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MEDICAL DRESSINGS, SYSTEMS, AND METHODS WITH THERMALLY- ENHANCED VAPOR TRANSMISSION

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] The present invention claims the benefit, under 35 USC § 119(e), of the filing of U.S. Provisional Patent Application serial number 61/560,090, entitled “Medical Dressing, Systems, and Methods with Thermally Enhanced Vapor Transmission,” by Pratt et al., filed November 15, 2011, which is incorporated herein by reference for all purposes.

FIELD

[0002] The present disclosure relates generally to medical treatment systems for treating wounds that produce liquids, such as exudate, and more particularly, but not by way of limitation, to medical dressings, systems, and methods with thermally-enhanced vapor transmission.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Caring for wounds is important in the healing process. Wounds often produce considerable liquids, e.g., exudate. Medical dressings are often used in wound care to address the production of liquids from the wound. If not properly addressed, liquids at the wound can lead to infection or maceration of the periwound area. As used throughout this document, “or” does not require mutual exclusivity. Wound dressings may be used alone or as an aspect of applying reduced pressure to a tissue site.

SUMMARY

[0004] According to one aspect of the invention, there is provided a wound dressing comprising: a high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape having a first side and a second, patient-facing side; a thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member comprising: a drape-interface member having a first side and a second, patient-facing side, wherein the first side of the drape-interface member is proximate the second, patient-facing side of the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape, a patient-interface member having a first side and a second, patient-facing side, wherein the second, patient-facing side of the patient-interface member is proximate to a patient, and a coupling member that thermally couples the drape-interface member and the patient-interface member; a liquid-processing member disposed between the drape-interface member and the patient-interface member, wherein the liquid-processing member is operable to at least temporarily retain liquids from the wound; and wherein the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member is operable to conduct body heat from the patient to the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape to enhance transmission of vapor through the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape.

[0005] According to another aspect of the invention, there is provided a method for treating a wound on a patient, the method comprising: covering the wound with a wound dressing comprising: a high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape having a first side and a second, patient-facing side, a thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member, and a liquid-processing member; and using the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member to conduct heat from the patient's body to the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape to enhance vapor transmission.

[0006] According to another aspect of the invention, there is provided a method of manufacturing a wound dressing, the method comprising the steps of: providing a thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member comprising: a drape-interface member having a first side and a second, patient-facing side, a patient-interface member having a first side and a second, patient-facing side, wherein the second, patient-facing side of the patient-interface member is for placing proximate to the patient, and a coupling member thermally coupling the drape-interface member and the patient-interface member; disposing a liquid-processing member between the drape-interface member and the patient-interface member, wherein the liquid-processing member

is operable to at least temporarily retain liquids from the wound; and disposing a high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape having a first side and a second, patient-facing side over the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member, wherein the first side of the drape-interface member is proximate the second, patient-facing side of the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape.

[0006a] Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, throughout the description and the claims, the words “comprise”, “comprising”, and the like are to be construed in an inclusive sense as opposed to an exclusive or exhaustive sense; that is to say, in the sense of “including, but not limited to”.

[0007] Other aspects, features, and advantages of the illustrative embodiments will become apparent with reference to the drawings and detailed description that follow.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] FIGURE 1 is a cross section of an illustrative embodiment of a wound dressing on a patient's wound;

[0009] FIGURE 2 is an exploded, perspective view, with a portion (an edge) shown in cross section, of an illustrative embodiment of a wound dressing;

[0010] FIGURE 3 is a perspective view, with a portion shown in cross section, of the wound dressing of FIGURE 2 shown with a plurality nano-antennas;

[0011] FIGURE 4 is a perspective view, with a portion shown in cross section, of a portion of the wound dressing of FIGURE 3;

[0012] FIGURE 5 is a cross section of an illustrative embodiment of a portion of a wound dressing including a filtering layer;

[0013] FIGURE 6 is a cross section of an illustrative embodiment of a portion of a wound dressing including a hydro-activated, exothermic material;

[0014] FIGURE 7 is a cross section of an illustrative embodiment of a portion of a wound dressing including an electrical heating element;

[0015] FIGURE 8 is a cross section of an illustrative embodiment of a portion of a wound dressing;

[0016] FIGURE 9 is a cross section of an illustrative embodiment of a portion of a wound dressing including inductive elements;

[0017] FIGURE 10 is a cross section of an illustrative embodiment of a wound dressing shown on a patient;

[0018] FIGURE 11 is a plan view of the illustrative embodiment of a wound dressing of FIGURE 10;

[0019] FIGURE 12 is a cross section of an illustrative system for treating a wound;

[0020] FIGURE 13 is a cross section of an illustrative system for treating a wound; and

[0021] FIGURE 14 is a cross section of an illustrative embodiment of a portion of a wound dressing.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF ILLUSTRATIVE EMBODIMENTS

[0022] In the following detailed description of illustrative, non-limiting embodiments, reference is made to the accompanying drawings that form a part hereof. These embodiments are described in sufficient detail to enable those skilled in the art to practice the invention, and it is understood that other embodiments may be utilized and that logical structural, mechanical, electrical, and chemical changes may be made without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention. To avoid detail not necessary to enable those skilled in the art to practice the embodiments described herein, the description may omit certain information known to those skilled in the art. The following detailed description is not to be taken in a limiting sense, and the scope of the illustrative embodiments are defined only by the appended claims.

[0023] The illustrative medical systems, dressings, and methods herein improve the fluid management of a wound. The illustrative medical systems, dressings, and methods thermally-enhance transmission of vapor across a sealing member to allow the system or dressing to process more liquid than otherwise possible.

[0024] Referring now primarily to FIGURES 1-4, an illustrative embodiment of a wound dressing 102 is presented. In FIGURE 1, the wound dressing 102 is shown on a wound 104, or tissue site. The wound is through a patient's 106 epidermis 108, a dermis 109, and into subcutaneous tissue 110. The wound dressing 102 includes a thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112 and a liquid-processing member 114. While referencing only "vapor" in its name, the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112 is operable to allow vapor and liquid to pass. The thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112 and liquid-processing member 114 are covered by a high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 (high-MVTR drape). The thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112 is operable to conduct body heat from the patient 106 at or near the wound 104 to the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 to enhance transmission of vapor through the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116.

[0025] The heat captured by the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112 of the wound dressing 102 and delivered specifically to the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 increases vapor transmission through the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116. As described further below, in addition to or separate from capturing body heat,

other sources of internal and external heat may be utilized with the wound dressing 102 to increase vapor transmission through the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116.

[0026] Enhancing the vapor transmission through the wound dressing 102 maximizes the capacity of the wound dressing 102. The wound dressing 102 becomes operable to process more liquid over time than the wound dressing 102 can hold at one time. The wound dressing 102 effectually removes or manages liquid from the wound 104. The increased vapor transmission can be notable. For example, increasing the temperature from 20° C to 30° C or 40° C may add orders of magnitude to the evaporation rate. In one illustrative, non-limiting example, a 1.3 fold increase in evaporation rate per degree was associated with each degree increase in Celsius (C) from 25° C to 37° C. The increased evaporation rate in turn may greatly enhance the amount of liquid from the wound 104 that may be processed over time by the wound dressing 102.

[0027] The high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 has a first side 118 and a second, patient-facing side 120. "Moisture Vapor Transmission Rate" or "MVTR" represents the amount of moisture that can pass through a material in a given period of time. The high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 will typically have an MVTR greater than 300g/24 hours/m² and more typically a value greater than or equal to 1000g/24 hours/m². The high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 allows vapor to egress from the wound through the wound dressing 102 to the atmosphere. The high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 may comprise any of numerous materials, such as any of the following: hydrophilic polyurethane, cellulotics, hydrophilic polyamides, polyvinyl alcohol, polyvinyl pyrrolidone, hydrophilic acrylics, hydrophilic silicone elastomers, and copolymers of these. As one specific, illustrative, non-limiting embodiment, the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 may be formed from a breathable cast matt polyurethane film sold under the name INSPIRE 2301 from Expopack Advanced Coatings of Wrexham, United Kingdom. That illustrative film has a MVTR (inverted cup technique) of 14400 g/m²/24 hours. The high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 may have various thicknesses, such as 10 to 40 microns (μm), e.g., 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40 microns or any number in the stated range.

