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(54) **PATIENT SUPPORT APPARATUS HAVING AN AIR CELL GRID AND ASSOCIATED METHOD**

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(58) **Field of Classification Search** 5/713,
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See application file for complete search history.

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

An apparatus (10) for supporting a patient during a medical procedure includes a bead bag (18) that is filled with compressible beads (20) and that forms a lower layer of the apparatus (10). The apparatus (10) also includes a layer of foam material (30) that is located above the bead bag and an air cell grid (36) that has a plurality of inflatable air cells (38). The air cell grid (36) forms an upper layer of the apparatus (10) and provides a soft surface upon which the patient lies. The bead bag (18), when subjected to a vacuum, becomes rigid for supporting the air cell grid (36) against the patient for helping to maximize a surface area of contact between the patient and the apparatus (10).

10 Claims, 6 Drawing Sheets

