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DESCRIPTION

Field of the invention

[0001] The present invention relates to a package with a catheter, e.g. a urethral catheter, which can be used for (intermittent) self-catheterization by a patient.

Prior art

[0002] International patent publication WO03/008028 discloses a lubrication and gripping device for a urinary catheter package. The cap 30 closing off the package is at the side where the distal (tip) end of the catheter is positioned inside the package, and a supply of lubricant is positioned in the package just in front of the cap. The distal end of the catheter (tip part with openings) is exiting the package first, the catheter part with connector remains inside the flexible package. A holder 20 is provided with dedicated shape and material as a gripping device.

[0003] American patent publication US-A-3,861,395 discloses an automated catheter, and more in particular a catheter assembly within a protective removable envelope. A tube of a catheter is pulled through a body with a longitudinal bore for lubrication of the catheter.

[0004] American patent publication US-A-4,811,847 discloses a urinary catheter package having a rectangular tray with an open top, to which a peel back cover is bonded.

[0005] International patent publication WO00/47494 discloses a storage package with a catheter. The catheter is provided with a coated surface, which exhibits a reduced friction when wetted with a wetting liquid. The wetting liquid is provided in the storage package, and thus contacts the coated surface during the entire shelf life.

[0006] British patent application GB-A-2 319 507 discloses a packaged catheter with a lubricant activating liquid. In the package which comprises the catheter, also a container with a liquid (water) is provided. Prior to actual use, the container may be opened such that the liquid can activate the coating on the catheter.

[0007] US20080189181 A1 describes an enclosed protective packaging for a vascular catheter. The cap of the packaging is permeable to allow passage of a sterilizing gas and thus sterilization of the content of the package.

Summary of the invention

[0008] The present invention seeks to provide an improved package for a (urethral) catheter, suitable for everyday use by a patient.

[0009] According to the present invention, a package is provided as defined in claim 1. The rigid material is a material retaining its form under normal conditions, allowing to store the package with contents without a risk of deforming the contents of the package (as opposed to many prior art packages made of a foil like material). This also results in a package which is easy and safe to carry on a person, e.g. in a purse, bag or pocket, without a risk of lubricant leaking from the package. The material is e.g. hard plastic material, such as a thermoplastic material (e.g. polycarbonate, PP, PE, PMMA) or a thermosetting material.

[0010] In a further embodiment, the main body is a closed off tube like element with an opening, the opening being closeable by the cap. In the present invention embodiment, the catheter is taken out from the package with the proximal end (connector) first, the catheter tip is taken out of the package as last.

[0011] In an even further embodiment the first opening diameter corresponds to a catheter diameter, and the second opening diameter is larger than the catheter diameter. The catheter is e.g. a urethral catheter, which may be used by the patient or a physician. This embodiment allows an equal and easy spread of the lubricating agent when opening the package and taking out the catheter (connector first), while having an easy to use and easy to store package. This makes the package according to the present invention suitable for intermittent self-catheterization.

[0012] In a further embodiment, the main body comprises a first part for receiving the cap, a second part for holding the gel container and a third part for holding a distal end of the catheter, in which the first part has an inner diameter which is less than an inner diameter of the second part, and the third part has an inner diameter which is less than the inner diameter of the second part. This allows to sufficiently seal off the package allowing it to be carried by a person before actual use.

[0013] The third part of the main body is arranged to hold the catheter tube in a space which is shorter than the length of the catheter tube. This variant would allow packaging of longer catheters, e.g. urethral catheters for men.

[0014] In an even further embodiment, the gel container comprises locking members extending beyond the inner diameter of the first part. This allows to lock the gel container in place inside the package in a simple and reliable manner.

[0015] The gel container comprises an inner sealing member (e.g. in the form of a ring) at the second opening, which in co-operation with the catheter (e.g. the connector part of the catheter) seals off the gel container. In a further variant, the catheter may comprise a closing member (e.g. as part of the connector) for sealing of the second opening of the gel container when positioned in the main body. This sealing member aids in preventing lubricating agent

from escaping from the package before actual use of the catheter.

[0016] In a further embodiment, the outside dimensions of the package are congruent with the catheter. In other words, a first part of the package (where the connector is located) has an outside diameter smaller than an outside diameter of a second part (where the catheter tube is located). By following the shape of the catheter, a package may be provided with minimal dimensions, making it easy to carry and to store.

[0017] In an even further embodiment, the length of the package corresponds to the length of the catheter. This again makes possible a package with minimal dimensions, and allows quick identification of the catheter present in the package.

