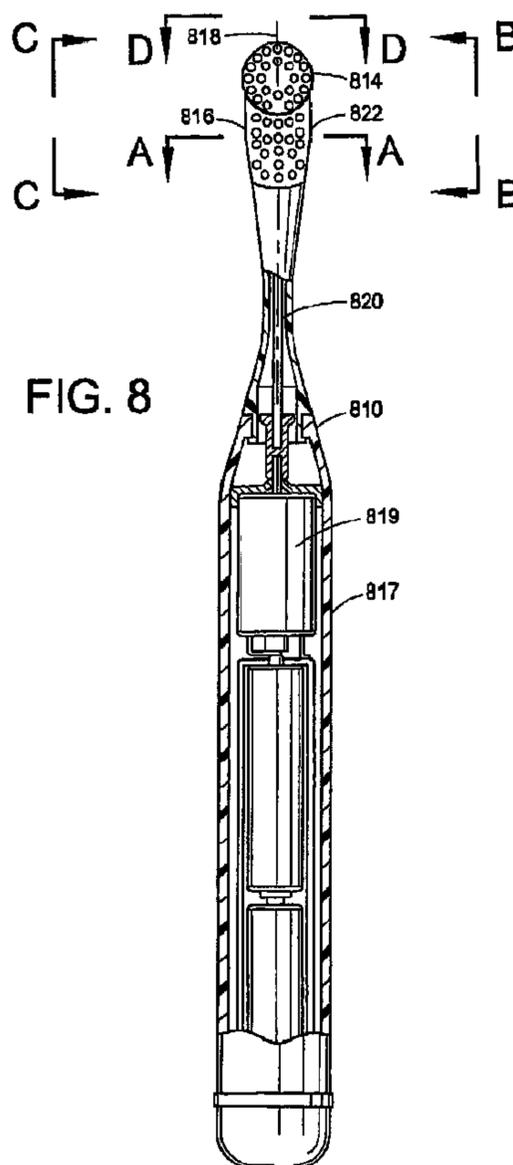




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(57) **Abrégé/Abstract:**

An electrically driven toothbrush has a rotatable shaft with a cam preferably at a remote end of the shaft, which fits into a slot in a bristle holder. The holder is mounted for rotation in a toothbrush head. When the shaft rotates cam describes a circle and drivingly engages the slot to cause the holder to vibrate in a first brushing motion. A second bristle holder is also driven by the shaft, for a second kind of brushing motion. The second bristle holder is driven through and engagement with a portion of the remote end and/or with one or more additional cams or cam portions included on the shaft.

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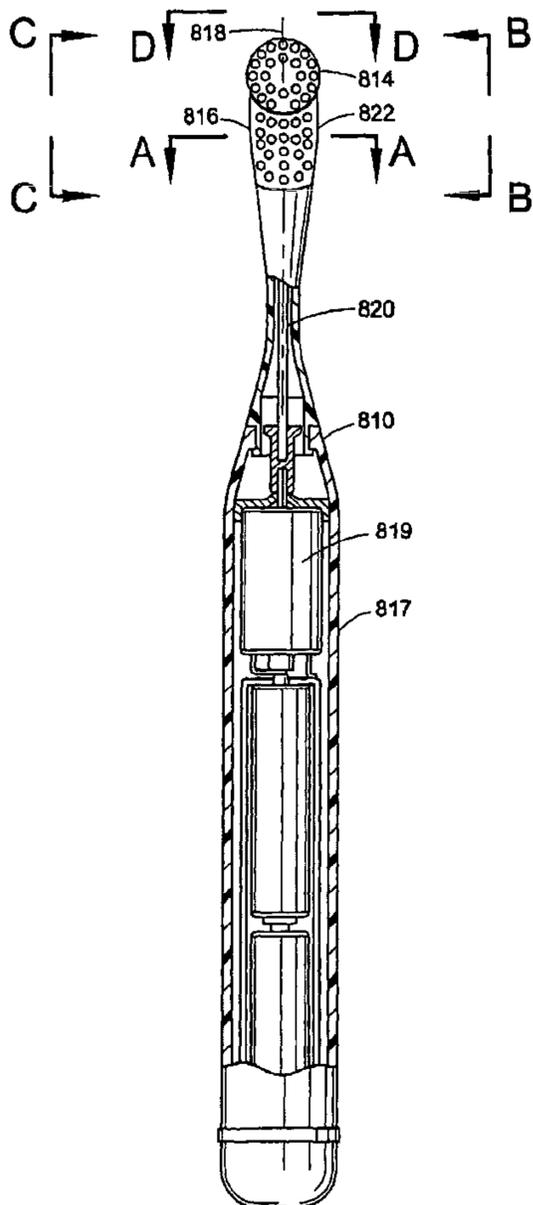
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(54) Title: COMPLEX MOTION TOOTHBRUSH



(57) Abstract: An electrically driven toothbrush has a rotatable shaft with a cam preferably at a remote end of the shaft, which fits into a slot in a bristle holder. The holder is mounted for rotation in a toothbrush head. When the shaft rotates cam describes a circle and drivingly engages the slot to cause the holder to vibrate in a first brushing motion. A second bristle holder is also driven by the shaft, for a second kind of brushing motion. The second bristle holder is driven through and engagement with a portion of the remote end and/or with one or more additional cams or cam portions included on the shaft.



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COMPLEX MOTION TOOTHBRUSH

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The invention is related to the art of toothbrushes

2. DESCRIPTION OF RELATED ART

The invention relates more particularly to electrically driven toothbrushes in which brush bristles are arranged to be moved relative to the toothbrush handle. There are many examples of such toothbrushes including the disclosure in 1939 of rotary driven bristles in U.S. Pat. No. 2,215,031, A similar rotational drive arrangement is also shown in U.S. Pat. No. 4,845,795, U.S. Pat. No. 4,156,620 explains how a rotational motor drive is converted into reciprocal linear motion to drive the bristles rotationally clockwise and counterclockwise, U.S. Pat. No. 3,577,579 discloses a toothbrush in which a toothbrush head is moved in relation to a brush holder so that all the bristles mounted in the brush head move together sideways and backwards and forwards relative to the holder. U.S. Pat. No. 5,625,916 discloses a toothbrush with a single bristle holder. The bristle holder is driven to vibrate in a rotational manner about a shaft.

The drive mechanisms and brush motions disclosed in these references range from the relatively simple to the relatively complex. The most complex of the disclosed toothbrushes is used to provide an elaborate brushing motion. While the provided brushing motion is beneficial, the means disclosed for providing it is far too complicated and involves far too many moving parts to be a practical brushing solution in many applications. The simpler of the disclosed toothbrushes, provide only one brushing action. While practical to produce, these single brushing actions may be inadequate in some brushing applications. For example, they may not adequately clean spaces between teeth.

It is desirable therefore, to provide a toothbrush that is simple to manufacture, and has few moving parts, while providing a plurality of cleaning or brushing actions for accomplishing a plurality of teeth cleaning tasks.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

One embodiment of the new toothbrush includes a handle portion at a first end of the toothbrush, a head section at a second end of the toothbrush, a rotatable shaft extending from the handle portion to the head section and having a first longitudinal central axis, a first bristle holder pivotally mounted to the head section and associated with a remote-most end of the shaft, the remote most end of the shaft being received in a slot of the first bristle holder for driving the first bristle holder in pivoting vibratory movement, and a second bristle holder movably mounted to the head section and drivingly engaged by a cam located on the shaft.

Another embodiment of the electric toothbrush includes a shaft. The shaft includes a first cam and a second cam. A motor operative to rotate the shaft is also included in the toothbrush. A first brush section is operatively coupled to the first cam for a first motion. A second brush section longitudinally separated from the first brush section and separately associated with the second cam to drive the second brush section in a second motion. The second motion being distinct from the first motion.

A third embodiment of the electric toothbrush includes a shaft. The shaft includes a cam. A motor is operative to rotate the shaft. A first brush section is operatively coupled to the cam for a first motion. A second brush section is longitudinally separated from the first brush section and separately operatively coupled to the cam for a second motion. The second motion is distinct from the first motion.

For example, the second brush section can include a pivot portion located in a body of the second brush section and disposed transversely to a longitudinal axis of the second brush section, the pivot portion being operative to pivotably connect the second brush section to a head portion of the toothbrush. The second brush section includes a cam contact surface on a bottom surface thereof. The cam contact surface is operative to ride on a surface of the cam, thereby causing the second brush section to rock about the pivot portion.

In accordance with an aspect of the present invention, there is provided an electric toothbrush comprising: a shaft, the shaft including a first cam and a second cam; a motor operative to rotate the shaft; a first brush section operatively coupled to the first cam for a first motion; and, a second brush section longitudinally separated from the first brush section and separately associated with the second cam for a second motion, the second motion being distinct from the first motion.

In accordance with an aspect of the present invention, there is provided the electric toothbrush of the present invention, wherein the second brush section includes a cam follower portion depending from a bottom surface of the second brush section, the cam follower portion being offset from a longitudinal axis of the second brush section, the cam follower portion being operative to follow the second cam, the electric toothbrush further comprising a resilient member operative to bias the cam follower toward a longitudinal axis of the toothbrush.

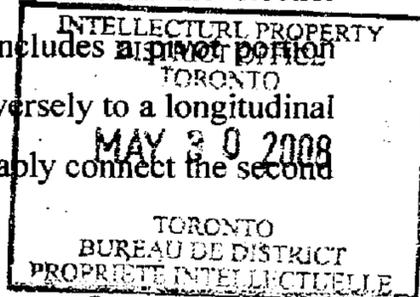
In accordance with an aspect of the present invention, there is provided the electric toothbrush of the present invention, wherein the second brush section includes one of a pivot and hinge portion, the one of a pivot and hinge portion being offset from and parallel to a longitudinal axis of the second brush section, the one of a pivot and hinge portion being operative to pivotably connect the second brush section to a head portion of the toothbrush, the second brush section including a cam contact surface on a bottom surface of the second brush section, the cam contact surface being operative to ride on a surface of the second cam, thereby causing the second brush section to swing about the one of a pivot and hinge portion.

In accordance with an aspect of the present invention, there is provided the electric toothbrush of the present invention, wherein the first brush section includes a groove operative to receive the first cam.

In accordance with an aspect of the present invention, there is provided the electric toothbrush of the present invention, wherein the first motion is an oscillatory rotational motion.

In accordance with an aspect of the present invention, there is provided the electric toothbrush of the present invention, wherein the second brush section includes a cam contact surface on a bottom surface thereof, the cam contact surface being operative to ride on a surface of the second cam, thereby causing the second brush to reciprocate in a direction substantially perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of the toothbrush.

In accordance with an aspect of the present invention, there is provided the electric toothbrush of the present invention, wherein the second brush section includes a pivot portion centrally located in a body of the second brush section and disposed transversely to a longitudinal axis of the second brush section, the pivot portion being operative to pivotably connect the second



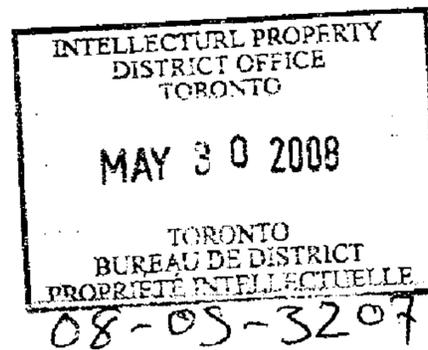
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brush section to a head portion of the toothbrush, the second brush section including first and second cam contact surfaces on a bottom surface of the second brush section and on opposite sides of the pivot portion, the cam contact surfaces being operative to ride on surfaces of the first and second cams, thereby causing the second brush section to rock about the pivot portion.