[0028] A peripheral edge 122 of the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 has an attachment device 124 on the second, patient-facing side 120. The attachment device 124 secures or helps secure the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 to the

patient's intact skin at or near the wound 104. The attachment device 124 may be a medically-acceptable, pressure-sensitive adhesive; a double-sided drape tape; paste; hydrocolloid; hydro gel; or other sealing devices or elements.

[0029] The thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112 functionally conducts heat from the patient 106 at or near the wound 104 to the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 and allows or enhances vapor transmission through the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112. While the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112 may be formed as integral components, the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112 may nonetheless be viewed as comprising three portions or members: a drape-interface member 126, a patient-interface member 128, and a coupling member 130. The drape-interface member 126 has a first side 132 and a second, patient-facing side 134. The first side 132 of the drape-interface member 126 is proximate the second, patient-facing side 120 of the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116. The patient-interface member 128 has a first side 136 and a second, patient-facing side 138. The second, patient-facing side 138 of the patient-interface member 128 is proximate to the patient 106. The coupling member 130 thermally couples the drape-interface member 126 and the patient-interface member 128.

[0030] The thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112 may be formed from any material that conducts thermal energy and allows liquid and vapor to transgress the material. For example, the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112 may comprise one or more of the following: woven or non-woven material, activated carbon material, porous foam, sintered polymer, carbon fiber material, woven metallic fibers, zinc oxide, or mesh fabric. The thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112 is sized and configured to be flexible enough to conform to the shape of the wound 104.

[0031] Disposed between the drape-interface member 126 and the patient-interface member 128 is the liquid-processing member 114. The liquid-processing member 114 is operable to at least temporarily retain liquids from the wound 104. The liquid-processing member 114 has a first side 140 and a second, patient-facing side 142. The first side 140 is proximate the second, patient-facing side 134 of the drape-interface member 126. The second, patient-facing side 142 is proximate to the first side 136 of the patient-interface member 128.

[0032] The liquid-processing member 114 functions to retain, at least temporarily, liquids from the wound 104. The liquid-processing member 114 buffers liquids while waiting

on evaporation or removal or may store a certain quantity of liquids for other reasons. The liquid-processing member 114 may be formed from one or more of the following: open-cell foam, non-woven material, a super-absorbent material, gel materials, absorbent clays or inorganic or polymer particulates, and nano particles.

[0033] In addition to or separate from capturing the patient's body heat and conducting the heat from at or near the wound 104 to the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116, thermal energy may be added to enhance evaporation from an internal heat source or external heat source. For example, heat from external air temperature, light, artificial radiation (infrared), hydro-activated chemicals, inductive materials, piezoelectric members, electric heating elements, or sonic heating (thermo-acoustic) may be used to enhance transmission of vapor through the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116.

[0034] With reference to FIGURES 4-6, a plurality of nano-antennas 144 or nantennas have been added on the first side 118 of the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116. The plurality of nano-antennas 144 are a way of harvesting the environmental energy, e.g., energy from light or heat from the patient. A nano-antenna is an electromagnetic collector designed to absorb specific wavelengths that are proportional to the size of the nano-antenna. The nano-antennas 144 may be sized to focus on absorbing infrared radiation with wavelengths from 1 micron to 300 microns and may, in some embodiments, focus on 12 micron wavelengths which are the wavelength that the human body at normal temperature emits as heat. Design of the nano-antenna 144 may be a type of interlocking spiral such as those from MicroContinuum Inc. These type of antennas are manufactured by photo-lithography using gold foil on a plastic sheet substrate. The energy harnessed is electrical.

[0035] Separate or in addition to the nano-antennas 144, the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 may include corrugated portions 146 as shown in FIGURE 6. The corrugated portions 146 increase the surface area available to assist with evaporation and may encourage turbulent air flow across the first side 118 of the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116.

[0036] Referring primarily to FIGURES 1-4, in operation, according to one illustrative embodiment, the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112, which has the liquid-processing member 114 between portions thereof, is disposed proximate to the wound 104. The patient-interface member 128 of the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112

is disposed proximate to the wound 104. The high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 is disposed over the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112. In particular, the second, patient-facing side 120 of the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 is disposed proximate to the first side 132 of the drape-interface member 126.

[0037] Before applying the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116, if applicable, release liners (not shown) may be removed from the attachment device 124. The wound dressing 102 may remain on the wound 104 for a few hours up to many days, e.g., 2 days, 4 days, 7 days, or more. A saturation indicator (visual indicator of moisture)(not shown) may be added to the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112 or liquid-processing member 114 to indicate when the wound dressing 102 is full. If nano-antennas 144 are included (e.g., FIGS. 3-4, 6, 12), the nano-antennas 144 may absorb energy from ambient light or may receive light from a directed light source (see, e.g., FIG. 12).

[0038] The wound 104 produces a liquid, e.g., exudate, that flows through the patient-interface member 128 and into the liquid-processing member 114, which temporarily holds the liquid. The liquid in the liquid-processing member 114 that is against or near the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 evaporates and is transmitted through the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116. The transmission rate through the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 is increased or enhanced by the thermal energy delivery from the patient 106 through the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112. The transmission rate may further be enhanced by additional energy added externally or internally as presented elsewhere herein.

[0039] Referring now primarily to FIGURE 5, a cross section of a portion of a wound dressing 102 is shown according to one illustrative embodiment. This embodiment is analogous to the embodiment of FIGURE 1, except a filtering layer 148 has been added. The filtering layer 148 is shown disposed between the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 and the drape-interface member 126 of the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112. It should be understood that the filtering layer 148 may be at any location between the patient and the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116. It should also be understood that filtering layer 148 may be used with any embodiment herein.

[0040] The filtering layer 148 may serve one or more purposes. The filtering layer 148 may prevent any substances other than water vapor from reaching the high-moisture-vapor-

transmission-rate drape 116. In addition or separately, the filtering layer 148 may serve to filter odors from the vapor transmitted through the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 to the atmosphere. The filtering layer may be formed from activated carbon material, activated clays (such as Bentonite), silicone resins, or coated porous (foams, sintered media) elements.

[0041] Referring primarily to FIGURE 6, an illustrative embodiment of a portion of a wound dressing 102 is shown that is analogous to the wound dressing 102 of FIGURE 1, except that the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 includes corrugated portions 146 and nano-antennas 144 and the wound dressing 102 includes a hydro-activated, exothermic material 150. The corrugated portions 146 and nano-antennas 144 have previously been discussed. The hydro-activated, exothermic material 150 may be disposed on or in the liquid-processing member 114 near the drape-interface member 126. When the hydro-activated, exothermic material 150 is exposed to a watery liquid, a resultant chemical reaction produces heat. As one illustrative, non-limiting example, the hydro-activated, exothermic material 150 may be calcium oxide such that when water in the exudate reaches the hydro-activated, exothermic material 150 a reaction occurs: $\text{CaO(s)} + \text{H}_2\text{O(l)} \rightarrow \text{Ca(OH)}_2\text{(s)}$. Another example, albeit a highly exothermic (and more caustic) one, is $\text{NaO}_{(\text{s})} + \text{H}_2\text{O}_{(\text{l})} \rightarrow \text{NaOH}_{(\text{s})}$. Another example (used in hand warmers for example) is $4\text{Fe}_{(\text{s})} + 3\text{O}_{2(\text{g})} \rightarrow 2\text{Fe}_2\text{O}_{3(\text{s})}$. This reaction is one way, but a reversible reaction may be used as well.

[0042] Referring now primarily to FIGURE 7, an illustrative embodiment of a portion of a wound dressing 102 that includes an internal heat source in the form of an electrical heating element 152 is presented. The wound dressing 102 is analogous in most respects to the wound dressing of FIGURE 1, except that it further includes the electrical heating element 152 and associated components. The electrical heating element 152 may be a resistive heating element that is disposed inside or on the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112 and is thereby thermally coupled to the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116. The electrical heating element 152 provides thermal energy when energized.

[0043] The illustrative electrical heating element 152 is shown as a plurality of electrical conduits disposed within the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112 and electrically coupled to one another by leads 154. The electrical heating element 152 is electrically coupled to a control circuit 156 by another lead 158. A power supply 160 is

electrically coupled to the control circuit 156 by another lead 162. The control circuit 156 may be used to set the desired temperature and to control the heat developed by the electrical heating element 152.

