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(54) **CUTTING MEMBER FOR BIFURCATION CATHETER ASSEMBLY**

Publication Classification

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A catheter assembly for deployment in a vessel includes a catheter shaft extending from a proximal end portion to a distal end portion. A balloon is operatively coupled to the distal end portion of the catheter shaft. At least one cutting member is coupled to the catheter assembly. As the balloon is inflated, the cutting member is moved to a position to cut a portion of the vessel.

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 11/750,748, filed on May 18, 2007, now Pat. No. 7,842,056.

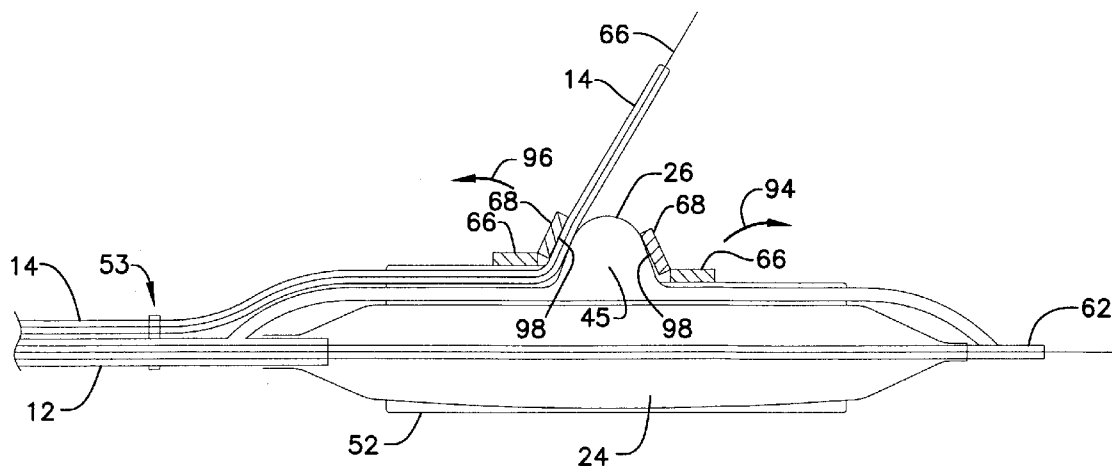


FIG. 1

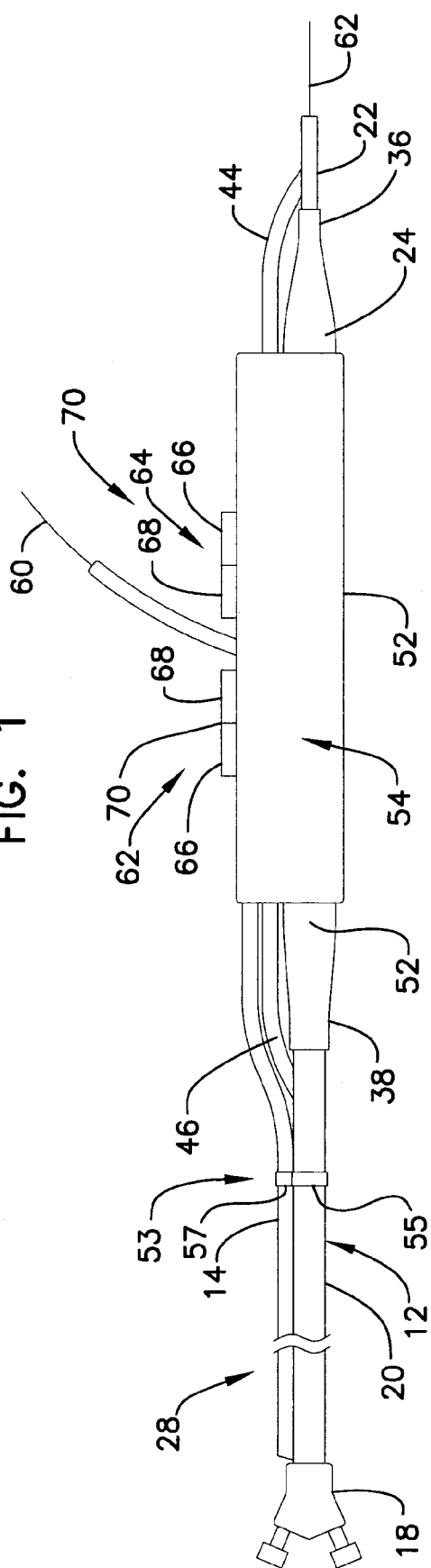
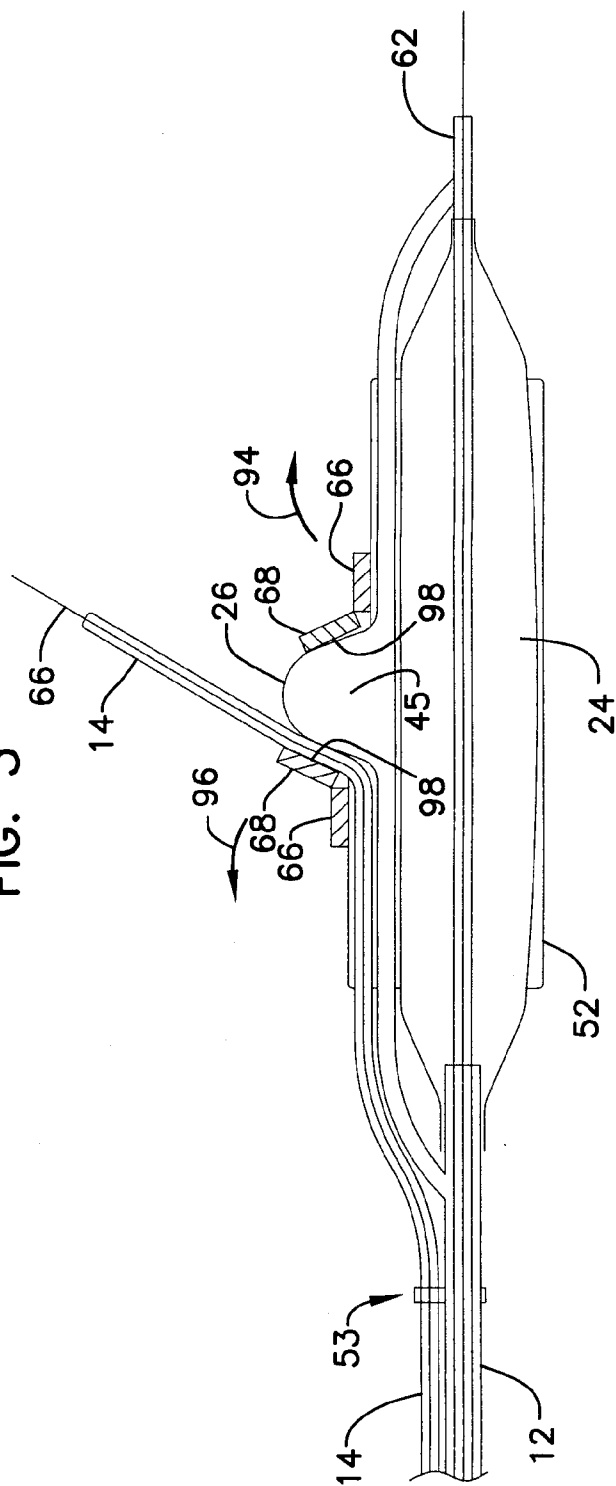


