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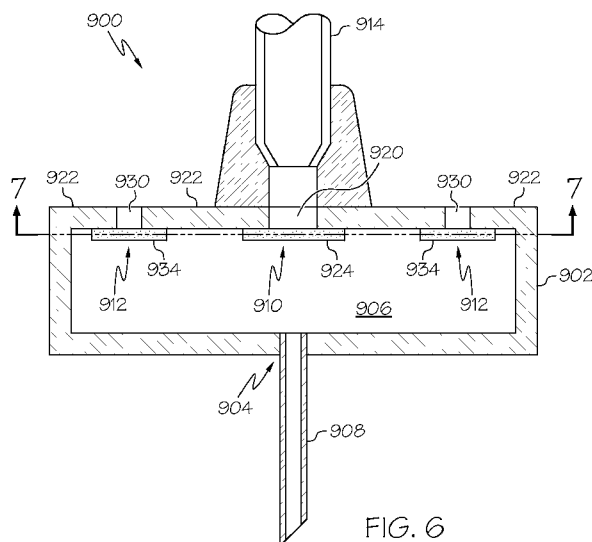


FIG. 6

(57) Abstract: A fluid conduit assembly for delivery of a medication fluid, and an associated fluid delivery system, are disclosed here. The fluid conduit assembly includes a trapping chamber having an interior volume to receive the medication fluid. The fluid conduit assembly also includes an inlet in fluid communication with the interior volume, a first outlet arrangement for the trapping chamber, and a second outlet arrangement for the trapping chamber. The first outlet arrangement accommodates flow of liquid from the interior volume, while inhibiting flow of gas from the interior volume. The second outlet arrangement accommodates flow of gas from the interior volume, while inhibiting flow of liquid from the interior volume.

FLUID CONDUIT ASSEMBLY WITH AIR VENTING FEATURES

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This PCT application claims the benefit of, and claims priority to: United States Patent Application Serial Number 14/553,766, filed November 25, 2014.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] Embodiments of the subject matter described herein relate generally to fluid infusion devices for delivering a medication fluid to the body of a user. More particularly, embodiments of the subject matter relate to the use of a trapping chamber in the medication fluid flow path.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Certain diseases or conditions may be treated, according to modern medical techniques, by delivering a medication fluid or other substance to the body of a patient, either in a continuous manner or at particular times or time intervals within an overall time period. For example, diabetes is commonly treated by delivering defined amounts of insulin to the patient at appropriate times. Some common modes of providing insulin therapy to a patient include delivery of insulin through manually operated syringes and insulin pens. Other modern systems employ programmable fluid infusion devices (e.g., continuous insulin infusion devices such as insulin pumps) to deliver controlled amounts of insulin or other drugs to a patient.

[0004] A fluid infusion device suitable for use as an insulin pump may be realized as an external device or an implantable device, which is surgically implanted into the body of the patient. External fluid infusion devices include devices designed for use in a generally stationary location (for example, in a hospital or clinic), and devices configured for ambulatory or portable use (to be carried by a patient). External fluid infusion devices may establish a fluid flow path from a fluid reservoir to the patient via, for example, a suitable hollow tubing. The hollow tubing may be connected to a hollow fluid delivery needle that is designed to pierce the patient's skin to deliver an infusion fluid to the body. Alternatively, the hollow tubing may be connected directly to the patient's body through a cannula or set of micro-needles.

[0005] It is desirable to reduce the amount of air bubbles in a medication fluid before delivering the fluid to the patient. Small bubbles may be introduced into the medication fluid during a reservoir filling operation, for example, when the fluid reservoir is filled from a vial using a syringe. Bubbles can also be generated during temperature or altitude changes. Although patients are instructed to eliminate air from a filled reservoir, some micro bubbles may remain.

[0006] Accordingly, it is desirable to have an assembly, system, or component that is designed to mitigate the effects of air bubbles within a medication fluid flow path. Furthermore, other desirable features and characteristics will become apparent from the subsequent detailed description and the appended claims, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings and the foregoing technical field and background.

BRIEF SUMMARY

[0007] Disclosed herein is a fluid conduit assembly for delivery of an aqueous medication fluid. An exemplary embodiment of the fluid conduit assembly includes a trapping chamber having an interior volume to receive the medication fluid. The fluid conduit assembly also includes an inlet in fluid communication with the interior volume, a first outlet arrangement for the trapping chamber, and a second outlet arrangement for the trapping chamber. The first outlet arrangement accommodates flow of liquid from the interior volume and inhibits flow of gas from the interior volume. The second outlet arrangement accommodates flow of gas from the interior volume and inhibits flow of liquid from the interior volume.

[0008] The inlet may comprise a hole in a first wall of the trapping chamber, and the first and second outlet arrangements may comprise holes in a second wall of the chamber, preferably an opposite wall from the wall with the inlet hole. To achieve the required selectivity for air or medication fluid, the fluid delivery system may further include a membrane overlying the holes of the first and second outlet arrangements, said membrane comprising a material of hydrophilic properties where it overlies a hole of the first outlet arrangement, the medication fluid outlet, and comprising a material of hydrophobic properties where it overlies a hole of the second outlet arrangement, the vent(s). This membrane can be two different membranes depending on whether it should allow flow of liquid, or flow of gas. Alternatively, a single membrane with selectively coated areas to render them hydrophilic or hydrophobic can be used. Typically, the second outlet arrangement can comprises a plurality of vent holes arranged in a pattern

around the first outlet arrangement. In typical arrangements, the inlet is in axial alignment with the first outlet arrangement. This gives a straight flow-through path for the medication fluid. A particularly convenient placement of the membrane overlying the holes of the first and second outlet arrangements is one in which the membrane comprises a disk or patch in the first outlet arrangement, i.e. where it covers the liquid outlet and a separate ring of material where it overlies the holes of the second outlet arrangements, i.e. where it covers the gas outlet.

[0009] An embodiment of a fluid conduit assembly presented here includes a trapping chamber having an interior volume to receive fluid, an inlet in fluid communication with the interior volume, a delivery hole formed in a wall of the trapping chamber, a first membrane covering the delivery hole, a vent hole, and a second membrane covering the vent hole. The first membrane has hydrophilic properties to accommodate flow of liquid from the interior volume through the delivery hole while inhibiting flow of gas from the interior volume through the delivery hole. The second membrane has hydrophobic properties to accommodate flow of gas from the interior volume through the vent hole while inhibiting flow of liquid from the interior volume through the vent hole.

[0010] There may be a plurality of such vent holes each formed in the wall of the trapping chamber and being covered by said second membrane. The vent holes may be distributed in a circular pattern around the said delivery hole. Convenient numbers of such holes would be 3, 4, 5 or 6. The inlet may be situated in a first wall of the trapping chamber with the delivery hole and vent holes situated in a second wall of the trapping chamber, preferably an opposite parallel wall. To give a straight through-flow path for the liquid the inlet and the delivery hole are axially aligned.

[0011] An embodiment of a fluid delivery system is also presented here. The system includes a fluid infusion pump and a fluid conduit assembly coupled to the fluid infusion pump. The fluid conduit assembly includes a trapping chamber having an interior volume to receive fluid from a fluid source, a liquid outlet arrangement, and a gas outlet arrangement. The liquid outlet arrangement allows liquid to flow from the interior volume to a fluid delivery conduit while inhibiting flow of gas from the interior volume to the fluid delivery conduit. The gas outlet arrangement allows gas to exit the interior volume while inhibiting flow of liquid from the interior volume.

