

US Patent & Trademark Office

Patent Public Search | Text View

United States Patent Application Publication

20250248718

Kind Code

A1

Publication Date

August 07, 2025

Inventor(s)

Biedermann; Timo et al.

SURGICAL INSTRUMENT

Abstract

A surgical instrument includes a handle having first and second ends and a passage that extends between the ends, wherein a maximum height of the handle is less than a lateral length of the handle, a shaft having first and second ends and a longitudinal axis that extends between the ends, and a coaxial channel that extends completely through the shaft, wherein the shaft is releasably connectable to the handle when the first end of the shaft is inserted from the second end of the handle into the passage to a position closer to the first end of the handle than to the second end of the handle, and a secondary instrument configured to be inserted from the first end of the shaft into the channel and to extend out of the second end of the shaft when the shaft and the handle are connected to one another.

Inventors: Biedermann; Timo (Trossingen, DE), Schünemann; Achim (Villingen-Schwenningen, DE)

Applicant: BIEDERMANN TECHNOLOGIES GMBH & CO. KG (Donaueschingen, DE)

Family ID: 70292747

Appl. No.: 19/072159

Filed: March 06, 2025

Foreign Application Priority Data

EP	20 169 076.5	Apr. 09, 2020
----	--------------	---------------

Related U.S. Application Data

parent US continuation 17224741 20210407 parent-grant-document US 12268402 child US 19072159
us-provisional-application US 63007532 20200409

Publication Classification

Int. Cl.: A61B17/16 (20060101); A61B17/00 (20060101); A61B17/70 (20060101)

U.S. Cl.:

CPC A61B17/1697 (20130101); A61B17/7077 (20130101); A61B2017/00367 (20130101); A61B2017/0046 (20130101)

Background/Summary

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION(S) [0001] This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 17/224,741, filed Apr. 7, 2021, which claims priority to and the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 63/007,532, filed Apr. 9, 2020, the contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference in their entirety, and claims priority from European Patent Application EP 20 169 076.5, filed Apr. 9, 2020, the contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference in their entirety.

BACKGROUND

Field

[0002] The application relates to a surgical instrument including a handle portion and an exchangeable instrument shaft. The surgical instrument may be used in musculoskeletal surgery, and in particular, in spinal surgery.

Description of Related Art

[0003] In surgery of the spine, a known technique involves the use of Jamshidi needles for inserting Kirschner wires (K-wires), which may be used for the placement of bone anchors such as pedicle screws. According to the known method, first, a small incision is made in the skin of the patient. Then, a Jamshidi needle including a tiny awl is advanced through the incision to the bone. A bore is prepared by hammering and turning the Jamshidi needle back and forth, and then the awl is removed. Subsequently, a K-wire is placed into the hole and the Jamshidi needle is removed. A thread cutter is guided by the K-wire to the hole, and a thread is cut with the thread cutter. After cutting the thread, the thread cutter is screwed back. Finally, a cannulated bone screw is guided by the K-wire to and screwed into the threaded hole. As a last step, the K-wire is removed. In sum, these steps require the use of several instruments and several instrument passes, and may be time consuming, especially in cases where many threaded bores have to be prepared.

SUMMARY

[0004] It is an object of the invention to provide an improved surgical instrument, a kit including such a surgical instrument and at least one further exchangeable part, and a system including a surgical instrument or a kit and a bone anchor, which allows for the reduction of surgical steps and the carrying out of certain surgical steps more efficiently.

[0005] According to an embodiment, the surgical instrument includes a handle portion and an elongate cannulated instrument shaft which is releasably connectable to the handle portion. The instrument shaft may have a functional section at its free end which is configured to perform a function during surgery. With the instrument, it is possible to reduce the number of steps necessary for certain surgical methods, for example, for the placement of a pedicle screw into the pedicle of a vertebra. Therefore, the number of steps can be reduced and time can be saved during surgery.

[0006] The surgical instrument may further include a secondary instrument configured to be inserted and removed through the handle portion into the instrument shaft. Such a secondary instrument may be, for example, an elongate shaft with a tip such as an awl. This awl may have one

of various tips such as a blunt, sharp, or threaded tip. Alternatively, the secondary instrument may be, for example, a K-wire, a depth measuring gauge, a sensor, or a syringe, or any other suitable instrument configured to pass through the instrument shaft.