In accordance with an aspect of the present invention, there is provided the electric toothbrush of the present invention, wherein the first and second cams comprise bends in the shaft.

In accordance with an aspect of the present invention, there is provided the electric toothbrush of the present invention, wherein the second brush section includes a centrally located cam follower portion depending from a bottom thereof, wherein the second cam is helical and whereby a first surface of the cam follower portion follows the cam during a first rotational half cycle of the shaft and a second surface of the cam follower portion follows the cam during a second half cycle of shaft, whereby the second brush section is made to shuttle back and forth along a path substantially parallel to a longitudinal axis of the toothbrush.

In accordance with an aspect of the present invention, there is provided the electric toothbrush of the present invention, wherein the second brush section includes a first cam follower portion and a second cam follower portion depending from a bottom thereof, the first and second cam followers separated from one another along a longitudinal axis of the second brush portion, wherein the second cam is captured between the first and second cam follower portions, whereby the first cam follower portion follows the cam during a first rotational half cycle of the shaft and the second cam follower portion follows the cam during a second half cycle of shaft, whereby the second brush section is made to shuttle back and forth along a path substantially parallel to a longitudinal axis of the toothbrush.



One advantage of the present invention resides in distinct and complementary cleaning motions provided respectively by the first and second bristle holders

Another advantage of the present invention is that distinct and complementary cleaning motions are provided in a simple and economical toothbrush.

Still other advantages of the present invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art upon a reading and understanding of the detail description below.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

The invention may take form in various components and arrangements of components, and in various procedures and arrangements of procedures. The drawings are only for purposes of illustrating preferred embodiments, they are not to scale, and are not to be construed as limiting the invention.

FIG. 1 is a sectional bottom view of a toothbrush.

FIG. 2 shows a cross-sectional side view of part of the toothbrush of FIG.1.

FIG. 3 is a sectional bottom view of FIG. 2.

FIG. 4 is an opposite side view of FIG. 2.

FIGS. 5, 6 and 7 are respectively the same views as FIGS. 2, 3 and 4 of a different toothbrush and to a different scale.

FIG. 8 is a bottom view of an enhanced toothbrush having a second bristle holder. The toothbrush is shown in partial section.

FIG. 9 is a sectional view taken along A-A in FIG. 8 of a first embodiment of a toothbrush head portion.

FIG. 9A is a partial sectional side view of the first embodiment.

FIG. 10 is a sectional view taken along A-A in FIG. 8 of a second embodiment of a toothbrush head portion.

FIG. 11 is a sectional view taken along A-A in FIG. 8 of a third embodiment of a toothbrush head portion.

FIG. 12 is a partial sectional view taken along B-B in FIG. 8 of a fourth embodiment of a toothbrush head .

FIG. 13 is a partial sectional view taken along B-B in FIG. 8 of a fifth embodiment a toothbrush head.

FIG. 14 is a partial sectional view taken along B-B in FIG. 8 of the fifth embodiment of a toothbrush head. A shaft is shown rotated to a different position than shown in FIG. 13.

FIG. 15 is a partial sectional view taken along B-B in FIG. 8 of a sixth embodiment of a toothbrush head.

FIG. 16 is a partial sectional view taken along B-B in FIG. 8 of a seventh embodiment of a toothbrush head.

FIG. 17 is a bottom view of a head portion of a ninth embodiment of a toothbrush.

FIG. 18 is a partial sectional view taken along B-B in FIG. 8 of the ninth embodiment of a toothbrush head.

FIG. 19 is a partial sectional view taken along B-B in FIG. 8 of a tenth embodiment of a toothbrush head.

FIG. 20 is a side view of a toothbrush showing a first exemplary alternate bristle arrangement.

FIG. 21 is an end view taken along D-D of FIG. 8 showing a second exemplary bristle arrangement.

FIG. 22. is a partial sectional view taken along B-B in FIG. 8 of a second implementation of the fifth embodiment showing an alternate cam design.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Referring to the drawings, in FIG. 1 the toothbrush comprises a handle **10** at a first end of the toothbrush, a head **11** at a second end of the toothbrush, a neck **9** extending therebetween, a rotatable shaft **12** extending from the handle to the head, and a generally circular bristle holder **13** having a plurality of bristle tufts embedded therein, wherein each tuft **8** comprises a plurality of bristles. The handle provides compartments for holding an electric motor **14** and two batteries **15** and **16**, although a rechargeable power source can be substituted for the batteries **15** and **16**. A shaft coupling **17** is arranged to grip one end of the shaft **12** and allow the shaft to be pulled out for cleaning or replacement as will be described below.

The head **11**, as is better seen in FIG. 2, supports a post **18**, which provides a rotational or oscillatory pivot axis **40** for the bristle holder **13**. Bristles **19** are shown for illustrative purposes only in FIG. 2. The shaft **12** has an integrally formed remote-most end **20** that is offset from a central longitudinal axis **21** of the shaft. The remote-most end **20** fits into a slot **22** (see FIG. 3) formed in a side of the bristle holder **13**. It will be noted that the end **20** points towards an intersection of the first axis **21** and the pivot axis **40** of the post **18**. In one embodiment, the post is arranged so that the pivot axis **40** is substantially perpendicular to the central longitudinal axis **21** of the shaft. The pivot axis **40** is also substantially parallel to the direction in which the bristles **19** extend. While this arrangement is preferred, it is contemplated that the post **18** can be arranged differently. For example, the post **18** might be angled so that the pivot axis **40** is not substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis **21** of the shaft but rather forms an acute angle therewith in order to provide a wobbling or swiveling action about the pivot axis **40**. When the shaft **12** is rotated by the motor **14**, the remote end **20** describes a circle about the shaft **12** and drivingly engages the slot **22** to cause the bristle holder **13** to vibrate or oscillate about the pivot axis of the bristle holder **13**. In this regard, the formed remote-most end **20** may be considered to be a cam or a gear tooth. To vibrate is to move to and fro or from side to side. To oscillate is to move or travel back and forth between two points. A cam is a shaped component or portion of a component, which determines the motion of a follower. As may be seen in FIG. 3, slot **22** is closed-ended and extends radially inward from the outer circumference of the holder to less than the distance to the center of the holder and between adjacent pairs of bristle holes. Thus, the bristle holder **13** pivots, oscillates, or rotates forwards and backwards about the center of the post **18**. To pivot is to turn on or as if on a pivot. To rotate is to turn about an axis or a center. Such movement provides a first relative motion between the head **11** and the bristles **19** and is generally beneficial for efficient cleaning of teeth. The width of the slot **22** is preferably generally the same as the diameter of the end **20** to leave minimum play; this keeps noise to a minimum in use.

Preferably, the motor **14** runs at around 6000 rpm. Where desired, the motor can run at other speeds or be arranged to run at two or more speeds, selectable by the user. FIG. 1 shows a toothbrush where the holder **13** vibrates, oscillates, or rotates through an

angle of 30 degrees. In FIG. 2, the angle is 35 degrees and in FIG. 5 the angle is 15 degrees. It will therefore be appreciated that the rotational angle can be chosen by fitting different shafts 12 and that the same bristle holder can be used for all angles.

Each bristle holder 13 may be provided with more than one slot 22 as may be seen in FIG. 3, opposite each other so as to be better balanced or so that different slots can be used if the one slot wears or if the bristles wear unevenly in use. In other words, the holder 13 can then be set up in two or more rotational positions. The holder 13 is preferable easily removable from the head 11, by being spring clipped to the post 18 for example. Such removal allows better cleaning and storing in a hygienic container perhaps and also enables the shaft 12 to be readily withdrawn and replaced when required.

The described shafts 12 are preferably integrally formed, i.e., a single length of a thin rod and shaped as shown. However, it is possible to arrange for the remote end or cam 20 to be separately formed or provided and fixed to a straight end part of the shaft or elsewhere on the shaft. Such a separate part can be a brush having a central axis coinciding with the axis 21 of the shaft and an off-center driving post. The driving post then takes up the position and function of the remote end or cam 20. Thus, the driving post and the slot 22 then form the driving engagement between the shaft and the holder 13 and so the driving post can be regarded as the remote end of the shaft.

It is also possible, but not usually so convenient, in some embodiments of the invention to arrange for the holder 13 to be hingedly pivoted at one side, for example opposite the shaft. In such a case, bristles mounted nearer the hinged pivot will not actually move as much as bristles at the side next to the shaft but they will still vibrate significantly.

It will also be appreciated that whether pivoted to rotate or to hinge, the bristle holder 13 need not be circular. However, a circular holder 13 is normally preferred so that its rotational position can be changed when desired, as mentioned above. While the above-described shaft arrangement is preferred, it is contemplated that other shaft arrangements can be used with the present invention. For example, the arrangement described in US patent no. 5,732,432

might be substituted to accommodate mechanical misalignments of the shaft and mechanical strain during use. Further, the head 11 might be provided in a form in

which it can be readily detached from the handle 10. This could be accomplished using, coupling arrangements for the shaft and body portion of the head. Such arrangements are known in the art. For example, the head and handle portions can include mating slots and protrusions and/or locking or securing tabs and grooves. The shaft can be divided into two sections, each section including a coupling element. For example the coupling is achieved with a keyed arrangement. For instance, coupling elements can include male and female mating splines affixed to respective shaft section ends. Further, the slot 22 might be replaced by a wobble plate, such as described in US patent no. 5,784,743.

With additional reference now to FIG. 8 - FIG 18, embodiments of an enhanced electric toothbrush 810 include a first bristle holder 814 similar to the bristle holder 13 described above. The enhanced toothbrush 810 has a head 816 and a body or handle 817. Of course, the enhanced toothbrush includes a motor 819 and batteries for powering the motor. The head portion 816 has a longitudinal axis 818. The first bristle holder 814 is illustrated as circular. However, other shape bristle holders are contemplated and within the scope of the invention. The first bristle holder 814 includes at least one slot as described above (see FIG. 3) for receiving a remote-most end or cam of a driving shaft 820 as described in reference to FIG.1 - FIG 7. The remote-most end (see FIG. 3) of the driving shaft is bent or offset from a central longitudinal axis 21 (see FIG. 3) of the driving shaft 820 as described above. The motor 819 is operative to rotate the shaft 820. In short, with regard to the construction and operation of the shaft 820 in relation to the first bristle holder 814, the enhanced toothbrush 810 is similar to the toothbrush described in reference to FIG.1 - FIG 7. However, embodiments of the enhanced electric toothbrush 810 also include second bristle holders disposed adjacent the first bristle holders, such as second bristle holder 822. While it is desirable to locate the second bristle holder directly adjacent the first bristle holder, it is contemplated that a gap may be provided between the first and second bristle holders. In addition, the space between the movable first and second bristle holders might be filled with stationary or fixed bristles which are embedded in fixed or stationary third bristle holder (not shown) which forms part of the toothbrush head. In many embodiments of the enhanced electric toothbrush the second bristle holders are movable and separately associated with, and separately

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driven by, a driving shaft such as the driving shaft **820**. The movable second bristle holders are movable in directions and/or manners that are different and distinct from whichever of the rotary or hingedly pivoted vibratory movements, described in reference to FIG. 1 - FIG. 7, is used in the particular embodiment.