[0018] The lubricating agent comprises a gel in a further embodiment, allowing easy assembly of the package.

[0019] In order to make the catheter suitable for application by the major part of patients, in a further embodiment, the catheter is made of a material without softening agent, e.g. PVC with a nelaton tip.

[0020] In a further embodiment, the cap is made of a transparent material. This allows to have codes on the catheter (or on the catheter connector) to be visible while the package is still closed off. The codes may be dimension codes, application codes, etc..

[0021] The cap is provided with one or more openings in a further embodiment, and optionally with a filter element (such as a paper filter). This allows to sterilize the package and its contents after assembly, by gas sterilization.

[0022] In a further aspect, the present invention relates to a method for sterilizing a package according to any one of the present invention embodiments, comprising assembling the main body, gel container, catheter and cap, and sterilizing internal elements of the package by introducing a sterilizing gas through the one or more openings in the cap. This is a very efficient and cost-effective manner of sterilizing the package and its contents in a sufficient manner. It is noted that American patent publication US-A-3,967,728 discloses a package for a catheter having a sachet with lubricant which can be ruptured. The sachet is disposed close to a distal end of the catheter allowing to bring at least the distal part of the catheter in contact with the lubricant before actual use. This document furthermore discloses that parts of the package may be sterilized before assembly of the entire package. The present invention embodiment allows to sterilize the entire package and its contents after assembly.

Short description of drawings

[0023] The present invention will be discussed in more detail below, using a number of exemplary embodiments, with reference to the attached drawings, in which

Fig. 1 shows a cross sectional view of a package according to an embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 2a shows a cross sectional view of an embodiment of a main body of the package of Fig. 1;

Fig. 2b shows a cross sectional view of an embodiment of a catheter of the package of Fig. 1;

Fig. 2c shows a cross sectional view of an embodiment of a gel container of the package of Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 shows a top view of an embodiment of a cap of the package of Fig. 1.

Detailed description of exemplary embodiments

[0024] The embodiments of the present invention aim to provide an easy to use and easy to carry solution for providing a medical device in the form of a catheter. As an example, the medical device is a urethral catheter allowing to empty the bladder of patient. The present invention embodiments provide for a package in which a urethral catheter 1 can be carried, which is ready for use when taken from the package. The urethral catheter 1 may be used for intermittent self-catheterization.

[0025] Fig. 1 shows a cross sectional view of an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, showing all elements in assembled state.

[0026] A main body 3 is provided which is closed off at a distal end, and which can be closed off at a proximal, open end using a cap 4. The cap 4 can be attached to the main body 3 using various attachment/locking methods, such as a screw thread, a bayonet closure or a clamping arrangement. In other words, the main body 3 is a closed off tube like element with an opening, the opening being closeable by the cap 4. The catheter 1 can then be taken out from the package 10 with its proximal end (connector) first, the catheter tip is taken out last.

[0027] The main body 3 is made of a rigid material, as opposed to a flexible, foil like material. The rigid material is a material retaining its form under normal conditions, allowing to store the package with contents without a risk of deforming the contents of the package. This also results in a package 10 which is easy and safe to carry on a person, e.g. in a purse, bag or pocket, without a risk of lubricant leaking from the package. The material is e.g. hard plastic material, such as a thermoplastic material (e.g. polycarbonate, PP, PE, PMMA) or a thermosetting material.

[0028] Fig. 2a shows a cross sectional view of the main body 3, which is divided in a first part 3a, second part 3b and third part 3c, which have a first internal diameter di_1 , di_2 and di_3 ,

respectively. The first part 3a is arranged for receiving the cap 4, the second part 3b for holding a gel container 5 and the third part 3c for holding the catheter tube 1a of the catheter 1. In the embodiment shown, the first part 3a has an inner diameter di_1 which is less than an inner diameter di_2 of the second part 3b, and the third part 3c has an inner diameter di_3 which is less than the inner diameter di_2 of the second part 3b.

[0029] The cap 4 may have a dimension which allows the cap 4 to cover the outside of the first part 3a entirely, thus providing a pen-like appearance for the package. In an embodiment, the cap 4 is made of a transparent material, which allows inspection of the connector 1b of the catheter 1 (which e.g. shows size or other markings on the connector 1b).

[0030] As shown in the embodiments of Fig. 1 and Fig. 2a, the outer diameter of the third part 3c may have a transition part from the second part 3b. The outside dimensions of the package are congruent with the general form of the catheter 1, or follows the general dimensions of the catheter 1, i.e. the package 10 is a long, pen shaped package. In more general terms, a first part of the package 10 has an outside diameter smaller than an outside diameter of a second part (i.e. the outer diameter do_3 of the third part 3c of the main body 3 is smaller than the outside diameter do_2 of the second part 3b, as shown in Fig. 2a).

