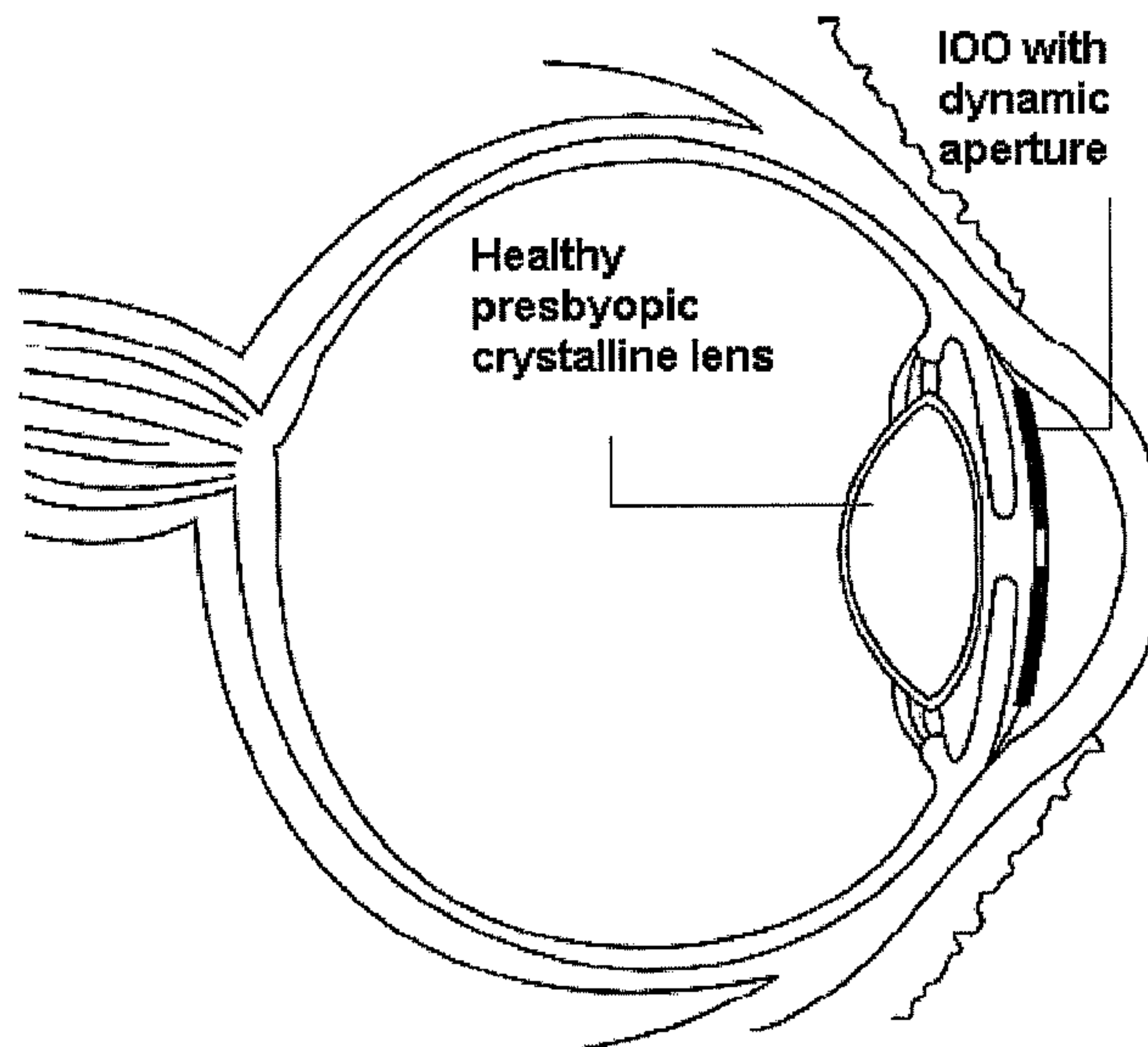




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Dynamic aperture IOO provides
for intermediate and near vision by
way of increasing depth of focus

FIGURE 8

(57) **Abrégé/Abstract:**

Embodiments of the present invention relate to an electro-active element having a dynamic aperture. The electro-active element provides increased depth of field and may be used in a non-focusing ophthalmic device that is spaced apart from but in optical communication with an intraocular lens, a corneal inlay, a corneal onlay, a contact lens, or a spectacle lens that provide an optical power. The electro-active element provides increased depth of field and may also be used in a focusing or non-focusing device such as an intraocular optic, an intraocular lens, a corneal inlay, a corneal onlay, or a contact lens which may or may not have an optical power. By changing the diameter of dynamic aperture either increased depth of field or increased light reaching the retina may be achieved.

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(54) Title: OPTHALMIC DYNAMIC APERTURE

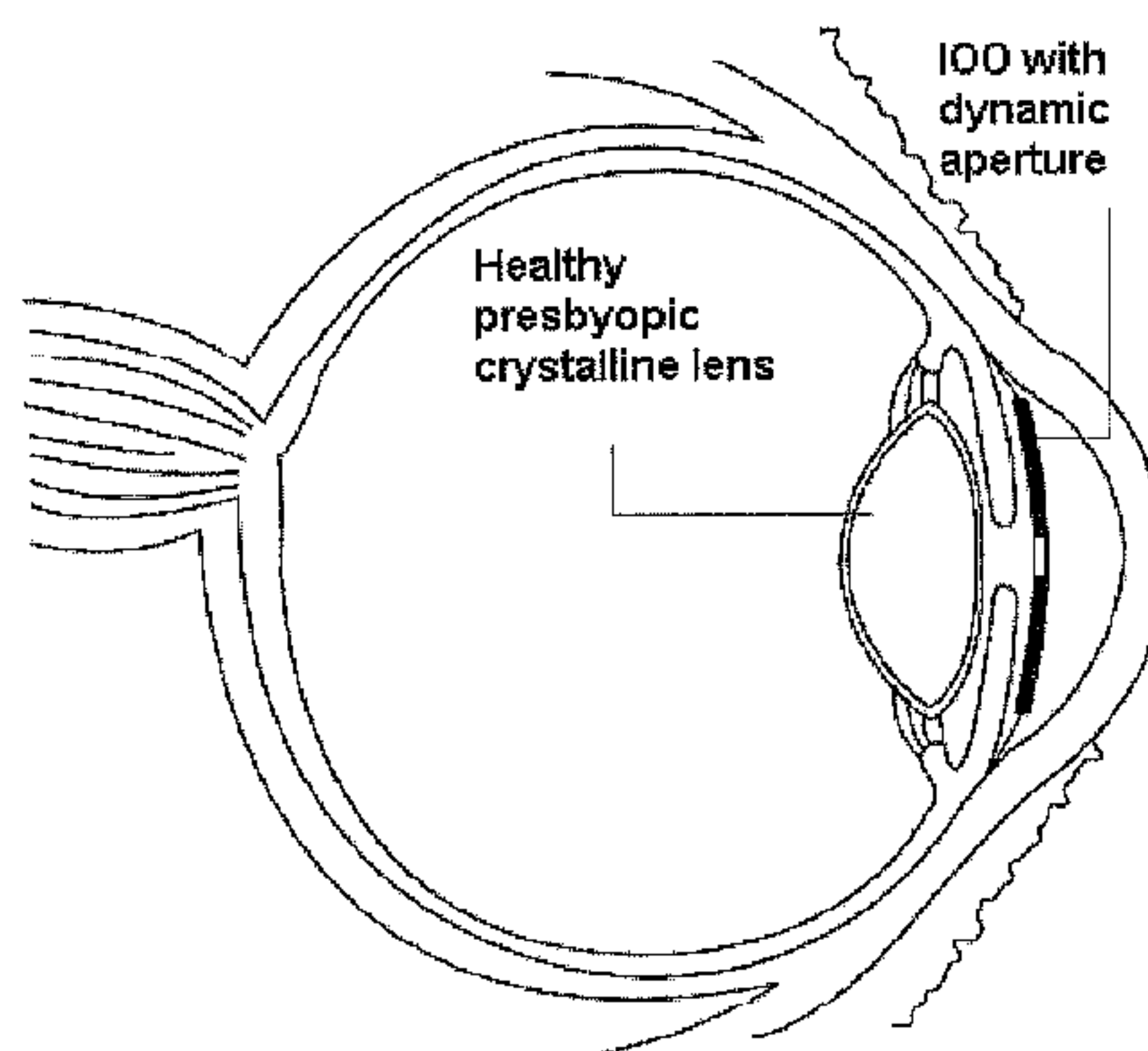
Dynamic aperture IOO provides
for intermediate and near vision by
way of increasing depth of focus

FIGURE 8

(57) Abstract: Embodiments of the present invention relate to an electro-active element having a dynamic aperture. The electro-active element provides increased depth of field and may be used in a non-focusing ophthalmic device that is spaced apart from but in optical communication with an intraocular lens, a corneal inlay, a corneal onlay, a contact lens, or a spectacle lens that provide an optical power. The electro-active element provides increased depth of field and may also be used in a focusing or non-focusing device such as an intraocular optic, an intraocular lens, a corneal inlay, a corneal onlay, or a contact lens which may or may not have an optical power. By changing the diameter of dynamic aperture either increased depth of field or increased light reaching the retina may be achieved.

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Ophthalmic Dynamic Aperture

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and John Hunkeler

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[01] This application claims priority from and incorporates by reference in their entirety the following provisional application:

U.S. Serial No. 60/902,866 filed on 23 February 2007 and entitled "Electro-Active Ophthalmic Device for the Correction of Refractive Errors of the Human Eye";

U.S. Serial No. 61/020,759 filed on 14 January 2008 and entitled "Electro-Active Ophthalmic Optic or Lens with Dynamic Aperture"; and

U.S. Serial No. 61/025,348 filed on 1 February 2008 and entitled "Range of Optical Transmission Values for an Ophthalmic Lens or Optic Comprising a Central Aperture for Providing Increased Depth of Focus".

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

[02] The present invention relates to an intraocular optic, an intraocular lens, a corneal inlay, a corneal onlay, and a contact lens. More specifically, the present invention relates to an intraocular optic, an intraocular lens, a corneal inlay, a corneal onlay, and a contact lens having a dynamic aperture for increasing depth of field which may be used in optical communication or integral with an ophthalmic lens that at least partially corrects a conventional error (lower order aberrations such as myopia, hyperopia, regular astigmatism, and presbyopia) and/or a non-conventional error (such as higher order aberrations) of a user's eye. The inventive system which has a dynamic aperture which provides for an increased depth of field and is in optical communication or integral with an ophthalmic lens (which may be a single vision or multifocal lens) which corrects for vision errors (such as presbyopia), may allow for a mostly continuous range of perceived focus from near distance to far distance.

Description of the Related Art

[03] There are two major conditions that affect an individual's ability to focus on near and intermediate distance objects: presbyopia and aphakia. Presbyopia is the loss of accommodation of

the crystalline lens of the human eye that often accompanies aging. In a presbyopic individual, this loss of accommodation first results in an inability to focus on near distance objects and later results in an inability to focus on intermediate distance objects. It is estimated that there are approximately 90 million to 100 million presbyopes in the United States. Worldwide, it is estimated that there are approximately 1.6 billion presbyopes. Aphakia is the absence of the crystalline lens of the eye, usually due to surgical removal during cataract surgery. In an aphakic individual, the absence of the crystalline lens causes a complete loss of accommodation that results in an inability to focus on either near or intermediate distance objects. For all practical purposes, an individual will get cataracts if he or she lives long enough. Furthermore, most individuals with cataracts will have a cataract operation at some point in their lives. It is estimated that approximately 1.2 million cataract surgeries are performed annually in the United States.

[04] The standard tools for correcting presbyopia are reading glasses, multifocal ophthalmic lenses, and monocular fit contact lenses. Reading glasses have a single optical power for correcting near distance focusing problems. A multifocal lens is a lens that has more than one focal length (*i.e.*, optical power) for correcting focusing problems across a range of distances. Multifocal lenses are used in eyeglasses, contact lenses, corneal inlays, corneal onlays, and intraocular lenses (IOLs). Multifocal ophthalmic lenses work by means of a division of the lens's area into regions of different optical powers. Multifocal lenses may be comprised of continuous surfaces that create continuous optical power as in a Progressive Addition Lens (PAL). Alternatively, multifocal lenses may be comprised of discontinuous surfaces that create discontinuous optical power as in bifocals or trifocals. Monocular fit contact lenses are two contact lenses having different optical powers. One contact lens is for correcting mostly far distance focusing problems and the other contact lens is for correcting mostly near distance focusing problems.

[05] The standard tool for correcting aphakia is an intraocular lens (IOL). A first type of IOL is a single vision or multifocal IOL that is non-accommodating and cannot change its optical power. A second type of IOL is an accommodating IOL that can alter its focusing power by way of example only, compression, translation, mechanical bending of a surface, or a combination of the above. Aphakia may also be corrected by using a single vision IOL in one eye and a multifocal or accommodating IOL in the other eye, or any combination thereof.

[06] Alternate approaches are also being used to correct presbyopia. One approach is a corneal inlay that provides a small, fixed diameter aperture. By way of example only, the ACI 7000 corneal

inlay made by AcuFocus is approximately 3.8 mm in diameter, 10 μ m thick, and contains an opaque annulus with a 1.6 mm diameter transparent opening. This opening acts to reduce the aperture of the human eye to a smaller diameter than what is normally achievable by the natural constriction of the pupil.

[07] As is well known in the art, limiting the diameter of the aperture of an optical system increases the system's depth of field. Depth of field is the distance in front of and behind the object plane that appears to be in focus on the image plane. Although an optical system can only provide for the precise focus of an object at the focal distance, in a system with increased depth of field, the decrease in sharpness on either side of the focal distance is gradual. Therefore, within the depth of field, the blurring produced on the image plane is imperceptible under normal viewing conditions. An aperture is used to increase depth of field by eliminating at least a portion of the light rays which make a large angle with the lens's optical axis (non-paraxial light rays). Non-paraxial light rays are only sharply focused when originating from objects located at the focal distance. For objects located at other distances, non-paraxial light rays have the highest deviation from the image plane. By eliminating non-paraxial light rays, the deviation from the image plane is minimized and objects located within a fixed distance of the focal distance (*i.e.*, within the depth of field) appear in focus.

[08] The small aperture counteracts some of the effects of presbyopia by creating a larger range of distances that appear in focus and allows presbyopes to conduct near vision tasks without the need for multifocal contact or spectacle lenses. The ACI 7000 is manufactured from bio-compatible materials whose optical properties are static, such as polyvinylidene fluoride or non-hydrogel microporous perfluoroether, by way of example only. As such, once the inlay is placed within the cornea its refractive optical power is fixed.

[09] While shown to be effective, the AcuFocus corneal inlay reduces the amount of light which reaches the retina. Additionally, the inlay is usually only be implanted in one eye as deleterious optical effects such as halos, doubling of vision, light scattering, glare, loss of contrast sensitivity, and/or reduction of light hitting the retina are too great and may be unacceptable when the inlay is implanted in both eyes. These deleterious effects are caused by the size of the inlay's aperture and occluded annulus in relation to the size of the pupil. These effects especially occur at night when the pupil dilates.

[010] Another approach for correcting presbyopia is corneal refractive surgery in which one eye is corrected for far distance and the other eye is corrected for near distance. Another approach is a corneal inlay that provides a multifocal effect using diffractive optics, for example.

[011] However, each of these approaches for correcting presbyopia and/or aphakia has drawbacks. Of course, some of these drawbacks are more severe than others. For example, while spectacle eyewear is capable of correcting one's vision for far, near and intermediate distances, this approach requires wearing a device that takes away from one's natural appearance. Also, in some cases, certain multifocal lenses may cause the user to perceive distortion and experience vertigo.

[012] Approaches for correcting presbyopia and/or aphakia that include the use of contact lenses can cause discomfort and can also result in one or more of: halos, doubling of vision, light scattering, glare, loss of contrast sensitivity, limited range of focus, and/or reduction of light hitting the retina. Approaches that include the use of IOLs can result in one or more of: light scattering, glare, halos, ghosting, loss of contrast sensitivity, limited range of focus, and/or reduction of light hitting the retina.

[013] These drawbacks, or compromises to one's vision, can be very problematic especially, by way of example only, when driving at night, driving in the rain, or working on a computer. Therefore, there is a need for a superior mode of correction for presbyopia and/or aphakia.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[014] In an embodiment of the present invention, an ophthalmic device may include an electro-active element that may include a mostly transparent dynamic aperture having an alterable diameter and a mostly opaque annulus for providing an increased depth of field, wherein the ophthalmic device is in optical communication with one of an intraocular lens, a corneal inlay, a corneal onlay, a contact lens, or a spectacle lens having an optical power for providing at least a partial correction of a refractive error of a user's eye.

[015] In an embodiment of the present invention, an ophthalmic device may include an electro-active element that may include a mostly transparent dynamic aperture having an alterable diameter and a mostly opaque annulus for providing an increased depth of field, wherein the electro-active element is integral with one of an intraocular lens, a corneal inlay, a corneal onlay, or a contact lens having an optical power for providing at least a partial correction of a refractive error of a user's eye.

[016] In an embodiment of the present invention, an ophthalmic device may include a first electro-active element having an optical power for providing at least a partial correction of a refractive error of a user's eye. The ophthalmic device may further include a second electro-active element having substantially no optical power that may include a mostly transparent dynamic aperture having an alterable diameter and a mostly opaque annulus for providing an increased depth of field, wherein the first and the second electro-active elements are in optical communication with each other.

[017] In an embodiment of the present invention, an ophthalmic device may include an electro-active element that may include a mostly transparent dynamic aperture having an alterable diameter and a mostly opaque annulus for providing an increased depth of field, wherein the center of the dynamic aperture may be relocated relative to a user's line of sight.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[018] Embodiments of the invention will be understood and appreciated more fully from the following detailed description in conjunction with the figures, which are not to scale, in which like reference numerals indicate corresponding, analogous or similar elements, and in which:

[019] Figure 1 shows a cross section of a healthy human eye;

[020] Figure 2A shows an exploded cross-sectional side view of an embodiment of an electro-active element having a dynamic aperture;

[021] Figure 2B shows a collapsed cross-sectional side view of the electro-active element of Figure 2A;

[022] Figure 3 shows a plurality of electrode rings operable for creating a dynamic aperture;

[023] Figure 4A shows an exploded cross-sectional side view of an embodiment of an electro-active element having a dynamic aperture;

[024] Figure 4B shows a collapsed cross-sectional side view of the electro-active element of Figure 4A;

[025] Figure 5 shows several arrangements of the electrode rings shown in Figure 3 wherein the geometric center of a dynamic aperture may be repositioned relative to the geometric center of one's pupil in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

[026] Figure 6 shows a stack of five electro-active elements that may each be used for the different arrangements of ring electrodes shown in Figure 5 in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

[027] Figures 7A, 7B, and 7C show embodiments of the invention having a dynamic aperture which are useful as a corneal inlay, corneal onlay, or contact lens;

[028] Figure 8 shows an IOO located in an anterior chamber of an eye and in optical communication with a healthy presbyopic crystalline lens according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[029] Figure 9 shows an IOO located in an anterior chamber of an eye and in optical communication with an IOL according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[030] Figure 10 shows an IOO located in an anterior chamber of an eye and in optical communication with an IOL that corrects for far distance vision only according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[031] Figure 11 shows an IOO located in an anterior chamber of an eye and in optical communication with an IOL that corrects for far distance vision and near distance vision according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[032] Figure 12 shows an IOO located in a posterior chamber of an eye and in optical communication with an IOL according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[033] Figure 13 shows an IOL having a dynamic aperture in the portion of the IOL closest to the eye's pupil according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[034] Figure 14 shows an IOL having a dynamic aperture in the middle portion of the IOL according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[035] Figure 15 shows an IOL having a dynamic aperture in the portion of the IOL closest to the eye's retina according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[036] Figure 16 shows a corneal inlay having a dynamic aperture in optical communication with a healthy presbyopic crystalline lens according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[037] Figure 17 shows a corneal inlay having a dynamic aperture in optical communication with an IOL according to an embodiment of the present invention;

[038] Figure 18 shows that during the day, or in light, when a user's pupil is constricted, a sensor senses the increase of light and a controller may cause a dynamic aperture in an electro-active element to constrict in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

[039] Figure 19 shows that at night, or in darkness, when a user's pupil is dilated, a sensor senses darkness and a controller may cause a dynamic aperture in an electro-active element to dilate or remain dilated in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

[040] Figure 20 shows the normal operation of a sensor and controller that have been overridden in which a dynamic aperture in an electro-active element is constricted for near distance tasks in dark lighting conditions even though a user's pupil is dilated in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention; and

[041] Figure 21 shows a folded inventive optic or lens having one or more electro-active elements according to an embodiment of the present invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[042] An electro-active element is a device with an optical property that is alterable with the application of electrical energy. The alterable optical property may be, for example, optical power, focal length, diffraction efficiency, depth of field, transmittance, tinting, opacity, or a combination of the above. An electro-active element may be constructed from two substrates. An electro-active material may be disposed between the two substrates. The substrates may be shaped and sized to ensure that the electro-active material is contained within the substrates and cannot leak out. One or more electrodes may be disposed on each surface of the substrates that is in contact with the electro-active material. The electro-active element may include a power supply operably connected to a controller. The controller may be operably connected to the electrodes by way of electrical connections to apply one or more voltages to each of the electrodes. When electrical energy is applied to the electro-active material by way of the electrodes, the electro-active material's optical property may be altered. For example, when electrical energy is applied to the electro-active material by way of the electrodes, the electro-active material's index of refraction may be altered, thereby changing the optical power of the electro-active element.