[0007] The connection between the instrument shaft and the handle portion may be a standardized connection, such as, for example, a quarter inch female-male connection. This allows the use of various other instrument shafts with different functions in an interchangeable manner. The attachment and detachment of the instrument shaft to the handle portion can be carried out without using a further tool. Hence, the variety of applications of the surgical instrument can be considerably increased. Moreover, the surgical instrument has a simple structure and can be easily and quickly assembled.

[0008] In one embodiment, the surgical instrument may include an instrument shaft with an end portion formed as a thread cutter and with an awl as a secondary instrument to be inserted into the channel of the cannulated instrument shaft.

[0009] The surgical instrument may be used, in particular, together with a cannulated bone anchor.

[0010] An embodiment of a method of placing a bone anchor, such as a bone screw, may involve the following steps. After an incision has been made in the skin, a surgical instrument having an instrument shaft with a thread cutter and with an awl inserted into the instrument shaft is applied to the bone. Next, the cortical bone is opened and a thread is cut into the bone. Subsequently, the awl is removed and a K-wire is inserted through the channel of the instrument shaft. Thereafter, the instrument shaft is removed. Finally, the bone screw may be placed via the K-wire, and the K-wire can be removed. In an alternative embodiment of a method of placing a bone anchor, in particular, a pedicle screw, the instrument shaft includes a shank inserting device configured to fixedly hold a bone anchor, for example, a head of an anchoring element of a polyaxial bone anchor, so that the threaded shank can be directly screwed into bone. An awl inserted through the shank inserting device may be used for penetrating the cortical bone. This may involve awls of different types and lengths, as well as modular awls to allow for various length options or uses. In the alternative embodiment, use of a thread cutter is not necessary, which makes the method even more efficient. This approach also has the advantage where the awl can be removed before the screw is fully advanced, thereby reducing the risk of vascular or neurological injuries.

[0011] In a further development, an adapter member can be attached between the instrument shaft and the handle portion. Such an adapter member may include, for example, a navigation device for image based navigation of the surgical steps and robotic guidance.

Description

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] Further features and advantages of the invention will become apparent from the description of embodiments by means of the accompanying drawings. In the drawings:

[0013] FIG. 1 shows an exploded perspective view of a surgical instrument according to an embodiment of the invention.

[0014] FIG. 2 shows a perspective view of the instrument of FIG. 1 in an assembled state.

[0015] FIG. 3 shows a side view of the instrument of FIGS. 1 and 2.

[0016] FIG. 4 shows a cross-sectional view of the instrument of FIGS. 1 to 3, with the cross-section taken in a plane extending through a longitudinal axis of a shaft of the instrument and through a handle portion of the instrument in a lengthwise direction.

[0017] FIG. 5 shows an exploded perspective view of a secondary instrument in the form of an awl.

[0018] FIG. 6 shows a perspective view of the secondary instrument of FIG. 5 in an assembled state.

[0019] FIG. 7 shows a cross-sectional view of the secondary instrument of FIGS. 5 and 6, with the

cross-section taken in a plane including a shaft axis of the secondary instrument and extending through elongate ends of an attachment portion of the secondary instrument.

[0020] FIG. 8 shows a perspective view of use of the surgical instrument according to the embodiment of FIGS. 1 to 7 applied to a vertebra.

[0021] FIG. 9 shows a cross-sectional view of the surgical instrument according to the embodiment of FIGS. 1 to 8, after preparation of a threaded hole in a pedicle of the vertebra.

[0022] FIGS. 10a to 10e show perspective views of steps of assembling the surgical instrument according to the embodiment of FIGS. 1 to 9.

[0023] FIGS. 11a to 11e show steps of preparing a threaded hole in the pedicle of a vertebra using the surgical instrument according to the embodiment of FIGS. 1 to 10, with FIG. 11c showing an enlarged portion of FIG. 11b.

[0024] FIGS. 12a to 12c show perspective views of preparatory steps for placing a pedicle screw into the pedicle of a vertebra, where a threaded hole has already been prepared with the surgical instrument according to embodiments of the invention.

