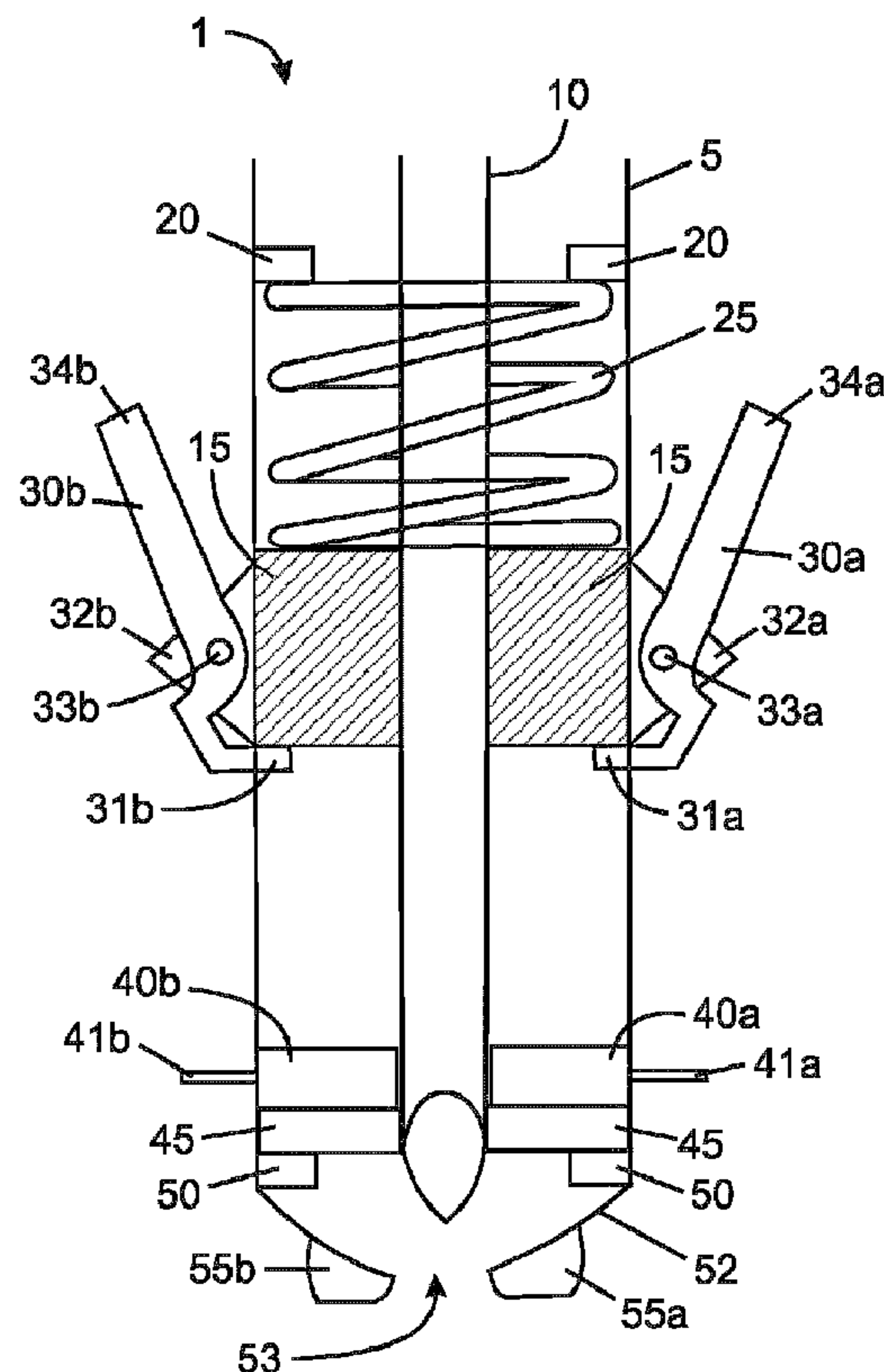




(86) Date de dépôt PCT/PCT Filing Date: 2014/09/23
(87) Date publication PCT/PCT Publication Date: 2015/03/26
(45) Date de délivrance/Issue Date: 2019/12/03
(85) Entrée phase nationale/National Entry: 2016/03/08
(86) N° demande PCT/PCT Application No.: CA 2014/050911
(87) N° publication PCT/PCT Publication No.: 2015/039256
(30) Priorité/Priority: 2013/09/23 (US61/881,100)

(51) Cl.Int./Int.Cl. *A61M 16/04* (2006.01)
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(54) Titre : DISPOSITIF DE TRACHEOTOMIE D'URGENCE
(54) Title: EMERGENCY TRACHEOTOMY DEVICE



(57) Abrégé/Abstract:

A tracheotomy device has a housing configured to guide the device to an appropriate location in a suprasternal notch of a subject and a hollow penetrator associated with the housing. The penetrator resiliently moves from a retracted restrained position to an

(57) Abrégé(suite)/Abstract(continued):

extended operational position with sufficient force to penetrate a tracheal wall, where the operational position extends a pre-determined distance from the housing. The pre-determined distance is correlated to a distance required to penetrate an anterior side of the tracheal wall without penetrating a posterior side of the tracheal wall. An actuator associated with the housing and the penetrator for releasing the penetrator is configured for use in one hand. The device is simple and disposable and may be used by unskilled caregivers to successfully and safely perform a tracheotomy on a subject with a blocked airway.

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property
Organization
International Bureau(10) International Publication Number
WO 2015/039256 A1(43) International Publication Date
26 March 2015 (26.03.2015)(51) International Patent Classification:
A61M 16/04 (2006.01)(21) International Application Number:
PCT/CA2014/050911(22) International Filing Date:
23 September 2014 (23.09.2014)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
61/881,100 23 September 2013 (23.09.2013) US

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AO, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BN, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CL, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IR, IS, JP, KE, KG, KN, KP, KR, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LU, LY, MA, MD, ME, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PA, PE, PG, PH, PL, PT, QA, RO, RS, RU, RW, SA, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, ST, SV, SY, TH, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LR, LS, MW, MZ, NA, RW, SD, SL, ST, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, RU, TJ, TM), European (AL, AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SE, SI, SK, SM, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, KM, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Published:

— with international search report (Art. 21(3))

(81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM,

(54) Title: EMERGENCY TRACHEOTOMY DEVICE

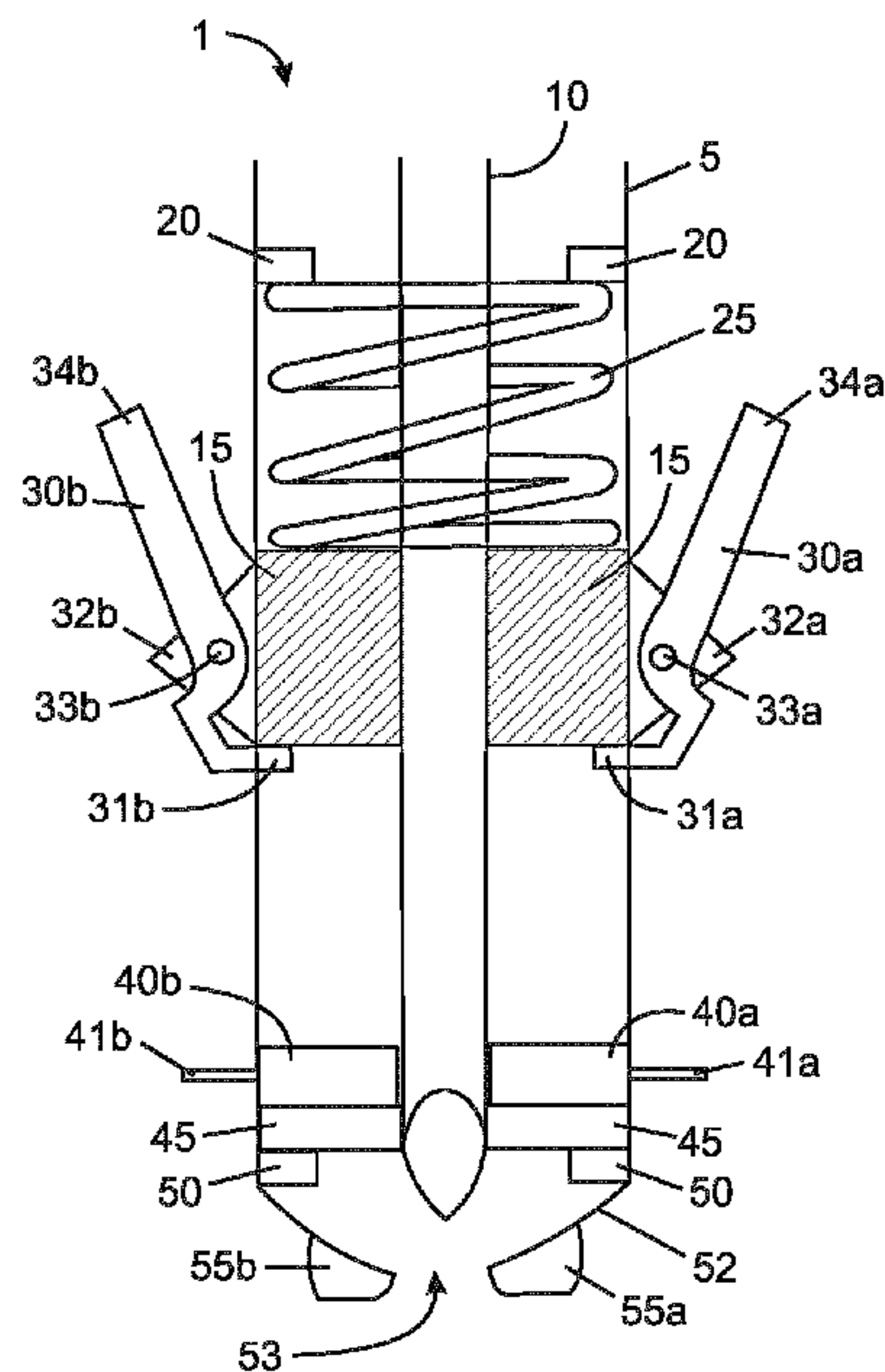


Fig. 1

(57) Abstract: A tracheotomy device has a housing configured to guide the device to an appropriate location in a suprasternal notch of a subject and a hollow penetrator associated with the housing. The penetrator resiliently moves from a retracted restrained position to an extended operational position with sufficient force to penetrate a tracheal wall, where the operational position extends a pre-determined distance from the housing. The pre-determined distance is correlated to a distance required to penetrate an anterior side of the tracheal wall without penetrating a posterior side of the tracheal wall. An actuator associated with the housing and the penetrator for releasing the penetrator is configured for use in one hand. The device is simple and disposable and may be used by unskilled caregivers to successfully and safely perform a tracheotomy on a subject with a blocked airway.

EMERGENCY TRACHEOTOMY DEVICE

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to medical devices, in particular to devices for performing emergency tracheotomies.

5 Background of the Invention

An obstruction in a person's trachea can cause death from asphyxiation, often within minutes before medical help can arrive. When back slaps or the Heimlich maneuver cannot dislodge the obstruction, it may be necessary to perform a tracheotomy. A tracheotomy involves inserting a hollow tube into the trachea below the
10 obstruction so that the person can breathe freely through the tube. Because the trachea is surrounded by stiff cartilaginous material, a scalpel, trocar or other cutting instrument is required to make an incision in the trachea between the cartilaginous rings. This can be difficult without specific knowledge, so tracheotomies traditionally require medical knowledge to perform successfully and safely. Given that the time for trained emergency
15 services personnel to arrive after a subject has begun to choke often exceeds the survival time that someone can survive without breathing, any attempt to save the subject's life must be considered. Therefore, if trained medical personnel are not present, then it would be useful to have a simple emergency tracheotomy device that can be used safely and successfully by the general public with little or no training. Further, to reduce the
20 possibility of contamination and for simplicity, such an emergency device should be simple to use, inexpensive, sterilizable and amenable to single-use with disposal after use.

Summary of the Invention

There is provided a tracheotomy device comprising: a housing configured to guide
25 the device to an appropriate location in a suprasternal notch of a subject; a hollow penetrator associated with the housing, the penetrator resiliently moveable from a retracted restrained position to an extended operational position with sufficient force to penetrate a tracheal wall, the operational position extending a pre-determined distance from the housing, the pre-determined distance correlated to a distance required to
30 penetrate an anterior side of the tracheal wall without penetrating a posterior side of the tracheal wall; and, an actuator associated with the housing and the penetrator and configured for use in one hand for releasing the penetrator to be resiliently moved from the restrained position to the operational position.

There is further provided a kit comprising a device of the present invention and instructions for use of the device for performing a tracheotomy.

There is further provided a method of performing a tracheotomy comprising positioning a device of the present invention in a suprasternal notch of a subject, and
5 actuating the actuator to release the penetrator into a trachea of the subject.

The penetrator preferably comprises a hollow sharp blade that can penetrate skin and the tracheal wall of the subject. The penetrator may be elongated, for example a hollow needle, scalpel or trocar. Hollow trocars are particularly preferred. The penetrator may comprise any medically approved material, for example stainless steel, and is
10 preferably sterilizable.

The penetrator is resiliently moveable from a retracted restrained position to an extended operational position with sufficient force to penetrate the tracheal wall. Preferably, the penetrator cannot then be reset back to the retracted restrained position to reduce the possibility that the device will be reused, since reuse could increase the
15 chance of infecting future subjects with pathogens. Preferably, a biasing member is employed to provide the resilient movement and penetrating force. The biasing member may be, for example, a spring. Springs include, for example, leaf springs, torsion springs, compression springs and the like. Compression springs are particularly preferred.

The penetrator is associated with a housing. The penetrator may sit within or
20 outside the housing, however, it is preferable that the penetrator is within the housing to reduce the possibility of accidentally causing injury with the penetrator. When the penetrator is in the retracted restrained position it is preferably fully within the housing so that no part of the penetrator is exposed. The housing is preferably a hollow tube with the penetrator housed coaxially within the tube. The tube may have a proximal end and a
25 distal end. The distal end may be configured for placement in the suprasternal notch and may have a discharge aperture through which the penetrator can fully or partially extend when resiliently moved from the restrained position to the operational position. The proximal end of the housing may be configured for blowing air through the penetrator, optionally with the aid of a mouthpiece. The mouthpiece may be unitized with the housing
30 or a separate piece that can be inserted on to the proximal end of the housing. The penetrator may be associated with a sealing element to seal a space between the penetrator and the housing to ensure that air blown into the device passes through penetrator.

The housing preferably comprises an inexpensive material, for example a plastic. The material is preferably moldable to form a one-piece or unitized structure and is preferably sterilizable. A one-piece structure provides for more economical construction and assembly and simplifies sterilization of the device. The housing may be opaque,
5 transparent or translucent. A transparent or translucent housing facilitates observing the condition of the elements inside the housing, for example determining the status of a usage indicator.

The housing is configured to guide the device to an appropriate location in a suprasternal notch of a subject. Preferably, the penetrator is positioned above tissue
10 between cartilaginous rings of the trachea. Therefore, the housing may comprise guide elements that naturally seat themselves between the cartilaginous rings and are configured on the housing to align the penetrator over the tissue between the cartilaginous rings rather than over the cartilaginous rings themselves. The guide elements may be further configured to reduce slippage of the device during actuation of
15 the penetrator. In one embodiment, the housing may comprise spaced-apart protrusions configured to sit between cartilaginous rings of the trachea to guide the penetrator to a position above tissue between the cartilaginous rings when the device is placed in the suprasternal notch.

The housing may further comprise a securement structure for securing the device
20 to the subject when the device is in operation. In one embodiment, the securement structure comprises one or more connections on the housing to which a tying feature, for example a strap, a cord, a string, a chain, etc., may be secured. The tying feature may be looped around the subject's neck and tightened sufficiently to hold the device in place in the suprasternal notch. In another embodiment, the securement structure may comprise a
25 self-adhesive pad that binds sufficiently strongly to skin of the subject that it will not release too easily. When the housing comprises a tube, the self-adhesive pad is preferably located on the distal end of the housing, preferably as a ring that surrounds the discharge aperture.

