding techniques and/or other gas or chemical treatments.

[0079] The illustrated sleeves 12 and 16 each are substantially cylindrical, having outer cylindrical bone anchor attachment surfaces 50 and 52, respectively, that are each of substantially the same diameter as the outer surface 39 of the bone anchor attachment portion 8. Each of the sleeves 12 and 16 further include an inner cylindrical surface 54 and 56, respectively, that define a through-bore for the passage of the core 6 therethrough. The sleeve 12 includes a pair of integral, opposed end plates 58 and 60 while the sleeve 16 includes a single end plate 62. The illustrated plates 58, 60 and 62 have outer cylindrical surfaces 64, 66 and 68, respectively, that are of substantially the same diameter as the buttress plate outer cylindrical surface 46. The plates 58 and 60 terminate at outer planar and annular surfaces 70 and 72, respectively. The plate 62 terminates at an outer planar and annular surface 74. The cylindrical surface 52 of the sleeve 16 terminates at an outer planar and annular surface 76.

[0080] With reference to FIGS. 8-12, the elastic spacers 10 and 14 and the elastic bumper 18 are sized and shaped to be slidably received over the core 6 and may be made from a variety of elastic materials, including, but not limited to natural or synthetic elastomers such as polyisoprene (natural rubber), and synthetic polymers, copolymers, and thermoplastic elastomers, for example, polyurethane elastomers such as polycarbonate-urethane elastomers. In order to have low or no wear debris, the spacers 10 and 14 and bumper 18 inner and side surfaces may also be coated with an ultra thin, ultra hard, ultra slick and ultra smooth coating, such as may be obtained from ion bonding techniques and/or other gas or chemical treatments.

[0081] The illustrated spacers 10 and 14 advantageously cooperate with the core 6 of the anchor member 4, providing limitation and protection of movement of the core 6 located between bone screws 25. With particular reference to FIGS. 9-12, the illustrated spacers 10 and 14 are almost identical, differing only with regard to inner surfaces that define through bores for receiving the anchor member core 6. Each of the spacers 10 and 14 have an external substantially cylindrical outer surface 78 and 80, respectively, and internal surfaces 82 and 84, respectively, defining through bores. The internal surface 82 is further defined by a flared or conical outwardly extending surface 86 sized and shaped for cooperating with the surface 48 of the anchor member 4. The spacer 10 includes opposed substantially planar and annular end surfaces 88 and 89 and the spacer 14 includes opposed substantially planar and annular end surfaces 90 and 91. When cooperating with the core 6, the end surfaces 88 and 89 and 90 and 91 are substantially perpendicular to the axis A. It is foreseen that in some embodiments, the spacers 10 and 14 may be of circular, square, rectangular or other

cross-section including curved or polygonal shapes. In the illustrated embodiment, both the spacers 10 and 14 further includes a compression groove 93 and 94, respectively. Spacers according to the invention may include one, none or any desired number of grooves that allow for some additional compression of the spacers 10 and 14 when pressed upon in an axial direction by the plates 40, 58, 60 and 62. The illustrated grooves 93 and 94 are substantially uniform and circular in cross-section, being formed in the respective external surfaces 78 and 80 and extending radially toward respective internal surfaces 82 and 84. The size of the internal surfaces 82 and 84 allow for some axially directed sliding movement of the respective spacers 10 and 14 with respect to the core surface 36.

[0082] The core 6 and cooperating compressible spacers 10 and 14 allows for some twist or turn, providing some relief for torsional stresses. The spacers 10 and 14 and cooperating plates 40, 58, 60 and 62 may cooperate to limit such torsional movement as well as bending movement. For example, a first set of pins may be inserted through the plates 40 and 60 and respective engaging spacer surfaces 89 and 88. A second set of pins may be inserted through the plates 58 and 62 and respective engaging spacer surfaces 91 and 90. It may be particularly advantageous to utilize pins made from tantalum, for example to provide x-ray markers, for example, when the anchor member 4, sleeves and spacers are made from radiolucent plastics. In other embodiments according to the invention, the spacers 10 and 14 and cooperating plates 40, 58, 60 and 62 may include ribs or fins for insertion into apertures located on cooperating facing surfaces to provide limits on twisting movement between such plates and spacers.

[0083] With particular reference to FIG. 8, the bumper 18 is substantially cylindrical, including an outer surface 98 and an inner surface 99 forming a substantially cylindrical through bore that opens at planar end surfaces 100 and 101 and operatively extends along the axis A. The bumper 18 further includes a compression groove 104 that is similar in form and function to the compression grooves 93 and 94 described above with respect to the spacers 10 and 14. The bumper 18 is sized and shaped to slidably receive the core 6 through the inner surface 99. The bumper 18 is preferably made from an elastomeric material such as polyurethane. The bumper 18 operatively provides axial tension on the core 6 as will be described in greater detail below.

[0084] With particular reference to FIG. 7, the crimping ring 20 is substantially cylindrical and includes an outer surface 110 and an inner surface 112 forming a substantially cylindrical through bore that opens at planar end surfaces 114 and 116 and operatively extends along the axis A. The crimping ring 20 is sized and shaped to receive the elongate core 6 through the inner surface 112. The crimping ring 20 further includes a pair of crimp or compression grooves 120 that are pressable and deformable inwardly toward the axis A upon final tensioning of the core 6 and compression of the spacers 10 and 14 and the bumper 18 during assembly of the assembly 1. The crimping ring 20 is preferably made from a stiff, but deformable material, including metals and metal alloys.

[0085] The illustrated dynamic connecting member assembly 1 having a pre-tensioned core 6 cooperates with at least three bone anchors, such as polyaxial bone screws, generally 25 as shown in FIG. 13. In use, the three bone screws 25 are implanted into vertebrae (not shown). Each

vertebra may be pre-drilled to minimize stressing the bone. Furthermore, when a cannulated bone screw shank is utilized, each vertebra will have a guide wire or pin inserted therein that is shaped for the bone screw cannula of the bone screw shank 30 and provides a guide for the placement and angle of the shank 30 with respect to the cooperating vertebra. A further tap hole may be made and the shank 30 is then driven into the vertebra by rotation of a driving tool (not shown) that engages a driving feature on or near a top portion of the shank 30. It is foreseen that both the screws 25 and the longitudinal connecting member assembly 1 may be inserted in a conventional, percutaneous or other minimally invasive surgical manner.

[0086] With particular reference to FIGS. 1, 2 and 6, the longitudinal connecting member assembly 1 is assembled to provide a pre-tensioned core 6 and pre-compressed spacers 10 and 14 and bumper 18 prior to implanting the assembly 1 in a patient. This is accomplished by first providing the anchor member 4 that has a core 6 that is longer in the axial direction A than the core 6 illustrated in the drawing figures. The spacer 10 is first loaded onto the core 6 by inserting the core 6 end 38 into the bore defined by the inner surface 82 with the face 89 directed toward the buttress plate 40. The spacer 10 is moved along the core 6 until the surface 86 contacts the surface 48. The sleeve 12 is then threaded onto the core 6 with the face 72 of the plate 60 facing the end surface 88 of the spacer 10. The core 6 is received in the bore defined by the inner cylindrical surface 54 and the sleeve 12 is moved along the core 6 until the plate surface 72 abuts the spacer surface 88. The spacer 14 is thereafter loaded onto the core 6 by inserting the core 6 end 38 into the bore defined by the inner surface 84 with the face 91 facing the toward the end plate 58 of the sleeve 12. The spacer 14 is moved along the core 6 until the surface 91 contacts the surface 70. The sleeve 16 is then threaded onto the core 6 with the face 74 of the plate 62 facing the end surface 90 of the spacer 14. The core 6 is received in the bore defined by the inner cylindrical surface 56 and the sleeve 16 is moved along the core 6 until the plate surface 74 abuts the spacer surface 90. The bumper 18 is thereafter loaded onto the core 6 by inserting the core 6 end 38 into the bore defined by the inner surface 99 with the face 101 facing the toward the surface 76 of the sleeve 16. The bumper 18 is moved along the core 6 until the surface 101 contacts the surface 76. The crimping ring 20 is thereafter loaded onto the core 6 by inserting the core 6 end 38 into the bore defined by the inner surface 112 with the face 116 facing the toward the surface 100 of the bumper 18. The crimping ring 20 is moved along the core 6 until the surface 116 contacts the surface 100. It is noted that due to the symmetrical nature of the sleeve 12, the spacer 14, the bumper 18 and the crimping ring 20, these components may be loaded onto the core 6 from either side thereof.

