ABSTRACT
A hospital garment for preventing removal of incontinent briefs, diapers or wound dressings including a main body that defines a front, back, top and bottom. A neck opening is formed in the top of the main body. Also, the main body forms a left arm opening and a right arm opening one each side of the neck opening. A crotch flap extends from the front of the main body. The crotch flap defines a distal end that is removably attachable to the back of the main body to establish a left leg opening and a right leg opening. In one embodiment, the bottom edge of the back of the main body is fastened to the proximal end of the crotch flap in addition to the attachment of the distal end of the crotch flap to the back of the main body.
GARMENT FOR PREVENTING INCONTINENT
BRIEF REMOVAL OR FOR PREVENTING
REMOVAL OF DRESSINGS ON BEDSORES OR
THE LIKE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED
APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority from U.S. provi-
sional application serial No. 60/248,885 filed on Nov. 14,
2000, incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention relates generally to hospital
garments, and more particularly to a garment that prevents
a person, particularly an elderly person, from removing an
incontinent brief.

[0004] 2. Description of the Background Art

[0005] Sadly, bowel and bladder control is a problem
suffered by many people, particularly the aged. Patients in
hospitals and convalescent homes for the elderly who are
incontinent may be required by their caregivers to wear
incontinent briefs or diapers to prevent these patients from
soiling their clothing and bedding as well as to avoid
embarrassment to the patient. Unfortunately, in many cases,
the patients can remove their diapers or incontinent briefs
thereby defeating the purpose of the briefs and causing
frustration to caregivers as well as creating repetitive unsan-
itary conditions requiring frequent bedding and clothing
changes.

[0006] Likewise, invalid patients often attempt to remove
irritating dressings and bandages that have been applied to
bedsores or closed wounds from operative procedures.
Removal of dressings can result in a greater likelihood of
infection or prolong recovery if the wound is re-opened.
Accordingly, there is a need for hospital garment that
prevents the removal of incontinent briefs and wound dress-
ings. The present invention satisfies that need, as well as
others, and generally overcomes the deficiencies found in
garments existing.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] By way of example, and not of limitation, the
invention includes a hospital garment according to the
present invention includes a main body that defines a front
panel, back panel, top and a bottom. A neck opening is
formed in the top of the main body. Also, a left arm opening
and right arm opening is formed in the main body on each
side of the neck opening.

[0008] A crotch flap extends from the front panel of the
main body. The crotch flap defines a distal end that is
removably attachable to the back panel of the main body.
The crotch flap has a plurality of fasteners at the distal end
of the flap that attach to corresponding fasteners at the back
panel of the main body of the garment. The fasteners can be
snaps, buttons and buttonholes, or hook-and-loop fasteners
or the like.

[0009] In one embodiment, the flap has a second set of
fasteners disposed near the proximal end of the crotch flap.
In this embodiment, the bottom edge of the back panel has
a tab with a strip of fasteners, preferably heavy-duty hook-
and-loop fasteners, which correspond with the proximal
fasteners of the crotch flap. When the bottom edge fasteners
are joined and the distal end of the crotch flap is attached to
the back of the main body, a left leg opening and a right leg
opening are established. Thus, the bottom edges of the front
and back panels are first secured together with the proximal
fasteners and then further secured as the crotch flap is
tightened between the legs and distal end of the flap is
fastened to the fasteners on the mid rear panel of the
garment.

[0010] Preferably, the hospital garment further includes a
back slit that is formed in the back of the main body so that
it extends downwardly from the neck opening. This facilit-
tates the placement of the garment on a patient that has
difficulty standing or has a large body. In one embodiment,
the garment also includes a back flap and back flap fastener
that are attached to one side of the back slit. An opposing
back flap fastener is attached to the back of the main body
adjacent to the second side of the slit at the neck opening.
Preferably, these fasteners can be snaps, buttons and but-
tonholes, or hook-and-loop fasteners. Moreover, the gar-
ment is preferably made of a soft, pre-shrunk cotton material
that can be repetitively washed in hot water and placed in a
hot dryer thereby allowing effective cleaning.

[0011] Thus it can be seen that the garment of the present
invention is much like a body suit that fits snugly over the
diaper or brief of the patient preventing the patient from
removing the incontinent brief or diaper.

