

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
4 October 2007 (04.10.2007)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2007/111670 A1

(51) International Patent Classification:
A61B 1/018 (2006.01)

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(21) International Application Number:
PCT/US2006/048953

(81) Designated States (*unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available*): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KM, KN, KP, KR, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, LY, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RS, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, SV, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(22) International Filing Date:
21 December 2006 (21.12.2006)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
11/386,861 22 March 2006 (22.03.2006) US

(84) Designated States (*unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available*): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

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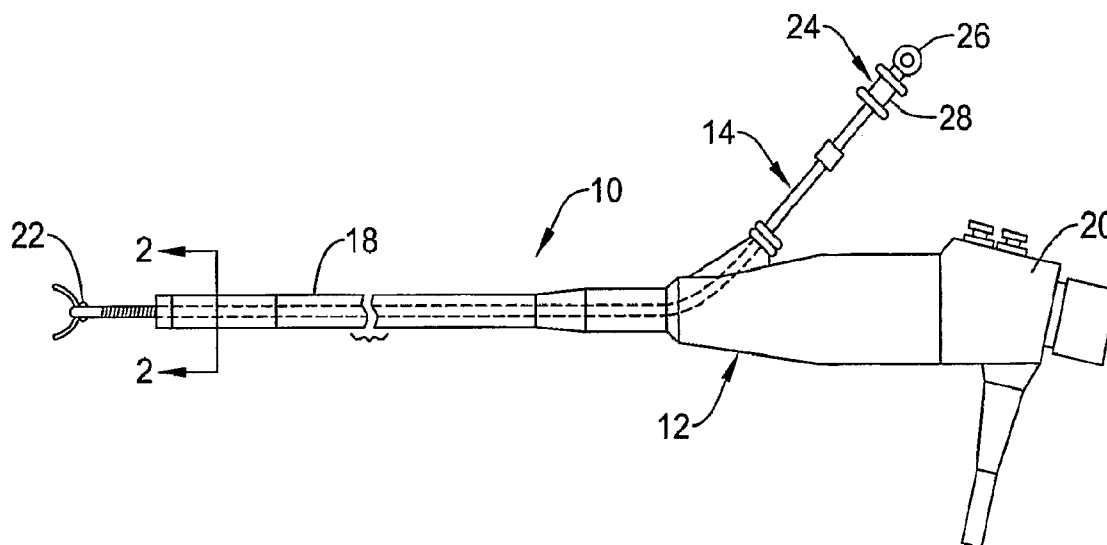
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Published:

- with international search report
- before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments

[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: ENDOSCOPE WORKING CHANNEL WITH MULTIPLE FUNCTIONALITY



(57) Abstract: Endoscopic instrument assemblies and methods for making and using the same. An example endoscopic instrument assembly includes an endoscope having a working channel and an endoscopic instrument slidably disposed in the working channel. The inside surface of the working channel and the outside surface of the endoscopic instrument each have a non-circular cross-sectional shape along at least a portion of their respective lengths.

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ENDOSCOPE WORKING CHANNEL WITH MULTIPLE FUNCTIONALITY

Field of the Invention

This invention pertains broadly to surgical instruments. More particularly, this invention pertains to an endoscope and endoscopic instruments that are disposed in a working channel of the endoscope.

Background

A wide variety of medical devices have been developed for medical use, for example, endoscopic and/or surgical use. Some of these devices include endoscopes, endoscopic instruments, and other related devices that have certain characteristics. Of the known medical devices, each has certain advantages and disadvantages. There is an ongoing need to provide alternative designs and methods of making and using medical devices.

Brief Summary

The invention provides design, material, and manufacturing method alternatives for medical devices, for example, endoscopes, endoscopic instruments, and endoscopic instrument assemblies. An example endoscopic instrument assembly includes an endoscope having a working channel and an endoscopic instrument slidably disposed in the working channel. The inside surface of the working channel and the outside surface of the endoscopic instrument each have a non-circular cross-sectional shape along at least a portion of their respective lengths. Methods for making and using medical devices including endoscopic instrument assemblies are also disclosed. Some of these and other features and characteristics of the inventive devices and methods are described in more detail below.

The above summary of some embodiments is not intended to describe each disclosed embodiment or every implementation of the present invention. The Figures, and Detailed Description, which follow, more particularly exemplify these embodiments.

Brief Description of the Drawings

The invention may be more completely understood in consideration of the following detailed description of various embodiments of the invention in connection with the accompanying drawings, in which:

- 5 FIG. 1 is side view of an example endoscopic instrument assembly;
 FIG. 2 is a cross-section across line 2 – 2 in FIG. 1;
 FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional view of an example working channel;
 FIG. 3A is a cross-section across line 3A – 3A in FIG. 3;
 FIG. 3B is a cross-section across line 3B – 3B in FIG. 3;
10 FIG. 4 is a side view of a portion of an example endoscopic instrument;
 FIG. 4A is a cross-section across line 4A – 4A in FIG. 4;
 FIG. 4B is a cross-section across line 4B – 4B in FIG. 4;
 FIG. 5 is a cross-sectional view of another example working channel;
 FIG. 6 is a cross-section across line 6 – 6 in FIG. 5;
15 FIG. 7 is an alternative example cross-section taken across line 6–6 in FIG. 5;
 FIG. 8 is a cross-sectional view of another example working channel having a plurality of endoscopic instruments disposed therein; and
 FIG. 9 is a cross-sectional view of the working channel shown in FIG. 8 having a plurality of different instruments disposed therein.