[0044] Referring now primarily to FIGURE 8, an illustrative embodiment of a portion of a wound dressing 102 that includes an internal heat source in the form of a piezoelectric member 164 is shown. The wound dressing 102 is analogous in most respects to the wound dressing of FIGURE 1, except that the wound dressing 102 further includes the piezoelectric member 164. The piezoelectric member 164 is operable to provide energy to the wound dressing 102 when the piezoelectric member 164 is moved. The piezoelectric member 164 generates an electrical current during flexing that is then used to generate heat.

[0045] Referring now primarily to FIGURE 9, an illustrative embodiment of a portion of a wound dressing 102 that includes inductive elements 166 and a source of magnetic energy 168 is presented. The wound dressing 102 is analogous in most respects to the wound dressing of FIGURE 1, except the inductive elements 166 have been added. The inductive elements 166 are disposed within or on the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112. The source of magnetic energy 168 emits magnetic energy that is received by the inductive elements 166 to produce thermal energy that is conducted to the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112 and thereby to the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116.

[0046] Referring now primarily to FIGURES 10 and 11, an illustrative embodiment of a wound dressing 102 is presented that is analogous in most respects to the wound dressing 102 of FIGURE 1, except that the wound dressing 102 includes a patient-interface member 128 that is larger than the drape-interface member 126 of the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112. The patient-interface member 128 is larger to provide a greater surface area over which to capture heat from the patient. A seal 170 may be provided on a portion of the patient-interface member 128 proximate to an edge of the drape-interface member 126 to provide a fluid seal. The seal inhibits fluid flow but allows thermal energy to pass. Thus, in this illustrative embodiment, the planar surface area (A_1) of the drape-interface member 126 is less than the planar surface area (A_2) of the patient-interface member 128, i.e., $A_1 < A_2$. An adhesive (not shown) may be applied on peripheral portion of the patient-facing side of the patient-interface member 128 to hold the additional portion of the patient-interface member 128 to intact skin on the patient.

[0047] Referring to FIGURES 5-11, in operation, according to another illustrative embodiment, the wound dressing 102 is disposed proximate to the wound 104. The patient-interface member 128 is proximate to the wound 104. The other layers or members are assembled or pre-assembled as shown in the figures with the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate Drape on the top (for the orientation shown).

[0048] Referring now primarily to FIGURE 5, in operation, the vapor leaving the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112 moves through the filtering layer 148, which removes odor or particulates that might otherwise escape. Referring primarily to FIGURE 6, the vapor transmission rate is enhanced by the patient's body heat and heat from the hydro-activated, exothermic material 150 once the watery liquid reaches the hydro-activated, exothermic material 150. For embodiments including the nano-antennas 144 (e.g., FIG. 3, 4, 6), additional energy is added thereby. Moreover, for the embodiment shown in FIGURE 6, the transmission rate may be relatively increased by using a greater surface area due to the corrugated portions 146.

[0049] Referring primarily to FIGURE 7, in operation according to one illustrative embodiment, the transmission rate is enhanced by the patient's body heat and heat from the electrical heating element 152. The amount of heat added by the electrical heating element 152 is controlled by the control circuit or controller 156. An electrical fill indicator (not shown) may be included in the liquid-processing member 114 and electrically coupled to the control circuit 156 such that the control circuit 156 activates the electrical heating element 152 once the liquid-processing member 114 is saturated. Alternatively, the control circuit 156 may activate the electrical heating element 152 based on timer intervals or when manually activated.

[0050] Referring primarily to FIGURE 8, in operation according to one illustrative embodiment, the transmission rate is enhanced by the patient's body heat and heat from the piezoelectric member 164. The piezoelectric member 164 may take movement and create thermal energy. In another illustrative embodiment, the element labeled 164 may be a material that otherwise generates heat as the element is flexed. For example, without limitation, the following may be used: castable polyester polyurethane elastomers based on the system polycaprolactone diol (Capa 225)/trans 1,4-cyclohexane diisocyanate (CHDI)/1,4-butane diol (1,4-BD) and 1,4-cyclohexane dimethanol (1,4-CHDM). Referring now primarily to FIGURE

9, the transmission rate is enhanced by the patient's body heat and heat from the inductive elements 166 that are activated by the source of magnetic energy 168.

[0051] Referring now primarily to FIGURE 12, an illustrative system 100 for treating a wound 104 on a patient 106 is presented. The system 100 includes a wound dressing 102, which is analogous in many respects to the wound dressing 102 of FIGURE 1. The system 100 provides for enhanced liquid management and also for the application of reduced pressure on a wound 104.

[0052] The system 100 includes a manifold member 172 disposed proximate to the wound 104. In this illustrative example, the wound 104 extends through epidermis 108, dermis 109, and into subcutaneous tissue 110. The manifold member 172 is a substance or structure that is provided to assist in applying reduced pressure to, delivering fluids to, or removing fluids from a tissue site or wound 104. The manifold member 172 includes a plurality of flow channels or pathways that distribute fluids provided to and removed from the tissue site around the manifold member 172. In one illustrative embodiment, the flow channels or pathways are interconnected to improve distribution of fluids provided to or removed from the wound 104. The manifold member 172 may be a biocompatible material that is capable of being placed in contact with the wound 104 and distributing reduced pressure. Examples of manifold members 172 include, without limitation, one or more of the following: devices that have structural elements arranged to form flow channels, such as, for example, cellular foam, open-cell foam, porous tissue collections, liquids, gels, and foams that include, or cure to include, flow channels; porous material porous, such as foam, gauze, felted mat, or any other material suited to a particular biological application; or porous foam that includes a plurality of interconnected cells or pores that act as flow channels, e.g., a polyurethane, open-cell, reticulated foam such as GranuFoam® material manufactured by Kinetic Concepts, Incorporated of San Antonio, Texas; a bioresorbable material; or a scaffold material.

[0053] In some situations, the manifold member 172 may also be used to distribute fluids such as medications, antibacterials, growth factors, and various solutions to the tissue site. Other layers may be included in or on the manifold member 172, such as absorptive materials, wicking materials, hydrophobic materials, and hydrophilic materials. In one illustrative, non-limiting embodiment, the manifold member 172 may be constructed from a bioresorbable material that remains in a patient's body following use of the reduced-pressure

dressings. Suitable bioresorbable materials include, without limitation, a polymeric blend of polylactic acid (PLA) and polyglycolic acid (PGA). The polymeric blend may also include without limitation polycarbonates, polyfumarates, and caprolactones.

[0054] The manifold member 172 may further serve as a scaffold for new cell-growth, or a scaffold material may be used in conjunction with the manifold member 172 to promote cell-growth. A scaffold is a substance or structure used to enhance or promote the growth of cells or formation of tissue, such as a three-dimensional porous structure that provides a template for cell growth. Illustrative examples of scaffold materials include calcium phosphate, collagen, PLA/PGA, coral hydroxy apatites, carbonates, or processed allograft materials.

[0055] As with other embodiments herein, the wound dressing 102 includes a high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116; a thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112; and a liquid-processing member 114. The high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 may include nano-antennas 144. Applied on or through the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 is a reduced-pressure interface 174. In one illustrative embodiment, the reduced-pressure interface 174 is a T.R.A.C.[®] Pad or Sensa T.R.A.C.[®] Pad available from KCI of San Antonio, Texas.

[0056] An external energy source 176 may be used to provide additional energy to the wound dressing 102. For example, the external energy source 176 may be a light source 178, e.g., an LED light, that provides light to the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 directly or by providing energy to the nano-antennas 144.

[0057] The high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 creates a sealed space 180 between the wound 104 and the second, patient-facing side 120 of the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116. A reduced-pressure source 182 is fluidly coupled to the sealed space 180. The reduced-pressure source 182 may be any device for supplying a reduced pressure, such as a vacuum pump, wall suction, micro-pump, or other source. While the amount and nature of reduced pressure applied to a tissue site will typically vary according to the application, the reduced pressure will typically be between -5 mm Hg (-667 Pa) and -500 mm Hg (-66.7 kPa) and more typically between -75 mm Hg (-9.9 kPa) and -300 mm Hg (-39.9 kPa).

[0058] The reduced-pressure source 182 may be fluidly coupled to the sealed space 180, which includes the manifold member 172, by a reduced-pressure delivery conduit 184 and the reduced-pressure interface 174 or by directly inserting the reduced-pressure delivery conduit 184 through the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 into the sealed space 180. In addition, the fluid coupling may be due to the position of the reduced-pressure source 182; for example, if the reduced-pressure source 182 is a micro-pump, the intake may be directly, fluidly coupled to the sealed space 180. In addition, in the latter example, the micro-pump is thermally coupled to the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116.