[0012] The liquid outlet arrangement may comprise a delivery hole formed in a wall of the trapping chamber, and a first membrane covering the delivery hole, the first membrane having hydrophilic properties. The gas outlet arrangement may comprise a

vent hole formed in the wall of the trapping chamber, and a second membrane covering the vent hole, the second membrane having hydrophobic properties. Preferably the delivery hole and the vent hole are in the same wall. The gas outlet arrangement may comprise a plurality of said vent holes arranged in a circular pattern around the delivery hole. A typical number of vent holes would be 3, 4, 5 or 6. Further, the trapping chamber may have an inlet in a first wall of the chamber to receive fluid from the said source, said delivery hole and said vent holes being in a second wall of the chamber parallel to said first wall. In other words, the inlet may be on one side and the outlets on an opposite side. Typically, the input could be in axial alignment with the liquid outlet, i.e. the delivery hole to give a straight-through flow path.

[0013] This summary is provided to introduce a selection of concepts in a simplified form that are further described below in the detailed description. This summary is not intended to identify key features or essential features of the claimed subject matter, nor is it intended to be used as an aid in determining the scope of the claimed subject matter.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0014] A more complete understanding of the subject matter may be derived by referring to the detailed description and claims when considered in conjunction with the following figures, wherein like reference numbers refer to similar elements throughout the figures.

[0015] FIG. 1 is a simplified block diagram representation of an embodiment of a fluid delivery system;

[0016] FIG. 2 is a plan view of an exemplary embodiment of a fluid delivery system that includes a fluid infusion device and an infusion set;

[0017] FIG. 3 is a perspective view of an exemplary embodiment of a fluid delivery system that includes a fluid infusion device designed to be affixed to the skin of the user;

[0018] FIG. 4 is a simplified block diagram representation of an embodiment of a trapping chamber suitable for use in a fluid conduit assembly;

[0019] FIG. 5 is a perspective view of an embodiment of a fluid conduit assembly that is realized as a cap for a fluid reservoir;

[0020] FIG. 6 is a cross-sectional view of a portion of a fluid conduit assembly having a trapping chamber; and

[0021] FIG. 7 is a top view of certain features of the fluid conduit assembly shown in FIG. 6.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0022] The following detailed description is merely illustrative in nature and is not intended to limit the embodiments of the subject matter or the application and uses of such embodiments. As used herein, the word “exemplary” means “serving as an example, instance, or illustration.” Any implementation described herein as exemplary is not necessarily to be construed as preferred or advantageous over other implementations. Furthermore, there is no intention to be bound by any expressed or implied theory presented in the preceding technical field, background, brief summary or the following detailed description.

[0023] The subject matter described here relates to certain assemblies, components, and features of a fluid infusion system of the type used to treat a medical condition of a patient. The fluid infusion system is used for infusing a medication fluid into the body of a user. The non-limiting examples described below relate to a medical device used to treat diabetes (more specifically, an insulin pump), although embodiments of the disclosed subject matter are not so limited. Accordingly, the medication fluid is insulin in certain embodiments. In alternative embodiments, however, many other fluids may be administered through infusion such as, but not limited to, disease treatments, drugs to treat pulmonary hypertension, iron chelation drugs, pain medications, anti-cancer treatments, medications, vitamins, hormones, or the like. Moreover, the gas trapping filter described below could be utilized in the context of other fluid delivery systems if so desired.

[0024] For the sake of brevity, conventional features and technologies related to infusion system operation, insulin pump and/or infusion set operation, and other functional aspects of the fluid infusion system (and the individual operating components of the system) may not be described in detail here. Examples of infusion pumps and/or related pump drive systems used to administer insulin and other medications may be of the type described in, but not limited to, United States patent numbers: 4,562,751; 4,678,408; 4,685,903; 5,080,653; 5,505,709; 5,097,122; 6,485,465; 6,554,798; 6,558,351; 6,659,980; 6,752,787; 6,817,990; 6,932,584; and 7,621,893; which are herein incorporated by reference.

[0025] FIG. 1 is a simplified block diagram representation of an embodiment of a fluid delivery system 100, which can be utilized to administer a medication fluid such as insulin to a patient. The fluid delivery system 100 includes a fluid infusion device 102

(e.g., an infusion pump) and a fluid conduit assembly 104 that is coupled to, integrated with, or otherwise associated with the fluid infusion device 102. The fluid infusion device 102 includes a fluid reservoir 106 or an equivalent supply of the medication fluid to be administered. The fluid infusion device 102 is operated in a controlled manner to deliver the medication fluid to the user via the fluid conduit assembly 104. Although not depicted in FIG. 1, the fluid conduit assembly 104 and/or the fluid reservoir 106 can be provided with a trapping chamber that receives the medication fluid and allows the liquid component of the medication fluid to flow downstream while venting gas/air that may be present in the medication fluid. In such embodiments, the trapping chamber can incorporate a gas trapping filter or membrane to inhibit downstream flow of gas/air.

[0026] The fluid infusion device 102 may be provided in any desired configuration or platform. In accordance with one non-limiting embodiment, the fluid infusion device is realized as a portable unit that can be carried or worn by the patient. In this regard, FIG. 2 is a plan view of an exemplary embodiment of a fluid delivery system 200 that includes a portable fluid infusion device 202 and a fluid conduit assembly that takes the form of an infusion set component 204. For this particular embodiment, the infusion set component 204 can be coupled to the fluid infusion device 202 as depicted in FIG. 2. The fluid infusion device 202 accommodates a fluid reservoir (hidden from view in FIG. 2) for the medication fluid to be delivered to the user.

[0027] The illustrated embodiment of the infusion set component 204 includes, without limitation: a tube 210; an infusion unit 212 coupled to the distal end of the tube 210; and a connector assembly 214 coupled to the proximal end of the tube 210. The fluid infusion device 202 is designed to be carried or worn by the patient, and the infusion set component 204 terminates at the infusion unit 212 such that the fluid infusion device 202 can deliver fluid to the body of the patient via the tube 210. The fluid infusion device 202 may leverage a number of conventional features, components, elements, and characteristics of existing fluid infusion devices. For example, the fluid infusion device 202 may incorporate some of the features, components, elements, and/or characteristics described in United States Patent numbers 6,485,465 and 7,621,893, the relevant content of which is incorporated by reference herein.

[0028] The infusion set component 204 defines a fluid flow path that fluidly couples the fluid reservoir to the infusion unit 212. The connector assembly 214 mates with and couples to the neck region of the fluid reservoir, establishing the fluid path from the fluid reservoir to the tube 210. The connector assembly 214 (with the fluid reservoir coupled

thereto) is coupled to the housing of the fluid infusion device 202 to seal and secure the fluid reservoir inside the housing. Thereafter, actuation of the fluid infusion device 202 causes the medication fluid to be expelled from the fluid reservoir, through the infusion set component 204, and into the body of the patient via the infusion unit 212 at the distal end of the tube 210. Accordingly, when the connector assembly 214 is installed as depicted in FIG. 2, the tube 210 extends from the fluid infusion device 202 to the infusion unit 212, which in turn provides a fluid pathway to the body of the patient. For the illustrated embodiment, the connector assembly 214 is realized as a removable reservoir cap (or fitting) that is suitably sized and configured to accommodate replacement of fluid reservoirs (which are typically disposable) as needed.