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Detailed Description

The following description should be read with reference to the drawings wherein like reference numerals indicate like elements throughout the several views. The detailed description and drawings illustrate example embodiments of the claimed
25 invention.

FIG. 1 illustrates an example endoscopic instrument assembly 10. Assembly 10 includes an endoscope 12 and an endoscopic instrument 14 disposed in a working channel (not shown in FIG. 1, see FIG. 2 for example working channels) defined in endoscope 12. Endoscope 12 includes an elongate tubular portion 18 and a proximal
30 handle portion 20 adapted to manipulate and direct the distal end of tubular portion 18.

Endoscopic instrument 14 may include an end effector 22 and one or more control members 24 that may manipulate or otherwise control end effector 22. In some embodiments, end effector 22 may be a biopsy forceps or linkage mechanism as

depicted in FIG. 1. Alternatively, end effector 22 may be a snare loop, scissors, punch, needle, and the like, or any other suitable device. Control member 24 may include a thumb ring 26 and a displaceable spool 28, which can be used to manipulate and/or actuate end effector 22. Some additional details regarding suitable types of end effectors and control members (which can also be described as or take the form of handles) can be found in U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,537,205; 6,840,900; 6,454,702; 6,881,186; 6,235,026; and 6,517,539, the entire disclosures of which are incorporated herein by reference.

FIG. 2 is a cross-sectional view of tubular portion 18 of endoscope 12. Here it can be seen that tubular portion 18 may include one or more channels. One or more of these channels, for example channel 30, may be provided for receiving an optical scope or camera device 32 (which may be built therein). A number of additional lumens 34/36/38/40 may be included for receiving control wires 42/44/46/48 that may extend from the handle portion 20 through the tubular portion 18. One or more working channels 50/52/54/56 may also be provided for receiving endoscopic instruments, for example endoscopic instrument 14, therethrough. Other lumens 58/60 may be provided for other purposes. Some additional details regarding endoscopes are described in general in U.S. Pat. No. 5,179,935 to Miyagi, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety. It should be noted that tubular portion 18 could also be a tubular medical device other than an endoscope, such as a catheter or guiding tube that includes any number of the features and characteristics of similar devices disclosed herein. Therefore, to the extent applicable, discussion found below relating to channels and instruments may also be applicable to tubular medical devices such as catheters or guiding tubes that include one, two, three or more lumens or channels that are configured to accommodate instruments.

Working channel 52, as depicted in FIG. 2, has a non-circular cross-sectional shape. In this example, the cross-sectional shape is that of a six-sided polygon (i.e., a hexagon). It can be appreciated that a number of alternative shapes may be utilized without departing from the spirit of the invention. For example, the cross-sectional shape may resemble a three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, or more sided polygon. The polygon may be regular (i.e., all sides having the same length and all angles between the sides being equal) or irregular. In addition, any other suitable "non-polygonal" shape may be utilized including partially circular shapes, irregular shapes, random shapes, other geometric shapes, or any other suitable shape. Other

configurations may include a screw thread or helical ridge or groove formed in channel 52. It should be noted that a vast variety of shapes are contemplated for working channel 52 as well as other channels and instruments disclosed herein.

An endoscopic instrument 62 is disposed in channel 52. Instrument 62 has a generally circular cross-sectional shape. The differences between the shape of channel 52 and instrument 62 may be desirable for a number of reasons. For example, because of the differences in the shape, the blank or vacant space between channel 52 and instrument 62 may allow for fluids to be infused or aspirated through channel 52 while instrument 62 is in place. In some instances, a secondary device (e.g., a needle, guidewire, etc.) may also be disposed in channel 56 adjacent instrument 62. The converse of working channel 52 and instrument 62 is working channel 56 and endoscopic instrument 64. Here, channel 56 has a generally circular cross-sectional shape while instrument 64 has a non-circular cross-sectional shape. This arrangement may be desirable for similar reasons as the arrangement of channel 52 and instrument 62.

In addition, the differences in shape between channels 52/56 and instruments 62/64 may also reduce the surface area in which channels 52/56 and instruments 62/64 are in contact. Reducing surface area contact or otherwise providing space between the working channel and the endoscopic instrument may reduce "backlash" (also known as "whip"). Backlash is understood to be a phenomenon where rotation or other manipulations of an instrument (e.g. instruments 62/64) on one end is not immediately translated to the other end of the instrument until, after a certain amount of un-translated motion occurs, the instrument abruptly translates the motion and/or otherwise "whips" around to catch up with the motion.

Channel 50 is similar to channel 52 in that it has a non-circular cross-sectional shape. Unlike channel 52, however, is that endoscopic instrument 14 disposed in channel 50 also has a non-circular cross-sectional shape. The shapes of channel 50 and instrument 14 are, thus, complementary. i.e., the inner surface of working channel 50 has an inner perimeter and the outer surface of endoscopic instrument 14 has an outer perimeter, and the inner perimeter and the outer perimeter are substantially equal. The complementary shapes allow instrument 14 to fit within channel 50 much like how a key fits in a lock.