[0087] After the crimping ring 20 is loaded onto the core 6, manipulation tools (not shown) are used to grasp the core 6 near the end 38 and at the bone anchor attachment portion 8, placing tension on the core 6. Furthermore, the spacer 10, the sleeve 12, the spacer 14, the sleeve 16, the bumper 18 and the crimping ring 20 are moved toward the buttress plate 40 and into contact with one another. Axial compressive force may also be placed on the components loaded on the core 6, followed by deforming the crimping ring at the crimp grooves 120 and against the core 6. When the manipulation tools are released, the crimping ring 20, now firmly and fixedly attached to the core 6 holds the spacers 10 and 14 and

the bumper 18 in compression and the spacers and bumper place axial tension forces on the core 6, resulting in a dynamic relationship between the core 6 and the spacers 10, 14 and the bumper 18. The tension on the core 6 is advantageously balanced and uniform as the spacers 10 and 16 are slidable with respect to the core 6, but also are limited by the buttress plate of the anchor member 4 and end plates of the sleeves 12 and 16. Furthermore, the bumper 18 that is compressed between the sleeve surface 76 and the crimping ring surface 116 is also slidable with respect to the core 206. The spacers 10 and 14 and the bumper 18 place a distractive force on the core 6 along the axis A and between the buttress plate 40 and the crimping ring 20, but also are movable with respect to the core 6, thus being able to respond to jolting and other body movements and thereafter spring back into an originally set location. The sleeves 12 and 16 that may compress slightly, but are more rigid than the spacers 10 and 14, keep the spacers 10 and 14 in an approximate desired axially spaced relation. However, the spacers 10 and 14 also advantageously slide along the core 6 in response to outside forces. The core 6 is then trimmed to be approximately flush with the end surface 114 of the crimping ring 20.

[0088] With reference to FIG. 13, the pre-loaded connecting member assembly 1 is eventually positioned in an open, percutaneous or other less invasive manner in cooperation with the at least three bone screws 25 with the spacers 10 and 14 being disposed between and spaced from the bone screws 25 and with the portion 8 and sleeves 12 and 16 each being located within a U-shaped channel of a cooperating bone screw receiver 31. Once a desired position is attained, a closure structure 27 is then inserted into and advanced between the arms of each of the bone screw receivers 31 until appropriately tightened.

[0089] The assembly 1 is thus substantially dynamically loaded and oriented relative to the cooperating vertebra, providing relief (e.g., shock absorption) and protected movement with respect to flexion, extension, distraction and compressive forces placed on the assembly 1 and the three connected bone screws 25. The slender core 6 allows for some twisting or turning, providing some relief for torsional stresses. Furthermore, the compressed spacers 10 and 14 place some limits on torsional movement as well as bending movement, to provide spinal support. The pre-loaded core 6 (in tension) and spacers 10, 14 and bumper 18 (in compression) allow for compression and some extension of the assembly 1 located between the two bone screws 25, e.g., shock absorption.

[0090] If removal of the assembly 1 from any of the bone screw assemblies 25 is necessary, or if it is desired to release the assembly 1 at a particular location, disassembly is accomplished by using the driving tool (not shown) with a driving formation cooperating with the closure structure 27 internal drive or cooperating set screw internal drive to rotate and remove the closure structure 27 from the receiver 31. Disassembly is then accomplished in reverse order to the procedure described previously herein for assembly.

[0091] Eventually, if the spine requires more rigid support, the connecting member assembly 1 according to the invention may be removed and replaced with another longitudinal connecting member, such as a solid rod, having the same diameter as the portion 8 and the sleeves 12 and 16, utilizing the same receivers 31 and the same or similar closure structures 27. Alternatively, if less support is eventually required, a less rigid, more flexible assembly, for example,

an assembly 1 having components made of a more flexible material, but with the same diameter sleeves as the assembly 1, may replace the assembly 1, also utilizing the same bone screws 25.

[0092] With reference to FIGS. 14-17, an alternative embodiment of a dynamic longitudinal connecting member, generally 201, includes an anchor member, generally 204, having an elongate segment or inner core 206 and a bone anchor attachment portion 208; an elastic spacer 210; a sleeve 216; an elastic bumper 218; and a crimping ring 220; all substantially symmetrically aligned with respect to a central axis B of the anchor member 204. The elongate core 206 of the anchor member 204 is receivable within the spacer 210, the sleeve 216, the bumper 218 and the crimping ring 220. Thus, the axis B of the anchor member 204 is also the axis of the fully assembled assembly 201. When fully assembled and fixed with all components fixed in position as shown in FIG. 14, the inner core 206 is in tension and the spacer 210 and the bumper 218 are in compression.

[0093] In the illustrated embodiment, the anchor member 204 is substantially similar to the anchor member 4 previously described herein with respect to the assembly 1. Therefore, the member 204 includes the core 206, the bone anchor attachment portion 208 and an integral buttress plate 240 identical or substantially similar in size and shape to the respective core 6, attachment portion 8 and buttress plate 40 of the anchor member 4 previously described herein. The member 204 differs from the member 4 only in the length of the bone anchor attachment portion 208. The portion 208 is longer than the similar portion 8 of the member 4 such that at least two bone screws 25 are attachable to the portion 208 as illustrated in FIG. 17 while only one bone screw 25 is attached to the portion 8 of the assembly 1. The spacer 210 is identical or substantially similar to the spacer 10 illustrated in FIGS. 11 and 12 and previously described herein. The sleeve 216 is identical or substantially similar to the sleeve 16 illustrated in FIG. 4 and previously described herein, having an outer cylindrical surface 252, an inner cylindrical surface 256 defining a through bore and an end plate 262 identical or substantially similar to the respective outer cylindrical surface 52, inner cylindrical surface 56 and end plate 62 of the sleeve 16 previously described herein. The bumper 218 and the crimping ring 220 are identical or substantially similar to the respective bumper 18 and the crimping ring 20 previously described herein with respect to the assembly 1.

[0094] The assembly 201 is assembled in a manner substantially similar to the manner of assembly previously described herein with respect to the assembly 1, the assembly 201 however, does not include a second spacer or second sleeve. Therefore, the core 206 is first received within a through bore of the spacer 210, then within the inner cylindrical surface 256 of the sleeve 216, followed by an inner through bore of the bumper 218 and then an inner through bore of the crimping ring 220. Similar to what has been described previously with respect to the assembly 1, the core 206 is initially of a longer length measured along the axis B than is shown in the drawing figures, allowing for a manipulation tool to grasp the core 206 near an end thereof that extends through the crimping ring bore. The core 206 is tensioned and/or the spacer 210 and bumper 220 are compressed, followed by deformation of the crimping ring 220 against the core 206. The core 206 is then trimmed substantially flush to the crimping ring 220. The assembly is now in

dynamic relationship with the core 206 being in tension while the spacer 210 that is slidable with respect to the core 206 is compressed between the plates 240 and 262 and the bumper 218 that is also slidable with respect to the core 206 is compressed between the sleeve 216 and the crimping ring 220; the spacer 210 and the bumper 218 placing a distractive force on the core 206 along the axis B and between the buttress plate 240 and the crimping ring 220. The assembly 201 may then be implanted, cooperating with three bone screws 25 as illustrated in FIG. 17 and as previously described herein with respect to the assembly 1. Unlike the assembly 1 illustrated in FIG. 13 that provides for a more dynamic and flexible connection between all three illustrated bone screws 25, the assembly 201 provides for dynamic stabilization between first and second bone screws 25 and a more rigid connection between the second bone screw 25 and a third bone screw 25 as both the second and third bone screws are attached to the rigid attachment portion 208.

[0095] With reference to FIG. 18, a third embodiment of a dynamic longitudinal connecting member assembly, generally 301 is illustrated. The assembly 301 includes an anchor member 304 having an inner core 306 and a bone anchor attachment portion 308; a spacer 310, a sleeve 316, a bumper 318 and a crimping ring 320. The illustrated spacer 310, sleeve 316, bumper 318 and crimping ring 320 are identical to the spacer 210, sleeve 216, bumper 218 and crimping ring 220 previously described herein with respect to the assembly 201. The anchor member 304 is identical to the anchor member 204 with the exception that the bone anchor attachment portion 308 is of a length to receive three bone screw receivers 31 therealong while the portion 208 is sized to receive two bone screw receivers 31. It is foreseen that longitudinal connecting member assemblies according to the invention may be of a variety of lengths for cooperation with a plurality of bone screws 25, either along a rigid end portion, such as the portion 308 shown in FIG. 18, or along dynamic portions that include one or more spacers and one or more sleeves, such as the sleeves 12 and 16 for attachment to bone screws 25 or other bone anchors. It is foreseen that such sleeves may also be a variety of lengths for attachment to one or more bone anchors along a length of the individual sleeve.