An actuator is associated with the housing and the penetrator and is configured
30 for use in one hand for releasing the penetrator to be resiliently moved from the restrained position to the operational position. The actuator preferably comprises a depressible structure disposed on a side of the housing whereby pressing the actuator applies a lateral force relative to the direction of motion of the penetrator. The lateral force releases the penetrator to be resiliently moved from the restrained position to the
35 operational position to puncture the skin and tracheal wall to create an opening in the

tracheal wall. Depressing the actuator with a lateral force to actuate the penetrator reduces the chance of an inexperienced user bearing down on the device during actuation. Preferably, the actuator comprises two depressible structures disposed on opposed sides of the housing and configured to be simultaneously depressed by one
5 hand, for example by pinching the depressible structures on the housing with thumb and forefinger of one hand. Using two opposed depressible structures advantageously reduces the risk of laterally displacing the device when the penetrator is activated. In one embodiment, the penetrator is restrained in the retracted position by a resiliently deflectable restraint, and the depressible structure is in abutting contact with the
10 resiliently deflectable restraint. Depressing the depressible structure or structures deflects the restraint to release the penetrator for resilient movement to the operational position.

The device preferably comprises a depth selector for selecting the distance that the penetrator moves, and therefore selecting the depth into the subject's body to which the penetrator will go. This is important for reducing the possibility that the penetrator will
15 penetrate the posterior wall of the trachea. It is desired for the penetrator to fully penetrate the anterior wall of the trachea, but penetrating the posterior wall could lead to complications causing death of the subject. While the device may be designed to permit selection of various depths positions, it is preferable for simplicity to have only two or three pre-set positions, one for a human adult, one for a human child, and possibly one
20 for an oversized human adult. The depths to which the penetrator must penetrate in each of these cases are sufficiently different that different pre-determined distances are warranted. The pre-set positions may be marked with indicia to indicate the age/size group for which the position is suited. The indicia may be printed or engraved on the housing and/or ring. The indicia may comprise words, pictures or both.

25 The depth selector can function by altering the position of the penetrator in relation to the housing, by altering the length of the housing or by altering the position of a stop inside the housing. Preferably, the depth selector adjusts a position of a stop that stops the penetrator from extending beyond the pre-determined distance. The stop may be a projection in the housing that may be moved longitudinally in relation to the direction
30 of motion of the penetrator, or that may be removed from inside the housing.

In one embodiment, the depth selector comprises a rotatable ring around an exterior of the housing. The ring may be rotatable on a threaded surface so that rotation of the ring moves the ring axially along the housing. Movement of the ring axially along the house may serve to lengthen the housing. The ring may comprise a projection
35 projecting into the housing that engages the penetrator to stop the penetrator from

extending beyond the pre-determined position. The penetrator may comprise a corresponding projection for engagement with the projection on the ring.

In another embodiment, the depth selector comprises a first pre-set position defined by a first stop in the housing, which extends through an aperture in the housing and which is configured to be removable from the aperture and therefore from the inside of the housing, for example by pulling the first stop out of the aperture. A pull tab attached to the first stop and extending outside the housing may be used to pull the first stop out of the housing. A second pre-set position defined by a second stop located inside the housing and farther toward the distal end of the housing sets the pre-determined distance once the first stop is removed. The first stop may define the pre-determined distance for a human child while the second stop may define the pre-determined distance for a human adult.

In an alternative embodiment, the device may have only one pre-set position specific for a particular age or size group, and several different models of the device constructed, each for use with a different age or size group.

The device may comprise a usage indicator that indicates whether the device has been used or is still in a ready-to-use state. This is particularly important as a safety measure to ensure sterility of the device, especially for disposable devices. It may be possible to reload the penetrator after use by pushing the penetrator back into the housing and re-setting the actuator, which comprises sterility and therefore safety. Thus, a non-re-settable usage indicator would be beneficial. The usage indicator may be a visual indicator located inside the housing and visible either through a window in the housing or by virtue of the housing being transparent or translucent. In one embodiment, the usage indicator may be a flag, preferably colored with a bright color (e.g. green, red, orange and the like), whereby operation of the device changes the location of the flag relative to another element of the device.

In a particularly preferred embodiment, a disposable tracheotomy device comprises: a spring-loaded hollow penetrator housed within a hollow tube, the penetrator resiliently moveable by a spring from a retracted restrained position to an extended operational position with sufficient force to penetrate a tracheal wall, the operational position extending a pre-determined distance from a distal end of the hollow tube, the pre-determined distance correlated to a distance required to penetrate an anterior side of the tracheal wall without penetrating a posterior side of the tracheal wall; spaced-apart protrusions on the distal end of the hollow tube configured to sit between cartilaginous

rings of a trachea to guide the penetrator to a position above tissue between the cartilaginous rings when the device is placed in a suprasternal notch of a subject; and, two depressible actuators disposed on opposed sides on the housing and configured for use in one hand for releasing the spring-loaded penetrator by action of lateral force
5 relative to direction of motion of the penetrator to permit the spring to resiliently move the penetrator from the restrained position to the operational position.

A kit of the present invention comprises the device of the present invention together with instructions for use of the device for performing a tracheotomy. The instructions may take the form of printed matter, for example, text, illustrations or both.
10 The device is preferably sterilized and then shrink wrapped in a sealed package to prevent contamination. The instructions may be printed on the shrink wrap or accompany the shrink wrapped device in another packaging material.

To use the device in an emergency setting after backslapping and the Heimlich maneuver have failed to dislodge an obstruction in a choking subject's trachea, the subject is laid on his/her back and any neck-covering clothing is removed. The subject is
15 generally unconscious at this point. The user reviews the instructions accompanying the device if not already familiar with them. The device is then unwrapped, the appropriate pre-set distance is selected and the device is placed in the hollow of the subject's neck, i.e. in the suprasternal notch. The guide elements naturally position the device in the
20 correct place in the suprasternal notch. The actuator is then pressed to release the penetrator which extends out under the influence of the bias to penetrate the skin and trachea. The subject can now breathe through the hollow penetrator, or air can be blown into the subject's lungs through the hollow penetrator. The device is secured to the subject until trained medical personnel arrive.

The device of the present invention is preferably a single-use device that may be disposed of after use. It is simple to use so that unskilled people or people with only basic first aid training can successfully and safely perform an emergency tracheotomy. The device is particularly useful in military applications, schools, airplanes, restaurants, and similar venues where the likelihood of someone choking on an obstruction is higher.
25 Further, people who are afraid, unwilling or too nervous to push a hollow blade into a subject's neck are instead able to simply position the device on the subject's neck and release the penetrator by simply depressing an actuator. The device is preferably used when the subject has lost consciousness after the use of back-slapping and the Heimlich maneuver has been unsuccessful at clearing a blockage in the trachea.
30

Further features of the invention will be described or will become apparent in the course of the following detailed description. It should be understood that each feature described herein may be utilized in any combination with any one or more of the other described features, and that each feature does not necessarily rely on the presence of another feature except where evident to one of skill in the art.

Brief Description of the Drawings

In order that the invention may be more clearly understood, embodiments thereof will now be described in detail by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 depicts a schematic drawing of a tracheotomy device in accordance with the present invention showing internal and external structures;

Fig. 2 depicts a schematic drawing of a tracheotomy device in accordance with the present invention having a mouthpiece and showing internal and external structures;

Fig. 3 depicts a schematic drawing of the tracheotomy device of Fig. 1 rotated 90-degrees about a vertical axis in which release clips and child setting stops are removed;

Fig. 4 depicts a schematic drawing of the tracheotomy device of Fig. 3 showing an alternative embodiment of a release clip mount;

Fig. 5 depicts a side view of a first embodiment of a child setting stop;

Fig. 6 depicts a side view of a second embodiment of a child setting stop;

Fig. 7A depicts the tracheotomy device of Fig. 1 set for a child and in a ready-to-use state;

Fig. 7B depicts the tracheotomy device of Fig. 7A in an extended used state;

Fig. 8A depicts the tracheotomy device of Fig. 1 set for an adult and in a ready-to-use state;

Fig. 8B depicts the tracheotomy device of Fig. 8A in an extended used state;

Fig. 9A depicts a schematic drawing of another embodiment of a tracheotomy device in accordance with the present invention showing internal and external structures;

Fig. 9B depicts the tracheotomy device of Fig. 9A in an extended used state;

Fig. 9C depicts a schematic drawing of a top view of a child setting stop used in the tracheotomy device of Fig. 9A;

Fig. 9D depicts a schematic drawing of a side view of the child setting stop of Fig. 9C;

5 Fig. 9E depicts a schematic drawing of a side view of a tube of the tracheotomy device of Fig. 9A showing a cut-away in the tube to accommodate child and adult setting stops;

Fig. 9F depicts a side view of a trocar seal and support of the tracheotomy device of Fig. 9A showing a usage flag in an unused position in relation to a recess in the seal
10 and support;

Fig. 9G depicts the trocar seal and support of Fig. 9F rotated 90°;

Fig. 9H depicts a bottom view of the trocar seal and support of Fig. 9G;

Fig. 10A depicts a schematic drawing of another embodiment of a tracheotomy device in accordance with the present invention showing internal and external structures
15 in a ready-to-use state;

Fig. 10B depicts the tracheotomy device of Fig. 10A in an extended used state;

Fig. 10C depicts a magnified side view of a trocar sleeve used in the tracheotomy device of Fig. 10A;

Fig. 10D depicts a magnified top view of a trocar sleeve used in the tracheotomy
20 device of Fig. 10A;

Fig. 11 depicts the tracheotomy device of Fig. 1 positioned above a trachea of a person;

Fig. 12A depicts another embodiment of a tracheotomy device in accordance with the present invention in perspective view; and,

25 Fig. 12B depicts the embodiment of Fig. 12A in a cross-sectional perspective view.

Description of Preferred Embodiments

Referring to Fig. 1, a tracheotomy device **1** includes a housing comprising a hollow open-ended tube **5** containing a trocar **10** supported in a trocar seal and support **15**. The tube **5** may have any suitable cross-sectional shape, for example circular, rectangular, square, hexagonal and the like. The trocar seal and support **15** comprises an annular sealing member having a through aperture through which the trocar **10** extends, the sealing member forming a seal with an outer surface of the trocar **10** so that the trocar **10** cannot move translationally in the trocar seal and support **15**. The trocar seal and support **15** is slidably engaged within the tube **5**. Thus, the trocar **10** moves with the trocar seal and support **15** when the device **1** is activated. The seal may be a friction seal or an adhesive seal.

The tube **5** comprises spring retainer **20** inside and proximate a proximal end of the tube **5**. The spring retainer **20** may be an annular protrusion fully or partially around an inner circumference of the tube **5** or it may be two or more separate protrusions extending into the tube **5** from an inner wall of the tube **5**. A coiled spring **25** is located between the spring retainer **20** and the trocar seal and support **15**. Fig. 1 shows the device in a ready-to-use state so the coiled spring **25** is compressed between the spring retainer **20** and the trocar seal and support **15** biasing the trocar seal and support **15** toward a distal end of the tube **5**. Seal engagement portions **31a**, **31b** of release clips **30a**, **30b** engage a bottom surface of the trocar seal and support **15** to prevent the coiled spring **25** from moving the trocar seal and support **15** toward the distal end of the tube **5**. The release clips **30a**, **30b** are pivotally mounted on release clip mounts **32a**, **32b** through pivot pins **33a**, **33b** (e.g. rivets). The release clip mounts **32a**, **32b** comprise outwardly extending flanges having through apertures for accepting the pivot pins **33a**, **33b**. The pressure exerted on the seal engagement portions **31a**, **31b** of the release clips **30a**, **30b** by the trocar seal and support **15** as a result of the force exerted by the coiled spring **25** is sufficient to prevent pivoting of the release clips **30a**, **30b** unless significant force is applied to lever arms **34a**, **34b** of the release clips **30a**, **30b**. The lever arms **34a**, **34b** are configured to be actuated simultaneously by one hand of a person using the device **1**. For example, the two lever arms **34a**, **34b** may be depressed simultaneously by gripping the device **1** between the thumb and forefinger of one hand such that one lever arm is engaged with the thumb and the other lever arm is engaged with the forefinger. Squeezing the thumb and forefinger together would simultaneously depress the two lever arms **34a**, **34b** thereby activating the device **1**.

Proximate the distal end of the tube **5** are child setting stops **40a, 40b**. The child setting stops **40a, 40b** stop movement of the trocar seal and support **15** and therefore stop movement of the trocar **10** after the device **1** is activated. The child setting stops **40a, 40b** are positioned and sized in relation to a length of the trocar **10** to stop movement of the trocar seal and support **15** when the trocar **10** reaches an extended position appropriate for a trachea of a child. If the device **1** is to be used on an adult, the child setting stops **40a, 40b** may be removed through apertures in the side walls of the tube **5** (see Fig. 3). The child setting stops **40a, 40b** comprise pull tabs **41a, 41b**, which allow removal of the child setting stops **40a, 40b** from the inside of the tube **5**. Applying a lateral force to the pull tabs **41a, 41b** results in pulling the child setting stops **40a, 40b** out through apertures in the side walls of the tube **5**. In a variation, only one child setting stop may be used on one side of the trocar as one stop would be sufficient to arrest the movement of the trocar seal and support. Some variations of child setting stops are illustrated in Fig. 5 and Fig. 6.

Adult setting stop **45** is provided inside the tube **5** distally from the child setting stops **40a, 40b**. The adult setting stop **45** is positioned and sized in relation to the length of the trocar **10** to stop movement of the trocar seal and support **15** when the trocar **10** reaches an extended position appropriate for a trachea of an adult. The adult setting stop **45** may be a protrusion fully or partially around the inner circumference of the tube **5** or it may be two or more separate protrusions extending into the tube **5** from the inner wall of the tube **5**. If the device **1** is to be a three setting device rather than a two setting device, the adult setting stop **45** may be constructed in a manner similar to the child setting stops.

The child setting stops **40a, 40b** and the adult setting stop **45** should be sized to permit the trocar **10** to pass unimpeded while stopping the trocar seal and support **15** at the appropriate position.

Final retainer **50** is provided inside the tube **5** distally from the adult setting stop **45**. The final retainer **50** provides further support to absorb the force generated by the coiled spring **25** when the trocar seal and support **15** is forced against the child setting stops **40a, 40b** or the adult setting stop **45**. In addition, if the adult setting stop **45** is removable, the final retainer **50** may be positioned and sized in relation to the length of the trocar **10** to stop movement of the trocar seal and support **15** when the trocar **10** reaches an extended position appropriate for a trachea of an extra-large adult.

At the distal end of the tube **5**, the tube **5** may comprise an inwardly depending surface **52** narrowing to an aperture **53** that is large enough to permit egress of the trocar

10 out of the tube **5** while small enough to ensure that the trocar **10** maintains linear movement as it passes out of the tube **5**. The inwardly depending surface **52** comprises alignment tabs **55a**, **55b** that are positioned, sized and shaped to guide the device **1** naturally to the correct position in a suprasternal notch of a person on which the device **1** is being used. For durability and performance, spring retainer **20**, final retainer **50**, release clip mounts **32a**, **32b** and alignment tabs **55a**, **55b** may be monolithically molded with the tube **5**.

Referring to Fig. 2, a tracheotomy device **100** of generally the same construction as the device of Fig. 1 is shown. The device **100** comprises a mouthpiece **101** at a proximal end of hollow tube **105**. The mouthpiece **100** has a larger diameter than the tube **105** and the diameter of the mouthpiece **100** is sized to fit comfortably in a person's mouth. The mouthpiece **100** is shown monolithically molded with the tube **105**, but it may alternatively be a separate piece that is fitted on to the tube **105**. Friction fittings, mated screw threads, clips or any other suitable structures may be used to fit the mouthpiece to the tube.

Fig. 3 depicts an external surface of the tracheotomy device of Fig. 1 rotated 90-degrees about a vertical axis in which the release clip **30a** and the child setting stop **40a** are removed. As seen in Fig. 3 with reference to Fig. 1, the tube **5** comprises a through aperture **35** through which the seal engagement portions **31a** extends when the device **1** is in the ready-to-use state. When the lever arm **34a** of the release clip **30a** is depressed with sufficient force toward the tube **5**, the release clip **30a** pivots on pivot pin **33a** mounted on the release clip mount **32a** causing the seal engagement portion **31a** to slide out of the through aperture **35** thereby releasing the trocar seal and support **15** to move under the force of the coiled spring **25**. There is a similar arrangement on the other side of the tube **5** in relation to the release clip **30b**. Simultaneously depressing both of the lever arms **34a**, **34b** of both release clips **30a**, **30b** permits simultaneous release of the trocar seal and support **15** on both sides of the tube **5** so that the trocar **10** may move in a substantially linear path out of the tube **5** with minimal lateral movement away from the vertical axis. Lateral movement of the trocar **10** is preferably avoided so that the trocar **10** does not jam in the tube **5** and so that the trocar **10** pierces the trachea cleanly between cartilaginous rings of the neck.