Utilizing a "lock-and-key" relationship between channel 50 and instrument 14 may be desirable for a number of reasons. For example, using complementary shapes

allows the user to keep track of the orientation of instrument 14 within channel 50. This may be particularly useful when the endoscopic intervention depends on instrument 14 having a particular orientation and/or when it is helpful to the clinician to know what orientation instrument 14 is in at any given time. For example, it may
5 be useful for a clinician to know whether a particular end effector 22 (e.g., a biopsy forceps) is "rightside-up" or "upside-down" prior to attempting to actuate the end effector 22. To further aid this orientation capability, instrument 14 may also include a visual indicia of origin (not shown) such as a colored marker or image that indicates the orientation of instrument 14. Of course, a number of alternative indicia of origin
10 may also be used without departing from the spirit of the invention.

Instrument 14' is disposed in channel 54 and is similar to instrument 14 except that the cross-sectional shape of instrument 14' is defined by a sleeve or coating 66 disposed on the outer surface of instrument 14'. Sleeve 66 allows an otherwise round instrument 14' to utilize the lock-and-key relationship described above and take
15 advantage of its desirable properties.

Sleeve 66 may include a number of different materials. For example, sleeve 66 may comprise a polymer such as polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE), ethylene tetrafluoroethylene (ETFE), fluorinated ethylene propylene (FEP), polyoxymethylene (POM, for example, DELRIN® available from DuPont), polyether block ester,
20 polyurethane, polypropylene (PP), polyvinylchloride (PVC), polyether-ester (for example, ARNITEL® available from DSM Engineering Plastics), ether or ester based copolymers (for example, butylene/poly(alkylene ether) phthalate and/or other polyester elastomers such as HYTREL® available from DuPont), polyamide (for example, DURETHAN® available from Bayer or CRISTAMID® available from Elf
25 Atochem), elastomeric polyamides, block polyamide/ethers, polyether block amide (PEBA, for example available under the trade name PEBAX®), ethylene vinyl acetate copolymers (EVA), silicones, polyethylene (PE), Marlex high-density polyethylene, Marlex low-density polyethylene, linear low density polyethylene (for example REXELL®), polyester, polybutylene terephthalate (PBT), polyethylene terephthalate
30 (PET), polytrimethylene terephthalate, polyethylene naphthalate (PEN), polyetheretherketone (PEEK), polyimide (PI), polyetherimide (PEI), polyphenylene sulfide (PPS), polyphenylene oxide (PPO), poly paraphenylene terephthalamide (for example, KEVLAR®), polysulfone, nylon, nylon-12 (such as GRILAMID® available from EMS American Grilon), perfluoro(propyl vinyl ether) (PFA), ethylene vinyl

alcohol, polyolefin, polystyrene, epoxy, polyvinylidene chloride (PVdC), polycarbonates, ionomers, biocompatible polymers, other suitable materials, or mixtures, combinations, copolymers thereof, polymer/metal composites, and the like. In some embodiments, lubricious polymers (including those listed above such as polytetrafluoroethylene) may desirably improve the ability for instrument 14' to move within channel 54. Moreover, because increased lubricity may be desirable, sleeve 66 can also be applied to the outer surface of instrument 14 or any other instrument having a non-circular cross-sectional shape. Sleeves or lubricious coatings may also be utilized for channels and other instruments described herein so that these instruments may more easily move within these channels.

Endoscopic instrument assembly 10 may be used by disposing tubular portion 18 within a body lumen. For example, for an endoscopic procedure that accesses the stomach, tubular portion 18 may extend through the mouth of a patient, down through the esophagus, and into the stomach. Once positioned, instrument 14 (or any other instrument described herein) can extend through the appropriate working channel and into the body lumen. Inside the body lumen, the instrument may be actuated so as to perform its intended intervention.

It is once again useful to consider that a number of different cross-sectional shapes are contemplated for the various working channels and endoscopic instruments described herein. For example, a number of different polygons (e.g., one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, or more sided), partially rounded, irregular, geometric, non-geometric, or other shapes can be used for any of the channels or instruments without departing from the spirit of the invention. It is worth noting that a cross-sectional shape may be described as an inner or outer diameter, an inner or outer perimeter, or by any other suitable designation. To the extent applicable, these descriptions can be used interchangeably.

In some embodiments, the non-circular cross-sectional shape of working channels 50/52/54 and instruments 14/14'/64 extend the full length of each given device. However, this need not be the case. For example, FIG. 3 illustrates a cross-section of another example working channel 68 that has an inner surface 70 with a first region 72 having a non-circular cross-sectional shape and a second region 74 with a generally circular cross-sectional shape. A transverse cross-sectional representation of first region 72 is depicted in FIG. 3A and a transverse cross-sectional representation of second region 74 is depicted in FIG. 3B. Analogously,

FIG. 4 illustrates a side view of another example endoscopic instrument 114 that has an outer surface 76 with a first region 78 having a non-circular cross-sectional shape and a second region 80 with a generally circular cross-sectional shape. A transverse cross-sectional representation of first region 78 is depicted in FIG. 4A and a transverse cross-sectional representation of second region 80 is depicted in FIG. 4B.