FIG. 3



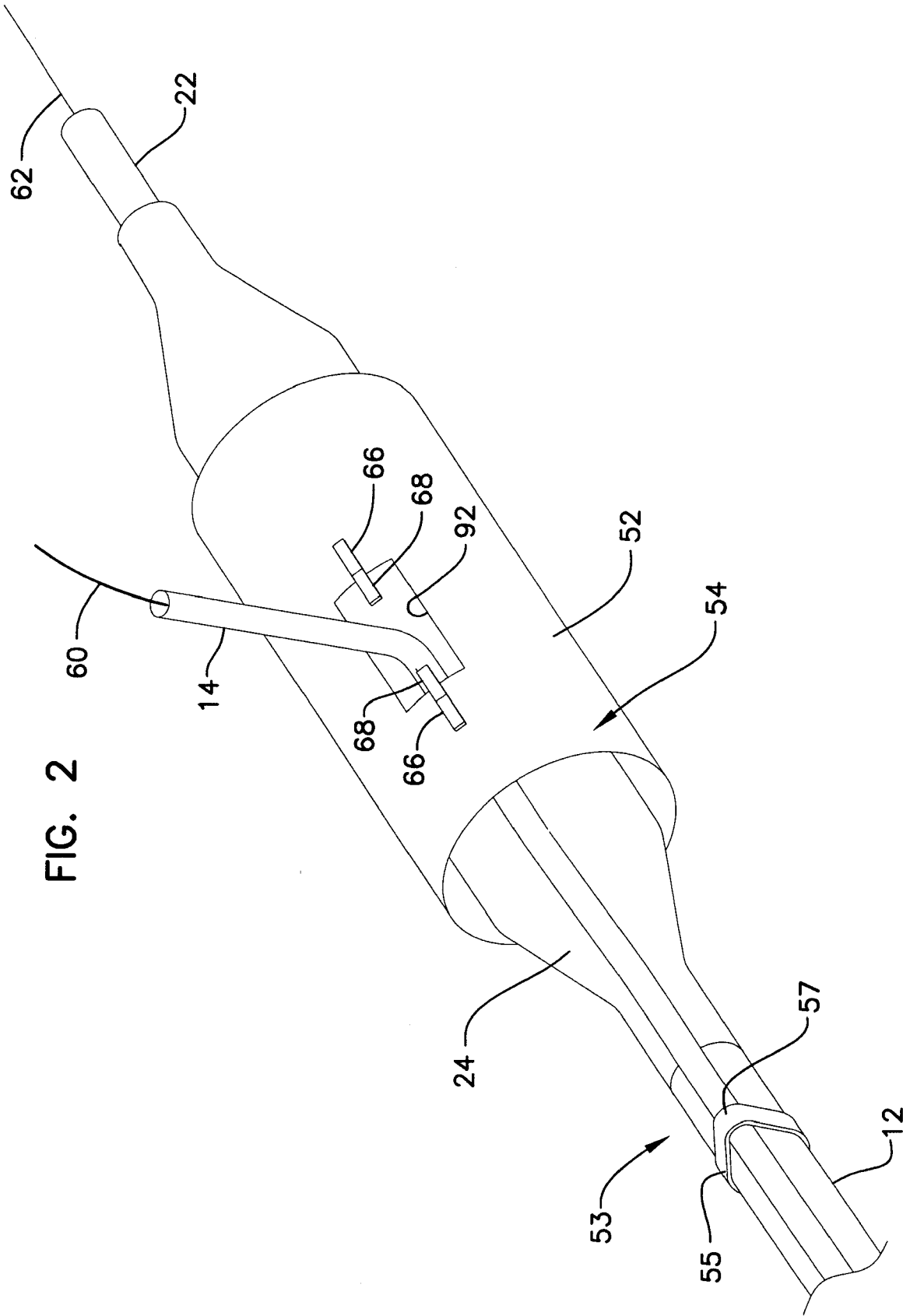


FIG. 4

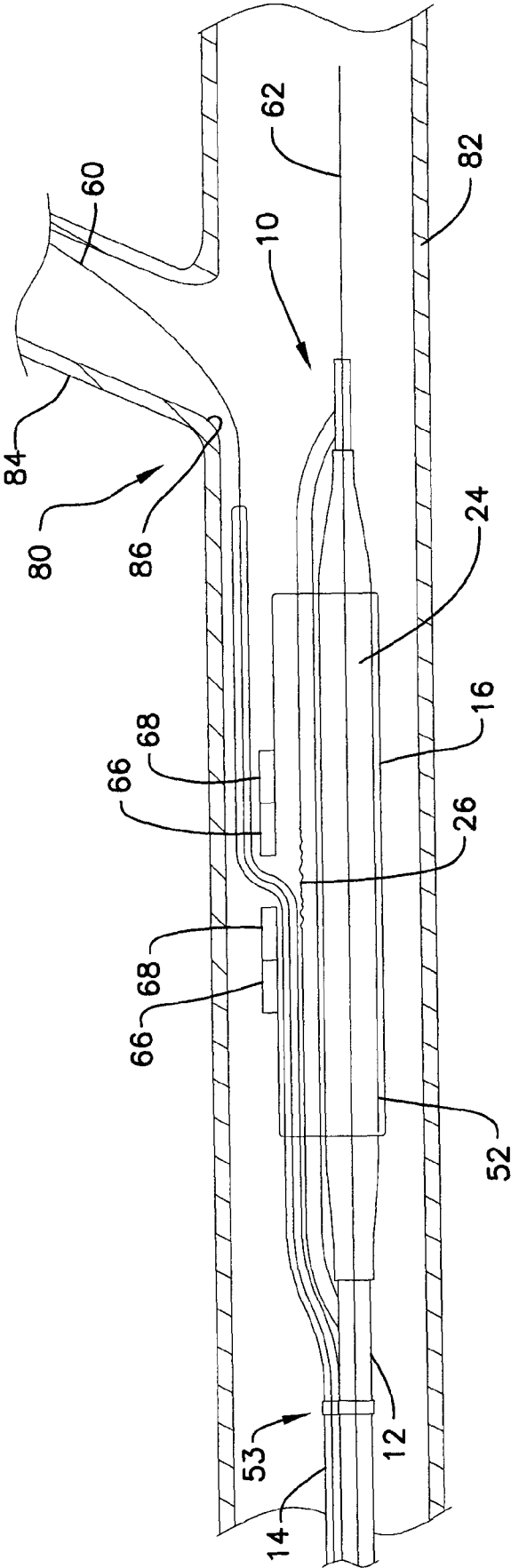
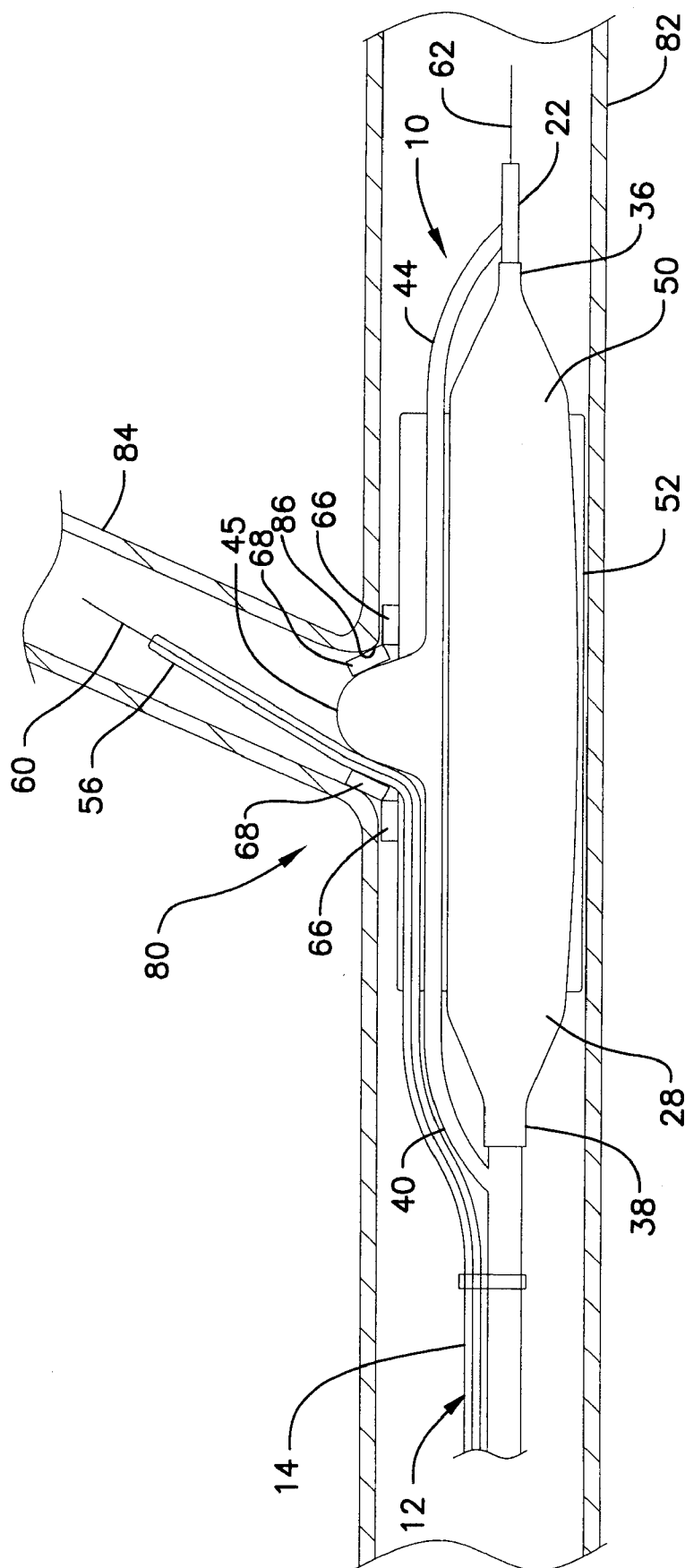


