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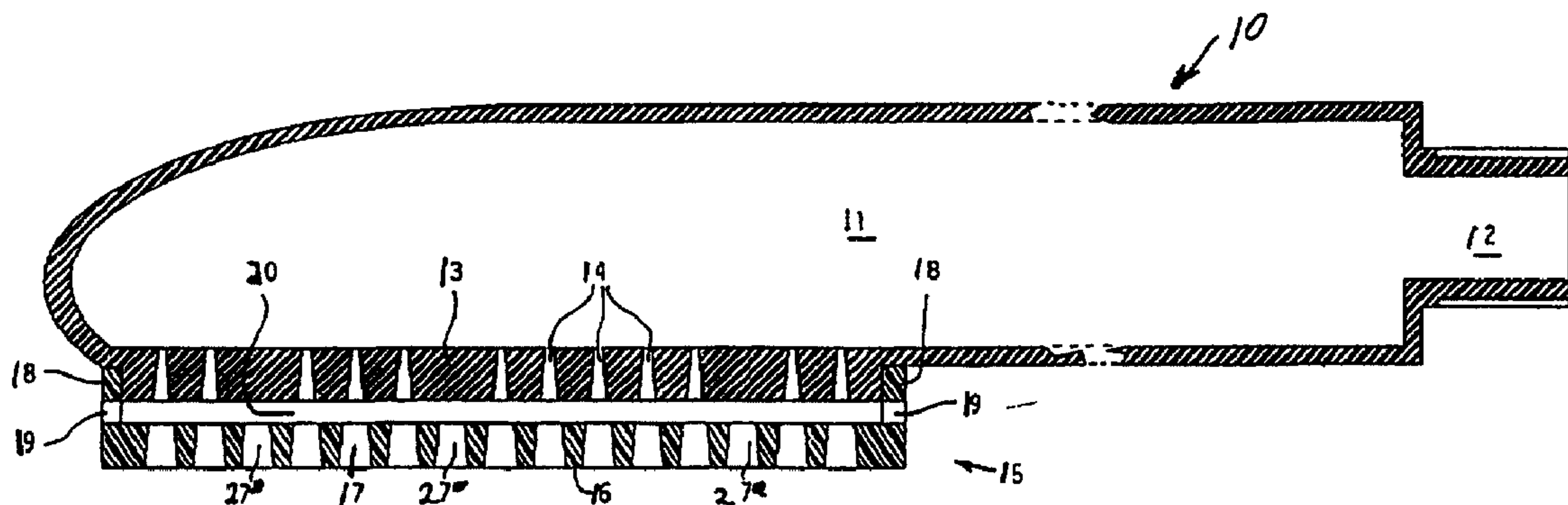
(71) MASCO CORPORATION, US

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(54) **DISPOSITIF D'AERATION POUR POMME DE DOUCHE A JET
VARIABLE**

(54) **MULTIPLE JET SHOWER WITH AERATION DEVICE**



(57) On décrit un dispositif d'aération (15) pour pomme de douche (10). La pomme de douche comprend une chambre d'eau (11) équipée d'un raccord (12) d'amenée d'eau sous pression et d'une première plaque perforée (13) formant une paroi de la chambre d'eau et munie d'une série de trous (14). Chaque trou de la première plaque est conçu pour projeter un seul jet d'eau. Le dispositif d'aération (15) comprend une deuxième plaque perforée (16) disposée en aval de la première plaque et délimitant avec celle-ci une chambre à air (20). La deuxième plaque est munie d'une série de trous (17) alignés chacun le long de la direction de projection du jet d'eau respectif d'un trou (14) correspondant de la première plaque. Une prise d'air (19) est placée entre la chambre à air (20) et l'environnement extérieur. Le dispositif d'aération (15) crée une aération par effet Venturi à la sortie de la pomme de douche, afin d'éliminer toute résistance après la formation des jets, ce qui en fait un dispositif très efficace.