[0025] FIG. 13 shows a perspective view of a modified embodiment of the surgical instrument, including an adapter member assembled between the shaft and the handle portion of the surgical instrument.

[0026] FIGS. 14a to 14d show perspective views of steps for using a further embodiment of the surgical instrument to place a pedicle screw into the pedicle of a vertebra.

[0027] FIG. 15 shows a perspective view of a still further modified embodiment of the surgical instrument.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0028] An embodiment of a surgical instrument 1 will be described with reference to FIGS. 1 to 4. The surgical instrument 1 includes an elongate instrument shaft 10 that is releasably connectable to a handle portion 20. The instrument shaft has a first or rear end 10a and an opposite second or front end 10b. A channel 11 extends completely through the instrument shaft from the rear end 10a to the front end 10b and defines a longitudinal axis L. The channel 11 is sized to receive a secondary instrument therein, for example, an awl as described below, or a K-wire, or a syringe, or any other suitable elongate member. The channel 11 may have a constant or a varying inner width. For example, a step 11a may be formed to reduce a width of the channel towards the front end 10b and to provide a stop that limits the insertion depth of the secondary instrument. Adjacent to the front end 10b, the instrument shaft includes a functional section 12 configured to perform an instrument function. In the embodiment, the functional section 12 is a thread cutter. The thread cutter may include a single thread cutting section, or may include more than one thread cutting sections 12a, 12b that may be arranged at smaller or greater distances from the front end 10b. In greater detail, a first thread cutting section 12a may be arranged at or close to the front end 10a and a second thread cutting section 12b may be arranged at a distance from the first thread cutting section 12a. The thread cutting sections are configured to cut a thread into bone. One or more longitudinal grooves 12c in the thread cutting section 12a may facilitate the cutting step. As shown in particular in FIG. 3, at the rear end of the one or more thread cutting sections, depth indication marks 13 may be provided that are configured to indicate the depth to which the thread cutting section is advanced into bone.

[0029] At the rear end 10a of the instrument shaft 10, a connection portion is formed that is configured to connect the instrument shaft 10 in a releasable manner to the handle portion 20. In the embodiment, the connection portion 14 may be designed as a male connection portion with a polygon outer contour, such as a square end. In a specific embodiment, the connection portion may be a quarter inch connection portion as used in many standard couplings. At a side of the connection portion 14 opposite to the rear end 10a, a circumferential groove 15 may be formed that is configured to be engaged by an engagement portion of a pushing member as described below to hold the instrument shaft 10 within the handle portion 20. The edge of the connection portion 14

towards the groove **15** forms a circumferentially extending protrusion or bulge **15a**.

[0030] The outer contour of the instrument shaft **10** may have various shapes and is not limited to the detailed shape as depicted in the figures. Since in this embodiment, the functional section **12** is a thread cutting section, the longitudinal axis L is also an axis of rotation of the surgical instrument. It shall be noted, however, that other instrument shafts with different functional sections may be provided which do not involve rotation. Adjacent to the groove **15**, there may be a section **16** with a substantially constant outer diameter that is configured to fit into a guiding sleeve provided at the handle portion. This may increase the stability of the connection between the handle portion and the instrument shaft. Lastly, the thread cutting sections **12** may have a reduced outer diameter compared to other portions of the instrument shaft.

[0031] The instrument shaft may be made of any material, preferably however, of titanium or stainless steel or of any bio-compatible metal or metal alloy or plastic material. For a bio-compatible alloy, a NiTi alloy, for example Nitinol, may be used. Bio-compatible plastic materials may be, for example, polyether ether ketone (PEEK) or poly-L-lactide acid (PLLA).

[0032] Turning now to the handle portion **20**, the overall shape of the handle portion may be that of an elongate bar or substantially cuboid-shaped body with rounded edges and outwardly bulged long sides to facilitate gripping. The handle portion **20** has a first end surface **20a** and an opposite second end surface **20b**, a top surface **21a** and a bottom surface **21b** opposite to the top surface, and side surfaces **22** connecting the top and bottom surfaces. The extension in the lengthwise direction along the top, bottom and side surfaces may be greater than in the height or width directions. A longitudinal axis T extends through the center of the handle portion in the lengthwise direction. In the assembled state, the longitudinal axis T of the handle portion **20** is substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis L of the instrument shaft **10**, so that the surgical instrument **1** has an overall T-shape.