Instrument 114 and channel 68 may be used together or with any other suitable partner. When used together, it can be appreciated that when non-circular first region 78 of instrument 114 engages non-circular first region 72 of channel 68, instrument 114 “keys” channel 68. Conversely, when first region 78 of instrument 114 is disposed adjacent second region 74 of channel 68, instrument 114 can be more easily rotated within channel 68. The combination of these design features allows the clinician to take advantage of the desirable properties of both circular and non-circular devices by simply shifting the longitudinal position of instrument 114 relative to channel 68.

Designs like these that utilize a non-circular cross-sectional shape along only a portion of the length may provide the endoscopic assembly with a number of desirable features. For example, because a substantial portion of the length of channel 68 and/or instrument 114 have a generally circular cross-sectional shape, non-circular first regions 72/78, when not engaged with one-another, may have reduced surface area contact with circular second regions 74/80. This relationship can reduce backlash and allow for fluid infusion and/or aspiration. Similarly, when non-circular first regions 72/78 are engaged with one another, they may desirably have improved orientation compatibility and otherwise take advantage of the desirable benefits of the “lock-and-key” arrangement.

The length, number, position, and shape of first regions 72/78 can vary in a number of different embodiments. For example, non-circular first regions 72/78 can span any portion of the length of either channel 68 or instrument 114. Likewise, differing embodiments of channel 68 and instrument 114 may include one, two, three, four, or more first regions 72/78. In addition, the various non-circular first regions 72/78 can be positioned at essentially any longitudinal position along channel 68 and instrument 114. For example, FIGS. 3 and 4 illustrate first regions 72/78 being positioned away from the ends of channel 68 and instrument 114. However, this need not be the case as numerous embodiments are contemplated that position first regions 72/78 adjacent the proximal end, distal end, or both of channel 68 and instrument 114,

respectively. Similarly, the shape of first regions 72/78 can vary to be any useful shape.

FIG. 5 illustrates another example channel 82 that is similar to other channels described herein. Channel 82 includes an inner surface 83 having a section 84 with a generally circular cross-sectional shape and another section 86 having a non-circular cross-sectional shape. Section 86 may include a rotatable member 87 that is rotatable within section 84 as best seen in FIG. 6. Here it can be seen that rotatable member 87 includes a plurality of teeth or gears 88. A control member or rod 90 having a gear 92 can be extended through an opening 93 in section 84 and into engagement with teeth 88. Rod 90 extends proximally to a position accessible by the clinician. With gear 92 engaged with teeth 88, rotation of rod 90 rotates rotatable member 87. Thus, rod 90 and gears 88 function much like a worm gear and this configuration can be utilized to rotate section 86 when desired. In some embodiments, a second rod 90a may also be utilized on the opposing side of section 84, and/or a motor may be disposed in or adjacent working channel 82 and be coupled to member 87 for rotating member 87. In alternative embodiments, rotatable member 87 and/or rod 90 may have mating or complimentary screw threads (or a screw thread on one structure and a gear on the other to drive the screw thread) that provide essentially the same features.

Rod 90 may utilize any number of different forms and/or material compositions. For example, rod 90 may be made from a metal or metal alloy. Some examples of suitable metals and metal alloys include stainless steel, such as 304V, 304L, and 316LV stainless steel; mild steel; nickel-titanium alloy such as linear-elastic or super-elastic nitinol, nickel-chromium alloy, nickel-chromium-iron alloy, cobalt alloy, tungsten or tungsten alloys, MP35-N (having a composition of about 35% Ni, 35% Co, 20% Cr, 9.75% Mo, a maximum 1% Fe, a maximum 1% Ti, a maximum 0.25% C, a maximum 0.15% Mn, and a maximum 0.15% Si), hastelloy, monel 400, inconel 825, or the like; other Co-Cr alloys; platinum enriched stainless steel; or other suitable material. Alternatively, rod 90 may comprise a polymer, metal-polymer composite, and the like, or any other suitable material.

Section 86 and rotatable member 87 may be desirable for a number of reasons. For example, a clinician may dispose an endoscopic instrument (such as any of those shown or described herein) through channel 82 and then need to rotate the instrument. With a non-circular section of the instrument "keyed" with section 86, a clinician can rotate rod 90 to rotate rotatable member 87 and, consequently, the instrument.

Another desirable feature of rotatable member 87 is that because it may be placed at or near the distal end of channel 82, torque can be applied directly at the distal end of the instrument rather than at the proximal end of the instrument. This may result in a more efficient transfer of torque and it may reduce the incidence of backlash because of the fact that torque is being applied to the instrument at a location that is much closer to where torque transmission is desired (e.g., near the end effector).

FIG. 7 illustrates an alternative section 186 that includes rotatable member 187 that is rotatable within section 84 of channel 82. One or more wires 194 are disposed about rotatable member 187, with ends 192a/192b of wires 194 extending into openings 93 and then extending proximally to a location accessible by the clinician. Ends 192a/192b or wires 194 can be pulled by the clinician in order to rotate section 186. For the same reasons set forth above, this may help to efficiently transmit torque and reduce backlash.