Fig. 4 depicts the device of Fig. 3 with an alternative embodiment of the release clip mount **32a**. The release clip mount comprises two substantially parallel outwardly extending flanges **32a'**, **32a''** having the pivot pin **33a** mounted therebetween. Providing an additional outwardly extending flange provides greater durability and better support for

the release clips. A similar release clip mount may be present on the other side of the tube **5**, although it is possible to use different release clip mounts on each side.

Referring again to Fig. 3, the tube **5** comprises a through aperture **44** proximate the distal end of the tube **5** through which the child setting stop **40a** may be removed.

5 There may be a similar arrangement on the other side of the tube **5**. Referring to Fig. 5 and Fig. 6, variations of child setting stops are illustrated. In all cases, the width of the child setting stops should be no larger than the width of the through aperture **44** so that the stop may be pulled out through the aperture **44**. As shown in Fig. 5, the child setting stop **40a** may comprise a rectangular solid portion **42** that extends into the tube **5** through

10 the aperture **44** and a pull tab **41a** attached to or integrally formed with the rectangular solid portion **42** that protrudes outwardly from the tube **5**. Since the rectangular solid portion **42** rests on the adult setting stop **45** inside the tube **5**, no further support is necessarily required. However, it is possible that the child setting stop **40a** could move farther inward thereby potentially interfering with movement of the trocar **10**. If further

15 surety is required, a child setting stop **140a** as illustrated in Fig. 6 may be employed in which a lip **143** is provided between a rectangular solid portion **142** and a pull tab **141a**. The lip **143** is located exterior to the tube **5** and is dimensioned larger than the aperture **44** to prevent the rectangular solid portion **142** from migrating farther into the tube **5**.

Fig. 7A, Fig. 7B, Fig. 8A and Fig. 8B illustrate the operation of the device **1**. Fig.

20 7A depicts the tracheotomy device **1** in the ready-to-use state for a child, as already described in relation to Fig. 1. When the device **1** is in the ready-to-use state, the trocar **10** is fully within the tube **5**. When the lever arms **34a**, **34b** are depressed simultaneously, the trocar seal and support **15** is released and the coiled spring **25** biasing the trocar seal and support **15** toward the distal end of the tube **5** is allowed to extend thereby driving the

25 trocar seal and support **15** toward the distal end of the tube **5**. The trocar **10** is driven with the trocar seal and support **15** as the trocar seal and support **15** slides in the tube **5** until the trocar seal and support **15** abuts the child setting stops **40a**, **40b** in the extended used state (Fig. 7B). In the extended used state, the trocar **10** now protrudes from the distal end of the tube **5** at a distance appropriate for a tracheotomy on a child. As can be seen

30 in Fig. 7B, the lever arms **34a**, **34b** are now up against the side wall of the tube **5** and the seal engagement portions **31a**, **31b** of the release clips **30a**, **30b** are outside the tube **5**. Further, the trocar seal and support **15** abutting the child setting stops **40a**, **40b** provides for a seal so that air being blown into the tube **5** from the proximal end of the tube **5** can pass through the trocar **10** rather escaping between the inner wall of the tube **5** and an

35 outer edge of the trocar seal and support **15**. To further enhance the seal, a sealing

element (e.g. an o-ring or a gasket) may be provided on a bottom surface of the trocar seal and support **15**. Fig. 8A and Fig. 8B illustrate the same operation except that the tracheotomy device **1** in the ready-to-use state for an adult. It can be seen in Fig. 8A and Fig. 8B that the child setting stops **40a**, **40b** have been removed so that the trocar seal and support **15** abuts the adult setting stop **45** in the extended used state. Thus, the trocar **10** extends further out from the tube **1** when the device **1** is used for an adult (compare Fig. 8B to Fig. 7B).

Referring to Figs. 9A-9H, another embodiment of a tracheotomy device **200** is depicted comprising many similar features as the device of Fig. 1 including a housing comprising a hollow open-ended tube **205**, a trocar **210**, a trocar seal and support **215**, a spring retainer **220**, a coiled spring **225**, release clips **230a**, **230b**, a final retainer **250**, a trocar exit aperture **253** and alignment tabs **255a**, **255b**. The tracheotomy device **200** is equipped with a mouthpiece **201**. The operation of the tracheotomy device **200** is substantially the same as the operation of the tracheotomy device **1** and **100** of Figs. 1-2.

In the tracheotomy device **200** a single-piece child setting stop **240** is provided, the child setting stop **240** comprising a single pull tab **241**. A single-piece adult setting stop **245** on which the child setting stop **240** rests is also provided. The adult setting stop **245** also has only one pull tab **247**. The design of the setting stops **240**, **245** are substantially the same and is described in relation to the child setting stop **240** as depicted in Figs. 9C-9D. The adult setting stop **245** rests on an extra-large adult setting stop **246**. Both the child setting stop **240** and the adult setting stop **245** are removable by pulling on the respective pull tabs **241**, **247**. The extra-large adult setting stop **246** is not removable and comprises a substantially annular ring resting on the final retainer **250** inside the tube **205**. As shown in Fig. 9C, the child setting stop **240** (as well as the adult setting stop **245**) comprises a generally annular disc surrounding a central aperture **242** through which the trocar **210** may pass. The generally annular disc has an arc section cut out therefrom to form a slot **243** of sufficient size so that the trocar **210** will pass through the slot **243** when the pull tab **241** of the child setting stop **240** is pulled to remove the child setting stop **240** from the tube **205**. Fig. 9E illustrates how a cut-away **249** is disposed in the tube **205** to provide sufficient clearance for the child and adult setting stops **240**, **245** to be pulled out of the tube **205**. The child and adult setting stops **240**, **245** and the cut-away **249** should be sized and constructed so that the setting stops **240**, **245** cannot simply fall out of the tube **205**, but can be pulled out of the tube **205** without exerting undue force.

Referring again to Figs. 9A-9B as well as to Figs. 9F-9G, the tracheotomy device **200** also comprises a green usage flag **235** (although other colors may be used) associated with the trocar seal and support **215**. The usage flag **235** may comprise plastic, although any suitable material may be employed. When the device **200** is in the ready-to-use state, the usage flag **235** depends downwardly from the trocar seal and support **215**, and is visible either through transparent/translucent material of the tube **205** or through a window in the tube **205**. The trocar seal and support **215** also comprises a recess **236** so that when the trocar seal and support **215** is driven distally carrying the trocar **210** fixed in aperture **237** of the trocar seal and support **215**, the usage flag **235** is driven into the recess **236** by the force of the impact on one of the setting stops, for example the child setting stop **240** as shown in Fig. 9B. Thus, when the device **200** is in the used state, the usage flag **235** does not depend below the trocar seal and support **215**. In the event that the trocar **210** is reloaded by forcing the trocar **210** with the trocar seal and support **215** back into the tube **205** and re-setting the release clips **230a**, **230b**, the usage flag **235** will remain in the recess **236** indicating that the device **200** has already been used.

To provide further security from tampering, the recess **236** may be wholly inside the trocar seal and support **215** except for an exposed bottom into which the usage flag **235** may be driven. Thus, the usage flag **235** would not be visible at all from the sides of the device **200** when the device **200** is in the used state. The visual absence of the usage flag **235** as viewed from the side of the device **200** would then be an indicator that the device **200** has been used.

Referring to Figs. 10A-10B, another embodiment of a tracheotomy device **300** is depicted comprising many similar features as the device of Fig. 1 including a housing comprising a hollow open-ended tube **305**, a trocar **310**, a trocar seal and support **315**, a spring retainer **320**, a coiled spring **325**, release clips **330a**, **330b**, a final retainer **350**, a trocar exit aperture **353** and alignment tabs **355a**, **355b**. The operation of the tracheotomy device **300** is substantially the same as the operation of the tracheotomy device **1** of Fig. 1.

However, the tracheotomy device **300** also comprises features beneficial in the event the device is successfully used on an unconscious subject and the subject subsequently regains consciousness. Upon regaining consciousness, the subject is often prone to coughing, panic and/or other vigorous movement. Such activity may dislodge the device. Thus, the tracheotomy device **300** may further comprise a trocar sleeve **370** around the trocar **310**, the trocar sleeve **370** being driven with the trocar **310** when the

device **300** is actuated. The trocar sleeve **370** may be driven by a hollow cylindrical spacer **380** between the trocar sleeve **370** and the trocar seal and support **315**, the spacer **380** also surrounding the trocar **310**. The spacer **380** is driven by the trocar seal and support **315** when the coiled spring **325** is released by activation of the release clips **330a**, **330b**. Alternatively, the trocar sleeve **370** may be sufficiently long that the trocar seal and support **315** drives the sleeve **370** directly. The trocar sleeve **370** and/or hollow cylindrical spacer **380** may comprise any suitable material, for example plastic.

Referring to Figs. 10C-10D, the trocar sleeve **370** may be of similar shape to the hollow tube **305**, for example cylindrical, and may comprise a sleeve body **375** and a through aperture **374** through the sleeve body **375** through which the trocar **310** extends. The trocar sleeve **370** may comprise a tapered distal edge **372** to facilitate entry into the hole in the trachea created by the trocar **310**. The trocar sleeve **370** may also comprise a radially extending flange **371** toward a proximal end of the sleeve **370** to prevent the sleeve **370** from completely entering the hole in the trachea to avoid loss of the sleeve **370** in the subject's trachea. The flange **371** has a larger diameter than the body **375** of so that the flange **371** may engage the surface of the subject's neck around the hole created by the trocar. The sleeve **370** is preferably a monolithic structure.

When the device **300** is actuated, the trocar sleeve **370** is driven into the hole in the trachea created by the trocar **310**. In the event the subject regains consciousness and moves vigorously due to coughing, panicking or the like, the trocar **310** may be dislodged from the hole in the trachea and from the through aperture **374** in the trocar sleeve **370**, but the trocar sleeve **370** may remain in the hole to keep the hole open. To help prevent the trocar sleeve **370** from also becoming dislodged, sides of the sleeve body **375** may comprise one or more features that allow easy penetration while resisting removal. Such features may comprise one or more protrusions, screw threads, or the like. For example, Fig. 10C depicts radially extending ridges **373** (only one labelled) that are angled toward the proximal end to permit easy penetration into the hole while resisting removal from the hole. The trocar sleeve **370** may be removed by medical personnel when the wound in the trachea is treated. The use of a trocar sleeve may also permit deliberate removal of the trocar, if desired, since the subject could breathe through the sleeve rather than the trocar.

Referring to Fig. 11, in use the tracheotomy device **1** is placed vertically in suprasternal notch **75** of a person **60** lying prone (horizontally). The suprasternal notch **75** is at the top of the sternum (not shown) between the clavicles **80** of the person **60**. The suprasternal notch **75** is colloquially known as the hollow of the throat. At the suprasternal

notch **75**, the device **1** is above a trachea **85** (shown in dashed lines) of the person **60**. The alignment tabs **55a**, **55b** (drawn in stippled lines) guide and position the device **1** in the suprasternal notch **75** such that the trocar **10** is aligned above a gap **92** between two cartilaginous rings **90a**, **90b** of the trachea **85** to facilitate insertion of the trocar **10** into the trachea **85**. Once aligned, the release clips **30a**, **30b** are actuated and the trocar **10** springs down under the force of the coiled spring to pierce the trachea **85** in the gap **92** between the cartilaginous rings **90a**, **90b**. With the proper setting (child or adult, or possibly large adult) the trocar **10** will pierce the anterior wall of the trachea **85** without piercing the posterior wall of the trachea **85**. With the trocar **10** in the person's trachea, the person may now breathe through the trocar **10**, or another person may blow into the proximal end of the tube **5** and thus into the trocar **10** to assist with the person's breathing.

Referring to Figs. 12A-12B, another embodiment of a tracheotomy device **400** is depicted comprising many similar features as the device of Fig. 1 including a housing comprising a hollow open-ended tube **405**, a trocar **410**, a trocar support **415**, a spring retainer **420**, a coiled spring **425**, release clips **430a**, **430b** (not shown in Figs. 12A-12B), a final retainer **450**, and a trocar exit aperture **453**. Alignment tabs **455a**, **455b** (not shown in Figs. 12A-12B) may also optionally be provided. The tracheotomy device **400** is equipped with a mouthpiece **401** provided with a removable cap **499**. The operation of the tracheotomy device **400** is substantially the same as the operation of the tracheotomy device **1** and **100** of Figs. 1-2.

The housing comprises the mouthpiece **401** at one end, the exit aperture **453** at an opposite end and the hollow tube **405** therebetween. The hollow tube **405** has an exterior threaded surface **498** thereon. The housing further comprises a rotatable ring **497** having an interior threaded surface **496** complementary to the exterior threaded surface **498**, a rounded end **495** configured to guide the device **400** to an appropriate location in a suprasternal notch of a subject and a ring aperture **496** aligned with exit aperture **453**, thereby permitting passage of the trocar **410** therethrough. The rotatable ring **497** functions as a depth selector by altering the length of the housing. Rotation of the ring **497** moves the ring along the complementary exterior and interior threaded surfaces **498**, **496**, causing it to extend or retract axially along the hollow tube **405**. Movement of the ring axially serves to lengthen or shorten the housing and changes the distance between the exit aperture **453** and the ring aperture **496**. Since the trocar **410** protrudes a fixed length from the exit aperture **453**, lengthening the housing causes the trocar to protrude through the ring aperture **496** a shorter distance from the rounded end of the ring **497**.

Since the rounded end **495** of the ring **497** is placed against the throat of the subject, lengthening of the housing effectively causes the trocar **410** to penetrate a shorter distance into the trachea than if the housing were shortened. Thus, depth control of the trocar **410** is possible. Although depth control is infinite, indicia (not shown) on the
5 exterior of the ring **497** can be provided to guide a user of the device **400** to extend the housing to suggested lengths and corresponding trocar penetration depths.

The novel features of the present invention will become apparent to those of skill in the art upon examination of the detailed description of the invention. It should be understood, however, that the scope of the claims should not be limited by the preferred
10 embodiments set forth in the examples, but should be given the broadest interpretation consistent with the specification as a whole.

Claims:

1. A tracheotomy device comprising:

a housing comprising a hollow tube having a proximal end and a distal end with an inwardly depending guide surface having a central exit aperture, the guide surface
5 configured to guide the device to an appropriate location in a suprasternal notch of a subject for performing a tracheotomy on the subject;

a hollow penetrator associated with the housing, the penetrator resiliently moveable from a retracted restrained position to an extended operational position with sufficient force to penetrate a tracheal wall, the operational position extending a pre-
10 determined distance from the housing through the exit aperture, the pre-determined distance correlated to a distance required to penetrate an anterior side of the tracheal wall without penetrating a posterior side of the tracheal wall; and,

an actuator associated with the housing and the penetrator and configured for use in one hand for releasing the penetrator to be resiliently moved from the restrained
15 position to the operational position, the housing comprising integrally formed spaced-apart protrusions on the guide surface that are positioned, sized and shaped to sit between cartilaginous rings of a trachea of the subject when the guide surface is within the suprasternal notch of the subject, the exit aperture located between the spaced-apart protrusions to guide the penetrator to a position above tissue covering a gap between the
20 cartilaginous rings so that moving the penetrator from the restrained position to the operational position pierces the tissue and causes the penetrator to enter the trachea through the gap between the cartilaginous rings to thereby perform a tracheotomy on the subject.
2. The device according to claim 1, wherein the penetrator is resiliently moveable by
25 a biasing member.
3. The device according to claim 2, wherein the biasing member comprises a spring.
4. The device according to claim 2, wherein the biasing member comprises a compression spring.
5. The device according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the actuator comprises
30 a depressible structure disposed on a side of the housing whereby pressing the actuator applies a lateral force relative to direction of motion of the penetrator that releases the

penetrator to be resiliently moved from the restrained position to the operational position to create an opening in the tracheal wall.

6. The device according to claim 5, wherein the penetrator is restrained in the retracted position by a resiliently deflectable restraint, and wherein the depressible structure is in abutting contact with the resiliently deflectable restraint, whereby depressing the depressible structure deflects the restraint to release the penetrator for resilient movement to the operational position.

7. The device according to claim 5 or claim 6, wherein the actuator comprises two depressible structures disposed on opposed sides of the housing and configured to be simultaneously depressed by the one hand.

8. The device according to any one of claims 1 to 7, further comprising a depth selector for selecting the pre-determined distance.

