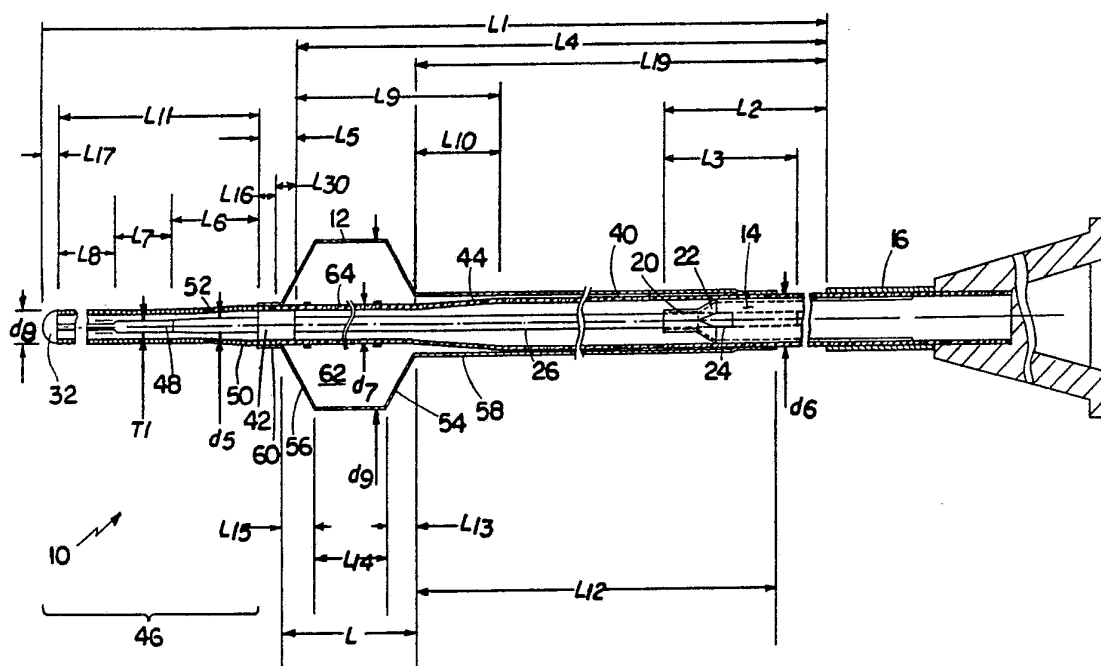




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(54) Title: DILATATION BALLOON**(57) Abstract**

Dilatation balloon devices that employ a metal tube (14) for introduction of inflation fluid from distal end into a balloon (12) have special features that enable introduction through very small passages. A distal core wire (26) is shown forming part of a guide wire extending into the distal end of the tube. The core wire is fixed at the distal end of the tube, and has a proximal extension (34) bridging across a fluid opening (24) formed in the wall of the tube. The wire extension serves to transfer stress from the distal end of the device, across the fluid opening, to adjacent proximal portions of the tube, to prevent stress build-up at the opening that might lead to fracture of the tube during bending.

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DILATATION BALLOONBackground of the Invention

The invention relates to dilatation balloon devices which are introduced into body passageways for the purpose of dilating a collapsed portion of the passageway. In particular, the invention provides devices capable of use in balloon angioplasty.

Typically, the balloon, placed at the distal end of a flexible shaft, is introduced to the body over a guidewire or by means of a guiding catheter. The balloon is then positioned in the affected region and inflated, thereby forcing the obstructed way open. The balloon may then be deflated and the device withdrawn back through a catheter and from the body.

It is advantageous for such devices to provide a small diameter profile when the balloon is deflated to allow atraumatic advance through body passageways and for positioning the balloon in the region of narrowing lesions. Angioplasty of smaller arteries, such as the coronary artery, typically requires balloons of 3 mm inflated diameter or less, which, when deflated and collapsed about a shaft, can be introduced. For larger arteries, such as the renal artery or popliteal artery, balloons of larger inflated diameter, up to as large as 8 mm, are required for angioplasty treatment; the lesions of these arteries, however, are not necessarily larger. Larger balloons, when deflated, tend to produce larger diameter profiles, thereby inhibiting their use across narrow lesions and requiring larger diameter introduction catheters.

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Summary of the Invention

According to one aspect of the invention, a dilatation balloon device comprises an inflatable balloon and a main tubular member comprising a metal tube having distal and proximal ends, and adapted for introduction of inflation fluid from its distal end into the balloon. A distal core wire forming part of a guide wire extends into the distal end of the tube, the wire being fixed at the distal end of the tube and having a proximal extension bridging across a fluid opening defined in the wall of the tube. The wire extension serves to transfer stress from the distal end of the device, across the fluid opening, to proximally adjacent portions of the tube, thereby to prevent stress build-up at the opening that might lead to collapse or fracture of the tube during bending of the device.

In the preferred embodiment, the device further comprises a balloon sleeve extending proximally of an expandible portion of the balloon, across the fluid opening to a point of attachment to the tube.

According to another aspect of the invention, a dilatation balloon device capable of being placed through a conventional 5 French diagnostic catheter or any catheter which accepts an 0.038 inch wire and capable of supporting a balloon having smaller inflated diameters up to about 4 mm diameter, comprises an inflatable balloon having a proximal and a distal end, the balloon being the product of the process of blowing and drawing a preformed tubular member having a tapered contour in the region corresponding to the transition section of the blown balloon, a flexible elongated, torque transmitting hollow main tubular body of outside

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diameter of 0.038 inch or less, extending from a proximal region of the device to a position spaced from a distal end of the device, the main tubular body having a distal portion and defining an interior volume adapted to conduct inflation liquid for the balloon, flexible spanning structure extending distally from the end of the main tubular body, the spanning structure defining a fluid passage for communication between the distal portion of the main tubular body and the balloon, and including a torque-transmitting element that extends from the main tubular body to a sealing formation at the distal end of the balloon, the portion of the spanning structure that corresponds with the length of the balloon having an outer diameter no greater than about 0.025 inch, enabling the balloon to be collapsed to a profile of about 0.038 inch diameter or smaller, the effective outer diameter of the spanning structure at the sealing formation being about 0.025 inch, to which a distal sleeve of the balloon is joined, and a flexible, torqueable guide element extending distally from the sealing formation to the end of the device.

Preferred embodiments of this aspect of the invention may include one or more of the following features. The hollow main tubular body includes a hollow metal tube. The torque transmitting element comprises a solid cross-section core wire joined to the distal end of the main tubular body and extending through the balloon to the sealing formation. The sealing formation includes a solid annular member sealed to the wire for providing support for a distal sleeve of the balloon of substantially larger diameter than the wire. A helical coil is joined to an outer surface of the sealing formation and extends distally therefrom to provide a flexible distal tip, the sleeve of the balloon

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being joined to an outer surface of the helical coil at the sealing formation. The hollow main tubular body includes a hollow metal tube. The torque transmitting element comprises a solid cross-section core wire joined to the distal end of the main tubular body and extending through the balloon to the sealing formation. The main tubular member has a first outer diameter for most of its length and a second, reduced outer diameter portion at its distal end, the inner diameter of a region of the second, reduced outer diameter corresponding to the outer diameter of the core wire over a joint region at which the main tubular member and the solid cross-section wire are joined. The main tubular member has a fluid opening proximal of the joint region and the solid cross-section wire has a proximal portion spanning across the opening and extending proximally thereof, adapted to transfer stress from distal of the main tubular member to a portion of the main tubular member proximal of the opening. There is a flow path for inflation fluid to the opening within the main tubular member in a space defined at its inner periphery by an external surface of a proximal portion of the solid cross-section wire.

According to another aspect of the invention, a dilatation balloon device comprises an inflatable balloon, a flexible elongated, torque transmitting hollow metal main tubular body extending from a proximal region of the device to a position spaced substantially from a distal end of the device, the main tubular body defining an interior volume adapted to conduct inflation liquid for the balloon, flexible spanning structure extending distally from an end of the main tubular body, the spanning structure defining a fluid passage for

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communication between a distal portion of the main tubular body and the balloon, and including a torque-transmitting element that extends from the main tubular body to a distal end of the balloon, the torque
5 transmitting element comprising a solid cross-section core wire joined to a distal end of the main tubular body and extending through the balloon, the main tubular member having a first outer diameter portion for most of its length and a second, reduced outer diameter portion
10 at its distal end, an inner diameter of the second, reduced outer diameter portion corresponding to the outer diameter of the wire over a joint region at which the member and wire are joined, the tubular member having a fluid opening proximal of the joint region and
15 the wire having a proximal portion spanning across the opening and extending proximally thereof, adapted to transfer stress from distal of the main tubular member to a portion of the main tubular member proximal of the opening, therebeing a flow path for inflation fluid to
20 the opening within the tubular main body in a space defined at its inner periphery by an external surface of a proximal portion of the core wire.