[0031] A urethral catheter 1 is shown in the view of Fig. 2b. The urethral catheter 1 is stored in the main body 3, and comprises a distal end in the form of a catheter tube 1a provided with a rounded end and one or more discharge openings 15. The openings 15 are provided with rounded and or polished rims 16, such that the entry of the urethral catheter tube 1a in to the urethral tract is as comfortable as possible for the patient. At a proximal end the catheter 1 is provided with a catheter connector 1b, which may be used to attach the catheter 1 to a collection bag or other collection device. The dimensions of the package 10 (or more specific the internal dimensions of the main body 3 and cap 4) are adapted to allow storage of the entire catheter 1 (which may have varying dimensions). In the embodiment shown, the catheter 1 is about 10-15 cm, which makes this catheter 1 especially suited for use with female patients.

[0032] In an embodiment, the length L of the package (see Fig. 1) corresponds to the length of the catheter 1 (i.e. is slightly larger than the catheter 1 so that the package surrounds the entire catheter 1).

[0033] The urethral catheter 1 is made of a plastic material without any softening agent in a specific embodiment, in order to prevent possible sensitivity issues with the patient. The material may e.g. be a PVC type of material, and the catheter tube 1a may be provided with a netaon tip.

[0034] Furthermore, a gel container 5 is provided which is positioned in a second part 3b of the main body 3 as shown in the cross sectional view of Fig. 1. In Fig. 2c, the gel container 5 is shown as single element. The gel container 5 is provided with a cavity 6, in which an amount of

a gel-like lubricant agent is stored. The gel container 5 comprises a first opening 7 at a distal end, and a second opening 8 at a proximal end, the first opening diameter dc_1 corresponding in general to a diameter dc of the catheter 1, and the second opening dc_2 diameter being larger than the catheter diameter dc . This allows to provide a layer of the gel-like lubricant on the outside surface of the entire catheter 1 when taking the catheter out of the package, making the catheter 1 instantaneously ready for use. The catheter tube 1a is disposed through the first opening 7 and second opening 8 when stored in the package 10. The first opening 7 may be provided as a skewed surface in the material of the gel container 5, with a diameter dc_1 smaller than the outer diameter dc of the catheter tube 1b, the flexible material then providing a good sealing of the first opening 7 against the outer wall of the catheter tube 1b.

[0035] The lubricating agent comprises a gel-like material in an embodiment of the present invention. In further embodiments, additional components may be included in the lubricating agent, such as compositions having a medicinal function.

[0036] The gel container 5 is held in position in the main body 3 by matching the dimensions of the gel container 5 to the inner diameter di_2 of the second part 3b. The gel container 5 is provided with one or more locking members 9, which extend beyond the inner diameter di_1 of the first part 3a. During manufacturing, the gel container 5 can be forced into position in the second part 3b of the main body 3, and the locking members 9 assure a proper fixation of the gel container 5. The locking members are e.g. extensions of the material of the gel container 5, or a ring like extension of flexible material. The gel container 5 is e.g. made of a soft material, such as silicone.

[0037] In the embodiment shown in Fig. 1, the gel container 5 comprises an inner sealing member 11 at the second opening 8, which in co-operation with the catheter 1 (e.g. using a properly shaped end part 11a of the connector 1b) seals off the gel container 4. also, the inner sealing member 11 provides a constant thickness film on the outer surface of the catheter tube 1b when the catheter 1 is taken out of the package.

[0038] In an alternative embodiment, the catheter 1 comprises a closing member, e.g. as part of the connector 1b, for sealing off the second opening 8 of the gel container 4 when the catheter 1 is positioned in the main body 3.

[0039] In a further embodiment, the third part 3c of the main body 3 is arranged to hold the catheter tube 1b of the catheter 1 in a space which is shorter than the length of the catheter tube 1b, e.g. in a folded or coiled up manner. This would also allow to use the present invention package embodiments for longer urethral catheters, e.g. intended for use by male patients.

[0040] In order to allow the package and catheter 1 to be used by patients themselves, the catheter 1 is sterilized when assembling the package with catheter 1. In a further aspect of the present invention, the cap 4 of the package is provided with one or more openings 12. These

openings 12 are sealed off with a filter element 13 (as shown in the cross sectional view of Fig. 1), e.g. in the form of a paper element. After assembling the main body, gel container, catheter and cap, the internal elements of the package (i.e. the inner lumen of the main body 3 and catheter 1) by introducing (e.g. injecting) a sterilizing gas through the one or more openings in the cap 4.