[0029] FIG. 3 is a perspective view of another exemplary embodiment of a fluid delivery system 300 that includes a fluid infusion device 302 designed to be affixed to the skin of the user. The fluid infusion device 302 includes two primary components that are removably coupled to each other: a durable housing 304; and a base plate 306. The fluid infusion device 302 also includes or cooperates with a removable/replaceable fluid reservoir (which is hidden from view in FIG. 3). For this particular embodiment, the fluid reservoir mates with, and is received by, the durable housing 304. In alternate embodiments, the fluid reservoir mates with, and is received by, the base plate 306.

[0030] The base plate 306 is designed to be temporarily adhered to the skin of the patient using, for example, an adhesive layer of material. After the base plate is affixed to the skin of the patient, a suitably configured insertion device or apparatus may be used to insert a fluid delivery needle or cannula 308 into the body of the patient. The cannula 308 functions as one part of the fluid delivery flow path associated with the fluid infusion device 302. In this regard, the cannula 308 and/or other structure in fluid communication with the cannula 308 may be considered to be one implementation of the fluid conduit assembly 104 shown in FIG. 1 (or a portion thereof).

[0031] FIG. 3 depicts the durable housing 304 and the base plate 306 coupled together. For this particular embodiment, the durable housing 304 contains, among other components, a drive motor, a battery, a threaded drive shaft for the fluid reservoir, one or more integrated circuit chips and/or other electronic devices (not shown). The durable housing 304 and the base plate 306 are cooperatively configured to accommodate removable coupling of the durable housing 304 to the base plate 306. The removable nature of the durable housing 304 enables the patient to replace the fluid reservoir as needed.

[0032] The fluid delivery systems 200, 300 described here are merely two exemplary embodiments that can include a fluid conduit assembly outfitted with a trapping chamber of the type described in more detail below. More specifically, the fluid delivery systems 200, 300 can manage the presence of gas/air in the medication fluid by way of a gas-venting trapping chamber, which can be incorporated into a fluid conduit assembly of the fluid delivery system. In this regard, FIG. 4 is a simplified block diagram representation of an embodiment of a trapping chamber 400 suitable for use in a fluid conduit assembly (such as the fluid conduit assembly 104, the infusion set component 204, a connector, an integrated feature of a fluid infusion device, a fluid reservoir, or the like). The trapping chamber 400 includes or defines an interior volume 402 that receives fluid, such as a medication fluid intended for delivery to the body of a patient. The trapping chamber 400 includes or cooperates with an inlet 404, which is in fluid communication with the interior volume 402. The inlet 404 may be implemented as part of the fluid conduit assembly, as part of the fluid delivery system, or the like. Fluid is provided from a fluid source (not shown), through the inlet 404, and into the interior volume 402 of the trapping chamber 400.

[0033] Ideally, medication fluid that enters the trapping chamber 400 should be free of bubbles, air, and other gas components. In practice, however, the liquid component of the medication fluid may contain some micro bubbles or trace amounts of gas. The trapping chamber 400 serves as a “staging area” for the received fluid during a fluid delivery operation. The trapping chamber 400 includes or cooperates with a liquid outlet arrangement 406 that facilitates flow of liquid out of the trapping chamber 400, and a gas outlet arrangement 408 that facilitates flow of gas out of the trapping chamber 400. More specifically, the liquid outlet arrangement 406 is suitably configured to accommodate flow of liquid from the interior volume 402 while inhibiting flow of gas from the interior volume 402. Conversely, the gas outlet arrangement 408 is suitably configured to accommodate flow of gas from the interior volume 402 while inhibiting flow of liquid from the interior volume 402. Although not depicted in FIG. 4, the gas outlet arrangement 408 can be implemented as a vent to allow gas to escape from the trapping chamber 400, and the liquid outlet arrangement 406 can be fluidly coupled to a fluid delivery conduit, a length of tubing, or the like. Thus, the liquid outlet arrangement 406 allows liquid to flow while blocking gas/air, and the gas outlet arrangement 408 allows gas to flow while blocking liquid.

[0034] The trapping chamber 400 that is schematically depicted in FIG. 4 can be implemented and realized in a variety of different ways. In some embodiments, the trapping chamber 400 is integrally formed in a reservoir cap of a fluid infusion device (see, for example, the connector assembly 214 shown in FIG. 2). In certain embodiments, the trapping chamber 400 is integrally formed in a fluid connector (such as a two-part detachable locking connector, a LUER LOK connector, or the like). In other embodiments, the trapping chamber 400 can be implemented in a fitting or a transfer guard that is utilized to transfer medication fluid (e.g., insulin) from a vial to a fluid reservoir of a fluid infusion device. Similarly, the trapping chamber 400 can be integrated into an automatic filling station that is operated to fill a fluid reservoir or an infusion device with the desired fluid. These and other implementations and embodiments are contemplated by this disclosure.

[0035] FIG. 5 is a perspective view of a fluid conduit assembly that is realized as a connector assembly or a reservoir cap 500 for a fluid reservoir. In this regard, the reservoir cap 500 is generally configured as described above for the connector assembly 214 shown in FIG. 2. Accordingly, the reservoir cap 500 may be provided as component of a disposable infusion set.

[0036] The illustrated embodiment of the reservoir cap 500 generally includes, without limitation: a body section 502; a flow path defined in the body section; a length of tubing 504 extending from the body section 502; and a trapping chamber (hidden from view). FIG. 5 depicts the body section 502 as two sections: a lower body section 502a; and an upper body section 502b. The trapping chamber can be integrally formed in the lower body section 502a.

[0037] The lower body section 502b is suitably configured to receive a fluid reservoir, e.g., by a threaded engagement, a snap fit, tabs, or the like. The tubing 504 is physically and fluidly coupled to the upper body section 502b such that the tubing 504 is in fluid communication with the flow path. This allows the tubing 504 to carry fluid from the body section 502 during a fluid delivery operation. The flow path, much of which is hidden from view in FIG. 5, may be defined by: a hollow needle that penetrates a septum of the fluid reservoir; an internal space, chamber, or conduit of the lower body section 502a, which is upstream of the trapping chamber; and an internal space, chamber, or conduit of the upper body section 502b, which is downstream of the trapping chamber. The flow path continues into the tubing 504, which is connected to the upper body section 502b.

[0038] The trapping chamber resides within the body section 502 such that it is positioned in the flow path of the medication fluid. During a fluid delivery operation, the medication fluid is forced out of the fluid reservoir and into the hollow needle (not shown in FIG. 5). The distal end of the hollow needle terminates at a location that is upstream of the trapping chamber. This positioning ensures that the medication fluid can be provided to the trapping chamber before it exits the reservoir cap 500.

[0039] FIG. 6 is a cross-sectional view of a portion of a fluid conduit assembly 900 having a trapping chamber 902 formed therein. This particular embodiment of the fluid conduit assembly 900 forms a part of a reservoir cap of a fluid infusion device, such as the reservoir cap 500 shown in FIG. 5. For simplicity and ease of illustration, however, surrounding structure and features of the reservoir cap are not shown or described here. Referring to FIG. 5, the trapping chamber 902 can be integrally formed in the body section 502 and in the fluid flow path. For example, the trapping chamber 902 can be located within the interior space that is generally defined by the lower body section 502a (this interior space is hidden from view in FIG. 5).