Preferred embodiments of this and the other aspects of the invention may include one or more of the
25 following features. The main tubular member tapers from the first outer diameter portion to the second, reduced outer diameter portion at its distal end. The wire extends to a distal tip of the device, the distal portion of the wire being of reduced diameter and more
30 flexible relative to proximal portions thereof. Helical coil means extend from the proximal region to the distal end of the device. A helical coil extends over a hollow liquid-tight tube from the proximal region of the device to the distal region of the main tubular body and a

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fluid impermeable sleeve extends from the distal region of the tubular body to the balloon. Alternatively, the fluid impermeable sleeve, constructed of PET flexible polymeric tube means, extends from the proximal region of the device to the proximal end of the balloon. The main tubular body comprises an exterior heat shrink tube shrunk upon a hollow metal liquid-conducting tube. The balloon is the product of the process of blowing and drawing a preformed tubular member having a tapered contour in the region corresponding to the transition section of the blown balloon. The preformed tubular member is the product of heating and drawing a defined region of an extruded tube of originally constant diameter and wall thickness. For the smaller sizes of the device, the wall thickness of the tapering transition section is greater than the wall thickness of the main body of the balloon. For the larger sizes of the device, the wall thickness of the tapering transition section is no greater than the wall thickness of the main body of the balloon. For use where the final passageway is relatively large, the main body of the balloon has an inflated diameter of 5 mm or larger. The resin from which the balloon is formed is polyethylene terephthalate (PET). Particularly for embodiments employing larger balloons, an elongated sleeve extending proximally from the balloon past the inflation opening is formed integrally with the balloon as a result of drawing the tubular member. The balloon may have sleeves of smaller diameter than the original diameter tube from which the sleeves are formed.

According to another aspect of the invention, a dilatation balloon device comprises an inflatable balloon, a main tubular member comprising a metal tube having distal and proximal ends, and adapted for

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introduction of inflation fluid from its distal end into the balloon, and a flexible spanning structure comprising concentric cross wound multifilar coils extending from the end of the hollow main tubular body to the distal end of the balloon.

The invention thus provides a balloon dilatation construction for a range of balloon sizes which has a minimum diameter deflated profile such that it may be introduced through a very small diameter catheter.

These and other features and advantages of the invention will be seen from the following description of a presently preferred embodiment, and from the claims.

Preferred Embodiments

We first briefly describe the drawings.

Drawings

Fig. 1 is a side section view of a dilatation device according to the invention having a wire coil that extends from the proximal end to the distal end of the balloon;

Fig. 2 is an enlarged partial side section view of the distal end of the metal tube used in the device, while Fig. 2a is a sectional view of the device taken at line 2a-2a of Fig. 2;

Fig. 2b is a view similar to Fig. 2 but under the condition that the dilatation device is bent, while Fig. 2c is a sectional view similar to Fig. 2a taken on line 2c-2c of Fig. 2b;

Fig. 3 is an enlarged partial side view of a sealing member of the device;

Fig. 4 is a partial side section view of another embodiment of the invention in which the main wire coil terminates at the distal end of the inflation

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tube and a sleeve spans the structure over the core wire to the balloon;

Fig. 5 is a partial side section view of another embodiment of the invention in which a polymer shrink tubing covers the metal tube, terminating at its distal end and a sleeve spans the structure over the core wire to the balloon;

Fig. 6 is a partial side section view of another embodiment of the invention in which a cross-wound pair of multifilar coils is employed;

Fig. 7 is a diagrammatic view of an extrusion-formed tubular element of a selected resin material being heated and drawn as a step of the present invention;

Fig. 7a is a diagrammatic view of a drawn section of the tubular element;

Fig. 7b is a view similar to 7a of another form with an elongated necked-down region;

Fig. 7c is a view on a smaller scale showing the entire preform with two necked-down regions separated by a distance L;

Fig. 8 is a diagrammatic view of the preform of Fig. 7c in a position ready to be blown into a balloon;

Fig. 9 is an enlarged view similar to Fig. 8 but in cross-section showing the formed balloon;

Fig. 9a is a cross-section of the wall of the balloon of Fig. 9 showing the generally uniform wall thickness achievable along the length of the tube;

Fig. 10 is a side view of a finished balloon produced according to the invention;

Fig. 11 is a similar view of an angioplasty balloon catheter according to the invention;

Fig. 12 is a thermal analysis curve of PET resin, a material suitable for forming a device of the invention.

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Detailed Description

The dilatation device 10, shown in Fig. 1, has length L_1 , e.g. 100 cm, with a dilatation balloon 12 positioned close to the distal end. The device employs
5 hollow metal tube 14, which extends length L_2 , e.g. 85 cm, in the distal direction from a strain relief 16 on a luer fitting 18. The main proximal body of tube 14 has an outer diameter d_1 , e.g. 0.025 inch, and an inner diameter d_2 , e.g. 0.021 inch. A short distal portion
10 20 of tube 14 is swaged to a smaller diameter, which may be seen most clearly in Fig. 2. This portion has an outer diameter d_3 , e.g. 0.016 inch, and an inner diameter d_4 , e.g. 0.011 inch, and extends for length L_{18} , e.g. 4 mm, in the proximal direction until
15 meeting a swaged transition taper 22. Swage connection of the tube parts is but one method of connection. It will be evident to those skilled in the art that other connection means may be used without departing from the present invention.

20 The taper extends axially for length L_{20} , e.g. 2 mm, integrally joining the main body to the smaller distal portion 20 of the tube. An inflation opening 24 in the wall of the tube extends for length L_0 , e.g. 4 mm, in the proximal direction from the
25 distal end of the taper 22.

A core wire 26 of diameter d_5 , e.g. 0.010 inch, is inserted in the reduced distal end 20 of the tube 14, and protrudes past opening 24 into the main body of the tube 14 by a distance L_3 , e.g. about
30 15 mm, from the distal end of tube 14, to a free end 28. In the reduced region 20, this wire is soldered at 30 to the tube 14. The proximal extension 34 of the

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wire spans the inflation opening while leaving it unobstructed. The core wire 26 extends distally beyond the tube 14 to the distal end of the device, terminating at a ball weld 32.

5 Referring to Fig. 2a, the proximal extension 34 of core wire 26 defines, with the inner wall 36 of the tube, an annular orifice 38 for passage of inflation medium (typically a viscous liquid which includes a contrast medium) about the core wire, and out of the
10 tube via inflation openings 24 and 24', (Figs. 2a and 2c show two openings 24 and 24', a single opening or a plurality of openings may alternatively be used.) When the distal tip portion of the dilatation wire 10 is flexed, e.g., to negotiate a passage of tight radius
15 within the body, the core wire 26 is secure at the solder joint 30 with the reduced tube portion 20. At a predetermined bending radius, dependent upon the relationship of length L_3 and diameters d_2 and d_3 , the free end 28 of the core wire bears upon the inner
20 wall 36 of the tube (Figs. 2b and 2c) causing transfer to the tube wall of bending stress applied to the distal tip, thereby preventing detrimental stress build-up in the region of the opening or the solder joint.

A helical wire coil 40 is provided
25 concentrically about the tube 14 and the core wire 26. The coil 40 is preferably made from 0.004 inch x 0.008 inch flat wire and extends from under the strain relief 16 of the luer fitting to a sealing member 42 of length L_5 , e.g. 2 mm, at the distal end of the balloon 12 at
30 which point the distal end of the coil 40 is attached, preferably by soldering or alternatively by welding or gluing. The coil includes a tapered region 44 in its distal portion approaching the position of the balloon, extending distally for length L_{10} , e.g. 2 cm, in which

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the outer diameter of the coil is reduced from d_6 , e.g. 0.034 inch, to d_7 , e.g. 0.025 inch. Between the taper 44 and the sealing member 42, the coil has an outer diameter of about 0.025 inch.

A highly flexible distal tip region 46 is provided at the distal end of the device which includes the core wire 26, tapered in region 48 after it emerges from the sealing member 42, such that the outer diameter is reduced from d_3 , e.g. 0.010 inch, to d_5 , e.g. 0.006 inch, over an axial length of 1 cm. Distal to the taper follows a region L_7 , e.g. 0.5 cm in length, of constant diameter which is in turn followed distally by a region L_8 , e.g. 1.5 cm in length, which is flattened to a thickness T_1 , e.g. 0.003 inch, and terminates at the distal ball weld 32. Disposed concentrically about the core wire distal to the bushing is a distal coil 50, constructed from 0.003 inch platinum round wire (selected for improved viewability due to its relatively high radiopacity) and soldered over the distal length L_{16} , e.g. 2 mm, of the sealing member 42. Distal to the member 42, the coil 50 tapers at 52 such that the outer diameter is reduced from 0.025 inch at the proximal end to d_8 , e.g. 0.018 inch, at the distal end where it meets the ball weld 32. (The taper may begin immediately distal of the sealing member, or more typically a short distance, e.g. 5 - 10, coils after the member, as seen in Fig. 3. In other embodiments, the sealing member 42 may also taper distally.) Other embodiments for the flexible tip include terminating the core wire at the bushing and employing a high tensile strength polymeric filament, such as Kevlar® or a safety wire distal to member 42.