[0041] The present invention embodiments have been described above with reference to a number of exemplary embodiments as shown in the drawings. Modifications and alternative implementations of some parts or elements are possible, and are included in the scope of protection as defined in the appended claims.

REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

This list of references cited by the applicant is for the reader's convenience only. It does not form part of the European patent document. Even though great care has been taken in compiling the references, errors or omissions cannot be excluded and the EPO disclaims all liability in this regard.

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- US20080189181A1 [0007]
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P a t e n t k r a v**1. Pakke til et kateter, omfattende**

et kateter (1), som har et kateterrør (1a) med en distal ende og en proksimal ende, hvilken proksimale ende er forsynet med en kateterkonnektor (1b);

5 et hovedlegeme (3) til at rumme kateteret (1), og en hætte (4) til at lukke hovedlegemet (3);

en gelbeholder (5), der er anbragt inde i hovedlegemet (3), hvilken gelbeholder (5) er forsynet med et hulrum (6) til at rumme en mængde af gel-lignende smøremiddel og omfatter en første åbning (7) ved en distal ende og en anden åbning (8) ved en proksimal ende, hvor kateterrøret (1a) er anbragt gennem den første åbning (7) og anden åbning (8), når det opbevares i pakken, hvor hovedlegemet (3) er fremstillet af et stift materiale, og hvor hovedlegemet (3) og hættten (4) omslutter kateterrøret (1a) fuldstændigt.

15 **2. Pakke ifølge krav 1, hvor hovedlegemet (3) er et aflukket rør-lignende element med en åbning, hvor åbningen kan lukkes med hættten.**

3. Pakke ifølge krav 1 eller 2, hvor den første åbnings diameter (dc_1) svarer til et kateters diameter (dc), og den anden åbnings diameter (dc_2) er større end kateterets diameter (dc).

20 **4. Pakke ifølge et af kravene 1-3, hvor hovedlegemet (3) omfatter en første del (3a) til at optage hættten (4), en anden del (3b) til at rumme gelbeholderen (5) og en tredje del (3c) til at rumme en distal ende af kateteret (1), hvori den første del (3a) har en indvendig diameter (di_1), som er mindre end en indvendig diameter (di_2) af den anden del (3b), og den tredje del (3c) har en indvendig diameter (di_3), som er mindre end den indvendige diameter (di_2) af den anden del (3b).**

25 **5. Pakke ifølge krav 4, hvor den tredje del (3c) af hovedlegemet (3) er indrettet til at rumme kateterrøret (1a) i et rum, som er kortere end længden af kateterrøret (1a).**

30 **6. Pakke ifølge krav 4 eller 5, hvor gelbeholderen (5) omfatter låseelementer (9), der strækker sig ud over den indvendige diameter (di_1) af den første del**

(3a).

5 **7.** Pakke ifølge et af kravene 1-6, hvor gelbeholderen (5) omfatter et indvendigt tætningselement (11) ved den anden åbning (8), som sammen med kateteret (1) tætnet gelbeholderen (5).

8. Pakke ifølge et af kravene 1-7, hvor de udvendige dimensioner af pakken er kongruente med kateteret (1).

10 **9.** Pakke ifølge et af kravene 1-8, hvor længden (L) af pakken svarer til længden af kateteret (1).

10. Pakke ifølge et af kravene 1-9, hvor smøremidlet omfatter en gel.

15 **11.** Pakke ifølge et af kravene 1-10, hvor kateteret (1) er fremstillet af et materiale uden blødgøringsmiddel.