[043] The electro-active element may be embedded within or attached to a surface of an ophthalmic lens to form an electro-active lens. Alternatively, the electro-active element may be embedded within or attached to a surface of an optic which provides substantially no optical power to form an electro-active optic. In such a case, the electro-active element may be in optical communication with an ophthalmic lens, but separated or spaced apart from or not integral with the ophthalmic lens. The ophthalmic lens may be an optical substrate or a lens. A "lens" is any device or portion of a device that causes light to converge or diverge (*i.e.*, a lens is capable of focusing light). A lens may be refractive or diffractive, or a combination thereof. A lens may be concave, convex, or planar on one or both surfaces. A lens may be spherical, cylindrical, prismatic, or a

combination thereof. A lens may be made of optical glass, plastic, thermoplastic resins, thermoset resins, a composite of glass and resin, or a composite of different optical grade resins or plastics. It should be pointed out that within the optical industry a device can be referred to as a lens even if it has zero optical power (known as plano or no optical power). However, in this case, the lens is usually referred to as a “plano lens”. A lens may be either conventional or non-conventional. A conventional lens corrects for conventional errors of the eye including lower order aberrations such as myopia, hyperopia, presbyopia, and regular astigmatism. A non-conventional lens corrects for non-conventional errors of the eye including higher order aberrations that can be caused by ocular layer irregularities or abnormalities. The lens may be a single focus lens or a multifocal lens such as a Progressive Addition Lens or a bifocal or trifocal lens. Contrastingly, an “optic”, as used herein, has substantially no optical power and is not capable of focusing light (either by refraction or diffraction). The term “refractive error” may refer to either conventional or non-conventional errors of the eye. It should be noted that redirecting light is not correcting a refractive error of the eye. Therefore, redirecting light to a healthy portion of the retina, for example, is not correcting a refractive error of the eye.

[044] The electro-active element may be located in the entire viewing area of the electro-active lens or optic or in just a portion thereof. The electro-active element may be located near the top, middle or bottom portion of the lens or optic. It should be noted that the electro-active element may be capable of focusing light on its own and does not need to be combined with an optical substrate or lens.

[045] Figure 1 shows a cross section of a healthy human eye **100**. The white portion of the eye is known as the sclera **110**. The sclera is covered with a clear membrane known as the conjunctiva **120**. The central, transparent portion of the eye that provides most of the eye's optical power is the cornea **130**. The iris **140**, which is the pigmented portion of the eye and forms the pupil **150**. The sphincter muscles constrict the pupil and the dilator muscles dilate the pupil. The pupil is the natural aperture of the eye. The anterior chamber **160** is the fluid-filled space between the iris and the innermost surface of the cornea. The crystalline lens **170** is held in the lens capsule **175** and provides the remainder of the eye's optical power. A healthy lens is capable of changing its optical power such that the eye is capable of focusing at far, intermediate, and near distances, a process known as accommodation. The posterior chamber **180** is the space between the back surface of the

iris and the front surface of the retina **190**. The retina is the “image plane” of the eye and is connected to the optic nerve **195** which conveys visual information to the brain.

[046] A static (non-dynamic) small aperture may have the benefit of a large depth of field but also has the detriment of decreased transmission of light through the lens or optic. Likewise, a static large aperture may have the benefit of increased transmission of light through the lens or optic but also has the detriment of a decreased depth of field.

[047] Embodiments of the present invention include an ophthalmic device (that may be a lens or an optic) including an electro-active element having a dynamic aperture (and may be referred to herein as an inventive lens or optic). A dynamic aperture is an aperture having an alterable diameter. The aperture diameter of the dynamic aperture may be capable of switching between two or more diameters, for example, between a first diameter and a second diameter. The dynamic aperture may switch between diameters continuously (*i.e.*, in a smooth transition) or discontinuously (*i.e.*, in discrete steps). The dynamic aperture may have a minimum non-zero aperture diameter or may be capable of completely closing such that the aperture diameter is zero. The dynamic aperture may create apertures having a circular shape, an elliptical shape, or any shape.

[048] Embodiments of the present invention may have a dynamic aperture that is capable of alternating between a decreased size for increased depth of field (and decreased transmission of light) and an increased size for increased transmission of light (and a decreased depth of field). In one embodiment, the size of the dynamic aperture may be decreased for near distance and/or intermediate distance vision when a large depth of field is most beneficial to a user. The dynamic aperture may be increased in size from the diameter appropriate for proper near distance vision to a larger diameter appropriate for proper intermediate distance vision. The dynamic aperture's diameter may be further increased in size for proper far distance vision to provide for an increased transmission of light since a large depth of field is not critical for far distance vision.

[049] As used herein, an intraocular optic (IOO) is an optic (having substantially no optical power) that is inserted or implanted in the eye. An intraocular optic may be inserted or implanted in the anterior chamber or posterior chamber of the eye, into the stroma of the cornea (similar to a corneal inlay), or into the epithelium layer of the cornea (similar to a corneal onlay), or within any anatomical structure of the eye. An intraocular optic has substantially zero optical power and therefore cannot focus light. Rather, an intraocular optic in embodiments of the present invention may have a dynamic aperture and may only be capable of providing an increased depth of field.

[050] As used herein, an intraocular lens (IOL) is a lens (having optical power) that is inserted or implanted in the eye. An intraocular lens may be inserted or implanted in the anterior chamber or posterior chamber of the eye, into the stroma of the cornea (similar to a corneal inlay), or into the epithelium layer of the cornea (similar to a corneal onlay), or within any anatomical structure of the eye. An intraocular lens has one or more optical powers and in embodiments of the present invention may or may not also have a dynamic aperture. When the IOL has a dynamic aperture it may be capable of providing an increased depth of field.

[051] As used herein, a corneal inlay is an optic (having substantially no optical power) or a lens (having optical power) that is inserted or implanted within the stroma of the cornea. When referring specifically to a corneal inlay optic, the terms "corneal inlay optic" or "plano corneal inlay" may be used. When referring specifically to a corneal inlay lens, the terms "corneal inlay lens" or "focusing corneal inlay" may be used. As used herein, a corneal onlay is an optic (having substantially no optical power) or a lens (having optical power) that is inserted or implanted within the epithelium layer of the cornea. When referring specifically to a corneal onlay optic, the terms "corneal onlay optic" or "plano corneal onlay" may be used. When referring specifically to a corneal onlay lens, the terms "corneal onlay lens" or "focusing corneal onlay" may be used. As used herein, a contact lens is an optic (having substantially no optical power) or a lens (having optical power) that is removably placed on top of the cornea. When referring specifically to a contact lens optic, the terms "contact lens optic" or "plano contact lens" may be used. When referring specifically to a contact lens that is a lens, the term "focusing contact lens" may be used.

[052] In embodiments of the present invention, an electro-active element having a dynamic aperture may be integral with (*i.e.*, embedded within or attached to) a contact lens, a corneal inlay, a corneal onlay, an IOO, or an IOL. The IOO or IOL may be inserted or implanted in the anterior chamber or posterior chamber of the eye, into the stroma of the cornea (as a corneal inlay), or into the epithelium layer of the cornea (as a corneal onlay). The corneal inlay, corneal onlay, and contact lens may be either a lens capable of focusing light (and therefore having an optical power) or an optic incapable of focusing light (and therefore having substantially no optical power). Embodiments of the present invention may provide for an increased depth of field. Some embodiments of the present invention may provide for both an increased depth of field and may at least partially correct for a conventional and/or non-conventional error of a user's eye. Embodiments of the present invention may be used in optical communication with one or more of

the following devices which are capable of focusing light and may at least partially correct for a conventional and/or non-conventional error of a user's eye: a spectacle lens, a contact lens, a corneal inlay, a corneal onlay, or an intraocular lens. Embodiments of the present invention may also provide for an inventive system which has a dynamic aperture which provides for an increased depth of field and is in optical communication and/or integral with an ophthalmic lens (which may be a single vision or multifocal lens) which corrects for vision errors (such as presbyopia). The inventive system may allow for a mostly continuous range of perceived focus from near distance to far distance (*i.e.*, the dynamic aperture provides increased depth of field which serves to provide a continuous range of focus between the fixed or static corrective powers of the ophthalmic lens). The mostly continuous range of focus may from a near distance to a far distance, from a near distance to an intermediate distance, from an intermediate distance to a far distance, or between any range of distances.

[053] Figure 2A shows an exploded cross-sectional side view of an embodiment of an electro-active element 200 having a dynamic aperture. Figure 2B shows a collapsed cross-sectional side view of the electro-active element of Figure 2A. One or more electro-active elements 200 may be usable in a contact lens, a corneal inlay, a corneal onlay, an IOO, or an IOL. If more than one electro-active element is used, the electro-active elements may be stacked one upon another if there is proper insulation between the elements.

[054] An electro-active element 200 may comprise two optical substrates 210 or may be bound by two optical substrates. The two substrates may be substantially flat and parallel, curved and parallel, or one substrate may have a surface relief diffractive pattern and the other substrate may be substantially smooth. The substrates may provide an optical power or the substrates may have no optical power. Each substrate may have a thickness of 200 μ m or less. In general, thinner substrates allows for a higher degree of flexibility for the electro-active element which may be important in certain embodiments of the present invention that are inserted or implanted into the eye. A continuous optically transparent electrode 220 that provides for an electrical ground may be disposed on one of the substrates and one or more individually addressable optically transparent electrodes 225 may be disposed on the second substrate. Electrodes 225 may determine the properties of the dynamic aperture such as the size, shape, and/or diameters of the dynamic aperture. Electrodes 220 and 225 may, for example, comprise any of the known transparent conductive oxides (such as ITO) or a conductive organic material (such as PEDOT:PSS or carbon nano-tubes).

The thickness of the optically transparent electrodes may be, for example, less than 1 μm , but is preferred to be less than 0.1 μm . The electrodes **220** and **225** may be coated with an alignment layer **230**. Alternatively, only one of the electrodes is coated with the alignment layer. An electro-active material **240** is disposed between the alignment layers. The thickness of the electro-active material may be between 1 μm and 10 μm , but is preferably less than 5 μm . The electro-active material may be a liquid crystalline material. The liquid crystalline material may be a nematic liquid crystal, a twisted nematic liquid crystal, a super-twisted nematic liquid crystal, a cholesteric liquid crystal, a smectic bi-stable liquid crystal, or any other type of liquid crystalline material. An alignment layer is a thin film, which, by way of example only, may be less than 100 nanometers thick and constructed from a polyimide material. The thin film is applied to the surface of substrates that comes into direct contact with liquid crystalline material. Prior to assembly of the electro-active element, the thin film is buffed in one direction (the alignment direction) with a cloth such as velvet. When the liquid crystal molecules come in contact with the buffed polyimide layer, the liquid crystal molecules preferentially lie in the plane of the substrate and are aligned in the direction in which the polyimide layer was rubbed (*i.e.*, parallel to the surface of the substrate). Alternatively, the alignment layer may be constructed of a photosensitive material, which when exposed to linearly polarized UV light, yields the same result as when a buffed alignment layer is used.

[055] A controller **250** connects to the electrodes **220** and **225** by electrical connections **255** and is capable of generating an electric field between the electrodes by applying one or more voltages to each electrode. In some embodiments, the controller is part of the electro-active element. In other embodiments, the controller is located outside the electro-active element and connects to the electrodes using electrical contact points in the electro-active element. The controller may be connected to a power source, sensors, or any other necessary electronics. In the absence of an electric field between the electrodes, the liquid crystal molecules align in the same direction as the alignment direction. In the presence of an electric field between the electrodes, the liquid crystal molecules orient in the direction of the electric field. In an electro-active element, the electric field is perpendicular to the alignment layer. Thus, if the electric field is strong enough, the orientation of the liquid crystal molecules will be perpendicular to the alignment direction. If the electric field is not strong enough, the orientation of the liquid crystal molecules will be in a direction somewhere between the alignment direction and perpendicular to the alignment direction. It should be noted

that the substrates may be as wide as or wider than the electrodes, alignment layers, and electro-active material.

[056] The electro-active element may have an aperture **260** through which light passes and an annulus **270** in which light is absorbed and/or scattered. A change in the size of the dynamic aperture is typically inversely proportional to a change in the depth of field of the electro-active element and is directly proportional to a change in the transmission of light through the electro-active element, as is known in the art. The aperture may be dynamic and may be capable of switching between one or more diameters. The annulus may be positioned at the peripheral edge of the electro-active element or may be spaced from the peripheral edge. The annulus may extend to the radial center of the electro-active element. The aperture may be positioned at the geometric center of the electro-active element and may be capable of extending all the way to the peripheral edge of the electro-active element, to a fixed distance from the peripheral edge, or to a radial distance from the geometric center of the electro-active element. In other embodiments, the aperture may be capable of being relocated such that the center of the aperture is not the same as the geometric center of the electro-active element. The annulus typically frames the aperture and defines the outer limits and the size of the aperture. As is described in further detail herein, the aperture may be altered to achieve any of a continuous or discrete range of diameter sizes.

[057] The electro-active material may include a layer of liquid crystal doped with a dye material such as a dichroic dye. By doping the liquid crystal molecules with the dye material, the dye molecules align themselves with the liquid crystal molecules. The dye molecules are polar and rotate to align with an applied electrical field. The optical absorption of the dye material depends on the orientation of the individual dye molecules with respect to an incident optical wave. In a deactivated state with homogeneous (horizontal) alignment of the liquid crystal molecules, when the electric field between the electrodes is not strong enough, the dye molecules align with the alignment layers and the absorption of light through the liquid crystal is maximized. In an activated state with homogeneous (horizontal) alignment of the liquid crystal molecules, when the electric field between the electrodes is strong enough, the dye molecules rotate and align with the orientation of the electric field, perpendicular to the alignment direction. In this orientation, the absorption of light through the liquid crystal is minimized. The opposite may be the case when a homeotropic (vertical) alignment of the liquid crystal is used such that absorption is minimized in a

deactivated state and maximized in an activated state. A ferroelectric liquid crystalline material may also be used.

[058] Figure 3 shows a plurality of electrode rings 300 operable for creating a dynamic aperture. The electrode rings may be useful as optically transparent electrodes 225 in the electro-active element 200. In such an embodiment, electro-active material 240 may be a liquid crystal doped with a dichroic dye. Electrode rings 300 may be composed of several annular shaped electrodes 310, 320, 330, and 340. Of course, fewer or more electrodes are possible. Each electrode is individually addressable. The center of the electrode rings may be concentric relative to a pupillary axis once the electro-active element is placed in or on the eye. The inter-electrode gap may be approximately 5 μm to 10 μm but may be smaller. The inner diameter of electrode 310 is r_1 , the outer diameter of electrode 310 is r_2 , the outer diameter of electrode 320 is r_3 , the outer diameter of electrode 330 is r_4 , and the outer diameter of electrode 340 is r_5 . The inner diameter of each electrode may define a different aperture size.

[059] An electrode may be "activated" if a sufficiently strong electric field is applied between the electrode and a ground electrode, if voltage above a threshold is applied to the electrode, or if a condition is satisfied which places an electro-active material between the electrode and the ground electrode in an activated state. An electrode may be "deactivated" if a sufficiently strong electric field is not applied between the electrode and a ground electrode, if voltage below a threshold is applied to the electrode, or if a condition is satisfied which places an electro-active material between the electrode and the ground electrode in a deactivated state.

[060] In an embodiment of the present invention using a liquid crystalline material, the liquid crystalline material may be activated when a voltage above a threshold of approximately 10 volts is applied between the electrodes and may be deactivated when a voltage below a threshold of approximately 10 volts is applied between the electrodes. The electric power used is that of approximately 1 microwatt. It should be pointed out that the electric potential can be, by way of example only, 1 volt or less, 5 volts or less, 10 volts or less, or over 10 volts.

[061] To reduce power consumption, a bi-stable liquid crystalline material may be used. A bi-stable liquid crystalline material may switch between one of two stable states with the application of electrical power (with one state being an activated state and the other state being a deactivated state). The bi-stable liquid crystalline material remains in the one stable state until sufficient electrical power is applied to switch the bi-stable liquid crystalline material to the other stable state.

Thus, electrical power is only needed to switch from one state to the other and not to remain in a state. The bi-stable liquid crystalline material may switch to a first state when +5 volts or more is applied between the electrodes and may switch to a second state when -5 volts or less is applied between the electrodes. Of course other voltages, both higher and lower, are possible.

[062] In an embodiment of the present invention, if electrodes **310**, **320**, **330**, and **340** are activated, opaque annulus **270** will be formed between **r1** and **r5** and aperture **260** will be formed between the center of the electrodes and **r1**. If electrode **310** is deactivated, the opaque annulus will now be formed between the inner diameter of electrode **320** and **r5** and aperture **260** will now be formed between the center of the electrodes and the inner diameter of electrode **320**. If electrodes **310**, **320**, **330**, and **340** are deactivated, there will be no opaque annulus **270** and aperture **260** will now be formed between the center of the electrodes and **r5**. The aperture may be increased by first deactivating electrode **310**, then electrode **320**, then electrode **330**, and finally electrode **340**. The aperture may be decreased by first activating electrode **340**, then electrode **330**, then electrode **320**, and finally electrode **310**. Thus, as shown in Figure 3, there are 5 possible aperture stops. However, fewer or more aperture stops are possible. As in a camera, each aperture stop may provide an aperture having twice the area of the next smallest aperture size. In other words, there may be a square root of two relationship between the inner diameters of each electrode. Of course, other aperture sizes are possible. When fully constricted, the aperture diameter may be between approximately 1.0 mm and approximately 3.0 mm, and may preferably be between approximately 1.0 mm and approximately 2.5 mm, and more preferably may be between approximately 1.0 mm and approximately 2.0 mm. When fully dilated, the aperture diameter may be approximately 7.0 mm or larger. In certain embodiments, there may be no aperture (*i.e.*, there is no annulus such that the pupil of the eye serves as the natural aperture) in dark or dim environments.

[063] In embodiments of the present invention, the outer edge of the annulus may extend further than the outer edge of the pupil (whether fully dilated or constricted). If there is a gap between the outer edge of the annulus and the outer edge of the pupil deleterious effects may occur such as, by way of example only, halos, light scattering, and reduction in contrast sensitivity.

[064] In one embodiment, each of the electrode rings is activated approximately at the same time for an instantaneous change in the aperture. In another embodiment, for a fading in and out effect which gradually reduces and enlarges the dynamic aperture, each of the electrode rings are activated and/or deactivated sequentially. For example, the outermost electrode ring may be activated first

and deactivated last and the innermost electrode ring may be activated last and deactivated first. In one embodiment, the electrodes may be activated or deactivated in less than approximately 1 second, and may be preferably activated or deactivated in less than approximately 0.5 seconds.

[065] In another embodiment of the present invention, electrodes **225** may be a plurality of individually addressable electrodes arranged in a grid. Each electrode may be referred to a “pixel” (the electrodes in this case may be referred to as “pixilated”). The pixel may be any size or shape. By selectively electrically activating or deactivating the pixels the aperture **260** and annulus **270** may be formed.

[066] Figure **4A** shows an exploded cross-sectional side view of an embodiment of an electro-active element **400** having a dynamic aperture. Figure **4B** shows a collapsed cross-sectional side view of the electro-active element of Figure **4A**. Similar to the electro-active element **200**, electro-active element **400** comprises two optical substrates **210**. A continuous optically transparent electrode **220** that provides for an electrical ground may be disposed on one of the substrates and one or more individually addressable optically transparent electrodes **225** may be disposed on the second substrate. Electrodes **225** may determine the properties of the dynamic aperture such as the size, shape, and/or diameters of the dynamic aperture. The electrodes **220** and **225** may be coated with an alignment layer **230**. The alignment layers have an alignment direction offset 90 degrees from each other, but other values such as 180, 270, 360 degrees or more are possible. An electro-active material **240** is disposed between the alignment layers. The electro-active material may be a liquid crystalline material, preferably one of a nematic, cholesteric, or smectic bi-stable liquid crystalline material. The liquid crystalline material may be doped with a dichroic dye and become a dichroic liquid crystalline material. A controller **250** connects to the electrodes **220** and **225** by electrical connections **255** and is capable of generating an electric field between the electrodes. The electro-active element may have an aperture **260** through which light passes and an annulus **270** in which light is absorbed and/or scattered. The electro-active element **400** may further include two polarizers **280** positioned on either side of the electro-active material (*e.g.*, exterior to the electrodes). The polarizers may also be located on the outer surfaces of the substrates (the electrodes are located on the innermost surface of the substrates). Each of the polarizers may have a direction of polarization parallel to the director of the liquid crystal layer at their respective outer surfaces (*i.e.*, parallel to the alignment direction of the closest alignment layer). The polarizers have

relative directions of polarization offset by, for example, 90 degrees. Such offset polarizers may be referred to as “crossed” polarizers.

[067] In a deactivated state, when the electric field between the electrodes is not strong enough, the alignment layers orient the director of the liquid crystal layer to align with the polarizers at the outer surfaces. In this orientation, light entering the first polarizer (*i.e.*, light that is polarized parallel to the polarization direction of the first polarizer) is rotated 90 degrees by the liquid crystal and can now pass through the second polarizer (*i.e.*, the light is now polarized parallel to the polarization direction of the second polarizer). Therefore, in a deactivated state the absorption of light through the electro-active element is minimized. In an activated state, when the electric field between the electrodes is strong enough, the liquid crystal molecules align with the orientation of the electric field, perpendicular to the alignment direction. In this orientation, light entering the first polarizer (*i.e.*, light that is polarized parallel to the polarization direction of the first polarizer) is not rotated and is blocked by the second polarizer (*i.e.*, the light is polarized orthogonal to the polarization direction of the second polarizer). Therefore, in an activated state the absorption of light through the liquid crystal is maximized.

[068] The electrode rings shown in Figure 3 may be useful as optically transparent electrodes 225 in the electro-active element 400. As above, if electrodes 310, 320, 330, and 340 are activated, opaque annulus 270 will be formed between r1 and r5 and aperture 260 will be formed between the center of the electrodes and r1. If electrode 310 is deactivated, the opaque annulus will now be formed between the inner diameter of electrode 320 and r5 and aperture 260 will now be formed between the center of the electrodes and the inner diameter of electrode 320. If electrodes 310, 320, 330, and 340 are deactivated, there will be no opaque annulus 270 and aperture 260 will now be formed between the center of the electrodes and r5.