[0096] With reference to FIGS. 19 and 20, fourth and fifth embodiments of a dynamic longitudinal connecting member assembly of the invention are illustrated. With reference to FIG. 19, an assembly 1' is illustrated that is substantially similar to the assembly 1 previously described herein with an anchor member, generally 4', having an inner core extension 6' fixed to a bone anchor attachment portion 8'; spacers 10' and 14'; sleeves 12' and 16'; a bumper 18' and a crimping ring 20', all aligned along an axis A'. The illustrated spacers 10' and 14', sleeves 12' and 16', bumper 18' and crimping ring 20' are identical or substantially similar to the respective spacers 10 and 14, sleeves 12 and 16, bumper 18 and crimping ring 20 of the assembly 1. The embodiment 1' differs from the assembly 1 only in how the core extension 6' is fixed to the bone anchor attachment portion 8'. In the assembly 1' the attachment portion 8' includes a threaded aperture T and the core extension 6' includes an outer threaded portion 36' that mates with the threaded aperture T, fixing the core extension 6' to the portion 8' upon rotation of the core extension 6' about the axis A' within the aperture T.

[0097] With reference to FIG. 20, another embodiment of the invention, an assembly 201', is shown that is substan-

tially similar to the assembly 201 illustrated in FIGS. 14-17. The assembly 201' includes an anchor member, generally 204', having an inner core extension 206' fixed to a bone anchor attachment portion 208'; a spacer 210'; a sleeve 216'; a bumper 218' and a crimping ring 220', all aligned along an axis B'. The illustrated spacer 210', sleeve 216', bumper 218' and crimping ring 220' are identical or substantially similar to the respective spacer 210, sleeve 216, bumper 218 and crimping ring 220 of the assembly 201. The embodiment 201' differs from the assembly 201 only in how the core extension 206' is fixed to the bone anchor attachment portion 208'. In the assembly 201' the attachment portion 208' includes a threaded aperture T' and the core extension 206' includes an outer threaded portion 236' that mates with the threaded aperture T', fixing the core extension 206' to the portion 208' upon rotation of the core extension 206' about the axis B' within the aperture T'. It is noted that the aperture T shown in FIG. 19 extends completely through the portion 8' while the aperture T' shown in FIG. 20 extends substantially into the portion 208' along the axis B', but does not extend therethrough.

[0098] With reference to FIGS. 21-23, another embodiment of a connecting member according to the invention, an assembly 401 is shown that includes the same or similar components to the assemblies 1 and 201, for example, previously described herein. However, the components are sized such that the resulting assembly 401 has a constant outer diameter along an entire length thereof. Thus, the assembly 401 generally designates a non-fusion dynamic stabilization longitudinal connecting member assembly according to the present invention having an anchor member, generally 404, that includes an elongate segment or inner core 406 integral with or otherwise fixed to a bone anchor attachment portion 408; an end spacer or stop 410; a second elastic spacer 411; a rigid sleeve 412; and a crimping ring 420; all substantially symmetrically aligned with respect to a central axis of the anchor member 404. The elongate core 406 of the anchor member 404 is receivable within the spacers 410 and 411, the sleeve 412 and the crimping ring 420. Thus, the central axis of the anchor member 404 is also the axis of the fully assembled assembly 401. Although not shown, the core 406 may be made of a slightly longer length and an elastic bumper, similar to the bumper 18 of the assembly 1 (but of a different inner diameter, such as the bumper 418' shown in FIG. 24) may be placed between the sleeve 412 and the crimping ring 420. The core 406, anchor attachment portion 408, spacers 410 and 411, sleeve 412 and crimping ring 420 are substantially similar in form and function to the respective core 6, anchor attachment portion 8, spacer 10, sleeve 12 and crimping ring 20 of the assembly 1. In the illustrated embodiment 401, the two spacers 410 and 411 may be made out of the same or different materials. For example, it may be desirable to make the spacer 410 of a more rigid material than the spacer 411 to provide more of a stop or barrier between the anchor attachment portion 408 and the spacer 411 in light of the reduced size of the components of the assembly 401 as compared to the assembly 1 and the fact that the assembly 401 does not include a buttress plate such as the buttress plate 40 of the assembly 1. It is foreseen that in certain embodiments of the invention, the two spacers 410 and 411 may be replaced by a single spacer. Furthermore, rather than a gradual decrease in diameter from the portion 408 to the core 406 shown in the drawings, the anchor attachment

portion 408 and the core 406 may be configured in a more abrupt or stepped manner, forming a small stop or abutment surface disposed perpendicular to the central axis of the anchor member 404.

[0099] Similar to the assembly 1, the assembly 404, when fully assembled, has the inner core 406 in tension and at least the spacer 411 in compression, with the ring 420 crimped against the core 406. The dynamic connecting member assembly 401 cooperates with at least two bone anchors (not shown), such as the anchors 25, the anchors being attached to the portion 408 and the rigid sleeve 412.

[0100] With reference to FIG. 24, another embodiment of a connecting member according to the invention, an assembly 401', is shown that is substantially similar to the assembly 401. The assembly 401' differs from the assembly 401 only that the assembly 401' includes a bumper 418', a pair of spacers 411' identical or substantially similar to the spacer 411 and a pair of rigid sleeves 412' identical or substantially similar to the sleeve 412, allowing for a bone screw 25 to be attached to each sleeve 412' as well as to the anchor portion 408', for a total of at least three bone screws 25. One spacer 411' is disposed between each bone screw 25. Thus, the assembly 401' includes an anchor member 404' that includes an elongate segment or inner core (not shown, but substantially similar to the core 406 shown in FIG. 22) and an integral bone anchor attachment portion 408'; an end spacer or stop 410'; a pair of elastic spacers 411'; a pair of rigid sleeves 412'; and a crimping ring 420'; all substantially symmetrically aligned with respect to a central axis of the anchor member 404'. The elongate core of the anchor member 404' is receivable within the end spacer 410', the spacers 411', the sleeves 412' and the crimping ring 420' as well as the elastic bumper 418' that is similar in form and function to the bumper 18 of the assembly 1. Thus, the anchor member 404', spacers 411, sleeve 412, bumper 418' and crimping ring 420 are substantially similar in form and function to the respective anchor member 4, spacer 10, sleeve 12, bumper 18 and crimping ring 20 of the assembly 1. Similar to the assembly 401, the assembly 401' end spacer or stop 410' may be elastic like the spacers 411' or may be made of a more rigid material in order to function in a manner similar to the buttress plate 40 of the assembly 1.

[0101] With reference to FIGS. 25-38, the reference numeral 501 generally designates another embodiment of a non-fusion dynamic stabilization longitudinal connecting member assembly according to the present invention. The connecting member assembly 501 includes an anchor member, generally 504, having an elongate segment or inner core or core extension 506 and a bone anchor attachment portion 508; an elastic spacer 510; a sleeve 512; an elastic bumper 518; and a crimping member 520; all substantially symmetrically aligned with respect to a central axis AA of the anchor member 504. The elongate core 506 of the anchor member 504 is receivable within the spacer 510, the sleeve 512, the bumper 518 and the crimping member 520. Thus, the axis AA of the anchor member 504 is also a central axis of the fully assembled assembly 501. As will be described in greater detail below, when fully assembled and fixed with all components fixed in position as shown in FIG. 25, the inner core 506 is in tension and the spacer 510 and the bumper 518 are in compression.

[0102] As illustrated in FIG. 38, the dynamic connecting member assembly 501 cooperates with at least two bone anchors, such as the polyaxial bone screws, generally 525

and cooperating closure structures 527, the assembly 501 being captured and fixed in place at the anchor portion 508 and the sleeve 512 by cooperation between the bone screws 525 and the closure structures 527. All of the embodiments according to the invention illustrated in FIGS. 25-52 are shown with the same bone screws 525 and cooperating closure structures 527, however, as more fully discussed below, a wide variety of bone anchors may be used with connecting members according to the invention. For example, because the anchor portion 508 and the sleeve 512 of the assembly 501 have substantially solid and planar surfaces, the connecting member assembly 501 may be used with a wide variety of bone screws and other bone anchors that closely receive the planar surfaces of the assembly 501, including fixed, monoaxial bone screws, hinged bone screws, polyaxial bone screws, and bone hooks and the like, with or without compression inserts, that may in turn cooperate with a variety of closure structures having threads, flanges, or other structure for fixing the closure structure to the bone anchor, and may include other features, for example, external or internal drives, break-off tops and inner set screws. The bone anchors, closure structures and the connecting member assembly 501 are then operably incorporated in an overall spinal implant system for correcting degenerative conditions, deformities, injuries, or defects to the spinal column of a patient.