9. The device according to claim 8, wherein the depth selector comprises first and second stops defining first and second pre-set positions, the first pre-set position selecting a depth appropriate for a human child and the second pre-set position selecting a depth appropriate for a human adult, the first stop extending through an aperture in the housing and configured to be removable from the housing.

10. The device according to claim 8, wherein the depth selector adjusts a position of a stop that stops the penetrator from extending beyond the pre-determined distance.

11. The device according to claim 8, wherein the depth selector comprises a rotatable ring around the housing rotatable between at least first and second positions, the first position selecting a depth appropriate for a human adult and the second position selecting a depth appropriate for a human child.

12. The device according to any one of claims 1 to 11, wherein the penetrator comprises a trocar, a needle or a scalpel.

13. The device according to any one of claims 1 to 11, wherein the penetrator comprises a hollow trocar.

14. The device according to any one of claims 1 to 13, further comprising a usage indicator that indicates whether the device is in a used state or is still in a ready-to-use state, wherein, following use, the usage indicator remains in the used state when the penetrator is re-loaded by forcing the penetrator back into the tube.

15. The device according to any one of claims 1 to 14, wherein the housing further comprises a securement structure for securing the device to the subject when the device is in operation.
16. The device according to claim 15, wherein the securement structure comprises a self-adhesive pad that binds to skin of the subject.
17. The device according to any one of claims 1 to 16, wherein the penetrator is retained within the housing and is biased from the restrained position where the penetrator is entirely housed within the housing to the operational position where at least a portion of the penetrator protrudes from the discharge aperture.
18. The device according to any one of claims 1 to 17, wherein the proximal end of the housing is configured for blowing air through the penetrator.
19. The device according to any one of claims 1 to 18, further comprising a sleeve around the penetrator, the sleeve moveable with the penetrator to enter the anterior side of the tracheal wall through a hole in the anterior side created by the penetrator penetrating the tracheal wall.
20. The device according to any one of claims 1 to 19, configured for a single use.
21. A disposable tracheotomy device comprising:
- (a) a spring-loaded hollow penetrator housed within a hollow tube, the penetrator resiliently moveable by a spring from a retracted restrained position to an extended operational position with sufficient force to penetrate a tracheal wall, the operational position extending a pre-determined distance from a distal end of the hollow tube through a central exit aperture, the pre-determined distance correlated to a distance required to penetrate an anterior side of the tracheal wall without penetrating a posterior side of the tracheal wall the distal end having a rounded guide surface configured to guide the device to an appropriate location in a suprasternal notch of a subject for performing a tracheotomy on the subject;
- (b) spaced-apart protrusions on the rounded guide surface that are positioned, sized and shaped to sit between cartilaginous rings of a trachea of the subject when the guide surface is within the suprasternal notch of the subject, the exit aperture located between the spaced-apart protrusions to guide the penetrator to a position above tissue covering a gap between the cartilaginous rings so that moving the penetrator from the restrained position to the operational position pierces the tissue and causes the

penetrator to enter the trachea through the gap between the cartilaginous rings to thereby perform a tracheotomy on the subject; and,

(c) two depressible actuators disposed on opposed sides on the housing and configured for use in one hand for releasing the spring-loaded penetrator by action of
5 lateral force relative to direction of motion of the penetrator to permit the spring to resiliently move the penetrator from the restrained position to the operational position.

22. A kit comprising a device as defined in any one of claims 1 to 21 and instructions for use of the device for performing a tracheotomy.