[069] One drawback to the above embodiment is that polarizing films absorb approximately 50% of incident light. Therefore, utilizing such films in an actual device would limit the amount of light that reaches the retina. In an embodiment of the present invention, a region concentric with the annular electrodes is physically removed from one or both of the polarizers. The region removed may be of any size or shape, but in a preferred embodiment is equal to the inner diameter of the smallest ring electrode. By removing this central region, one or more polarizers may be used while increasing the overall transmission through the electro-active element. In such an embodiment the functionality of the dynamic aperture is not affected and overall transmission is increased.

Additionally, the transmission contrast ratio (the ratio between light transmitted through the aperture and light transmitted through the annulus) between the aperture and the annulus is increased thereby making the dynamic aperture more efficient in providing depth of field. In another embodiment, instead of removing the region, the region may instead be composed of a thinner or less efficient polarizing film used to increase transmission, thereby favoring performance in the transmitting state over the opaque state. These embodiments increase the transmission contrast ratio between the darkened area of the annulus and a region of the aperture.

[070] It is virtually impossible to have an implanted corneal inlay, corneal onlay, IOO, or IOL perfectly centered with the optical axis of the eye, because the eye is asymmetric in normal anatomic configuration. The most desired position of an implant is aligned with the central axis of the pupil. Nevertheless, approximately 0.1 mm or 0.2 mm decentration of the eye relative to the center of the eye's pupil must be anticipated even under normal anatomical circumstances. This is also true of a contact lens which is not surgically implanted but rather is it to rest on one's cornea or the tear layer thereof.

[071] Figure 5 shows several arrangements of the electrode rings shown in Figure 3 in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention wherein the geometric center of a dynamic aperture may be repositioned relative to the geometric center of one's pupil. Arrangement A has the geometric center of the ring electrodes aligned with the geometric center of the electro-active element's substrates. Arrangements B, C, D, and E have the geometric center of the ring electrodes aligned to the left, to the right, above, and below, respectively, with the geometric center of the electro-active element's substrates. Arrangements A, B, C, D, and E may each be utilized in a separate electro-active element. Figure 6 shows a stack of five electro-active elements that may each be used for the different arrangements of ring electrodes shown in Figure 5 in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. Each electro-active element is properly insulated from the other electro-active elements. The distance between the geometric center of the ring electrodes and the geometric center of the substrates may be between approximately 0.0 mm and approximately 1 mm, and more preferably between approximately 0.0 mm and approximately 0.5 mm. It should be noted that other alignments at any angle between the two centers are possible. This embodiment allows for the ability to alter the center of the dynamic aperture by way of remote adjustment after the inventive implant has been surgically implanted. One or more of the arrangements of ring electrodes may be activated to the exclusion of the other arrangement to re-align the center of the

dynamic aperture relative to the line of sight of the user. This is important in cases where the inventive implant was surgically implanted out of alignment with the line of sight of the user. Certain retinal diseases or trauma such as, by way of example only, macular degeneration, retinal tears, or retinal detachments may damage a region of the retina. This embodiment may also be useful for realigning the line of sight of the user away from a damaged region of the retina to a healthy region of the retina.

[072] In embodiments of the present invention in which electrodes **225** are a plurality of individually addressable electrodes arranged in a grid, the individual pixels may be selectively activated or deactivated to relocate the geometric center of the aperture **260** and annulus **270** relative to the geometric center of the substrates or the eye's pupil.

[073] An electro-active element may be capable of switching between a first optical power and a second optical power. The electro-active element may have the first optical power in a deactivated state and may have the second optical power in an activated state. The electro-active element may be in a deactivated state when one or more voltages applied to the electrodes of the electro-active element are below a first predetermined threshold. The electro-active element may be in an activated state when one or more voltages applied to the electrodes of the electro-active element are above a second predetermined threshold. Alternatively, the electro-active element may be capable of "tuning" its optical power such that the electro-active element is capable of providing a continuous, or substantially continuous, optical power change between the first optical power and the second optical power.

[074] Electro-active lenses may be used to correct for conventional or non-conventional errors of the eye. The correction may be created by the electro-active element, by the optical substrate or the ophthalmic lens, or by a combination of the two.

[075] In an embodiment of the present invention, an electro-active element having a dynamic aperture is attached to or embedded within an optical perform, optic, or substrate that does not refract or diffract light for the purposes of correcting vision errors of the eye and thus does not provide focusing power. In certain embodiments of the invention, an electro-active element having a dynamic aperture is attached to or embedded within an ophthalmic lens that corrects for the user's refractive error caused by natural anatomical conditions and/or caused by the removal of a cataract or healthy crystalline lens. The ophthalmic lens may also correct any or all of the user's conventional and/or non-conventional errors of the eye. Thus, the dynamic aperture may be integral

with a focusing lens. Alternatively, an electro-active lens may have a first electro-active element having a dynamic aperture. The first electro-active element or a second electro-active element in optical communication with the first electro-active element may be capable of correcting any or all of the user's conventional and/or non-conventional errors of the eye. The above embodiments may be a contact lens, a corneal onlay, a corneal inlay, an IOO, or an IOL. The above embodiments may be used in optical communication with a focusing lens such as, by way of example only, an IOL, a crystalline lens, a corneal inlay, a corneal onlay, a contact lens, or a spectacle lens. The focusing lens may be static (incapable of altering its optical power) or dynamic (capable of altering its optical power).

[076] Figures 7A, 7B, and 7C show embodiments of the invention having a dynamic aperture which are useful as a corneal inlay, corneal onlay, or contact lens. The embodiments shown in Figures 7A, 7B, and 7C may be modified slightly, for example by adding stabilizing haptics, for use as an inventive anterior or posterior chamber IOO or IOL having a dynamic aperture. Optic or lens 500 may have one or more electro-active elements 510. Electro-active element 510 may be similar to electro-active elements 200 or 400 or may not have a dynamic aperture and may instead provide a changeable optical power. The electro-active element may be embedded within or attached to substrates 520. The substrates may have no optical power or may have one or more optical powers. The substrates and/or the electro-active elements may be capable of correcting for at least a portion of any or all conventional and/or non-conventional error of the eye. A controller 530 may be electrically connected to the electrodes in the electro-active elements by electrical connections 535. The electrodes may define a mostly transparent aperture 540 and a mostly opaque annulus 545. The term "mostly transparent" means approximately 50% or more optical transmission (and preferably 75% or more) and isn't meant to necessarily mean 100% optical transmission. The term "mostly opaque" means approximately 50% or less optical transmission (and preferably 35% or less) and isn't meant to necessarily mean 0% optical transmission.

[077] The substrates may have one or more openings 550 and/or pores 555 to allow nutrients and/or cellular waste products to pass through the substrates and/or the electro-active elements. The openings and/or pores may be created, by way of example only, by a laser, or they may be machined or stamped. Typically, the openings and pores are located at non-electrical or otherwise non-critical areas of the inventive lens or optic such as within a central region where the electrodes

do not extend or apply power. These features are especially important when the inventive lens or optic having a dynamic aperture is used as a corneal inlay or corneal onlay.

[078] The controller may draw at least some of its electrical power from a power supply **560**. The power supply may be attached and integral with the substrates or attached but not integral with the substrates. The power supply may be a thin film rechargeable battery such as those manufactured by Excellatron. The thin film rechargeable battery may be capable of being cycled in excess of 45,000 cycles. This may provide a usable lifetime of 20-25 years in the inventive lens or optic. In an embodiment of the present invention, two thin film rechargeable batteries may be used and may be stacked one atop the other. In this embodiment one of the batteries may be used for 20-25 years and the other battery may be switched to when the first battery is no longer operable. Alternatively, the other battery may be switched to by a signal sent remotely to the controller. This may extend the lifetime of the inventive optic or lens to 40-50 years. The power supply may also be a capacitor. The power supply may be remotely charged, by way of example only, by induction.

[079] A light-sensitive cell **565** and piezo-electric materials may also be used to supplement and or augment the power supply's electrical power. Alternatively, the light sensitive cell and/or the piezo-electric materials may obviate the need for a power supply. The light-sensitive cell may be a solar cell. Alternatively, the light-sensitive cell may be a 1.5 μ m photovoltaic cell. The photovoltaic cell is utilized and located out of the line of sight of the user and more preferably utilized and located peripheral to the margin of the pupil when partially dilated by darkness, but not fully dilated. The inventive lens or optic may thus be charged by using an eye safe laser capable of energizing the 1.5 μ m photovoltaic cell or cells. The user may position his or her chin and forehead into a device that provides the eye safe laser energy needed to energize the 1.5 μ m photovoltaic cell or cells. This may be accomplished at home once a day or as needed. The proper energy can be provided through a normally dilated pupil or a fully non-medicated dilated pupil caused by a very dark room or by the device blocking out any ambient visible light. When utilizing a 1.5 μ m photovoltaic cell or cells within the inventive lens or optic, the cell or cells in most, but not all embodiments, need to be capable of bending. When using a 1.5 μ m photo-voltaic cell not capable of bending, multiple cells are used and are placed in a pattern that allows for folding or rolling the inventive lens or optic over or around the cells prior to insertion into the eye.

[080] In an embodiment of the present invention, the light-sensitive cell **565** may be a solar cell. The solar cell may be located in front of (closer to the cornea of the eye) and separately disposed

from a portion of the iris of a user's eye. Thin electrical wiring may operably connect the solar cell to the controller of the inventive optic or lens. The electrical wiring may pass through the pupil without touching the iris and operably connect to the inventive IOO or IOL in the anterior or posterior chamber of the eye. The solar cell may be large enough such that it supplies enough electrical power to obviate the need for a separate power supply. The thin electrical wiring may not conduct electricity and may have a form factor which has the appropriate tensile strength to hold the solar cell in place. In certain embodiments of the present invention, one or more small holes may be made in the iris by an ophthalmic laser such that the thin electrical wiring connects the solar cell to the IOO or IOL that houses an electro-active element.

[081] The inventive lens or optic may include a memory metal material **570** for re-establishing the proper shape, positioning and alignment of the device after being folded and inserted into an eye. A memory metal "remembers" its shape and attempts to regain its original geometry after being deformed (for example, while being folded in preparation for insertion into the eye). The memory metal may also function as an antenna for inductively charging the inventive lens or optic or for receiving signals from a transmitter. The transmitter may send a signal to the inventive lens or optic to change the diameter of the dynamic aperture or to change the inventive lens's optical power.

[082] The inventive lens or optic may include a sensor **580**. The sensor may be a range finder for detecting a distance to which a user is trying to focus. The sensor may be light-sensitive cell **565** for detecting light that is ambient and/or incident to the inventive lens or optic. The sensor may include, for example, one or more of the following devices: a photo-detector, a photovoltaic or UV sensitive photo cell, a tilt switch, a light sensor, a passive range-finding device, a time-of-flight range finding device, an eye tracker, a view detector which detects where a user may be viewing, an accelerometer, a proximity switch, a physical switch, a manual override control, a capacitive switch which switches when a user touches the nose bridge of a pair of spectacles, a pupil diameter detector, a bio-feed back device connected to an ocular muscle or nerve, or the like. The sensor may also include one or more micro electro mechanical system (MEMS) gyroscopes adapted for detecting a tilt of the user's head or encyclorotation of the user's eye.

[083] The sensor may be operably connected to the controller. The sensor may detect sensory information and send a signal to the controller which triggers the activation and/or deactivation of one or more dynamic components of the inventive lens or optic. When the inventive lens or optic includes an electro-active element having a dynamic aperture, the sensor, by way of example only,

may detect the intensity of light and communicate this information to the controller. In an embodiment of the present invention, the sensor may be a photo-detector and may be located in a peripheral region of the inventive lens or optic and located behind the iris. This location may be useful for sensing increases and/or decreases in available light caused by the constriction and dilation of the user's pupil. Figure 19 shows that at night, or in darkness, when the user's pupil is dilated, the sensor senses darkness and the controller may cause the dynamic aperture to dilate or remain dilated. Figure 18 shows that during the day, or in light, when the user's pupil is constricted, the sensor senses the increase of light and the controller may cause the dynamic aperture to constrict. The dynamic aperture may remain constricted until the sensor senses darkness or the lack of available light below a certain threshold in which case the controller may cause the dynamic aperture to dilate. It should be pointed out that the invention contemplates locating the sensor in any region of the inventive lens or optic that works in an optimum manner. In certain embodiments of the present invention, the controller may have a delay feature which ensure that a change in intensity of light is not temporary (*i.e.*, lasts for more than the delay of the delay feature). Thus, when a user blinks his or her eyes, the size of the aperture will not be changed since the delay of the delay circuit is longer than the time it takes to blink. The delay may be longer than approximately 0.0 seconds, and preferably 1.0 seconds or longer.

[084] In another embodiment of the present invention, the sensor, by way of example only, may detect the distance to which one is focusing. If the sensor detects that a user is focusing within a near distance range, the controller may cause the dynamic aperture to constrict to produce an increased depth of field. If the sensor detects that the user is focusing beyond the near distance range, the controller may cause the dynamic aperture to dilate. In an embodiment of the present invention, the sensor may include two or more photo-detector arrays with a focusing lens placed over each array. Each focusing lens may have a focal length appropriate for a specific distance from the user's eye. For example, three photo-detector arrays may be used, the first one having a focusing lens that properly focuses for near distance, the second one having a focusing lens that properly focuses for intermediate distance, and the third one having a focusing lens that properly focuses for far distance. A sum of differences algorithm may be used to determine which array has the highest contrast ratio (and thus provides the best focus). The array with the highest contrast ratio may thus be used to determine the distance from a user to an object the user is focusing on.

[085] It should be pointed out that in certain embodiments of the inventive lens or optic, the sensor and controller may be overridden by a manually operated remote switch. The remote switch may send a signal by means of wireless communication, acoustic communication, vibration communication, or light communication such as, by way of example only, infrared. By way of example only, should the sensor sense a dark room, such as a restaurant having dim lighting, the controller may cause the dynamic aperture to dilate to allow more light to reach the retina. However, this may impact the user's ability to perform near distance tasks, such as reading a menu. The user could remotely control the dynamic aperture of the inventive lens or optic to constrict the aperture to increase the depth of field and enhance the user's ability to read the menu. Figure 20 shows the normal operation of a sensor and controller that have been overridden in which a dynamic aperture is constricted for near distance tasks in dark lighting conditions even though the user's pupil is dilated. When the near distance task has completed, the user may remotely allow the sensor and controller to cause the aperture to dilate once again automatically thereby allowing the user to see best in the dim restaurant with regard to non-near distance tasks. When activated, the remote switch signal may be received, by way of example one, by the inventive lens or optic via an antenna formed from the memory metal material 570.

[086] The substrates of the inventive lens or optic may be coated with materials that are biocompatible with anatomical objects in the eye. Biocompatible materials may include, for example, polyvinylidene fluoride or non-hydrogel microporous perflouroether. The substrates and the various electronics that are affixed to or embedded within the substrates may optionally be over-coated to be hermetically sealed to prevent or retard leaching. Additionally, the substrates may be designed to encapsulate the various electronics such that they are buried within the substrates.

[087] In an embodiment of the present invention, the inventive lens or optic may be bendable, foldable, and/or able to be rolled up for fitting during insertion through a small approximately 1 mm to 3 mm incision. A syringe-like device commonly used for implantation of IOLs having a piston may be used as an insertion tool that allows for the folded or rolled inventive lens or optic to be placed properly where desired in either the anterior or posterior chamber of the eye. Figure 21 shows a folded inventive optic or lens having one or more electro-active elements. It should also be noted that when the inventive plano contact lens and focusing contact lens may be flexible.

[088] Embodiments of the present invention having a dynamic aperture can be fit or implanted either monocularly (in only one eye of a user) or binocularly (in both eyes of a user). Because the

dynamic aperture can be programmed to expand to a larger size at night or in dim lighting conditions when the pupil diameter of the user would naturally dilate, glare, halos, ghosting, and reduced light hitting the retina of the user are largely eliminated. Therefore, the invention allows for a binocular approach as opposed to other conventional IOLs, corneal onlays, corneal inlays, and contact lenses that do not have a dynamic aperture and are therefore sometimes fit for far distance correction in one eye and near distance correction in the other eye as a compromise due to glare, halos, ghosting, etc. It should be pointed out that the inventive optic or lens can also be implanted or fit in monocular manner, if desired. In addition, the inventive optic or lens disclosed herein can be designed and fabricated in such a way that the central point of the dynamic aperture may be remotely relocated relative to the center of the optic or lens after being implanted within or on the eye in order to better align the central axis of the dynamic aperture to the user's line of sight.

[089] The inventive optic or lens may be used in optical communication with a healthy but presbyopic crystalline lens, an underperforming or fully performing single focus IOL, static multifocal IOL, dynamic focusing IOL (such as that of an electro-active focusing IOL), or an accommodating IOL without a dynamic aperture, an eye having an iris that has been traumatized and is torn, has a hole, or does not contract or dilate properly, an iris devoid of pigment such as an iris of certain albinos, a fully performing or underperforming multifocal or single vision contact lens without a dynamic aperture, a fully performing or underperforming multifocal or single vision corneal inlay or corneal onlay without a dynamic aperture, a fully performing or underperforming multifocal or single vision spectacle lens without a dynamic aperture, or an eye that has had underperforming refractive surgery.

[090] A "fully performing" lens is capable of properly focusing light on the retina. An "underperforming" lens is not capable of properly focusing light on the retina. In most cases, the inventive optic or lens will improve the quality of visual acuity as perceived by the user when used in association with and in optical communication with the various examples provided in the preceding paragraph. When used with a fully forming lens, the dynamic aperture increases the depth of field and acts to inhibit or remove some or most of the higher aberrations of a user's eye.

[091] The inventive lens or optic that houses an electro-active element disclosed herein can be comprised of ophthalmic materials that are well known in the art and used for IOLs, contact lenses, or corneal inlays. The materials can be flexible or non-flexible. In one embodiment of the invention (not shown) an inventive IOO is made out two approximately 100 μ m layers of a

polysulphone material having the appropriate electrodes, liquid crystalline material (which may be doped with a dichroic dye), optional polarizing layers, power supply, controller, sensor and other needed electronics. Each 100 μ m layer is used to form a flexible envelope that sandwiches and houses the electronics and electro-active material. The total thickness of the working optic is approximately 500 μ m or less. The outer diameter of this particular embodiment is approximately 9.0 mm (not including any haptics). The inventive IOO may be capable of being folded and inserted into the eye through a small surgical incision of approximately 2 mm or less. In certain embodiments of the invention, a thin layer of memory metal is utilized as part of the inventive IOO to aid in opening the IOO to its proper shape and location after it has been inserted into the eye's anterior or posterior chamber.

[092] In some embodiments of the present invention, a tint or a filter may be incorporated into the inventive lens or optic to filter high energy blue light and/or ultra-violet light. The filter or tint may also be used to enhance contrast sensitivity as perceived by the user.

[093] The diameter of the IOO or IOL is between approximately 5 mm and approximately 10 mm (not including haptics), depending upon the inventive lens's or optic's intended application. Other dimensions are possible as well.

[094] When used as a corneal inlay, the diameter of the inventive optic or lens having a dynamic aperture must be less than the diameter of the cornea. When used as a contact lens, the inventive optic or lens can have a diameter between approximately 5 mm and approximately 14 mm. In some embodiments of the invention, the outer surface of the substrates may be curved to substantially match the curvature of the cornea (when used in a corneal inlay) or the surface of the eye (when used in a contact lens). In other embodiments, the outer surface of substrates may be planar.

[095] Figure 8 shows an IOO located in an anterior chamber of an eye and in optical communication with a healthy presbyopic crystalline lens according to an embodiment of the present invention. Figure 9 shows an IOO located in an anterior chamber of an eye and in optical communication with an IOL according to an embodiment of the present invention. Figure 10 shows an IOO located in an anterior chamber of an eye and in optical communication with an IOL that corrects for far distance vision only according to an embodiment of the present invention. The embodiment shown in Figure 10 may be useful for providing an increased depth of field for providing near distance and/or intermediate distance correction. Figure 11 shows an IOO located in an anterior chamber of an eye and in optical communication with an IOL that corrects for far

distance vision and near distance vision according to an embodiment of the present invention. The embodiment shown in Figure 11 may be useful for providing an increased depth of field for providing intermediate distance correction. Figure 12 shows an IOO located in a posterior chamber of an eye and in optical communication with an IOL according to an embodiment of the present invention. Figure 13 shows an IOL having a dynamic aperture in the portion of the IOL closest to the eye's pupil according to an embodiment of the present invention. Figure 14 shows an IOL having a dynamic aperture in the middle portion of the IOL according to an embodiment of the present invention. Figure 15 shows an IOL having a dynamic aperture in the portion of the IOL closest to the eye's retina according to an embodiment of the present invention. Figure 16 shows a corneal inlay having a dynamic aperture in optical communication with a healthy presbyopic crystalline lens according to an embodiment of the present invention. Figure 17 shows a corneal inlay having a dynamic aperture in optical communication with an IOL according to an embodiment of the present invention. It should be noted, that it is not possible to show all possible embodiments, combinations, and placements of the present invention. For example, a contact lens and a corneal inlay embodiment having a dynamic aperture are not shown. However, these embodiments will be apparent to those skilled in the art.

[096] The inventive IOO or IOL can be surgically inserted during the initial surgical procedure that inserts a conventional IOL without a dynamic aperture. Alternatively, the inventive IOO or IOL may be surgically inserted as a follow on surgical procedure hours, days, weeks, months, or years after the initial IOL surgery.