[0103] The illustrated polyaxial bone screws 525 each include a shank 530 for insertion into a vertebra (not shown), the shank 530 being pivotally attached to an open receiver or head 531. The shank 530 includes a threaded outer surface and may further include a central cannula or through-bore disposed along an axis of rotation of the shank. The through bore provides a passage through the shank interior for a length of wire or pin inserted into the vertebra prior to the insertion of the shank 530, the wire or pin providing a guide for insertion of the shank 530 into the vertebra. The receiver 531 includes a pair of spaced and generally parallel arms that form an open squared off U-shaped channel therebetween that is open at distal ends of such arms. The receiver arms each include radially inward or interior surfaces that have a discontinuous guide and advancement structure mateable with cooperating structure on the closure structure 527. The guide and advancement structure may be a partial helically wound flangeform configured to mate under rotation with a similar structure on the closure structure 527 or a buttress thread, a square thread, a reverse angle thread or other thread like or non-thread like helically wound advancement structures for operably guiding under rotation and advancing the closure structure 527 downward between the receiver arms and having such a nature as to resist splaying of the receiver arms when the closure 527 is advanced between the receiver arms.

[0104] The shank 530 and the receiver 531 may be attached in a variety of ways. For example, a threaded capture connection as described in U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2007/0055244, and incorporated by reference herein, may be used wherein the bone screw shank includes an outer helical thread mateable with an inner helical thread of a retaining structure disposed within the receiver. The shank 530 of the illustrated bone screw 525 is top loaded into the receiver 531 and includes an upper portion 536 that has a partially spherical surface that is slidingly mateable with a cooperating inner surface of the receiver 531, allowing for a wide range of pivotal movement between the shank 530

and the receiver 531. Top or bottom loaded polyaxial bone screws for use with the assembly 501 may include other types of capture connections, including but not limited to, other threadably connected, spline connected, or cam connected shank upper portions mateable with a retainer structure or ring that is in turn slidingly mateable with the inner surface of the receiver 531, frictional connections utilizing frusto-conical or polyhedral capture structures, and other types of integral top or downloadable shanks. Also, as indicated above, polyaxial and other bone screws for use with connecting members of the invention may have bone screw shanks that directly engage the elongate connecting member or, as illustrated, include at least one compression member, such as the lower insert 538 that includes a partially spherical base that engages the substantially spherical upper portion of the bone screw shank 536 and also engages the bone anchor attachment portion 508 or the sleeve 512 to securely hold the connecting member assembly 501 within the receiver 531 and/or cooperate with the closure structure 527 to fix the bone screw shank 530 at a desired angle with respect to the bone screw receiver 531. As illustrated in FIG. 38 and also shown in FIG. 48, the insert 538 includes spaced parallel walls disposed perpendicular to a bottom seating surface for closely holding the flat surfaced anchor attachment portion 508 or the flat surfaced sleeve 512 at a location slightly spaced from the squared off opening of the receiver 531.

[0105] Although the closure structure 527 for use with the assembly 501 of the present invention is illustrated with the polyaxial bone screw 525 having an open receiver or head 531, it is foreseen that a variety of closure structures may be used in conjunction with any type of medical implant having an open or closed head or receiver, including monoaxial bone screws, hinged bone screws, hooks and the like used in spinal surgery.

[0106] To provide a biologically active interface with the bone, the threaded shank 530 may be coated, perforated, made porous or otherwise treated. The treatment may include, but is not limited to a plasma spray coating or other type of coating of a metal or, for example, a calcium phosphate; or a roughening, perforation or indentation in the shank surface, such as by sputtering, sand blasting or acid etching, that allows for bony ingrowth or ongrowth. Certain metal coatings act as a scaffold for bone ingrowth. Bio-ceramic calcium phosphate coatings include, but are not limited to: alpha-tri-calcium phosphate and beta-tri-calcium phosphate ($\text{Ca}_3(\text{PO}_4)_2$), tetra-calcium phosphate ($\text{Ca}_4\text{P}_2\text{O}_9$), amorphous calcium phosphate and hydroxyapatite ($\text{Ca}_{10}(\text{PO}_4)_6(\text{OH})_2$). Coating with hydroxyapatite, for example, is desirable as hydroxyapatite is chemically similar to bone with respect to mineral content and has been identified as being bioactive and thus not only supportive of bone ingrowth, but actively taking part in bone bonding.

[0107] With further reference to FIG. 38, the closure structure 527 can be any of a variety of different types of closure structures for use in conjunction with the present invention with suitable mating structure on the interior surface of the upstanding arms of the receiver 531. The illustrated closure structure 527 is rotatable between the spaced arms, but it is foreseen that it could be a slide-in closure structure. The illustrated closure structure 527 is substantially cylindrical and includes an outer helically wound guide and advancement structure in the form of a flange form that may take a variety of forms, including those

described in Applicant's U.S. Pat. No. 6,726,689, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference. It is also foreseen that according to the invention the closure structure guide and advancement structure could alternatively be a buttress thread, a square thread, a reverse angle thread or other thread like or non-thread like helically wound advancement structure for operably guiding under rotation and advancing the closure structure 527 downward between the receiver arms and having such a nature as to resist splaying of the arms when the closure structure 527 is advanced into the squared off U-shaped channel formed by the arms. The closure 527 may further include an inner set screw with an internal drive in the form of an aperture utilized for assembly of the set screw and removal of the entire closure 527. It is foreseen that the closure structure may alternatively include a non-helically wound locking or cam structure that may also include a flanged lip. It is also foreseen that the closure structure 527 may alternatively include an external drive, such as a break-off head designed to allow such a head to break from a base of the closure at a preselected torque, for example, 70 to 140 inch pounds. Such a closure structure would also include a base having an internal drive to be used for closure removal. In the illustrated embodiments, the closure 527 has a planar bottom surface that engages the insert 538 as well as the bone anchor portion 508 or the sleeve 512 for consistent secure locking of the polyaxial screw mechanism, the insert 538 pressing against the shank upper portion 536 that in turn presses against an inner surface of the receiver 531. It is also foreseen that the closure structure may have a roughened or point and rim structure to aid in frictionally engaging the longitudinal connecting member.

[0108] Returning to the longitudinal connecting member assembly 501 illustrated in FIGS. 25-38, the assembly 501 is elongate, with the inner core 506 being a substantially solid, smooth and uniform bar of substantially square or rectangular cross-section. The core 506 may have a variety of cross-sectional geometries including polygonal and curvate. It is preferred that the cross-section be non-circular. However, a curvate cross-section, such as an oval or elliptical shape is acceptable. As will be described in greater detail below, the non-circular shape of the core 506 advantageously provides for torsion control of the assembly whereas a similar assembly made with a core of a circular cross section may tend to slip or rotate with respect to the other components of the assembly 501 when the assembly 501 is placed under torsional forces. Such a connecting member may require further structure in the form of pegs, pins or adhesives to more firmly connect an anchor member (similar to the anchor 504 but with circular cross-section) with an outer spacer (similar to the spacer 510 but with circular cross-section), for example.

[0109] The anchor attachment portion 508 may be made from metal, metal alloys or other suitable materials, including plastic polymers such as polyetheretherketone (PEEK), ultra-high-molecular weight-polyethylene (UHMWP), polyurethanes and composites, including composites containing carbon fiber. It is noted that although an anchor member 504 is illustrated in which the components 506 and 508 are integral, the core extension 506 and the anchor attachment portion 508 may be made from different materials, for example, the core extension 506 may be made out of PEEK and fixed or adhered to a bone anchor attachment portion 508 made out of titanium. The core 506 and attachment

portion 508 each include a small central lumen or through-bore 540 extending along the central axis AA. The lumen 540 may be used as a passage through the entire assembly 501 interior for a length of a guide wire for aiding insertion of the assembly 501 between implanted bone screws 525 in a percutaneous or less invasive procedure.

[0110] With particular reference to FIGS. 27-29, the anchor member 504 is substantially bar-shaped along an entire length thereof along the axis AA and includes at least two or more rectangular cross-sections along the length thereof. The illustrated member 504 includes the slender and thus more flexible core 506 of a first rectangular cross-section that is illustrated in the drawings as having a square cross-section with four outer planar surfaces 543. The core 506 terminates at an end 544. Prior to final assembly, the core 506 is typically of a length greater than that shown in the drawing figures so that the core 6 may be grasped by a tool (not shown) near the end 544 and pulled along the axis AA in a direction away from the anchor attachment portion 508 in order to place tension on the core 506. Alternatively, the core 506 may be grasped by a tool near the end 544 during compression of the spacer 510 and/or bumper 518 and crimping of the member 520. As will be described in greater detail below, after removal of the tools, the spacer 510 and bumper 518 expand along the axis AA, placing the core extension 506 in tension.