[0059] In operation, according to one illustrative embodiment, the manifold member 172 is disposed proximate to the wound 104. The wound dressing 102 is placed proximate to a first side 173 of the manifold member 172. The high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 over the patient's skin creates the sealed space 180. Using the reduced-pressure interface 174 or otherwise, the reduced-pressure delivery conduit 184 is fluidly coupled to the sealed space 180 and thereby the manifold member 172. Reduced pressure is then applied to help treat the wound 102. In the embodiment shown, liquids are delivered to the reduced-pressure source 182, but evaporation and transmission through the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 may also occur. For embodiments in which the reduced-pressure source 182 is a micro-pump, the liquid will be retained in the wound dressing 102 until transmitted through the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116. The transmission rate is enhanced by the patient's body heat (delivered through the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112) and may be enhanced by nano-antennas 144 if included. The nano-antennas 144 may be energized by a light source 178.

[0060] Referring now primarily to FIGURE 13, another illustrative embodiment of a wound dressing 102 is presented. The wound dressing 102 is analogous in most respects to the wound dressing 102 of FIGURE 1, except external baffles 186 and an air mover 188 have been added. The external baffles 186 are on the first side of the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 and form a channel 190. The air mover 188 is fluidly coupled to the channel 190 by a conduit 192. The air mover 188 provides air flow against the first side 118 of the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 and thereby further increases the evaporation rate. The components of the various figures may be combined with others. Thus, for example,

the air mover 188 and external baffles 186 may be added to any of the other embodiments herein.

[0061] Referring now to FIGURE 14, another illustrative embodiment of a portion of a wound dressing 102 is presented. The wound dressing 102 is analogous in most respects to the wound dressing 102 of FIGURE 1. The wound dressing 102 has a thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112. A liquid-processing member 114 is between portions of the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112. The wound dressing 102 further includes a high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116. The thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112 has a drape-interface member 126, a patient-interface member 128, and a coupling member 130. In this embodiment, the coupling member 130 is presented in a different location in part to emphasize that the coupling member 130 may be in numerous locations.

[0062] In the embodiments presented previously, the coupling member 130 has been to one side of the liquid-processing member 114. In the illustrative embodiment of the present embodiment, the coupling member 130 extends from the patient-interface member 128 to the drape-interface member 126 through the body or main portion of the liquid-processing member 114. Because it is generally desirable to transfer heat from the patient to the drape-interface member 126 without heating up the liquid-processing member 114, insulation 194 may be placed around the coupling member 130. It should be understood that the coupling member 130 functions to thermally couple the drape-interface member 126 and the patient-interface member 128 and may be located at any point with respect to those members, e.g., sides or middle or any where between.

[0063] Although the present invention and its advantages have been disclosed in the context of certain illustrative, non-limiting embodiments, it should be understood that various changes, substitutions, permutations, and alterations can be made without departing from the scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims. It will be appreciated that any feature that is described in connection to any one embodiment may also be applicable to any other embodiment. For example, without limitation, the nano-antennas 144 may be added to any embodiment herein. As another example, without limitation, the filtering layer 148 may be added to any embodiment herein. As another example, without limitation, the corrugated portions 146 may be added to any of the embodiments herein.

[0064] As another example, without limitation, the hydro-activated, exothermic material 150 may be added to any of the embodiments herein. As still another example the electrical heating element 152 (and associated components) may be added to any embodiment herein or the piezoelectric member 164 added to any embodiment. As still another example, without limitation, reduced pressure (see FIG. 12) may be used with any of the embodiments. As one more example, without limitation, the external baffles 186 and air mover 188 (FIG. 13) may be used with any embodiment. Moreover, the different components may be used in any combination.

[0065] Thus, for example, without limitation, a wound dressing 102 may have a nano-antennas 144 on the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116, a filtering layer 148 below (for orientation shown in FIG. 5), a hydro-activated, exothermic material 150 proximate the filtering layer 148, and an electrical heating element 152 in the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112. Numerous other examples are possible. Finally, while the illustrative embodiments have been shown using body heat directed by the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member 112, it should be appreciated that some of the embodiments may forgo such a component and use other heating elements alone, e.g., the hydro-activated, exothermic material 150; electrical heating element 152; or piezoelectric member 164.

[0066] According to another illustrative embodiment, the piezoelectric member 164 (FIG. 8) may be included with the reduced-pressure components of FIGURE 12. Then in operation, the reduced-pressure components may be used in a pulsed fashion to move and excite the piezoelectric member 164 to generate heat.

[0067] The illustrative embodiments herein may provide numerous perceived advantages for healthcare providers and patients. A number of possible examples follow. For example, the wound dressing 102 may have an enhanced capacity because the wound dressing 102 is able to offload liquid from the wound dressing 102 in the form of vapor exiting the wound dressing 102 through the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116. And, because of the additional thermal energy, the wound dressings 102 are operable to transmit relatively more liquid through the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape 116 over a given time. Moreover, the wound dressings 102 may stay in place longer. The wound dressings 102 may be used without requiring additional training. The wound dressings 102

may convert liquids retained into the wound dressing 102 to a gel and thereby make disposal easier.

[0068] It will be understood that the benefits and advantages described above may relate to one embodiment or may relate to several embodiments. It will further be understood that reference to “an” item refers to one or more of those items.

[0069] The steps of the methods described herein may be carried out in any suitable order, or simultaneously where appropriate.

[0070] Where appropriate, aspects of any of the embodiments described above may be combined with aspects of any of the other embodiments described to form further examples having comparable or different properties and addressing the same or different problems.

[0071] It will be understood that the above description of preferred embodiments is given by way of example only and that various modifications may be made by those skilled in the art. The above specification, examples and data provide a complete description of the structure and use of exemplary embodiments of the invention. Although various embodiments of the invention have been described above with a certain degree of particularity, or with reference to one or more individual embodiments, those skilled in the art could make numerous alterations to the disclosed embodiments without departing from the scope of the claims.

CLAIMS

1. A wound dressing comprising:
 - a high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape having a first side and a second, patient-facing side;
 - a thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member comprising:
 - a drape-interface member having a first side and a second, patient-facing side, wherein the first side of the drape-interface member is proximate the second, patient-facing side of the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape,
 - a patient-interface member having a first side and a second, patient-facing side, wherein the second, patient-facing side of the patient-interface member is proximate to a patient, and
 - a coupling member that thermally couples the drape-interface member and the patient-interface member;
 - a liquid-processing member disposed between the drape-interface member and the patient-interface member, wherein the liquid-processing member is operable to at least temporarily retain liquids from the wound; and
 - wherein the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member is operable to conduct body heat from the patient to the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape to enhance transmission of vapor through the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape.
2. The wound dressing of claim 1, wherein the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape is less than or equal to 30 microns in thickness.
3. The wound dressing of claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member comprises an active carbon member.
4. The wound dressing of claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member comprises a material with metallic fibers.

5. The wound dressing of claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member comprises zinc oxide.
6. The wound dressing of claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member comprises silver.
7. The wound dressing of any one of the preceding claims, wherein the liquid-processing member comprises one of the following: a foam member, a non-woven member, a super absorbent material, and a gel material.
8. The wound dressing of any one of the preceding claims, further comprising a filtering layer disposed between at least a portion of the liquid-processing member and the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member.
9. The wound dressing of any one of the preceding claims, further comprising nano-antennae coupled to the first side of the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape for receiving external energy.
10. The wound dressing of any one of the preceding claims, wherein the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape is at least partially corrugated.
11. The wound dressing of any one of the preceding claims, wherein the liquid-processing member comprises a hydro-activated, exothermic material that reacts with wound exudate to generate heat.
12. The wound dressing of any one of the preceding claims, wherein the liquid-processing member comprises a calcium oxide that exothermically reacts with wound exudate to generate heat.
13. The wound dressing of any one of the preceding claims, further comprising:
 - an electrical heating element that is operable to provide thermal energy when energized, wherein the electrical heating element is thermally coupled to the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape;
 - a power supply electrically coupled to the electrical heating element; and
 - a control circuit coupled to the power supply and electrical heating element.