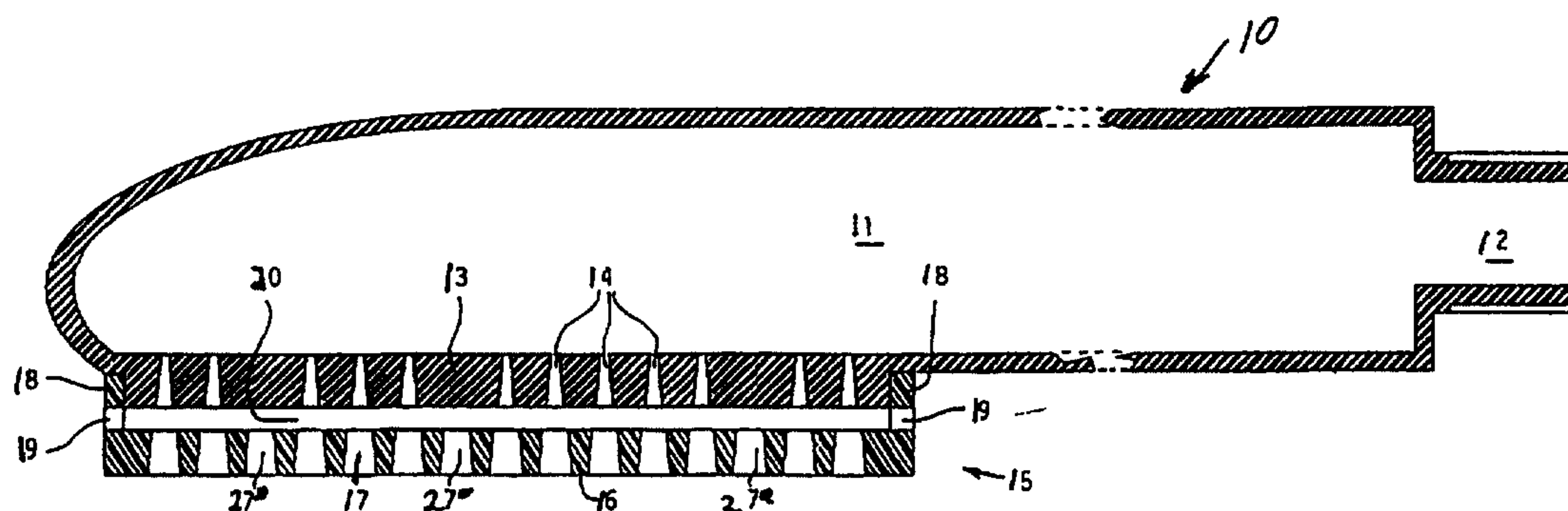
(57) An aerating device (15) for a shower (10) where the shower includes a water chamber (11) having a connection (12) for the supply of pressurized water and having a first perforated plate (13) that forms a wall of the water chamber and that is provided with a plurality of holes (14). Each hole of the first plate is constructed as to project a single jet of water. The aerating device comprises a second perforated plate (16), positioned downstream from the first plate, to make an air chamber (20) between the two plates. The second plate has a plurality of holes (17), each of which is aligned along the direction of projection of the respective jet of water of a corresponding hole (14) of the first plate. An air intake (19) is positioned between the air chamber (20) and the outside environment. The aerating device (15) makes it possible to aerate by way of the Venturi effect, at the outlet of the shower to eliminate any resistance after the jets have been formed for providing a highly efficient device.



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(21) International Application Number: PCT/US98/10306 (22) International Filing Date: 20 May 1998 (20.05.98) (30) Priority Data: TO97A000481 3 June 1997 (03.06.97) IT (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): MASCO CORPORATION [US/US]; 21001 Van Born Road, Taylor, MI 48180 (US). (72) Inventor; and (75) Inventor/Applicant (for US only): KNAPP, Alfons [DE/DE]; Klockstrasse 15, D-88400 Biberach (DE). (74) Agent: PERMUT, Steven, L.; Reising, Ethington, Learman & McCulloch, Suite 400, 201 W. Big Beaver Road, P.O. Box 4390, Troy, MI 48084 (US).		(81) Designated States: AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CU, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, GB, GE, HU, IL, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, TJ, TM, TR, TT, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, SD, SZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG). Published <i>With international search report.</i> <i>Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of the receipt of amendments.</i>

(54) Title: MULTIPLE JET SHOWER WITH AERATION DEVICE**(57) Abstract**

An aerating device (15) for a shower (10) where the shower includes a water chamber (11) having a connection (12) for the supply of pressurized water and having a first perforated plate (13) that forms a wall of the water chamber and that is provided with a plurality of holes (14). Each hole of the first plate is constructed as to project a single jet of water. The aerating device comprises a second perforated plate (16), positioned downstream from the first plate, to make an air chamber (20) between the two plates. The second plate has a plurality of holes (17), each of which is aligned along the direction of projection of the respective jet of water of a corresponding hole (14) of the first plate. An air intake (19) is positioned between the air chamber (20) and the outside environment. The aerating device (15) makes it possible to aerate by way of the Venturi effect, at the outlet of the shower to eliminate any resistance after the jets have been formed for providing a highly efficient device.

MULTIPLE JET SHOWER WITH AERATION DEVICE

TECHNICAL FIELD

This invention relates to a device for the
5 aeration of a multiple jet shower that can be a fixed
showerhead or a hand-held small showerhead.

BACKGROUND OF THE DISCLOSURE

It is sometimes desired that the jet of a
10 shower be aerated because, the shower produces a more
pleasing sensation. Furthermore, the shower is rendered
more efficient so that it becomes possible to perform a
satisfactory operation with less water consumption.

Aeration devices are provided for this
15 purpose. They are inserted up-stream from the
showerhead and comprise a neck intended to speed up the
flow of water that is piped to the shower and a chamber
with an air intake that surrounds the water flow. The
outside ambient air is thus aspirated into the shower
20 by virtue of the Venturi effect from the accelerated
flow and is incorporated in the water that is piped to
the shower. The efficiency of these devices is high
when the aerated jet thus obtained is used directly as
flow for the shower, for example, as shown in United
25 States Patent No. 4,573,639. However, when the aerated
device is inserted up-stream from the perforated plate
that produces the jets of a multiple jet shower, the
shower's efficiency is reduced because of the
resistance that the plate puts up against the flow of
30 water. Moreover, when an aeration device is inserted
upstream of the plate, lime deposits are soon formed on
the plate.

It is desired, therefore, to provide a device
that is easily and economically manufactured on an
35 industrial scale and that aerates a multiple jet shower
with a great degree of efficiency.

SUMMARY OF THE DISCLOSURE

According to the invention, a shower includes a water chamber having a connection to supply pressurized water and having a first perforated plate that forms a wall of the water chamber and that is provided with a plurality of holes. Each hole of the first plate is positioned to project a single jet of water. The multiple jets are aerated by an aeration device that comprises a second perforated plate arranged down-stream from the first plate to produce an air chamber between the two plates. The second plate has a plurality of holes, each of which is aligned with the direction of projection of a respective water jet of a corresponding hole of the first plate. An air intake is arranged between the air chamber and the outside ambient environment.