[0040] The exemplary embodiment of the fluid conduit assembly 900 generally includes, without limitation: the trapping chamber 902; an inlet 904 in fluid communication with an interior volume 906 of the trapping chamber 902; a hollow needle 908 coupled to the inlet 904; a liquid outlet arrangement 910 for the trapping chamber 902; a gas outlet arrangement 912 for the trapping chamber 902; and a length of hollow tubing 914 that serves as a fluid delivery conduit. During a fluid delivery operation, such as an insulin delivery operation of an insulin infusion pump, the desired fluid (e.g., insulin medication fluid) is dispensed from a fluid source such as a fluid reservoir. The hollow needle 908 is compatible with the fluid delivery source and the host fluid infusion system. The dispensed fluid enters the interior volume 906 by way of the hollow needle 908, which is in fluid communication with the fluid source. The liquid outlet arrangement 910 allows liquid to flow from the interior volume 906 to the hollow tubing 914, while inhibiting or preventing the flow of gas from the interior volume 906 to the hollow tubing 914. The gas outlet arrangement 912 allows gas to exit the interior volume 906, while inhibiting or preventing the flow of liquid from the interior volume 906.

[0041] The illustrated embodiment of the liquid outlet arrangement 910 includes, without limitation: at least one delivery hole 920 formed in a wall 922 of the trapping chamber 902; and at least one membrane 924 (also referred to here as the first membrane 924) covering or blocking at least a portion of the at least one delivery hole 920. For

simplicity, FIG. 6 depicts only one delivery hole 920, which is formed in an upper wall 922 of the trapping chamber 902. In certain embodiments, the first membrane 924 completely covers or blocks the at least one delivery hole 920, as schematically depicted in FIG. 6. In practice, the first membrane 924 can be realized as a small disc or patch of material that is affixed or otherwise incorporated into the wall 922 as needed. It should be appreciated that the first membrane 924 can be located upstream of the delivery hole 920 (as shown), located downstream of the delivery hole 920, or positioned within the space defined by the delivery hole 920. Furthermore, more than one membrane 924 can be utilized within the defined fluid flow path if redundancy is desired.

[0042] The first membrane 924 exhibits hydrophilic properties, such that liquid can easily pass through the first membrane 924. Moreover, the properties of the first membrane 924 inhibit or prevent the flow of gas through the first membrane 924. Thus, the first membrane 924 is fabricated from a material (or materials) that is partially or predominantly hydrophilic. The hydrophilic characteristic of the first membrane 924 facilitates the flow of liquid medication fluid from the interior volume 906 to the hollow tubing 914, which is in fluid communication with the liquid outlet arrangement 910.

[0043] The first membrane 924 is formed from a suitable material, composition, or element such that the medication fluid can easily pass through the first membrane during fluid delivery operations. The first membrane 924 can be formed from a hydrophilic, semi-hydrophilic, partially hydrophilic, or predominantly hydrophilic material. Although a truly hydrophilic material may be ideal, the material used for the first membrane 924 can be partially or predominantly hydrophilic while exhibiting some amount of hydrophobicity. Non-limiting examples of suitable materials for the first membrane 924 include: polyacrylate; polyurethane; nylon; cellulose acetate; polyvinyl alcohol; polyethylene foam; polyvinyl acetate; polyester fiber felt; polyester (PET); polysulfone; polyethyl sulfone; collagen; polycaprolactone; or the like. It should be appreciated that the material or materials used to fabricate the first membrane 924 can be treated to enhance the hydrophilic characteristics if so desired.

[0044] The illustrated embodiment of the gas outlet arrangement 912 includes, without limitation: at least one vent hole 930 formed in the wall 922 of the trapping chamber 902; and at least one membrane 934 (also referred to here as the second membrane 934) covering or blocking at least a portion of the at least one vent hole 930. The cross-sectional view of FIG. 6 shows only two vent holes 930, however, the illustrated embodiment actually includes four vent holes 930 (see FIG. 7). In certain

embodiments, the second membrane 934 completely covers or blocks the vent holes 930, as schematically depicted in FIG. 6. In practice, the second membrane 934 can be realized as individual pieces of material or as a unitary patch of material that is shaped and sized in accordance with the configuration of the vent holes 930. As described above for the first membrane 924, the material used for the second membrane 934 can be affixed or otherwise incorporated into the wall 922 as needed. It should be appreciated that the second membrane 934 can be located upstream of the vent holes 930 (as shown), located downstream of the vent holes 930, or positioned within the space defined by the vent holes 930. Furthermore, more than one second membrane 934 can be utilized within the defined fluid flow path if so desired.

[0045] The second membrane 934 exhibits hydrophobic properties, such that gas can easily pass through the second membrane 934. Moreover, the properties of the second membrane 934 inhibit or prevent the flow of liquid through the second membrane 934. Thus, the second membrane 934 is fabricated from a material (or materials) that is partially or predominantly hydrophobic. Indeed, the second membrane 934 can be fabricated using any suitable material or composition, including, without limitation: polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE); fluoropolymers; glass fiber; treated or coated materials; or the like. The hydrophobic characteristic of the second membrane 934 facilitates the venting of gas/air from the interior volume 906 of the trapping chamber 902. In this regard, the vent holes 930 are preferably arranged and configured to exit into external airspace surrounding the trapping chamber 902. In other words, the vent holes 930 terminate at a location that is at ambient temperature and pressure.

[0046] In certain embodiments where the trapping chamber 902 is integrated into a reservoir cap of the type utilized with an insulin infusion pump, the hollow needle 908 receives insulin during a delivery operation that advances a piston or plunger of an insulin reservoir. In such an implementation, the interior volume 906 of the trapping chamber 902 can be within the range of about 1.0 microliters to about 500 microliters, although the actual volume may fall outside of this range in some embodiments. During a typical insulin delivery operation, the pressure within the interior volume 906 of the trapping chamber 902 can be within the range of about 1.0 psi to about 30 psi, although the actual pressure may fall outside of this range in some embodiments. The fluid pressure inside the trapping chamber 902 is sufficient to force the liquid insulin through the first membrane 924, and is sufficient to vent air or other gas components through the second membrane 934 as needed.

[0047] FIG. 7 is a top view of certain features of the fluid conduit assembly 900. For ease of illustration, FIG. 7 represents some features in cross-section and some features in phantom. Moreover, the scale and proportions shown in FIG. 7 may not be consistent with that shown in FIG. 6; the features are exaggerated in FIG. 7 for clarity. The trapping chamber 902 is shown in cross-section to illustrate the arrangement and locations of the vent holes 930, the delivery hole 920, the first membrane 924, and the second membrane 934. As shown in FIG. 7, the first membrane 924 can be realized as a round disc of material that covers the delivery hole 920 without interfering with the second membrane 934 or any of the vent holes 930.

[0048] The illustrated embodiment includes four vent holes 930 formed in a circular pattern around the delivery hole 920. It should be appreciated that other venting configurations and arrangements can be utilized in lieu of that shown in FIG. 7. The circular pattern of vent holes 930 can be covered with a single ring-shaped second membrane 934. In this regard, the second membrane 934 completely covers each vent hole 930 in a way that does not interfere with the first membrane 924 or the delivery hole 920. Accordingly, air is allowed to escape from any of the vent holes 930 (via the second membrane 934), but the first membrane 924 inhibits or prevents air from traveling downstream.