14. The wound dressing of any one of the preceding claims, further comprising a piezoelectric member that is operable to provide thermal energy when moved, wherein the piezoelectric member is thermally coupled to the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape.
15. The wound dressing of any one of the preceding claims, further comprising:
 - a manifold member disposed proximate to the a patient-interface member of the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member; and
 - a reduced-pressure source fluidly coupled to the manifold member.
16. The wound dressing of any one of claims 1-14, further comprising:
 - a manifold member disposed proximate to the a patient-interface member of the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member; and
 - a reduced-pressure source fluidly coupled to the manifold member, wherein the reduced-pressure source comprises a micro-pump coupled to the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape, and wherein the micropump is thermally coupled to the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape to deliver heat thereto.
17. The wound dressing of any one of the preceding claims, wherein a planar surface area of the drape-interface member is less than a planar surface area of the patient-interface member.
18. The wound dressing of any one of the preceding claims, further comprising a motion-activated heating element thermally coupled to the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape.
19. The wound dressing of any one of the preceding claims, further comprising an external heater for transmitting heat to the first side of the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape.
20. The wound dressing of any one of the preceding claims, further comprising external baffles on the first side of the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape and an air mover for delivering an air flow in the baffles.
21. The wound dressing of any one of the preceding claims, wherein the wound dressing is

operable to process more liquids over time than the dressing can physical hold without evaporation.

22. A method for treating a wound on a patient, the method comprising:
 covering the wound with a wound dressing comprising:
 a high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape having a first side and a second,
 patient-facing side,
 a thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member, and
 a liquid-processing member; and
 using the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member to conduct heat from the
 patient's body to the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape to enhance
 vapor transmission.
23. The method of claim 22, further comprising heating the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape with an external heat source.
24. The method of claim 23, wherein the external heat source comprises an LED light.
25. The method of claim 22, wherein the wound dressing further comprises a plurality of nano-antennae on the first side of the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape and the method further comprises exciting the nano-antennae with infrared radiation.
26. The method of claim 22, further comprising heating the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape with an internal heat source.
27. The method of claim 26, wherein the internal heat source comprises a piezoelectric member.
28. The method of claim 26, wherein the internal heat source comprises:
 an electrical heating element that is operable to provide thermal energy when
 energized, wherein the electrical heating element is thermally coupled to the
 high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape;
 a power supply electrically coupled to the electrical heating element; and
 a control circuit coupled to the power supply and electrical heating element.
29. The method of claim 26, wherein the internal heat source comprises a motion-activated

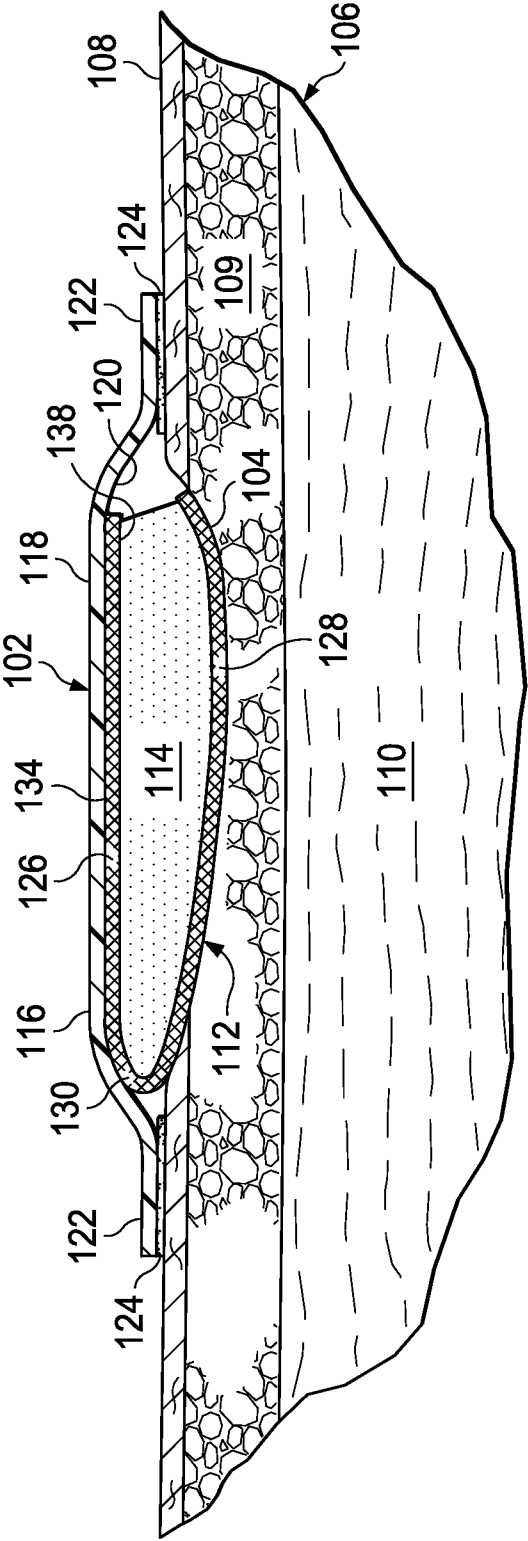
heating element thermally coupled to the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape and the method further comprises moving the motion-activated heating element.

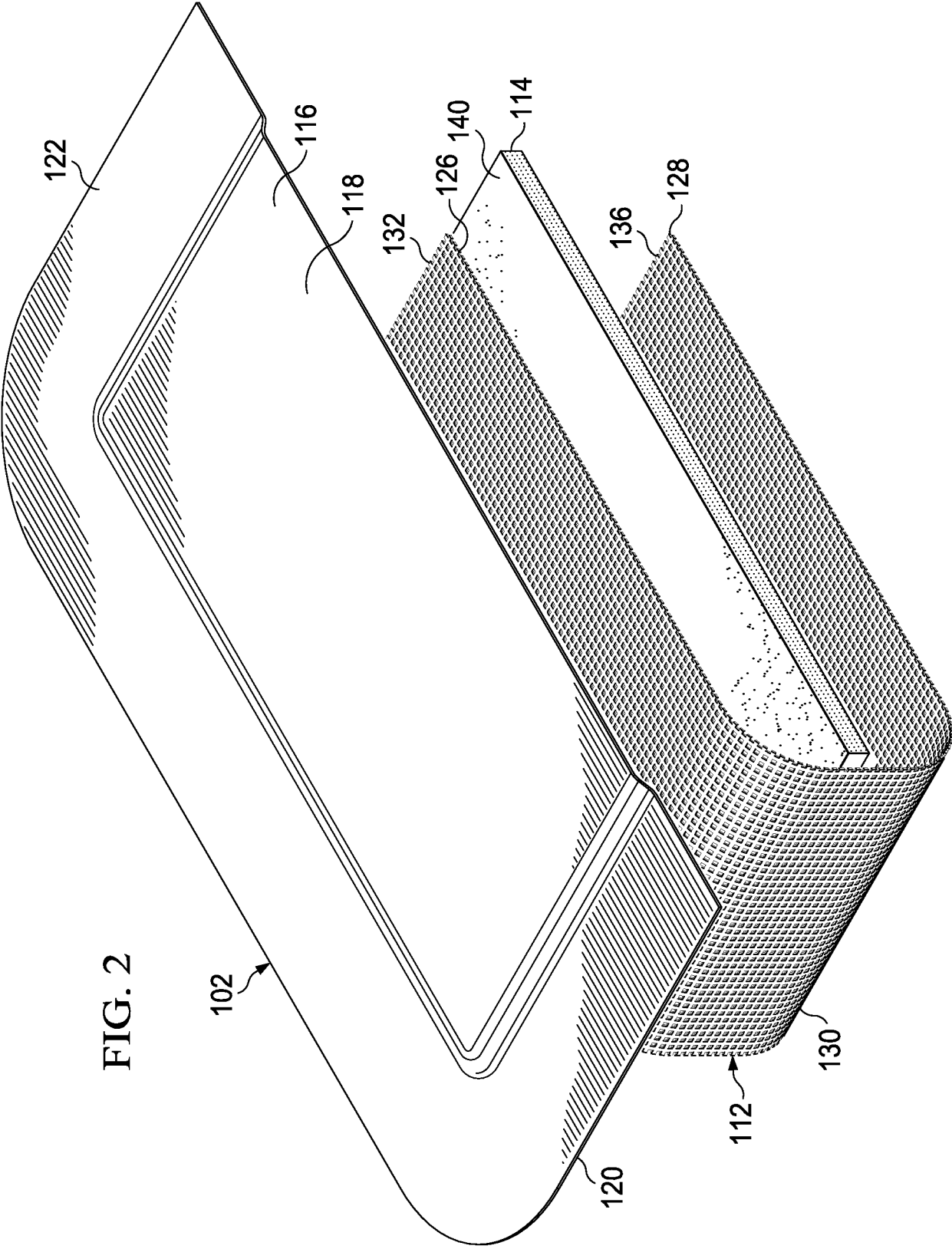
30. The method of claim 26, wherein the internal heat source comprises a hydro-activated exothermic material.
31. The method of claim 22, wherein the wound dressing further comprises an inductive member and further comprising exciting the inductive member using magnetic energy.
32. The method of claim 22, wherein the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member comprises:
 - a drape-interface member having a first side and a second, patient-facing side, wherein the first side of the drape-interface member is proximate the second, patient-facing side of the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape,
 - a patient-interface member having a first side and a second, patient-facing side, wherein the second, patient-facing side of the patient-interface member is proximate to the patient, and
 - a coupling member that thermally couples the drape-interface member and the patient-interface member.
33. The method of claim 23 or any one of claims 24-32, wherein the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape is less than or equal to 30 microns in thickness.
34. The method of claim 23 or any one of claims 24-33, wherein the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member comprises an active carbon member.
35. The method of claim 23 or any one of claims 24-33, wherein the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member comprises a material with metallic fibers.
36. The method of claim 23 or any one of claims 24-33, wherein the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member comprises zinc oxide.
37. The method of claim 23 or any one of claims 24-33, wherein the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member comprises silver.