Each individual jet that emanates in an accelerated fashion from a hole of the first plate then penetrates a corresponding hole of the second plate. By virtue of the Venturi effect the jet aspirates air from the air chamber that is present between the two plates and incorporates it, coming out thus aerated from the corresponding hole of the second plate. The air aspirated from the air chamber is replenished from the outside ambient environment through an air intake.

The device according to the invention, thus makes it possible to individually aerate, also by virtue of the Venturi effect, each jet of the multiple jet shower in an economical and easily manufactured construction. Since this aeration takes place at the outlet of the shower, the aerated jets no longer encounter any resistance after they have been formed, and this makes the device highly efficient. Furthermore, because the aeration of the jets takes place downstream of the

first plate, the formation of lime deposits is greatly reduced or avoided.

A device, according to the invention, can be permanently built into a shower head or it can be in the form of an accessory, intended to be attached or mounted to an existing shower. Furthermore, the device can be installed in a permanent manner so that the shower head must form aerated jets, or the device can be mounted in a removable manner, thus enabling the user to employ or not employ the device, depending on whether he wants to use the shower with aerated or non-aerated jets.

The device, according to the invention, furthermore, can be constructed to aerate all of the individual jets coming from the holes of the first plate, or only a portion of them. For example, it can aerate only the peripheral jets, leaving the central jets unchanged, or vice versa. In another pattern, alternate jets may be aerated.

The air intake for the air chamber, positioned between the two plates can be formed by apertures situated on the peripheral side of the air chamber and extending perpendicularly to the general direction of projection of the water jets. Alternatively, the intake can be formed by apertures situated about the peripheral portion of the air chamber and extending parallel to the general direction of projection of the water jets. In a different embodiment, the intake can be made up of apertures made in the second plate that corresponds to regions in which no holes of the first plate are aligned or where the corresponding jets are not intended to be aerated.

The holes of the first plate or the holes of the second plate or the holes of both plates together

can be shaped to promote aeration. In particular, the holes of the first plate can be flared along all or part of their length, becoming wider in the direction of flow, and they can cooperate with holes of the second plate that are also flared or parallel and that have a plate that is greater than the maximum diameter of the holes of the first plate. In another embodiment, the holes of the first plate can be narrowed, for example, close to their outlet, and they can cooperate with holes of the second plate that have a considerably larger diameter. In this last case, the holes of the first plate can have a neck crest at their outlet or in some other suitable position that causes the outgoing water flow to be widened.

Moreover, if desired, the apertures may be designed and sized in both plates to produce multiple jets that form discontinuous streams of separate drops commonly referred to as "rain jets" rather than a continuous jet.

The device, according to the invention, can be made in any of the shapes in which a shower can be made and, hence, in particular, in an elongated linear or substantially circular form, and the shower, equipped with the device, according to the invention, can be a fixed showerhead or a hand-held showerhead. The plates need not be flat but can be contoured to accommodate any shower design.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Reference is now made to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a side elevational and segmented view of a showerhead provided with a aeration device, according to one embodiment of the invention;

Figures 2 to 5 are fragmentary elevational segmented views illustrating other embodiments of the invention as regards the configuration of the holes in the first and second plates;

5 Figure 6 is an enlarged modified detail, taken about the marked VI in Figure 5;

Figure 7 shows an embodiment where the first plate is made in parts from an elastomer material;

10 Figure 8 is a bottom plan view illustrating a pattern of aerated and non-aerated jets;

Figure 9 is a bottom plan view illustrating a modified pattern of alternating aerated and non-aerated jets;

15 Figure 10 is a bottom plan view illustrating an annular aerating second plate to produce peripherally positioned aerated jets and central non-aerated jets; and

20 Figure 11 is a side elevational and segmented view of the second plate and shower head shown in Figure 10.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

With reference to Figure 1, a shower head housing 10 comprises a water chamber 11 having a
25 supply connection 12 for the supply of pressurized water and having a first perforated plate 13 that forms a wall of said water chamber. The plate 13 is provided with a plurality of holes 14 that have a small cross-section. The plate 13 as shown is
30 integrally formed with the shower head housing 10 but it is foreseen that separate plates may be mounted onto housing 10. Each hole 14 of the first plate 13 is arranged to project a single water jet, taken together form the multiple jets of the shower that is

both well known and popular. The jets can be arranged in various formations such as an elongated linear, circular, or elliptical pattern in the manner of a fixed showerhead for a hand-held shower. The plate 13
5 can be positioned laterally, as in the illustrated form for a hand held shower, or axially at the end of a fixed showerhead.

In the customary showers of this type, each jet coming out of one of the holes 14 is compact i.e.
10 non-aerated and continuous. It has, however, been found that if the jets are aerated, the jet streams now permeated with air feel softer and the many users derive a more pleasing sensation from this type of aerated jet. Furthermore, the shower turns out to be
15 considerably more efficient and can be usefully operated with less water consumption, something that is particularly important where water is scarce or water drainage needs to be carefully managed.

In order to aerate the multiple jets of a
20 shower, such as the one described so far, the invention provides for an aeration device 15 that comprises a second perforated plate 16 arranged downstream from the first plate 13. An air chamber 20 is formed between the two plates 13 and 16. The second
25 plate 16 has a plurality of holes 17, and each hole 17 is arranged along the direction of the projection of the single water jet of a corresponding hole 14 of the first plate 13. In other words, holes 17 of the second plate 16 are exactly aligned with the
30 corresponding holes 14 of the first plate 13, to receive the respective discharge of the water jets from holes 14.