FIG. 8 illustrates another example working channel 96 that is similar in form and function to the other channels described above. A plurality of instruments 98a/98b are disposed in channel 96. This arrangement demonstrates that multiple instruments 98a/98b, each having a non-circular cross-sectional shape, can be disposed in channel 96. In some embodiments, instruments 98a/98b may have a combined shape that is complimentary to the cross-sectional shape of channel 96. The combination of instruments 98a/98b, thus, may take advantage of the desirable features of the "lock-and-key" arrangement described above. Alternatively, a plurality of generally circular instruments 99a/99b may be disposed in channel 96 as shown in FIG. 9. This arrangement may be desirable by reducing the surface area contact between instruments 99a/99b and channel 96 as described above. Of course, a combination of these arrangements is also contemplated where a non-circular instrument (e.g., instrument 98a) and a generally circular instrument (e.g., instrument 99a) are disposed in channel 96. Regardless of what arrangement is utilized, any combination of instruments 98a/98b/99a/99b may be used with any suitable channel, including any of those described herein.

It should be understood that this disclosure is, in many respects, only illustrative. Changes may be made in details, particularly in matters of shape, size, and arrangement of steps without exceeding the scope of the invention. The

invention's scope is, of course, defined in the language in which the appended claims are expressed. .

What is claimed is:

1. An endoscopic instrument assembly, comprising:
an endoscope defining a working channel therein;
an inner surface defined in the endoscope adjacent the working channel,
wherein the inner surface has a non-circular cross-sectional shape; and
an endoscopic instrument slidably disposed in the working channel, the
endoscopic instrument having an outer surface with a non-circular cross-sectional
shape.
2. The endoscopic instrument assembly of claim 1, wherein the cross-
sectional shape of the inner surface of the working channel and the cross-sectional
shape of the outer surface of the endoscopic instrument are complimentary.
3. The endoscopic instrument assembly of claim 1, wherein the inner
surface of the working channel has a polygonal cross-sectional shape.
4. The endoscopic instrument assembly of claim 1, wherein the outer
surface of the endoscopic instrument has a polygonal cross-sectional shape.
5. The endoscopic instrument assembly of claim 1, wherein the inner
surface of the working channel has a length and wherein the inner surface has a non-
circular cross-sectional shape that spans the length.
6. The endoscopic instrument assembly of claim 1, wherein the inner
surface of the working channel has a length and wherein the inner surface has a non-
circular cross-sectional shape along only a portion of the length.
7. The endoscopic instrument assembly of claim 6, wherein the portion of
the length of the inner surface having a non-circular cross-sectional shape is rotatable.
8. The endoscopic instrument assembly of claim 7, further comprising
means for rotating the portion of the length of the inner surface having a non-circular
cross-sectional shape.

9. The endoscopic instrument assembly of claim 8, wherein means for rotating the portion of the length of the inner surface having a non-circular cross-sectional shape comprises a rod and a gear disposed adjacent the rod.

10. The endoscopic instrument assembly of claim 8, wherein means for rotating the portion of the length of the inner surface having a non-circular cross-sectional shape includes one or more wires.

11. The endoscopic instrument assembly of claim 1, wherein the outer surface of the endoscopic instrument has a length and wherein the outer surface has a non-circular cross-sectional shape that spans the length.

12. The endoscopic instrument assembly of claim 1, wherein the outer surface of the endoscopic instrument has a length and wherein the outer surface has a non-circular cross-sectional shape along only a portion of the length.

13. The endoscopic instrument assembly of claim 1, wherein the inner surface of the working channel, the outer surface of the endoscopic instrument, or both includes a coating.

14. The endoscopic instrument assembly of claim 1, further comprising a second endoscopic instrument disposed in the working channel.

15. The endoscopic instrument of claim 14, wherein the second endoscopic instrument has a second outer surface with a non-circular cross-sectional shape.

16. The endoscopic instrument of claim 15, wherein the outer surface of the endoscopic instrument and the second outer surface of the second endoscopic instrument define a combined outer surface, and wherein shape of the combined outer surface is complimentary with the shape of the inner surface of the working channel.

17. The endoscopic instrument of claim 1, further comprising an end effector disposed at a distal end of the endoscopic instrument.

18. An endoscopic instrument assembly, comprising:
an endoscope having a working channel formed therein;
an inner surface defined in the endoscope adjacent the working channel,
wherein the inner surface has a non-circular cross-sectional shape;
an endoscopic instrument slidably disposed in the working channel, the
endoscopic instrument having an outer surface with a non-circular cross-sectional
shape; and
wherein the inner surface of the working channel has an inner perimeter and
the outer surface of the endoscopic instrument has an outer perimeter, and wherein the
inner perimeter and the outer perimeter are substantially equal.

19. The endoscopic instrument assembly of claim 18, wherein the inner
surface of the working channel has a length and wherein the inner surface has a non-
circular cross-sectional shape that spans the length.