The sealing member 42, shown in detail in Fig. 3, is preferably a stainless steel tube of axial length

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L_5 , e.g. 4 mm, and 0.025 inch outer diameter, with a through hole diameter approximately equal to the outer diameter d_5 of the core wire 26. The outer diameter of the sealing member may be selected to permit the use of relatively large balloons with relatively large sleeves. The sealing member further serves to ensure a strong union between the distal end of proximal wire coil 40 and the proximal end of the extension coil 50, and also provides a seal to flow of inflation fluid from the balloon.

10 The device further includes an extremely thin and tightly collapsible inflatable balloon 12, the manufacture of which is described in detail below. The balloon features proximal and distal transition sections 54 and 56 having wall thickness about the same as that of the largest dilatating region of the balloon, and proximal and distal sleeves 58 and 60 which fix the balloon to the shaft. The proximal sleeve 58 is of considerable length L_{12} , e.g. 15 cm. The distal sleeve 60 extends distally a distance L_5 , e.g. 4 mm, and is fixed and sealed to the proximal coil 44 and distal coil 50 at a position over member 42. The balloon is positioned on the device such that the region of maximum inflated diameter 62 corresponds to the reduced diameter region 64 of the coil 40. When the balloon 12 is deflated, the device 10 has a maximum diameter of 0.039 inch, thereby allowing insertion in places where a conventional 0.038 inch diameter guide wire may be inserted. (Typically passages of 0.040 inch ID.)

30 During use, the device is inserted into an artery, e.g., via a 5-French diagnostic catheter. The flexible distal tip 46 allows atraumatic advance through tortuous body passages and permits placement at

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narrowing lesions. The core wire 26, coil 40 and tube 14 give structural integrity together with flexibility and torqueability which permits advance of the device of the invention without kinking when applying force and twisting from its distal end. During bending, stress in the region of the distal portion of the tube is transferred across its narrow diameter portion 20 and taper 22 by the proximal extension 34 of the core wire 26, as mentioned above. Once positioned at a lesion, the balloon 12 is inflated by introducing fluid from the proximal end of the tube 14. The fluid flows through inflation port 24 and the coil 40. The balloon, sealed by its sleeves at the distal sealing member 42 and at the main shaft proximal to the inflation port 24, is thereby inflated.

In another embodiment of the invention, shown in Fig. 4, a wire coil 66 extends from the proximal region of the tube 14 to an end 68 near the distal end of the main body of the tube. A separately formed, extended sleeve 70, preferably equal in thickness to the coil wire and formed from a structurally strong resin such as polyethylene terephthalate (PET), is sealably fixed to the hypotube 14 and abuts the distal end of the coil at 72 and is joined to the proximal sleeve of balloon 12 at its proximal end 73. Alternatively the sleeve is formed integrally with the balloon, see below. The flexibility and strength of the PET sleeve can also be varied through control of the crystallization process.

In another embodiment of the invention, shown in Fig. 5, a heat shrinkable polymer tubing 72, such as Teflon®, is shrunk onto tube 14. The shrink tubing extends from the proximal end of the device and terminates about the distal portion of the tube 14. The

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balloon sleeve 70 is attached directly to the hypotube 14 as shown in Fig. 4 and the outer dimension of the shrink tubing and balloon sleeve are preferably substantially equal to avoid a break in the continuous profile of the device.

Another embodiment of the device, shown in Fig. 6, includes a pair of cross wound multifilar coils 78, 80, preferably wound from 0.002 inch wire, extending from the proximal portion of a tube 82 to the distal end of a flexible distal tip 84 of the device. Due to the superior strength and torque transmission characteristics of the multifilar coils, no core wire or safety wire is required in this embodiment in the region of the balloon. (In the embodiment shown, the distal tip region is a platinum coil, as described above, and a core or safety wire 85 extends from sealing member 42 to the ball weld tip. If the distal tip region is formed of, e.g., of a multifilar coil, no core or safety wire may be necessary. Further, the hypotube may also be eliminated and replaced by a plastic tube which runs the length of the device and is concentrically contained within the multifilar coils.)

In the preferred embodiment, the balloon of Fig. 1 is manufactured by a process of heating and drawing a defined region of an extruded tube of originally constant diameter and wall thickness; the main body section and the tapering transition section of the balloon have substantially the same wall thickness or the transition section is thinner; the main body of the balloon has an inflated diameter of 5 mm or larger; and the resin from which the balloon is formed is polyethylene terephthalate (PET).

Referring to Fig. 7, a tube suitable for

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blowing a medical balloon of 6 mm diameter is provided, comprised of a nondistendable resin, e.g. Goodyear's Clear Tuf 8006, polyethylene terephthalate, having an outer diameter of 0.56 inch and a wall thickness of 0.010 inch. A portion 10a of the tube, up to line B, has been crystallized to render it dimensionally stable under heated conditions. The portion thus stabilized can not be appreciably inflated or drawn. The tube 110 is immersed in a heated bath 112 of glycerine at a selected drawing temperature in the range of about 105 to 130 degrees centigrade, e.g., 120°C. The crystallized region is fully immersed together with a short portion, D₁₁, e.g. 2 inches, of the amorphous portion 10b of the tube. The portion of the tube out of the bath is gripped by a fixed clamp 114, and the crystallized portion of the tube submerged in the bath is gripped by a moveable clamp 116. After a suitable duration of immersion, to ensure that the resin reaches the temperature of the bath, clamp 116 is moved downwardly a predetermined distance, e.g. 3.5 inches, at a draw rate in the range of about one inch to 0.1 inch per minute, e.g. 0.3 inch per minute, in the direction of the arrow, causing the heated amorphous portion of the tube to be drawn, the crystallized portion resisting such deformation. Referring to Fig. 7a, a tube 110, in the region between A and B as shown in Fig. 7, is necked-down as a result of such drawing. The degree of necking and thinning of the walls obviously depends upon the conditions of drawing, e.g., the drawing rate, drawing temperature, length of the amorphous portion being drawn and the distance of draw, the values of which for any particular balloon can be determined by ready trial. In the embodiment being described, the outer diameter of the tube OD_d is necked to 0.026 inch

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and the tube is lengthened 3.5 inches. In the preferred embodiment of Fig. 7b for use in Fig. 1, a longer portion of the amorphous tube has been immersed, and the tube is drawn down to a constant diameter sleeve 119 for use as the proximal elongated, integral sleeve in the completed device of the invention. (In the embodiment of Fig. 4, the sleeve 70 is formed separately, as a tube of PET in amorphous state is glued to the proximal end of the balloon (at 73) and crystallized to render it dimensionally stable under heated conditions to resist inflation or drawing.)

After the initial necking-down of the tube, the tube is reversed in the bath and the second necked-down portion is formed by the same procedure, at a point spaced along the amorphous tube a distance L, e.g. 0.57 inch, to provide a section of tube between the necked-down regions which will be drawn and blown in forming the main body of the balloon. This procedure provides a preform in which the thickness of the wall of the tube in the region of the drawn-down deformation decreases with decrease in diameter. Prior to blowing, a section of the tubing along the smaller diameter ends is recrystallized to avoid enlargement at the time of inflation.

After the preform is completed, it is submerged in a second bath of glycerine as shown in Fig. 8, this time arranged horizontally, and with the tube extending through two stationary constraining elements 118, the crystallized portion of the tube being grasped by clamps 120, 122. The temperature of bath 112a is regulated to correspond to the desired blowing temperature, selected from the range of about 85 to 115 degrees Centigrade. Each constraining element 118 consists of a cylindrical portion 118a and a conical portion 118b, the

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wide ends of the conical portions being opposed to each other, arranged to define the shape of the tapered sections of the balloon. Preferably, when using the preformed balloon sleeve, the cylindrical portion is
5 made up of smaller diameter for reducing sleeve diameter.