FIG. 6



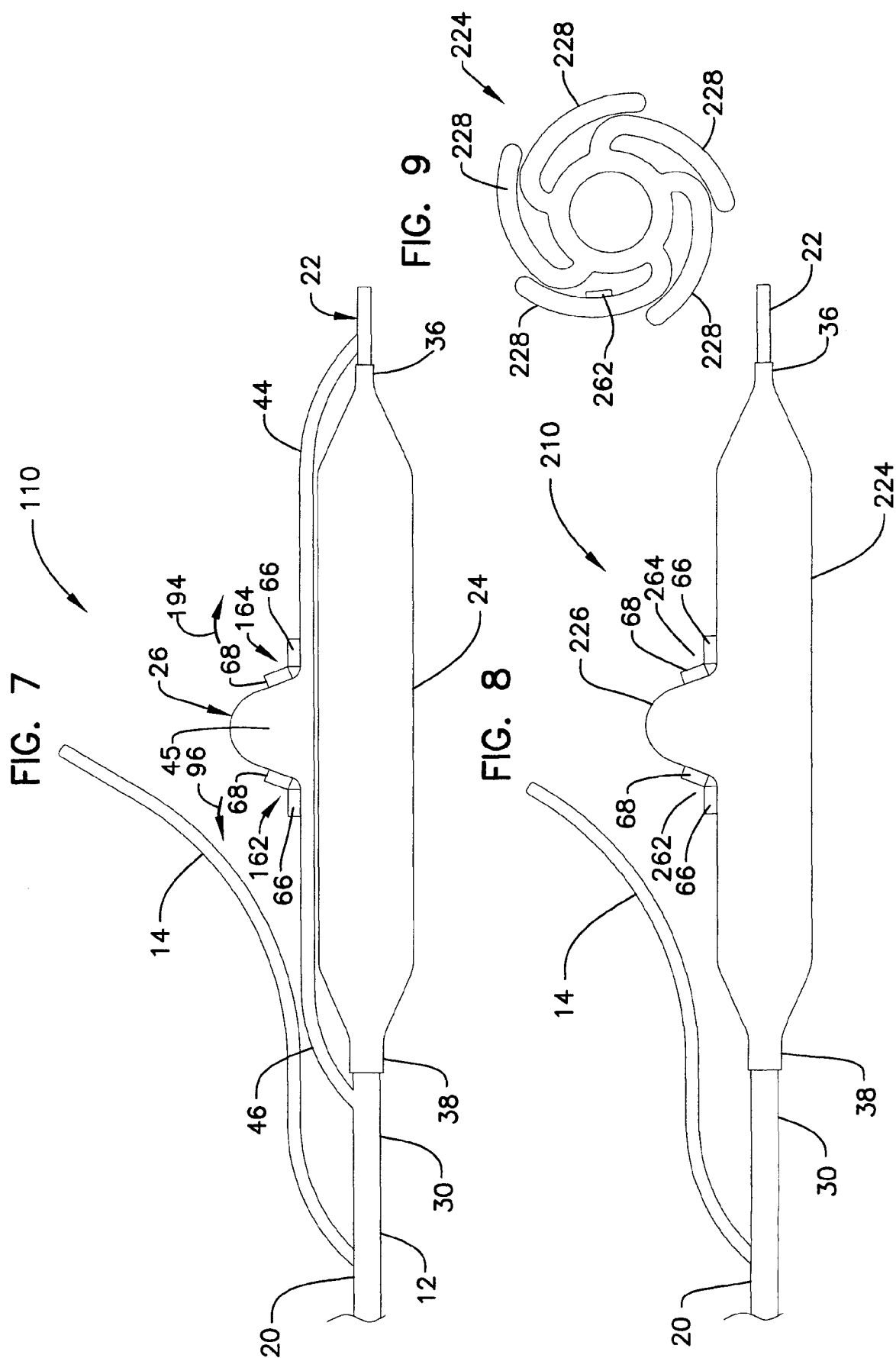


FIG. 10

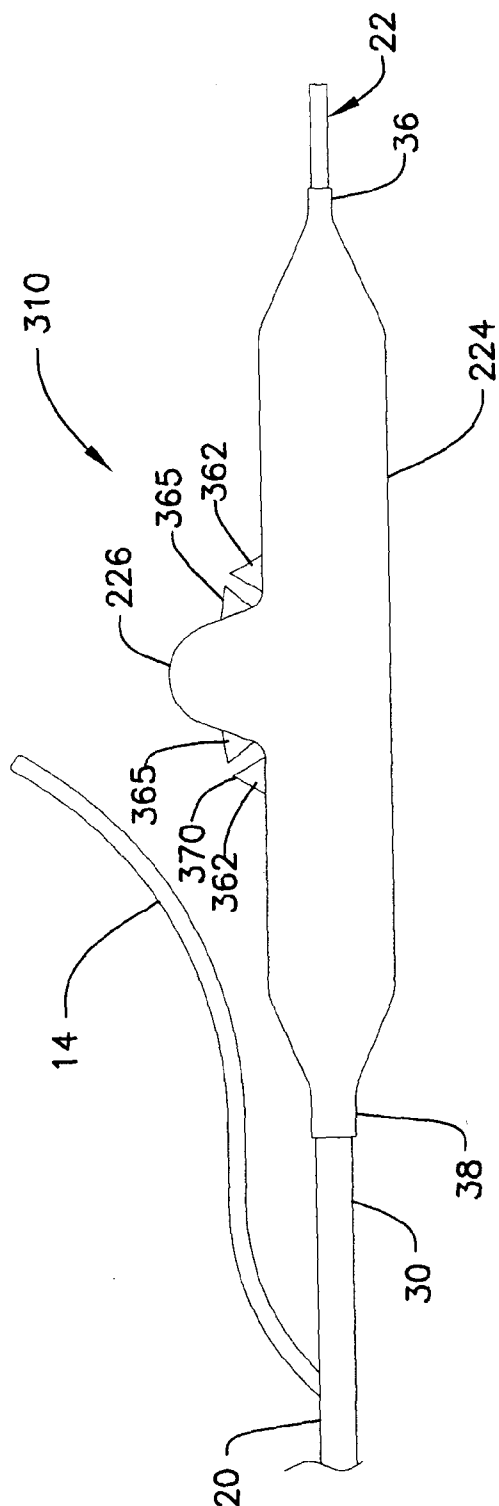


FIG. 13

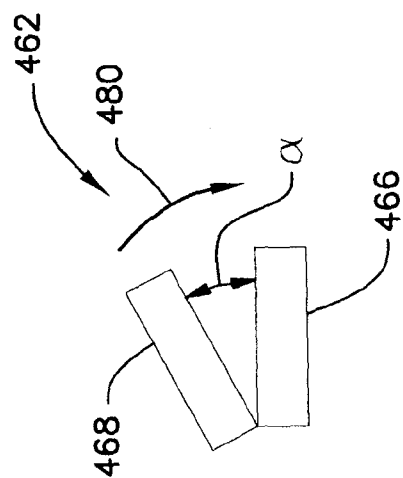


FIG. 12

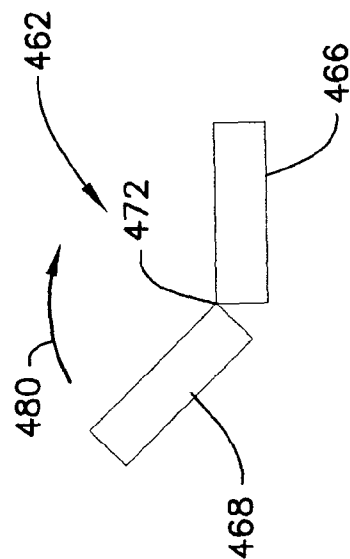
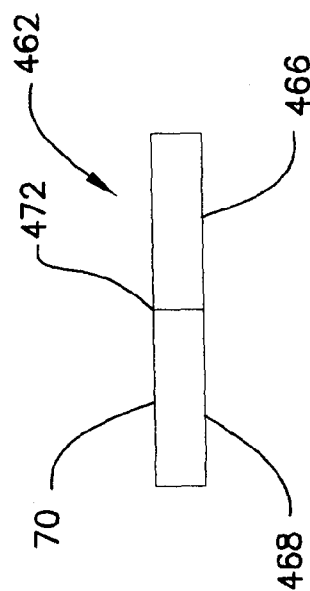


FIG. 11



CUTTING MEMBER FOR BIFURCATION CATHETER ASSEMBLY

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a continuation of co-pending U.S. application Ser. No. 11/750,748, filed May 18, 2007, the entire disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] This disclosure relates to catheter systems and methods for treating vessel bifurcations.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Catheters are used with stents and balloon inflatable structures to treat strictures, stenoses, and narrowing in various parts of the body. Various catheter designs have been developed for the dilatation of stenoses and to deliver and deploy stents at treatment sites within the body.

[0004] Stents are typically intraluminally placed by a catheter within a vein, artery, or other tubular body organ for treating conditions such as, for example, occlusions, stenoses, aneurysms, dissection, or weakened, diseased, or abnormally dilated vessel or vessel wall, by expanding the vessel or by reinforcing the vessel wall. Once delivered, the stents can be expanded using one or more inflation members such as balloons. Stents can improve angioplasty results by preventing elastic recoil and by remodeling of the vessel wall and treating dissections in blood vessel walls caused by balloon angioplasty of coronary arteries. Stents can also be used as a drug delivery medium for treatment of damaged portions of a vessel.

[0005] While conventional stent technology is relatively well developed, stent technologies related to treatment of the region of a vessel bifurcation are still being developed. One challenge related to treatment of a vessel bifurcation involves the minimization of restenosis of the treated vessel.

SUMMARY

[0006] The present disclosure relates generally to catheter assemblies for treatment of bifurcated lumens in a patient, such as vessel bifurcations.

[0007] In one arrangement, a catheter assembly for deployment in a vessel includes a catheter shaft extending from a proximal end portion to a distal end portion. A balloon is operatively coupled to the distal end portion of the catheter shaft. At least one cutting member is coupled to the catheter assembly. As the balloon is inflated, the cutting member is moved to a position to cut a portion of the vessel.

[0008] There is no requirement that an arrangement or method include all features characterized herein to obtain some advantage according to this disclosure.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] FIG. 1 is a schematic representation of an example catheter assembly for treatment of a vessel bifurcation shown in a non-deployed state.

[0010] FIG. 2 is a schematic perspective representation of a distal portion of the catheter assembly of FIG. 1.