[0033] As can be seen in greater detail in FIG. 4, a passage **23** is provided that extends from the top surface **21a** to the bottom surface **21b** and permits insertion of the instrument shaft **10** and a secondary instrument, such as an awl or a K-wire or any other device. The passage **23** is substantially coaxial to the longitudinal axis L of the instrument shaft. In greater detail, the passage **23** may have a first portion **23a** that is configured to receive, and preferably guide, the secondary instrument. An inner diameter of the first portion **23a** may be slightly greater than an inner diameter of the channel **11** of the instrument shaft. Adjacent to the first portion **23a**, there may be a second portion **23b** that has an inner contour adapted to the contour of the connection portion **14** of the instrument shaft, which in the embodiment shown is a quarter inch female socket contour to receive the connection portion **14**. Thus, the second portion **23b** forms a connection structure configured to connect the handle portion **20** to the instrument shaft **10**. As the second portion **23b** has a greater inner width than the first portion **23a** of the passage **23**, a step is formed therebetween which provides an abutment for the rear end **10a** of the instrument shaft **10**. Moreover, the second portion **23b** may be followed by a small widening passage to permit the circumferential bulge **15a** of the instrument shaft **10** to extend at least partially therein.

[0034] At the bottom side **21b** of the handle portion **20**, a threaded bore **24** forms part of the passage **23**. An inner diameter of the threaded bore **24** is greater than that of the connection portion **23b**. The threaded bore **24** is configured to receive a guiding sleeve **25** therein. The guiding sleeve **25** has a threaded portion **25a** and may have a cylindrical unthreaded portion **25b** with a greater diameter than the threaded portion **25a**, such that when the guiding sleeve **25** is screwed into the threaded bore **24**, the unthreaded portion **25b** forms a stop and projects away from the bottom surface **21b**. An inner diameter of the guiding sleeve **25** is such that the instrument shaft **10** can pass therethrough and can slide therein, in particular with its cylindrical section **16**. As depicted in FIG. 4, between the threaded bore **24** and the connection portion **23b**, an unthreaded section **23c** of the passage **23** serves for receiving a portion of a pushing member **30**.

[0035] As depicted specifically in FIGS. 1 and 4, a recess or cutout **26** is formed in the handle

portion **20** for receiving the pushing member **30**. The cutout **26** extends from the first end surface **20a** into the unthreaded section **23c** of the passage **23** in the lengthwise direction, i.e., in the direction of the axis T. In the height direction, i.e., in a direction perpendicular to the axis T, the cutout **26** has a stepped shape. In the region of the first end surface **20a** of the handle portion, the cutout **26** extends to about half or more of the height of the first end surface **20a**. At a position away from the first end surface **20a**, the height of the cutout **26** is reduced, so that a first abutment **26a** perpendicular to the axis T is formed at a distance from the first end surface **20a**. The first abutment **26a** serves for receiving a biasing member in the form of, for example, springs **50** between the pushing member **30** and the abutment **26a**. A second abutment **26b** is formed close to the bottom surface **21b** and to the threaded bore **24**, which faces away from the threaded bore **24**. The second abutment **26b** forms a stop for the pushing member **30** when the pushing member **30** is pushed inward, i.e., in the direction of the second end surface **20b**.

[0036] The pushing member **30** may have an overall shape such that the pushing member is substantially flush with the outer surface of the handle portion **20** when inserted into the cutout **26**. Moreover, the pushing member has a stepped shape which is substantially adapted to the shape of the cutout **26**. With this shape, a first abutment surface **31a** is formed at the pushing member **30** which is configured to face the first abutment surface **26a** of the handle portion **20**, and a second abutment surface **31b** which faces the second abutment surface **26b** of the handle portion. The pushing member has a smallest height on a side of the free end that extends past the second abutment **31b**, which is configured to extend into the unthreaded section **23c** of the passage **23**. In this section, the pushing member **30** includes a hole **32** configured to receive the instrument shaft **10** therethrough. In greater detail, the hole **32** has a greater width in the direction of the axis T than the width of the instrument shaft **10**. At the side which is closer to the second end surface **20b**, the hole **32** is defined by a protruding edge **32a** that is configured to engage the groove **15** of the instrument shaft **10**, thereby forming a locking member for the instrument shaft. Furthermore, on an upper side of the pushing member **30** which is directed towards the top side **21a** of the handle portion **20**, an elongate recess **33** is formed that is configured to receive a tip **41** of a securing member **40** in the form of a securing screw. The securing screw secures the pushing member **30** in the cutout **26**. The elongate recess **33** has its long side oriented in the direction of the axis T. The securing screw is configured to be screwed through a threaded bore **35** extending from the top side **21a** of the holding member to the elongate recess **33**.