38. The method of claim 23 or any one of claims 24-37, wherein the liquid-processing member comprises one of the following: a foam member, a non-woven member, a super absorbent material, and a gel material.
39. The method of claim 23 or any one of claims 24-38, further comprising a filtering layer disposed between at least a portion of the liquid-processing member and the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member.
40. The method of claim 23 or any one of claims 24 or 26-33, further comprising nano-antennae coupled to the first side of the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape for receiving external energy.
41. The method of claim 23 or any one of claims 24-40, further wherein the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape is at least partially corrugated.
42. The method of claim 32, further comprising:
a manifold member disposed proximate to the a patient-interface member of the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member; and
a reduced-pressure source fluidly coupled to the manifold member.
43. The method of claim 32, further comprising:
a manifold member disposed proximate to the a patient-interface member of the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member; and
a reduced-pressure source fluidly coupled to the manifold member, wherein the reduced-pressure source comprises a micro-pump coupled to the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape, and wherein the micropump is thermally coupled to the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape to deliver heat thereto.
44. The method of claim 32, wherein a planar surface of the drape-interface member is less than a planar surface area of the patient-interface member.
45. The method of claim 22, further comprising moving air across the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape.

46. A method of manufacturing a wound dressing, the method comprising the steps of:
- providing a thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member comprising:
 - a drape-interface member having a first side and a second, patient-facing side,
 - a patient-interface member having a first side and a second, patient-facing side,
 - wherein the second, patient-facing side of the patient-interface member is for placing proximate to the patient, and
 - a coupling member thermally coupling the drape-interface member and the patient-interface member;
 - disposing a liquid-processing member between the drape-interface member and the patient-interface member, wherein the liquid-processing member is operable to at least temporarily retain liquids from the wound; and
 - disposing a high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape having a first side and a second, patient-facing side over the thermally-conductive, vapor-permeable member, wherein the first side of the drape-interface member is proximate the second, patient-facing side of the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape.
47. The method of claim 46 further comprising coupling nano antennae to the first side of the high-moisture-vapor-transmission-rate drape.

FIG. 1





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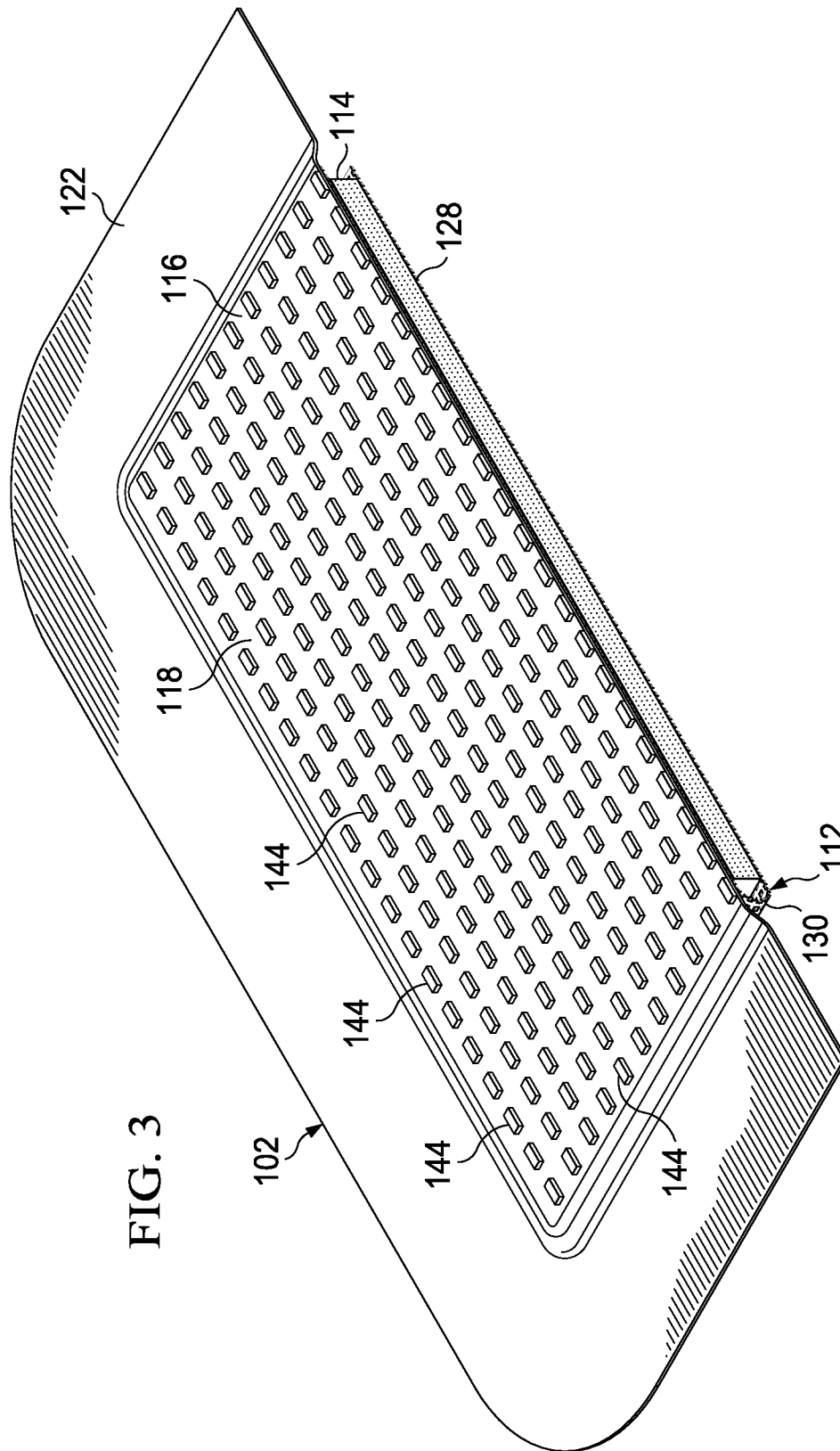
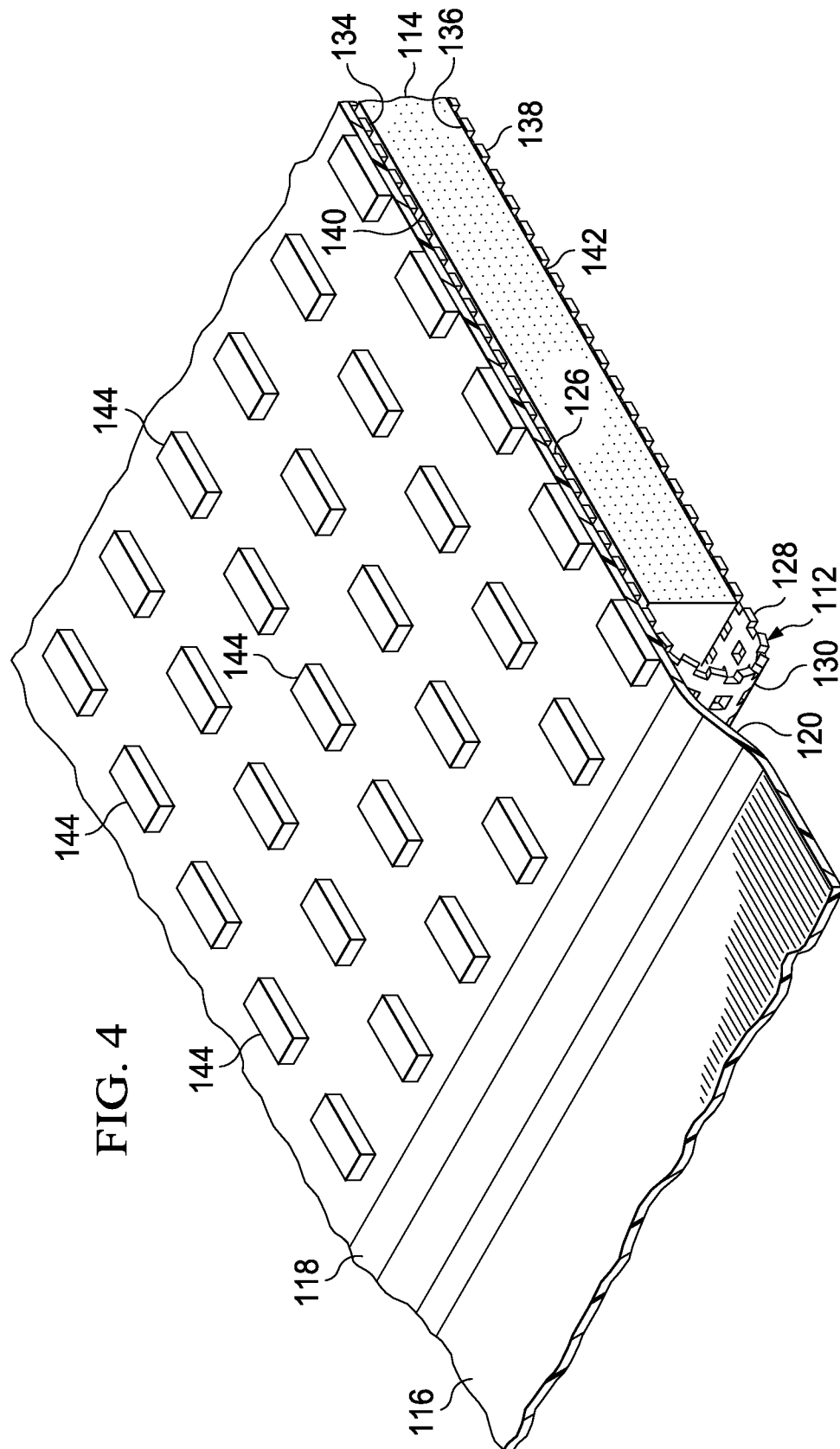