[0011] FIG. 3 is a schematic cross-sectional view of the distal portion of the catheter assembly of FIG. 1 shown in a deployed state.

[0012] FIG. 4 is a schematic side view of the catheter assembly shown in FIG. 1 in a position prepared for treatment of a vessel bifurcation.

[0013] FIG. 5 is a schematic side view of the catheter assembly shown in FIG. 4 with the side catheter branch extending into a branch vessel of the vessel bifurcation.

[0014] FIG. 6 is a schematic side view of the catheter assembly shown in FIG. 5 with the side and main balloons inflated at the vessel bifurcation.

[0015] FIG. 7 is a schematic representation of a distal portion of another example catheter assembly for treatment of a vessel bifurcation shown in a deployed state.

[0016] FIG. 8 is a schematic representation of a distal portion of another example catheter assembly for treatment of a vessel bifurcation shown in a deployed state.

[0017] FIG. 9 is a schematic end view of the balloon of the distal portion of the catheter assembly of FIG. 8 in a non-deployed state.

[0018] FIG. 10 is a schematic representation of a distal portion of another example catheter assembly for treatment of a vessel bifurcation shown in a deployed state.

[0019] FIG. 11 is a schematic view of an example cutting member.

[0020] FIG. 12 is another schematic view of the cutting member of FIG. 11.

[0021] FIG. 13 is another schematic view of the cutting member of FIG. 11.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

I. Overview

[0022] This disclosure relates to bifurcation treatment systems, catheter assemblies, and related methods of treating bifurcations in a patient's body. The term "bifurcation" means a division location from one unit into two or more units. Generally, two types of bifurcations of a body organ include: 1) a main tubular member defining a main lumen and a branch tubular member defining a branch lumen that extends or branches off from the main tubular member, wherein the main and branch lumens are in fluid communication with each other; and 2) a primary or main member defining a primary or main lumen (also referred to as a parent lumen) that splits into first and second branch members defining first and second branch lumens. The term "lumen" means the cavity or bore of a tubular structure such as a tubular organ (e.g., a blood vessel).

[0023] Example applications of the principles disclosed herein include cardiac, coronary, renal, peripheral vascular, gastrointestinal, pulmonary, urinary, and neurovascular systems. Bifurcated vessels in such systems can become partially or fully blocked over time, which is referred to as stenosis of the artery. There are various procedures to treat the stenosis of a vessel, including angioplasty and/or the placement of a stent at the point of stenosis to reopen the vessel. Restenosis of the bifurcated vessel can occur over time. It is desirable to minimize the effects of restenosis.

