Health problem addressed
Mobile stretchers are used to transport a patient safely and expediently within a healthcare facility.

Product description
A mobile stretcher typically consists of a patient platform made of steel, aluminum, or plastic, mounted on a wheeled frame that may incorporate mechanical, electronic, or hydraulic devices for adjusting the platform’s height. Fixed-height stretchers are generally lighter, and less complex than adjustable-height models, but the latter can match the elevation of other surface levels, providing easier, safer patient transfers. Most stretchers can be accessorized to accommodate intravenous poles, patient monitors, oxygen tanks, articulating headpieces, and other equipment. They may also function as beds. Most stretchers provide mattresses, adjustable siderails, and straps.

Principles of operation
The stretcher platform height can be adjusted in various ways: some use a hydraulic pump or an electronic control, while others use a mechanical hand crank or support bars that fit into grooves to raise or lower the platform. Most permit different platform positions (e.g., Trendelenburg, reverse Trendelenburg, Fowler, leg lift, knee flex). They typically have casters at least 20 cm (8 in) in diameter so that they can cross elevator and door thresholds smoothly. Most casters can swivel and are equipped with wheel locks and/or brakes to keep the table stationary for patient treatment.

Operating steps
- Place patient on stretcher.
- Make sure siderails and/or straps are secure along with any accessories needed for the specific patient.
- Transport patient carefully.
- If stretcher is to be stationary, activate wheel locks and/or brakes.

Reported problems
The most common problems encountered with mobile stretchers involve siderails unlocking, casters falling off, wheel locks and/or brakes not functioning or engaged incorrectly, or frame/structural components failing. Loss of a caster can cause the platform surface to tilt, spilling the patient onto the floor. Routine inspection of casters, siderails, and other frame components can usually prevent these problems.

Use and maintenance
User(s): Physicians, nurses, other medical staff
Maintenance: Medical staff; technician; biomedical engineering staff and/or service contract with the manufacturer or third-party organization
Training: Initial training by manufacturer, operator’s manuals, user’s guide

Environment of use
Settings of use: Hospital, emergency room, operating room, intensive care unit, radiology, intra-hospital transport
Requirements: NA

Product specifications
Approx. dimensions (mm): [600-900] x 800 x 2000; the height should be adjustable to meet the caregiver’s requirements
Approx. weight (kg): 125
Consumables: NA
Price range (USD): 700-18,000 (6,500 typical); price covers all types and variations
Typical product life time: 15 years
Shelf life (consumables): NA

Types and variations
- Adjustable
- Fixed-Height
- Radiographic
- Bariatric