FIG. 3



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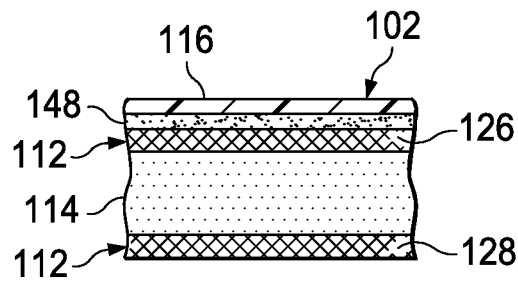


FIG. 5

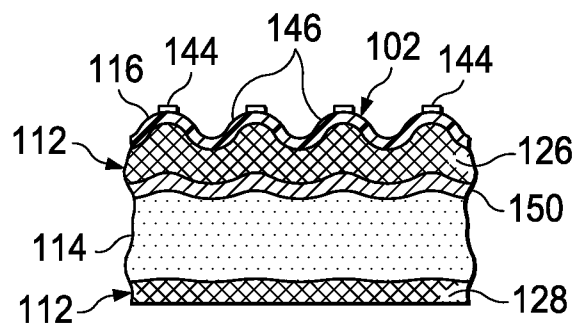


FIG. 6

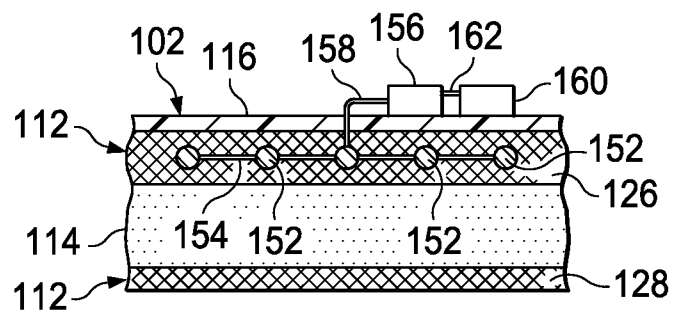


FIG. 7

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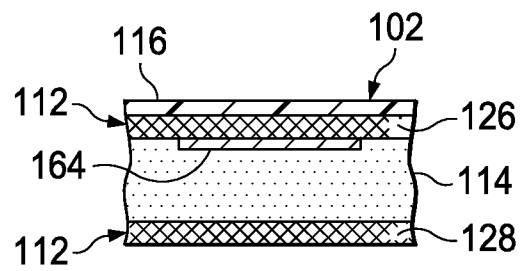


FIG. 8

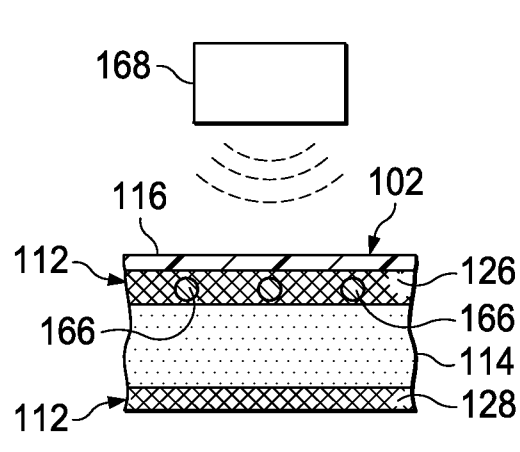
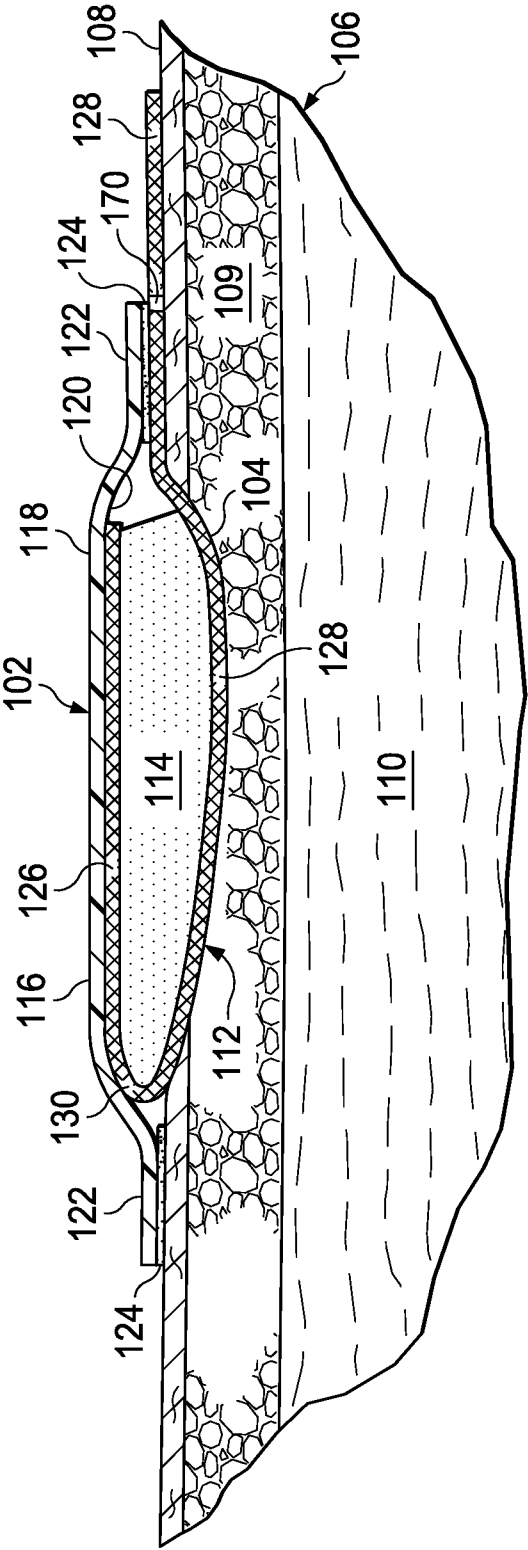