[0024] The catheter assemblies, systems and methods disclosed herein can be used for locating a branch vessel of the vessel bifurcation and for treatment of stenoses of such vessels. In some examples, the catheter assemblies include one or more cutting members that are used to cut the vessel tissue at or near the stenosis. As used herein, the term "cut" means to gash, incise, slash, slit, open, or otherwise penetrate. In one example, the cutting is done during delivery of a therapy, such

as the placement of a stent relative to the vessel bifurcation for treatment of the vessel bifurcation. Other arrangements are possible. In the examples shown, the cutting of the vessel tissue can help to minimize restenosis of the vessel.

II. The Example Illustrated in FIGS. 1-6

[0025] An example catheter assembly 10 is shown schematically with reference to FIGS. 1-6. The catheter assembly 10 is configured for treatment of a vessel bifurcation, such as a vessel bifurcation 80 described below.

[0026] Referring now to FIG. 1, the catheter assembly 10 includes a main catheter branch 12 and a side catheter branch 14. The main catheter branch 12 includes a catheter shaft 20 having a proximal end portion 28 with a proximal end 18 and a distal end portion 30. The catheter shaft 20 defines a main inflation lumen extending therethrough. The main catheter branch 12 further includes a main guidewire housing 22. The main guidewire housing 22 defines a main guidewire lumen.

[0027] The main catheter branch 12 further includes a main balloon 24 extending along the guidewire housing 22. A proximal waist 38 of the main balloon 24 is operably mounted to the catheter shaft 20, and a distal waist 36 of the main balloon 24 is operably mounted to the main guidewire housing 22.

[0028] The main catheter branch 12 further includes a side balloon 26. See FIG. 3. The side balloon 26 includes an inflatable portion 45, a distal waist 44, and proximal waist 46. The side balloon 26 generally extends around the main balloon 24.

[0029] The waist members 44, 46 define a side inflation lumen through which inflation fluid is provided to the side balloon 26. When uninflated, the inflatable portion 45 of the side balloon 26 maintains a generally collapsed profile. When inflated as shown in FIG. 3, the inflatable portion 45 of the side balloon 26 extends radially outward relative to the longitudinal axis of the main balloon 24.

[0030] Typically, the distal waist 44 is operably mounted to the main guidewire member 22 distal of the main balloon 24, and the distal waist 44 is also operably mounted in fluid communication with the side balloon 26. The proximal waist 46 is operably mounted in fluid communication to the inflation portion 45. The proximal waist 44 is also operably mounted to the distal end portion of the catheter shaft 20 in fluid communication with the main inflation lumen therein. The main balloon 24 is also coupled in fluid communication with the inflation lumen.

[0031] As shown in FIGS. 1 and 3, the side catheter branch 14 extends generally along the catheter shaft 20. In examples, the side catheter branch 14 is generally parallel to the catheter shaft 20, although other configurations are possible. The side catheter branch 14 has a side guidewire lumen extending therethrough. The side catheter branch 14 is used to align features of the catheter assembly 10 with the ostium into the branch vessel, as described below.

[0032] In the example shown in FIGS. 1 and 3, the side catheter branch 14 is coupled to the main catheter branch 12 by a ring assembly 53. The ring assembly 53 including a first portion 55 coupled to the main catheter branch 12 so that the ring assembly 53 is fixed axially with respect to the main catheter branch 12. In the example shown, the ring assembly 53 is positioned proximally on the main catheter branch 12 approximately one inch from the proximal waist 38 of the main balloon 24. Other positions are possible. A second portion 57 of the ring assembly 53 is coupled to the first compo-

nent 55 such that the second portion 57 can rotate about the first component 55. The side catheter branch 14 is coupled to the second portion 57 so that the side catheter branch 14 can rotate about the main catheter branch 12, while being fixed axially by the ring assembly 53.

[0033] Referring to FIGS. 1-3, positioned about the main and side balloons 24, 26 is a sheath 52. In example arrangements, the sheath 52 is crimped or otherwise attached to the balloons 24, 26 and/or the side catheter branch 14. For example, in one arrangement, the sheath 52 is coupled to the side catheter branch 14 so that the sheath 52 can rotate about the main catheter branch 12 to a desired orientation.

[0034] Attached to an outer circumference 54 of the sheath 52 are one or more articulated cutting members, such as cutting members 62, 64. Each cutting member 62, 64 includes a first cutting portion 66 and a second cutting portion 68. In the example shown, the first cutting portions 66 of each of the cutting members 62, 64 are coupled to the outer circumference 54 of the sheath 52.

[0035] The second cutting portions 68 are rotatably coupled to the first cutting portions 66 so that the second cutting portions 68 can pivot with respect to the first cutting portions 66. In example arrangements, the second cutting portions 68 can pivot generally outwardly away from the outer circumference 54 of the sheath 52. For example, the second cutting portions 68 can rotate generally radially outwardly from the outer circumference 54. In some arrangements, the second cutting portions 68 rotate in a direction generally perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of the main catheter branch 12. In one arrangement, the second cutting portions 68 are positioned to extend adjacent to and overlap an aperture 92 formed in the sheath 54 (see FIG. 2), such that the side balloon 26 can extend through the aperture 92 to contact and pivot the second cutting portions 68.

[0036] For example, referring now to FIG. 3, the catheter assembly 10 is shown with the main and side balloons 24, 26 in expanded form in the deployed state. As the side balloon 26 is expanded, the inflatable portion 45 extends through the aperture 92 in the sheath 52 (see FIG. 2) to engage a lower surface 98 of the second cutting portions 68 of the cutting members 62, 64. As the inflatable portion 45 expands, the inflatable portion 45 forces the second cutting portions 68 to pivot in opposite directions 94, 96 with respect to the first cutting portions 66. In this manner, the first and second cutting portions 66, 68 can be forced against and cut the stenosis in the main and branch portions of the vessel, as described further below.

[0037] An outer surface 70 of each cutting member 62, 64 is configured to cut tissue, such as a stenosis in the bifurcated vessel. For example, in one embodiment, the outer surface 70 includes a sharpened edge that can be used to mechanically cut the stenosis. In other arrangements, the outer surface 70 can be used to deliver other therapies that are capable of cutting the stenosis, such as Radio Frequency (RF), ultrasonic, or other electromechanical ablation therapies.

[0038] The cutting members 62, 64 can be delivered to the stenosis in the bifurcated vessel using a variety of methods. For example, as described below with reference to FIGS. 4-6, the outer surface 70 of the cutting members 62, 64 can be coated with a material, such as polymeric material, that covers the cutting members 62, 64 so that the cutting members 62, 64 do not cut the blood vessel during delivery of the cutting member 62, 64 to the stenosis. Once at the desired site, the polymeric material can be removed so that the outer

surface **70** can be used to cut the stenosis. For example, in one arrangement, the coating is removed by applying an electrical charge to the cutting members **62**, **64** to erode the polymeric material. In other embodiments, the cutting members **62**, **64** are configured such that, as the cutting members **62**, **64** are employed as described below, the outer surface **70** cuts through the coating to cut the blood vessel.

