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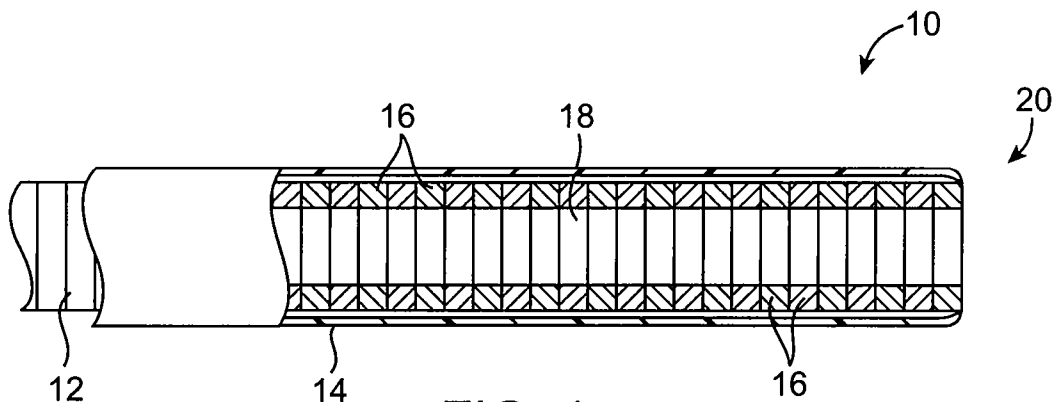


FIG. 1

(57) Abstract: CATHETER WITH ADJUSTABLE COLUMN STABILITY AND METHODS FOR ITS USE ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE The catheter includes an inner column and an outer elastic member. The inner column is bendable wherein the column strength and flexibility of the inner column are adjusted by axially tensioning the outer elastic member. The inner column comprises a helical spring, slotted or slit tube, or individual links that, when axially compressed by advancement forces or by tensioning an elastic outer sheath, assume a straight or other pre-determined geometry. The column strength and flexibility of the catheter may be adjusted during introduction of the catheter into a body lumen as necessitated by the conditions encountered, as well as made highly flexible when left in position.

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

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A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(8) - A61M 25/08 (2008.04)

USPC - 600/141

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC(8) - A61M 25/08 (2008.04)

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Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

USPTO EAST System (US, USPG-PUB, EPO, DERWENT), MicroPatent.

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 5,345,937 A (MIDDLEMAN et al) 13 September 1994 (13.09.1994) entire document	1-3, 12, 13, 15-18, 20, 22, 23, 25, 28-31, 33, 35-37, 39, 44, 45
Y		4-11, 14, 19, 21, 24, 26, 27, 32, 34, 38, 40-43
Y	US 5,897,488 A (UEDA) 27 April 1999 (27.04.1999) entire document	4-11, 40-42
Y	US 2005/0027287 A1 (O'CONNOR et al) 03 February 2005 (03.02.2005) entire document	11, 14
Y	US 6,761,685 B2 (ADAMS et al) 13 July 2004 (13.07.2004) entire document	19, 21, 24
Y	US 2006/0122566 A1 (HUANG et al) 08 June 2006 (08.06.2006) entire document	26, 27, 32, 43
Y	US 7,090,683 B2 (BROCK et al) 15 August 2006 (15.08.2006) entire document	34
Y	US 2005/0113862 A1 (BESSELINK et al) 26 May 2005 (26.05.2005) entire document	38

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