[0111] The bone anchor attachment portion 508 that is integral with the core extension 506 has a second rectangular cross-section that is larger than the core 506 cross-section and thus the portion 508 is more rigid than the core 506. Also with reference to FIGS. 25-29, between the core 506 and the portion 508 is a buttress plate 546 that has a rectangular cross-section that is larger than the cross-section of the attachment portion 508. The buttress plate 546 is integral with and disposed between the core 506 and the portion 508. Although the illustrated anchor member 504 is substantially rectangular, it is foreseen that the core 506, the portion 508 and the plate 546 may have other forms, including but not limited to oval and square cross-sections as well as other curved or polygonal shapes. The bone anchor attachment portion 508 is of a length along the axis AA for cooperating with at least one and up to a plurality of bone attachment members, such as the bone screws 525, hooks or other types of bone anchors. The portion 508 is substantially solid and rigid, with opposed planar surfaces 548 and perpendicular cooperating opposed planar surfaces 550. The surfaces 548 and 550 terminate at an end 551. In the illustrated embodiment, a distance between the surfaces 548 is slightly greater than a distance between the surfaces 550. This is advantageous in situations wherein a relatively stiff bar 508 is desired but space considerations such as vertebrae and tooling placement require a more slender elongate connector.

[0112] The buttress plate 546 includes a first substantially flat and annular face 552 facing away from the core 506 and an opposed parallel substantially flat face 554 facing toward the core 506. The faces 552 and 554 are disposed substantially perpendicular to the axis AA. An outer surface 556 of rectangular cross-section extends between the faces 552 and 554. A gently sloping transition surface or flange 558 bridges between and connects the surfaces 543 of the core 506 with the substantially flat face 554 of the buttress plate 546.

[0113] With particular reference to FIGS. 26, 32 and 33, the sleeve 512 is sized and shaped to be slidably received

over the core **506** along the axis AA and has a length measured along the axis AA that is sufficient for the attachment of at least one bone screw **525** thereon. Similar to the anchor member **504**, the sleeve **512** may be made from metal, metal alloys or other suitable materials, including plastic polymers such as polyetheretherketone (PEEK), ultra-high-molecular weight-polyethylene (UHMWP), polyurethanes and composites, including composites containing carbon fiber. The sleeve **512** may be made of the same material as the cooperating core **506**, for example, the anchor member **504** and the sleeve **512** may be made from PEEK; or, for example, the core **506** may be made from one material, such as PEEK, while the sleeve **512** may be made from another material, such as a metal (e.g. stainless steel or titanium). In order to have low or no wear debris, the sleeve **512** inner surfaces and/or cooperating core **506** outer surfaces may be coated with an ultra thin, ultra hard, ultra slick and ultra smooth coating, such as may be obtained from ion bonding techniques and/or other gas or chemical treatments.

[0114] The illustrated sleeve **512** has a rectangular cross-section taken perpendicular to the axis AA, having outer opposed planar anchor attachment surfaces **560** and cooperating perpendicular opposed planar attachment surfaces **562**. The illustrated sleeve **512** rectangular cross-section is identical or substantially similar to the rectangular cross-section formed by the surfaces **548** and **550** of the bone anchor attachment portion **508**. The sleeve **512** further includes inner opposed planar surfaces **564** and cooperating perpendicular opposed planar surfaces **566** that define a through-bore for the passage of the core **506** therethrough. In the illustrated embodiment, the surfaces **564** and **566** are of substantially the same width (measured perpendicular to the axis AA) for being closely slidingly mateable with the surfaces **543** of the core **506**. The sleeve **512** further includes a plate **570** at an end thereof. The illustrated end plate **570** has a rectangular cross-section perpendicular to the axis AA partially defined by outer planar surfaces **574**. The surfaces **574** are sized and shaped to be identical or substantially similar to the surfaces **556** of the plate **546** of the anchor member **504**. The plate **570** has a planar surface **575** perpendicular to the axis AA and an opposed terminal planar surface **576**. The surfaces **560** and **562** terminate at an outer planar surface **578**.

[0115] With reference to FIGS. **25-27**, the elastic spacer **510** and the elastic bumper **518** are sized and shaped to be slidingly received over the core **506** and may be made from a variety of elastic materials, including, but not limited to natural or synthetic elastomers such as polyisoprene (natural rubber), and synthetic polymers, copolymers, and thermoplastic elastomers, for example, polyurethane elastomers such as polycarbonate-urethane elastomers. In order to have low or no wear debris, the spacer **510** and the bumper **518** inner and side surfaces may also be coated with an ultra thin, ultra hard, ultra slick and ultra smooth coating, such as may be obtained from ion bonding techniques and/or other gas or chemical treatments.

[0116] The illustrated spacer **510** advantageously closely slidingly mates and cooperates with the core **506** of the anchor member **504**, providing limitation and protection of axial movement and torsional control of the core **506** located between bone screws **525**. With particular reference to FIGS. **26**, **30** and **31**, the illustrated spacer **510** has a pair of opposed planar outer surface **580** and perpendicular opposed planar cooperating surfaces **582**. The surfaces **580** and **582**

have an outer cross-section similar or identical in size to the plates **546** and **570**. The spacer **510** also includes inner surfaces **584** of substantially the same width forming a lumen or through bore of substantially rectangular cross-section with respect the axis AA. In the illustrated embodiment, the cross-section is substantially square and slightly larger than the substantially square cross-section of the core **506**. The internal surfaces **584** are further defined by a flared outwardly extending surface **586** sized and shaped for cooperating with the surface **558** of the anchor member **504**. The spacer **510** includes opposed substantially planar end surfaces **588** and **589**. The flared surface **586** terminates at the end surface **588**. When cooperating with the core **506**, the end surfaces **588** and **589** are substantially perpendicular to the axis AA. It is foreseen that in some embodiments, the spacer **510** may be of circular, square, or other outer cross-sectional shapes including curved or polygonal shapes. In the illustrated embodiment, the spacer **510** further includes a compression groove **590**. Spacers according to the invention may include one, none or any desired number of grooves **590** that allow for some additional compression of the spacer **510** when pressed upon in an axial direction by the plates **546** and **570**. The illustrated groove **590** is substantially uniform and formed in the external surfaces **580** and **582** and extending inwardly toward the internal surfaces **584**. The size of the internal surfaces **584** allow for some axially directed sliding movement of the spacer **510** with respect to the core surfaces **543** but limits any rotation of the spacer **510** about the axis AA and thus limits twisting movements between the anchor **504**, the sleeve **512** and the spacer **510**.

[0117] With particular reference to FIGS. **25-27** and **34-35**, the illustrated bumper **518** is substantially square in cross-section in an operational direction perpendicular to the axis AA. The bumper **518** includes outer planar surfaces **592** and an inner bore also of substantially square cross-section with respect to the axis AA, the bore formed by inner planar surfaces **594** sized and shaped to be slightly larger than the surfaces **543** defining the core **506**. The surfaces **592** and **594** terminate at planar end surfaces **596** and **598** that are operatively perpendicular to the axis AA. The bumper **518** further includes a compression groove **600** that is similar in form and function to the compression groove **590** described previously herein with respect to the spacer **510**. The bumper **518** is sized and shaped to slidingly receive the core **506** through the inner surface **594**. The bumper **518** is preferably made from an elastomeric material such as polyurethane. The bumper **518** operatively provides axial tension on the core **506** as will be described in greater detail below.

[0118] With particular reference to FIGS. **25-27** and **36-37**, the crimping member **520** is substantially square in cross-section taken in a direction perpendicular to the axis AA and includes four substantially planar outer surfaces **602**. Four planar inner surfaces **604** form a through bore also of substantially square cross-section, sized and shaped to closely slidingly receive the planar surfaces **543** of the core **506** along the axis AA. The surfaces **602** and **604** terminate at opposed planar end surfaces **606** and **608**. The crimping member **520** further includes a pair of opposed crimp or compression grooves **610** that are pressable and deformable inwardly toward the axis AA upon final tensioning of the core **506** and/or compression of the spacer **510** and the bumper **518** during assembly of the assembly **501**. The

crimping member **520** is preferably made from a stiff, but deformable material, including, but not limited to, metals and metal alloys.

[0119] The illustrated dynamic connecting member assembly **501** having a pre-tensioned core extension **506** cooperates with at least two bone anchors, such as the polyaxial bone screws, generally **525** as shown in FIG. **38**. In use, the bone screws **525** are implanted into vertebrae (not shown). Each vertebra may be pre-drilled to minimize stressing the bone. Furthermore, when a cannulated bone screw shank is utilized, each vertebra will have a guide wire or pin inserted therein that is shaped for the bone screw cannula of the bone screw shank **530** and provides a guide for the placement and angle of the shank **530** with respect to the cooperating vertebra. A further tap hole may be made and the shank **530** is then driven into the vertebra by rotation of a driving tool (not shown) that engages a driving feature on or near a top portion of the shank **530**. It is foreseen that both the screws **525** and the longitudinal connecting member assembly **501** may be inserted in a conventional, percutaneous or other minimally invasive surgical manner.