For example, referring to FIG. 9, a second bristle holder **910** is movably mounted in slots **912** in the toothbrush head **816** and separately driven in a vibratory, side-to-side, motion in a direction substantially perpendicular to the direction of the longitudinal axis **818** by an eccentric cam **914** included on a driving shaft **918**. The cam **914** and other cams described below can comprise one or more bends in the shaft **918**, as shown for example, example in FIG. 9A and as seen in views of other embodiments described below such as seen in FIG.12, FIG.13, FIG. 15. Alternatively, the cam **914** can be provided as a separate piece, which is attached to the shaft **918** by adhesive, a press or snap fit, a co-molding or any other mechanical or chemical means known in the art. Optionally, the driving shaft is supported by a shaft support **920**. A cam follower **922** depends from a bottom surface **924** of the second bristle holder **910**. The cam follower **922** is offset from a longitudinal axis **926** of the second bristle holder. As the motor **819** of the enhanced toothbrush **810** rotates the shaft **918**, the cam **914** comes into contact with a cam contact surface **928** of the cam follower **922** and drives the cam follower **922**, and therefore, the second bristle **910** holder toward one side **930** of the enhanced toothbrush **810** and away from the longitudinal axis **818** of the head portion **816**. As the shaft **918** continues to rotate, the cam **914** becomes disengaged with the cam follower **922**. A resilient biasing member such as a spring **934**, lodged between a wall of the head portion **816** and a second surface of the cam follower, urges the cam follower **922**, and therefore the second bristle holder **910**, back toward the longitudinal axis **818** of the head portion **816**. As this back and forth or sided to side motion is repeated (as the shaft **918** continues to rotate), a sweeping or brushing motion is provided that is distinct from and complimentary to the motion provided by the first bristle holder **814**. The stroke and/or frequency of the second bristle holder **910** can be changed by varying the construction of the spring and placement and/or sizing of the cam **914** and the cam follower **922**. For example, the cam follower **922** might be placed closer to the axis **926** to provide a shorter stroke or the cam follower **922** or a stronger spring might be provided to increase the rate

of return of the second bristle holder **910** or more than one spring might be provided. Alternatively, the cam follower **922** might form an acute angle with the bottom surface **924** of the second bristle holder **910** or the first surface can be provided as accurate, curvilinear, or in other complex forms as opposed to the planar surface shown in Fig. 9.

Referring to FIG. 10, in a second embodiment of the enhanced toothbrush **810** a second bristle holder **1010** is movably mounted in slots **1012** in the toothbrush head **816** and separately driven in a vibratory, swinging or pivoting motion about a hinge or pivot **1014**, by a cam **1016** included on a driving shaft **1018**. The cam **1016** can comprise one or more bends in the shaft **1018** or be provided as a separate piece as previously discussed. Optionally, the driving shaft is supported by a shaft support **1020**. A cam contact surface **1022** is located on a bottom surface of the second bristle holder **1010**. As the motor **819** of the enhanced toothbrush **810** rotates the shaft **1018**, the cam **1016** comes into contact with the cam contact surface **1022** and drives or pushes the second bristle holder **1010** causing the second bristle holder to swing or pivot about the hinge or pivot **1014**. As the shaft **1018** continues to rotate, the cam **1016** becomes disengaged with the cam contact surface **1022**. During use, as the cam **1016** comes in contact with the cam contact surface **1022**, bristles of the second bristle holder **1010** are urged against the users teeth with greater force. Preferably, bristles of the second bristle holder **1010** are urged between the teeth of the user to provide a cleaning and flossing function. As the cam disengages with the contact surface **1022**, bristles pressing against the teeth of the user urge the second bristle holder away from the users teeth. As this swinging or pivoting motion is repeated (as the shaft **1018** continues to rotate), a flossing or deep cleaning motion is provided that is distinct from and complimentary to the motion provided by the first bristle holder **814**.

Referring to Figure 11, in a third embodiment of the enhanced toothbrush **810** a second bristle holder **1110** is movably mounted in slots **1112** in the toothbrush head **816** and separately driven in a vibratory, lifting or vertical pulsating motion (e.g., in a direction substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis **1114** and substantially parallel to a surface **1115** of the second bristle holder **1110** as shown by way of example in Fig. 11) within the slots **1112**, by a cam **1116** included on a driving shaft **1118**. Optionally, the driving shaft is supported by a shaft support **1120**. The cam **1116** can

comprise one or more bends in the shaft **1118** or can be provided as a separate piece as previously discussed. A cam contact surface **1122** is located on a bottom surface of the second bristle holder **1110**. As the motor **819** (see FIG. 8) of the enhanced toothbrush **810** rotates the shaft **1118**, the cam **1116** comes into contact with the cam contact surface **1122** and drives or lifts in a vibratory, lifting, or vertical pulsating motion the second bristle holder **1110** causing the second bristle holder to lift or pulsate in a direction away from the head portion **816** and toward the teeth of a toothbrush user (not shown). As the shaft **1118** continues to rotate, the cam **1116** becomes disengaged with the cam contact surface **1122**. During use, as the cam **1016** comes in contact with the cam contact surface **1122**, bristles of the second bristle holder **1110** are urged against the users teeth with varying degrees of force. Preferably, bristles of the second bristle holder **1110** are urged between the teeth of the user to provide a cleaning and flossing function. As the cam disengages with the contact surface **1122**, bristles pressing against the teeth of the user urge the second bristle holder away from the users teeth and back toward the head portion **816**. As this lifting or vertical pulsating motion is repeated (as the shaft **1018** continues to rotate), a flossing or deep cleaning motion is provided that is distinct from and complimentary to the motion provided by the first bristle holder **814**.

Referring to Figure 12, in a fourth embodiment of the enhanced toothbrush **810** a second bristle holder **1210** is movably mounted in slots (not shown, but similar to the slots **912** illustrated in Fig. 9) in the toothbrush head **816** and separately driven in a reciprocating or translating, longitudinal motion within the slots by a cam **1216** included on a driving shaft **1218**. Optionally, the shaft is supported by shaft supports **1217**. The shaft supports may include C or U shaped portions (not shown) that are operative to receive and snap around the shaft. Other means for retaining a shaft in a support are known in the art. The cam **1216** can comprise a shaped bead, with an appropriate eccentric configuration, placed or molded over and firmly secured to the shaft **1218**. In one embodiment, the cam **1216** includes a pair of acutely angled surfaces **1219**, **1220** which are inclined in the same direction and at the same angle of inclination, but which are disposed at opposite ends of the cam **1216**. The direction of inclination and angle of inclination can be varied as desired to change the frequency and stroke of the second bristle holder **1210**. First **1222** and second **1226** cam followers depend from a bottom

surface of the second bristle holder **1210**. The cam followers **1222**, **1226** are offset or spaced from a transverse axis **1230** of the second bristle holder. The cam followers **1222**, **1226** straddle and/or capture the cam **1216** so that the angled surfaces **1219**, **1220** slidably engage the free ends of the cam followers **1222** and **1226**. As the motor **819** (see FIG. 8) of the enhanced toothbrush **810** rotates the shaft **1218**, the first acutely angled surface **1220** of the cam **1216** comes into contact with a surface of the first cam follower **1222** and drives the cam follower, and therefore, the second bristle holder **1210**, away from the first bristle holder **814** along the longitudinal axis **818** of the head portion **816**. As the shaft **918** continues to rotate, the cam **1216** becomes disengaged with the first cam follower **1222**. The second acutely angled second surface **1219** of the cam **1216** then comes into contact with a surface of the second cam follower **1226** and drives the second cam follower **1226**, and therefore, the second bristle holder **1210**, back toward the first bristle holder **814**. As this back and forth motion is repeated (as the shaft **918** continues to rotate), a scrubbing action is provided by the reciprocating or translating motion that is distinct from and complimentary to the motion provided by the first bristle holder **814**.

Referring to FIG. 13 and FIG. 14, in a fifth embodiment of the enhanced toothbrush **810** a second bristle holder **1310** is movably mounted in slots (not shown, but similar to the slots **912** illustrated in Fig. 9) in the toothbrush head **816** and separately driven in an reciprocating or translating, longitudinal motion, by a cam **1316** included on a driving shaft **1318**. Optionally, the shaft is supported by shaft supports **1317**. The shaft supports may include C or U shaped portions (not shown) that are operative to receive and snap around the shaft. Other means for retaining a shaft in a support are known in the art. The cam **1316** is sinusoidal or curvilinear in nature in that it has one or more adjacent arcuate bends **1319** and **1320** in the shaft **1318**. The arcuate bends **1319**, **1320** have each have an apex **1321**, and the apexes **1321** are disposed on opposite sides of the driving shaft **1318**. A cam follower **1322** depends from a bottom surface **1323** of the second bristle holder **1310** and is disposed between the apexes **1321** of the cam **1316**. As the motor **819** of the enhanced toothbrush **810** rotates the shaft **1318**, a first surface **1325** of the cam **1316** comes into contact with a first surface **1324** of the cam follower **1322** and drives the cam follower **1322**, and therefore, the second bristle holder **1310** away from the first bristle holder **814** in a direction along the longitudinal axis **818** of the head

portion **816**. As the shaft **918** continues to rotate, the first surface **1325** of the cam **1316** reaches the apex **1321** and becomes disengaged with the first cam follower surface **1324**. A second surface **1326** of the cam **1316** then comes into contact with a second surface **1426** of the cam follower **1322** and drives the cam follower **1322**, and therefore, the second bristle holder **1310** back toward the first bristle holder **814**. As this back and forth motion is repeated (as the shaft **918** continues to rotate), a scrubbing action is provided by the reciprocating or translating motion that is distinct from and complimentary to the motion provided by the first bristle holder **814**. The stroke and frequency of the reciprocating or translating motion can be varied by changing the spacing between the apexes and/or the amplitude or height of the apexes. Referring to Figure 15, in a sixth embodiment of the enhanced toothbrush **810**, a second bristle holder **1508** is movably mounted to the toothbrush head **816** with a pivot **1510**, which can be provided in the form of a pin or hinge, is installed at a centrally located transverse axis of the second bristle holder **1508**. In one embodiment, the second bristle holder **1508** pivots about a pin, which is anchored in the sidewalls of the toothbrush neck or head **816** at the midpoint of the second bristle holder **1508**. The second bristle holder **1508** is separately driven in a vibratory, swinging, teetering or rocking motion by a cam comprised of first **1512** and second **1514** cam portions included on a driving shaft **1518**. Optionally, the shaft is supported by shaft supports **1519**. The shaft supports may include C or U shaped portions (not shown) that are operative to receive and snap around the shaft. Other means for retaining a shaft in a support are known in the art. The cam portions **1512**, **1514** can comprise one or more rectilinear, curvilinear or other bends in the shaft **1518**. As is illustrated in FIG. 15 the first cam portion **1512** is located adjacent a first side of the pivot and the second cam portion **1514** is located adjacent a second side of the pivot. The second cam portion **1514** can comprise a portion of the remote-most end or cam (not shown but similar to the remote-most end or cam **20** of FIG. 3) of the shaft **1518**. First **1520** and second **1522** cam contact surfaces are located on a bottom surface of the second bristle holder **1508**. . As is the case with all the described embodiments, the amplitude or height of the bends or eccentricities that make up the first and second cam portions **1512**, **1514** are large enough reach the related cam contact surface(s) and to drive the second bristle holder a desired distance toward, into, across or along a toothbrush users teeth. As the

motor **819** of the enhanced toothbrush **810** rotates the shaft **1518**, the first cam portion **1512** comes into contact with the first cam contact surface **1520** and drives or lifts (relative to the figure) a first end **1522** of the second bristle holder **1510** causing the first end **1522** to rock or move about the pivot **1510** in a direction away from the head portion **816** and toward the teeth of a toothbrush user (not shown). This action lowers a second end **1526** of the second bristle holder back toward the head portion **816**. As the shaft **1518** continues to rotate, the first cam portion **1512** becomes disengaged with the first cam contact surface **1520** and the second cam portion **1514** engages the second cam contact surface **1522**. The second cam portion **1514** drives or lifts (relative to the figure) the second end **1526** of the second bristle holder **1508** causing the second end **1522** to rock or move about the pivot **1510** in a direction away from the head portion **816** and toward the teeth of the toothbrush user. This action lowers a first end **1530** of the second bristle holder back toward the head portion **816**. During use, as the first and second cam portions **1512**, **1514** alternately come in contact with the first and second cam contact surfaces **1520**, **1522**, bristles of the second bristle holder **1508** are urged against teeth of the user with varying degrees of force. Preferably, bristles of the second bristle holder **1508** are urged between the teeth of the user to provide a cleaning and flossing function. As the rocking or pivoting motion is repeated (as the shaft **1518** continues to rotate), a flossing or deep cleaning motion is provided that is distinct from and complimentary to the motion provided by the first bristle holder **814**.