[0012] An object of the invention is to provide a hospital
garment that is durable and easy to sanitize.

[0013] Another object of the invention is to provide a
garment that restricts the access of the patient to inconti-
inent briefs or diapers so that the briefs cannot be easily removed
by the patient.

[0014] Another object of the invention is to provide a
garment that has a lowered neckline and armholes that are
oversized for ease of use and comfort to the patient.

[0015] Still another object of the invention is to provide a
garment that is easily adjustable to fit the torso of patients
of varying sizes and shapes.

[0016] Another object of the invention is to provide a
garment that is durable and of reliable construction.

[0017] Another object of the invention is to provide a
hospital garment that is easily and efficiently manufactured.

[0018] Yet another object of the invention is to provide a
garment that has a flap that fastens at the back such that the
user cannot unfasten the fasteners and remove the garment
without assistance.

[0019] Further objects and advantages of the invention
will be brought out in the following portions of the speci-
ification, wherein the detailed description is for the purpose
of fully disclosing preferred embodiments of the invention
without placing limitations thereon.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0020] The invention will be more fully understood by
reference to the following drawings, which are for illustra-
tive purposes only:
FIG. 1 is a front view of a hospital garment according to the present invention with the crotch flap shown in the open position.

FIG. 2 is a rear view of the hospital garment of FIG. 1 with the crotch flap shown in the open position.

FIG. 3 is a rear view of the hospital garment of FIG. 1 and FIG. 2 with the crotch flap shown in the closed position.

FIG. 4 is a rear view of an alternative embodiment of the hospital garment of FIG. 1 through FIG. 3 with a back slit and with the crotch flap shown in the closed position.

FIG. 5 is a rear view of an alternative embodiment of the hospital garment of FIG. 1 through FIG. 3 with the crotch flap shown in the open position.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Referring more specifically to the drawings, for illustrative purposes the present invention is embodied in the apparatus generally shown in FIG. 1 through FIG. 5. It will be appreciated that the apparatus may vary as to configuration and as to details of the parts without departing from the basic concepts as disclosed herein.

Referring first to FIG. 1, FIG. 2, and FIG. 3, an embodiment of a hospital garment 10 is shown. Preferably, garment 10 is manufactured from a soft, pre-shrunk cotton material that will maintain its dimensions after multiple washings. In the front view of garment 10 in FIG. 1, it can be seen that garment 10 includes a main body portion 12 that is preferably of a pullover type construction having a front panel F and a rear panel R that are open at the bottom B, as well as a crotch flap portion 14 that extends from the bottom of front panel F in a downward direction when in the unfastened or open position. Main body portion 12 also includes a neck opening 16 at the top of main body portion 14 through which a wearer’s head can extend, and left 18 and right 20 arm openings through which the wearer’s arms can extend. Main body portion 12 is supported on the wearer by a pair of shoulder straps 22, 24. As shown, left 18 and right 20 arm openings are separated from neck opening 16 by left shoulder strap 22 and right shoulder strap 24, respectively. Preferably, neck opening 16 is scooped-shaped, as shown, but it is to be appreciated that neck opening 16 can be V-shaped or any other desired shape in order to promote comfort and proper fit of the garment to the user. Arm openings 18, 20 are preferably sized and shaped to allow the arms of the wearer to pass therethrough when initially placed upon the wearer as described below.

FIG. 1 also shows that crotch flap portion 14 defines a proximal end 26 and a distal end 28. As shown, proximal end 26 extends from the bottom of front panel F of main body portion 12. It is to be appreciated that main body portion 12 and crotch flap portion 14 can be manufactured separately and then attached to each other, e.g., by sewing. Or, in the alternative, main body portion 12 and crotch flap portion 14 may be manufactured as one integral unit.

As shown in FIG. 1 and FIG. 2, at least one fastener 30 is attached to the inside face of crotch flap portion 14 at distal end 28. Additionally, at least one opposing fastener 32 is attached to the rear panel R of the main body 12 of the garment 10. Thus, crotch flap portion 14 can be pulled between a wearer’s legs and fastened to rear panel R as shown in FIG. 3. Fastener 32 is preferably positioned at a height on rear panel R that impedes the wear from reaching behind and unfastening crotch flap portion 14. In FIG. 1 through FIG. 3, fastener 32 is shown positioned slightly below the midpoint of rear panel R (e.g., midpoint of the wearer’s back) as an example. It will be appreciated that the position can vary, but that higher positions are preferred over lower positions to thwart the wearer’s ability to unfasten crotch flap portion 14.