[097] Successful operation of the inventive lens or optic is dependent upon obtaining the maximum allowable transmission through the mostly transparent aperture and the minimum allowable transmission through the mostly opaque annular region. Experiments were conducted with neutral density (ND) optical filters with ND values between 0 and 1.0 in which holes having a 1.5 mm diameter were formed in the filters to create apertures. In some experiments, a second filter was placed over the aperture to simulate the transmittance through the aperture. Neutral density is measure of light transmittance based on a logarithmic scale and is related to the transmission (T) via the following relationship:

$$T = 10^{-ND}$$

Equation 1

[098] In the experiment, the filter was held in front of and very close to the eye of a non-corrected +2.50D presbyopic patient. The presbyopic patient looked at a near vision target at approximately 13 inches from the patient's eye through the aperture. It was discovered that such an aperture works for increasing depth of field by providing good visual acuity and contrast sensitivity, but only under certain conditions.

[099] In general, the best results were obtained when the ND value of the mostly transparent aperture was less than approximately 0.1 (T greater than approximately 80%) and the difference in ND values between the mostly transparent aperture and the mostly opaque annulus was greater than approximately 0.3. In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the ND value for the mostly transparent aperture may be less than approximately 0.04 (T greater than approximately 90%) and the ND of the mostly opaque annulus is greater than approximately 1.0 (T less than approximately 10%). While increasing the difference in ND values between the mostly transparent aperture and the mostly opaque annulus can compensate for a high ND value in the mostly transparent aperture, it will lead to an undesirable decrease in overall transmission of light to the retina.

THE CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An ophthalmic device, comprising:
an electro-active element comprising a mostly transparent dynamic aperture having an alterable diameter and a mostly opaque annulus for providing an increased depth of field, wherein the ophthalmic device is in optical communication with one of an intraocular lens, a corneal inlay, a corneal onlay, a contact lens, or a spectacle lens having an optical power for providing at least a partial correction of a refractive error of a user's eye.
2. The ophthalmic device of Claim 1, where said electro-active element further comprises:
a first substrate;
a plurality of electrodes disposed on a surface of said first substrate;
a second substrate having a surface facing said surface of said first substrate;
a single electrode disposed on said surface of said second substrate; and
an electro-active material disposed between the facing surfaces of said first and said second substrates,
wherein said plurality of electrodes provide said dynamic aperture and said annulus.
3. The ophthalmic device of Claim 1, wherein said diameter of said dynamic aperture is alterable to a fully dilated size or to a fully constricted size.
4. The ophthalmic device of Claim 3, wherein said diameter of said dynamic aperture is alterable to one or more sizes between said fully dilated size and said fully constricted size.
5. The ophthalmic device of Claim 2, wherein said diameter of said dynamic is alterable by application of voltage to said plurality of electrodes.
6. The ophthalmic device of Claim 2, wherein said electro-active material comprises a bi-stable liquid crystal.
7. The ophthalmic device of Claim 2, further comprising a controller operably connected to said plurality of electrodes.
8. The ophthalmic device of Claim 7, further comprising a sensor operably connected to said controller.
9. The ophthalmic device of Claim 7, wherein said controller is operably connected to a power supply.

10. The ophthalmic device of Claim 9, wherein said power supply is one or more thin film rechargeable batteries.
11. The ophthalmic device of Claim 10, wherein a first of said thin film rechargeable batteries is used initially and a second of said thin film rechargeable batteries is used when said first of said thin film rechargeable batteries is no longer operable.
12. The ophthalmic device of Claim 8, wherein said controller is operable connected to a light-sensitive cell.
13. The ophthalmic device of Claim 1, wherein said diameter of said dynamic aperture can be altered remotely.
14. The ophthalmic device of Claim 1, wherein the center of said dynamic aperture can be relocated remotely.
15. The ophthalmic device of Claim 2, further comprising a first polarizer disposed on said first substrate and a second polarizer disposed on said second substrate, wherein said first and said second polarizers are crossed polarizers.
16. The ophthalmic device of Claim 15, wherein a central region of said polarizers is removed.
17. The ophthalmic device of Claim 2, wherein said electro-active material is doped with a dichroic dye.
18. The ophthalmic device of Claim 2, wherein said plurality of electrodes are pixilated.
19. The ophthalmic device of Claim 1, wherein said mostly transparent aperture has a neutral density of less than approximately 0.1.
20. The ophthalmic device of Claim 1, wherein said mostly opaque annulus has a neutral density of greater than approximately 0.3.
21. The ophthalmic device of Claim 1, wherein the ophthalmic device is flexible and is capable of being surgically implanted into said user's eye.
22. An ophthalmic device, comprising:
an electro-active element comprising a mostly transparent dynamic aperture having an alterable diameter and a mostly opaque annulus for providing an increased depth of field, wherein said electro-active element is integral with one of an intraocular lens, a corneal inlay, a corneal onlay, or a contact lens having an optical power for providing at least a partial correction of a refractive error of a user's eye.

23. The ophthalmic device of Claim 22, where said electro-active element further comprises:
a first substrate;
a plurality of electrodes disposed on a surface of said first substrate;
a second substrate having a surface facing said surface of said first substrate;
a single electrode disposed on said surface of said second substrate; and
an electro-active material disposed between the facing surfaces of said first and said second substrates,
wherein said plurality of electrodes provide said dynamic aperture and said annulus.
24. The ophthalmic device of Claim 22, wherein said diameter of said dynamic aperture is alterable to a fully dilated size or to a fully constricted size.
25. The ophthalmic device of Claim 24, wherein said diameter of said dynamic aperture is alterable to one or more sizes between said fully dilated size and said fully constricted size.
26. The ophthalmic device of Claim 23, wherein said diameter of said dynamic is alterable by application of voltage to said plurality of electrodes.
27. The ophthalmic device of Claim 23, wherein said electro-active material comprises a bi-stable liquid crystal.
28. The ophthalmic device of Claim 23, further comprising a controller operably connected to said plurality of electrodes.
29. The ophthalmic device of Claim 28, further comprising a sensor operably connected to said controller.
30. The ophthalmic device of Claim 28, wherein said controller is operably connected to a power supply.
31. The ophthalmic device of Claim 30, wherein said power supply is one or more thin film rechargeable batteries.
32. The ophthalmic device of Claim 31, wherein a first of said thin film rechargeable batteries is used initially and a second of said thin film rechargeable batteries is used when said first of said thin film rechargeable batteries is no longer operable.
33. The ophthalmic device of Claim 29, wherein said controller is operable connected to a light-sensitive cell.
34. The ophthalmic device of Claim 22, wherein said diameter of said dynamic aperture can be altered remotely.

35. The ophthalmic device of Claim 22, wherein the center of said dynamic aperture can be relocated remotely.
36. The ophthalmic device of Claim 23, further comprising a first polarizer disposed on said first substrate and a second polarizer disposed on said second substrate, wherein said first and said second polarizers are crossed polarizers.
37. The ophthalmic device of Claim 36, wherein a central region of said polarizers is removed.
38. The ophthalmic device of Claim 23, wherein said electro-active material is doped with a dichroic dye.
39. The ophthalmic device of Claim 23, wherein said plurality of electrodes are pixilated.
40. The ophthalmic device of Claim 22, wherein said mostly transparent aperture has a neutral density of less than approximately 0.1.
41. The ophthalmic device of Claim 22, wherein said mostly opaque annulus has a neutral density of greater than approximately 0.3.
42. The ophthalmic device of Claim 22, wherein the ophthalmic device is flexible and is capable of being surgically implanted into said user's eye.
43. An ophthalmic device, comprising:
 - a first electro-active element having an optical power for providing at least a partial correction of a refractive error of a user's eye; and
 - a second electro-active element having substantially no optical power comprising a mostly transparent dynamic aperture having an alterable diameter and a mostly opaque annulus for providing an increased depth of field,wherein said first and said second electro-active elements are in optical communication with each other.
44. An ophthalmic device, comprising:
 - an electro-active element comprising a mostly transparent dynamic aperture having an alterable diameter and a mostly opaque annulus for providing an increased depth of field,wherein the center of said dynamic aperture may be relocated relative to a user's line of sight.

45. An ophthalmic device, comprising:
an electro-active element comprising a mostly transparent dynamic aperture having an alterable diameter and a mostly opaque annulus for providing an increased depth of field, wherein the ophthalmic device is in optical communication with a lens having an optical power for providing at least a partial correction of a refractive error of a user's eye, and wherein said increased depth of field and said lens provide for a mostly continuous range of perceived focus.
46. The ophthalmic device of Claim 1, wherein said increased depth of field provides for a mostly continuous range of perceived focus.
47. The ophthalmic device of Claim 22, wherein said increased depth of field provides for a mostly continuous range of perceived focus.
48. The ophthalmic device of Claim 43, wherein said increased depth of field provides for a mostly continuous range of perceived focus.
49. The ophthalmic device of Claim 44, wherein said increased depth of field provides for a mostly continuous range of perceived focus.

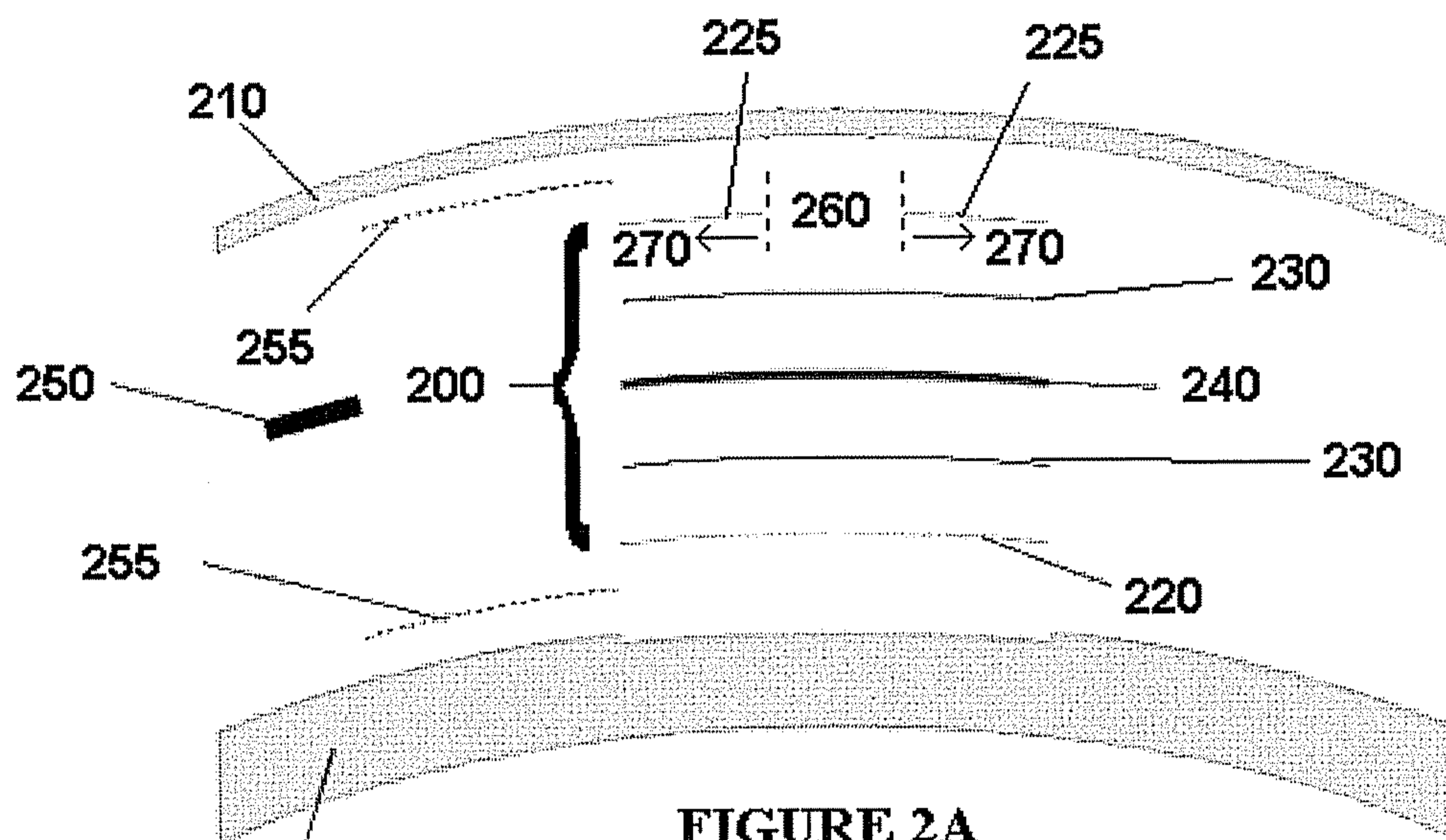


FIGURE 2A

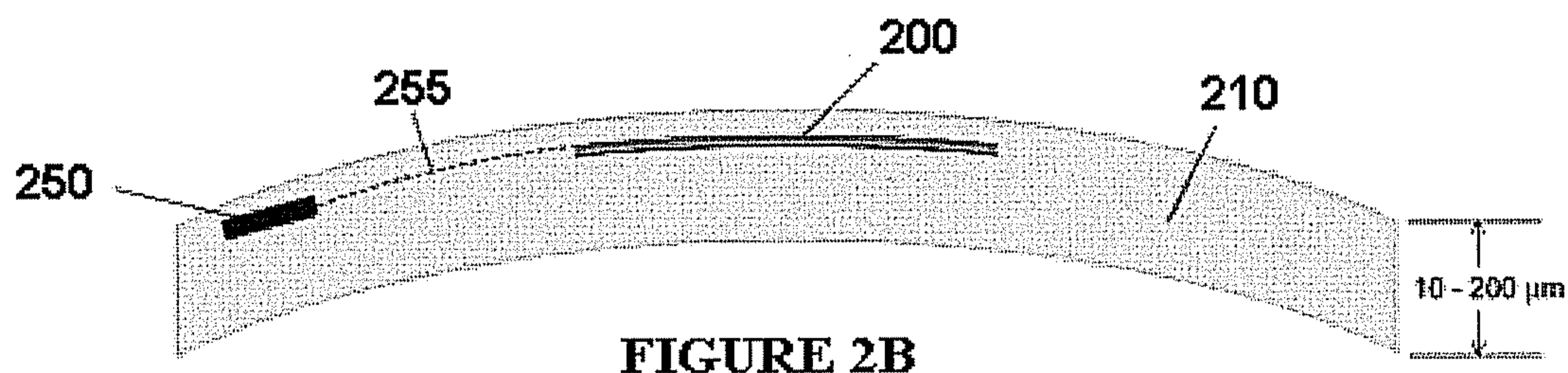


FIGURE 2B

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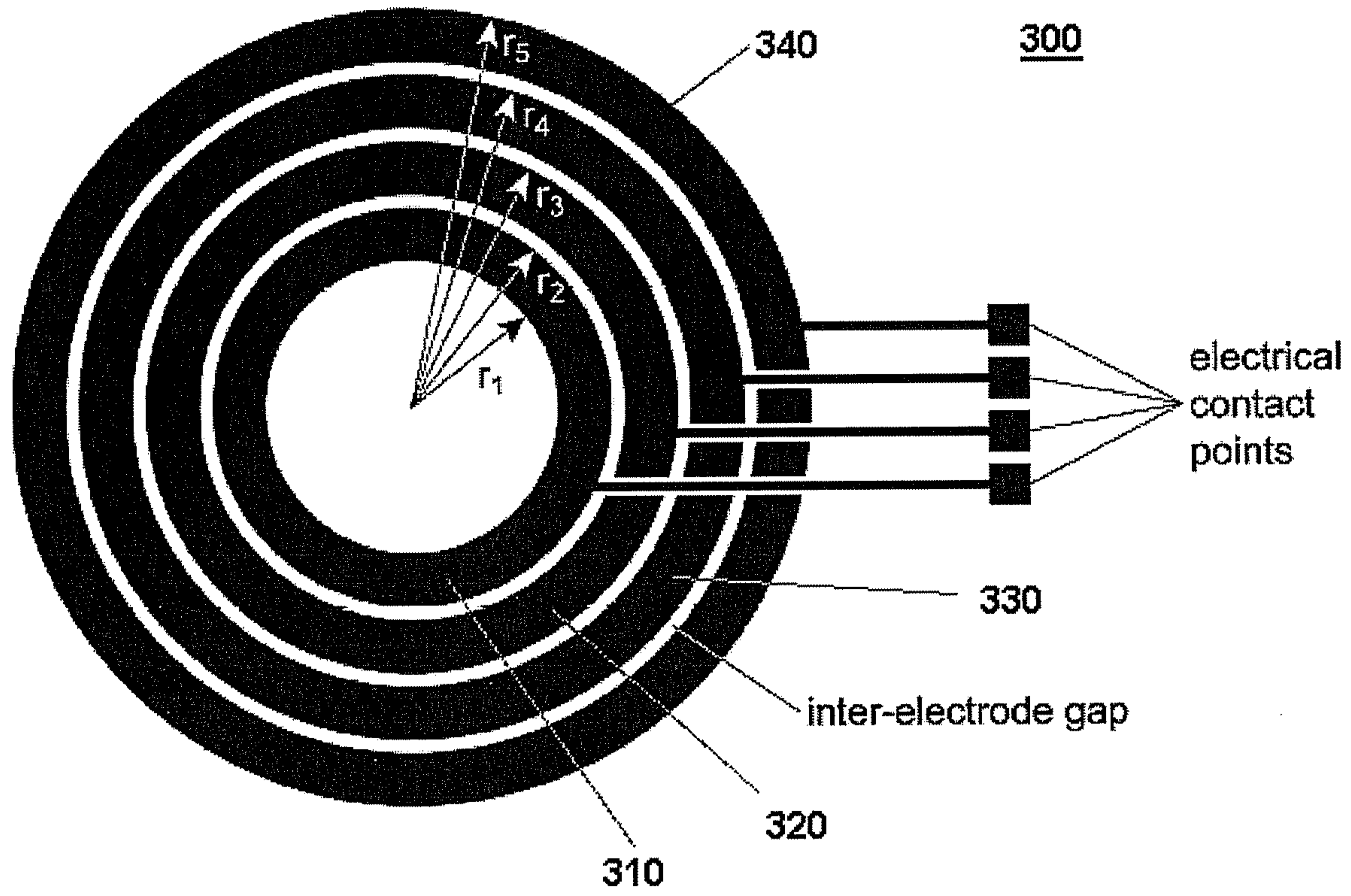
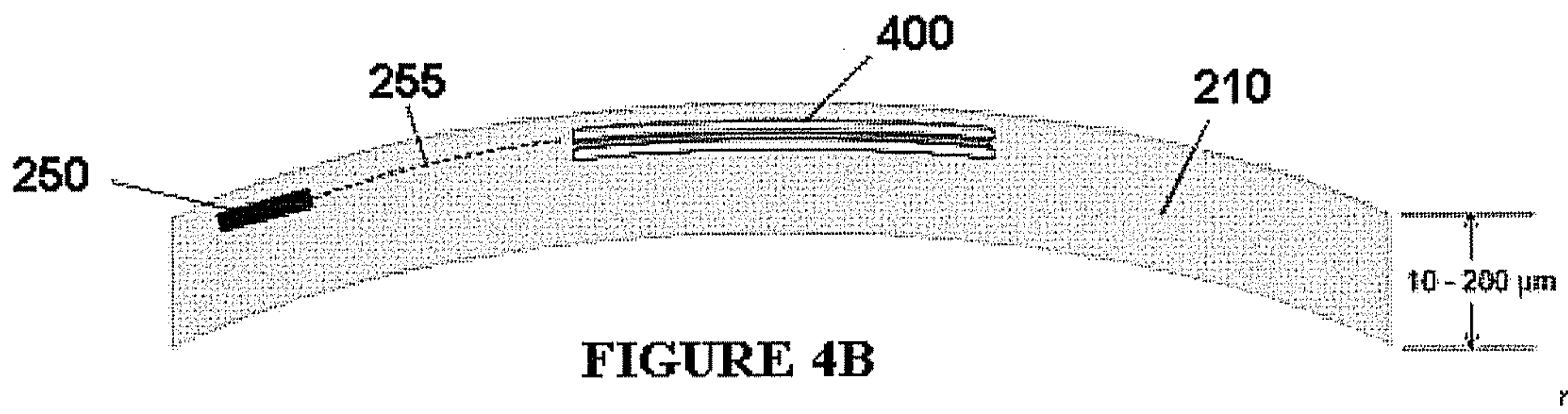
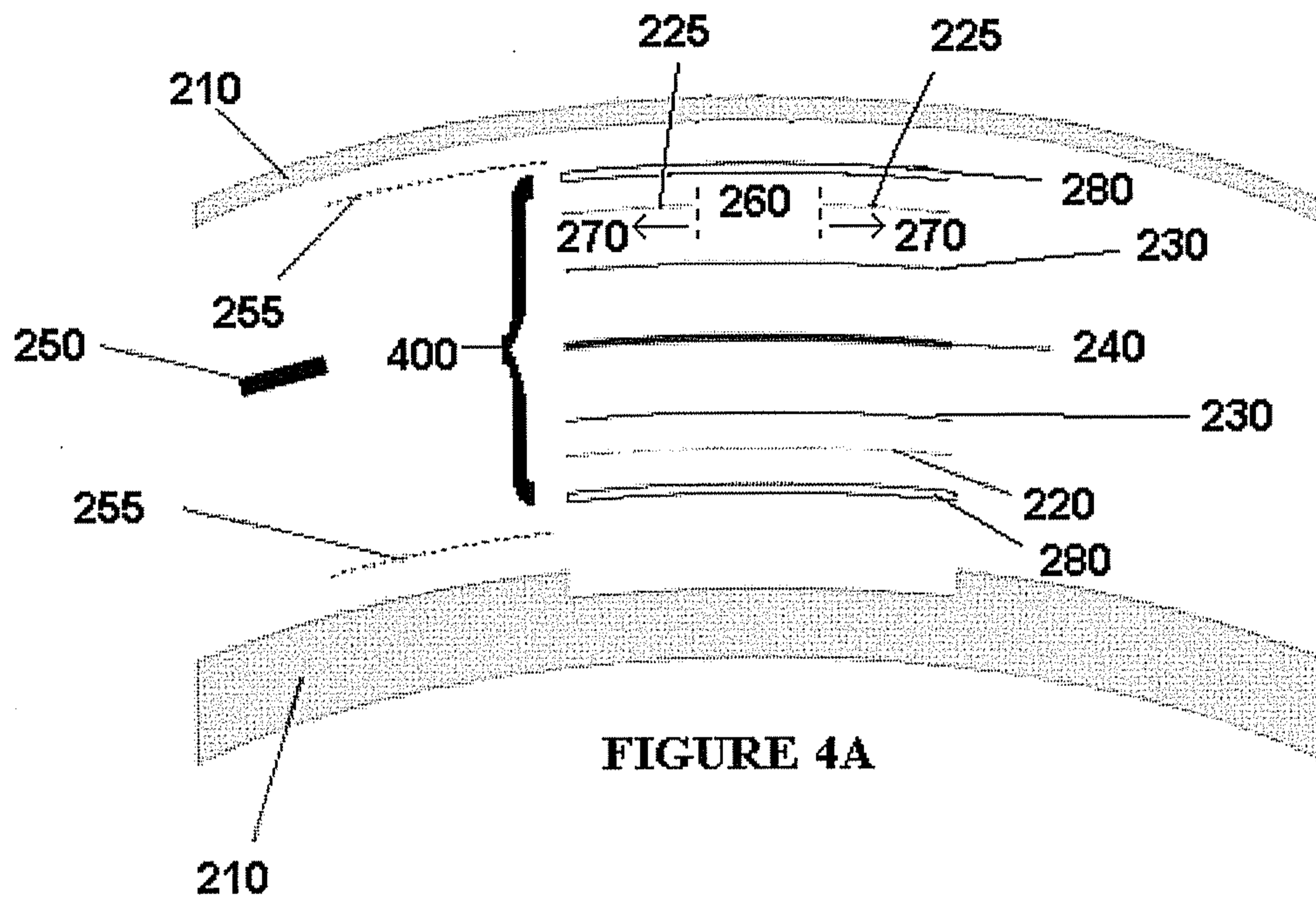