Aeration device 15 can be secured or mounted to shower head 10 in any suitable fashion. For

example, a proper flange 18, with a bayonet fitting or a snap fit release on a peripheral part of the first plate 13 is one of many foreseen mountings. While numerous variants are possible, they do not in any way
5 change the manner in which the device works. For example, in cases where the removal of the aerator device is to be left to the discretion of the user, the previously described mounting systems are suitably placed that include bayonet, friction or snap fit
10 couplings. In cases where the aerator device is to be separated from the shower only for cleaning and maintenance operations, it can still be attached in these ways or also by means of screws. In cases where the aerator device is to be applied to the shower in a
15 non-removable fashion, the second plate may also be attached by means of welding or gluing. As a technically equivalent arrangement the second plate may be integrally formed as a single body with the other parts of the shower and the first plate is
20 mounted behind it from inside the water chamber 11. In cases where the second plate must be capable of being removable it is advisable to place indicators such as a key so as to assure that the plate 16 will then be reassembled in the correct position.

25 Furthermore, at least one air intake 19 extends from the air chamber 20 to the outside ambient environment. In the form shown, this air intake includes openings 19 made in peripheral flange 18 that services to mount the aeration device 15 to shower 10,
30 but many other arrangements are possible.

The device works in the following manner. Each water jet produced by a hole 14 of the first plate 13 is highly accelerated because of the small cross-section of holes 14 and the pressure from the

supply connections 12. Due to the Venturi effect, as the water jet penetrates into the corresponding hole 17 due to the second plate 16, the water draws in or aspirates the air present in air chamber 20. The
5 chamber 20 thus has a slight air pressure drop or depression. Other air penetrates into chamber 20 from the outside ambient environment through air intake 19 due to the low pressure in chamber 20. The jet, which has thus aspirated air, incorporates it, and thus it
10 emanates from hole 17 of the second plate 16 in an aerated form.

The device thus makes provision for individually aerating each of the water jets emanating from holes 14 of plate 13 of the shower. This
15 aeration operation is performed simultaneously while the jets leave the shower, in other words, when they no longer encounter any resistance, so that there is maximum aeration efficiency.

Naturally, the resultant effect depends on
20 various parameters, such as the shape of the holes of the plates, the reciprocal relationships of the diameter between the holes of the two plates and the distance between the two plates. The designer can achieve a desired degree of aeration by the
25 appropriate selection of these various parameters. At the same time he can give preference to configurations that are more easily manufactured.

In the illustrated embodiment shown in Figure 1, provision is made that the aerator device 15
30 acts upon all of the jets coming from the holes 14 of the first plate 13. In some cases, however, one may desire to aerate only some of the jets, for example, the peripheral jets, or only the central jets, leaving the remaining jets compact; or the jets can be

alternatingly aerated and not aerated. In these cases, it suffices for some holes of the second plate 16 that corresponds to jets that must not be aerated to have a large diameter so as not to come into
5 contact with the jets. The enlarged corresponding holes 37 as shown in Figures 8 and 9 of the second plate may be quite large to constitute air intakes, thus allowing the entry of air around the water jets to function as an air intake. A pattern where only
10 the peripheral jets are aerated is illustrated in Figures 8. Figure 9 illustrates another pattern of alternating aerated and non-aerated jets.

The air intake, which was shown in the form of lateral openings 19, can also be made up of holes
15 27 of the second plate to which the holes of the first plate do not correspond so that there will be no water flowing through them as also illustrated in Figure 1.

A wide range of choices is available to the designer as regards the configuration of the holes of
20 the plate. The specific configuration can be chosen freely, especially when the parts of the shower and the aerator device are made of molded plastic material. For example, Figure 1 illustrates holes 14
25 of the first plate 13 and 17 of the second plate 16, all of which are flared to be of frustum shape with the hole diameter growing in the direction of water flow. The initial diameter of holes 17 is greater than the final diameter or maximum diameter of holes 14.

30 Figure 2 illustrates another embodiment where holes 14 are cylindrical for most of their length and that are widened conically in the final section. Holes 17, in turn, are cylindrical with a

diameter that is equal to or greater than the final diameter or maximum diameter of holes 14.

Figure 3 illustrates another embodiment where holes 14 that are widened with generatrix curves along their entire length toward the final cross-section. Holes 17, in turn, are cylindrical with a diameter that is equal to or greater than the final i.e. maximum diameter of holes 14.

Figure 4 illustrates further modified holes 14 that become wider with generatrix curves along their entire length toward the final cross-section. Holes 17, in turn, are cylindrical and have an initial diameter that is equal to or greater than the final diameter, i.e. maximum diameter of holes 14 and become yet wider in the final part.

Figure 5 illustrates further modified holes 14 which, contrary to the preceding ones, become narrower toward the final section. Holes 17, in turn, are cylindrical and have a diameter that is equal to or greater than the final diameter of holes 14.

Figure 6 shown a further variation of the device, according to Figure 5, and, on a much larger scale. Hole 14 has a small crest 24 at it outlet facing toward the inside of the hole 14, which causes the jet, emanating from that hole itself, to become wider.