20. The endoscopic instrument assembly of claim 18, wherein the inner
surface of the working channel has a length and wherein the inner surface has a non-
circular cross-sectional shape along only a portion of the length.

21. The endoscopic instrument assembly of claim 18, further comprising a
second endoscopic instrument disposed in the working channel.

22. An endoscopic instrument assembly, comprising:
an endoscope having a working channel formed therein;
an inner surface defined in the endoscope adjacent the working channel,
wherein a rotatable portion of the inner surface has a non-circular cross-sectional shape;
an endoscopic instrument slidably disposed in the working channel, the endoscopic instrument having an outer surface with a non-circular cross-sectional shape;
wherein the cross-sectional shape of the rotatable portion of the working channel and the cross-sectional shape of the outer surface of the endoscopic instrument are complimentary; and
a control member disposed adjacent the rotatable portion for rotating the rotatable portion.

23. The endoscopic instrument assembly of claim 22, wherein the rotatable portion includes a plurality of teeth and wherein the control member comprises a gear engagable with the plurality of teeth.

24. The endoscopic instrument assembly of claim 22, wherein the control member includes one or more wires disposed about the rotatable portion and extending proximally therefrom.

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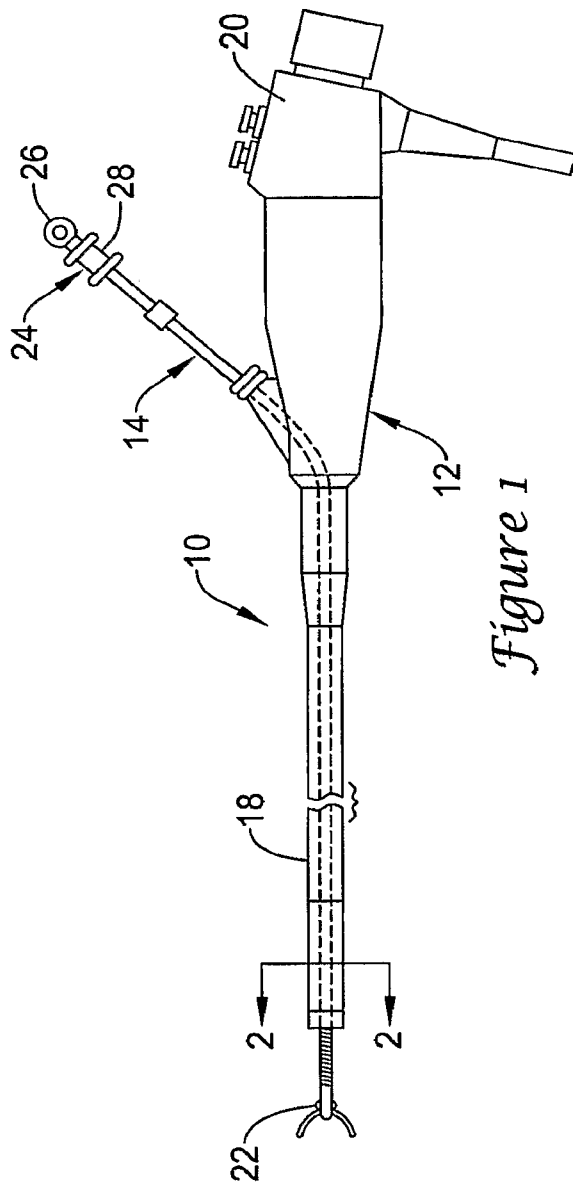