As shown, the crystallized regions of the tube end at points C and D in the initial setup of Fig. 8. After the temperature of the tube has stabilized in bath 112a, the two clamps 120 and 122 are drawn apart,
10 causing the tube to slide through the stationary constraining elements 118 as it is lengthened. Simultaneously, gas pressure is applied to the interior of the tube, causing it to expand. The region L of the tube expands without constraint until the molecules of
15 the wall material in the balloon region become stabilized in a biaxially oriented condition. In its final form, the balloon reaches an outer diameter of 6 mm and the length between the tapered sections increases to $L + \Delta L = 1.51$ inches. The portions of the tube
20 having the preformed tapers also expand until they are constrained to the shape of constraining elements 118. The final balloon thickness profile is illustrated in Fig. 9a in which the thickness of the balloon t_b is 0.0007 inch and the thickness t_t of the tapered wall
25 is substantially of the same value with variation less than about 0.0001 inch. The length of the amorphous region during the blow and draw step increase from $L_2 = 0.92$ inch to $L_2 + \Delta L_2 = 1.70$ inch.

It is also possible in forming the preform,
30 e.g., by drawing more on the defined region, and thus drawing the taper down further, to achieve in the blown balloon a wall thickness of the transition region that is less than that of the main body of the balloon.

After formation of the balloon, the balloon is

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cooled, dried, the end portions are cut away, and the balloon 121 is assembled upon the previously assembled shaft. Radiopaque markers 129 are provided on the catheter at the ends of the main body of the balloon 121. In this manner, a large balloon, e.g. of 6 to 8 mm diameter, capable of pressures of, e.g., 8 atmospheres, can be obtained, having transition regions that are sufficiently thin to enable atraumatic collapse. The balloon is capable of very successful dilation on a device which may be passed through a very small introduction catheter.

A particular advantage is obtained when making the larger balloon sizes for assembly on small shafts, for instance an 8 mm balloon for the shafts described above. To form such a balloon, it is advantageous to choose a starting tube of diameter greater than the outer diameter of the shaft on which the balloon is ultimately to be mounted. By use of the drawing steps to form the preform, it is readily possible, in the defined heated regions, to draw the diameter of these regions to a size corresponding to the size of the shaft.

In various embodiments, the wall thickness of the tapered section can be increased or decreased according to the amount of draw performed during fabrication of the preform. In some embodiments, use of constraining elements in the end regions may be omitted, and in other embodiments the entire preform may be confined in a mold for determining the final blown shape. The temperature in other embodiments may be outside of the preferred ranges mentioned, provided certain relationships are maintained, see above, with reference to the thermal analysis curve for the respective resin (see the example for the preferred embodiment, Fig.12, a thermal analysis curve for

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polyethylene terephthalate (PET), one preferred resin).

For certain of the broader aspects of the invention, other forming techniques such as molding of a softened tube are possible for preparing the tapered
5 preform.

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Claims

1. In a dilatation balloon device comprising
an inflatable balloon, and a main tubular member
comprising a metal tube having distal and proximal ends,
5 and adapted for introduction of inflation fluid from its
distal end into said balloon,

a distal core wire forming part of a guide wire
extends into the distal end of the tube, said wire being
fixed at the distal end of the tube and having a
10 proximal extension bridging across a fluid opening
defined in the wall of the tube, the wire extension
serving to transfer stress from the distal end of the
device, across the fluid opening, to proximally adjacent
portions of the tube, thereby to prevent stress build-up
15 at the opening that might lead to collapse or fracture
of the tube during bending of the device.

2. The dilatation balloon device of claim 1
further comprising a balloon sleeve extending proximally
of an expandible portion of said balloon, across said
fluid opening to a point of attachment to the tube.

3. A dilatation balloon device capable of
being placed through any catheter that accepts an 0.038
inch diameter wire and capable of supporting a balloon
having an inflated diameter up to about 4 mm diameter,
5 said device comprising:

an inflatable balloon having a proximal and a
distal end, said balloon being the product of the
process of blowing and drawing a preformed tubular
member having a tapered contour in the region
10 corresponding to the transition section of the blown
balloon,

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a flexible elongated, torque transmitting hollow main tubular body of outside diameter of 0.038 inch or less, extending from a proximal region of the device to a position spaced from a distal end of the device, said main tubular body having a distal portion and defining an interior volume adapted to conduct inflation liquid for said balloon,

flexible spanning structure extending distally from the end of said main tubular body, said spanning structure defining a fluid passage for communication between the distal portion of said main tubular body and the balloon, and including a torque-transmitting element that extends from the main tubular body to a sealing formation at the distal end of the balloon,

the portion of said spanning structure that corresponds with the length of the balloon having an outer diameter no greater than about 0.025 inch, enabling the balloon to be collapsed to a profile of about 0.038 inch diameter or smaller,

the effective outer diameter of said spanning structure at said sealing formation being about 0.025 inch, to which a distal sleeve of the balloon is joined, and

a flexible, torqueable guide element extending distally from said sealing formation to the end of the device.

4. The dilatation balloon device of claim 3 wherein said hollow main tubular body includes a hollow metal tube, said torque transmitting element comprises a solid cross-section core wire joined to the distal end of said main tubular body and extending through said balloon to said sealing formation, said sealing formation including a solid annular member sealed to

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said wire for providing support for a distal sleeve of said balloon of substantially larger diameter than said wire.

5. The dilatation balloon device of claim 3 wherein a helical coil is joined to an outer surface of said sealing formation and extends distally therefrom to provide a flexible distal tip, the sleeve of the balloon being joined to an outer surface of said helical coil at said sealing formation.

6. The dilatation balloon device of claim 3 wherein said hollow main tubular body includes a hollow metal tube, said torque transmitting element comprises a solid cross-section core wire joined to the distal end of said main tubular body and extending through said balloon to said sealing formation, and wherein said main tubular member has a first outer diameter for most of its length and a second, reduced outer diameter portion at its distal end, the inner diameter of a region of the second, reduced outer diameter corresponding to the outer diameter of the core wire over a joint region at which said main tubular member and said solid cross-section wire are joined, said main tubular member having a fluid opening proximal of said joint region and said solid cross-section wire having a proximal portion spanning across said opening and extending proximally thereof, adapted to transfer stress from distal of said main tubular member to a portion of said main tubular member proximal of said opening, there being a flow path for inflation fluid to said opening within said main tubular member in a space defined at its inner periphery by an external surface of a proximal portion of said solid cross-section wire.

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7. A dilatation balloon device comprising;
an inflatable balloon,
a flexible elongated, torque transmitting
hollow metal main tubular body extending from a proximal
5 region of the device to a position spaced substantially
from a distal end of the device, said main tubular body
defining an interior volume adapted to conduct inflation
liquid for said balloon,
flexible spanning structure extending distally
10 from an end of said main tubular body, said spanning
structure defining a fluid passage for communication
between a distal portion of said main tubular body and
the balloon, and including a torque-transmitting element
that extends from the main tubular body to a distal end
15 of the balloon,
said torque transmitting element comprising a
solid cross-section core wire joined to a distal end of
said main tubular body and extending through said
balloon, said main tubular member having a first outer
20 diameter portion for most of its length and a second,
reduced outer diameter portion at its distal end, an
inner diameter of the second, reduced outer diameter
portion corresponding to the outer diameter of the wire
over a joint region at which said member and wire are
25 joined, said tubular member having a fluid opening
proximal of said joint region and said wire having a
proximal portion spanning across said opening and
extending proximally thereof, adapted to transfer stress
from distal of said main tubular member to a portion of
30 said main tubular member proximal of said opening, there
being a flow path for inflation fluid to said opening
within said tubular main body in a space defined at its
inner periphery by an external surface of a proximal
portion of said core wire.

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8. The dilatation balloon device of claim 1, 6 or 7 wherein said main tubular member tapers from said first outer diameter portion to said second, reduced outer diameter portion at its distal end.

9. The dilatation balloon device of claim 1, 6 or 7 wherein the distal portion of said main tubular member includes an additional, smaller, diameter, tubular member extending distally therefrom for forming
5 a taper.

10. The dilatation balloon of claim 1, 6 or 7 wherein said wire extends to a distal tip of said device, the distal portion of said wire being of reduced diameter and more flexible relative to proximal portions
5 thereof.

11. The dilatation balloon device of claim 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7 wherein helical coil means extend from the proximal region to the distal end of the device.

12. The dilatation balloon device of claim 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7 wherein a helical coil extends over a hollow liquid-tight tube from the proximal region of the device to the distal region of said main tubular body
5 and a fluid impermeable sleeve extends from said distal region of said tubular body to said balloon.

13. The device of claim 12 wherein said sleeve is constructed of polyethylene terephthalate (PET) and the stiffness and strength of said sleeve is variable by selective crystallization during forming of said sleeve.

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14. The dilatation balloon device of claim 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7 wherein flexible polymeric tube means extend from the proximal region of the device to the proximal end of said balloon.

15. The dilatation balloon of claim 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7 wherein said main tubular body comprises an exterior heat shrink tube shrunk upon a hollow metal liquid-conducting tube.

16. A dilatation balloon device comprising an inflatable balloon, a main tubular member comprising a tube having distal and proximal ends, and adapted for introduction of inflation fluid from its distal end into
5 said balloon, and a flexible spanning structure comprising concentric cross wound multifilar coils extending from the end of said hollow main tubular body to the distal end of the balloon.