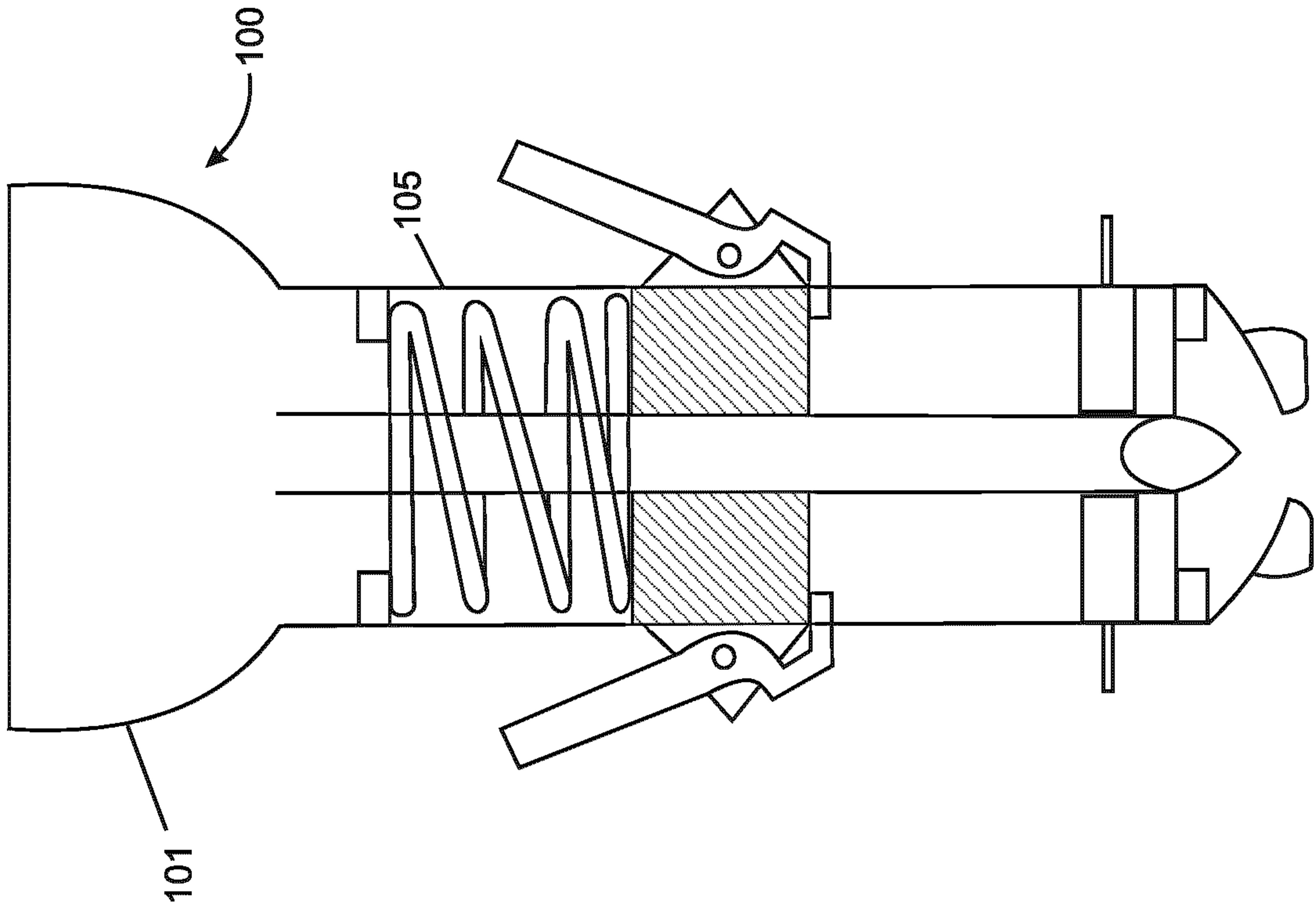


Fig. 2

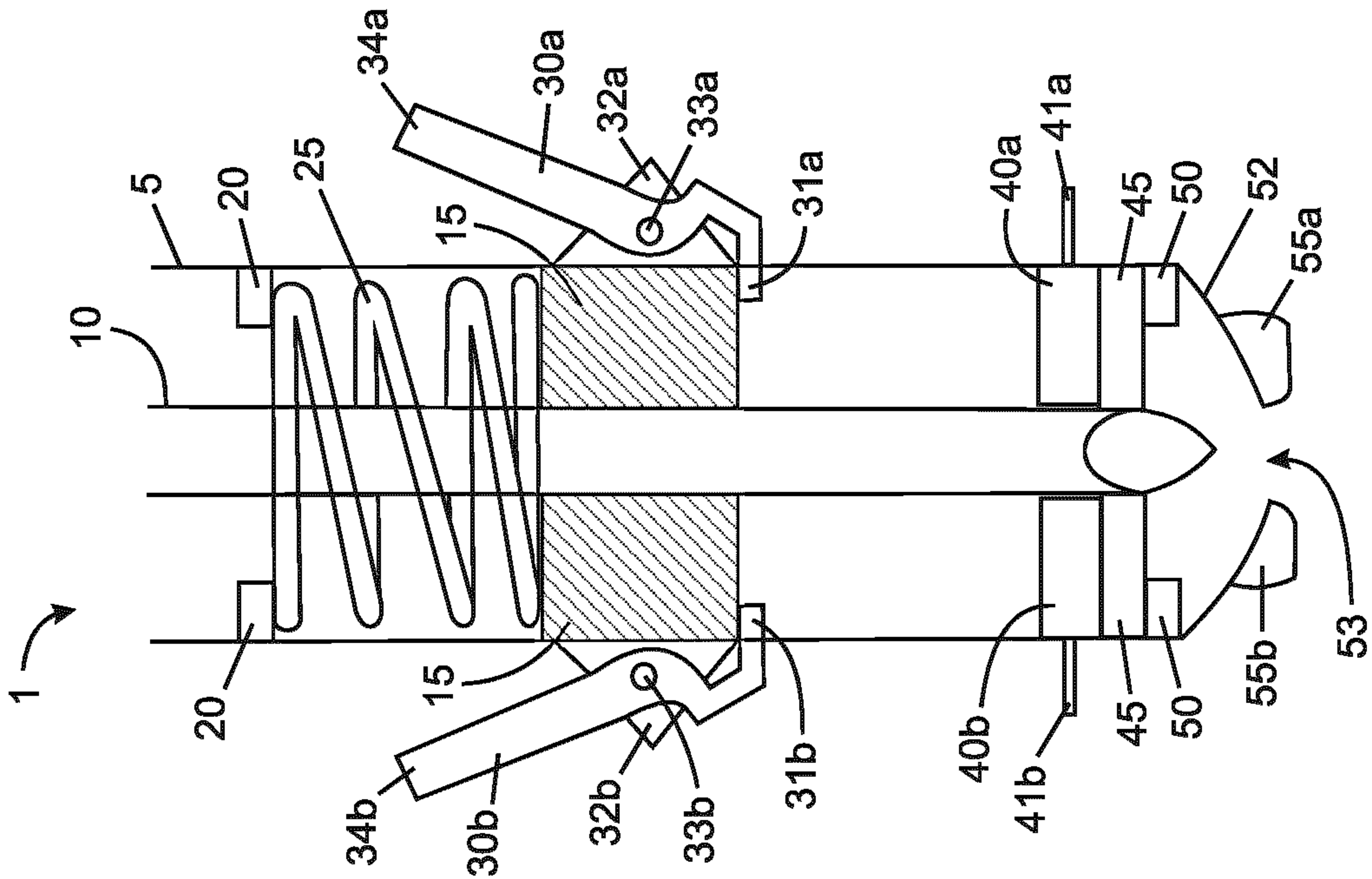


Fig. 1

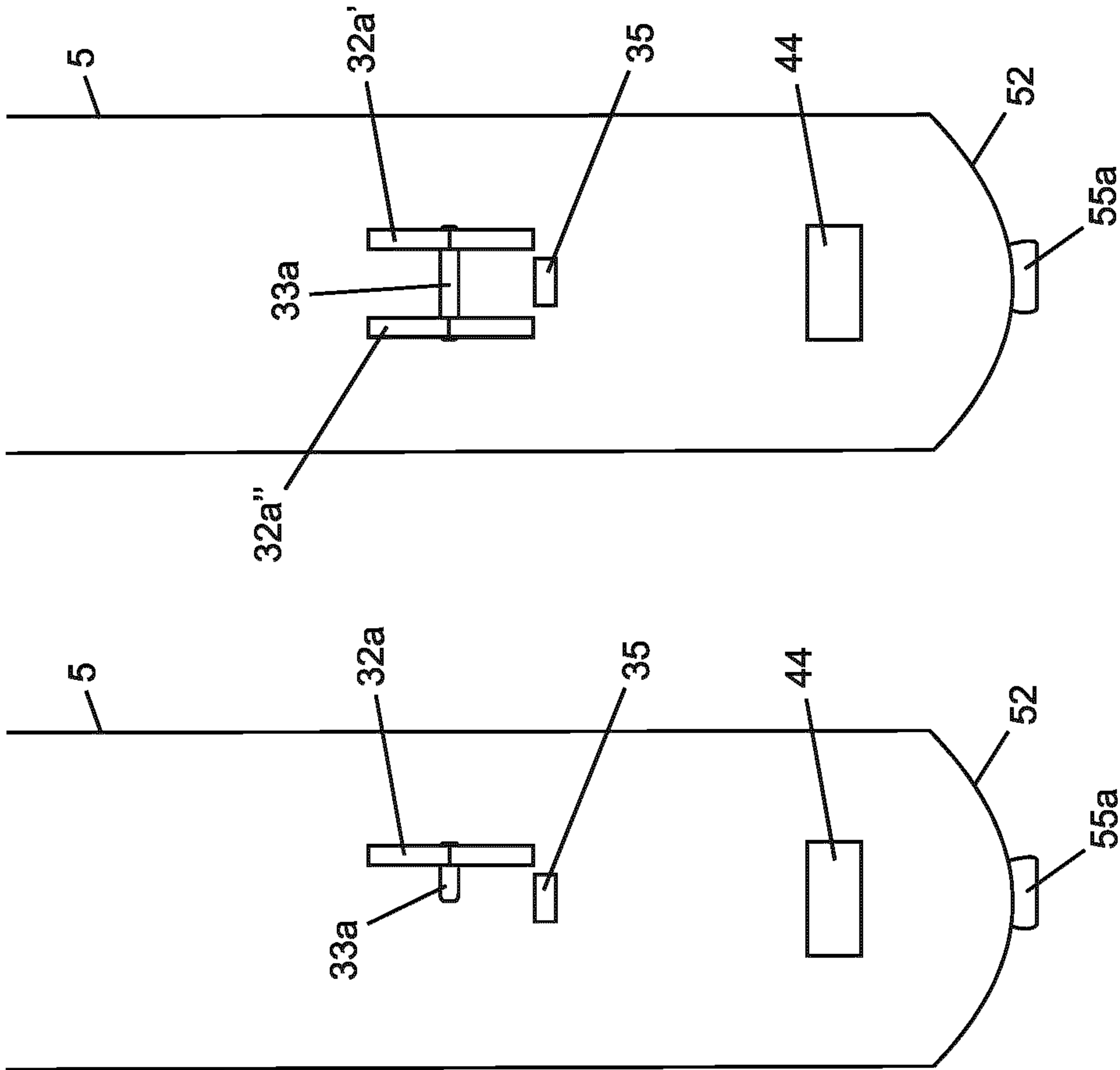


Fig. 3

Fig. 4

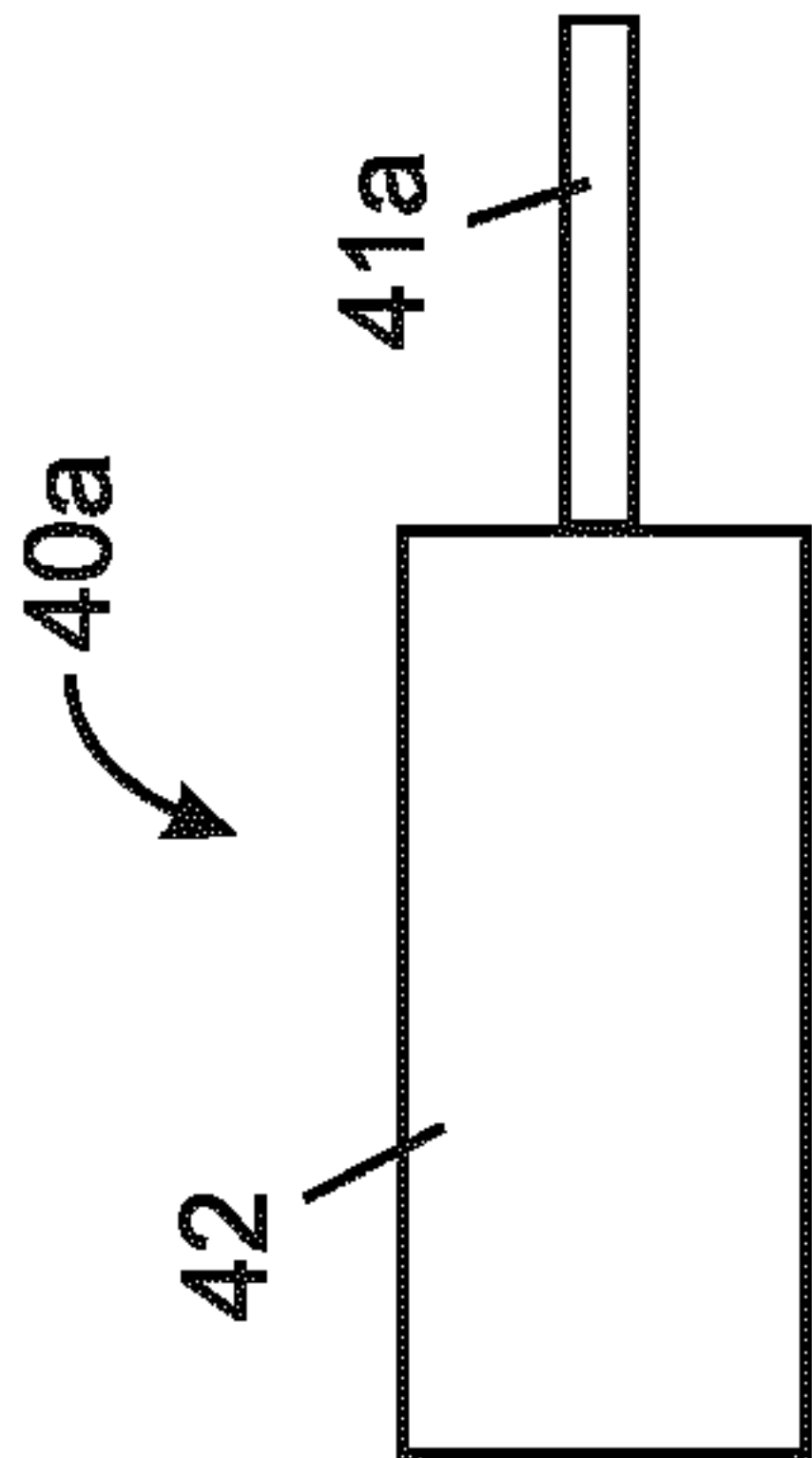


Fig. 5

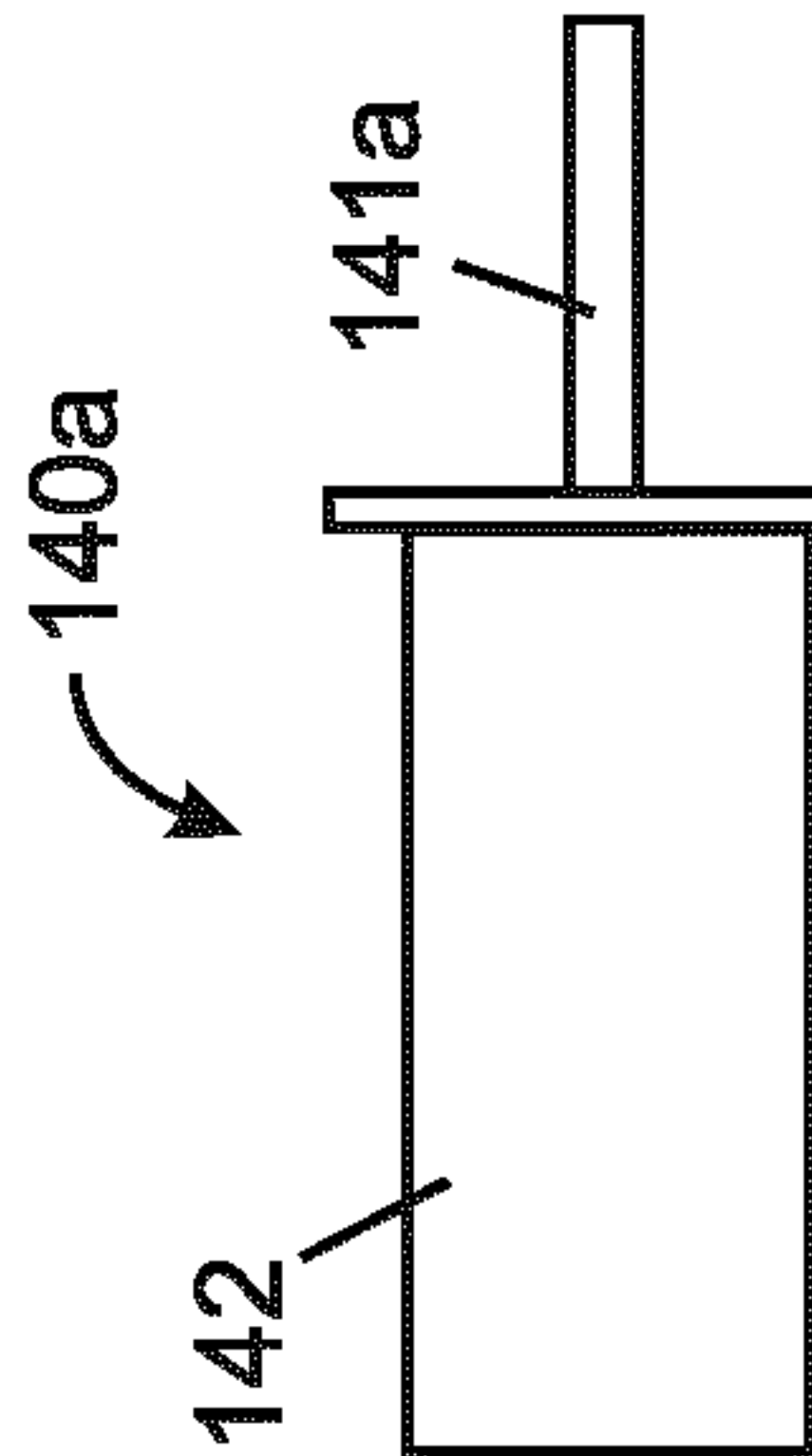


Fig. 6