[0120] With particular reference to FIGS. **25-27**, the longitudinal connecting member assembly **501** is assembled to provide a pre-tensioned core **506** and pre-compressed spacer **510** and bumper **518** prior to implanting the assembly **501** in a patient. This is accomplished by first providing the anchor member **504** that has a core **506** that is longer in the axial direction AA than the core **506** illustrated in the drawing figures. The spacer **510** is first loaded onto the core **506** by inserting the core **506** end **544** into the bore defined by the inner surfaces **584** with the spacer end face **588** directed toward the buttress plate **546**. The spacer **510** is moved along the core **506** until the surface **586** contacts the surface **558**. The sleeve **512** is then threaded onto the core **506** with the face **576** of the plate **570** facing the end surface **589** of the spacer **510**. The core **506** is received in the bore defined by the inner planar surfaces **564** and **566** and the sleeve **512** is moved along the core **506** until the plate surface **576** abuts the spacer surface **589**. The bumper **518** is thereafter loaded onto the core **506** by inserting the core **506** end **544** into the bore defined by the inner surfaces **594** with the face **596** facing the toward the surface **578** of the sleeve **512**. The bumper **518** is moved along the core **506** until the surface **596** contacts the surface **578**. The crimping member **520** is thereafter loaded onto the core **506** by inserting the core **506** end **544** into the bore defined by the inner surfaces **604** with the face **606** facing the toward the surface **598** of the bumper **518**. The crimping member **520** is moved along the core **506** until the surface **606** contacts the surface **598**. It is noted that due to the symmetrical nature of the sleeve **512**, the spacer **514**, the bumper **518** and the crimping member **520**, these components may be loaded onto the core **506** from either side thereof. However, if, as in the illustrated embodiment, the bone anchor attachment portion **508**, the spacer **510** and the sleeve **512** are not of square cross-section, such components **508**, **510** and **512** are assembled on the core **506** in alignment with the surfaces **548**, **580** and **560** being loaded on the core to be in parallel planes. As illustrated in FIGS. **25** and **26**, in the illustrated embodiment, such alignment places the surfaces **548** and **560** in substantially the same plane. Likewise, such assembly places the surfaces **550**, **582** and **562** in parallel with the surfaces **550** and **562** being in substantially the same plane.

[0121] After the crimping member **520** is loaded onto the core **506**, manipulation tools (not shown) are used to grasp the core **506** near the end **544** and at the bone anchor attachment portion **508**, placing tension on the core **506**. Furthermore, the spacer **510**, the sleeve **512**, the bumper **518** and the crimping member **520** are moved toward the buttress plate **540** and into contact with one another. Alternatively, or in addition, axial compressive force is placed on the components loaded on the core **506**, followed by deforming the crimping member at the crimp grooves **610** and against the core **506**. When the manipulation tools are released, the crimping member **520**, now firmly and fixedly attached to the core **506** holds the spacer **510** and the bumper **518** in compression and the spacers and bumper place axial tension forces on the core **506**, resulting in a dynamic relationship between the core **506** and the spacer **510** and bumper **518**. The tension on the core **506** is advantageously balanced and uniform as the spacer **510** is slidable with respect to the core **506**, but also are limited by the buttress plate of the anchor member **504** and end plate of the sleeve **512**. Furthermore, the bumper **518** that is compressed between the sleeve surface **578** and the crimping member surface **606** is also slidable with respect to the core **506**. The spacer **510** and the bumper **518** place a distractive force on the core **506** along the axis AA and between the buttress plate **546** and the crimping member **520**, but also are movable with respect to the core **506**, thus being able to respond to jolting and other body movements and thereafter spring back into an originally set location.

[0122] The sleeve **512** may compress slightly, but is more rigid than the spacer **510** and bumper **518** and thus keeps the spacers **510** and bumper **518** in an approximate desired axially spaced relation. However, the spacer **510** also advantageously slides along the core **506** in response to outside forces. The core **506** is then trimmed to be approximately flush with the end surface **608** of the crimping member **520**.

[0123] With reference to FIG. **38**, the pre-loaded connecting member assembly **501** is eventually positioned in an open, percutaneous or other less invasive manner in cooperation with the at least two bone screws **525** with the spacer **510** being disposed between and spaced from the bone screws **525** and with the portion **508** and sleeve **512** each being located within a squared-off U-shaped channel of a cooperating bone screw receiver **531**. Once a desired position is attained, a closure structure **527** is then inserted into and advanced between the arms of each of the bone screw receivers **531** until appropriately tightened.

[0124] The assembly **501** is thus substantially dynamically loaded and oriented relative to the cooperating vertebra, providing relief (e.g., shock absorption) and protected movement with respect to flexion, extension, distraction and compressive forces placed on the assembly **501** and the connected bone screws **525**. The slender core extension **506** allows for some twisting providing some relief for torsional stresses. However, the fact that the core **506** is of a non-round cross-section and cooperates with through bores of the other assembly components that are also non-round and closely slidingly mate with the core **506** also advantageously provides limits to rotational or twisting movement of the assembly **501** in response to torsional forces. Furthermore, the compressed spacer **510** places some limits on torsional movement as well as bending movement, to provide spinal support. The pre-loaded core **506** (in tension) and spacer **510** and bumper **518** (in compression) allow for compression and

some extension of the assembly 501 located between the two bone screws 525, e.g., shock absorption.

[0125] If removal of the assembly 501 from any of the bone screw assemblies 525 is necessary, or if it is desired to release the assembly 501 at a particular location, disassembly is accomplished by using the driving tool (not shown) with a driving formation cooperating with the closure structure 527 internal drive or cooperating set screw internal drive to rotate and remove the closure structure 527 from the receiver 531. Disassembly is then accomplished in reverse order to the procedure described previously herein for assembly.

[0126] Eventually, if the spine requires more rigid support, the connecting member assembly 501 according to the invention may be removed and replaced with another longitudinal connecting member, such as a solid cylindrical or bar-like rod, having the same diameter or width as the width of the bar-like portion 508 and the sleeve 512, utilizing the same receivers 531 and the same or similar closure structures 527. Alternatively, if less support is eventually required, a less rigid, more flexible assembly, for example, an assembly 501 having components made of a more flexible material, but with the same size sleeves as the assembly 501, may replace the assembly 501, also utilizing the same bone screws 525.

[0127] With reference to FIGS. 39-44, another embodiment of a dynamic longitudinal connecting member of the invention, generally 701, includes an anchor member, generally 704, having an elongate segment or inner core 706 and a bone anchor attachment portion 708; an elastic spacer 710; a sleeve 716; an elastic bumper 718; and a crimping member 720; all substantially symmetrically aligned with respect to a central curvate axis BB of the anchor member 704 as unlike the core 506 of the assembly 501, the core 706 of the assembly 701 is bent primarily at a location near the portion 708. The elongate core 706 of the anchor member 704 is receivable within the spacer 710, the sleeve 716, the bumper 718 and the crimping member 720. Thus, the central curvate axis BB of the anchor member 704 is also the axis of the fully assembled assembly 701. When fully assembled and fixed with all components fixed in position as shown in FIG. 39, the inner core 706 is in tension and the spacer 710 and the bumper 718 are in compression.

[0128] In the illustrated embodiment, the anchor member 704 is substantially similar to the anchor member 504 previously described herein with respect to the assembly 501. Therefore, the member 704 includes the core 706, the bone anchor attachment portion 708 and an integral buttress plate 746 identical or substantially similar in size and shape to the respective core 506, attachment portion 508 and buttress plate 546 of the anchor member 504 previously described herein. The member 704 differs from the member 504 only in the fact that the core 706 is bent adjacent the buttress plate 746.

[0129] The sleeve 712 is identical or substantially similar to the sleeve 512 illustrated in FIGS. 32 and 33 and previously described herein, having an outer planar surfaces 760 and 762, inner planar surfaces 764 and 766 defining a through bore and an end plate 770 identical or substantially similar to the respective outer surfaces 560 and 562, inner surfaces 564 and 566 and end plate 570 of the sleeve 512 previously described herein. The bumper 718 and the crimping member 720 are identical or substantially similar to the

respective bumper 518 and the crimping member 520 previously described herein with respect to the assembly 501.

[0130] The spacer 710 is operatively located between the buttress plate 746 and the sleeve plate 770 in a manner similar to the spacer 510 located between the plates 546 and 570 of the assembly 501. The spacer 710 is also made from materials similar to the materials from which the spacer 10 is made. The spacer 710 further includes inner planar surfaces 784 and a flanged surface 786 forming a through bore for receiving the core 706, such surfaces 784 and 786 being substantially similar in form and function to the surfaces 584 and 586 previously described herein with respect to the spacer 510 with the exception that the through bore may be further modified to follow the curvature of the bent core 706. Also, the spacer 710 is of a different shape than the spacer 510. The spacer 710 includes a pair of opposed planar surfaces 790 that are trapezoidal in shape. The surfaces 790 run parallel to the through bore formed by the planar surfaces 784, such bore terminating at opposed load-bearing end surfaces 792 and 794. The surfaces 792 and 794 are not parallel, each directed toward one another and terminating at a small top (operatively posterior with respect to the spine) surface 796 and sloping in a direction away from one another at a larger bottom (operatively anterior) surface 798. It is noted that also according to the invention the surface 796 may be placed in an anterior position and the surface 798 placed in a posterior position with respect to the spine if desired to correct spinal kyphosis. In other embodiments of the invention the core 706 and spacer 710 may be bent, sized and shaped for the correction of other spinal deformities, such as scoliosis, for example.