FIGURE 3



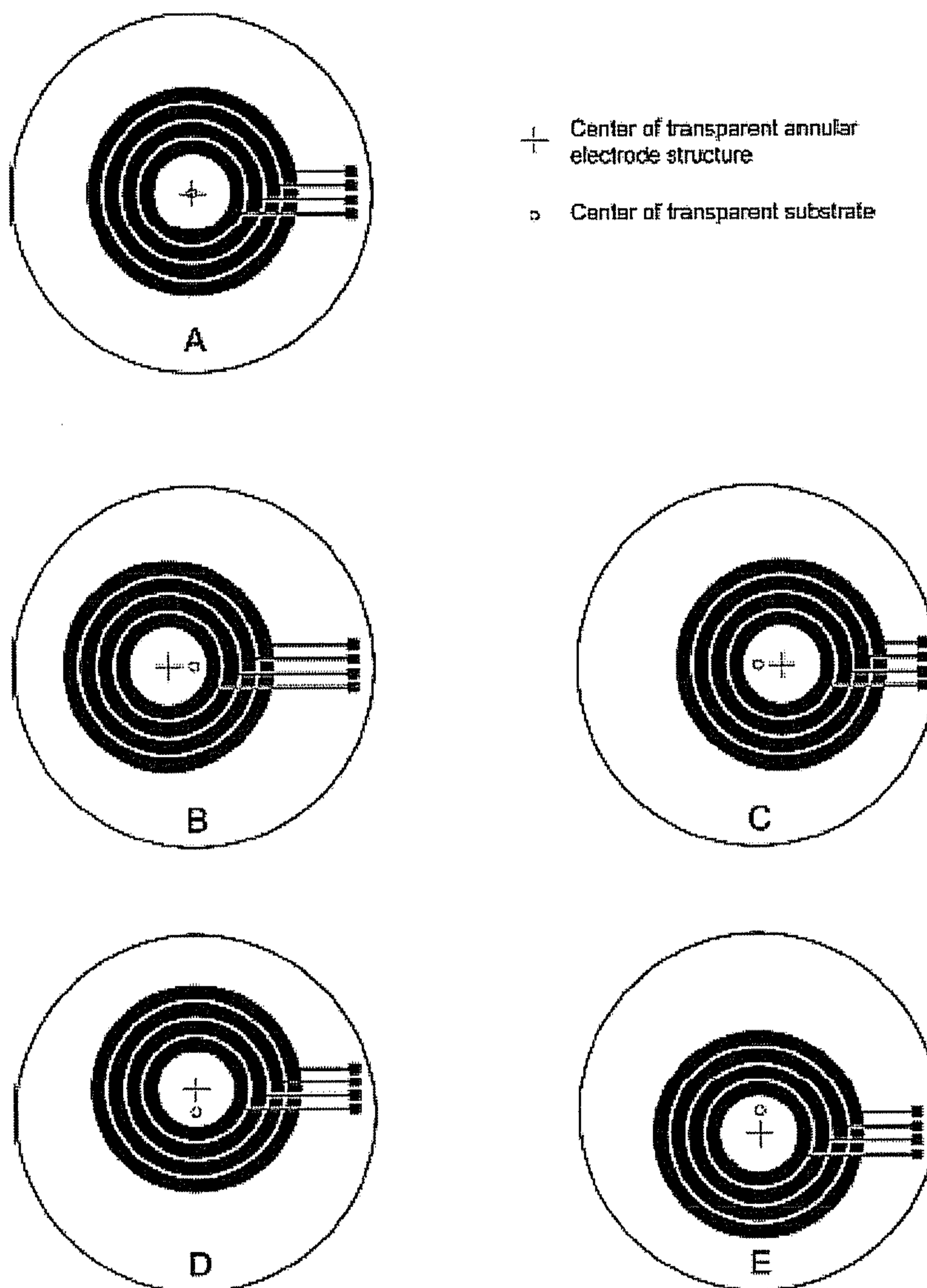


FIGURE 5

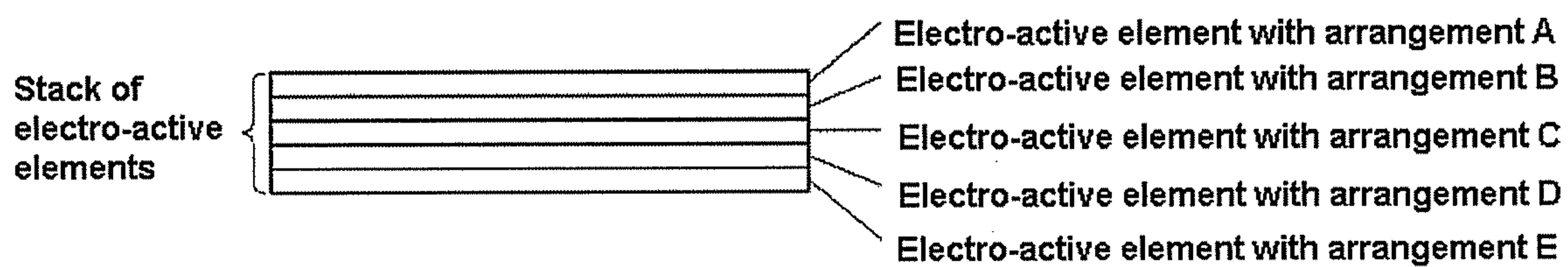


FIGURE 6

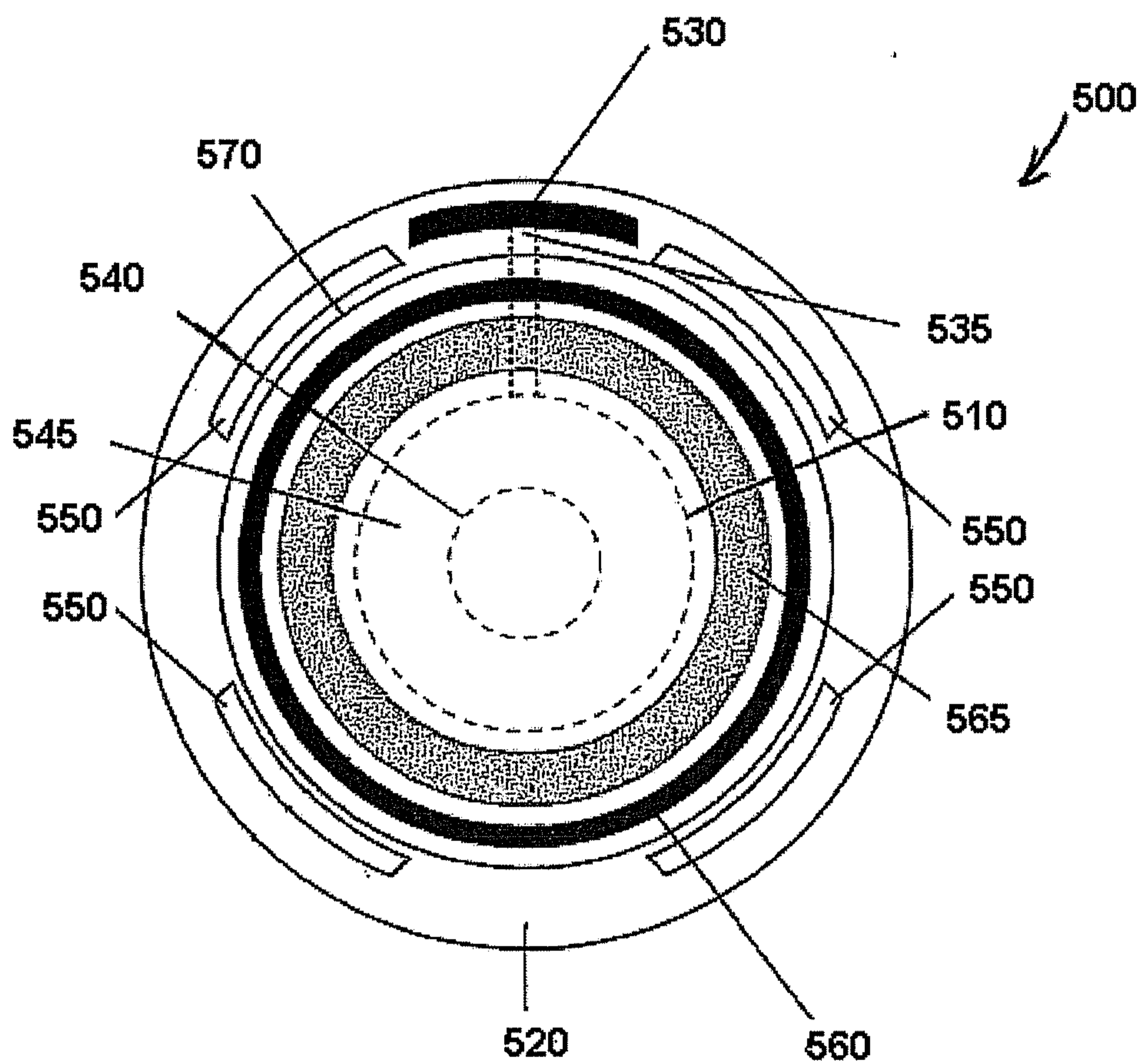


FIGURE 7A

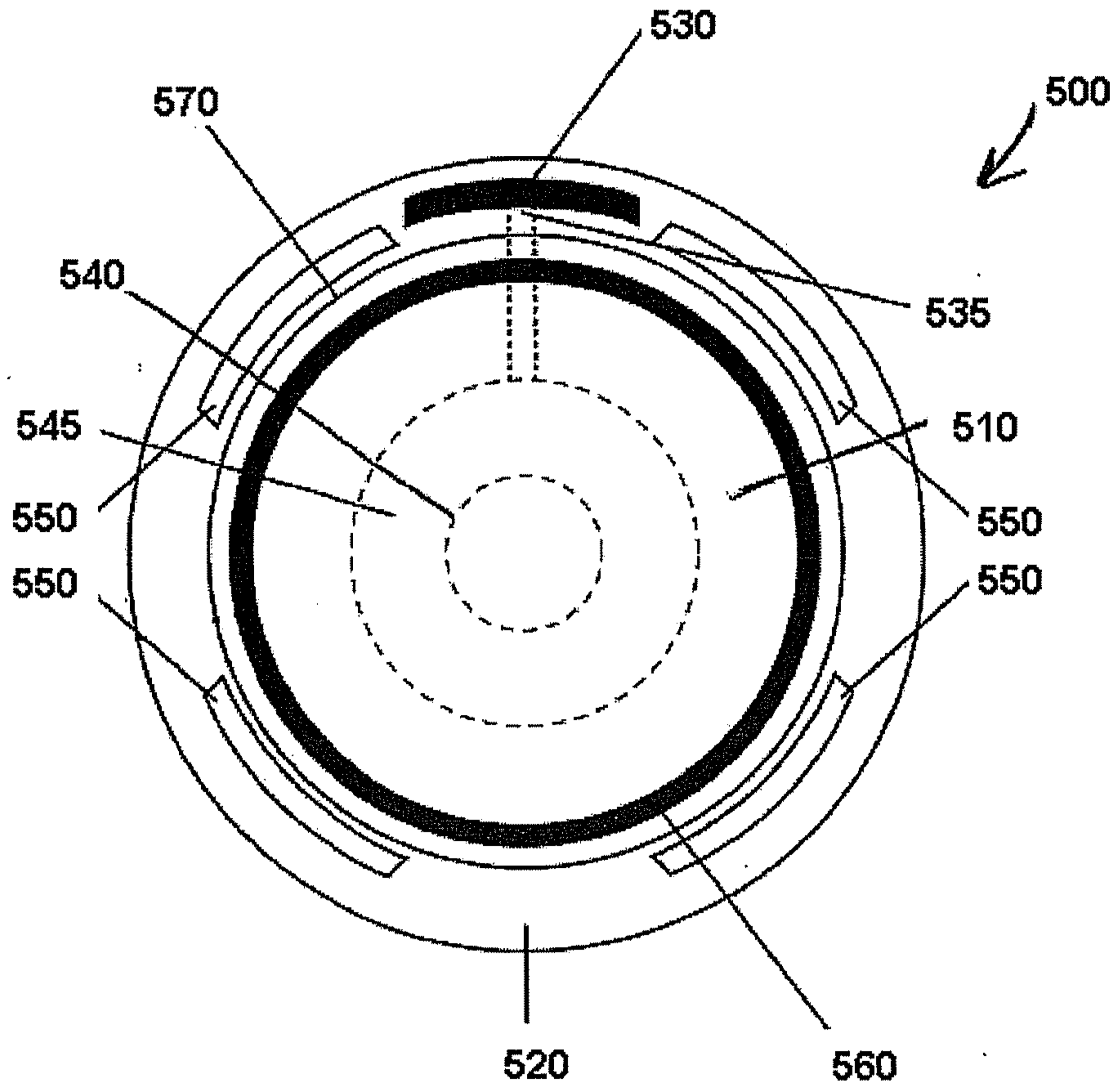


FIGURE 7B

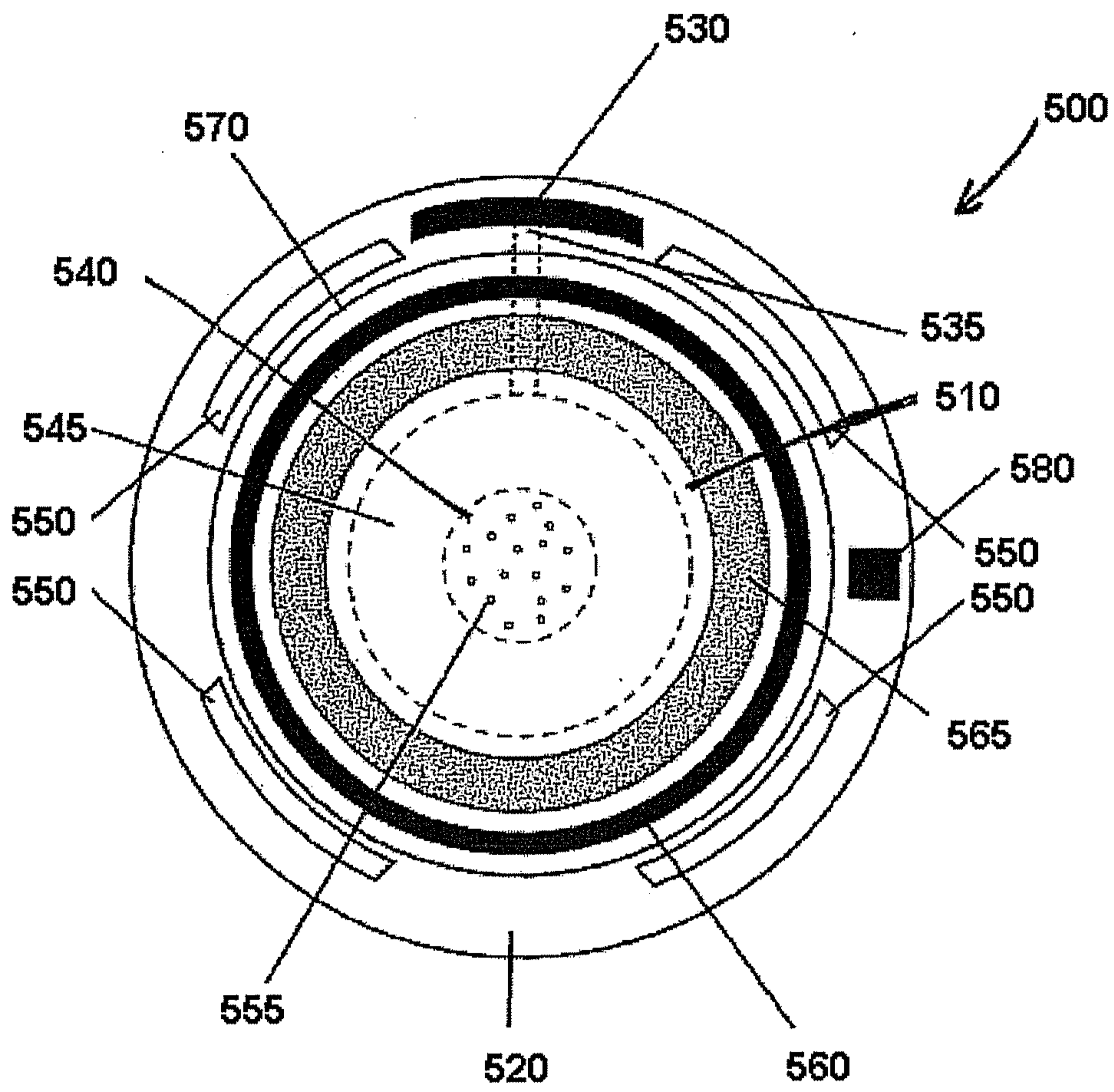
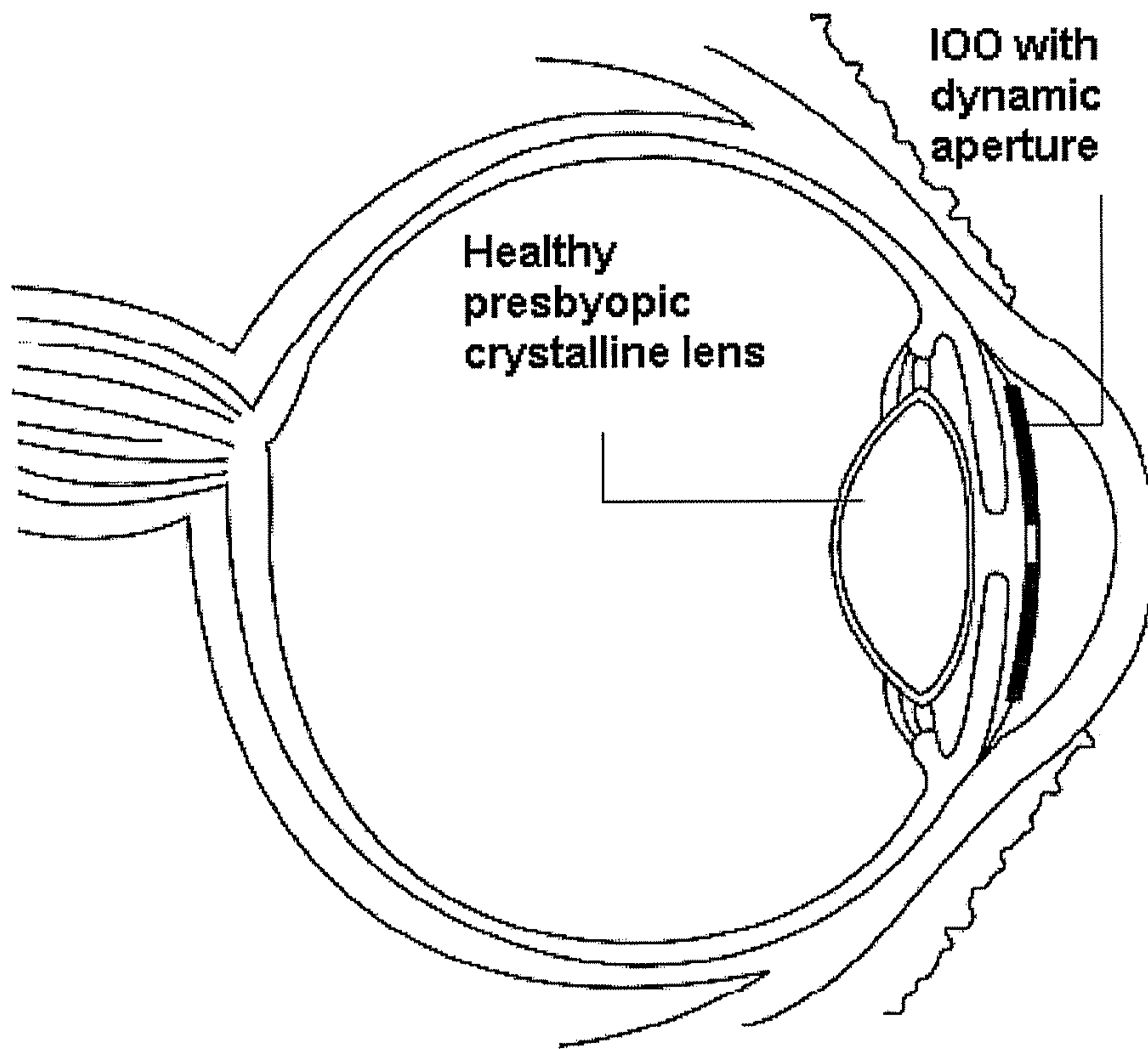
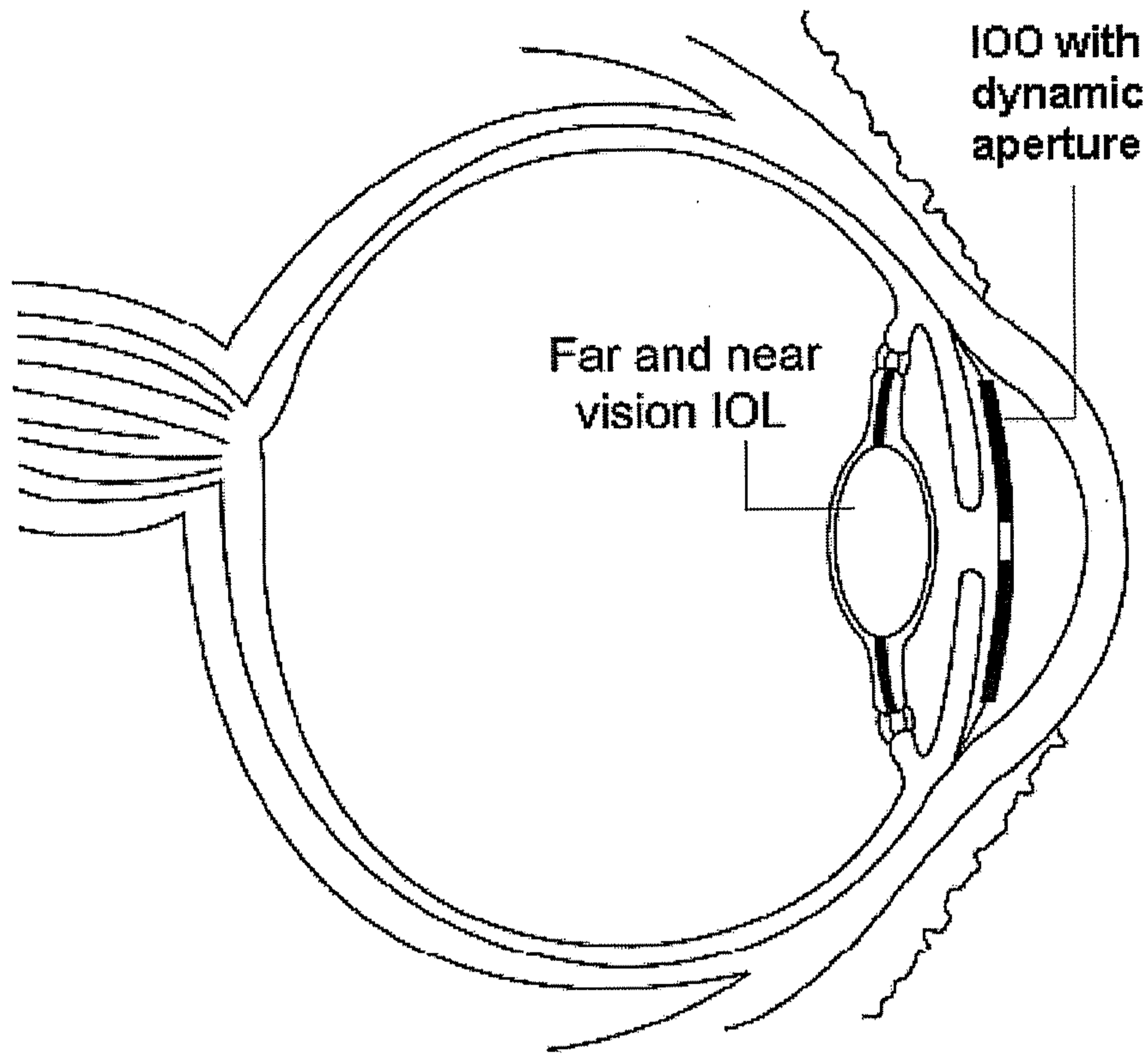