17. The dilatation balloon device of claim 1 or 7 wherein said balloon is the product of the process of blowing and drawing a preformed tubular member having a tapered contour in the region corresponding to the
5 transition section of the blown balloon.

18. The dilatation balloon device of claim 17 wherein the preformed tubular member is the product of heating and drawing a defined region of an extruded tube of originally constant diameter and wall thickness.

19. The dilatation balloon device of claim 17 wherein the wall thickness of said tapering transition section is greater than the wall thickness of the main body of the balloon.

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20. The dilatation balloon catheter of claim 17 wherein the wall thickness of said tapering transition section is no greater than the wall thickness of the main body of the balloon.

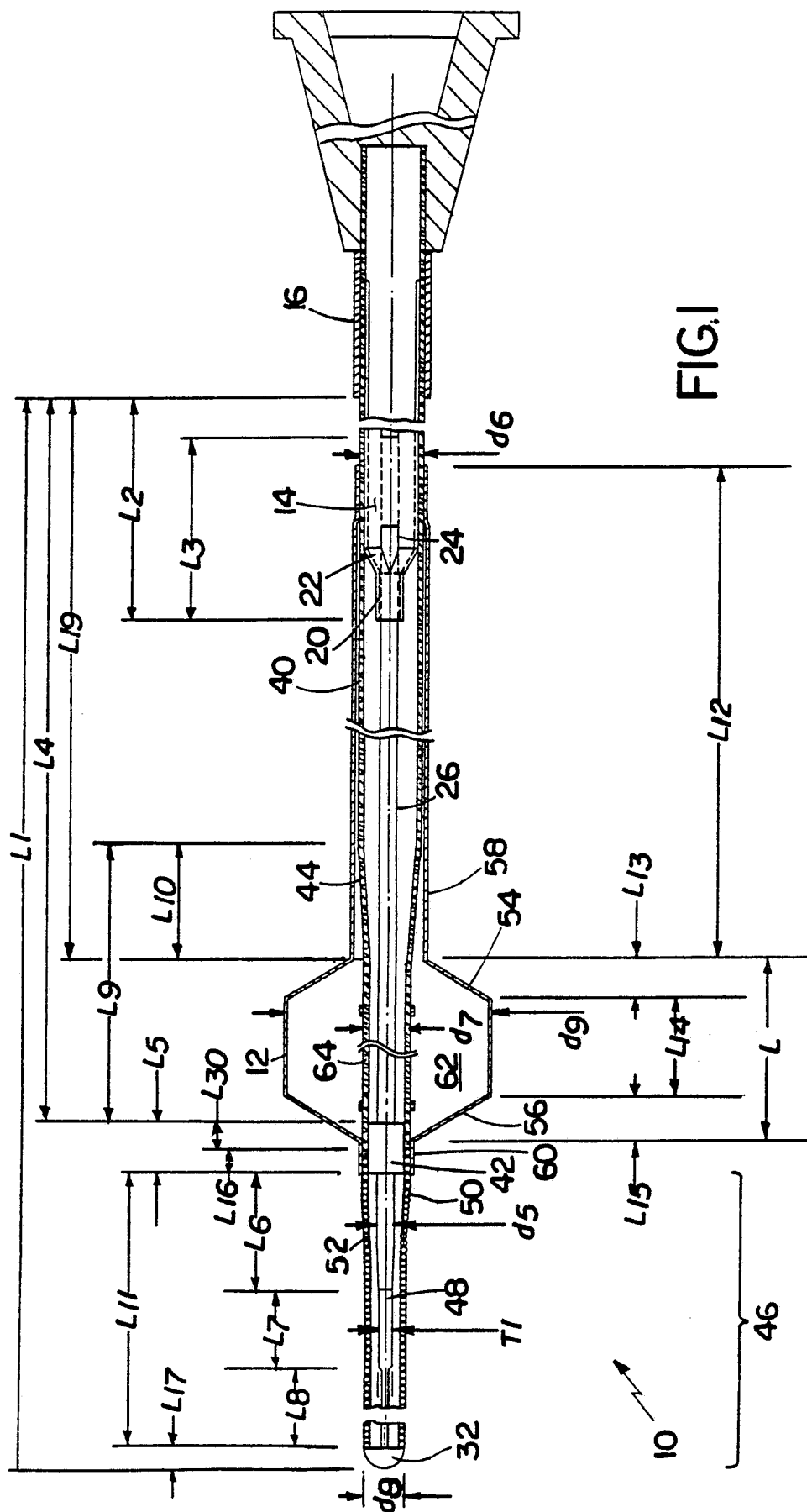
21. The dilatation balloon catheter of claim 17 wherein the main body of said balloon has an inflated diameter of 5 mm or larger.

22. The dilatation balloon catheter of claim 17 wherein the resin from which the balloon is formed is polyethylene terephthalate.

23. The dilatation balloon device of claim 17 wherein an elongated sleeve extending proximally from said balloon past said inflation opening is formed integrally with said balloon as a result of drawing said
5 tubular member.

24. The dilatation balloon device of claim 17 wherein said balloon has sleeves of smaller diameter than the original diameter tube from which the sleeves are formed.

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SUBSTITUTE SHEET

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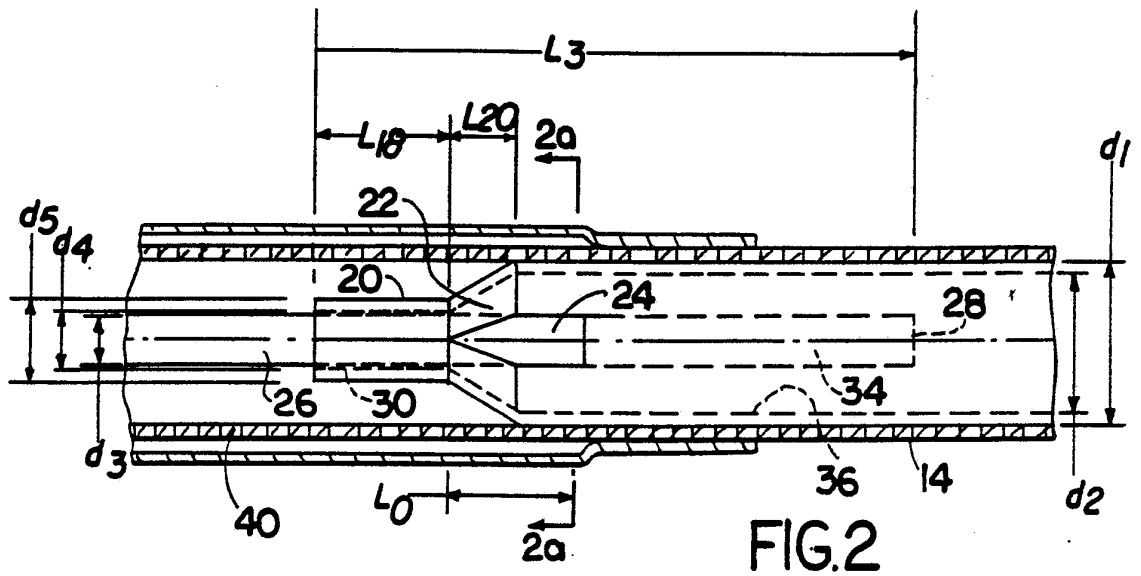


FIG. 2a

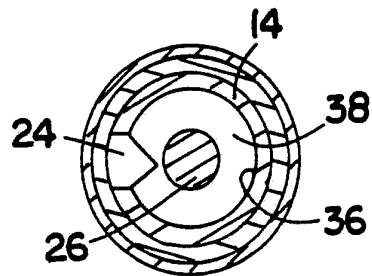


FIG. 2c

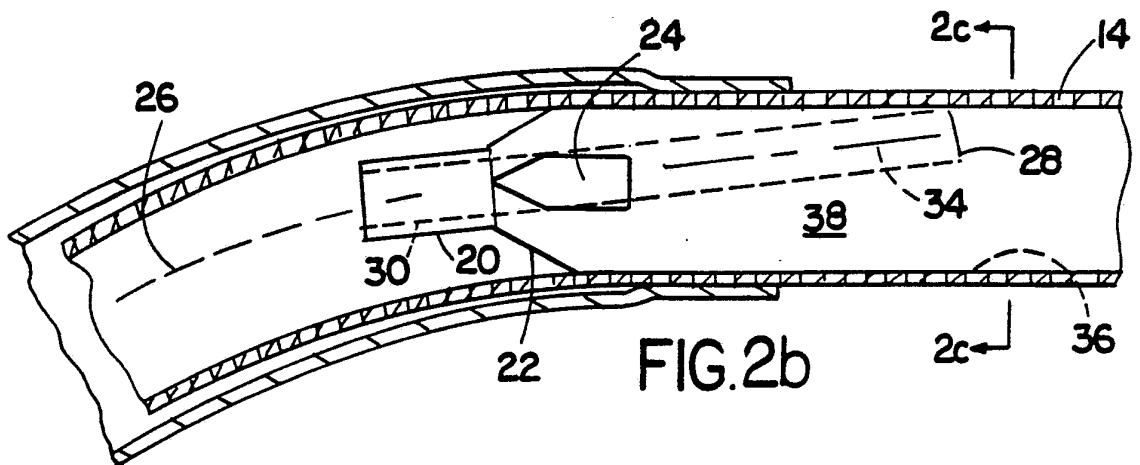
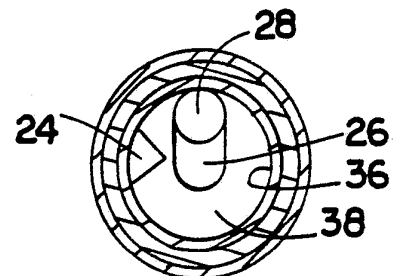