Fasteners 30, 32 are preferably strips of hook and loop fasteners such as Velcro®. The size of the fasteners can vary, but typical sizes are on the order of approximately one inch to four inches in height and approximately 6 inches in length. While strips of hook and loop fasteners 30, 32 are preferred, it will be understood that other types of fasteners indicated as fasteners 30, 32 could be used instead, such as snaps, buttons and buttonholes, circular hook-and-loop fasteners or any other similar fasteners known in the art.

Referring more particularly to FIG. 3, garment 10 is shown with crotch flap portion 14 fastened in place, i.e., fastener 30 on crotch flap portion 14 is engaged with the opposing fastener 32 on rear panel R. As shown, when crotch flap portion 14 is fastened in place, left 34 and a right 36 leg openings are established to the left and right sides of crotch flap portion 14, respectively.

Referring again to FIG. 2, rear panel R preferably includes a fastener 38 attached to the inside face of a tab 40 of garment material that extends downward from the bottom edge B of rear panel R. For example, rear panel R would be patterned for tab 40 when cut. A corresponding fastener 42 is attached to the inside face of crotch flap portion 14 near proximal end 26 as shown in FIG. 1 and FIG. 2. These opposing fasteners, which are also preferably hook and loop type fastener strips, but which could also be other types of fasteners, are preferably vertically and horizontally aligned. In this way, after the garment is placed over the head, arms and torso of the wearer, fastener strip 38 is fastened with corresponding fastener strip 42 by simply pressing the fasteners together. This results in the formation of a crotch for the garment as well as defines leg openings 34, 36. As an alternative to attaching fastener 38 on the inside of tab 40, the tab could be made longer and the fastener attached to the outside face of the tab. The tab would then be folded or rolled under rear panel R so that the fasteners are aligned for engagement.

Once fasteners 38, 42 are engaged and the crotch area formed, the distal end 28 of crotch flap portion 14 is drawn through the legs of the wearer and pulled up the wearer’s back to a final position where fasteners 30, 32 can be fastened together. Thus, two sets of fasteners 30, 32 and 38, 42 keep garment 10 positionned snugly over the incon- tent brief of the wearer, and denies them access to the brief so as to prevent removal of the brief.

Turning now to FIG. 4, an alternative embodiment of garment 10 with crotch flap portion 14 in the secured position is shown. This figure corresponds to FIG. 3, except that in this embodiment rear panel R includes a back slit 44 extending downwardly from neck opening 16 at the back to a point slightly below the position of the shoulders. Slit 44 will allow greater ease in the donning of garment 10 on a
patient by the caregiver. The portions of rear panel R defined by slit 44 can be drawn together and secured with at least one back slit fastener 46 adjacent one edge of slit 44 that engages a corresponding fastener 45 adjacent the second edge of slit 44. Fasteners 46, 48 can be snaps, buttons, hook-and-loop fasteners or any other similar fasteners well known in the art. It will be appreciated that the portions of rear panel R defined by back slit 44 can be fastened in place in order to hold the garment snugly on the wearer’s body. In the embodiment shown, one side of the back slit 44 has a back flap 50 that holds one set of fasteners 46 that are configured to fasten with opposing fastener 46 on the second side of the back slit 44.

[0035] Lastly, referring FIG. 5, a rear view of the garment corresponding to the view in FIG. 2 is shown except that fasteners 30, 32 are larger strips of hook and loop type fasteners. Using a larger square or rectangular strip of hook and loop type fastener for fastener 32, preferably approximately four inches in height and approximately six inches in length, allows the caregiver to fasten crotch flap portion 14 in place with less concern about aligning fasteners 30, 32. This is particularly useful when the care giver is having difficulty with dressing a patient with the garment.