[0131] The assembly 701 is assembled in a manner substantially similar to the manner of assembly previously described herein with respect to the assembly 501. Therefore, the core 706 is first received within a through bore of the spacer 710 formed by the surfaces 784, then within the inner planar surfaces 764 and 766 of the sleeve 712, followed by an inner through bore of the bumper 718 and then an inner through bore of the crimping member 720. Similar to what has been described previously with respect to the assembly 1, the core 706 is initially of a longer length measured along the axis BB than is shown in the drawing figures, allowing for a manipulation tool to grasp the core 706 near an end thereof that extends through the crimping member bore. The core 706 is tensioned and/or the spacer 710 and bumper 720 are compressed, followed by deformation of the crimping member 720 against the core 706. The core 706 is then trimmed substantially flush to the crimping member 720. The assembly is now in dynamic relationship with the core 706 being in tension while the spacer 710 that is slidable with respect to the core 706 is compressed between the plates 746 and 770 and the bumper 718 that is also slidable with respect to the core 706 is compressed between the sleeve 712 and the crimping member 720; the spacer 710 and the bumper 718 placing a distractive force on the core 706 along the axis BB and between the buttress plate 746 and the crimping member 720. The assembly 701 may then be implanted, cooperating with a pair of bone screws 525 as illustrated in FIG. 43 and as previously described herein with respect to the assembly 501. Unlike the assembly 501 illustrated in FIG. 38 the bent core 706 and cooperating trapezoidal spacer 710 provide additional support or correction to a spine, for example, when correcting spinal lordosis. With reference to FIG. 44, the assembly 701

and cooperating bone screws **525** of FIG. **43** are shown under a load that causes the core **706** to straighten and further compresses the spacer **710** resulting in a bulging of the flexible spacer at the anterior surface **798**.

[0132] With reference to FIGS. **45-49**, another embodiment of a dynamic longitudinal connecting member assembly, generally **801** is illustrated. The assembly **801** includes an anchor member **804** having an inner core **806** and a bone anchor attachment portion **808**; a trapezoidal spacer **810**, a sleeve **812**, a second spacer **814**, a second sleeve **816**, a bumper **818** and a crimping member **820**. The illustrated spacer **810**, sleeve **812**, bumper **818** and crimping member **820** are identical or substantially similar to the respective spacer **710**, sleeve **712**, bumper **718** and crimping member **720** previously described herein with respect to the assembly **701**. The anchor member **804** is identical to the anchor member **704** with the exception that the bone anchor attachment portion **808** is of a greater length to receive three bone screw receivers **531** therealong while the portion **708** is sized to receive two bone screw receivers **531**. The second spacer **814** is substantially similar in shape and function as the spacer **510** previously described herein with respect to the assembly **501** with the exception that the through bore defined by the inner planar surfaces is uniform (see FIG. **46**) and does not require a flared portion for cooperating with the core **806** as the spacer **814** is disposed along a uniform mid-section of the core **806**.

[0133] The sleeve **816** is for the most part similar to the sleeve **812**, the sleeve **712** and the sleeve **512** of the previously described embodiments, having outer planar surfaces **860** and **862**, a rectangular cross-section, inner planar surfaces **864** and **866** defining a through bore for closely receiving the core **806** and an end plate **870** identical or substantially similar to the respective outer surfaces **560** and **562**, inner surfaces **564** and **566** and end plate **570** of the sleeve **512** previously described herein with respect to the assembly **501**. Additionally, the sleeve **816** has an opposite end plate **871** spaced from and parallel to the end plate **870**.

[0134] The assembly **801** is assembled in a manner substantially similar to the manner of assembly previously described herein with respect to the assembly **701**. The core **806** is first received within a through bore of the spacer **810**, then within the inner planar surfaces **864** and **866** of the sleeve **816**, followed by an inner through bore of the spacer **814** and then a through bore of the sleeve **812**. Thereafter, the core **806** is received in an inner through bore of the bumper **818** and then an inner through bore of the crimping member **820**. Similar to what has been described previously with respect to the assemblies **501** and **701**, the core **806** is initially of a longer length than is shown in the drawing figures, allowing for a manipulation tool to grasp the core near an end thereof that extends through the crimping member bore. The core **806** is tensioned and/or the spacers **810** and **816** and the bumper **818** are compressed, followed by deformation of the crimping member **820** against the core **806**. The core **806** is then trimmed substantially flush to the crimping member **820**. The assembly is now in dynamic relationship with the core **806** being in tension while the spacers **810** and **816** that are slidable with respect to the core **806** are compressed and the bumper **818** that is also slidable with respect to the core **806** is compressed between the sleeve **812** and the crimping member **820**; the spacers **810** and **816** and the bumper **818** placing a distractive force on the core **806** along an elongate axis thereof. The assembly

801 may then be implanted, cooperating with a three bone screws **525** as illustrated in FIG. **48** and as previously described herein with respect to the assembly **501**. Unlike the assembly **501** illustrated in FIG. **38** the bent core **806** and cooperating trapezoidal spacer **810** provide additional support or correction to a spine, for example, when correcting spinal lordosis. With reference to FIG. **49**, the assembly **801** and cooperating bone screws **525** of FIG. **48** are shown under a load that causes the core **806** to straighten and further compresses the spacer **810** resulting in a bulging of an anterior surface of the spacer **810**.

[0135] It is foreseen that longitudinal connecting member assemblies according to the invention may be of a variety of lengths for cooperation with a plurality of bone screws **525**, either along an attachment portion, such as the portion **808** or along dynamic portions that include one or more spacers and one or more sleeves, such as the sleeves **512**, **712**, **812** and **816** for attachment of a plurality of bone screws **525** or other bone anchors. It is foreseen that such sleeves may also be a variety of lengths for attachment to one or more bone anchors along a length of the individual sleeve.

[0136] As another example of an elongate dynamic connecting member of the invention for use with at least three bone screws **525**, FIGS. **50-52** illustrate another embodiment of a dynamic longitudinal connecting member assembly, generally **901**. The assembly **901** includes an anchor member **904** having an inner core **906** and a bone anchor attachment portion **908**; first and second trapezoidal spacers **910A** and **910B**, a sleeve **912**, a second sleeve **916**, a bumper **918** and a crimping member **920**. The illustrated trapezoidal spacers **910A** and **910B** are identical or substantially similar to the trapezoidal spacer **710** previously described herein with respect to the assembly **701**. The second spacer **910B** would not require an inner flared portion as such spacer is placed along a uniform mid-section of the core **906**. The sleeves **912** and **916** are substantially similar to the respective sleeves **812** and **816** previously described herein with respect to the assembly **801**. The bumper **918** and crimping member **920** are identical or substantially similar to the respective bumpers **518**, **718** and **818** and crimping members **520**, **720** and **820** previously described herein with respect to the assemblies, **501**, **701** and **801**. The anchor member **904** is identical to the anchor member **804** with the exception that the core **906** is bent at two locations corresponding to the operative placement of the trapezoidal spacers **910A** and **910B**.

[0137] The assembly **901** is assembled in a manner substantially similar to the manner of assembly previously described herein with respect to the assembly **801**. The core **906** is first received within a through bore of the spacer **910**, then within the inner planar surfaces defining the inner through bore of the sleeve **916**, followed by an inner through bore of the spacer **910A** and then a through bore of the sleeve **912**. Thereafter, the core **906** is received in an inner through bore of the bumper **918** and then an inner through bore of the crimping member **920**. Similar to what has been described previously with respect to the assemblies **501**, **701** and **801**, the core **906** is initially of a longer length than is shown in the drawing figures, allowing for a manipulation tool to grasp the core **906** near an end thereof that extends through the crimping member bore. The core **906** is tensioned and/or the spacers **910A** and **910B** and the bumper **918** are compressed, followed by deformation of the crimping member **920** against the core **906**. The core **906** is then trimmed

substantially flush to the crimping member 920. The assembly is now in dynamic relationship with the core 906 being in tension while the spacers 910A and 910B that are slidable with respect to the core 906 are compressed and the bumper 918 that is also slidable with respect to the core 906 is compressed between the sleeve 912 and the crimping member 920; the spacers 910A and 910B and the bumper 918 placing a distractive force on the core 946 along an elongate axis thereof. The assembly 901 may then be implanted, cooperating with a three bone screws 525 as illustrated in FIG. 51 and as previously described herein with respect to the assembly 501. Similar to the assembly 801, the bent core 906 and cooperating trapezoidal spacers 910A and 910B provide additional support or correction to a spine, for example, when correcting spinal lordosis. With reference to FIG. 52, the assembly 901 and cooperating bone screws 525 of FIG. 51 are shown under a load that causes the core 906 to straighten and further compresses the spacers 910A and 910B resulting in a bulging of anterior surfaces of the spacers 910A and 910B.