FIGURE 7C

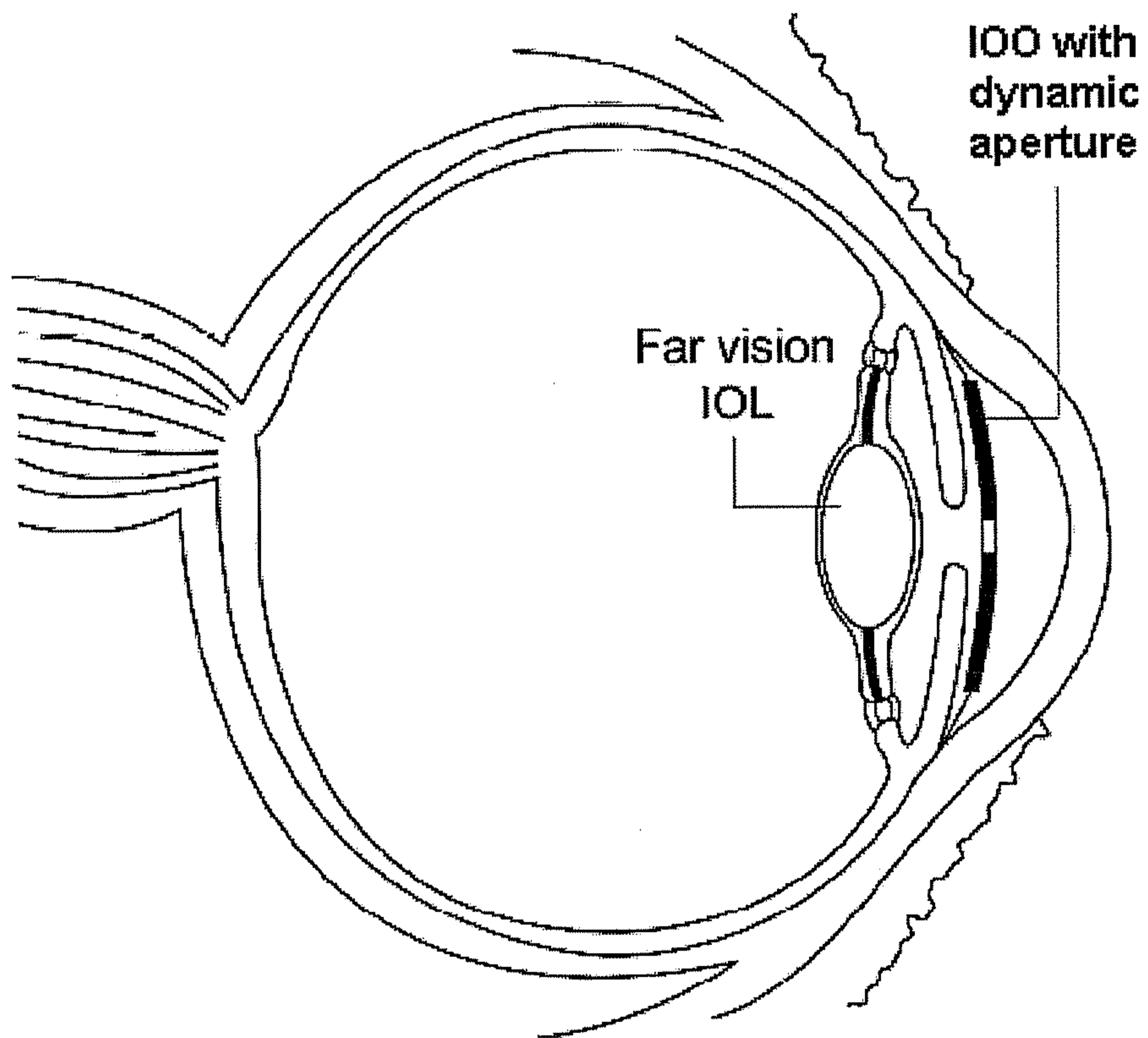


Dynamic aperture IOL provides for intermediate and near vision by way of increasing depth of focus

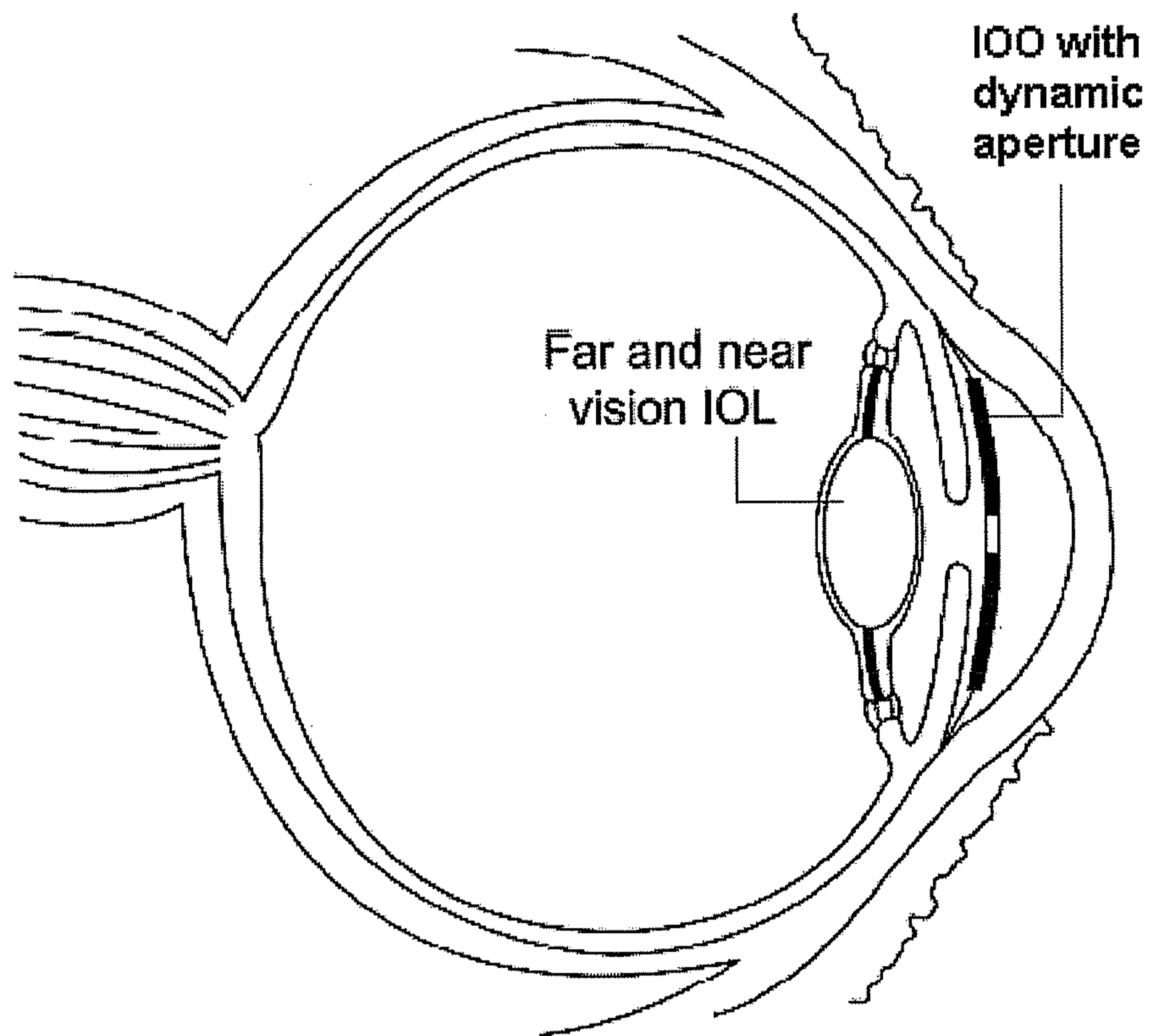
FIGURE 8



Dynamic aperture IOL provides
for increased depth of focus
FIGURE 9



Dynamic aperture IOO provides for intermediate and near vision by way of increasing depth of focus
FIGURE 10



Dynamic aperture IOO provides
for intermediate vision by way of
increasing depth of focus