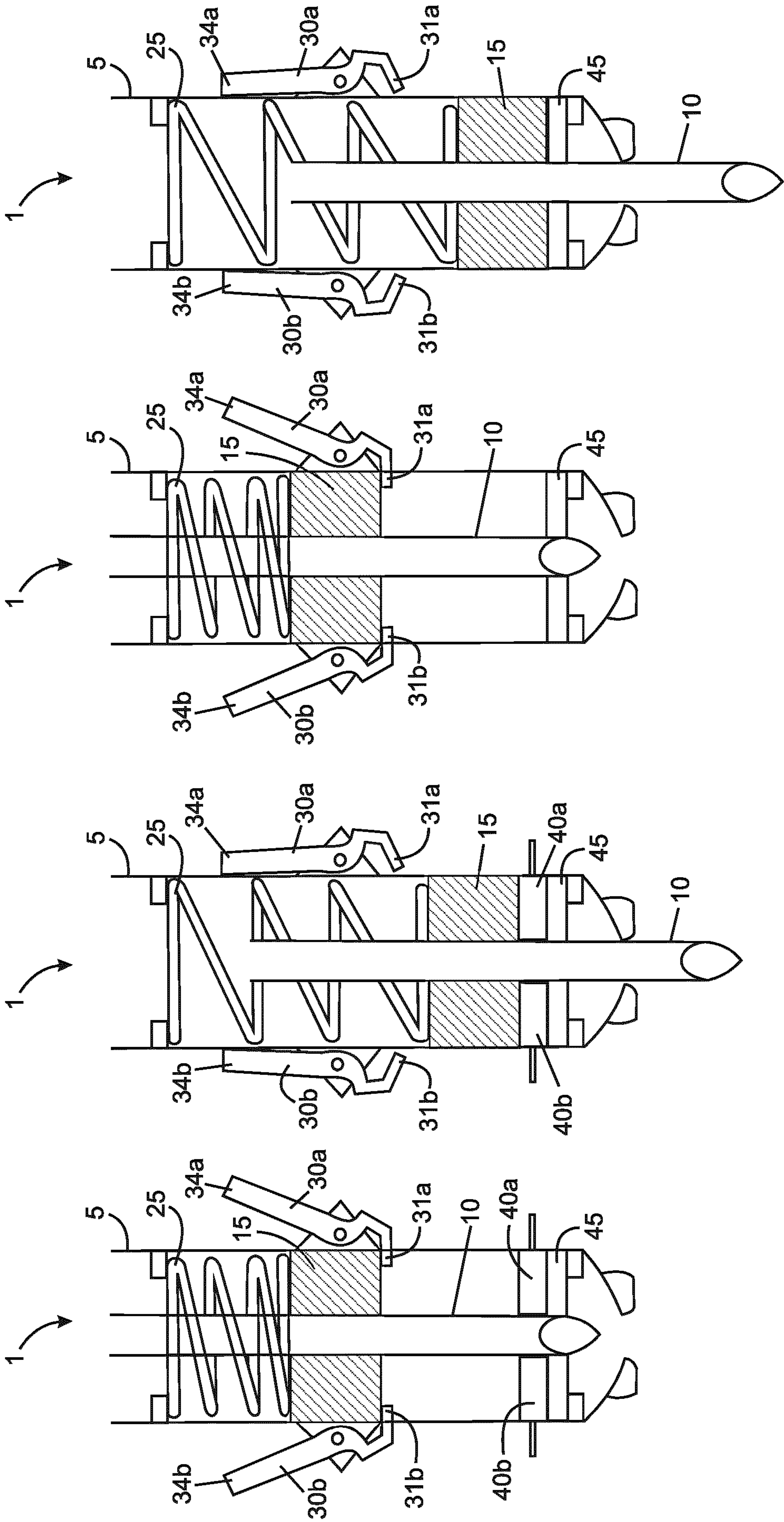


Fig. 7A

Fig. 7B

Fig. 8A

Fig. 8B

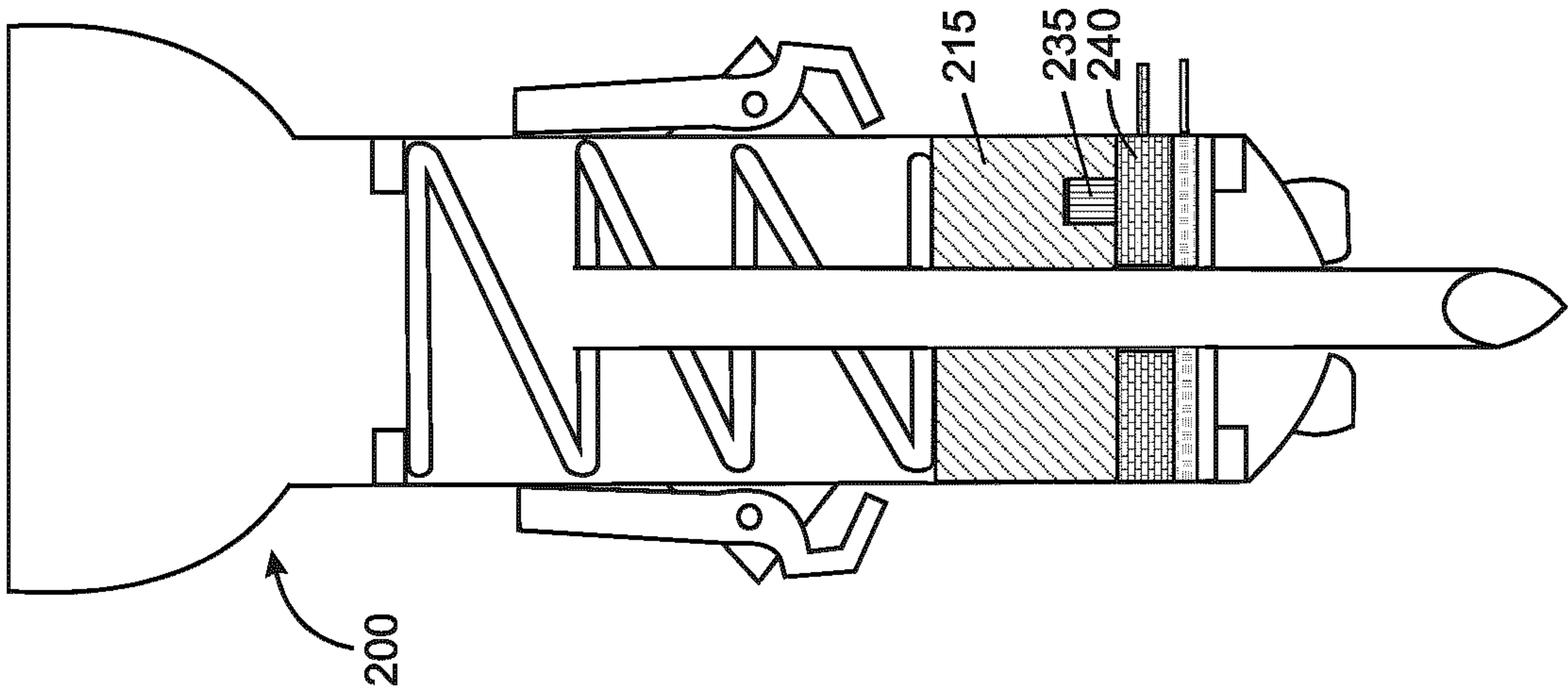


Fig. 9B

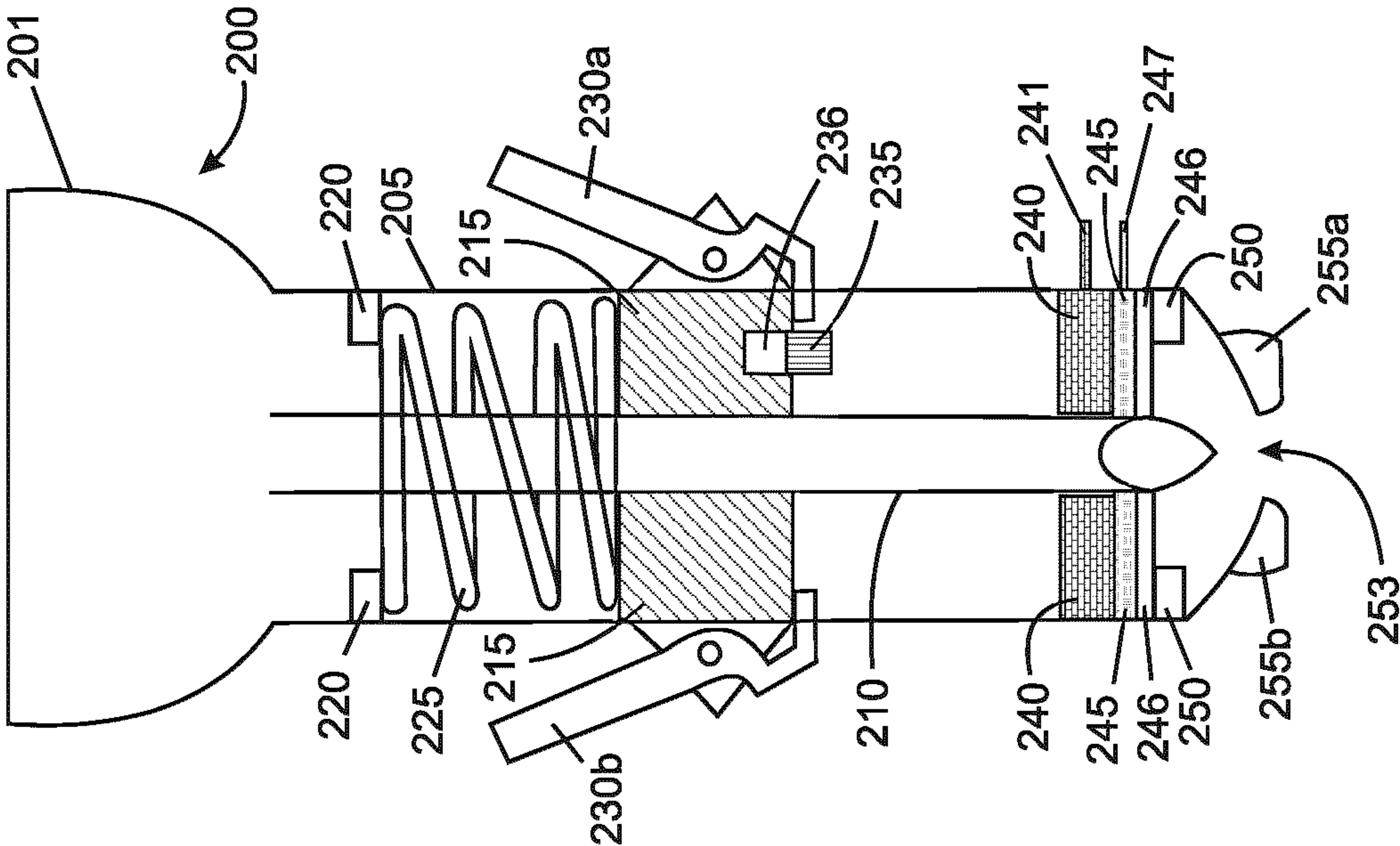


Fig. 9A

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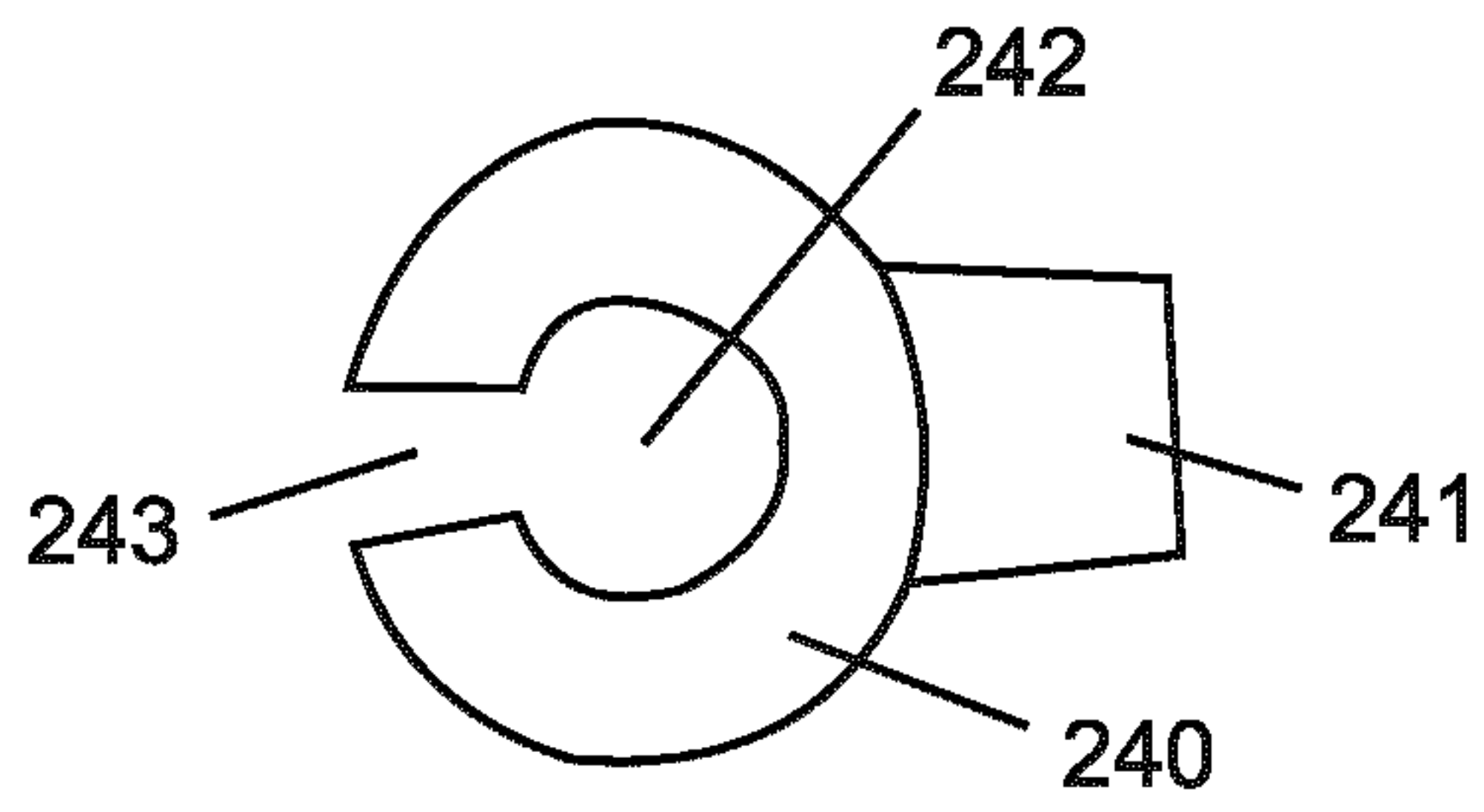


