

Current U.S. Patents

► AN ALL-PURPOSE surgical stapler that can be used to hold together many different kinds of living tissue after an operation was granted a patent by the U.S. Patent Office.

The versatile stapling device was developed by two Russian scientists. It can be used to replace the many separate staplers previously needed to handle such different organs as the lung, stomach, duodenum or eyes.

The all-around instrument for suturing living tissue was developed by Alexey Alexeevich Strekopytov and Pavel I. Androssov, both of Moscow, who were awarded patent 3,252,643.

The ingenious adaptation of the stapling tools used in offices the world over enables surgeons to join severed arteries or veins in a fraction of the time required for hand stitching. The idea is to mechanize, as much as possible, some of the most difficult procedures during an operation.

The staples used to fasten cut tissues together are hair fine, and can be made either from metals or plastics that do not react with body chemi-

cal. Although they can be removed after an incision has healed, the staples usually remain in a patient for the rest of his life.

Fish Protein From Menhaden

A method of producing protein from fish high in oil content, such as menhaden, earned patent 3,252,962 for Wilson M. Whaley of Chicago and Raymond J. Moshy of Westport, Conn.

They note that many fish flours either have a fishy odor or become rancid and smelly after a short shelf life. Their treatment eliminates both these problems, giving a fish-flour protein that can be used in bland foods.

The whole fish to be processed can be either fresh or thawed after having been frozen. It is ground up in a mill, water is added to form a slurry and then an antioxidant is introduced. The slurry is next acidified to precipitate the protein and then heated to between 155 and 212 degrees F. to denature the protein, which is then separated from the slurry and extracted with a bland solvent.

The solvent-extract is removed from the protein, which is dried once, then moistened and dried again.

About 20% of the edible portion of most fish is protein. The method allows obtaining even more protein by using the entire fish to produce fish flour.

Other Interesting Patents

A nuclear reactor capable of yielding large amounts of energy at predetermined levels over long periods of time without the need for refueling was granted patent 3,252,867. The reactor concept is related to the one proposed for use with the so-called Rickover reactor, which is still in the research and development stage. George H. Conley of Pittsburgh, Pa., assigned patent rights to the Government through the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission.

An optical maser amplifier that in effect folds a long laser beam into a short distance is now under experimental development at Bell Telephone Laboratories, Murray Hill, N.J. A device related to this development earned patent 3,253,226 for Donald R. Herrriott, Herwig Kogelnik and Rudolf Kompfner, who assigned rights to Bell.

An electric alarm system that automatically signals an alarm when a shoplifter attempts to remove an object that the system has been set to protect earned patent 3,253,270 for Frank Downer of Edgewater, Md. The alarm does not sound when the object is removed properly by an authorized person.

• Science News, 89:476 June 11, 1966

Surgery Unnecessary In Some Stab Wounds

► WHEN A PERSON is brought into the emergency room of a hospital with a stab wound in his abdomen it may not be necessary to do exploratory surgery to find out how deep the wound is.

Reports from Johns Hopkins University and Hospital, Baltimore, Md., show that a type of X-ray procedure in which radiopaque material is injected through a catheter into the stab wound may tell the surgeons the extent of the penetration. X-rays of this kind could eliminate the need for surgical exploration in as many as 60% of the patients, radiologists estimate.

Drs. William P. Cornell and Paul A. Ebert, both of the department of surgery, reported accurate diagnosis by X-ray in *The American Journal of Roentgenology, Radium Therapy and Nuclear Medicine*, 5:1, 1966. The X-rays showed that during the past 10 years, only 40% of abdominal stab wounds actually penetrated the abdominal wall.

The use of radiopaque material may not be the answer to the problem in all cases, however, the Baltimore researchers warned.

• Science News, 89:476 June 11, 1966

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