FIG. 9

FIG. 10



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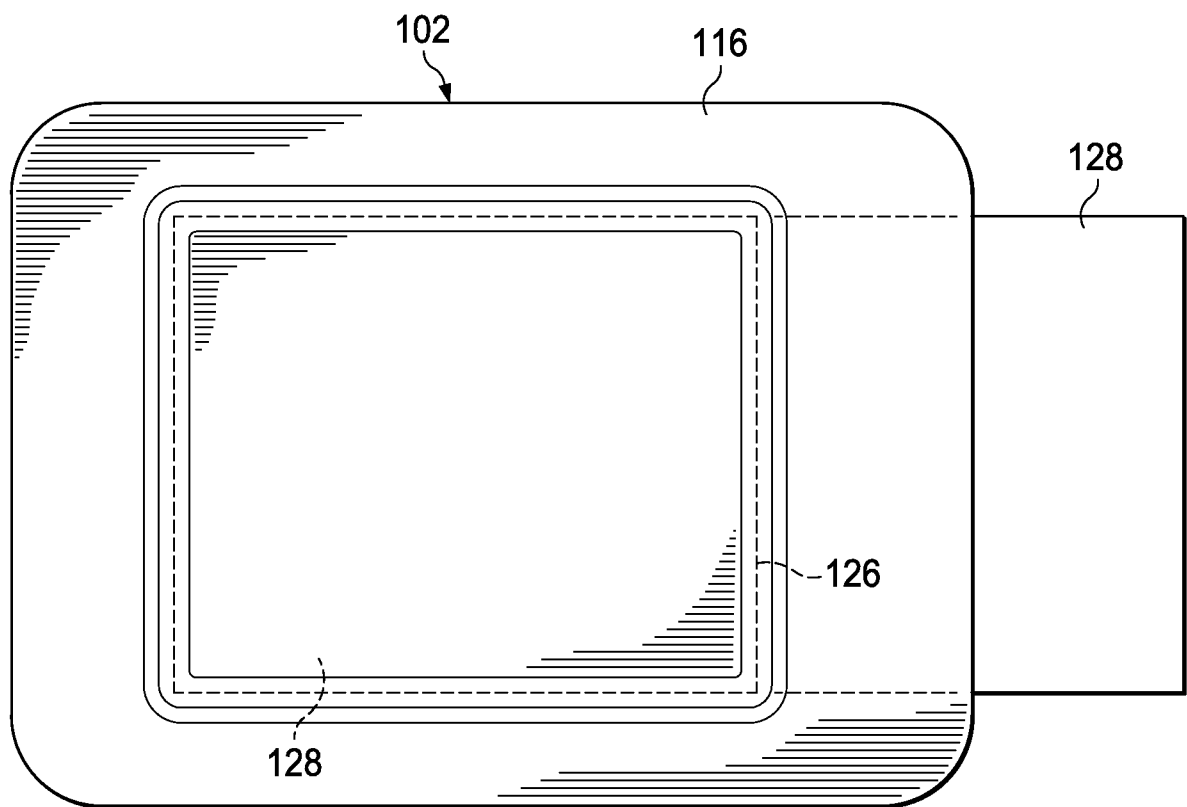


FIG. 11

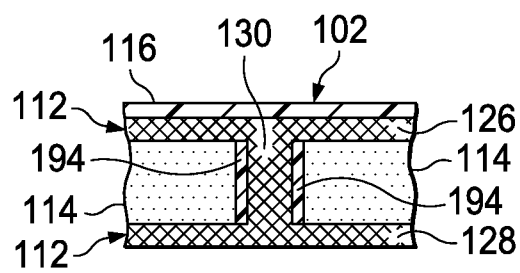


FIG. 14

FIG. 12

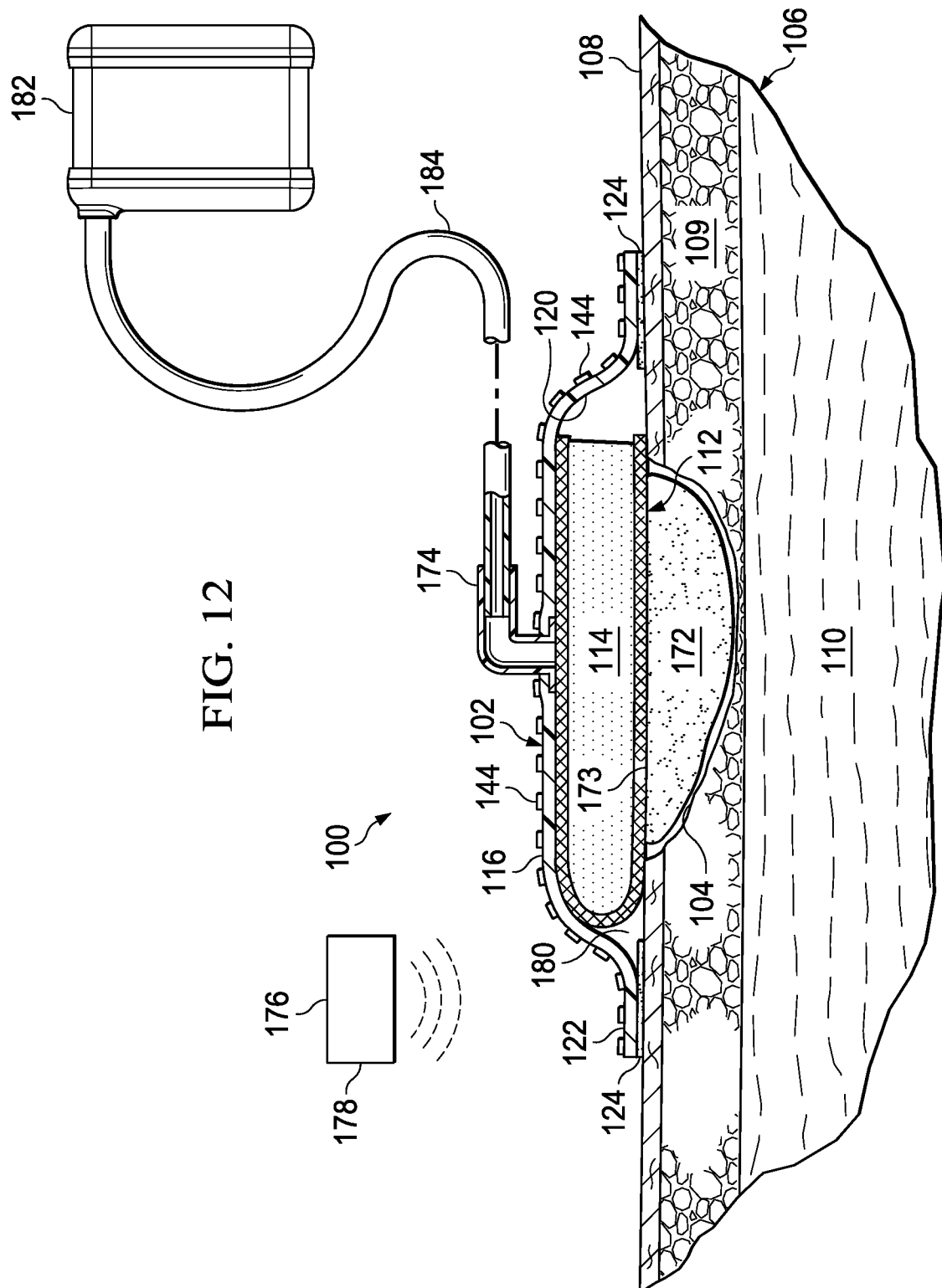


FIG. 13