Figure 1

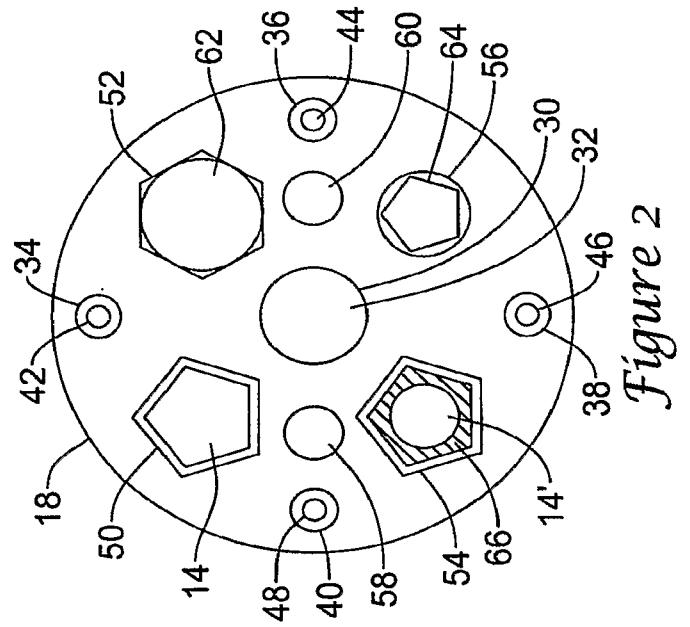


Figure 2

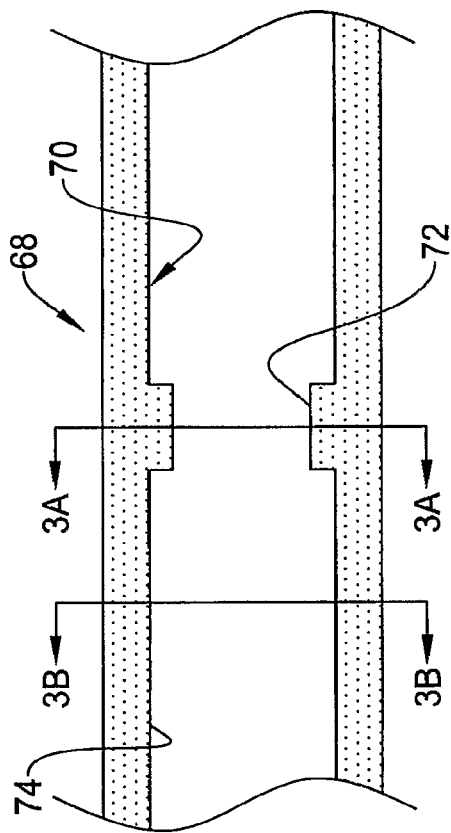


Figure 3

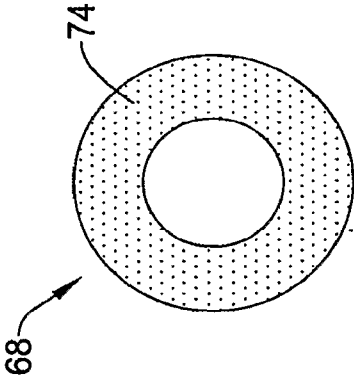


Figure 3B

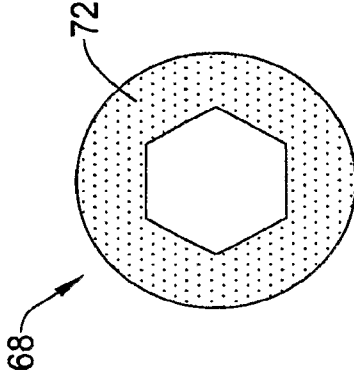


Figure 3A

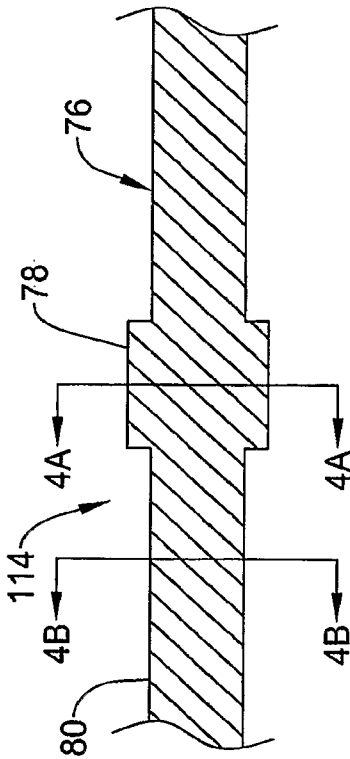


Figure 4

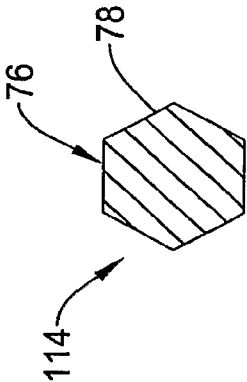


Figure 4A

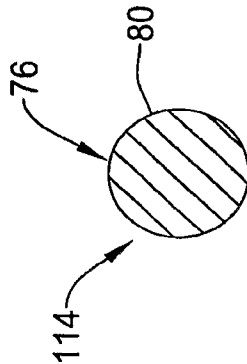


Figure 4B

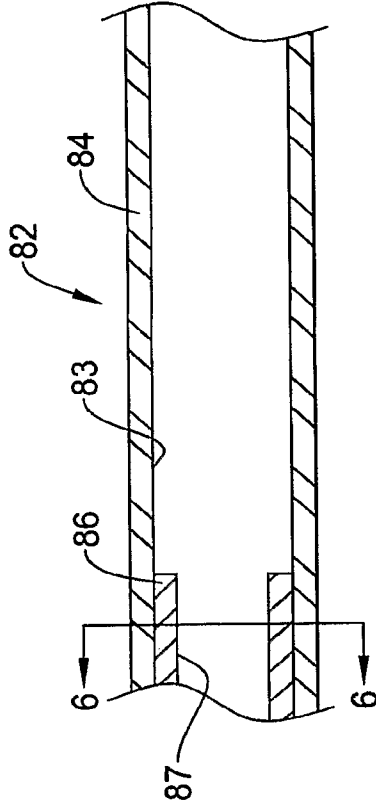


Figure 5

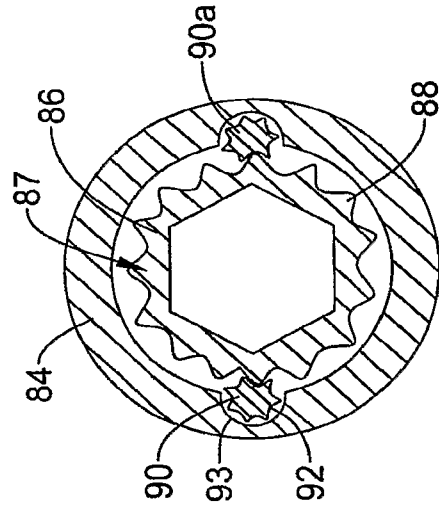


Figure 6

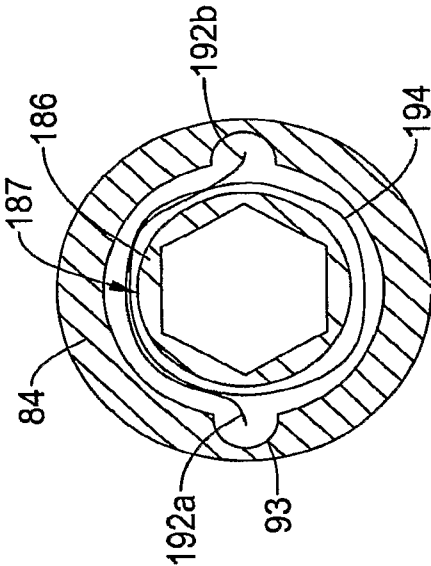


Figure 7

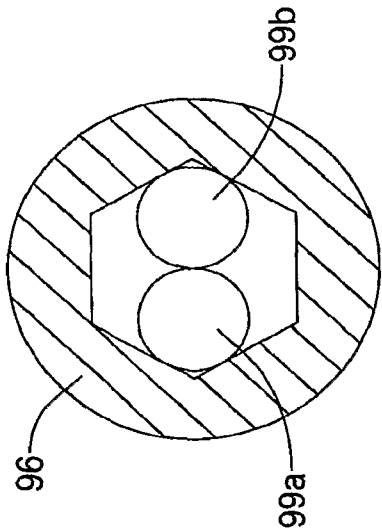


Figure 9

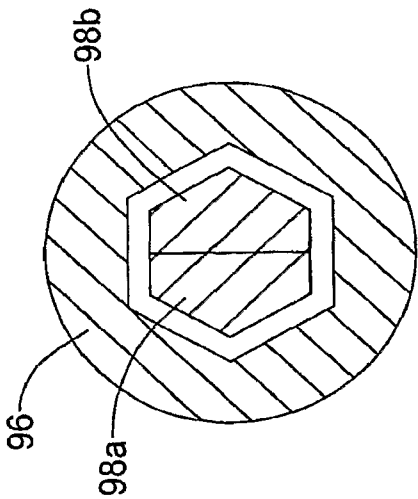


Figure 8

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No
PCT/US2006/048953

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

INV. A61B1/018

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)
A61B

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 practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	JP 2002 051974 A (FUJI PHOTO OPTICAL CO LTD) 19 February 2002 (2002-02-19) abstract; figures 1-7 -----	1,2,6, 12, 14-18, 20,21
X	US 5 738 630 A (SUZUKI AKIRA [JP] ET AL) 14 April 1998 (1998-04-14) column 9, line 39 - line 42 column 10, line 43 - line 55 column 11, line 66 - column 12, line 3 -----	1,2,6, 12,17, 18,20
X	US 4 742 817 A (KAWASHIMA MASAHIRO [JP] ET AL) 10 May 1988 (1988-05-10) column 2, line 49 - column 3, line 21 column 4, line 24 - line 33 column 4, line 58 - line 61 ----- -/--	1-6,11, 12,18-20

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

☒ See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:

A document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

E earlier document but published on or after the international filing date

L document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

O document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

P document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

T later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

X document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

Y document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

Z document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

14 June 2007

Date of mailing of the international search report