[0037] Moreover, a pushing recess **34** is provided in the outer surface of the pushing member **30** to be positioned near the first end surface **20a** of the handle portion **20**. The pushing recess **34** may be shallow and rounded to be easily found and pushed by a user's fingertip.

[0038] In addition, the biasing member in the form of, for example, two biasing springs **50**, is placed between the pushing member **30** and the handle portion **20**. In greater detail, the biasing springs **50** are arranged in the gap between the first abutment **31a** at the pushing member and the first abutment **26a** at the handle portion **20** and extend in the lengthwise direction of the handle portion (i.e., in the direction of the axis T). The pushing member **30** can assume a fixing position in which the protruding edge **32a** engages the groove **15** of the instrument shaft **10**, thereby fixing the instrument shaft to the handle portion. The pushing member can further assume a releasing position in which the protruding edge **32a** is disengaged from the groove **15**. By means of the biasing member, the pushing member **30** is urged towards the fixing position. The pushing member **30** can be actuated manually into the releasing position by pushing the pushing member inwardly along the axis T. By means of this, the springs **50** are compressed and the protruding edge **32a** is moved out of the groove **15**. At the same time, the tip **41** of the securing screw moves in a direction parallel to the axis T within and relative to the elongate recess **33**. The handle portion **20** can be brought from the fixing position into the releasing position and vice versa by pressing and releasing the pushing member **30**. Generally, in the releasing position, the instrument shaft **10** can be inserted or removed.

[0039] Furthermore, in the top surface **21a**, two attachment recesses **27** may be formed that serve for attachment with a secondary instrument. The attachment recesses **27** are symmetrically arranged on both sides of the center of the handle portion **20** in the lengthwise direction. More specifically, the recesses **27** extend basically on the circumference of a circle around the center of the handle portion, and have a cross-section or shape that includes an undercut **27a** at, for example, respective outer sidewalls thereof, which is configured to receive and hold an attachment portion of a secondary instrument therein. It shall be mentioned that the attachment recesses may have other shapes that permit attachment of a portion of the secondary instrument thereto.

[0040] The material of the holding portion **20**, including its various parts like the pushing member **30**, the guiding sleeve **25**, and the securing screw **40**, may be the same as the material of the instrument shaft **10**. However, the handle portion and the respective parts thereof can also be made of one or more other materials. For example, the handle portion can be made of a material that is radiolucent for use in fluoroscopic procedures.

[0041] Next, an example of a secondary instrument **60** in the form of an awl will be explained, with reference to FIGS. **5** to **9**. The secondary instrument includes an elongate shaft **61** with a tip portion **62**. The elongate shaft **61** is preferably monolithic. The elongate shaft **61** is configured to be inserted into the channel **11** of the instrument shaft **10** and may be adapted to the inner contour of the channel so that, for example, a step **61a** may be formed between a main part of the elongate shaft and a front portion which has the tip portion **62**. The step **61a** is configured to abut against the step **11a** in the channel **11** to limit the insertion depth of the elongate shaft **61** into the channel **11**. The length of the elongate shaft **61** is such that, in the inserted state, the tip portion **62** projects out of the channel **11**. At its rear end opposite to the tip portion **62**, the elongate shaft **61** is held in an attachment portion in the form of a bracket **63** extending substantially transversely to the shaft axis of the elongate shaft **61**. The bracket **63** includes, at a side facing the handle portion **20** in the assembled state, a sleeve-shaped protrusion **64** that is configured to receive the rear end of the elongate shaft **61**, for example, in a press fit manner. An outer diameter of the sleeve-like portion **64** is such that the sleeve-like portion **64** fits into the first portion **23a** of the passage **23** of the handle portion **20** (FIG. **9**). End portions **63a** of the bracket **63** are outwardly protruding and substantially match the shape of a portion of the attachment recesses **27** of the handle portion **20**. Hence, when the instrument shaft **10** is assembled with the handle portion **20** and the elongate shaft **61** of the secondary instrument **60** is inserted into the channel **11** of the instrument shaft **10**, the length of the bracket **63** and the shape of the end portions is such that the end portions **63a** of the bracket **63** matingly engage the attachment recesses **27**.