12. Pakke ifølge et af kravene 1-11, hvor hættten (4) er fremstillet af et transparent materiale.

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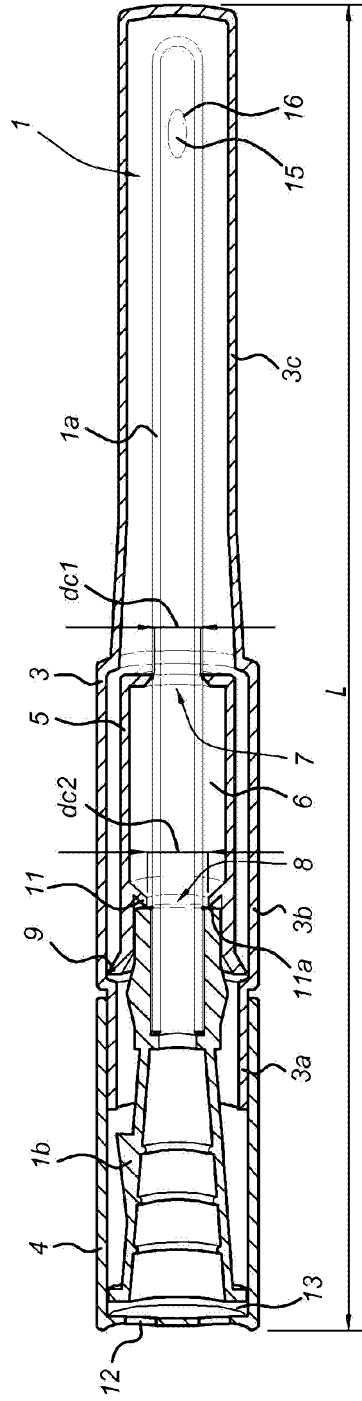
13. Pakke ifølge et af kravene 1-12, hvor hættten (4) er forsynet med en eller flere åbninger (12).

25 **14.** Fremgangsmåde til sterilisering af en pakke ifølge et af kravene 1-13, omfattende at samle hovedlegemet (3), gelbeholderen (5), kateteret (1) og hættten (4), hvor hættten (4) er forsynet med en eller flere åbninger (12) og at sterilisere indvendige elementer af pakken ved at indføre en steriliseringsgas gennem den ene eller de flere åbninger (12) i hættten (4).

30

DRAWINGS

Fig 1



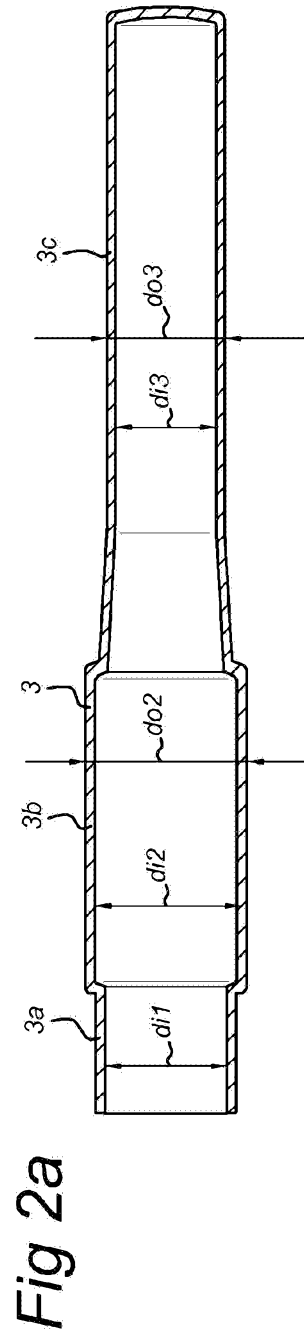
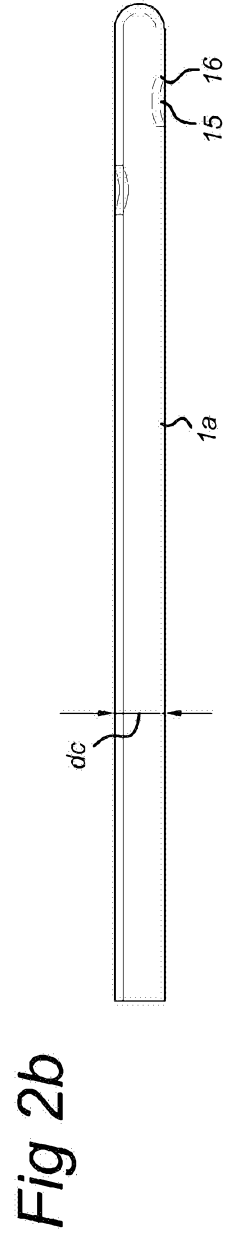
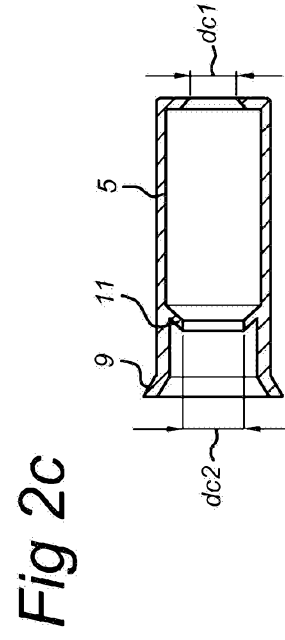


Fig 3