It should be noted that similar crests can also be provided in other positions, for example, at the mount of holes 14 or in intermediate positions between the mouth and the outlet of said holes. They can be provided and arranged in various ways, independently of the shape chosen for the generatrices, that is, straight or curved, of the holes themselves.

The above described construction, if desired, can have holes 14 and 17 of size and construction to obtain what is commonly referred to as "rain jets" or jets which are not continuous streams
5 of water but discontinuous as separate drops as in a rain fall. The embodiment shown in Figure 6 is particularly suitable for this effect.

Figure 7 shows how holes 14 of plate 13 can be made in parts labeled 34, that are mounted to plate
10 13. Parts labeled 34 can be made of elastomeric material and make it possible to easily remove any lime deposits by simply momentarily deforming the parts themselves. Naturally, the same part construction can be provided in plate 16 for holes 17.
15 Furthermore, the parts 34 can be provided with a plurality of holes rather than a single hole. The same effect can also be achieved by, on the other hand, making one or both of the plates 13 and 16 of elastomeric material. These arrangements are
20 independent of the configurations selected for the holes.

Figures 10 and 11 illustrate a modified plate 16 which covers only a portion of plate 13. The plate 17 is annular in shape with holes 17 aligned
25 with hole 14 about the periphery of plate 13. The air chamber 20 is also annular in shape. The holes 14 in the center of plate 13 thereby produce unaerated jets while the peripheral holes 14 produce aerated jets. Furthermore, air intake apertures 19 are formed at the
30 inner periphery of the plate 16.

It must be understood that the invention is not confined to the embodiments described and illustrated as examples. Similar modifications are within the reach of the expert in the field; for

example, other configurations can be chosen for the holes of the plates and various other means can be selected to apply the aerator device to the shower in a fixed manner or a removable manner.

5 These and other modifications and any substitution with technical equivalents can be introduced in what was described and illustrated without departing from the scope of the invention and the coverage of this patent.

The embodiments in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. An aeration device for a shower, the shower including a main housing having a connection for a supply of pressurized water, the main housing forming a water chamber that receives water from said supply connection, a first perforated plate that forms a wall of said water chamber, said plate being provided with a plurality of holes to project a respective water jet; said aeration device characterized by:

a second perforated plate positioned downstream of said first plate to form an air chamber between the two plates;

the second plate having a set of plurality of holes therethrough, each hole in the set aligned with the direction of each projection of a respective water jet from a corresponding hole in the first plate;

an air intake extending from the air chamber to an exterior ambient environment; and

said second plate construction to aerate a first set of jets emanating from said first plate and leaving a second set of jets emanating from said first plate unaerated.

2. An aerating device as defined in claim 1 further characterized by:

said second plate being an accessory and mounted to an existing operable shower housing.

3. An aerating device as defined in claim 2 further characterized by:

said second plate being removably mounted to said shower main housing.

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4. An aerating device as defined in claim 1 further characterized by:

said second plate constructed to aerate one of the peripheral jets and central jets emanating from the holes in the first plate and leaving the other of the peripheral and central jets unaerated.

5. An aerating device as defined in claim 1 further characterized by:

said second plate constructed to aerate alternating jets emanating from the first plate and leaving the remaining jets unchanged.

6. An aerating device as defined in claim 1 further characterized by

said air intake including apertures on a peripheral side of said chamber and extending generally perpendicular to the general direction of the water jets.

7. An aerating device as defined in claim 6 further characterized by:

said air intake apertures positioned on an outer periphery of said second plate about said air chamber and extending radially outward to said exterior ambient environment.

8. An aerating device as defined in claim 1 further characterized by:

said air intake comprising apertures made in the second plate in regions that are not aligned with jets emanating from said first plate.

9. An aerating device as defined in claim 1 further characterized by:

said air intake comprising oversized apertures in said second plate through which said second set of jets pass through unaerated.

10. An aeration device for a shower, the shower including a main housing having a connection for a supply of pressurized water, the main housing forming a water chamber that receives water from said supply connection, a first perforated plate that forms a wall of said water chamber, said plate being provided with a plurality of holes to project a respective water jet; said aeration device characterized by:

a second perforated plate positioned downstream of said first plate to form an air chamber between the two plates;

the second plate having a set of plurality of holes therethrough, each hole in the set aligned with the direction of each projection of a respective water jet from a corresponding hole in the first plate;

said holes in said first plate and second plate constructed to promote aeration by way of a Venturi effect and

said holes in said first plate being flared to become wider in the direction of water flow:

said holes in said second plate having a diameter greater than the maximum diameter of the holes in the first plate.

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11. An aerating device as defined in claim 10 further characterized by:

said holes in said first and second plates constructed to provide jets that are discontinuously formed by subsequent separate drops.

12. An aerating device as defined in claim 10 further characterized by:

said holes in said second plate being flared to become wider in the direction of water flow; and

said holes in said second plate having a minimum diameter greater than the maximum diameter of the holes in the first plate.

13. An aerating device as defined in claim 1 further characterized by:

said holes in said first plate having an inwardly extending neck crest that causes the outgoing jet emanating therefrom to become wider.

14. An aerating device as defined in claim 1 further characterized by:

said holes in said first plate are narrowed close to their outlets and cooperate with large diameter holes in said second plate.

15. An aerating device as defined in claim 1 further characterized by:

said holes in said first plate having an inwardly extending neck crest that causes the outgoing jet emanating therefrom to become wider.

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16. An aerating device as defined in claim 1 further characterized by:

at least one of the first and second plates having a yielding elastomeric section through which the holes extend such that lime deposits may be removed by mechanical deformation of the elastomeric material.