Fig. 9C

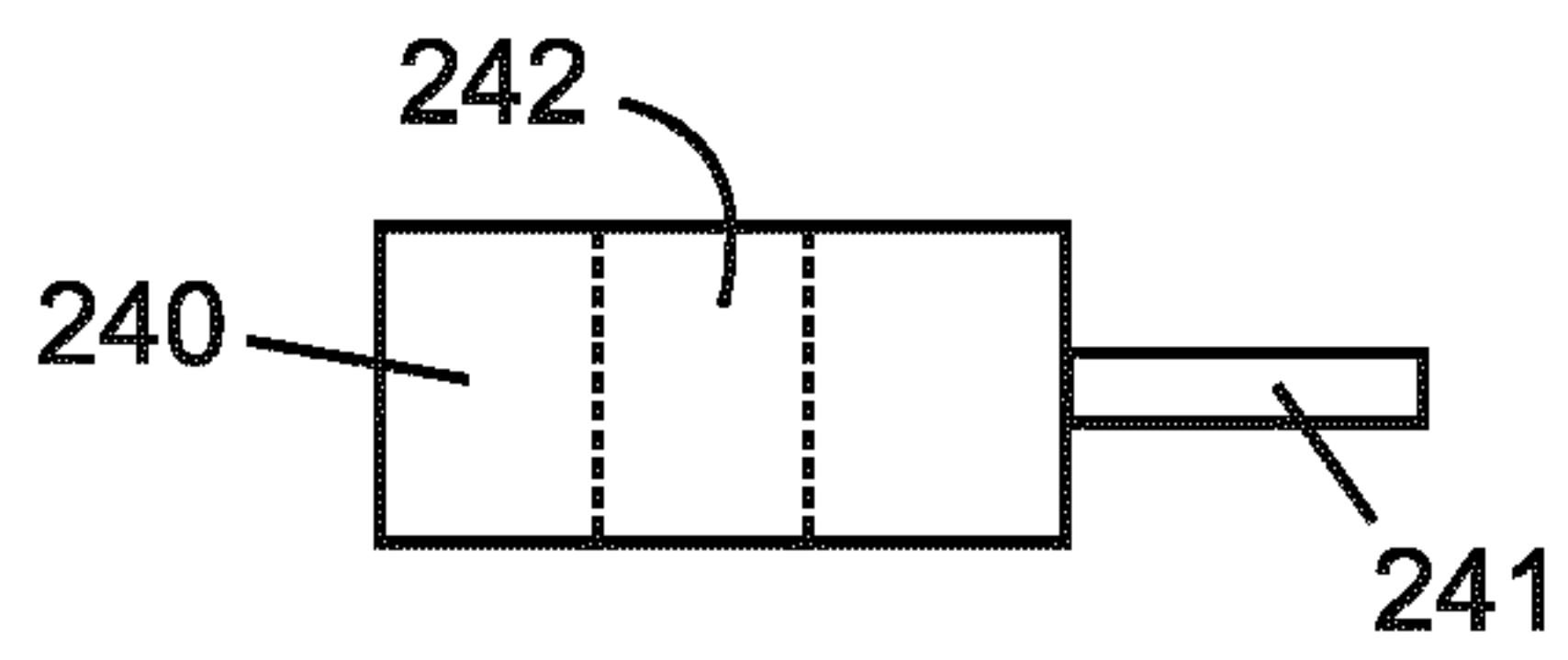


Fig. 9D

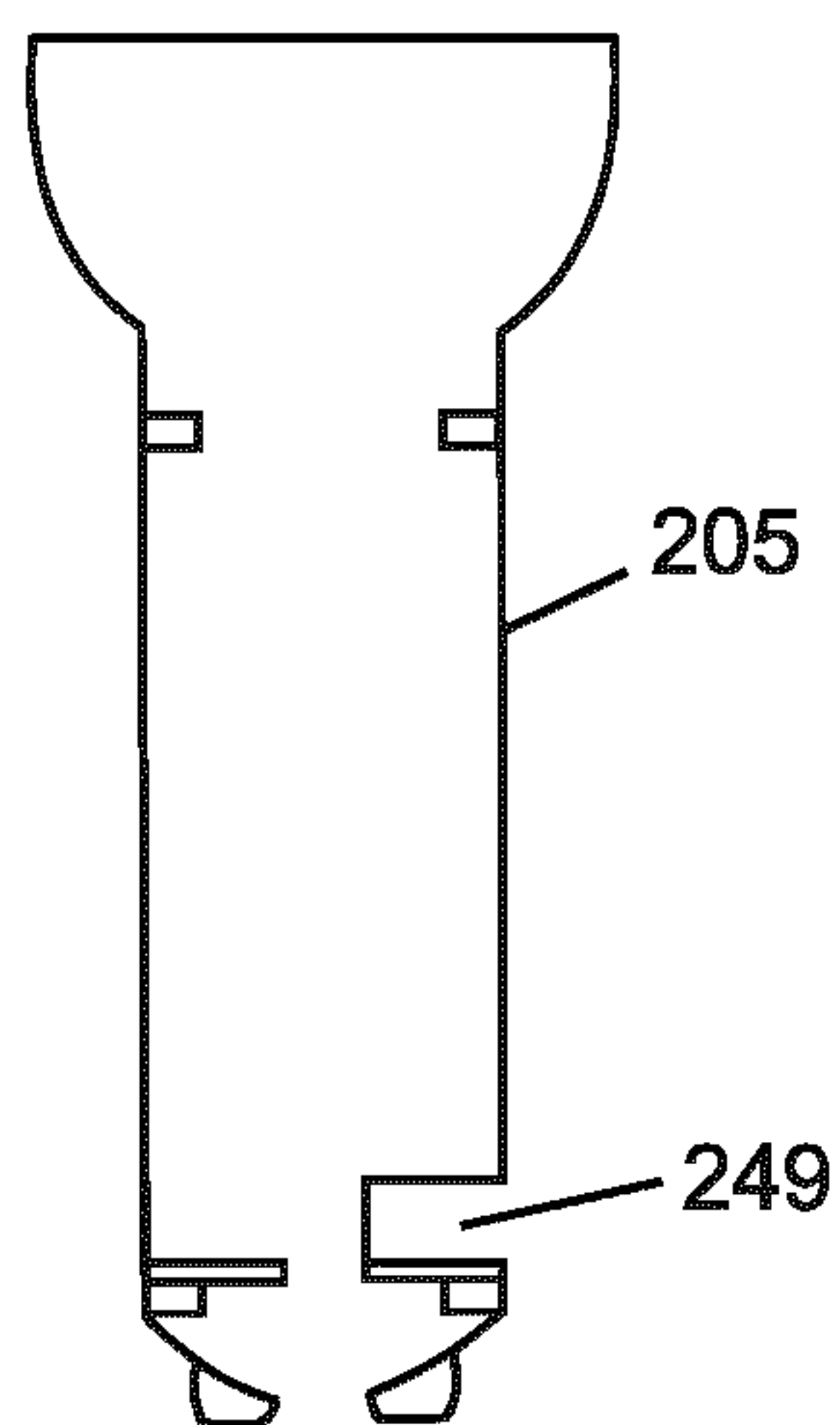


Fig. 9E

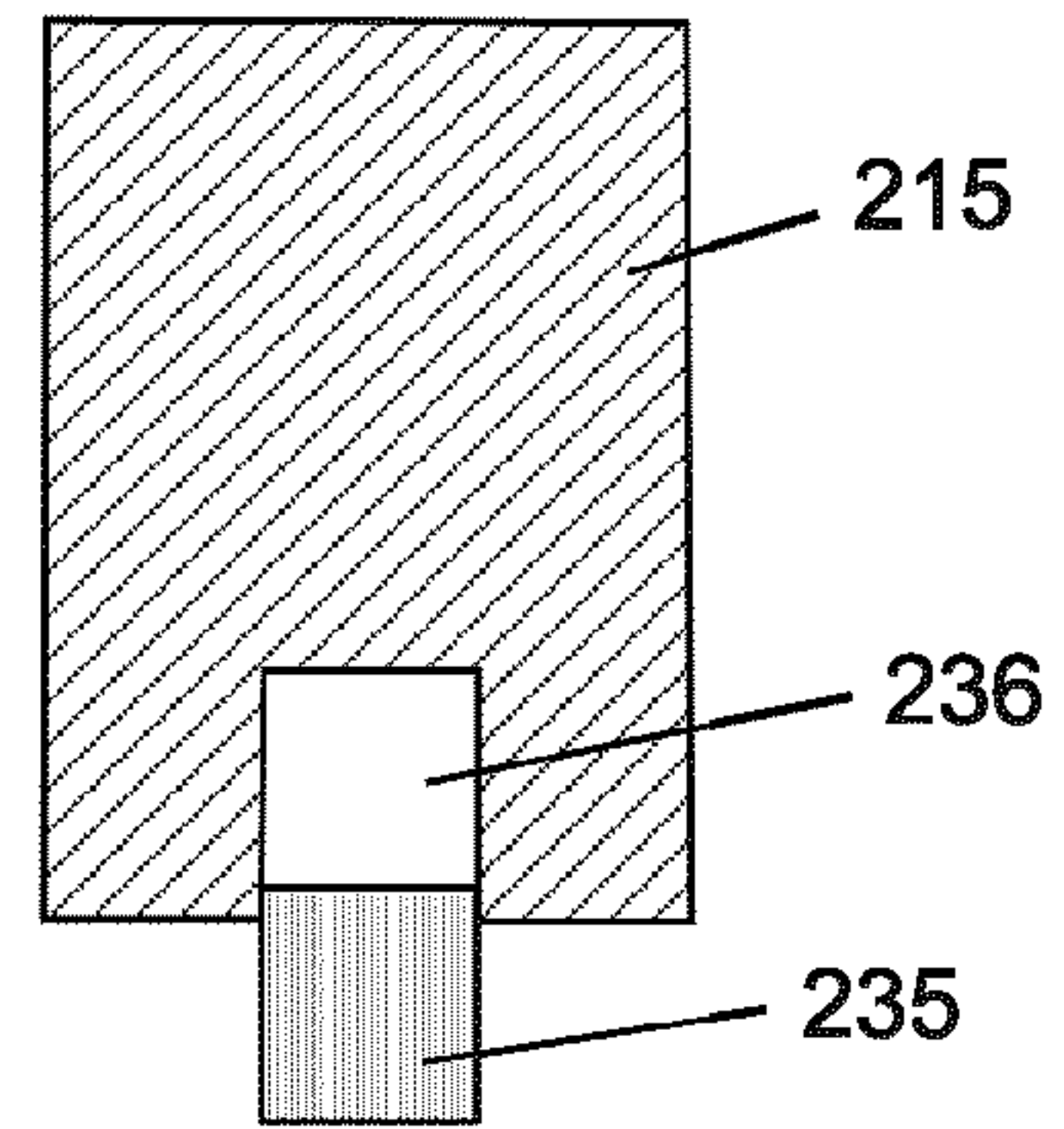


Fig. 9F

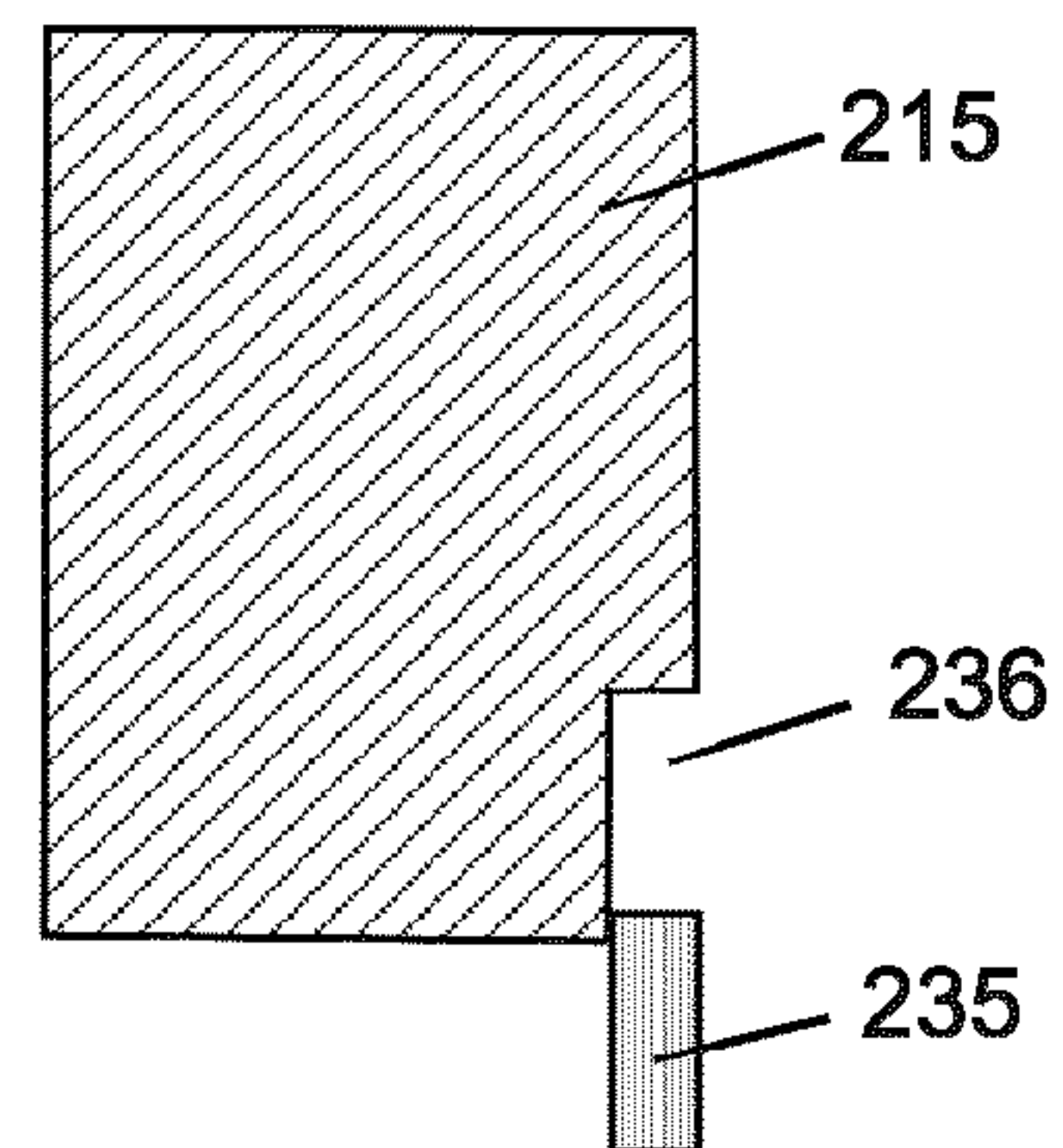


Fig. 9G

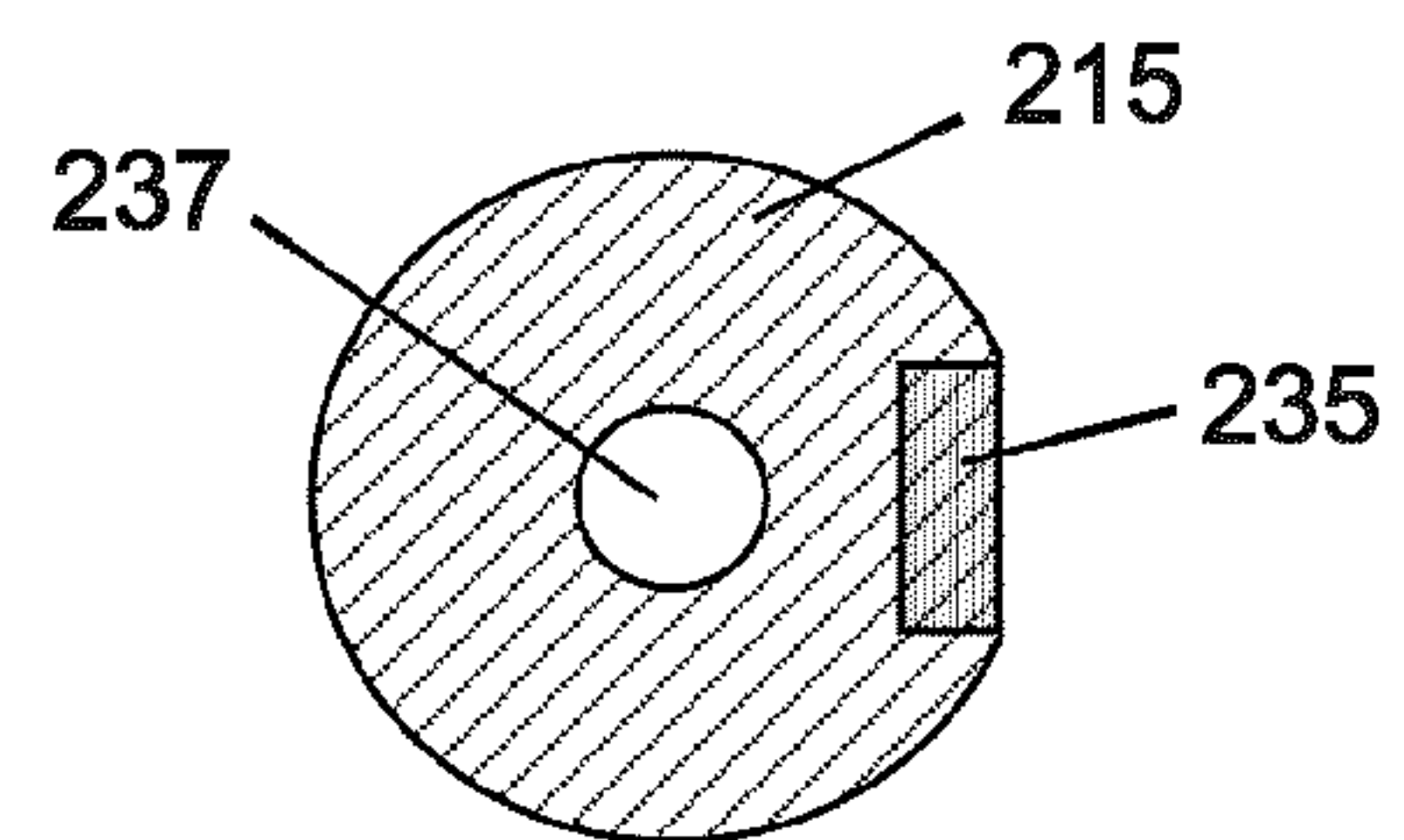


Fig. 9H

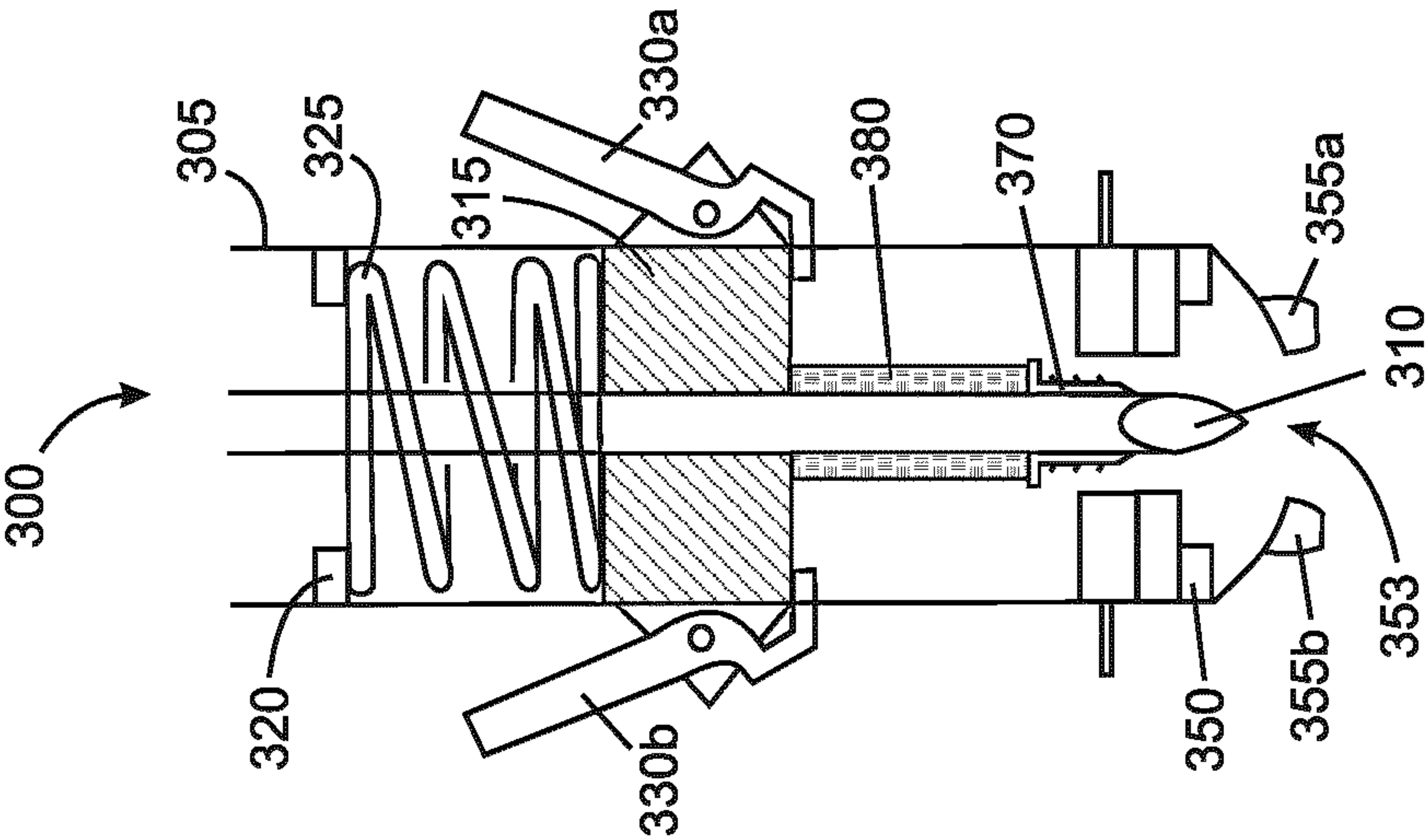


Fig. 10A

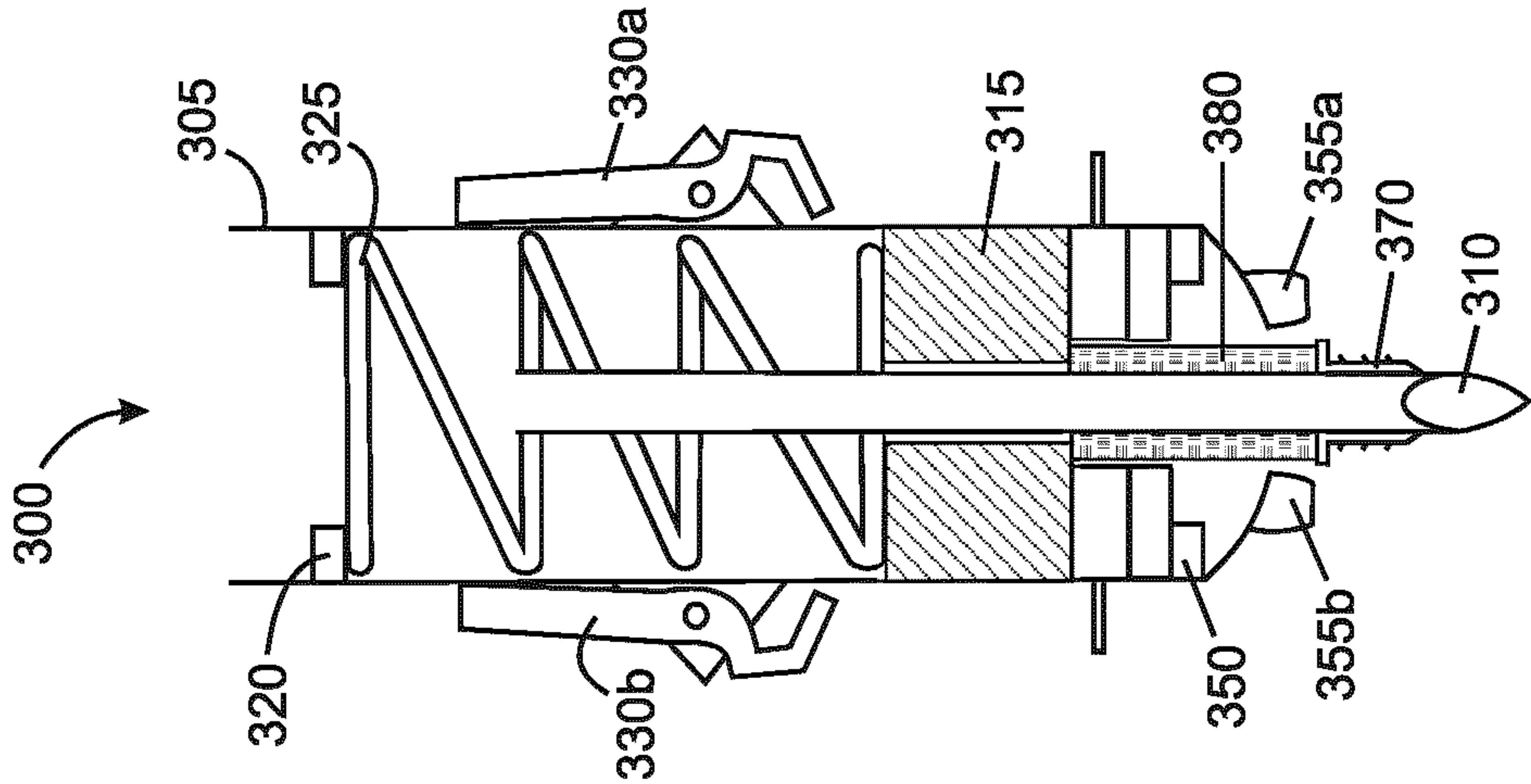