Referring to Figure 16, in a seventh embodiment of the enhanced toothbrush **810** a second bristle holder **1608** is movably mounted to the toothbrush head **816** with a pivot **1610**, which can be provided in the form of a pin or of a hinge installed at a transverse axis of the second bristle holder **1608**. In one embodiment, the second bristle holder **1608** pivots about a pin, which is anchored in the side walls of the toothbrush neck at the midpoint of the second bristle holder **1608**. The transverse axis is, for example, adjacent to a first end **1612** of the second bristle holder **1608**. The second bristle holder **1608** is separately driven in a vibratory, swinging, pivoting or rocking motion by a cam **1614** included on a driving shaft **1618**. Optionally, the shaft is supported by shaft supports **1619**. The shaft supports may include C or U shaped portions (not shown) that are operative to receive and snap around the shaft. Other means for retaining a shaft in a

support are known in the art. The cam **1614** may be a portion of a remote-most end of the shaft **1618** (not shown but similar to the remote-most end or cam **20** of FIG. 3). The cam **1614** can comprise one or more bends in the shaft **1618**. For example, the bends can be rectilinear, curvilinear or other kinds of bends. A cam contact surface **1622** is located on a bottom surface of the second bristle holder **1608** adjacent to a second end **1626** thereof. As the motor **819** of the enhanced toothbrush **810** rotates the shaft **1618**, the cam **1614** comes into contact with the cam contact surface **1622** and drives or lifts (relative to the figure) the second end **1626** of the second bristle holder **1608** causing the second end **1626** of the second bristle holder **1608** to rock or move about the pivot **1610** in a direction away from the head portion **816** and toward the teeth of a toothbrush user (not shown). As the shaft **1618** continues to rotate, the cam **1614** becomes disengaged with the cam contact surface **1622**. During use, as the cam **1614** comes in contact with the cam contact surface **1622**, bristles of the second bristle holder **1608** are urged against teeth of the user with a varying degree of force. Preferably, bristles of the second bristle holder **1608** are urged between the teeth of the user to provide a cleaning and flossing function. As the cam disengages with the contact surface **1622**, bristles pressing against the teeth of the user urge the second bristle holder away from the users teeth and back toward the head portion **816**. As this swinging or pivoting motion is repeated (as the shaft **1618** continues to rotate), a flossing or deep cleaning motion is provided that is distinct from, and complimentary to, the motion provided by the first bristle holder **814**.

Referring to FIG. 17 and FIG. 18, in a eighth embodiment of the enhanced toothbrush **810** a second bristle holder **1810** is movably mounted in slots **1812** in the toothbrush head **816** and separately driven in a reciprocating or translating, transverse motion within the slots **1812** by a cam **1816** included on a driving shaft **1818**. The cam **1816** can comprise an appropriately shaped bead placed over or molded and fixedly secured to the shaft **1818**. For example, the bead is shaped as and eccentric cam. Alternatively, the cam can include one or more rectilinear, curvilinear or other kind of bend. First **1822** and second **1826** cam followers depend from a bottom surface of the second bristle holder **1810**. The cam followers are, for example, offset from the longitudinal axis **818** of the second bristle holder and straddle or capture the cam **1816**. As the motor **819** (see FIG. 8) rotates the shaft **1818**, the cam **1816** comes into contact

with a surface **1821** of the first cam follower **1822** and drives the first cam follower **1822**, and therefore, the second bristle holder **1810** away from a first side **1828** of the head portion **816** along a transverse axis **1830** of the head portion **816**. As the shaft **1818** continues to rotate, the cam **1816** becomes disengaged with the first cam follower **1822**. The cam **1816** then comes into contact with a surface **1825** of the second cam follower **1826** and drives the second cam follower **1826**, and therefore, the second bristle holder **1810** back toward the first side **1828** of the head portion **816**. As this back and forth or side to side motion is repeated (as the shaft **918** continues to rotate), a sweeping motion is provided that is distinct from and complimentary to the motion provided by the first bristle holder **814**.

Referring to FIG. 19 in a ninth embodiment of the enhanced toothbrush **810** a second bristle holder **1910** is movably mounted in slots (not shown) in the toothbrush head **816** and separately driven in an reciprocating or translating, longitudinal motion, by a cam **1916** included on a driving shaft **1918**. The cam **1916** can comprise a shaped bead, with an appropriate configuration, placed or molded over and firmly secured to the shaft **1918**. The cam **1916** includes a reversing spiral or helical groove **1920**. The spiral or helical groove extends around a circumference of the bead and spirals about a longitudinal axis of the bead. For example, the longitudinal axis coincides with the shaft **1918**. A cam follower **1922** depends from a bottom surface **1923** of the second bristle holder **1910**. The cam follower **1922** is slidably received within the spiral groove **1920**. As the motor **819** of the enhanced toothbrush **810** rotates the shaft **1918**, a first surface **1924** of the spiral groove **1920** comes into contact with a first surface **1925** of the cam follower **1922** and drives the cam follower **1922**, and therefore, the second bristle holder **1910** away from the first bristle holder **814** along the longitudinal axis **818** of the head portion **816**. As the shaft **1918** continues to rotate, the cam follower **1922** reaches an apex **1926** of the spiral groove **1920** and the first surface **1924** of the spiral groove **1920** becomes disengaged with the first cam surface **1925**. A second surface **1928** of the spiral groove **1920** then comes into contact with a second surface **1930** of the cam follower **1922** and drives the cam follower **1922**, and therefore, the second bristle holder **1910** back toward the first bristle holder **814**. As this back and forth motion is repeated (as the shaft **918** continues to rotate), a scrubbing motion is provided that is distinct from and

complimentary to the motion provided by the first bristle holder **814**. Optionally cam **1916** is eccentrically mounted on the shaft **1918** and the longitudinal axis of the bead or cam **1916** does not coincide with the shaft **1918**. In this case, if the cam follower **1922** is made long enough to ride on the bottom of the spiral groove **1920**, a lifting or vertical pulsing force is provided to the second bristle holder as the eccentrically mounted came is rotated by the shaft. Alternately, or additionally, the depth of the groove is varied. The variation in depth provides lifting or vertical pulsing forces to the cam follower and therefore to the second bristle holder. The spiral groove may be replaced with a groove that cycles back and forth along the longitudinal axis of the bead several times as it circles the bead. This sort of groove can be used to increase the reciprocating frequency of the second bristle holder.

While the embodiments of the present invention have been illustrated for simplicity with bristles, which extend in a direction substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis **818** and the surface (for example see **1115** of FIG. 11) of the bristle holders, it is contemplated that the bristles might be arranged differently to complement or further enhance the motions of the first and/or second bristle holders. Referring to FIG. 20, some or all of the bristles might extend in a direction which forms an acute angle **2008** to a surface **2006** of the bristle holder and extends in a direction toward or away from the handle, such as shown by way of example in FIG.20 ___ with respect to bristles **2010** and **2014** respectively. Referring to FIG. 21, in another embodiment, some of the bristles might extend outwardly away from head, in another direction, again forming an acute angle **2108** with respect to the surface of the bristle holder, as shown by way in Fig. 21 with respect to bristles **2110** and **2114**. Massaging bristles or bristles of varying height might also be used, such as described in US patent nos. Des. 330,286, Des. 434,563.

Other preferred bristle arrangements suitable for use include those arrangements described in whole or part in US patents nos. 6,006,394; 4,081,876; 5,046,213; 5,335,389; 5,392,483; 5,446,940; 4,894,880; and international publication no. WO 99/23910.

The invention has been described with reference to particular embodiments. Modifications and alterations will occur to others upon reading and understanding this

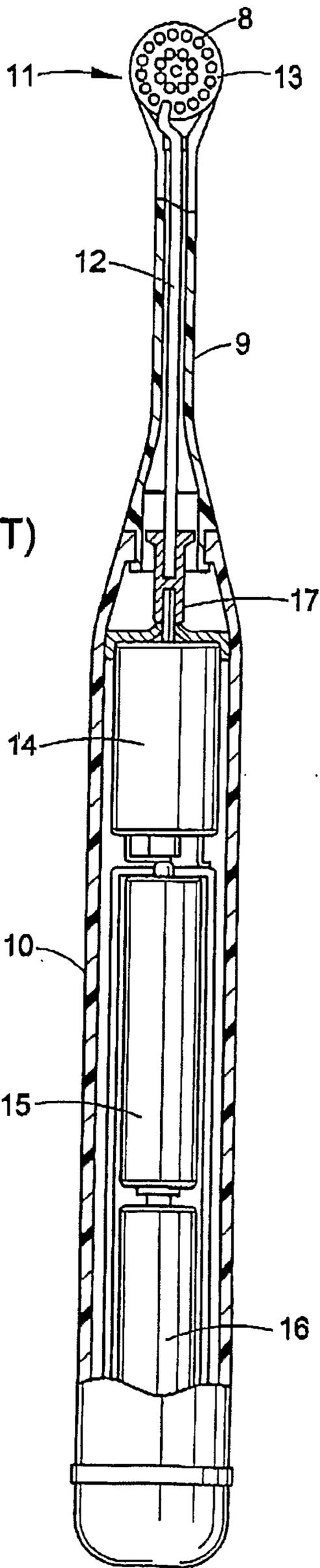
specification. For example, while certain cams maybe described as comprising bends in a shaft and other cams have been described as including appropriately shaped beads secured to a shaft, the cams are not limited to the suggested form. Indeed, bends may be substituted for beads and beads may be substituted for bends. For example, FIG. 22 illustrates a tenth embodiment that is similar to the fifth embodiment illustrated in FIG. 13 and 14. However, in the tenth embodiment the cam **2216** is formed as an appropriately configured complex bead fixedly placed or co-molded over the shaft **2218**. Where first and second cam portions or surfaces are described or referenced, the portions or surfaces can be considered to be or implemented as separate cams. Where cams or cam portions are illustrated with one eccentricity or bent shape, multiple eccentricities or bent shapes may be included. Each added eccentricity or bent shape would increase the frequency with which the related bristle holder vibrates, pulses, pivots, swivels, rocks, oscillates, reciprocates or translates. Additionally, where multiple eccentricities are included, they may be of varying amplitude, thereby providing varying bristle holder movement amplitudes. It is intended that all such modifications and alterations are included insofar as they come within the scope of the appended claims or equivalents thereof.

What is claimed is:

1. An electric toothbrush comprising:
a shaft, the shaft including a first cam and a second cam;
a motor operative to rotate the shaft;
a first brush section operatively coupled to the first cam for a first motion;
and,
a second brush section longitudinally separated from the first brush section and separately associated with the second cam for a second motion, the second motion being distinct from the first motion.
2. The electric toothbrush of claim 1 wherein the second brush section includes a cam follower portion depending from a bottom surface of the second brush section, the cam follower portion being offset from a longitudinal axis of the second brush section, the cam follower portion being operative to follow the second cam, the electric toothbrush further comprising a resilient member operative to bias the cam follower toward a longitudinal axis of the toothbrush.
3. The electric toothbrush of claim 1, wherein the second brush section includes one of a pivot and hinge portion, the one of a pivot and hinge portion being offset from and parallel to a longitudinal axis of the second brush section, the one of a pivot and hinge portion being operative to pivotably connect the second brush section to a head portion of the toothbrush, the second brush section including a cam contact surface on a bottom surface of the second brush section, the cam contact surface being operative to ride on a surface of the second cam, thereby causing the second brush section to swing about the one of a pivot and hinge portion.
4. The electric toothbrush of claim 1, wherein the first brush section includes a groove operative to receive the first cam.