FIGURE 11

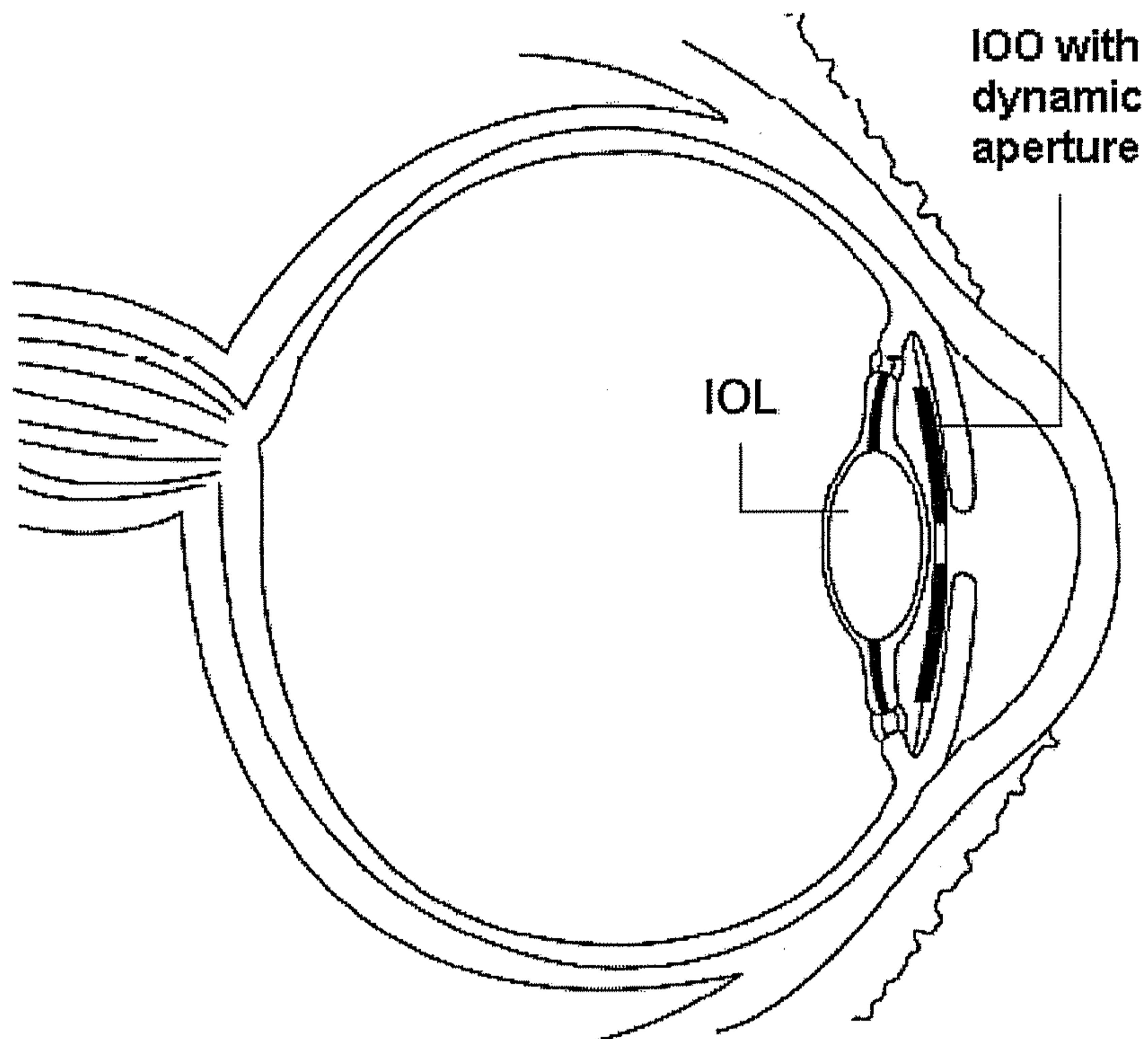


FIGURE 12

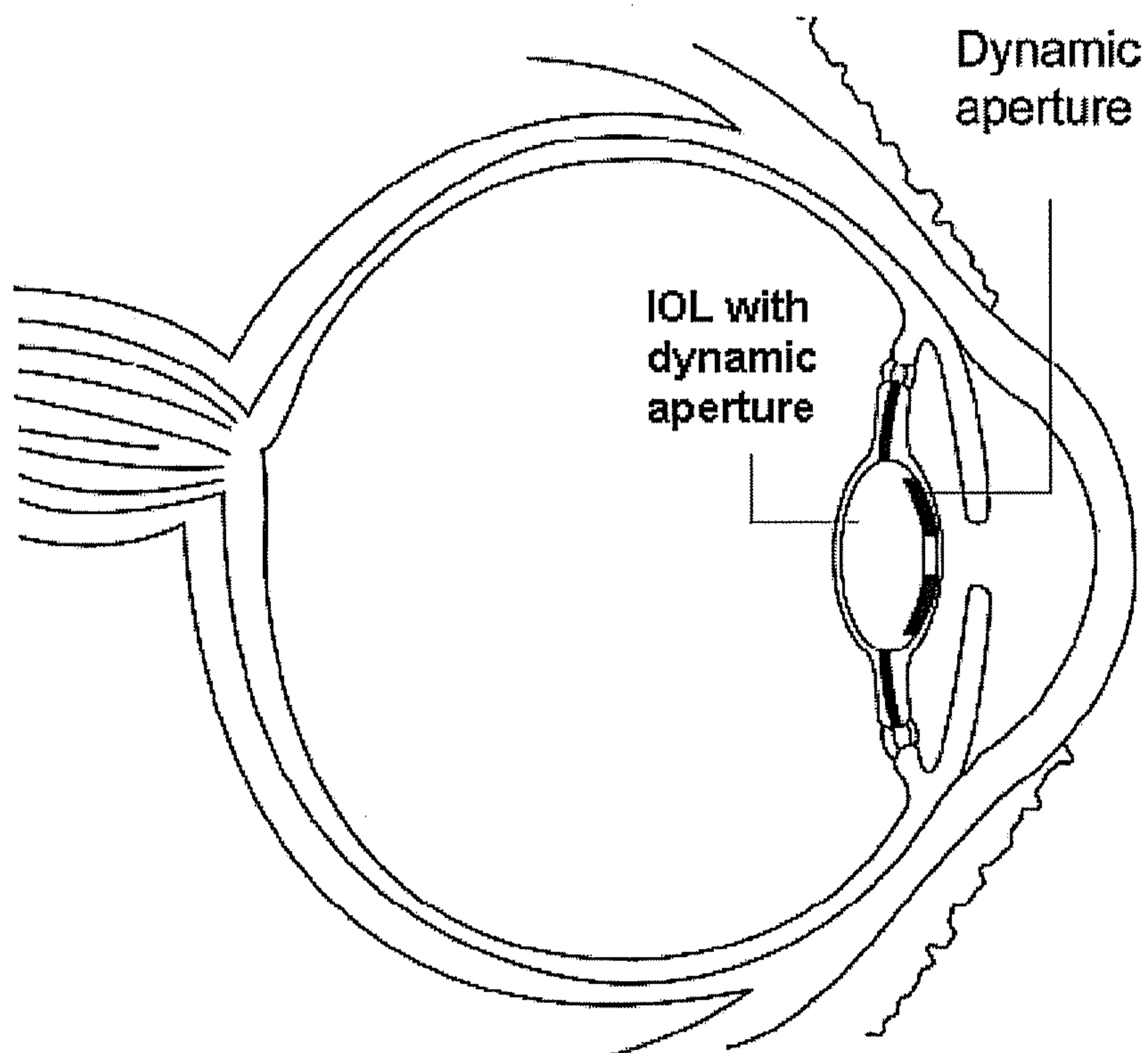


FIGURE 13

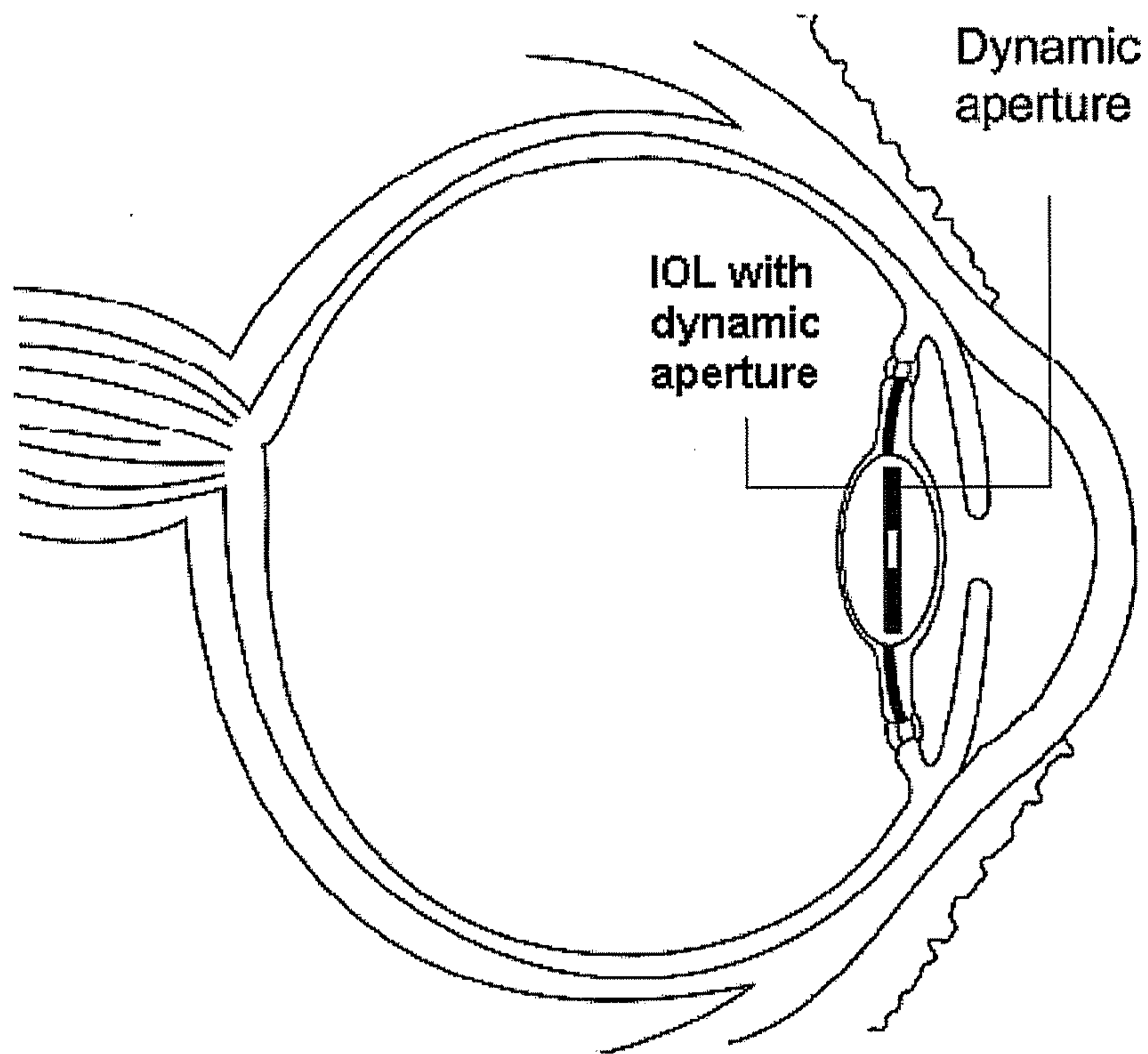


FIGURE 14

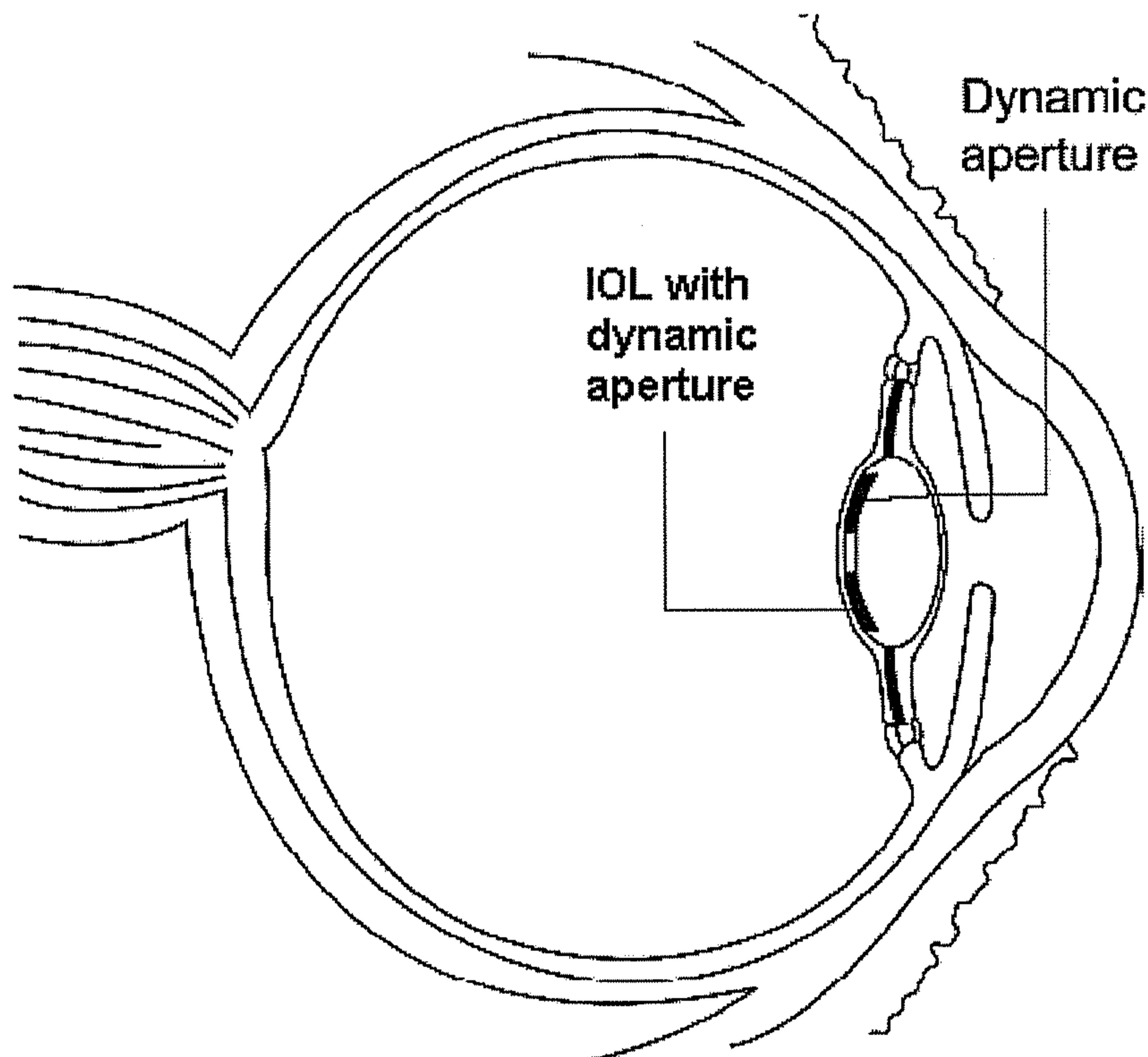


FIGURE 15

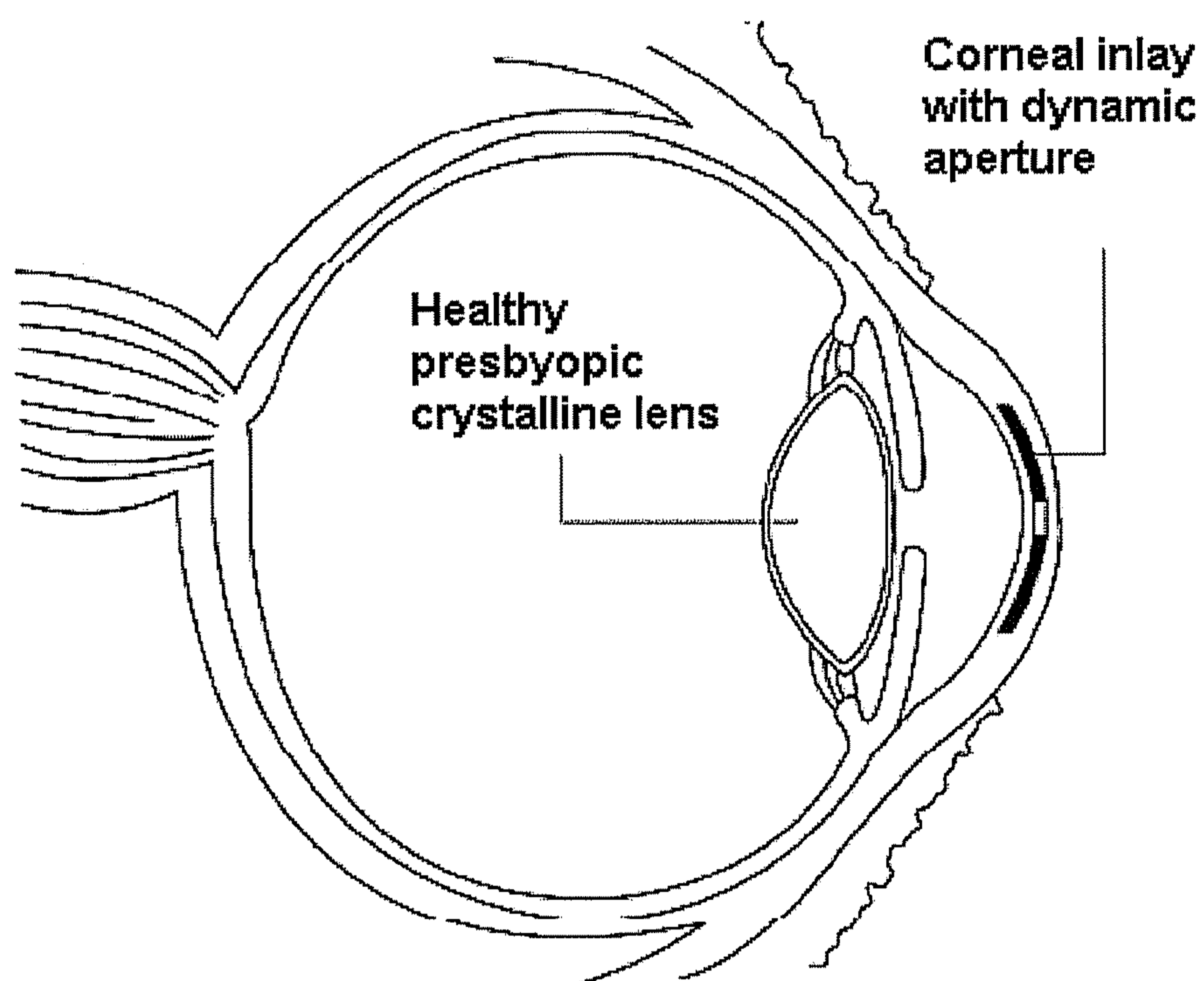


FIGURE 16

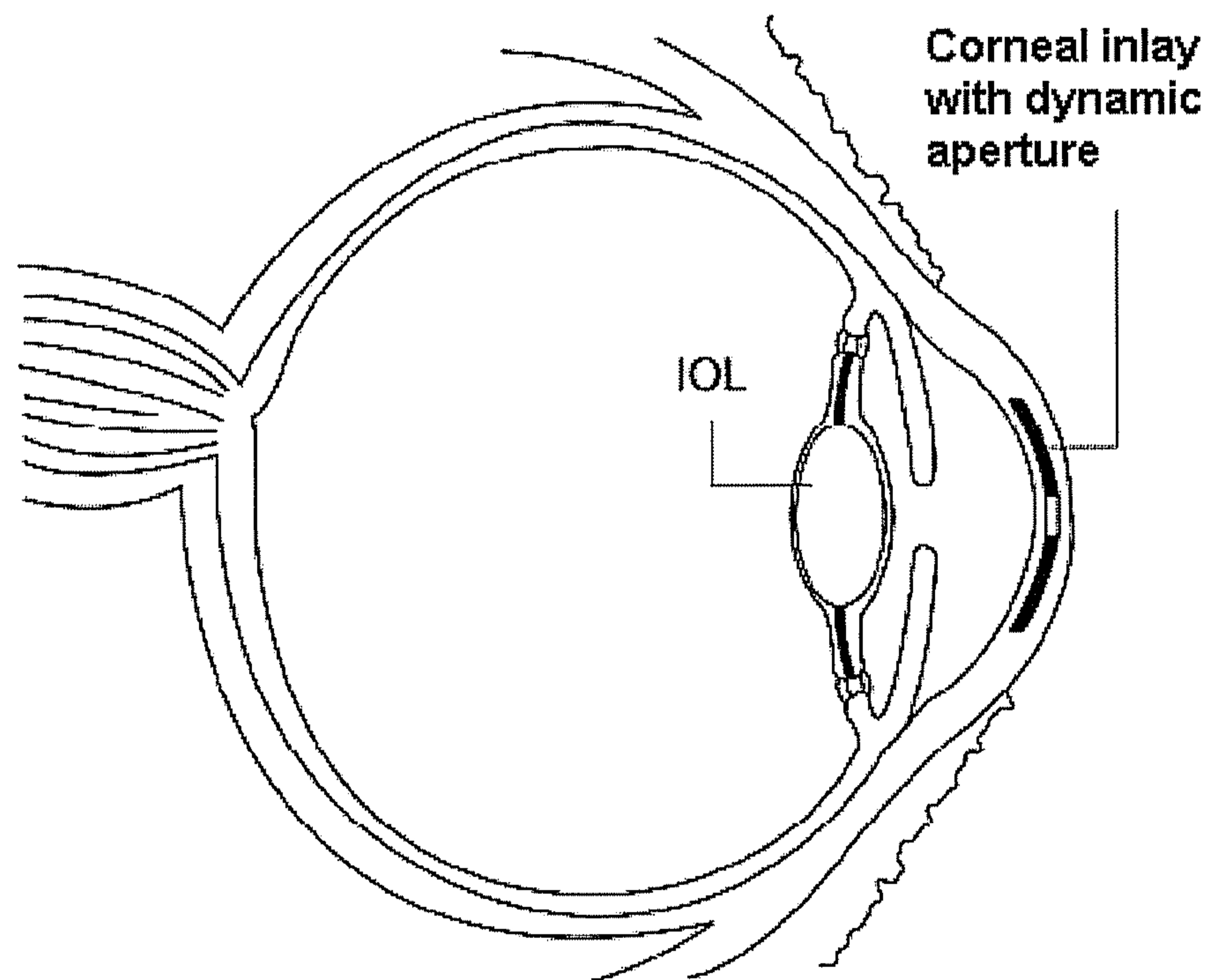
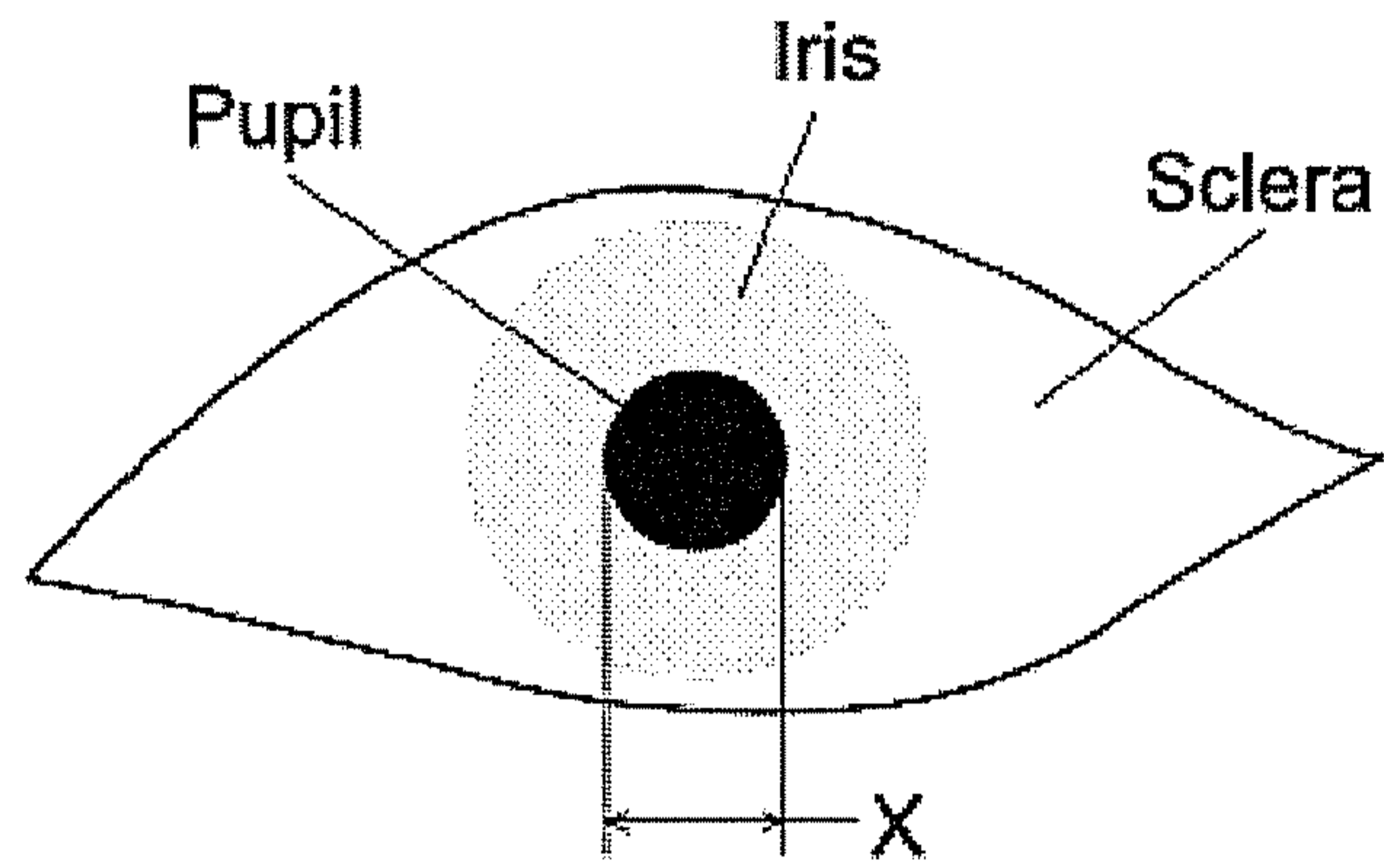


FIGURE 17

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Diameter of aperture of invention ($X_1 < X$)
under normal lighting conditions

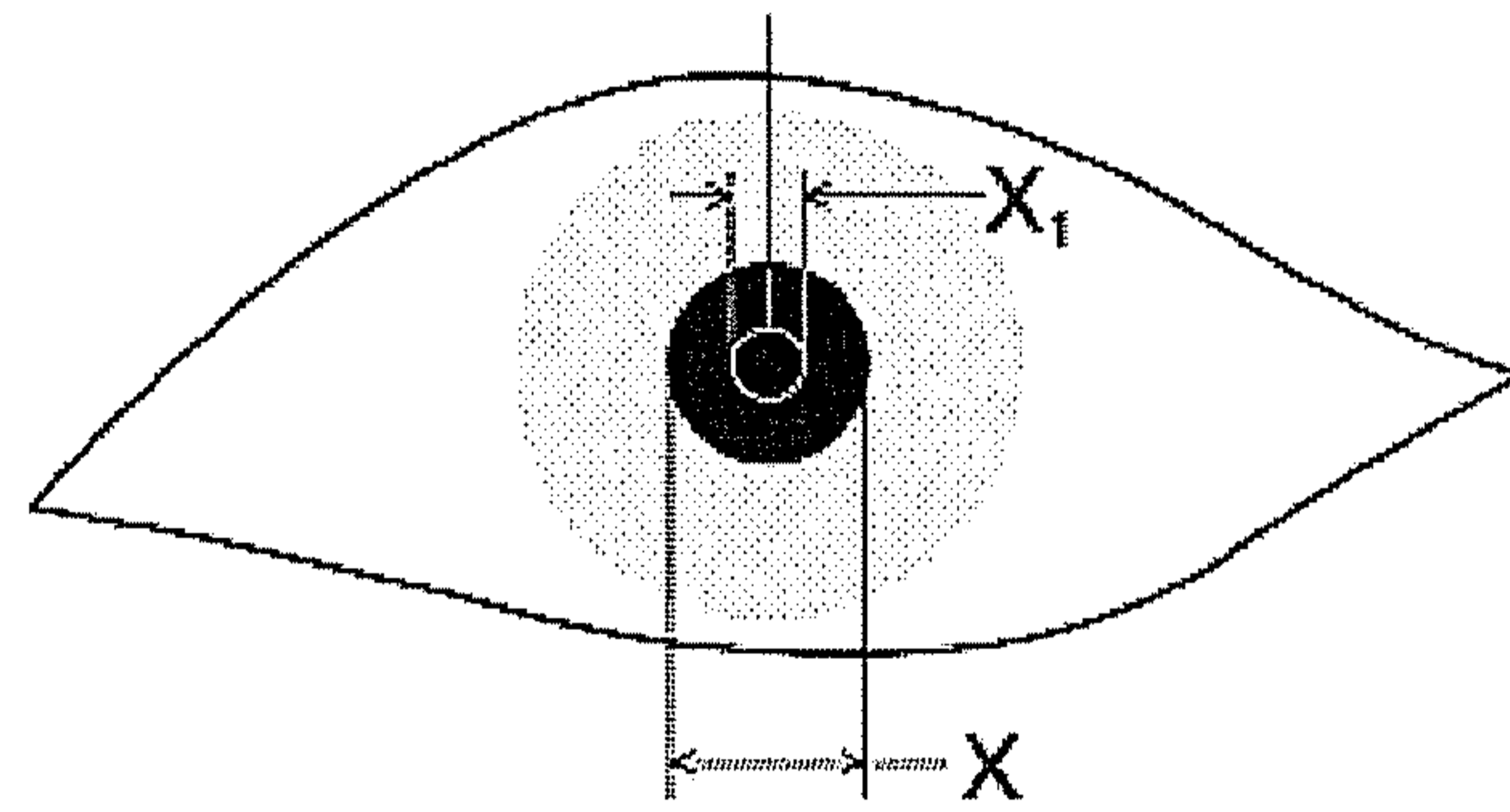
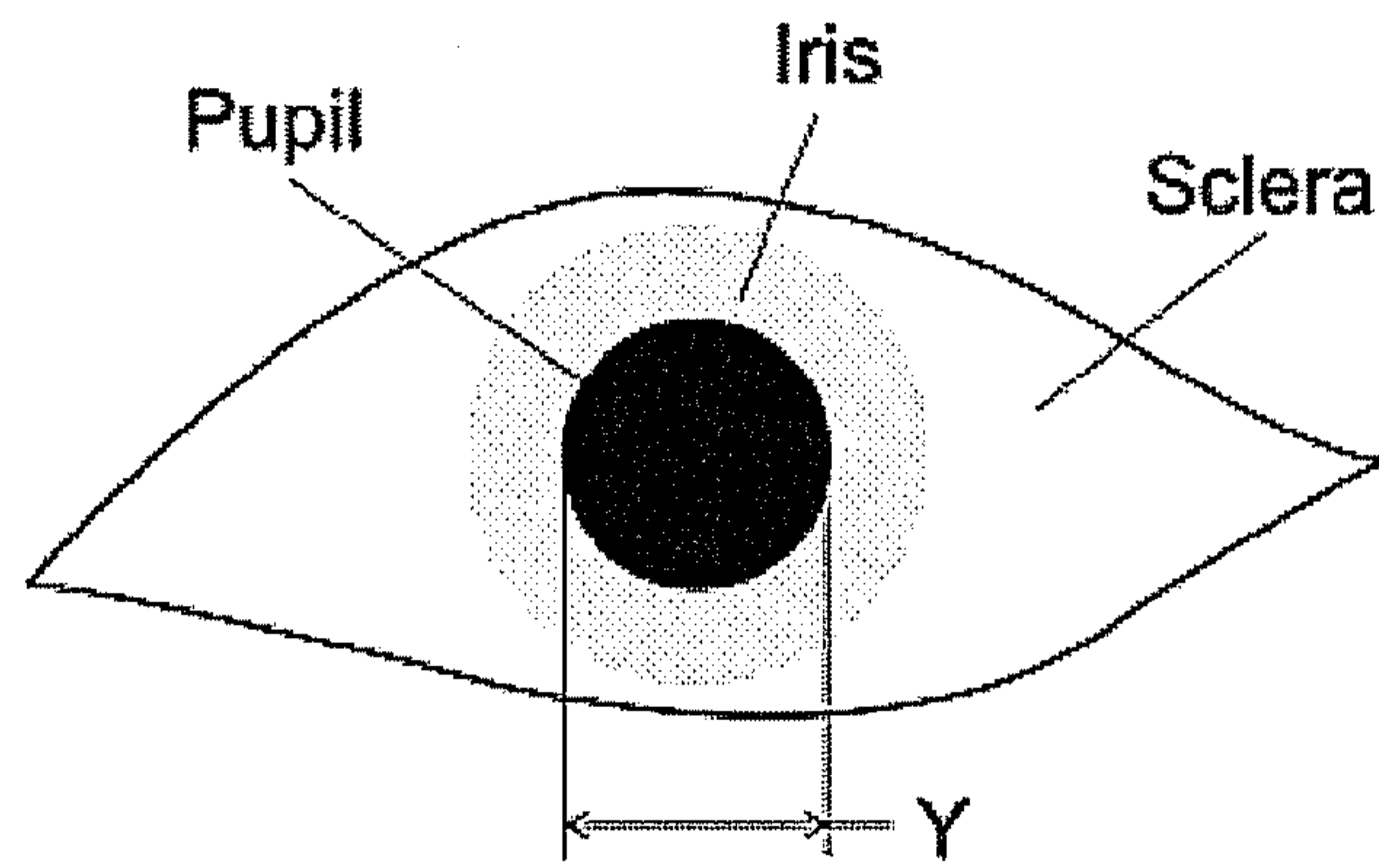