Fig. 10B

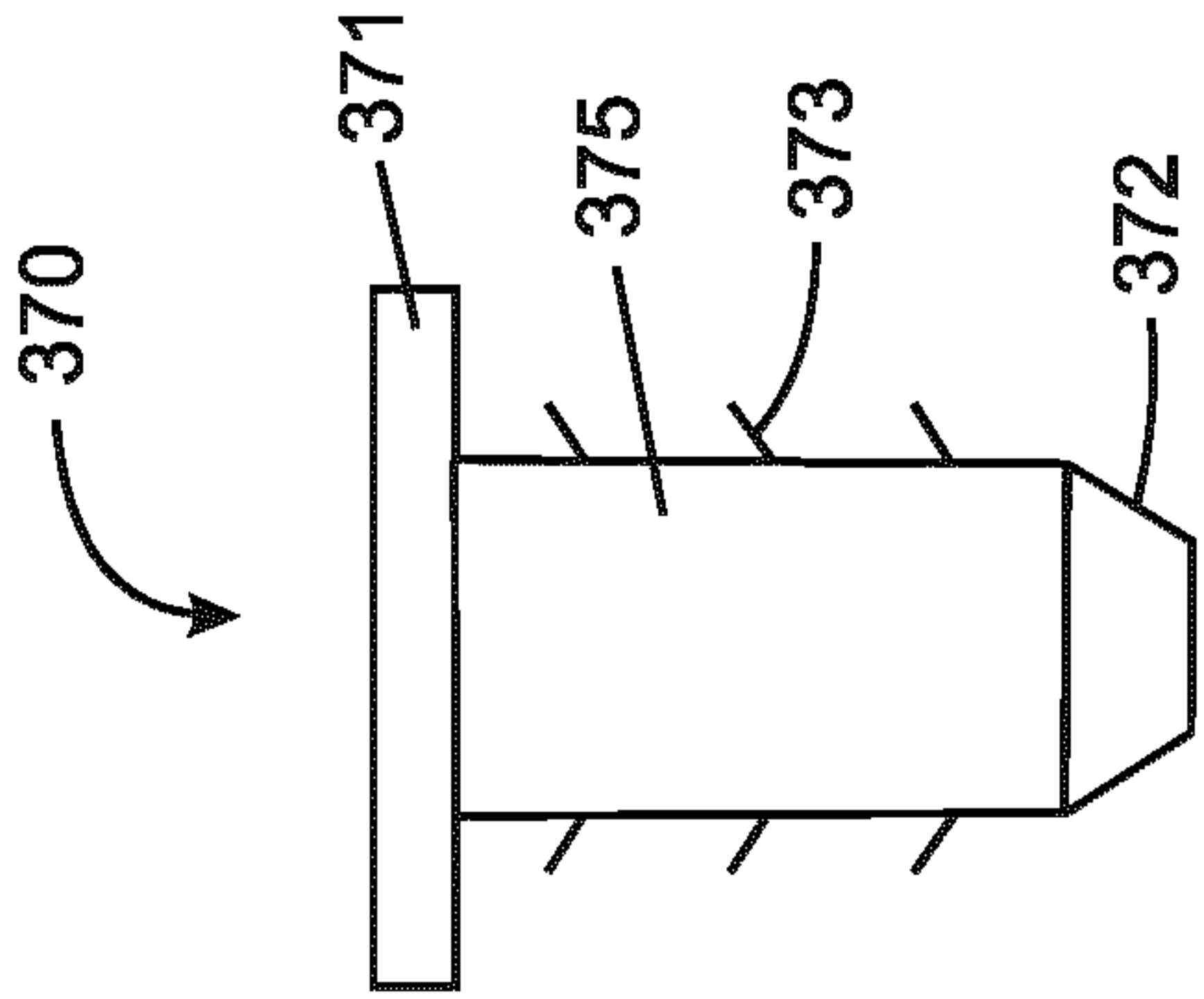


Fig. 10C

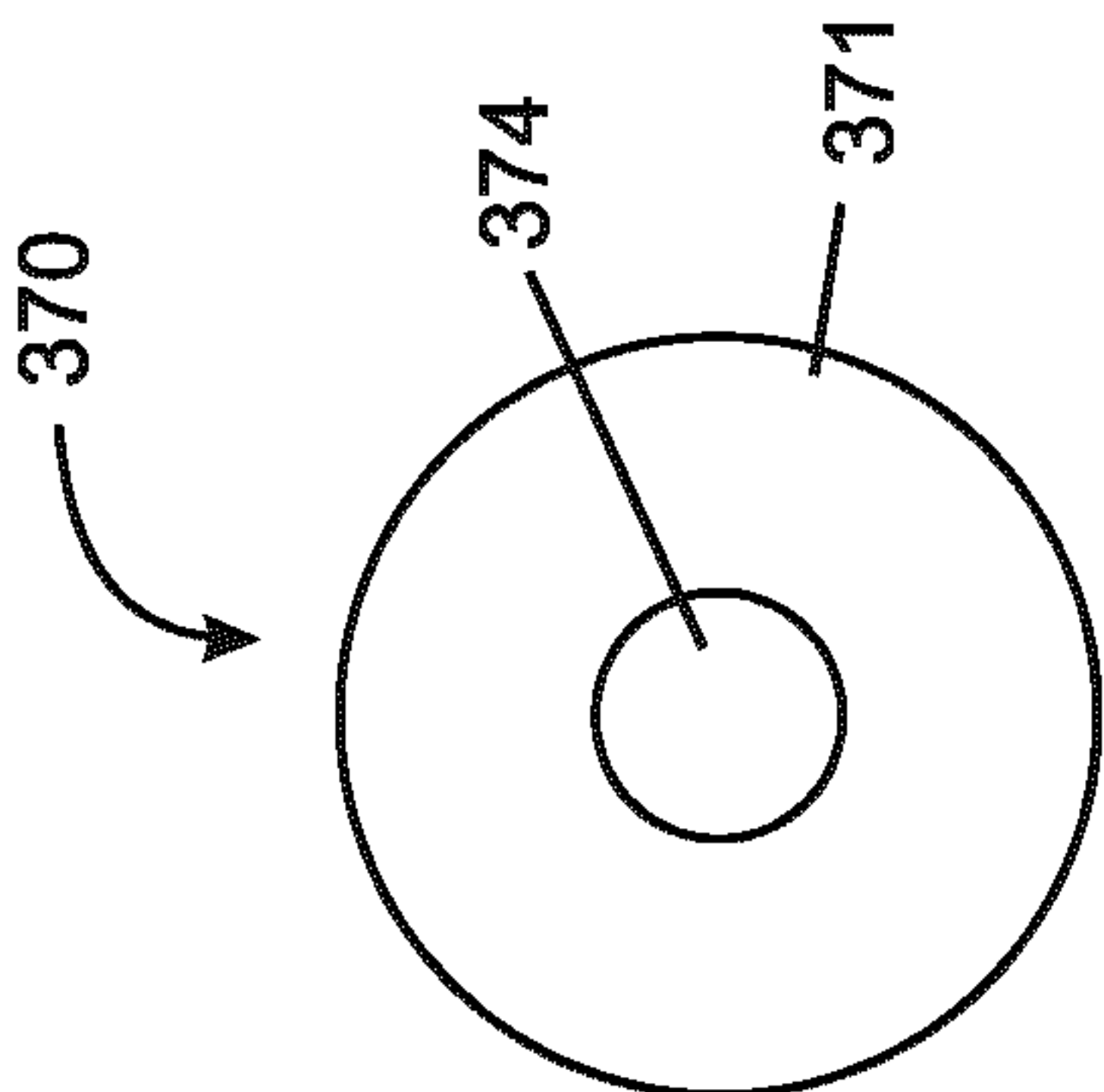


Fig. 10D

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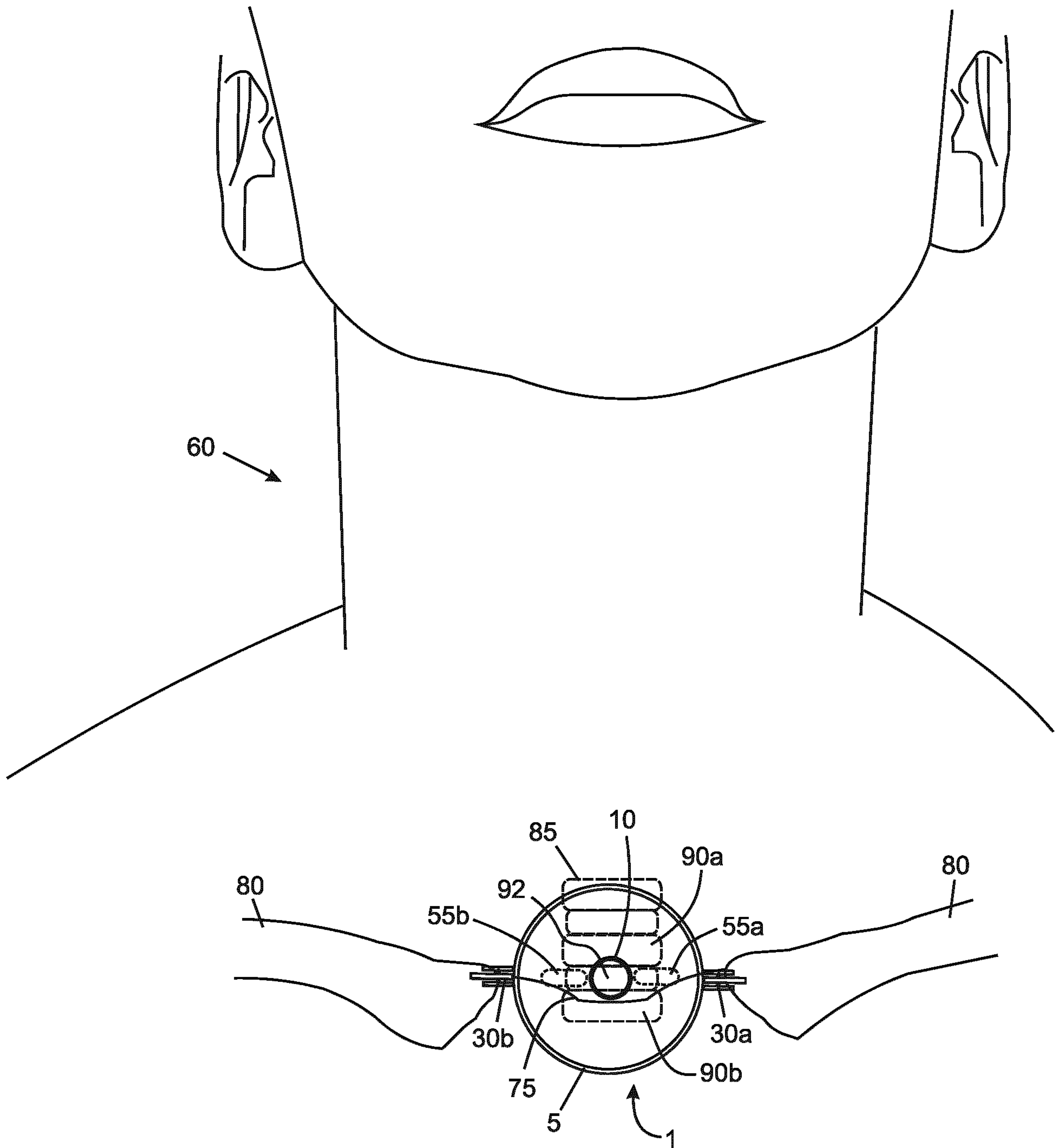
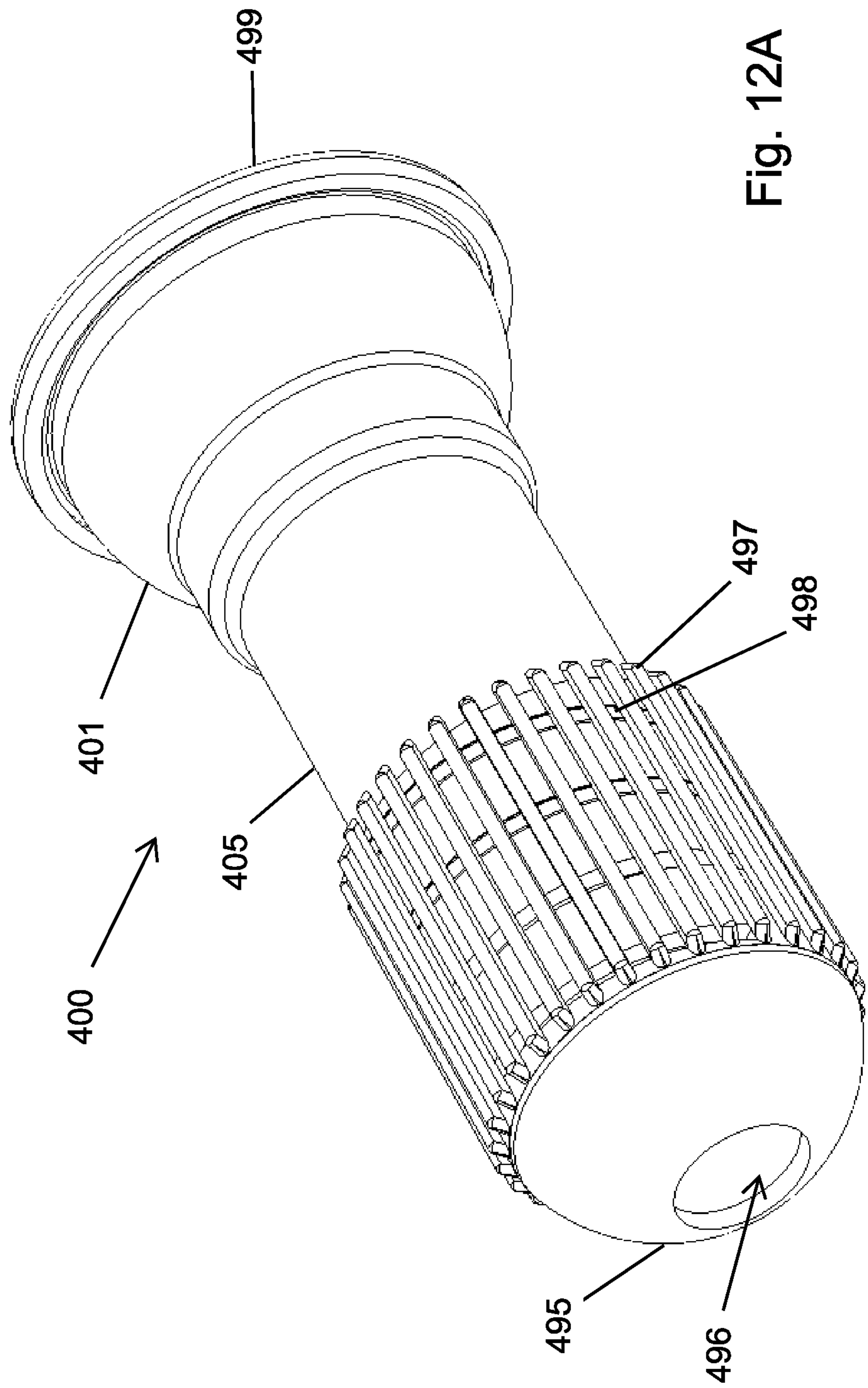


Fig. 11

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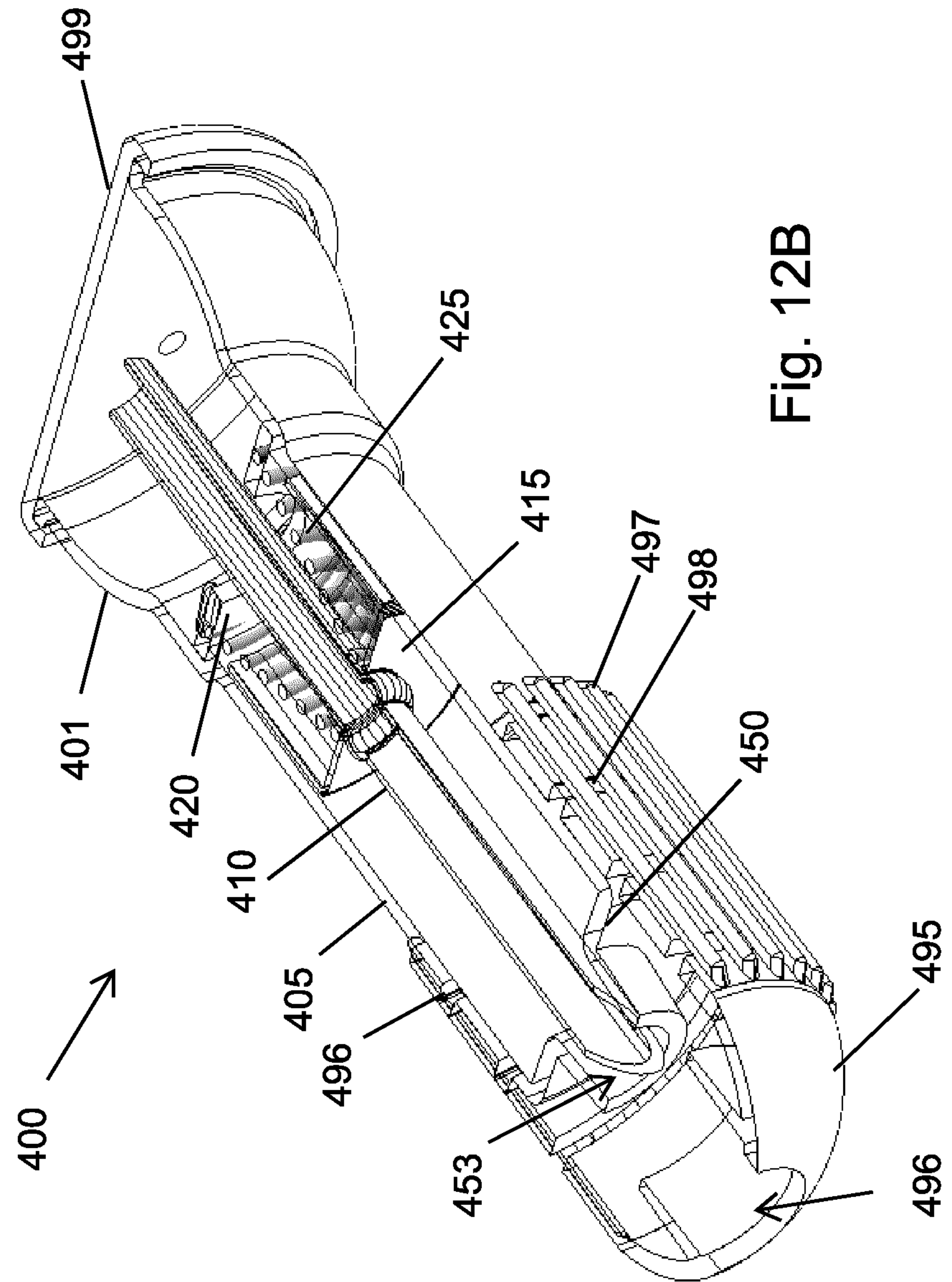


Fig. 12B