[0049] As explained above, a trapping chamber can be incorporated into a reservoir cap of an infusion pump. Referring to FIG. 5 and FIG. 2, the reservoir cap receives a fluid reservoir and also seals the fluid reservoir inside the housing (the main body) of the fluid infusion device 202. More specifically, the reservoir cap seals the fluid reservoir inside a chamber or cavity of the fluid infusion device 202, and the chamber can be isolated from other sections of the fluid infusion device 202. In certain embodiments, the reservoir cap includes one or more pressure vents formed therein to equalize pressure inside the reservoir chamber of the fluid infusion device 202. Pressure equalization is desirable to ensure that the piston of the fluid reservoir does not move in response to changes in atmospheric pressure, which may be caused by altitude changes.

[0050] In addition to the trapping chamber and venting arrangement described above, a reservoir cap may also include pressure vent holes formed therein for purposes of equalizing pressure inside the reservoir chamber. In certain embodiments, the pressure vent holes are formed in the wall 922 depicted in FIG. 6, which may correspond to a top portion of the reservoir cap (see FIG. 5). In such embodiments, the pressure vent holes are external to the trapping chamber. In other words, the pressure vent holes are not in fluid

communication with the interior volume of the trapping chamber. Instead, the pressure vent holes serve as a gas conduit from the volume inside the reservoir cavity that surrounds the exterior surface of the fluid reservoir.

[0051] Notably, the hydrophobic membrane 934 (see FIG. 6 and FIG. 7) that covers the vent holes 930 can be extended or otherwise configured to also cover the pressure vent holes. Accordingly, the membrane 934 facilitates equalization of air pressure inside the reservoir cavity while also inhibiting the ingress of fluid or contaminants into the reservoir cavity. Although it is preferable to use the same membrane 934 to cover the pressure vent holes and the vent holes 930, it should be understood that distinct hydrophobic membranes may be used if so desired.

[0052] While at least one exemplary embodiment has been presented in the foregoing detailed description, it should be appreciated that a vast number of variations exist. It should also be appreciated that the exemplary embodiment or embodiments described herein are not intended to limit the scope, applicability, or configuration of the claimed subject matter in any way. Rather, the foregoing detailed description will provide those skilled in the art with a convenient road map for implementing the described embodiment or embodiments. It should be understood that various changes can be made in the function and arrangement of elements without departing from the scope defined by the claims, which includes known equivalents and foreseeable equivalents at the time of filing this patent application.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A fluid conduit assembly for delivery of a medication fluid, the fluid conduit assembly comprising:
 - a trapping chamber (402, 902) comprising an interior volume (906) to receive the medication fluid;
 - an inlet (404, 904) in fluid communication with the interior volume (906);
 - a first outlet arrangement (406, 910) for the trapping chamber (402, 902), the first outlet arrangement (406, 910) accommodating flow of liquid from the interior volume (906) and inhibiting flow of gas from the interior volume (906); and
 - a second outlet arrangement (408, 912) for the trapping chamber (402, 902), the second outlet arrangement accommodating flow of gas from the interior volume (906) and inhibiting flow of liquid from the interior volume (906).
2. The fluid conduit assembly of claim 1, further comprising a hollow needle coupled to the inlet, wherein the medication fluid enters the interior volume (906) of the trapping chamber (402, 902) via the hollow needle during a fluid delivery operation.
3. The fluid conduit assembly of claim 1, wherein the first outlet arrangement (406, 910) comprises:
 - a delivery hole (920) formed in a wall of the trapping chamber (402, 902); and
 - a first membrane (924) covering at least a portion of the delivery hole, the first membrane (924) having hydrophilic properties.
4. The fluid conduit assembly of claim 3, wherein the second outlet arrangement comprises:
 - a vent hole (930) formed in the wall of the trapping chamber (402, 902); and
 - a second membrane (934) covering at least a portion of the vent hole (930), the second membrane (934) having hydrophobic properties.
5. The fluid conduit assembly of claim 3, wherein the first membrane (924) completely covers the delivery hole.

6. The fluid conduit assembly of claim 1, wherein the second outlet arrangement comprises:

a vent hole (930) formed in a wall of the trapping chamber (402, 902); and
a second membrane (934) covering at least a portion of the vent hole (930), the second membrane (934) having hydrophobic properties.

7. The fluid conduit assembly of claim 6, wherein the first outlet arrangement (406, 910) comprises:

a delivery hole formed in the wall of the trapping chamber (402, 902); and
a first membrane (924) covering at least a portion of the delivery hole, the first membrane (924) having hydrophilic properties.

8. The fluid conduit assembly of claim 6, wherein the second membrane (934) completely covers the vent hole (930).

9. The fluid conduit assembly of claim 1, further comprising:
a length of hollow tubing in fluid communication with the first outlet arrangement (406, 910).

10. The fluid conduit assembly of claim 1, wherein the trapping chamber (402, 902) is integrally formed in a reservoir cap of a fluid infusion device.

11. The fluid conduit assembly of claim 1, wherein the trapping chamber (402, 902) is integrally formed in a fluid connector.

12. A fluid conduit assembly comprising:
a trapping chamber (402, 902) comprising an interior volume (906) to receive fluid;
an inlet in fluid communication with the interior volume (906);
a delivery hole formed in a wall of the trapping chamber (402, 902);
a first membrane (924) covering the delivery hole, the first membrane (924) having hydrophilic properties to accommodate flow of liquid from the interior volume (906) through the delivery hole while inhibiting flow of gas from the interior volume (906) through the delivery hole;

a vent hole (930) formed in the wall of the trapping chamber (402, 902); and
a second membrane (934) covering the vent hole (930), the second membrane (934) having hydrophobic properties to accommodate flow of gas from the interior volume (906) through the vent hole (930) while inhibiting flow of liquid from the interior volume (906) through the vent hole (930).

13. The fluid conduit assembly of claim 12, further comprising a hollow needle coupled to the inlet, wherein the hollow needle is compatible with a fluid delivery source that delivers fluid to the interior volume (906) of the trapping chamber (402, 902) via the hollow needle.

14. The fluid conduit assembly of claim 12, further comprising:
a length of hollow tubing in fluid communication with the delivery hole.

15. The fluid conduit assembly of claim 12, wherein the vent hole (930) exits into external airspace surrounding the trapping chamber (402, 902).

16. The fluid conduit assembly of claim 12, wherein the trapping chamber (402, 902) is integrally formed in a reservoir cap of a fluid infusion device.

17. The fluid conduit assembly of claim 12, wherein the trapping chamber (402, 902) is integrally formed in a fluid connector.

18. A fluid delivery system comprising:
a fluid infusion pump; and
a fluid conduit assembly coupled to the fluid infusion pump, the fluid conduit assembly comprising:
a trapping chamber (402, 902) having an interior volume (906) to receive fluid from a fluid source;
a liquid outlet arrangement that allows liquid to flow from the interior volume (906) to a fluid delivery conduit while inhibiting flow of gas from the interior volume to the fluid delivery conduit; and
a gas outlet arrangement that allows gas to exit the interior volume (906) while inhibiting flow of liquid from the interior volume (906).