5. The electric toothbrush of claim 1, wherein the first motion is an oscillatory rotational motion.
6. The electric toothbrush of claim 1, wherein the second brush section includes a cam contact surface on a bottom surface thereof, the cam contact surface being operative to ride on a surface of the second cam, thereby causing the second brush to reciprocate in a direction substantially perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of the toothbrush.
7. The electric toothbrush of claim 1, wherein the second brush section includes a pivot portion centrally located in a body of the second brush section and disposed transversely to a longitudinal axis of the second brush section, the pivot portion being operative to pivotably connect the second brush section to a head portion of the toothbrush, the second brush section including first and second cam contact surfaces on a bottom surface of the second brush section and on opposite sides of the pivot portion, the cam contact surfaces being operative to ride on surfaces of the first and second cams, thereby causing the second brush section to rock about the pivot portion.
8. The electric toothbrush of claim 1, wherein the first and second cams comprise bends in the shaft.
9. The electric toothbrush of claim 1, wherein the second brush section includes a centrally located cam follower portion depending from a bottom thereof, wherein the second cam is helical and whereby a first surface of the cam follower portion follows the cam during a first rotational half cycle of the shaft and a second surface of the cam follower portion follows the cam during a second half cycle of shaft, whereby the second brush section is made to shuttle back and forth along a path substantially parallel to a longitudinal axis of the toothbrush.
10. The electric toothbrush of claim 1, wherein the second brush section includes a first cam follower portion and a second cam follower portion depending from a bottom thereof, the first and second cam followers separated from one another along a

longitudinal axis of the second brush portion, wherein the second cam is captured between the first and second cam follower portions, whereby the first cam follower portion follows the cam during a first rotational half cycle of the shaft and the second cam follower portion follows the cam during a second half cycle of shaft, whereby the second brush section is made to shuttle back and forth along a path substantially parallel to a longitudinal axis of the toothbrush.



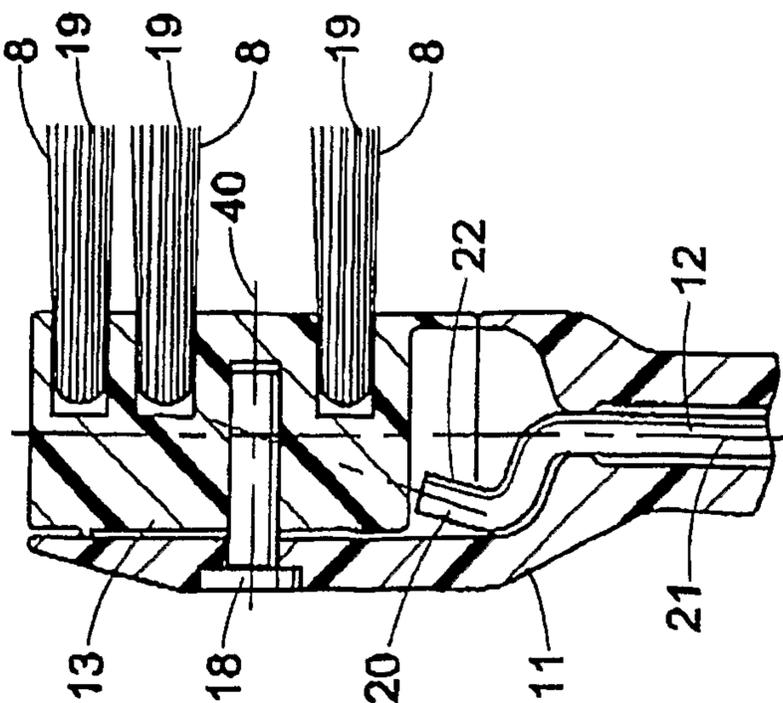


FIG. 2
(PRIOR ART)

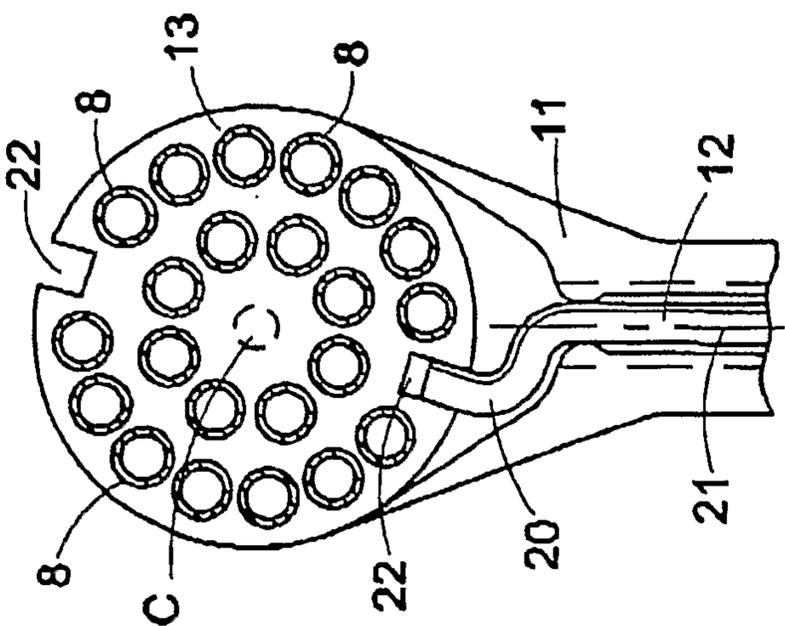


FIG. 3
(PRIOR ART)

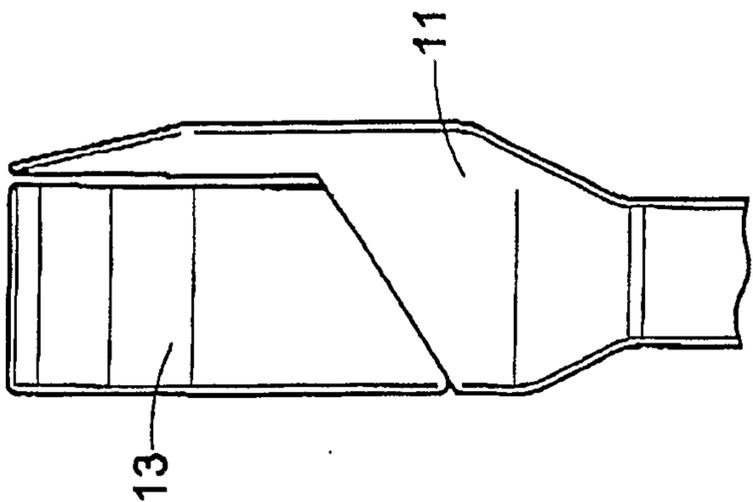


FIG. 4
(PRIOR ART)

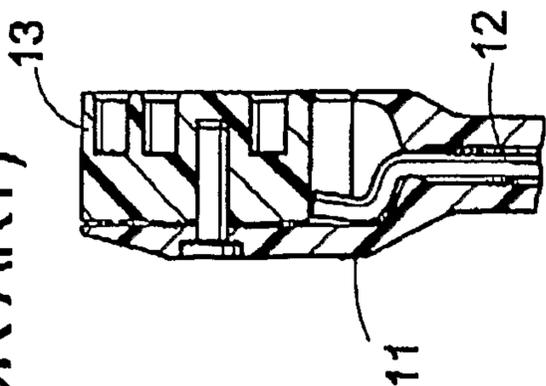


FIG. 5
(PRIOR ART)

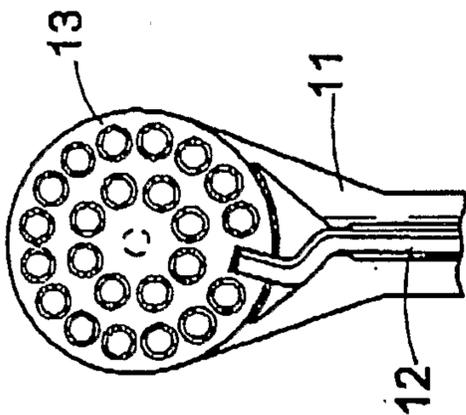


FIG. 6
(PRIOR ART)

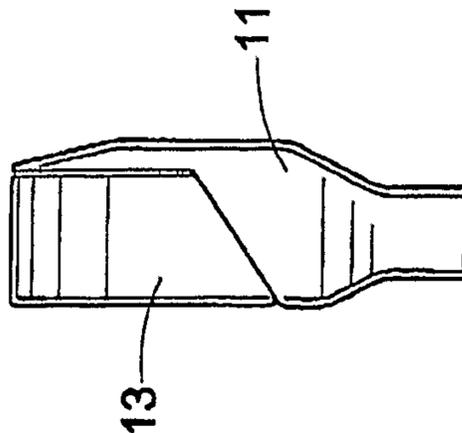


FIG. 7
(PRIOR ART)