FIG.3

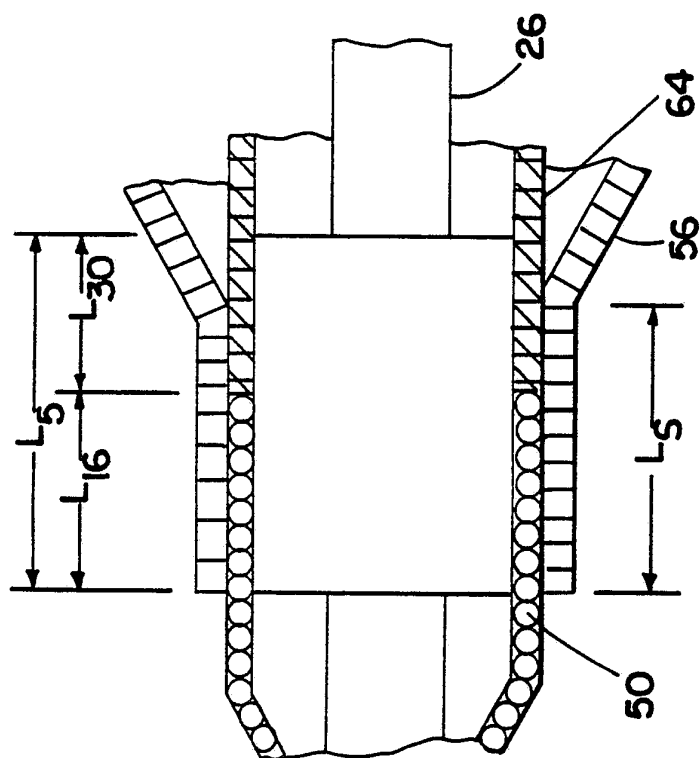
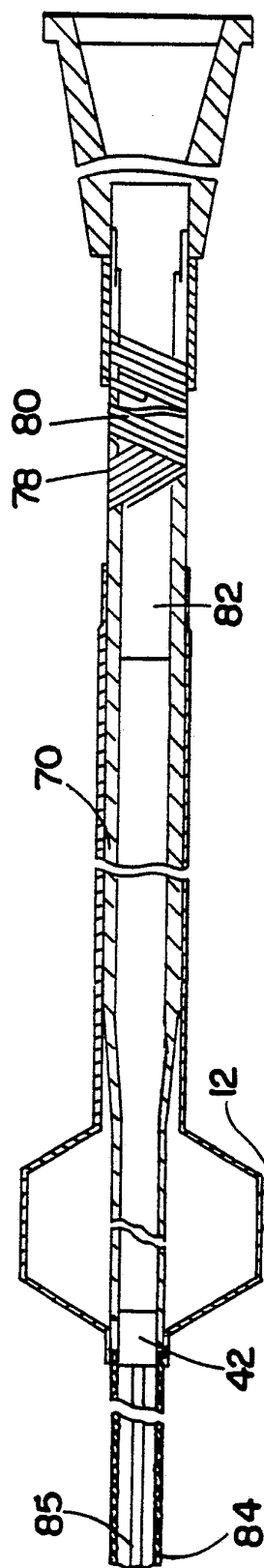
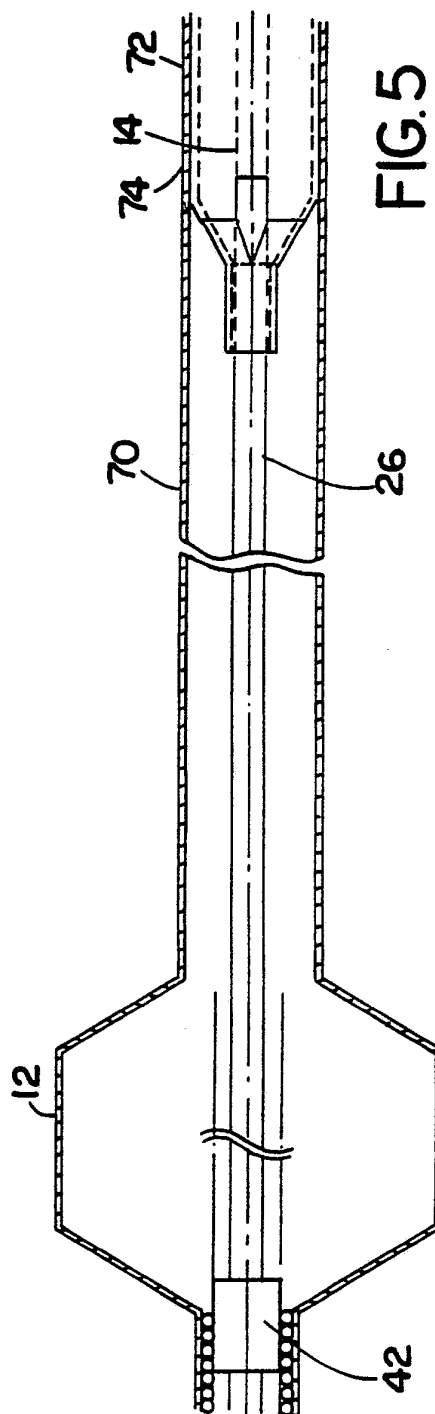
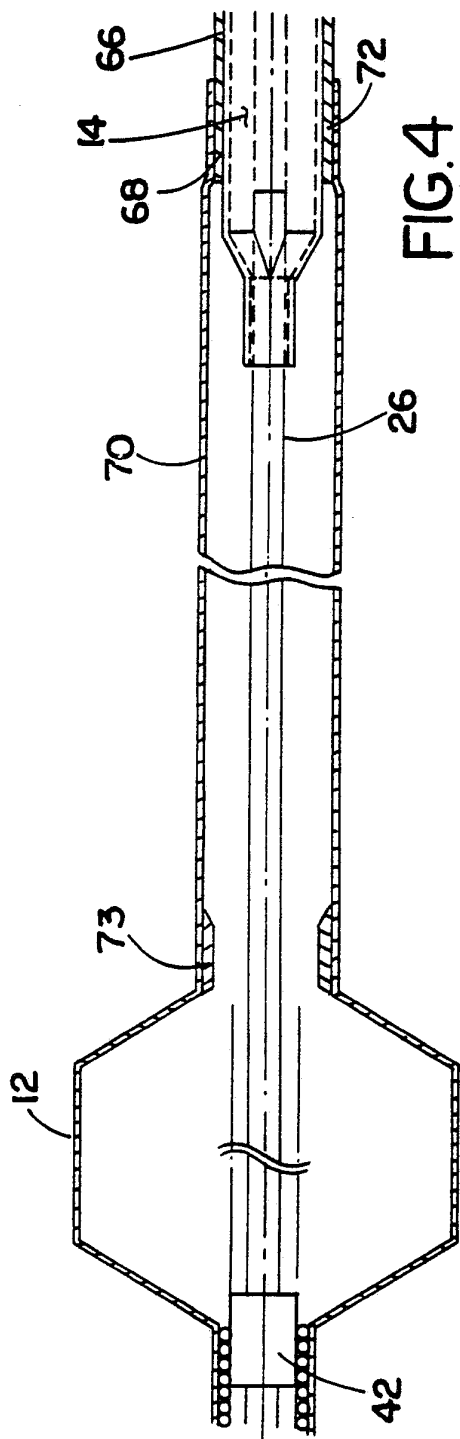
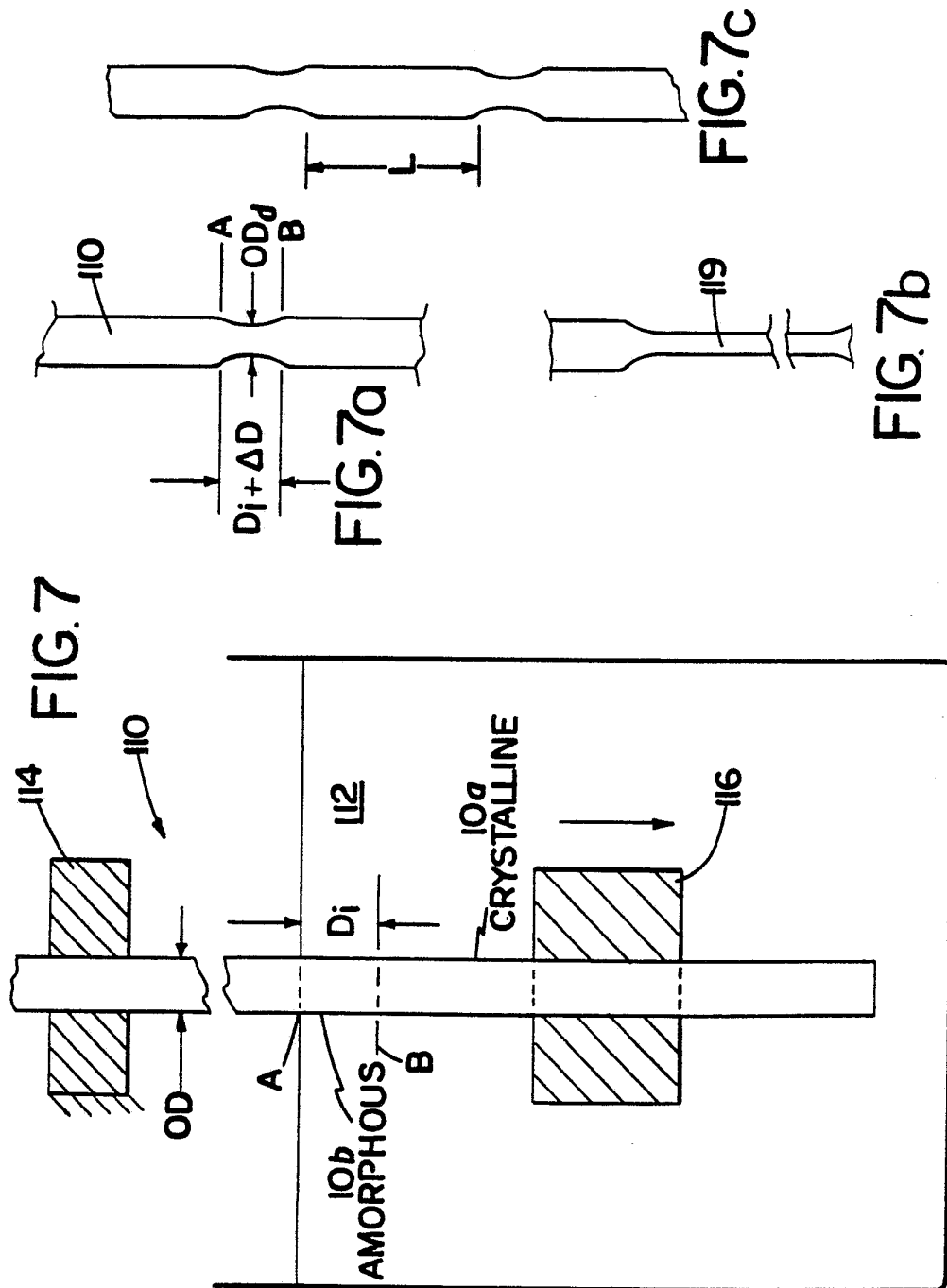