17. An aerating device as defined in claim 16 further characterized by:

one of the entered first and second plates being made from elastomeric material.

18. An aeration device for a shower head, said aeration device characterized by:

a plate mounted to cover at least a portion of the outlet sections of the showerhead such plurality of jet outlets from said showerhead are covered; and spaced from the outlet section to form an air chamber therebetween;

said plate having a plurality of holes therethrough, each hole being aligned with the direction of a respective water jet emanating from jet outlets from the showerhead and said holes being flared such that the hole diameter grows in the direction of water flow; and

an air intake extending from the air chamber to the outside ambient environment.

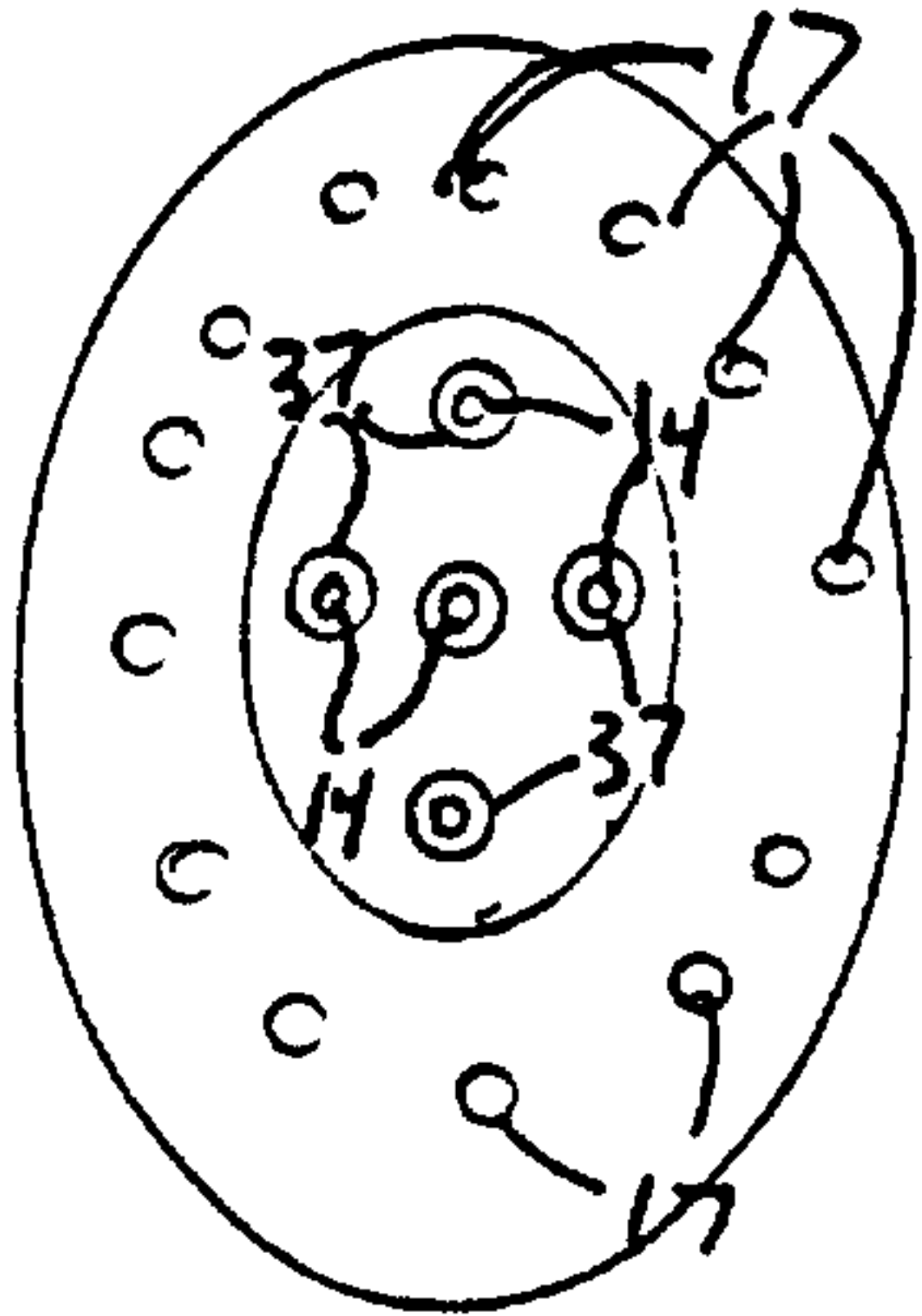


FIG. 8

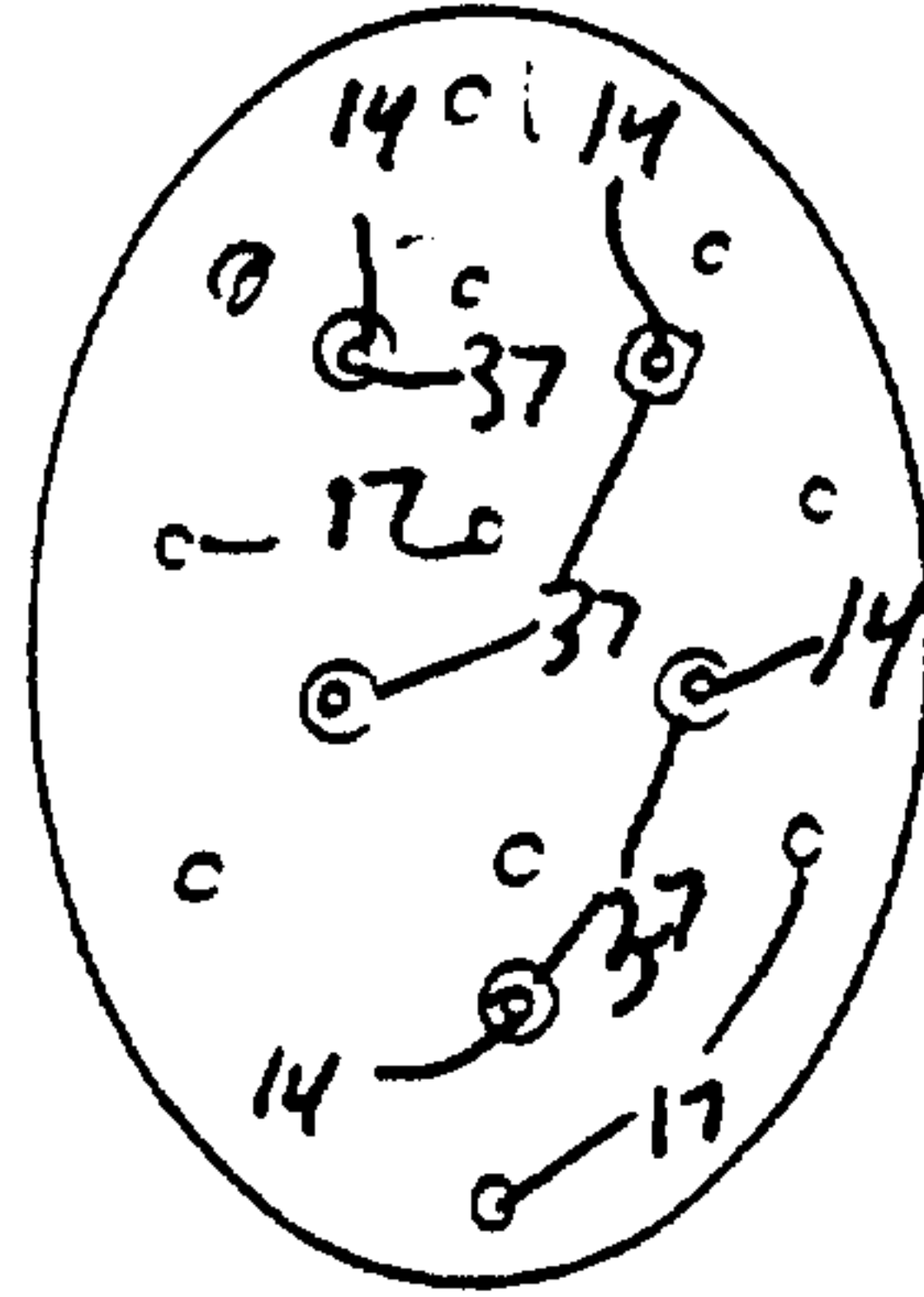


FIG. 9.