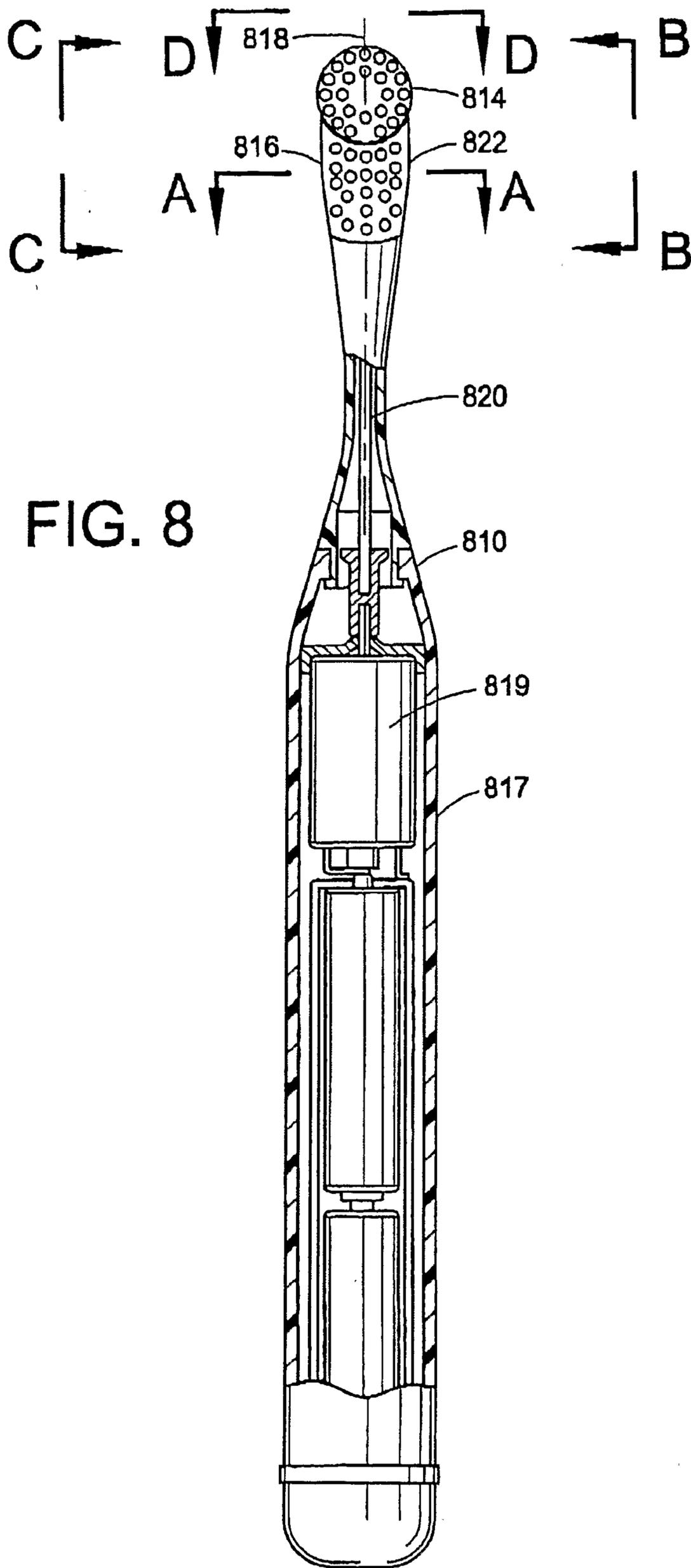


FIG. 8

FIG. 9

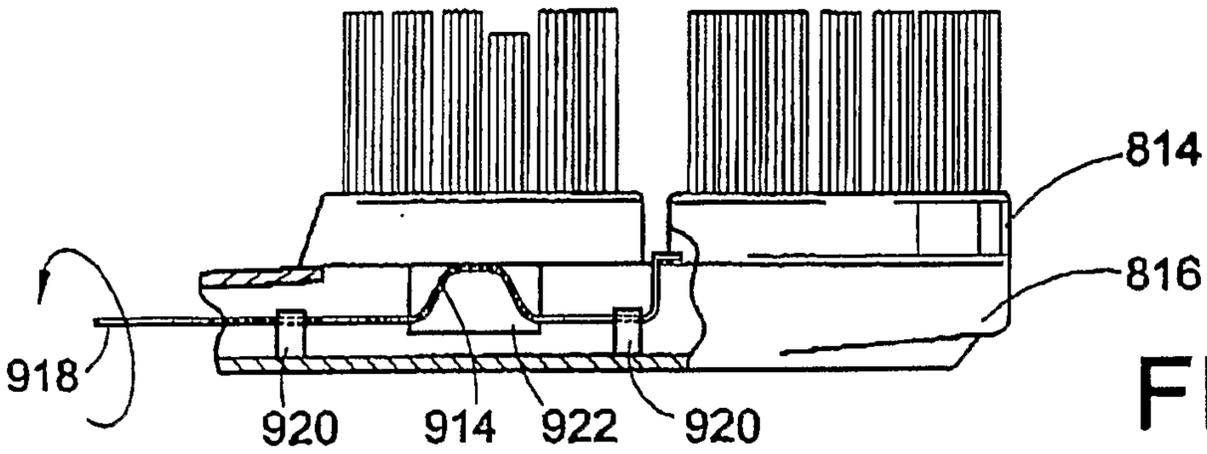
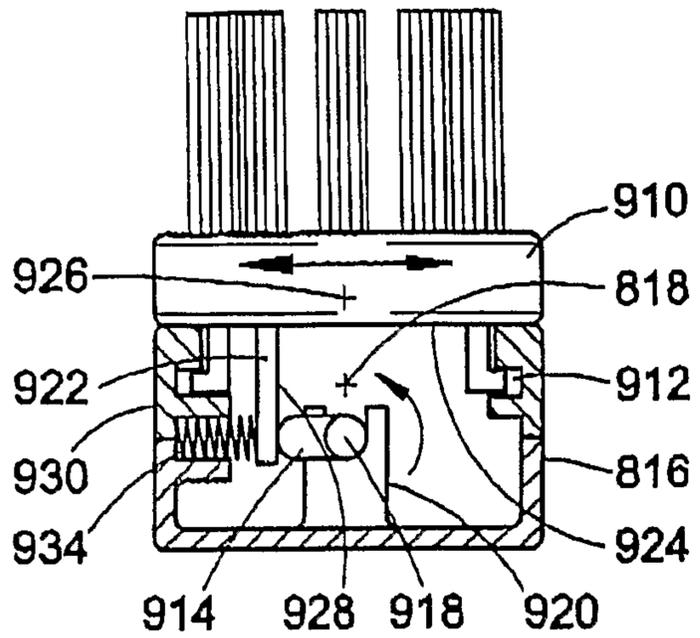


FIG. 9A

FIG. 10

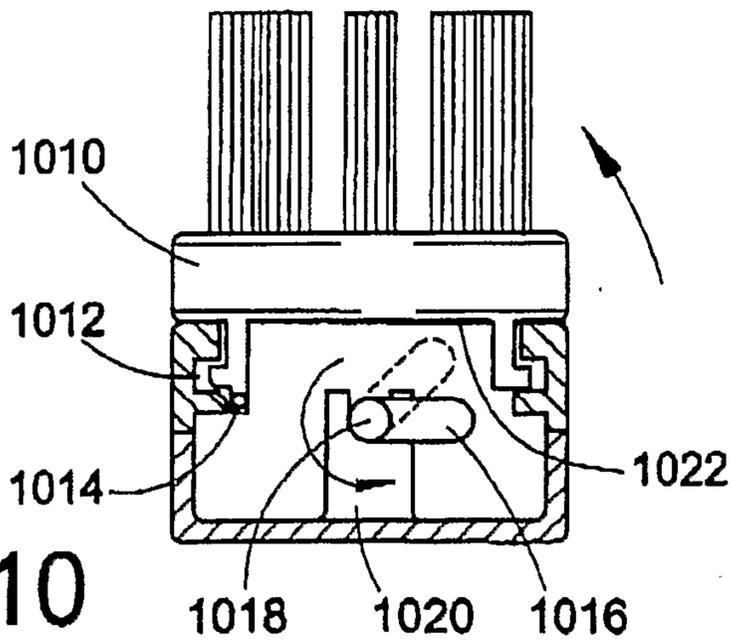
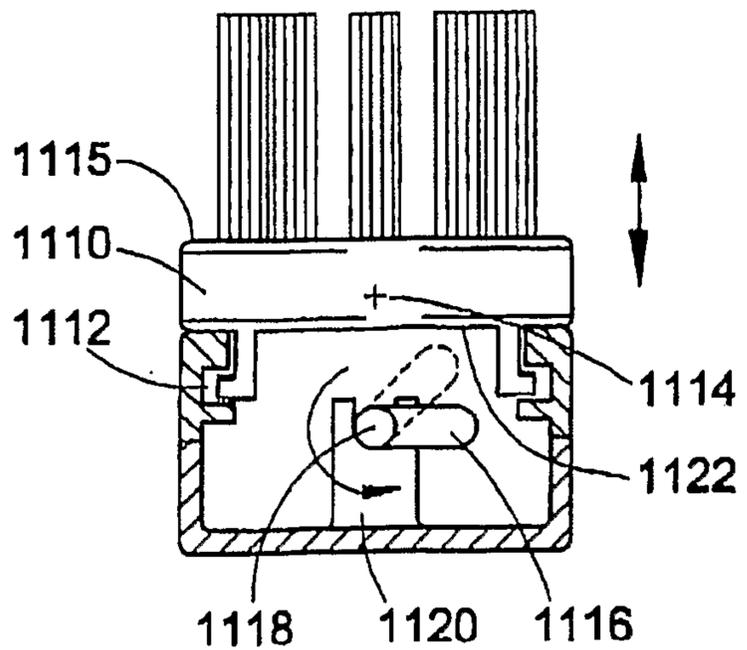