[0042] In the assembled state, the attachment portion in the form of the bracket **63** protrudes out of the top surface **21a** of the handle portion **20**, so that it can be easily gripped and removed when desired. In greater detail, the bracket **63** is configured to assume a fixing position in which the outwardly protruding end portions **63a** engage the attachment recesses **27** and are prevented by the undercut **27a** from being removed in an axial direction along the shaft axis of the elongate shaft **61**. Further, the bracket **63** is configured to assume a releasing position in which the outwardly protruding end portions **63a** are disengaged from the attachment recesses **27**. The bracket **63** can be moved from the fixing position to the releasing position by rotating the bracket **63**.

[0043] The material of the elongate shaft **61** with the tip portion **62** is preferably bio-compatible, and can be selected from one of the materials described for the instrument shaft above. The bracket **63** may be made of the same as or of a different material from the shaft **61**.

[0044] In FIGS. **10a** to **10e**, steps of assembling the surgical instrument **1** are depicted. The handle portion **20** is shown in a pre-assembled state, with the pushing member **30** and the guiding sleeve **25** mounted. In a first step, as shown in FIGS. **10a** and **10b**, the instrument shaft **10** is inserted into the guiding sleeve **25** and the pushing member **30** is pushed so that it assumes the releasing position. In this position, the connection portion **14** of the instrument shaft can be advanced into the second portion **23b** of the passage until it abuts against the step. Then, the pushing member **30** can

be released so that the protruding edge **32a** snaps or otherwise protrudes into the groove **15** of the instrument shaft **10**. Thereby, the instrument shaft **10** and the handle portion **20** are fixedly connected.

[0045] Next, as shown in FIGS. **10c** and **10d**, the elongate shaft **61** of the secondary instrument is inserted into the channel **11** of the instrument shaft through the top side **21a** of the handle portion **20**, with the bracket **63** oriented transverse or otherwise angled relative to the longitudinal axis T of the handle portion **20**. The insertion depth is defined by the step portion of the elongate shaft **61** abutting against the step portion or shoulder **11a** within the channel **11** of the instrument shaft, so that the tip portion **62** extends to a predefined length out of the channel **11**. Then, the bracket **63** is rotated so that it engages the attachment recesses **27**. Finally, as shown in FIG. **10e**, when the outwardly protruding end portions **63a** of the bracket have engaged the attachment recesses **27** and more particularly extend into the undercut **27a**, the secondary instrument **60** is fixed to the handle portion **20**. In this configuration, the secondary instrument **60** is prevented from being removed axially out of the channel of the instrument shaft, and is also secured against rotational forces.

[0046] Referring now to FIGS. **11a** to **11e**, steps of using the functional section **12** of the instrument shaft **10** will be described. Since in the embodiment, the functional section **12** is a thread cutter, a method of cutting a thread into bone is shown. As shown in FIG. **11a**, the surgical instrument **1** with the assembled secondary instrument is advanced to an intended site, for example, to the pedicle of a vertebra **500**. It shall be understood that prior to using the instrument, at least a small incision in the skin of the patient has been made. As illustrated in FIG. **11b**, a hole is made with the tip portion **62** of the awl, and simultaneously the instrument shaft is rotated so that the thread cutting section cuts a thread in the pedicle. With the aid of the depth indication marks **13**, the depth achieved can be indicated as shown in FIG. **11c**. The whole procedure can be carried out using visualization techniques known in image-based surgery, including navigation and robotics.

[0047] Once a required or desired depth has been achieved, or before, the awl can be removed by rotating the bracket **63** and pulling out the elongate shaft **61**, as shown in FIG. **11d**. The handle portion with the instrument shaft remains in position as depicted in FIG. **11e**.