FIG.6







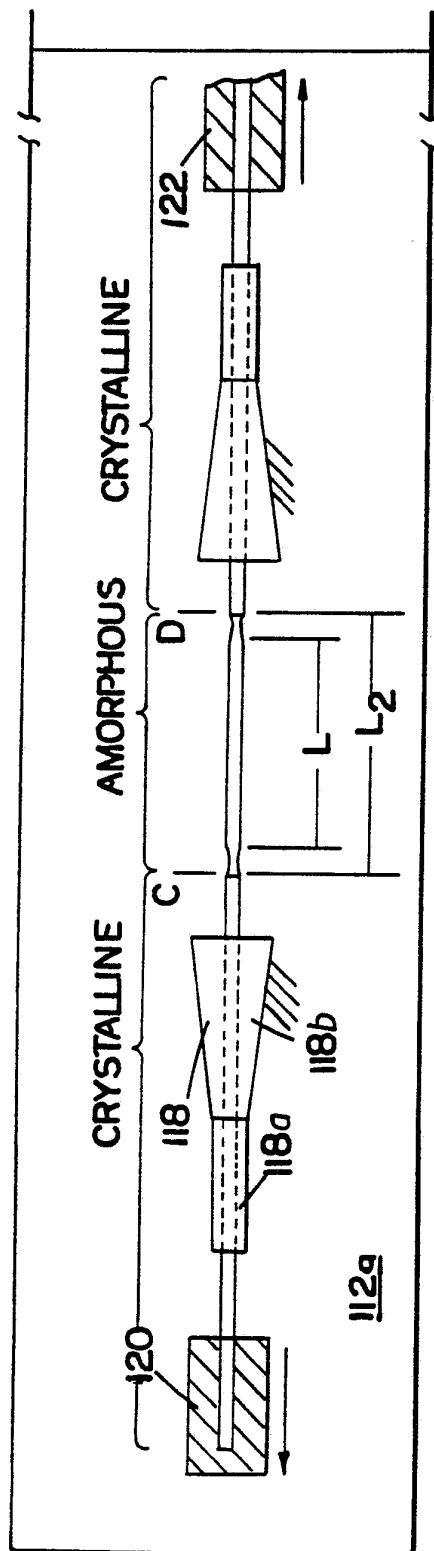


FIG. 8

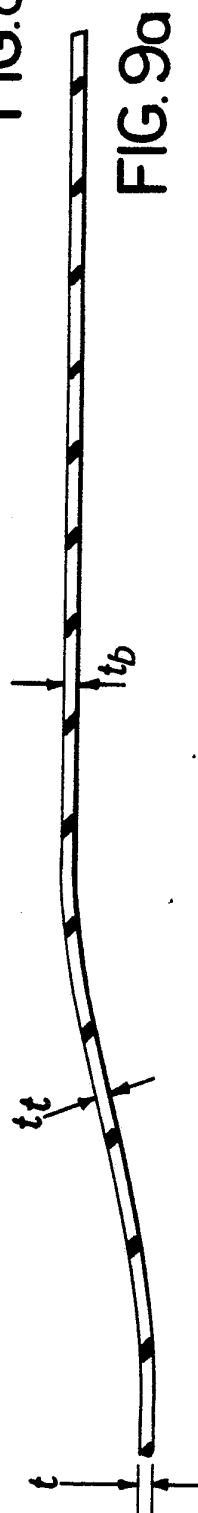


FIG. 9a

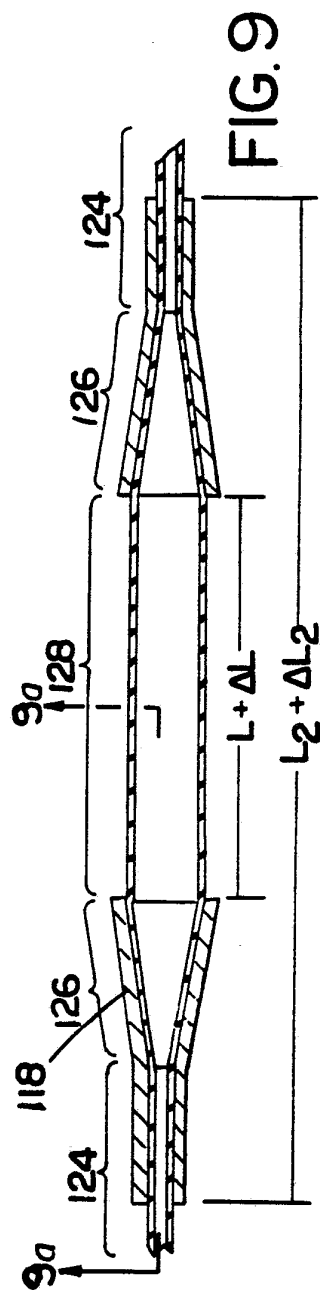


FIG. 9

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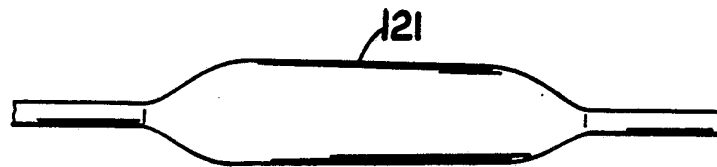