FIG. 11



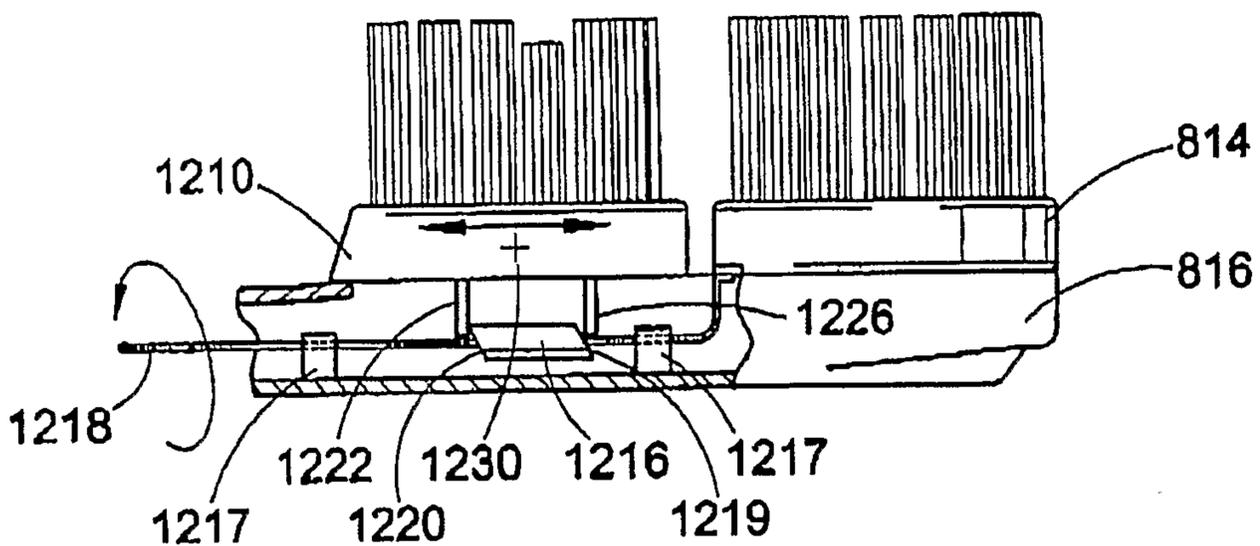


FIG. 12

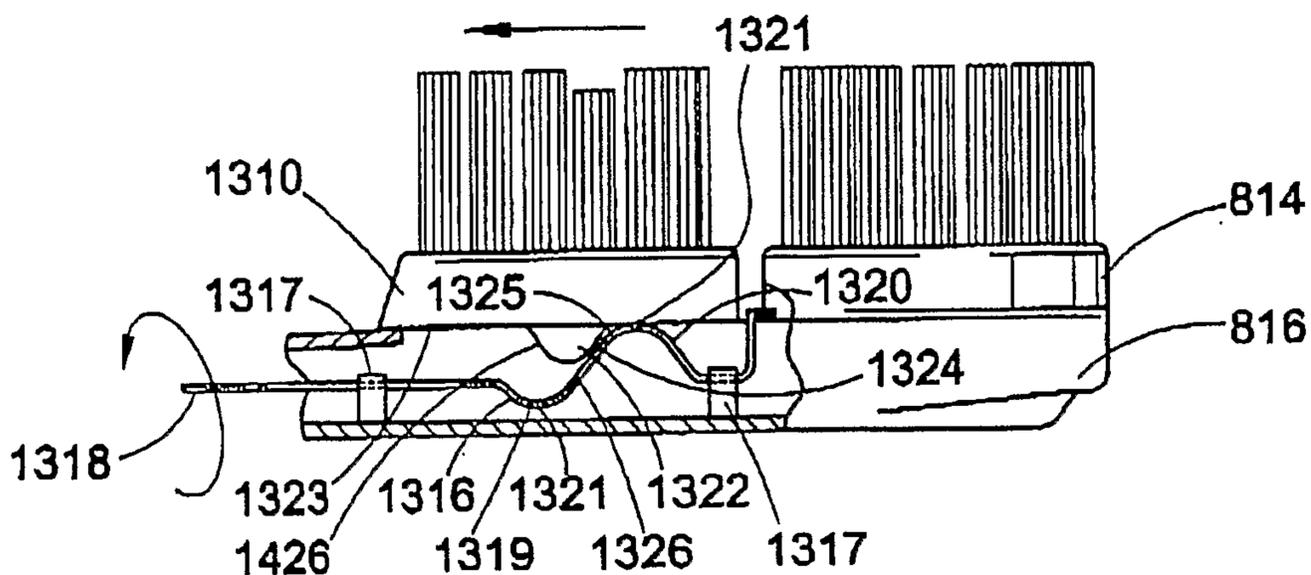


FIG. 13

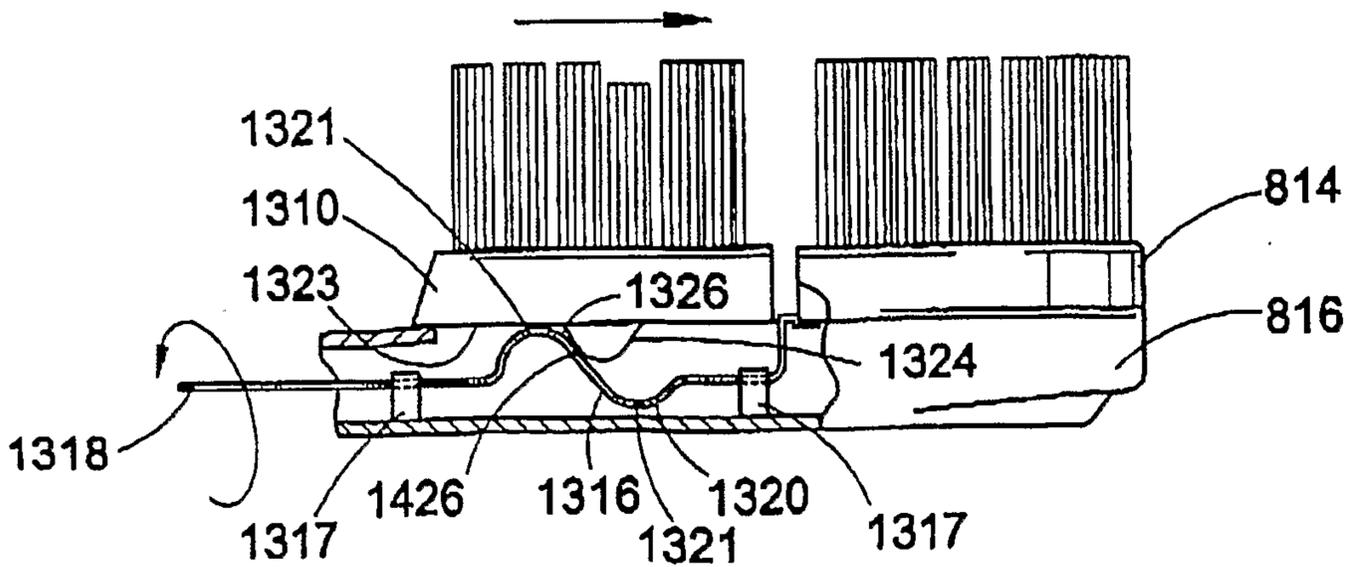


FIG. 14

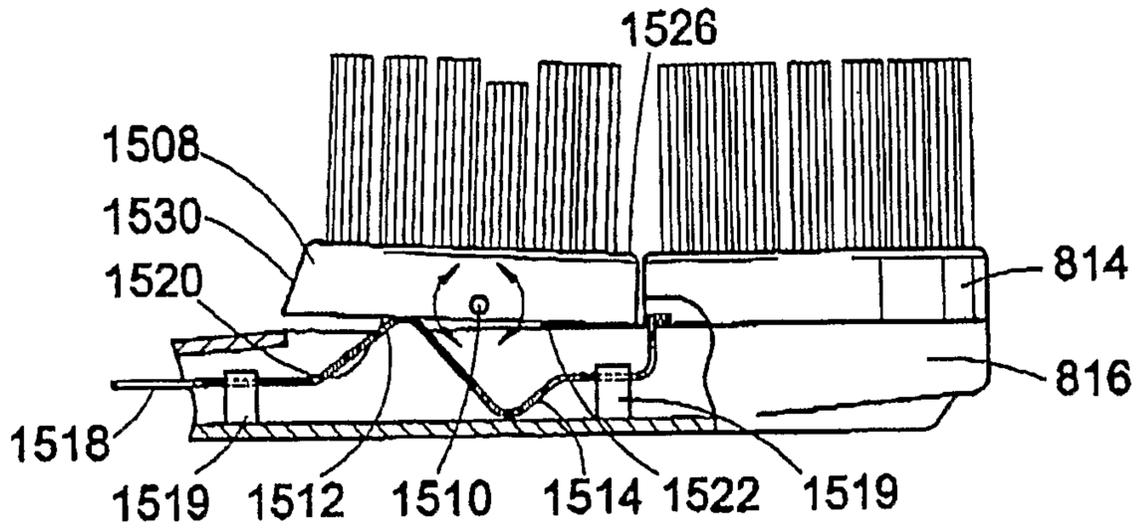


FIG. 15

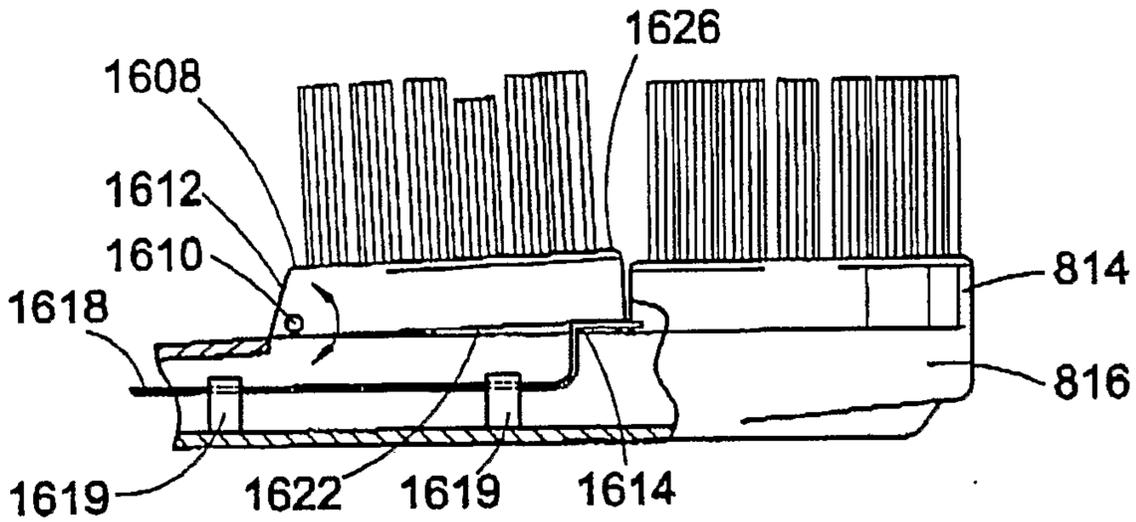


FIG. 16

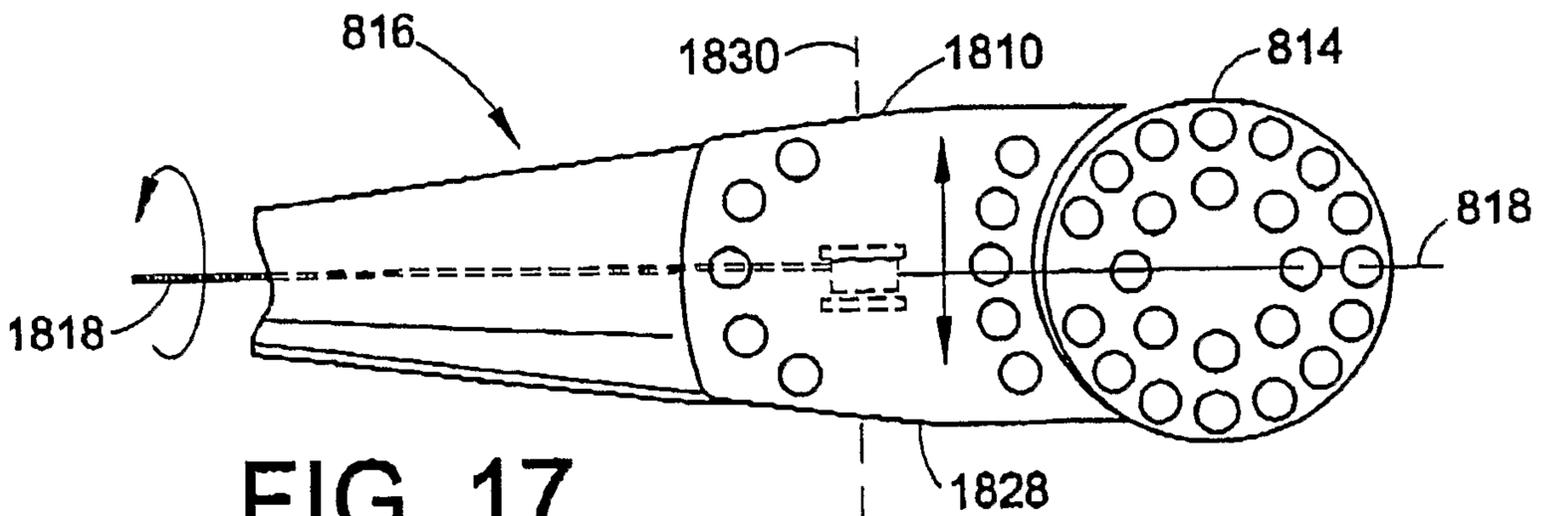