19. The fluid delivery system of claim 18, wherein:

the liquid outlet arrangement comprises a delivery hole (920) formed in a wall of the trapping chamber (402, 902), and a first membrane (924) covering the delivery hole, the first membrane (924) having hydrophilic properties; and

the gas outlet arrangement comprises a vent hole (930) formed in the wall of the trapping chamber (402, 902), and a second membrane (934) covering the vent hole (930), the second membrane (934) having hydrophobic properties.

20. The fluid delivery system of claim 18, wherein:

the fluid conduit assembly comprises a reservoir cap for the fluid infusion pump; and the trapping chamber (402, 902) is integrated in the reservoir cap.

21. The fluid delivery system of claim 20, wherein:

the reservoir cap includes a pressure vent formed therein to equalize pressure inside a housing of the fluid infusion pump; and

the pressure vent is external to the trapping chamber (402, 902).

22. The fluid delivery system of claim 21, wherein:

the liquid outlet arrangement comprises a delivery hole (920) formed in a wall of the trapping chamber (402, 902), and a first membrane (924) covering the delivery hole (920), the first membrane (924) having hydrophilic properties;

the gas outlet arrangement comprises a vent hole (930) formed in the wall of the trapping chamber (402, 902), and a second membrane (934) covering the vent hole (930), the second membrane (934) having hydrophobic properties; and

the second membrane (934) also covers the pressure vent.

23. The fluid delivery system of claim 1 wherein the inlet (404, 904) comprises a hole in a first wall of the trapping chamber (402, 902), and the first and second outlet arrangements (406, 910; 408, 912) comprise holes (920, 930) in a second wall of the chamber (402, 902);

the fluid delivery system further including a membrane (924, 934) overlying the holes (920, 930) of the first and second outlet arrangements (406, 910; 408, 912), said membrane comprising a material of hydrophilic properties where it overlies a hole (920) of the first outlet arrangement (406, 910) and comprising a material of hydrophobic properties where it overlies a hole (930) of the second outlet arrangement (408, 912).

24. The fluid delivery system of claim 23, wherein the second outlet arrangement (408, 912) comprises a plurality of holes (930) surrounding the first outlet arrangement (406, 910).

25. The fluid delivery system of claim 23 or 24, wherein the inlet (404, 904) is in axial alignment with the first outlet arrangement (406, 910).

26. The fluid delivery system of claim 24, wherein the membrane (924, 934) overlying the holes (920, 930) of the first and second outlet arrangements (406, 910; 408, 912) comprises a disk in the first outlet arrangement (406, 910) and a separate ring of material where it overlies the holes (930) of the second outlet arrangements (408, 912).

27. The fluid conduit assembly of claim 12 including a plurality of said vent holes (930) each formed in the wall of the trapping chamber and being covered by said second membrane (934).

28. The fluid conduit assembly of claim 27, wherein the vent holes (930) are distributed in a circular pattern around the said delivery hole (920).

29. The fluid conduit assembly of claims 27 or 28, wherein the inlet is situated in a first wall of the trapping chamber and the delivery hole (920) and vent holes are situated in a second wall of the trapping chamber.

30. The fluid delivery system of claim 29, wherein the inlet and the delivery hole are axially aligned.

31. The fluid delivery system of claim 19, wherein the gas outlet arrangement comprises a plurality of said vent holes (930) arranged in a circular pattern around the delivery hole (920).

32. The fluid delivery system of claim 31, wherein the trapping chamber has an inlet in a first wall of the chamber to receive fluid from the said source, said delivery hole (920) and said vent holes (930) being in a second wall of the chamber parallel to said first wall.