03/09/2007

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No

PCT/US2006/048953

C(Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 2003/045768 A1 (HIROOKA KENJI [JP] ET AL) 6 March 2003 (2003-03-06)	1-4,6-9, 12,17, 18,20
A	paragraph [0267]; figure 43b -----	
A	EP 1 481 628 A (OLYMPUS CORP [JP]) 1 December 2004 (2004-12-01) paragraph [0052] -----	1,6,18
A	WO 2005/081202 A1 (ACUMEN MEDICAL INC [US]; LEEFLANG STEPHEN A [US]; LOFTHOUSE TREVOR A []) 1 September 2005 (2005-09-01) page 29, line 10 - line 14 -----	1,13

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US2006/048953

Box II Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This International Search Report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:
2. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to parts of the International Application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful International Search can be carried out, specifically:
3. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box III Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

see additional sheet

1. ☐ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers all searchable claims.
2. ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.
3. ☐ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:
4. ☒ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this International Search Report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

1-6, 11-21

Remark on Protest

- ☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.
- ☐ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

FURTHER INFORMATION CONTINUED FROM PCT/ISA/ 210

This International Searching Authority found multiple (groups of) inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. claims: 1-6,11-21

Endoscopic instrument assembly comprising working channel
with polygonal cross-sectional shape

2. claims: 7-10,22-24

Endoscopic instrument assembly comprising working channel
with rotatable portion

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No

PCT/US2006/048953

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			US 2004267090 A1	30-12-2004
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			CA 2559781 A1	01-09-2005
			EP 1727459 A2	06-12-2006