FIG. 17

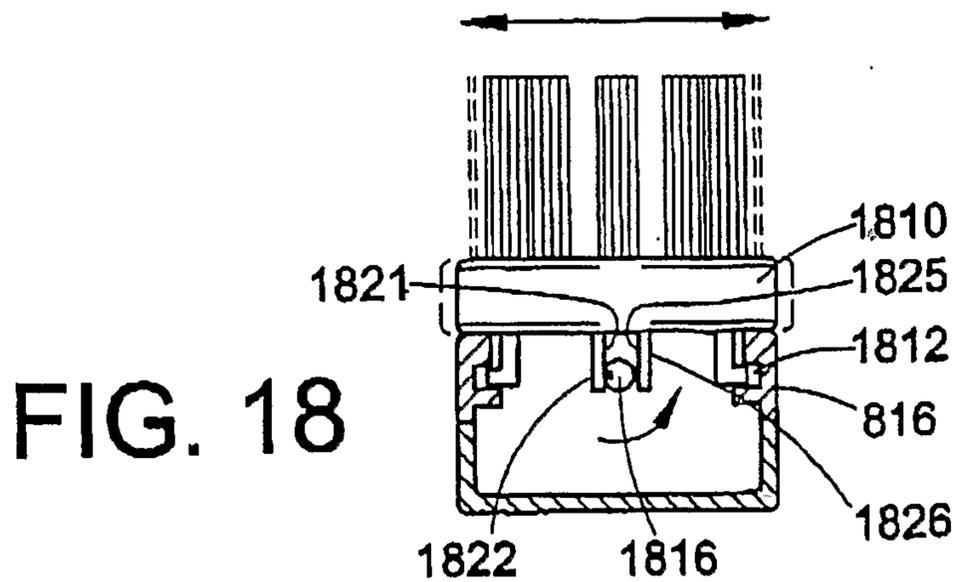


FIG. 18

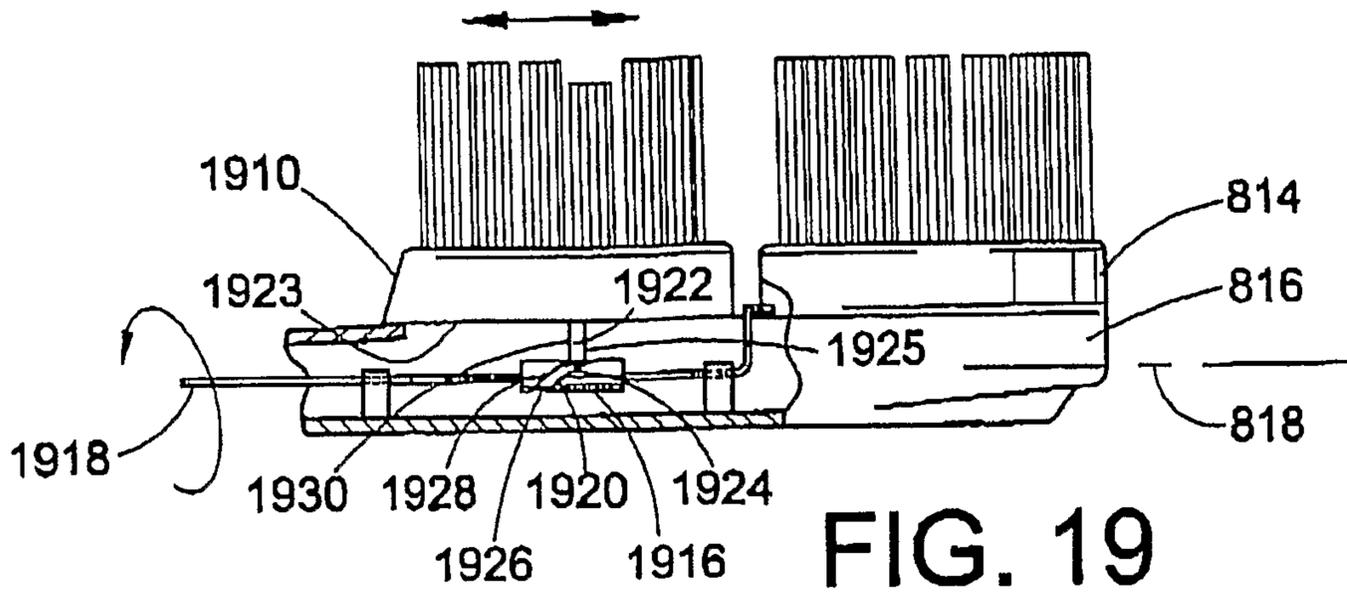


FIG. 19

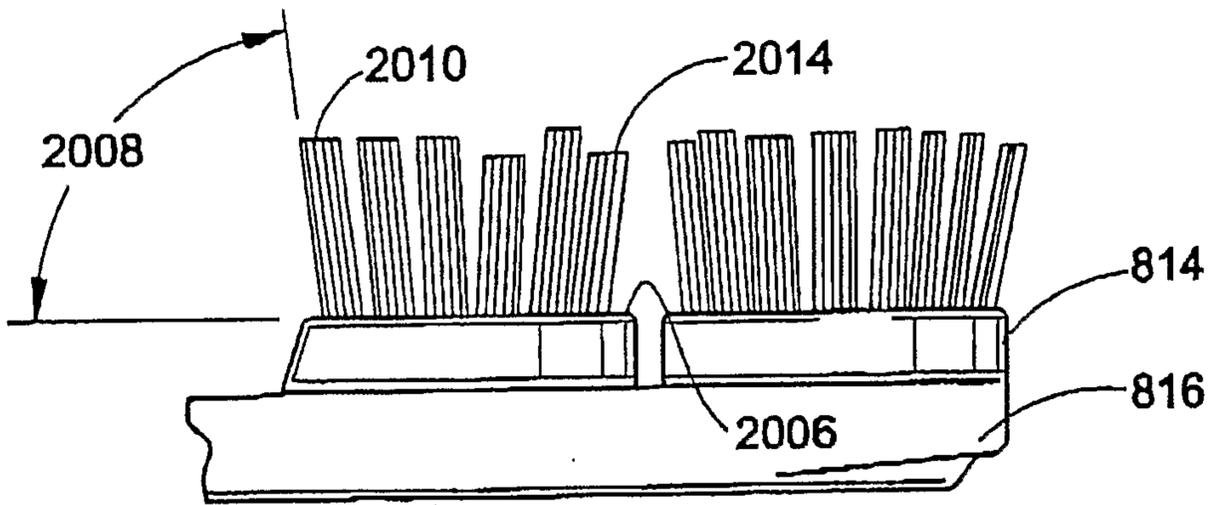


FIG. 20

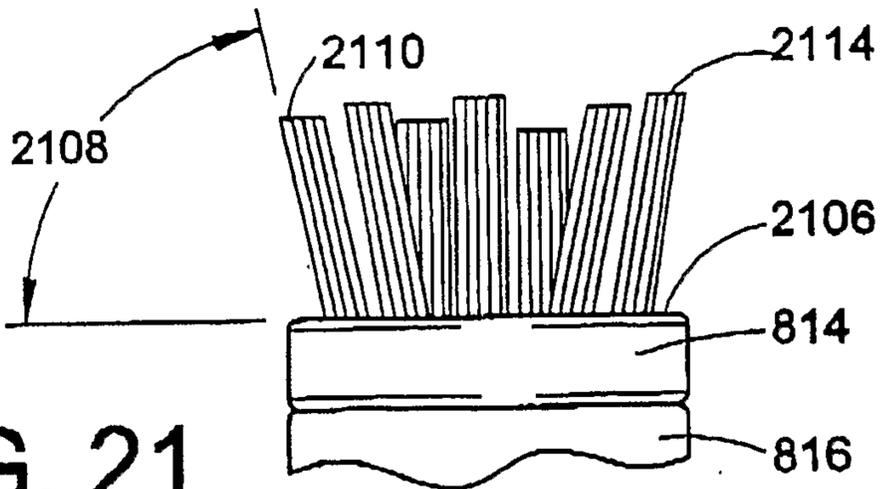


FIG. 21

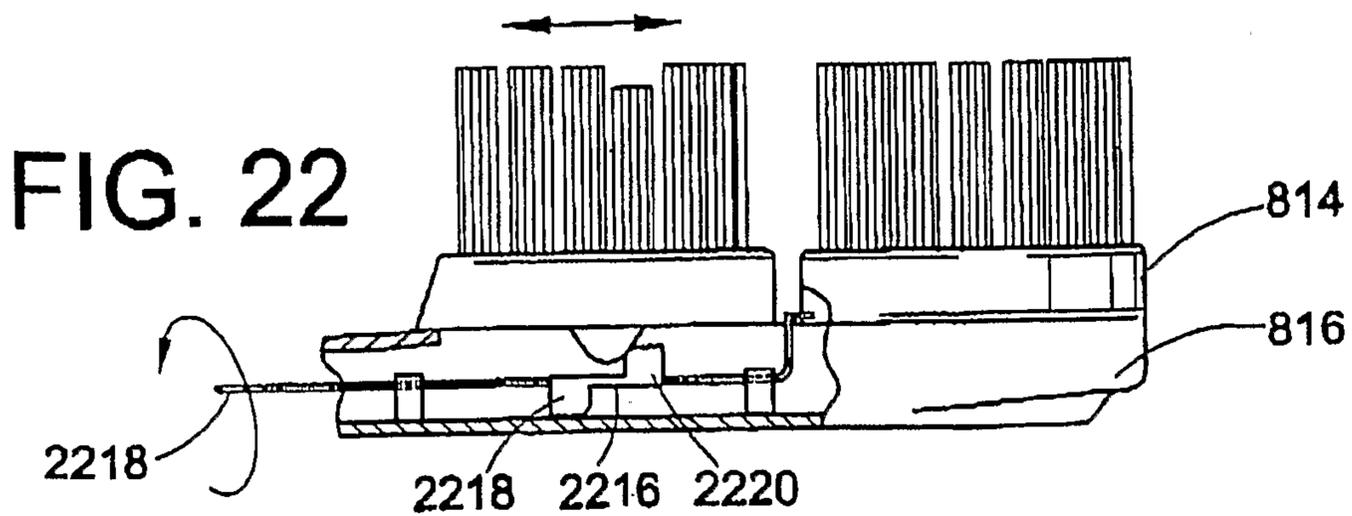


FIG. 22

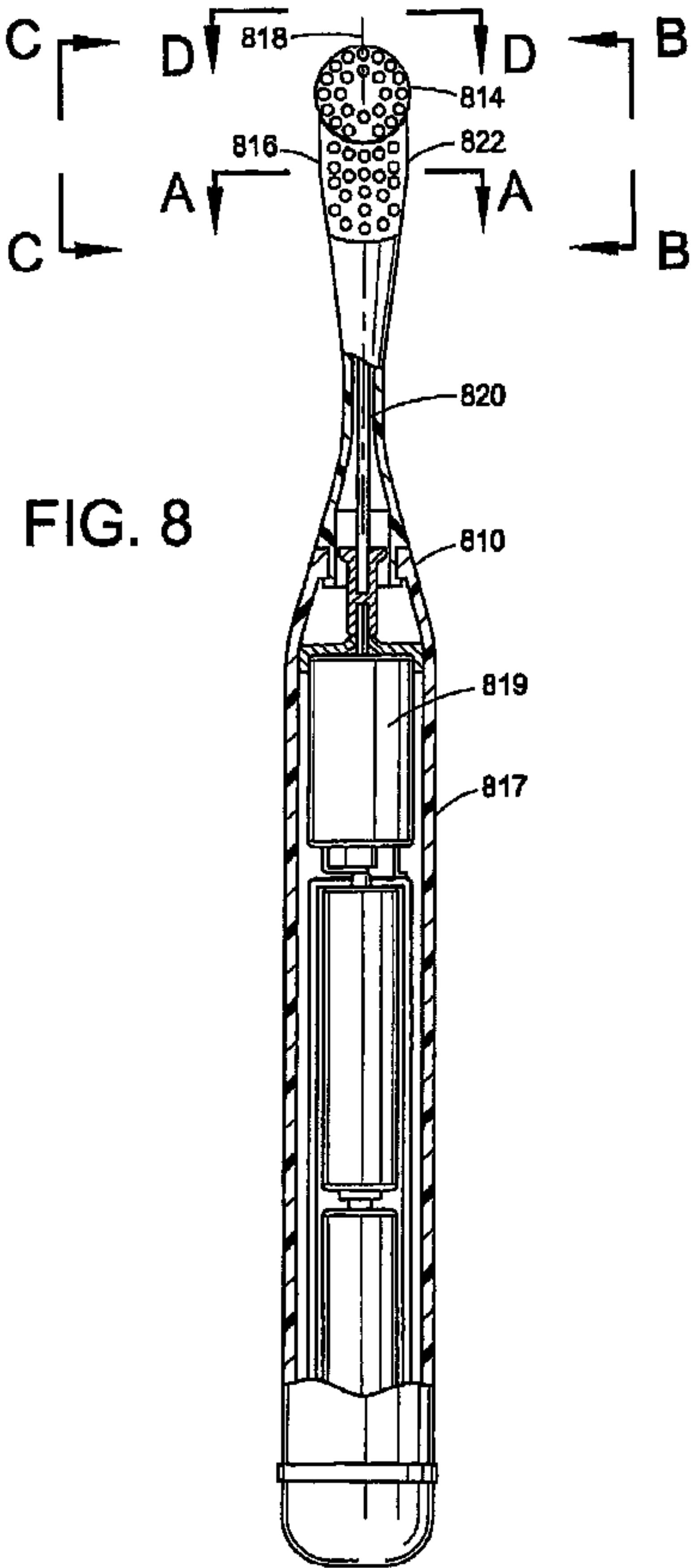


FIG. 8