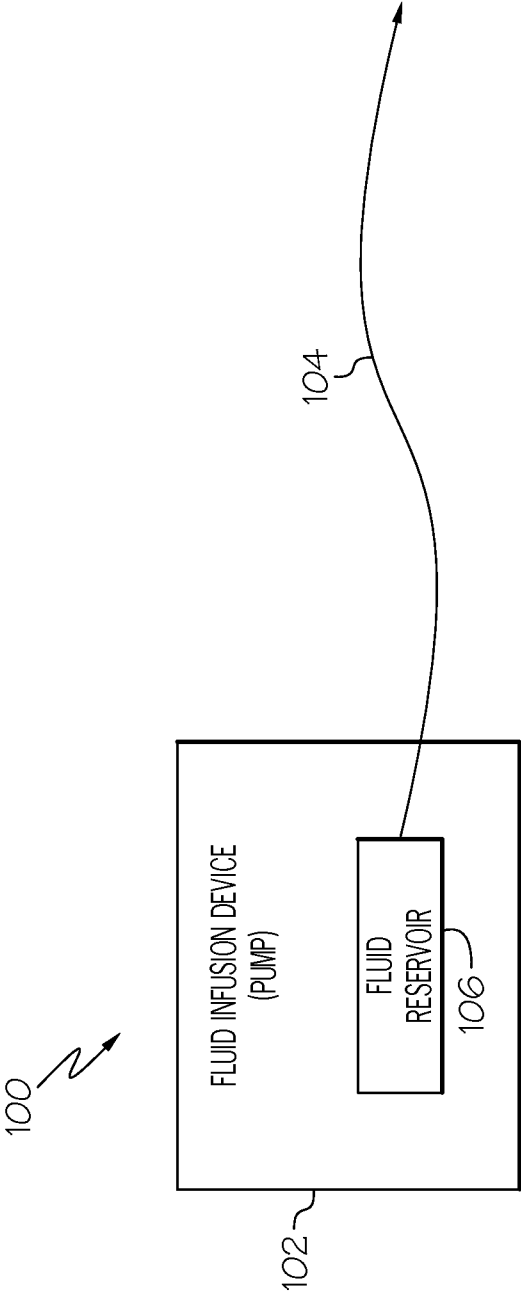


FIG. 1

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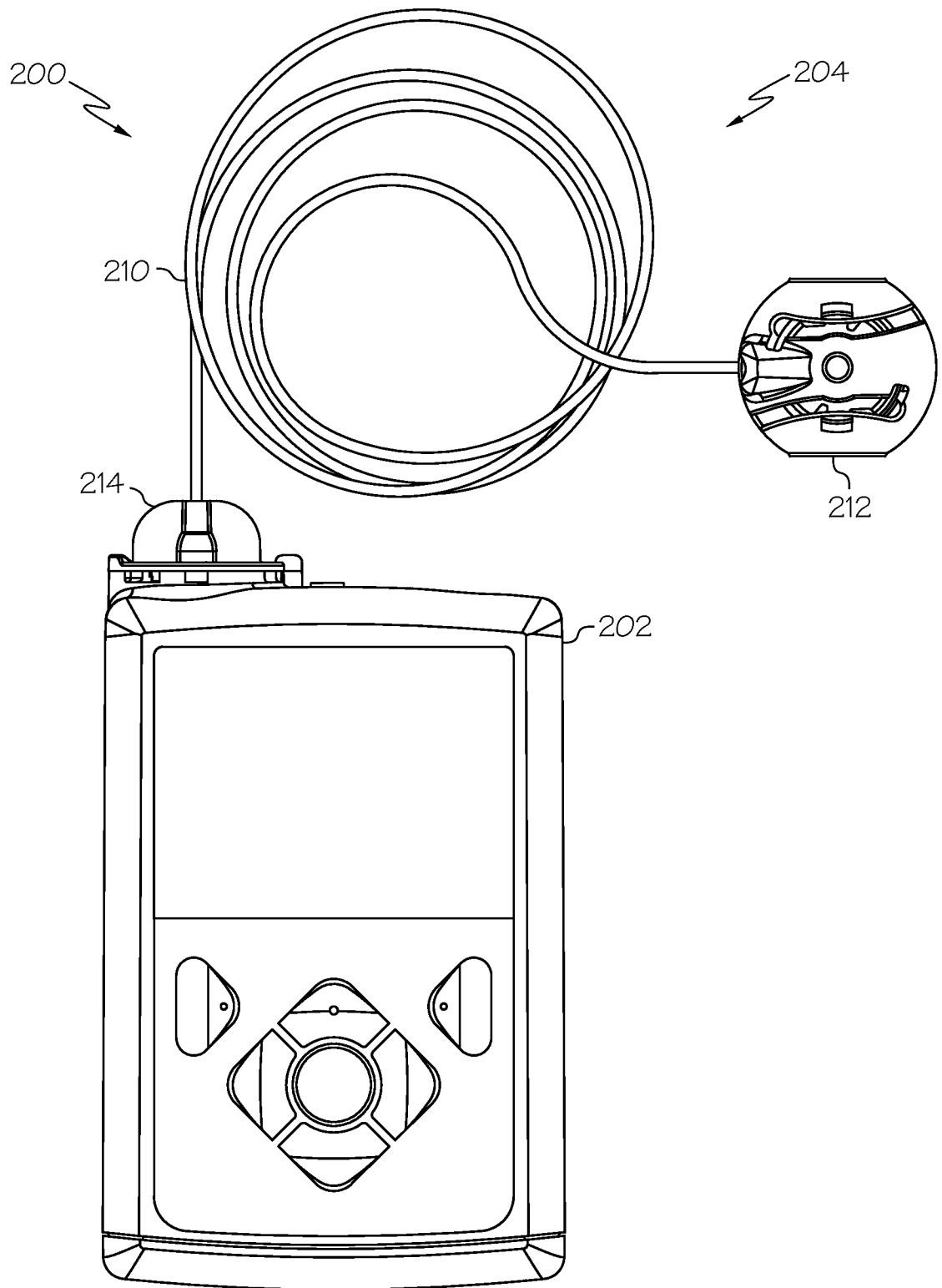


FIG. 2

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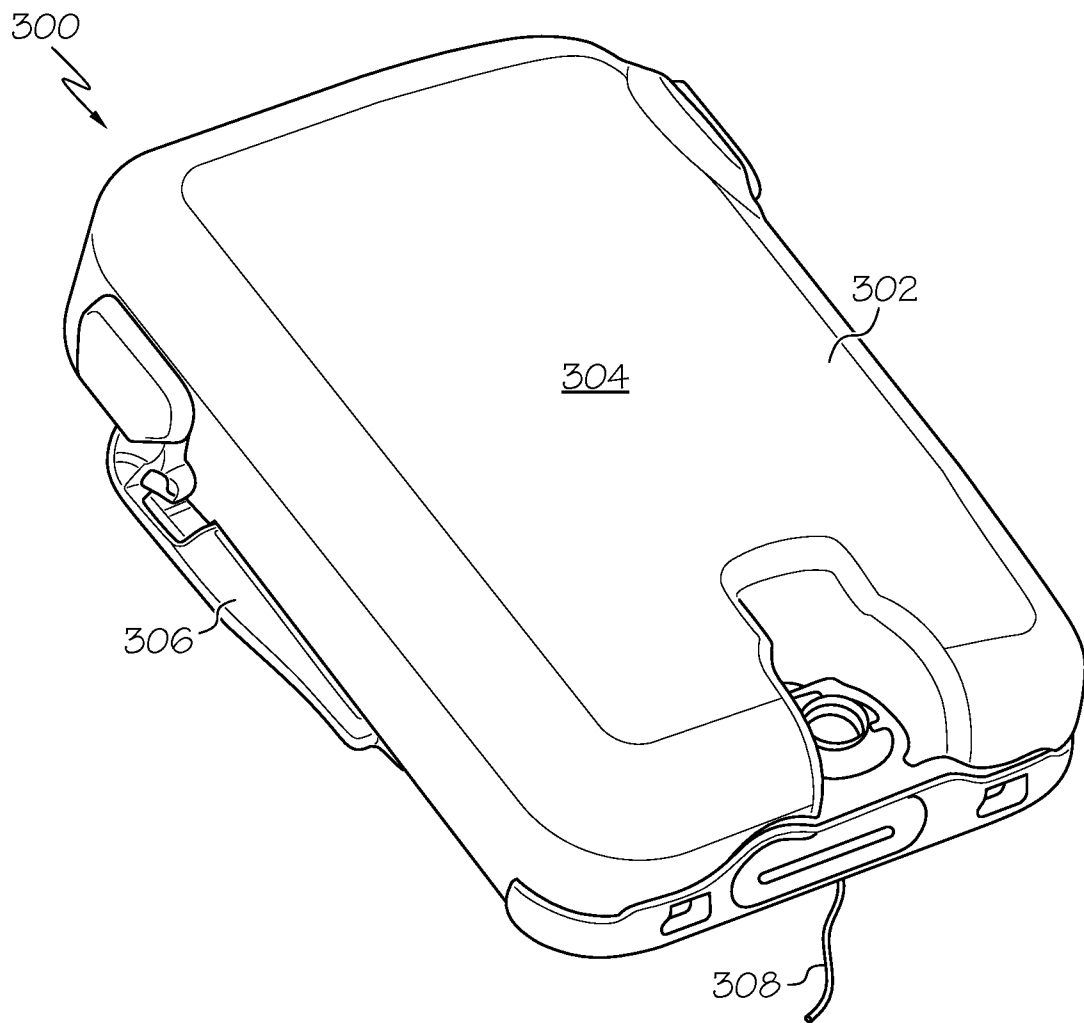


FIG. 3

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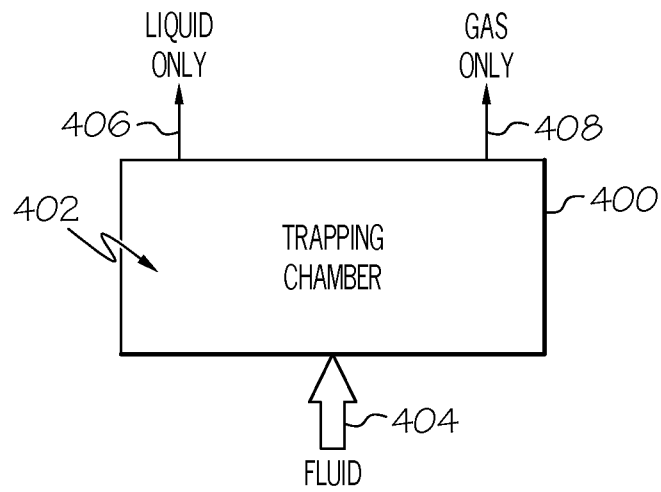