[0048] Referring now to FIGS. **12a** to **12c**, further surgical steps for preparation of the insertion of a pedicle screw are shown. In FIG. **12a**, a K-wire **100** is inserted through the first portion **23a** of the passage **23** into the channel **11** of the instrument shaft **10** until the K-wire reaches the prepared threaded hole in the pedicle. Once the K-wire has been safely placed, the surgical instrument is removed, for example, as depicted in FIG. **12b** by screwing the instrument shaft backward and pulling the surgical instrument away. Now, the K-wire has been placed as shown in FIG. **12c** and can be used for guiding a cannulated pedicle screw to the implantation site, and the pedicle screw can be screwed into the prepared hole. Once the pedicle screw has been inserted, the K-wire is removed (not shown).

[0049] The described method of placing a bone anchor, such as a bone screw, in a prepared hole is time-saving and more efficient compared, for example, to known techniques, as typical steps requiring Jamshidi needles may become superfluous. Use of the described method also reduces the amount of instrument passes into the body.

[0050] FIG. **13** shows a modified embodiment that differs from the embodiment according to FIGS. **1** to **12** by the use of an adapter member and a navigation device.

[0051] The surgical instrument **1'** includes an instrument shaft **10'** that includes an instrument shaft **10** similar to the one described in the previous embodiment and an adapter member **70** that may be detachably mounted to the instrument shaft **10**. Hence, the instrument shaft **10'** is a two part instrument shaft. In greater detail, the adapter member **70** may have a first end **70a** with a connection portion configured to be received in the second portion **23b** of the handle portion **20** in the same manner as the connection portion **14** described in the previous embodiment. In still greater detail, the first end **70a** of the adapter member **70** in the embodiment shown preferably has a quarter inch male connection portion. The second end **70b** of the adapter member is configured to

be connected to the connection portion **14** of the instrument shaft **10**, preferably in a detachable manner. On the adapter member **70**, additional auxiliary devices or instruments may be attached. In the embodiment shown, the adapter member **70** includes a rotatable sleeve **71** to which a navigation star **72** is attached via an arm **73**. Various other auxiliary devices or instruments can be connected via the adapter member **70** to the instrument shaft **10'**. In this embodiment, the length of the secondary instrument, for example, the length of the awl, may be greater than the length of the secondary instrument in the previous embodiment.

[0052] Referring to FIGS. **14a** to **14d**, a further modified embodiment of the surgical instrument **1''** will be described. The instrument shaft **10''** includes a shank inserting device **80** having a cannulated sleeve with a first end detachably connected to the handle portion **20** and an opposite second end **10b**. A head (not shown) of a bone anchor **90**, more specifically a head of a bone screw, is firmly held at the second end **10b**, so that the threaded shank **91** of the bone screw is axially and rotatably fixed to the shank inserting device **80**. The bone screw is cannulated so that the secondary instrument in the form of the awl can be guided therethrough. As depicted in FIG. **14a**, when the tip **62** of the awl protrudes out of the shank **91** of the bone anchor, the tip **62** can be used for penetrating the cortical bone. Subsequently, the shank **91** can be screwed into the bone to some extent as shown in FIG. **14b**. Next, as illustrated in FIG. **14c**, the awl **60** is removed. After removal of the awl **60**, the shank can be completely screwed into the bone as illustrated in FIG. **14d**. By the method described, use of other instruments like a thread cutter can be omitted.

[0053] Referring to FIG. **15**, a still further embodiment is shown. The surgical instrument **1''** differs from the embodiment described in FIGS. **14a** to **14d** in that the instrument shaft **10''** includes a modified shank inserting device **80'**. The modified shank inserting device **80'** is configured to be releasably connectable with its first end to the handle portion **20** similarly as described in the previous embodiments. At the second end **10b**, the modified shank inserting device **80'** is connectable to a modified bone anchor **90'** that is in the form of a polyaxial bone anchor, where an outer ring **92** is used to clamp and lock a head of an anchoring element in a receiving part. With the modified shank insertion device **80'** the threaded shank **91** of the bone anchor **90'** is locked and thereby fixedly connected to the handle portion **20**. The insertion of the shank **91** into the bone can be carried out in the same manner as described with reference to FIGS. **14a** to **14d**, i.e., penetrating the cortical bone with the tip portion **62** of the awl **60** and then slightly inserting the shank **91**, removing the awl, and then screwing the shank directly into the bone.