[0039] In yet other arrangements, the cutting members **62**, **64** can be folded against the outer circumference **54** of the sheath **52** during delivery. When the cutting members **62**, **64** reach the stenosis, the cutting members **62**, **64** can be mechanically moved into the cutting position. In one example, the cutting members **62**, **64** are moved into the cutting position using hydraulic pressure from the fluid in the inflation lumens for the main and side balloons **24**, **26**. In another embodiment, electricity is used to excite a ferrofluidic fluid within the balloons **24**, **26** and/or a lumen connected to the cutting members **62**, **64** to cause the cutting members **62**, **64** to move from a stowed position to the cutting position, or the cutting members **62**, **64** can themselves include Electroactive Polymers (EAP). In another arrangement, the cutting members **62**, **64** can be made of a shape memory material such as nitinol. In yet another example, an outer sheath can be placed over the cutting members **62**, **64** during delivery. The outer sheath can be removed once the cutting members **62**, **64** are at the stenosis to allow the cutting members **62**, **64** to cut the stenosis.

[0040] In yet another example, the cutting members **62**, **64** can be coupled directly to the main or side balloons. See FIGS. **7** and **8**. In such arrangements, the cutting members can be encompassed within the folds of the main or side balloons during delivery. See FIG. **9**. Upon expansion of the main or side balloons, the cutting members **62**, **64** are exposed to allow the cutting members **62**, **64** to cut the walls of the vessels. Other examples are possible.

[0041] In yet other examples, a plurality of cutting members can be mounted about the circumference of the sheath **52**. Upon delivery the sheath **52** extends at least partially into the bifurcated vessel, so that the cutting members located on the sheath can cut the bifurcated vessel. The cutting members on the sheath can also contact portions of the main vessel to cut any stenosis located in the main vessel as well. Other configurations are possible.

[0042] Referring now to FIGS. **4-6**, the catheter assembly **10** can be used for treatment of the vessel bifurcation **80**. Typically, a main vessel guidewire **62** is inserted into a main vessel **82** of the vessel bifurcation **80** to a point distal of the vessel bifurcation. A branch vessel guidewire **60** is advanced to the vessel bifurcation and inserted through an ostium or opening **86** of a branch vessel **84**. A proximal end of the main vessel guidewire **62** is then inserted into the main guidewire lumen, and a proximal end of the branch vessel guidewire **60** is inserted into a branch guidewire lumen defined by the side catheter branch **14**. See FIG. **4**.

[0043] The catheter assembly **10** is advanced over the guidewires **60**, **62** to the vessel bifurcation **80**. See FIG. **5**. The catheter assembly **10** is then advanced further distally until a distal end portion **56** of the side catheter branch **14** is positioned within the branch vessel **60**. A marker system (described further below) can be used to help confirm proper radial and axial alignment of the lateral branch opening **54** of the sheath **52** relative to the ostium **86** into the branch vessel **84**.

[0044] As the side catheter branch **14** follows the branch vessel guidewire **60**, the side catheter branch **14** rotates about the main catheter branch **12** at the ring assembly **53**. As the side catheter branch **14** rotates about the main catheter branch **12**, the sheath **52**, which is coupled to the side catheter branch **14**, also rotates about the main catheter branch **12** so that the aperture **92** formed in the sheath **54** (see FIG. **2**), is aligned with the ostium **86** of the branch vessel **84**.

[0045] After proper positioning of the catheter assembly **10** is confirmed, the main and branch balloons **24**, **26** are inflated. As the side balloon **26** is inflated, the inflatable portion **45** positioned at the aperture **92** extends through the aperture of the sheath **54**. The remaining portions of the side balloon **26** contact and are held within the sheath **52** so that only the inflatable portion **45** extends through the aperture **92**. The inflatable portion **45** contacts and moves the second cutting portions **68** of the cutting members **62**, **64**. As the inflatable portion **45** is further inflated, the second cutting portions **68** pivot in the directions **94**, **96** with respect to the first cutting portions **66** so that the second cutting portions **68** engage the ostium **86** and/or the wall of the branch vessel **84**. In this position, the first and second cutting portions **66**, **68** of the cutting members **62**, **64** can be used to cut any stenosis on the walls of the main or branch vessels **82**, **84**.

[0046] In one example, the sheath **52** can be moved axially within the main vessel **82** when the cutting members **62**, **64** are in place to cause the cutting members **62**, **64** to cut the stenosis in the vessels **82**, **84** as desired. For example, in one arrangement, the second portion **57** of the ring assembly **53** can be released from the first component **55** once the catheter assembly **10** is in place so that the side catheter branch **14** can be moved axially with respect to the main catheter branch **12** to move the sheath **52** axially within the main vessel **82**. In other arrangements, other therapies such as RF or electrical can be delivered to initiate cutting.

[0047] In some examples, additional therapy can be delivered after the cutting members **62**, **64** are used to cut the stenosis. For example, in one arrangement, one or more drugs are delivered to further minimize restenosis after the walls of the vessels **82**, **84** have been cut.

[0048] In another example, a bifurcated stent is delivered to the bifurcation **80** after the walls of the vessels **82**, **84** are cut. For example, a stent (not shown) can be positioned about the sheath **54**. After the cutting members **62**, **64** are used to cut the stenosis, the sheath **54** can be removed from the catheter assembly **10**, and the stent can then be delivered to the bifurcated vessel by further expansion of the main and side balloons **24**, **26**.

[0049] Other configurations are possible. For instance, in another example, the cutting members can be coupled directly to the stent. The cutting members can be made of a bioabsorbable material, such as iron or magnesium, so that, after delivery and cutting, the cutting members dissolve or otherwise dissipate over time.

[0050] It can be advantageous to use the cutting members **62**, **64** to cut and create stress points on the walls of the main and/or side vessels **82**, **84** adjacent to the ostium **86** because cutting of the area of the stenosis can minimize future restenosis of the area. For example, typically, the healthy portions of the blood vessel are more elastic than the heavily calcified regions of the stenosis. During deployment of therapy using balloons, the healthy portions of the blood vessel are therefore stretched more easily, which can cause stress-induced inflammatory effects leading to new stenoses. The use of the cutting

members to cut the calcification associated with the stenoses allows the stenosis to be more easily expanded as well, thereby causing less stretching of the healthy blood vessel walls and the associated stress-induced inflammatory effects.

III. The Example Illustrated in FIG. 7

[0051] Referring now to FIG. 7, another example distal end portion **110** of a catheter assembly is shown. The distal end portion **110** is similar to that of the catheter assembly **10** described above, except that cutting members **162**, **164** are coupled to the side balloon **26**, rather than a sheath. The first cutting portion **66** of each cutting member **162**, **164** is coupled to the balloon **26**, and the second cutting portion **68** of each cutting member **162**, **164** is coupled to the first cutting portion **66** so that the second cutting portion **68** can pivot with respect to the first cutting portion **66**.

[0052] As the side balloon **26** is inflated as shown in FIG. 7, the inflatable portion **45** of the side balloon **26** contacts and moves the second cutting portion **68** of each of the cutting members **162**, **164** so that the second cutting portions **68** pivot in directions **194**, **196**. In this manner, the first cutting portions **66** can be used to cut the wall of the main vessel, and the second cutting portions **68** can be used to cut the wall of the branch vessel of the bifurcation.

IV. The Example Illustrated in FIGS. 8 and 9

[0053] Referring now to FIG. 8, another example distal end portion **210** of a catheter assembly is shown. The distal end portion **210** includes a balloon **224** with a bulge **226** when inflated as shown in FIG. 8. Cutting members **262**, **264** are coupled to the balloon **224**. The first cutting portion **66** of each cutting member **262**, **264** is coupled to the balloon **224**, and the second cutting portion **68** of each cutting member **262**, **264** is coupled to the first cutting portion **66** so that the second cutting portion **68** can pivot with respect to the first cutting portion **66**.

[0054] As the balloon **224** is inflated as shown in FIG. 8, the bulge **226** contacts and moves the second cutting portion **68** of each of the cutting members **262**, **264** so that the second cutting portions **68** pivot. In this manner, the first cutting portions **66** can be used to cut the wall of the main vessel, and the second cutting portions **68** can be used to cut the wall of the branch vessel at the bifurcation.