FIGURE 18

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Diameter of aperture of invention ($Y_1 > Y$)
under dim lighting conditions

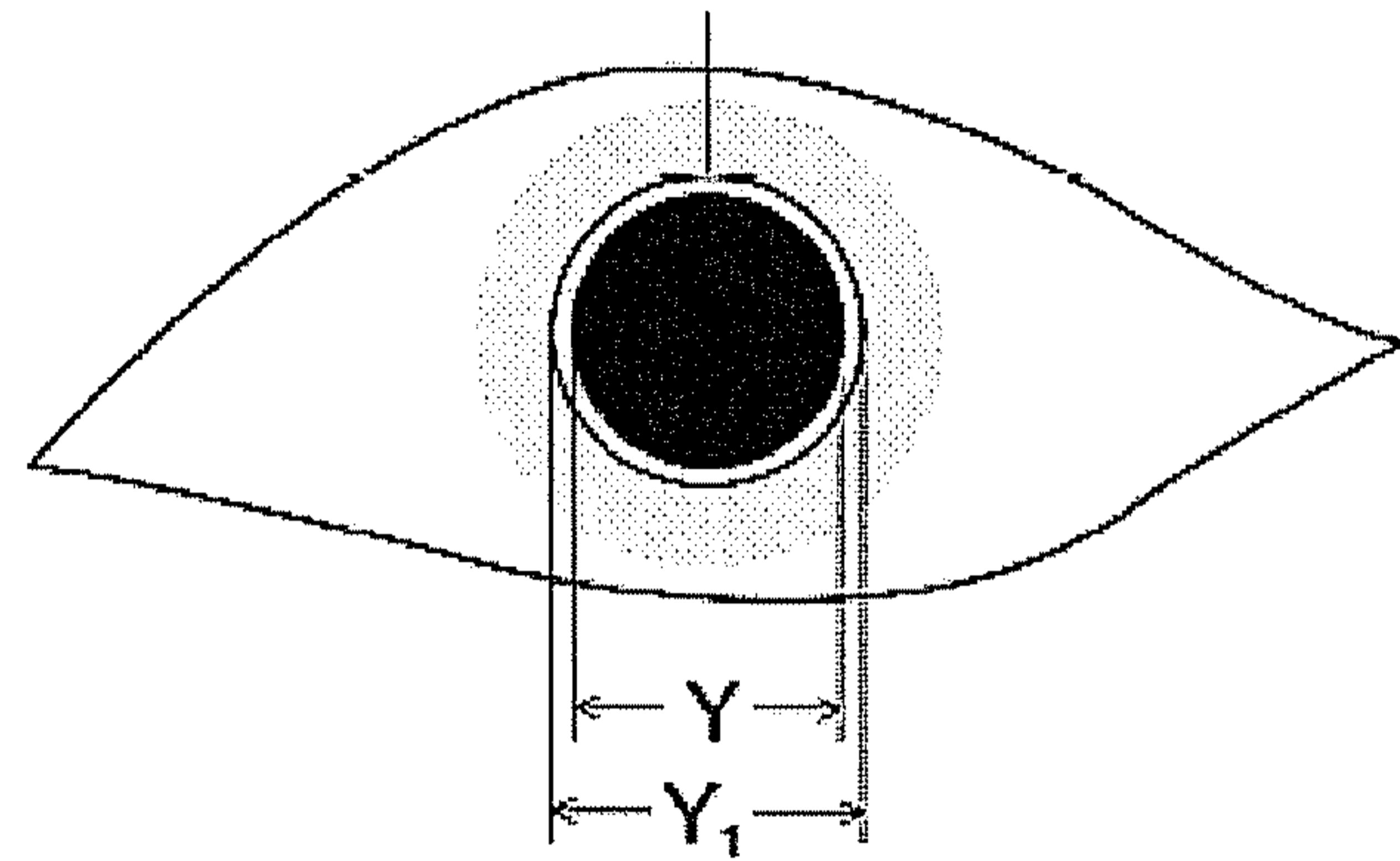
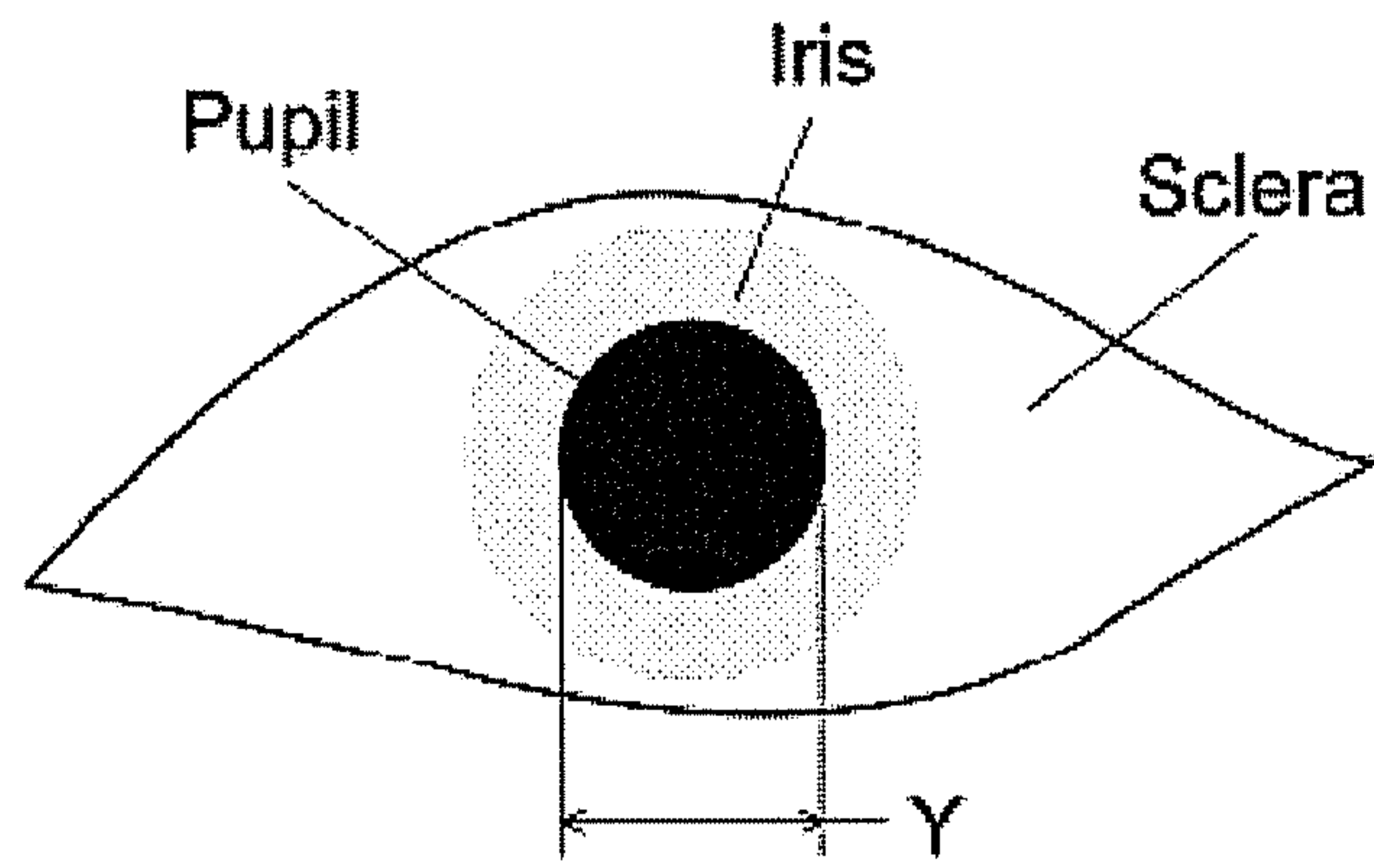


FIGURE 19



Diameter of aperture of invention ($Y_2 < Y$)
under dim lighting conditions

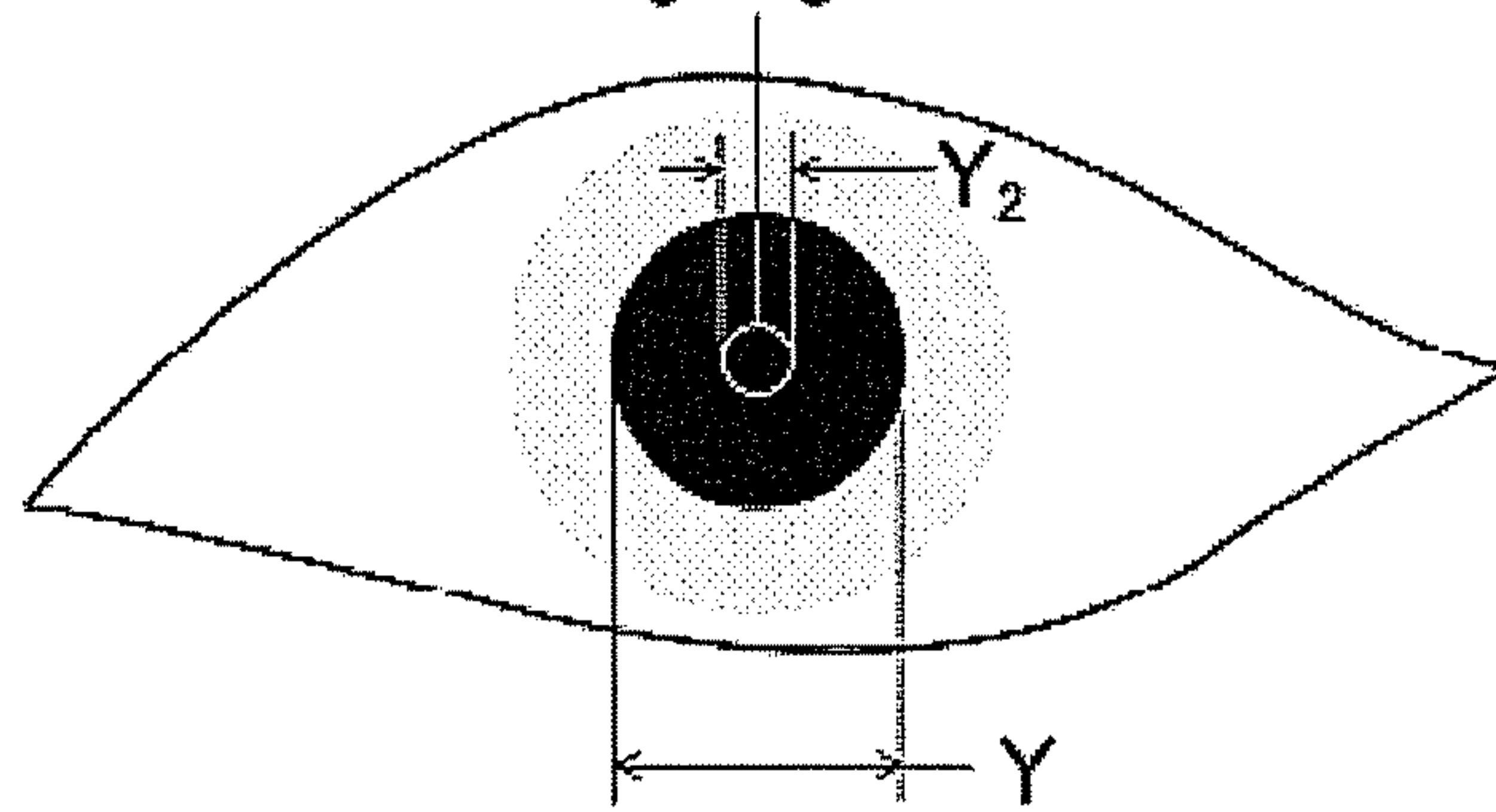


FIGURE 20

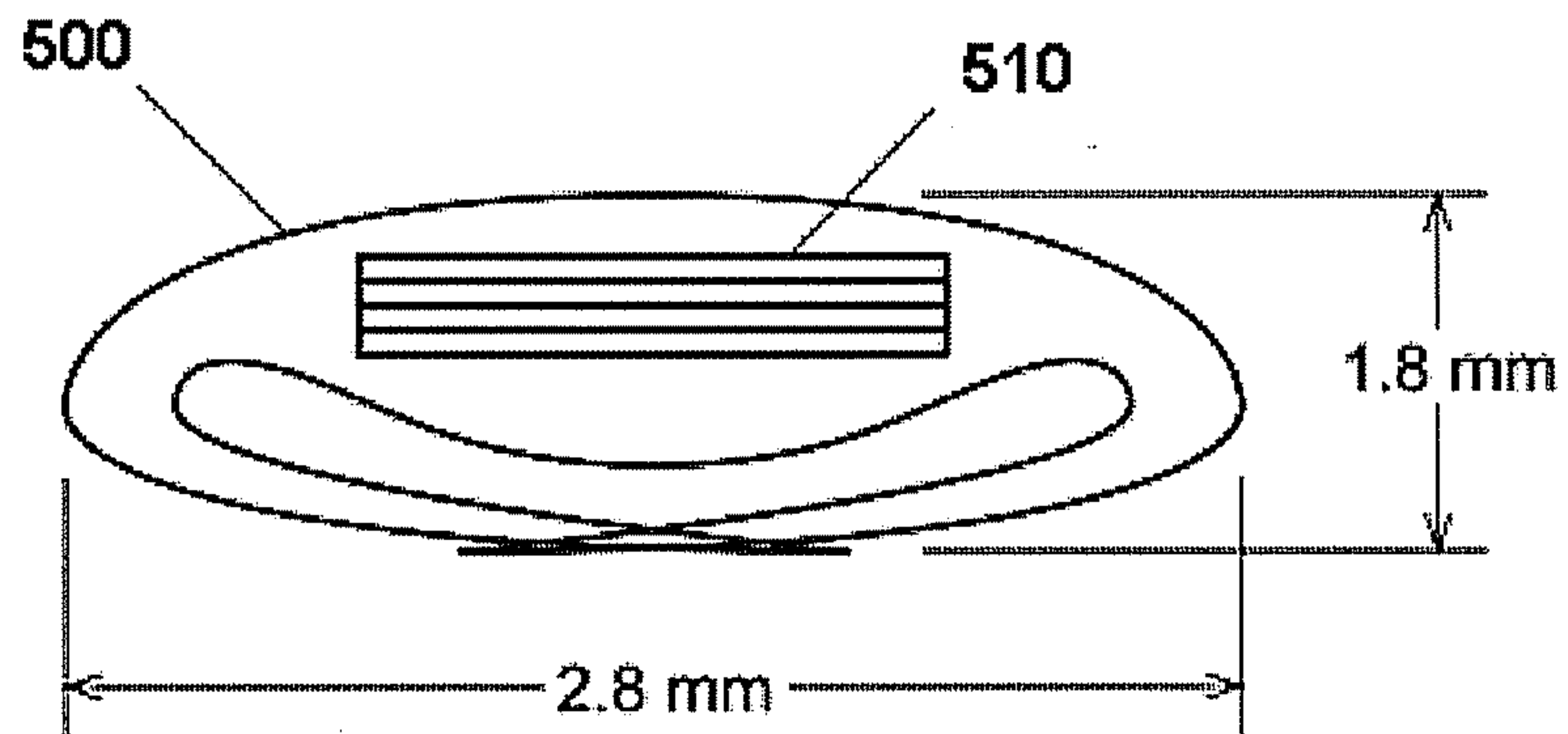
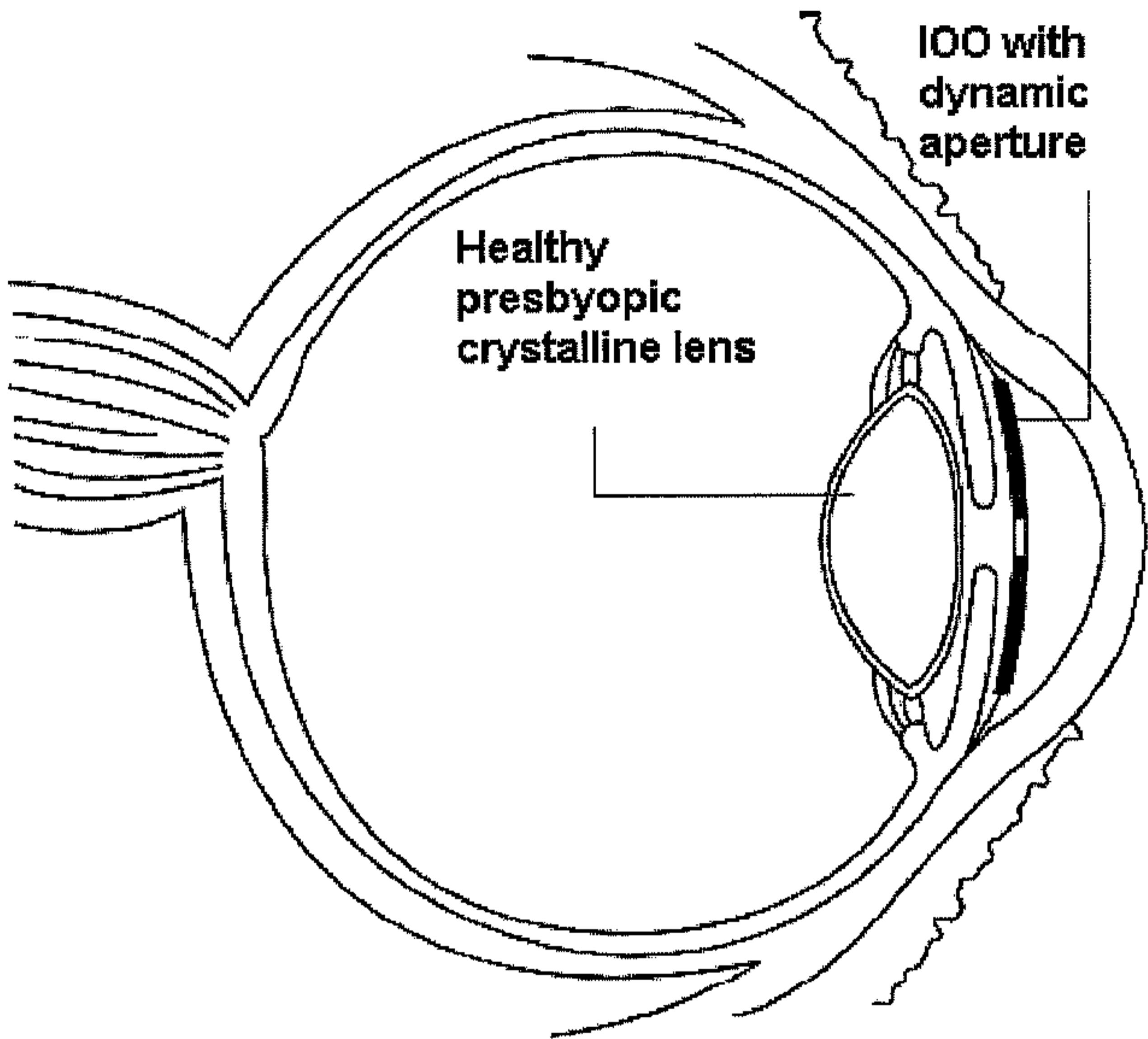


FIGURE 21



**Dynamic aperture IOL provides
for intermediate and near vision by
way of increasing depth of focus**

FIGURE 8