[0054] The handle portion and at least two instrument shafts with different functional sections form a surgical kit. The different functional sections may encompass different mechanical functions, such as thread cutting, holding and/or fixing, as well as different mechanical variations and/or geometries of one mechanical function. For example, the surgical kit may include the handle portion and two or more instrument shafts with thread cutting portions that differ in terms of diameter and/or other thread characteristics. In addition, the kit may include one or more secondary instruments such as an awl as described and/or a syringe, a K-wire, or a sensor, but not limited to these. It shall be understood that various sub-types of a particular instrument may also be part of the kit such as, for example, awls with a blunt, a sharp, or a threaded tip, or various geometrical modifications thereof. A system may be formed, for example, with the handle portion, one or more instrument shafts, and a cannulated bone anchor.

[0055] Various further modifications of the above described embodiments are also conceivable. For example, the detailed shape of the handle portion and the instrument shape are not limited to the shapes shown in the embodiments. Other shapes may also be possible. While the connection between the instrument shaft and the handle portion is shown to be a male and female polygonal connection, other connections may instead be used that allow a releasable connection between the instrument shaft and the handle portion. The mechanism of fixing the instrument shaft to the handle portion may also be different.

[0056] While the present invention has been described in connection with certain exemplary

embodiments, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to the disclosed embodiments, but is instead intended to cover various modifications and equivalent arrangements included within the spirit and scope of the appended claims, and equivalents thereof.

Claims

1. A surgical instrument comprising: a handle having a first end, a second end, and a passage that extends from the first end to the second end; a shaft having a first end, a second end, a longitudinal axis extending from the first end to the second end, and a coaxial channel that extends completely through the shaft, wherein the shaft is releasably connectable to the handle when the first end of the shaft is inserted from the second end of the handle into the passage; and a secondary instrument configured to be inserted from the first end of the shaft into the channel and to extend out of the second end of the shaft.
 2. The surgical instrument of claim 1, wherein the secondary instrument is insertable from the first end of the handle through the passage of the handle and into the channel of the shaft.
 3. The surgical instrument of claim 1, wherein the secondary instrument comprises an elongate shaft with a tip portion.
 4. The surgical instrument of claim 1, wherein the secondary instrument comprises an awl.
 5. The surgical instrument of claim 1, wherein the handle comprises a first connection structure and the shaft comprises a second connection structure configured to engage the first connection structure.
 6. The surgical instrument of claim 5, wherein the first connection structure and the second connection structure comprise corresponding standardized connection structures.
 7. The surgical instrument of claim 5, wherein when the first connection structure and the second connection structure are engaged, the engagement is configured to be locked and released.
 - 8-9. (canceled)
 10. The surgical instrument of claim 1, wherein the surgical instrument is substantially T-shaped when the handle and the shaft are assembled to one another.
 11. The surgical instrument of claim 1, wherein the second end of the shaft comprises a functional section configured to perform a primary function of the surgical instrument.
 12. The surgical instrument of claim 11, wherein the functional section comprises a thread cutting portion.
 - 13-16. (canceled)
 17. The surgical instrument of claim 1, further comprising a cannulated adapter releasably mountable between the shaft and the handle, wherein the adapter is configured to connect an auxiliary device to the surgical instrument.
 18. A system comprising the surgical instrument of claim 1 and a cannulated bone anchor.
 19. A surgical kit comprising: a handle having a first end, a second end, and a passage that extends from the first end to the second end; a first shaft having a first end, a second end, a longitudinal axis extending from the first end to the second end, and a coaxial channel that extends completely through the shaft; a second shaft having a first end, a second end, a longitudinal axis extending from the first end to the second end, and a coaxial channel that extends completely through the shaft, wherein the first and second shafts are interchangeably and releasably connectable to the handle by inserting the first end of the selected shaft into the passage; and a secondary instrument configured to be inserted from the first end of at least one of the first or second shafts into the channel of at least one shaft and to extend out of the second end of the at least one shaft.
 20. (canceled)
-