[0055] Referring now to FIG. 9, the balloon **224** is shown in a semi-folded state. A plurality of folds **228** are formed as the balloon **224** is folded to reduce the profile of the balloon **224** in the non-deployed state. An example of a balloon folded in such a manner is shown in U.S. Pat. No. 7,160,317 filed on Jan. 4, 2002, the entirety of which is hereby incorporated by reference. The cutting members **262** and **264** (not shown in this view) are positioned in the interior between two folds **228** of the balloon **224** so that the cutting members **262**, **264** are shielded by the folds **228** of the balloon **224** until the balloon **224** is expanded. Upon expansion of the balloon **224**, the folds **228** dissipate and the cutting members **262**, **264** are exposed and moved to the cutting position shown in FIG. 8.

V. Alternative Arrangements for the Cutting Members

[0056] Referring now to FIG. 10, another arrangement for a distal end portion **310** of a catheter assembly is shown. The distal end portion **310** includes a plurality of cutting members **362**, **363**, **364**, **365** coupled to the balloon **224**. In the example shown, the cutting members **362**, **364** are coupled to the

balloon **224**, and the cutting members **363**, **365** are coupled to the bulge **226**. The cutting members **362**, **363**, **364**, **365** each form a “sharks tooth” or pyramid configuration with a pointed cutting surface **370**. In this manner, the cutting members **362**, **364** can be used to cut the wall of the main vessel, and the cutting member **363**, **365** can be used to cut the wall of the branch vessel of the bifurcation. In the example shown, the cutting members **363**, **364**, **365**, **366** are configured to fold laterally against the surface of the balloon **224** until the balloon **224** is inflated. For example, elastic members (not shown) made of a compliant material such as silicon rubber can be used to hold the cutting members **363**, **364**, **365**, **366** against the surface of the balloon **224** prior to deployment.

[0057] Referring now to FIGS. 11-13, another example cutting member **462** is shown, which is similar to the cutting members **62**, **64** shown in FIGS. 1-9. The cutting member **462** includes first and second cutting portions **466**, **468**. The second cutting portion **468** pivots about a point **472** in a direction **480** with respect to the first cutting portion **466**. In example embodiments, the cutting member **462** is configured to allow the second cutting portion **468** to pivot to a specified angle α with respect to the first cutting portion **466**. In some examples, the angle α is greater than 90 degrees. In other examples, the angle α is less than 90 degrees. In the examples in which the angle α is less than 90 degrees, the first and second cutting portions **466**, **468** can create a “scissor-type” action that captures and cuts the vessel at the ostium between the first and second cutting portions **466**, **468** to thereby enhance the cutting action of the cutting member **462**. In example arrangements, the appropriate angle α is determined by the caregiver during a prescan of the bifurcation.

[0058] Other arrangements for the cutting members are possible. For example, in one alternative, each cutting member is broken into more than two portions that can pivot with respect to one another. In yet another example, each cutting member is made of a single portion. In yet another arrangement, some of the cutting members can be located on a sheath, and other cutting members can be located on the main or side balloons. Other configurations are possible.

[0059] The cutting members can be deployed at various points along the sheath and/or balloon to cut various portions of the walls of the main or branch vessels. In one alternative example, a plurality of cutting members are formed along the main balloon, side balloon, sheath, and/or an outer circumference of the side branch lumen to cut the walls of the main and/or side branch vessels at a plurality of sites. The cutting members can extend at one or a plurality of directions and/or orientations with respect to the other cutting members and the walls of the main and/or side branch vessels.

[0060] In yet another alternative, a kissing balloon arrangement can be used, in which a main balloon is positioned in the main vessel, and a side balloon is positioned along the main balloon. A distal part of the side balloon is positioned through the ostium into a branch vessel. Cutting members can be positioned along the side balloon, such as on the distal part that extends into the branch vessel. Upon inflation of the side balloon, the cutting members cut the vessel wall of the branch vessel, as described above. Other configurations are possible.

VI. Other Alternative Materials and Arrangements

[0061] In some arrangements, the distal end portions **30**, **110**, **210**, **310** of the catheter assemblies can include marker material that is visible under X-ray or in fluoroscopy procedures. In some examples, the mark material is positioned

along the distal end portions of the main and side catheter branches. Features of the system **10** that include marker material can be more easily identified and distinguished under X-ray or in fluoroscopy procedures. Some example marker materials include gold, platinum and tungsten. In one embodiment, the marker material can be included in a band structure that is secured to at least one of the main and side catheter branches **12**, **14**. In other embodiments, the marker material is part of the material composition of portions of the main and side catheter branches **12**, **14**. Viewability of features of the catheter assembly **10** under X-ray or fluoroscopy can assist the physician operating the system **10** to more easily adjust a position of the system **10** relative to the vessel bifurcation **80**. Example markers and marker materials suitable for use with system **10** are described in U.S. Pat. No. 6,692,483 to Vardi, et al., and co-pending U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 60/776,149, filed on Feb. 22, 2006, and titled MARKER ARRANGEMENT

[0062] FOR BIFURCATION CATHETER, which patent matters are incorporated herein by reference.

[0063] Alternative catheter assemblies to those described above are configured for use with stents having self-expanding features. Self-expanding stents and self-expanding features of a stent typically do not require the use of an inflatable member such as a balloon to expand the stent or stent feature. Typically, self-expanding stents, such as those stents described in U.S. Published Patent Application No. 2004/0176837, are held in a constricted state using a sheath that fits over the stent. In the constricted state, the stent is able to navigate through a body lumen to the treatment site. Once the stent and sheath are positioned at the treatment site, the sheath is retracted proximally to release the stent for expansion of the stent into a radially expanded state.

[0064] A wide variety of stents, catheters, and guidewire configurations can be used with the catheter assembly embodiments of the present disclosure. The inventive principles disclosed herein should not be limited to any particular design or configuration. Some example stents that can be used with the catheter assemblies disclosed herein can be found in, for example, U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,210,429, 6,325,826 and 6,706,062 to Vardi et al., U.S. Pat. No. 7,220,275 to Davidson et al., and U.S. Published Patent Application No. 2004/0176837 titled SELF-EXPANDING STENT AND CATHETER ASSEMBLY AND METHOD FOR TREATING BIFURCATIONS, the entire contents of which are incorporated herein by reference. In general, the aforementioned stents include a lateral branch opening located between distal and proximal open ends of the stent. The lateral branch opening defines a path between an inner lumen of the stent and an area outside of the stent. The stent lateral branch opening is distinct from the cell openings defined between strut structures from which the stent sidewall is constructed. In some stents, the lateral branch opening can be surrounded by expandable structure. The expandable structure can be configured to extend radially into the branch lumen of the bifurcation upon expansion of, for example, an inflatable portion of the bifurcation treatment system. Typically, the stent is expanded after being positioned in the main lumen with the lateral branch opening aligned with an opening into the branch lumen. Alignment of the lateral branch opening with the opening into the branch lumen includes both radial and axial alignment. The stent, including the expandable structure surrounding the lateral branch opening, can be expanded with a single expansion or multiple expansions using one or more inflatable members.