[0138] It is to be understood that while certain forms of the present invention have been illustrated and described herein, it is not to be limited to the specific forms or arrangement of parts described and shown.

1. In a medical implant assembly having at least first and second bone anchor attachment structures cooperating with a longitudinal connecting member, the improvement wherein the longitudinal connecting member comprises:

- a) an anchor member portion in engagement with the first of the bone anchor attachment structures having a longitudinal axis, the anchor member portion having an extension of reduced diameter extending from an end thereof, the extension is initially tensioned along the longitudinal axis and thereafter can be further tensioned when the assembly is fully assembled by releasing a stiff end structure;
- b) a compressible outer spacer, the extension being received in the spacer, the spacer being positioned between the first and second bone anchor attachment structures and held in compression by the extension; and
- c) a sleeve, the extension being received within the sleeve and in slidable relationship therewith, the sleeve being in engagement with a second of the bone anchor attachment structures.

2. The improvement of claim 1 further comprising an elastic bumper, the extension being received within the bumper and the bumper engaging the sleeve.

3. The improvement of claim 1 wherein the extension is fixed to the anchor member portion at an end thereof.

4. In a medical implant assembly having at least first and second bone attachment structures cooperating with a longitudinal connecting member, the improvement wherein the longitudinal connecting member comprises:

- a) a rigid anchor member portion with a first diameter in engagement with the first of the bone anchor attachment structures, the anchor member portion having a longitudinal axis;
- b) an attached flexible core extension member with a second reduced diameter along a length thereof, the core extension member connected to and extending from the anchor member portion and being in tension and thereafter can be further tensioned when the assembly is fully assembled by releasing a stiff end structure;

- c) a compressible outer spacer, the core extension member being received in the spacer, the spacer being positioned between the first and second bone attachment structures; and

- d) a sleeve, the core extension member being received within the sleeve and in slidable relationship therewith, the sleeve being secured to the second of the bone attachment structures.

5. In a medical implant assembly having at least first and second bone anchor attachment structures cooperating with a longitudinal connecting member, the improvement wherein the longitudinal connecting member comprises:

- a) a rigid anchor member portion with a first diameter in engagement with a first of the bone anchor attachment structures, the anchor member portion having a longitudinal axis;
- b) a flexible extension member with a second reduced diameter extending from an end thereof, the extension member attached to and extending from the anchor member portion and is initially tensioned along the longitudinal axis to a steady state length and thereafter can be further tensioned when the assembly is fully assembled by releasing a stiff end structure;

- c) a compressible outer spacer, the extension member being received in the spacer, the spacer being positioned between the at least two bone anchor attachment structures; and

- d) a sleeve, the extension member being received within the sleeve and in slidable relationship therewith, the sleeve being in engagement with the second of the bone anchor attachment structures.

6. The improvement of claim 5, further comprising an elastic bumper, the extension member being received within the bumper and the bumper engaging the sleeve.

7. The improvement of claim 5, further comprising a fixation structure secured to the extension member at an end thereof opposite the anchor member portion.

8. The improvement of claim 5, wherein the extension member is fixed to the anchor member portion at an end thereof.

9. In a medical implant assembly having at least first and second bone attachment structures cooperating with a longitudinal connecting member, the improvement wherein the longitudinal connecting member comprises:

- a) a rigid anchor member portion with a first diameter in engagement with the first of the bone attachment structures, the anchor member portion having a longitudinal axis;
- b) a bendable core extension member with a second reduced diameter along a length thereof, the core extension attached to and extending from the anchor member portion, the extension having a linear and a non-linear configuration and is initially tensioned along the longitudinal axis to a steady state length and thereafter can be further tensioned when the assembly is fully assembled by releasing a stiff end structure;

- c) a compressible outer spacer, the core extension member being received in the spacer, the spacer being positioned between the first and second bone attachment structures; and

- d) a sleeve, the core extension member being received within the sleeve and in slidable relationship therewith, the sleeve being in engagement with the second of the bone attachment structures.

10. A medical implant assembly with at least first and second bone attachment structures including:

- a) a longitudinal connecting member having a stiff portion with a first diameter secured to at least the first bone attachment structure having a longitudinal axis, the stiff portion being coaxial with a less stiff core extension portion with a second diameter of reduced width relative to the stiff portion first diameter, the core extension portion being in slidable relation with the second bone attachment structure, and is initially tensioned along the longitudinal axis to a steady state length and thereafter can be further tensioned when the assembly is fully assembled by releasing a stiff end structure;
- b) a solid non-slitted outer spacer positioned entirely outside of the core extension portion and between the first and second bone attachment structures, the spacer being in slidable relation with the core extension portion; and
- c) an end fixing structure and an elastic bumper, both the wherein at least one sleeve is positioned around and between the end fixing structure and the elastic bumper being positioned entirely outside of the second bone attachment structure, wherein the bumper is positioned around the core extension portion and between the fixing structure and the second bone attachment structure, and wherein the bumper is in slidable relation with the core extension portion; and wherein
- d) the fixing structure is slidable on the core section, compressible against the bumper and securable to the core extension portion.

11. The assembly according to claim 10, wherein the core extension portion is maintained in tension by axial elastic distraction from the bumper.

12. The assembly according to claim 10, wherein the core extension portion is made of at least one of a polymer, PEEK and a non-metal.

13. The assembly according to claim 10, core extension portion and the bone attachment structure, the sleeve being secured to at least the bone attachment structure.

14. The assembly according to claim 10, wherein the tensioned core extension portion is adapted to provide resilient bending stiffness for the longitudinal connecting member while cooperating with the bone attachment structures.

15. The according to claim 10, wherein the end fixing structure is positioned entirely outside of the bumper.

16. The assembly according to claim 10, wherein the bumper and the spacer are positioned entirely outside of the sleeve.

17. A longitudinal connecting member adapted for use in joining first and second bore attachment structures comprising:

- a) an anchor member having a first rigid portion with a first diameter and being adapted for joining to the first bone attachment structure;
- b) a flexible core extension member having a longitudinal axis and extending outward from the first portion and being initially tensioned along the longitudinal axis to a steady state length and thereafter can be further

tensioned when the assembly is fully assembled by releasing a stiff end structure;

- c) a sleeve adapted to be joined to the second bone attachment structure and having a bore; the core extension member being slidably received in the bore and the sleeve being maintained on the extension member.

18. The connecting member according to claim 17, wherein the anchor member first portion and core extension member are screwably joined so as to be fixed together.

19. The connecting member according to claim 17, wherein the anchor member first portion and core extension member are constructed of dissimilar materials.

20. The connecting member according to claim 17, including a compressibly spacer slidably received on the core extension member between the anchor member first portion and the sleeve.

21. The connecting member according to claim 20, including an end fixing structure secured to an end of the core extension member opposite the first portion and abutting against the sleeve on a side opposite the first portion.

22. The connecting member according to claim 17, wherein the anchor member first portion and core extension member are fixedly secured to each other.

23. A medical implant assembly having at least two bone attachment structures cooperating with a longitudinal connecting member, wherein the longitudinal connecting member includes:

- a) a rigid anchor member portion with a first diameter in engagement with one of the at least two bone attachment structures;
- b) a pre-tensioned flexible inner core extension member with a second reduced diameter, the flexible core extension member extending longitudinally from the anchor member portion along a substantially central axis of the longitudinal connecting member, the flexible core extension member being formed of a polyethylene polymer;
- c) at least one compressible outer spacer with a pair of opposed end surfaces and having a first through bore, and being formed of a urethane polymer, the flexible core extension member being received in the first through bore of the spacer, the spacer being positioned between the at least two bone attachment structures;
- d) at least one sleeve having a second through bore, the sleeve being formed of a non-metallic polymer, the flexible core extension member being received within the second through bore of the sleeve and in slidable relationship therewith, the sleeve being in engagement with the other of the at least two bone attachment structures;
- e) an elastic bumper formed of an elastomer, the flexible core extension member being received within the bumper and the bumper engaging the sleeve
- f) a rigid end blocker fixed to the flexible core extension member at an end thereof opposite the anchor member portion, the rigid end blocker being accessible outside the bone attachment structures so that the cord and the assembly may be further tensioned.

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