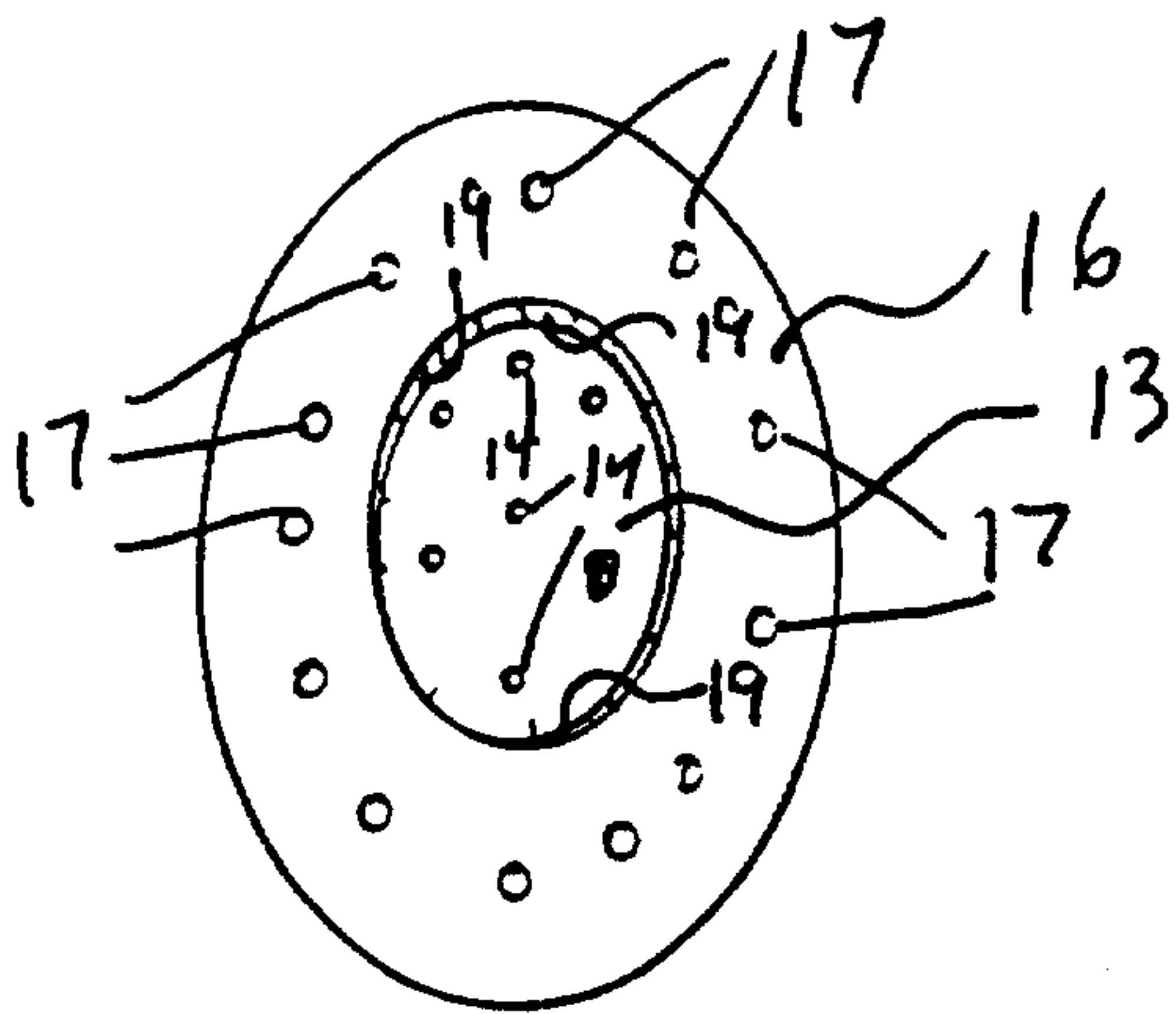


FIG. 10.

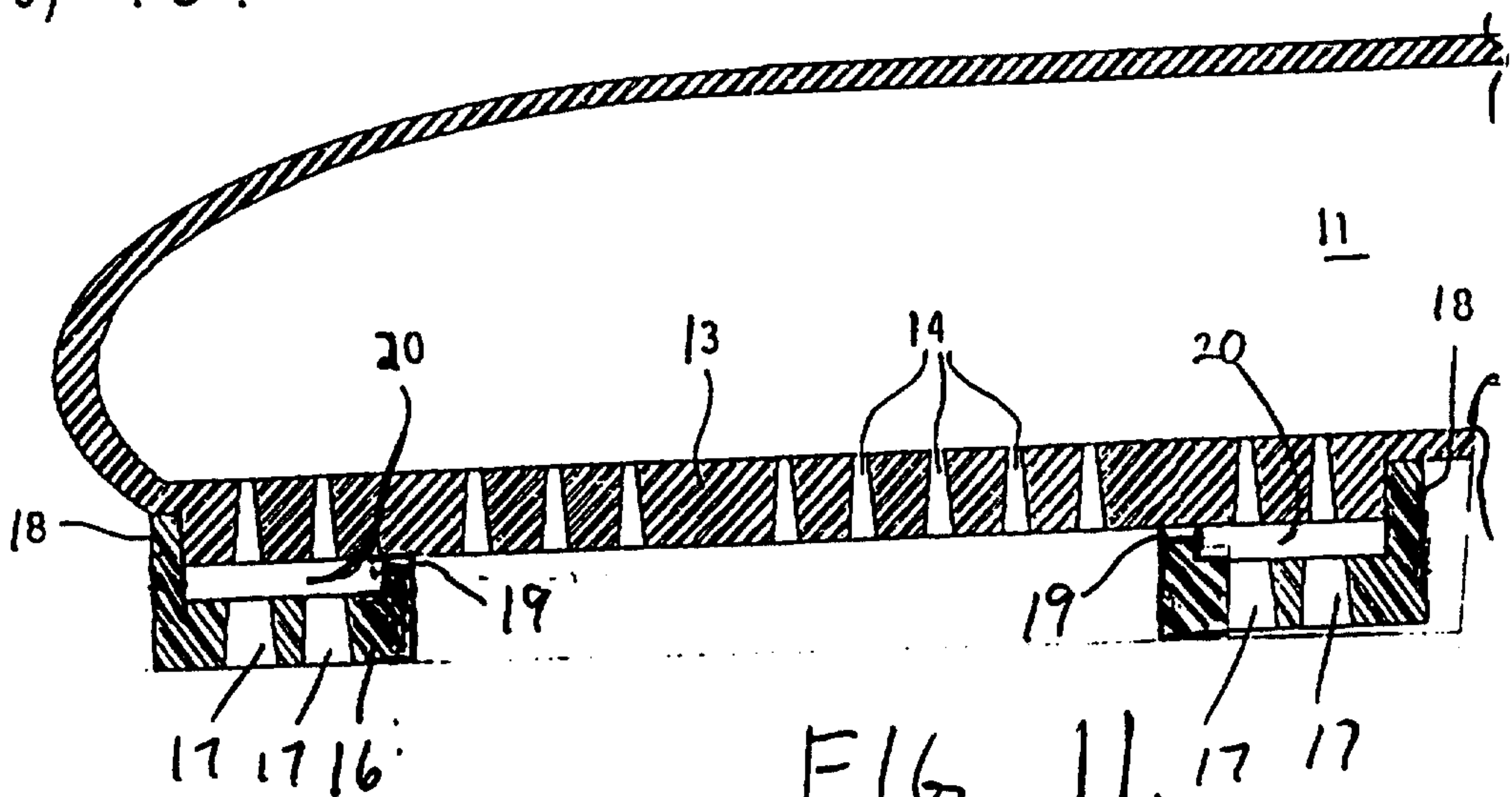


FIG. 11. 17 17