[0065] The main and side balloons, and all other balloons disclosed herein, can be made of any suitable balloon material including compliant and non-compliant materials and combinations thereof. Some example materials for the balloons and catheters disclosed herein include thermoplastic polymers, polyethylene (high density, low density, intermediate density, linear low density), various co-polymers and blends of polyethylene, ionomers, polyesters, polycarbonates, polyamides, poly-vinyl chloride, acrylonitrile-butadiene-styrene copolymers, polyether-polyester copolymers, and polyetherpolyamide copolymers. One suitable material is SUR-LYN®, a copolymer polyolefin material (DuPont de Nemours, Wilmington, Del.). Still further suitable materials include thermoplastic polymers and thermoset polymeric materials, poly(ethylene terephthalate) (commonly referred to as PET), thermoplastic polyamide, polyphenylene sulfides, polypropylene. Some other example materials include polyurethanes and block copolymers, such as polyamide-polyether block copolymers or amide-tetramethylene glycol copolymers. Additional examples include the PEBAX® (a polyamide/polyether/polyester block copolymer) family of polymers, e.g., PEBAX® 70D, 72D, 2533, 5533, 6333, 7033, or 7233 (available from Elf AtoChem, Philadelphia, Pa.). Other examples include nylons, such as aliphatic nylons, for example, Vestamid L21011F, Nylon 11 (Elf Atochem), Nylon 6 (Allied Signal), Nylon 6/10 (BASF), Nylon 6/12 (Ashley Polymers), or Nylon 12. Additional examples of nylons include aromatic nylons, such as Grivory (EMS) and Nylon MXD-6. Other nylons and/or combinations of nylons can also be used. Still further examples include polybutylene terephthalate (PBT), such as CELANEX® (available from Ticona, Summit, N.J.), polyester/ether block copolymers such as ARNITEL® (available from DSM, Erionspilla, Ind.), e.g., ARNITEL® EM740, aromatic amides such as Trogamid (PA6-3-T, Degussa), and thermoplastic elastomers such as HYTREL® (Dupont de Nemours, Wilmington, Del.). In some embodiments, the PEBAX®, HYTREL®, and ARNITEL® materials have a Shore D hardness of about 45D to about 82D. The balloon materials can be used pure or as blends. For example, a blend may include a PBT and one or more PBT thermoplastic elastomers, such as RITEFLEX® (available from Ticona), ARNITEL®, or HYTREL®, or polyethylene terephthalate (PET) and a thermoplastic elastomer, such as a PBT thermoplastic elastomer. Additional examples of balloon material can be found in U.S. Pat. No. 6,146,356, which is incorporated herein by reference.

VII. Conclusion

[0066] As described herein, example arrangements include a catheter assembly for deployment in a bifurcated vessel. The catheter assembly includes a catheter shaft extending from a proximal end portion to a distal end portion, and a balloon operatively coupled to the distal end portion of the catheter shaft. The catheter assembly also includes a sheath positioned about the balloon, the sheath including at least one cutting member coupled thereto. As the balloon is inflated, the cutting member is moved to a position to cut a portion of a main vessel and/or the bifurcated vessel. In some examples, the cutting member includes first and second portions, the first portion being coupled to and pivoting with respect to the second portion to cut the bifurcated vessel. In this manner, restenosis of the bifurcated vessel is minimized.

[0067] It is noted that not all of the features characterized herein need to be incorporated within a given arrangement, for the arrangement to include improvements according to the present disclosure.

What is claimed is:

1. A catheter assembly for use in a vessel, the catheter assembly comprising:

a catheter shaft extending from a proximal end portion to a distal end portion;

a balloon assembly operatively coupled to the distal end portion of the catheter shaft; and

at least one cutting member positioned relative to the balloon assembly, wherein the at least one cutting member includes a first cutting portion and a second cutting portion, wherein the second cutting portion is rotatably coupled to the first cutting portion such that when the balloon assembly is inflated the second cutting portion pivots relative to the first cutting portion in a direction generally radially outward from the balloon assembly.

2. The catheter assembly of claim 1, wherein the second cutting portion is configured to rotate in a direction generally perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of the catheter shaft.

3. The catheter assembly of claim 1, wherein the first cutting portion is coupled to the balloon assembly and the second cutting portion is coupled to the first cutting portion.

4. The catheter assembly of claim 1, wherein the balloon assembly includes a bulge portion, wherein, as the balloon assembly is inflated, the bulge portion is configured to contact and pivot the second cutting portion.

5. The catheter assembly of claim 4, wherein the first cutting portion is attached to the balloon assembly proximal or distal of the bulge portion.

6. The catheter assembly of claim 1, wherein the balloon assembly includes a main balloon and a side balloon, wherein the at least one cutting member is coupled to the side balloon such that as the side balloon is inflated the side balloon is configured to contact and pivot the second cutting portion.

7. The catheter assembly of claim 1, further comprising a sheath positioned about the balloon assembly, wherein the at least one cutting member is coupled to the sheath.

8. The catheter assembly of claim 7, wherein the first cutting portion is coupled to the sheath and the second cutting portion is coupled to the first cutting portion.

9. The catheter assembly of claim 1, wherein the at least one cutting member includes a cutting surface being an exposed edge of the cutting member positioned opposite the balloon assembly.

10. A method for forming a catheter assembly for deployment in a bifurcated vessel, the method comprising:

providing a catheter shaft extending from a proximal end portion to a distal end portion;

coupling a balloon assembly at the distal end portion of the catheter shaft; and

positioning a cutting member relative to the balloon assembly, the cutting member including a first cutting portion and a second cutting portion, the second cutting portion being rotatably coupled to the first cutting portion, wherein the cutting member is positioned such that, when the balloon assembly is inflated, the balloon

assembly pivots the second cutting portion relative to the first cutting member in a direction radially outward from the balloon assembly

11. The catheter assembly of claim 10, wherein the second cutting portion is configured to rotate in a direction generally perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of the catheter shaft.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein positioning the cutting member includes coupling the cutting member to the balloon assembly.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the balloon assembly includes a main balloon and a side balloon, wherein the cutting member is positioned adjacent to the side balloon such that the side balloon pivots the second cutting portion of the cutting member when inflated.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein the balloon assembly includes a bulge portion, wherein the cutting member is positioned adjacent to the bulge portion such that when the bulge portion is inflated, the bulge portion pivots the second cutting portion of the cutting member.

15. The method of claim 10, further comprising providing a sheath positioned about the balloon assembly, wherein the cutting member is coupled to an outer surface of the sheath.

16. The method of claim 15, further comprising defining an aperture in the sheath through which the balloon assembly extends upon inflation, wherein the second cutting portion of the cutting member is positioned to extend over the aperture so that the balloon assembly contacts and rotates the cutting portion upon inflation.

17. A catheter assembly for use in a vessel, the catheter assembly comprising:

a catheter shaft extending from a proximal end portion to a distal end portion;

a main balloon coupled to the distal end portion of the catheter shaft;

a side balloon including a proximal waist and a distal waist, wherein the proximal waist is coupled to the catheter shaft proximal of the main balloon and the distal waist is coupled to the catheter shaft distal of the main balloon; and

a first cutting member coupled to the side balloon, wherein the first cutting member includes a first cutting portion and a second cutting portion, wherein the second cutting portion is rotatably coupled to the first cutting portion such that when the side balloon is inflated the second cutting portion pivots relative to the first cutting portion.

18. The catheter assembly of claim 17, wherein the second cutting portion is configured to rotate in a direction generally perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of the catheter shaft.

19. The catheter assembly of claim 17, wherein the first cutting portion is coupled to the side balloon and the second cutting portion is coupled to the first cutting portion.

20. The catheter assembly of claim 17, further comprising a second cutting member coupled to the side balloon, wherein the second cutting member includes a first cutting portion and a second cutting portion, wherein the first cutting portion is coupled to the side balloon and the second cutting portion is rotatably coupled to the first cutting portion such that when the side balloon is inflated the second cutting portion pivots relative to the first cutting portion.

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