FIG. 10

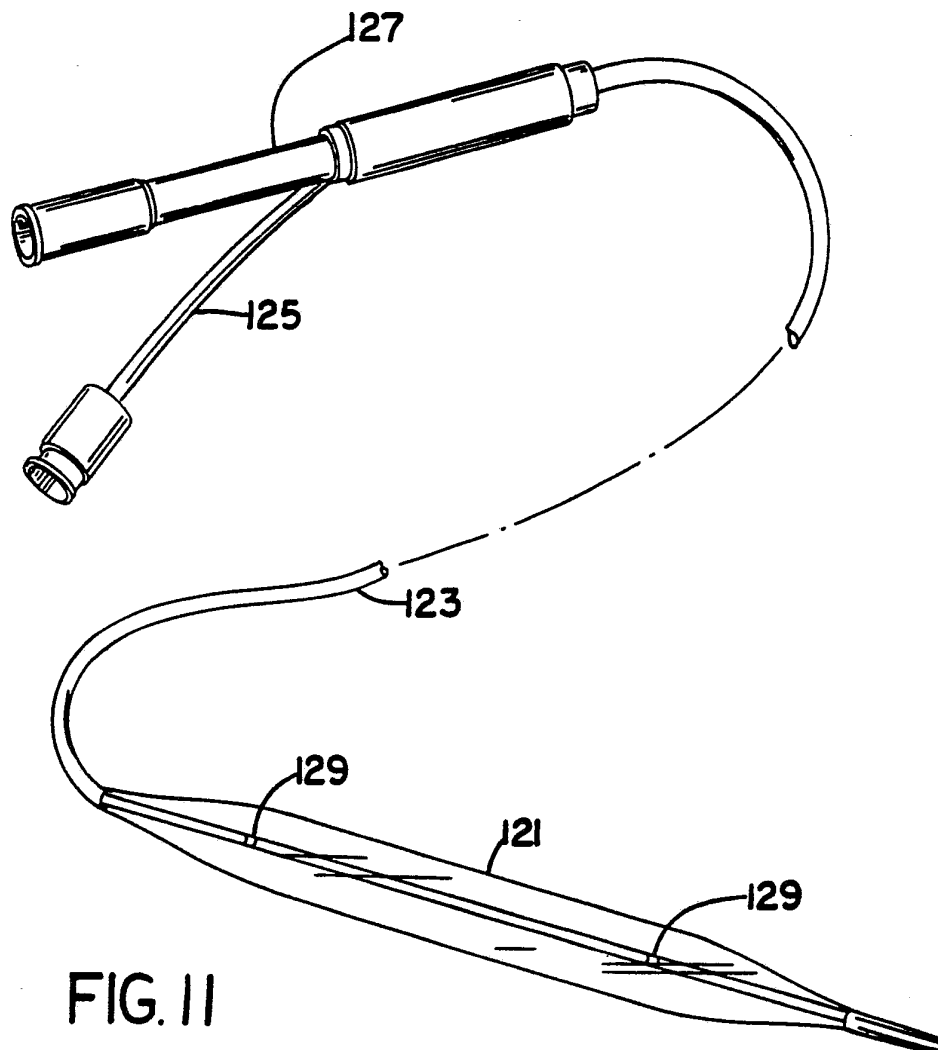
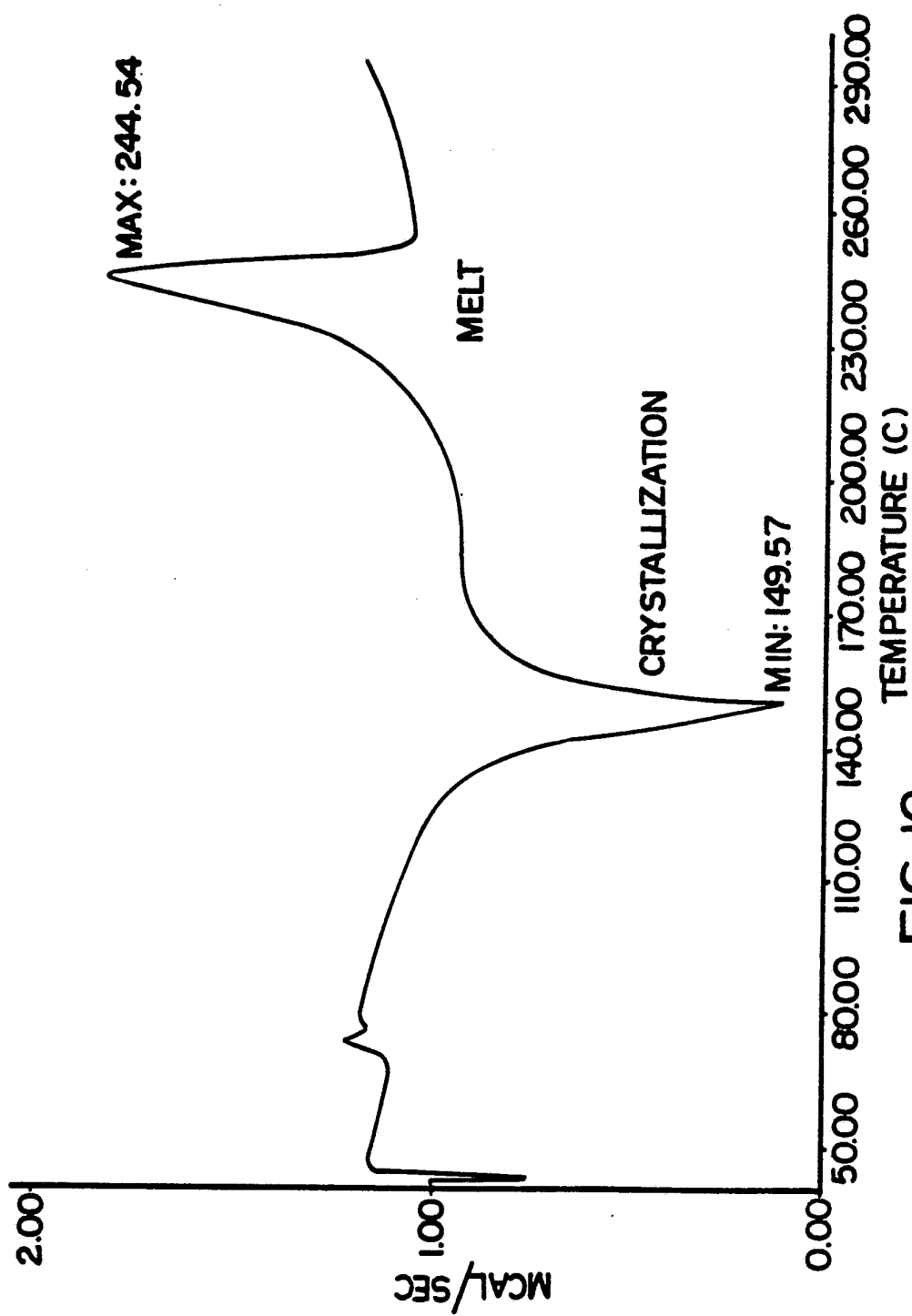


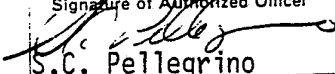
FIG. 11

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**FIG. 12**

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No. PCT/US89/01109

I. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER (if several classification symbols apply, indicate all) ⁶		
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both National Classification and IPC IPC (4): A61M 29/02 U.S. Cl. 128/344; 604/96		
II. FIELDS SEARCHED		
Minimum Documentation Searched ⁷		
Classification System	Classification Symbols	
U.S.	128/344, 325, 343, 348.1; 604/96-103	
Documentation Searched other than Minimum Documentation to the Extent that such Documents are Included in the Fields Searched ⁸		
III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT ⁹		
Category *	Citation of Document, ¹¹ with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages ¹²	Relevant to Claim No. ¹³
Y	US, A, 4,561,439 (BISHOP ET AL.) 31 December 1985, see the entire document.	16-24
A	US, A, 4,719,924 (CRITTENDEN ET AL.) 19 January 1988, see the entire document.	
P, A	US, A, 4,771,778 (MAR) 20 September 1988 See the entire document.	
A	US, A, 4,646,742 (PACKARD ET AL.) 03 March 1987, see the entire document.	
A	US, A, 4,646,719 (NEUMAN ET AL.) 03 March 1987, see the entire document.	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>* Special categories of cited documents: ¹⁰</p> <p>"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</p> <p>"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date</p> <p>"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</p> <p>"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</p> <p>"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</p> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</p> <p>"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step</p> <p>"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.</p> <p>"&" document member of the same patent family</p> </div> </div>		
IV. CERTIFICATION		
Date of the Actual Completion of the International Search	Date of Mailing of this International Search Report	
11 May 1989	23 JUN 1989	
International Searching Authority	Signature of Authorized Officer	
ISA/US	 S.C. Pellegrino	