[0036] It is to be understood that in a preferred manner garment 10 is donned while fasteners 30, 32 and fasteners 38, 42, and fasteners 46, 48 (if used as in the embodiment of FIG. 4) are unfastened. Garment 10 can be placed over the wearer’s torso so that his or her head protrudes through neck opening 16 and his or her arms extend through arm openings 18, 20. Once the garment is over the torso of the wearer, fasteners 38, 40 are fastened together to join proximal end 26 of crotch flap portion 14 to tab 40, thereby forming a crotch and leg openings. Then, crotch flap portion 14 can be pulled between the wearer’s legs and fastened to rear panel R by engaging fasteners 30, 32. Additionally, if present, the sides of back slit 44 can be brought together to tighten the main body 12 of the garment 10 to the wearer by engaging fasteners 46, 48. As can be seen, therefore, garment 10 is worn like a body suit over an incontinent brief and any dressings over wounds such as bedsores. Since fasteners 30, 32, and 46, 48 are on the back of the garment, and because fasteners 38, 42 are covered by crotch flap portion 14, the garment cannot be easily removed and a wearer will be unable to remove an incontinent garment underneath. Also, garment 10 will prevent or minimize the likelihood of a wearer removing any dressings.

[0037] It is also to be understood that garment 10 can be manufactured in various sizes, e.g., small, medium, large, extra-large, etc., in order to accommodate men, women, and children of all sizes. Also, neck opening 16, arm openings 18, 20, and leg openings 34, 36 are established as to maximize the comfort of the wearer. Further, it is to be understood that back slit 44 can be omitted in embodiments that have an oversized neck opening 16.

[0038] Accordingly, it will be seen that this invention provides a garment that can effectively restrict the removal of incontinent briefs or diapers by an invalid patient that is easy to put on and comfortable to wear. Although the description above contains many specificities, these should not be construed as limiting the scope of the invention but as merely providing illustrations of some of the presently preferred embodiments of this invention. Therefore, it will be appreciated that the scope of the present invention fully encompasses other embodiments which may become obvious to those skilled in the art, and that the scope of the present invention is accordingly to be limited by nothing other than the appended claims, in which reference to an element in the singular is not intended to mean “one and only one” unless explicitly so stated, but rather “one or more.” All structural, chemical, and functional equivalents to the elements of the above-described preferred embodiment that are known to those of ordinary skill in the art are expressly incorporated herein by reference and are intended to be encompassed by the present claims. Moreover, it is not necessary for a device or method to address each and every problem sought to be solved by the present invention, for it to be encompassed by the present claims. Furthermore, no element, component, or method step in the present disclosure is intended to be dedicated to the public regardless of whether the element, component, or method step is explicitly recited in the claims. No claim element herein is to be construed under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 112, sixth paragraph, unless the element is expressly recited using the phrase “means for.”

What is claimed is:

1. A hospital garment, comprising:
   a. body suit; and
   means for securing said body suit firmly to a wearer wherein said means is inaccessible to the wearer.
2. A hospital garment as recited in claim 1, wherein said means for securing the body suit comprises:
   a frontals flap attached to said body suit; and
   means for securing said frontal flap to a rear side of said body suit.
3. A hospital garment as recited in claim 2, wherein said means for securing said frontal flap comprises a plurality of fasteners mounted to said flap and the rear side of the body suit.
4. A hospital garment as recited in claim 3, wherein said fasteners comprise a hook and loop fastener and a snap fastener.
5. A hospital garment as recited in claim 2, wherein said means for securing said frontal flap comprises a first fastener member and a second fastener member mounted to said flap, said first and second fastener members configured to engage a corresponding third fastener member and fourth fastener member respectively on the rear side of the body suit.
6. A hospital garment as recited in claim 1, wherein said body suit further comprises:
   a longitudinal slit from a neck opening in said body suit to approximately a mid back location; and
   means for closing said slit.
7. A hospital garment as recited in claim 6, wherein said means for closing said slit comprises a plurality of hook and loop strips.
8. A hospital garment, comprising:
   a main body defining a front, back and top; and
   a neck opening formed in the top of the main body;
   a right arm opening formed in the main body; and
a crotch flap extending from the front of the main body and defining a distal end, the distal end of the crotch flap being removably attachable to the back of the main body to establish a left leg opening and a right leg opening.

9. A hospital garment as recited in claim 8, further comprising a back slit formed in the back of the main body extending from the neck opening, said back slit having a periphery.

10. A hospital garment as recited in claim 9, further comprising means for reversibly closing said slit of said main body.

11. A hospital garment as recited in claim 10, wherein said means for reversibly closing said slit comprises a plurality of fasteners configured to join together the periphery of said slit.

12. A hospital garment as recited in claim 11, further comprising at least one back slit fastener attached to one side of said slit and at least one opposing back slit fastener attached to an opposite side of said slit in the back of the main body adjacent to the neck opening.

13. A hospital garment as recited in claim 12, wherein the back slit fastener and opposing back slit fastener are snaps.

14. The hospital garment as recited in claim 13, wherein the back slit fastener is a buttonhole and the opposing back slit fastener is a button.

15. The hospital garment of claim 12, wherein the back slit fastener and opposing back slit fastener are hook-and-loop fasteners.

16. The hospital garment as recited in claim 8, further comprising at least one crotch flap fastener attached to the distal end of the crotch flap and at least one opposing crotch flap fastener attached to the back of the main body.

17. The hospital garment as recited in claim 16, wherein the crotch flap fastener and opposing crotch flap fastener are snaps.

18. The hospital garment as recited in claim 16, wherein the crotch flap fastener is a buttonhole and the opposing crotch flap fastener is a button.

19. The hospital garment as recited in claim 16, wherein the crotch flap fastener and opposing crotch flap fastener are hook-and-loop fasteners.

20. The hospital garment of claim 1, wherein the garment is made of cotton.

21. A hospital garment, comprising:

a main body defining a front, back, top and bottom;
a neck opening formed in the top of the main body;
two arm openings formed in the main body;
a crotch flap extending from the bottom of the front of the main body; and
means for reversibly attaching the end of the crotch flap to the bottom of the back of the main body in order to establish two leg openings.

22. The hospital garment of claim 21, further comprising:

a back slit formed in the back of the main body extending from the neck opening; and
means for temporarily closing the back slit.

23. The hospital garment of claim 21, wherein the means for reversibly attaching the crotch flap to the main body includes at least one snap.

24. The hospital garment of claim 21, wherein the means for reversibly attaching the crotch flap to the main body includes at least one button and at least one buttonhole.

25. The hospital garment of claim 21, wherein the means for reversibly attaching the crotch flap to the main body includes at least one hook-and-loop fastener.

26. The hospital garment of claim 22, wherein the means for temporarily closing the back slit includes at least one snap.

27. The hospital garment of claim 22, wherein the means for temporarily closing the back slit includes at least one button and at least one buttonhole.

28. The hospital garment of claim 22, wherein the means for temporarily closing the back slit includes at least one hook-and-loop fastener.

29. The hospital garment of claim 21, wherein the garment is made from cotton.

30. The hospital garment of claim 22, further comprising:
a back flap coupled to a first side of said slit formed in the back of the main body extending from the neck opening; and
a plurality of fasteners configured to reversibly join said back flap and a second side of said slit together.

31. A hospital garment, comprising:
a main body defining a front, back, top and bottom;
a neck opening formed in the top of the main body;
two arm openings formed in the main body;
a crotch flap extending from the bottom of the main body;
means for reversibly attaching a proximal end of the crotch flap to a bottom edge of the back of the main body; and
means for reversibly attaching a distal end of the crotch flap to the back of the main body in order to establish two leg openings.

32. The hospital garment of claim 31, wherein the means for reversibly attaching said proximal end of said flap includes at least one button and at least one buttonhole.

33. The hospital garment of claim 31, wherein the means for reversibly attaching said proximal end of said flap includes at least one button and at least one hook-and-loop fastener.

34. The hospital garment of claim 31, wherein the means for reversibly attaching a distal end of said crotch flap to the main body includes at least one snap.

35. The hospital garment of claim 31, wherein the means for reversibly attaching a distal end of said crotch flap to the main body includes at least one button and at least one buttonhole.

36. The hospital garment of claim 31, wherein the means for reversibly attaching a distal end of said crotch flap to the main body includes at least one hook-and-loop fastener.

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