FIG. 4

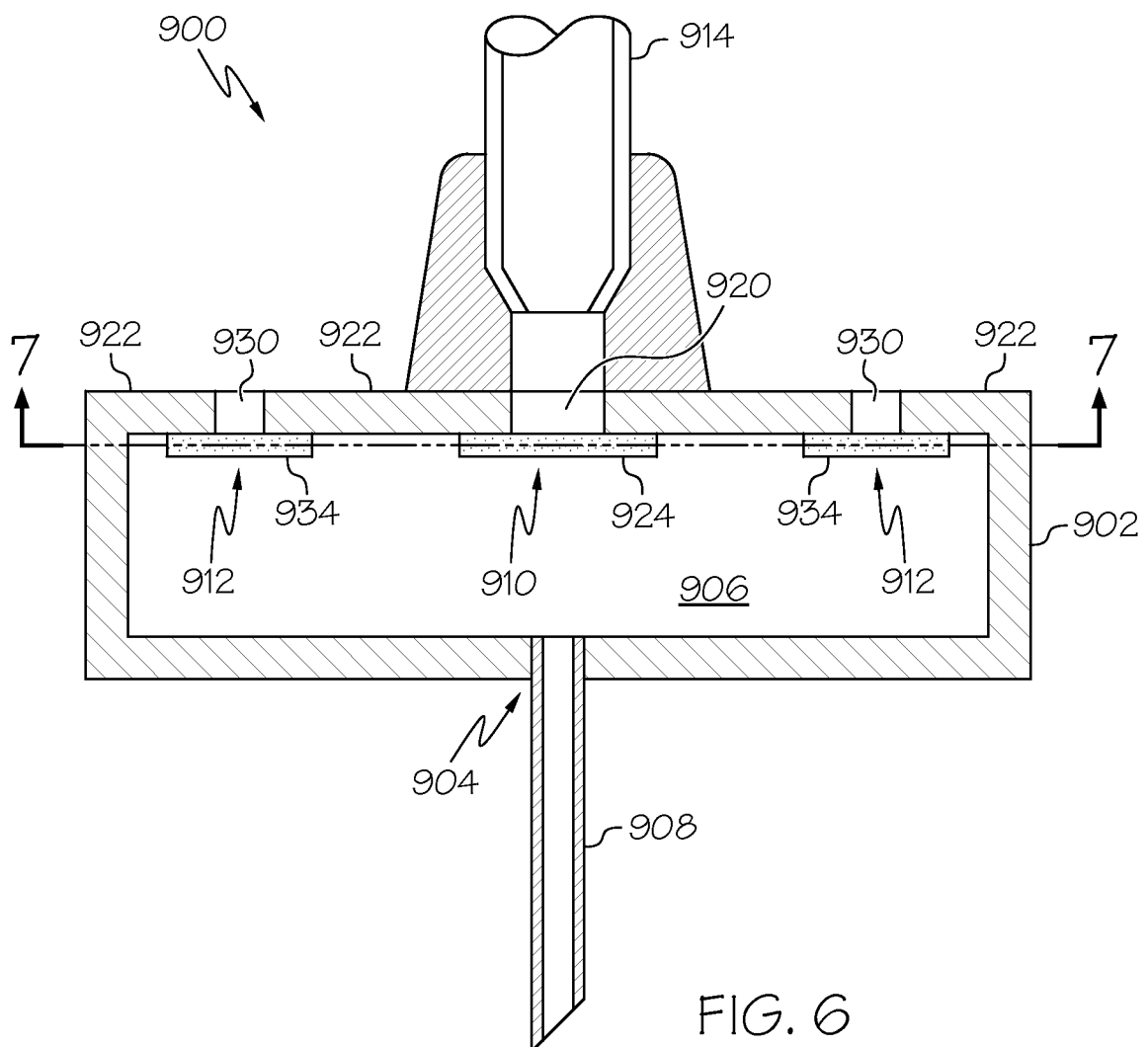


FIG. 6

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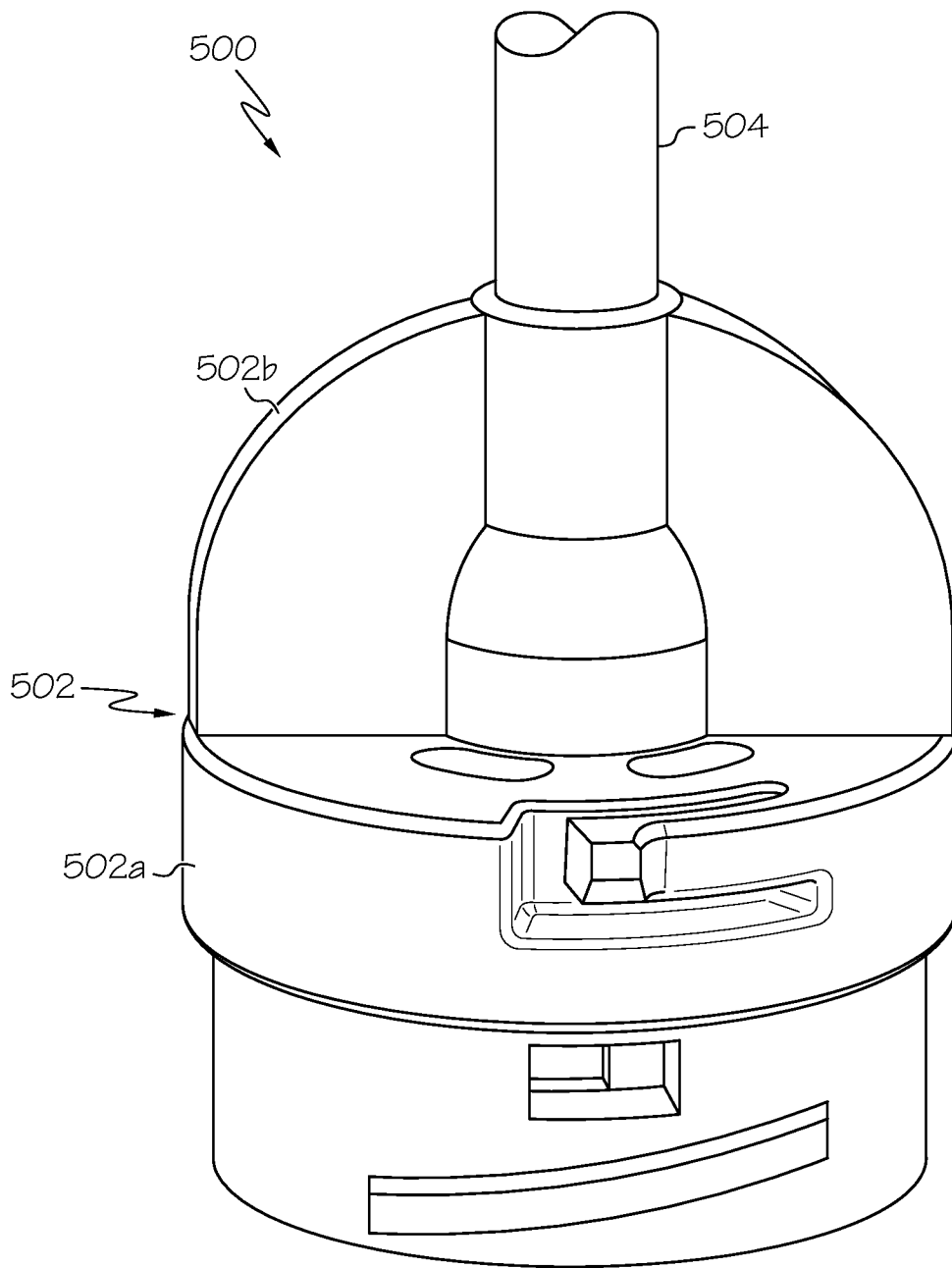


FIG. 5

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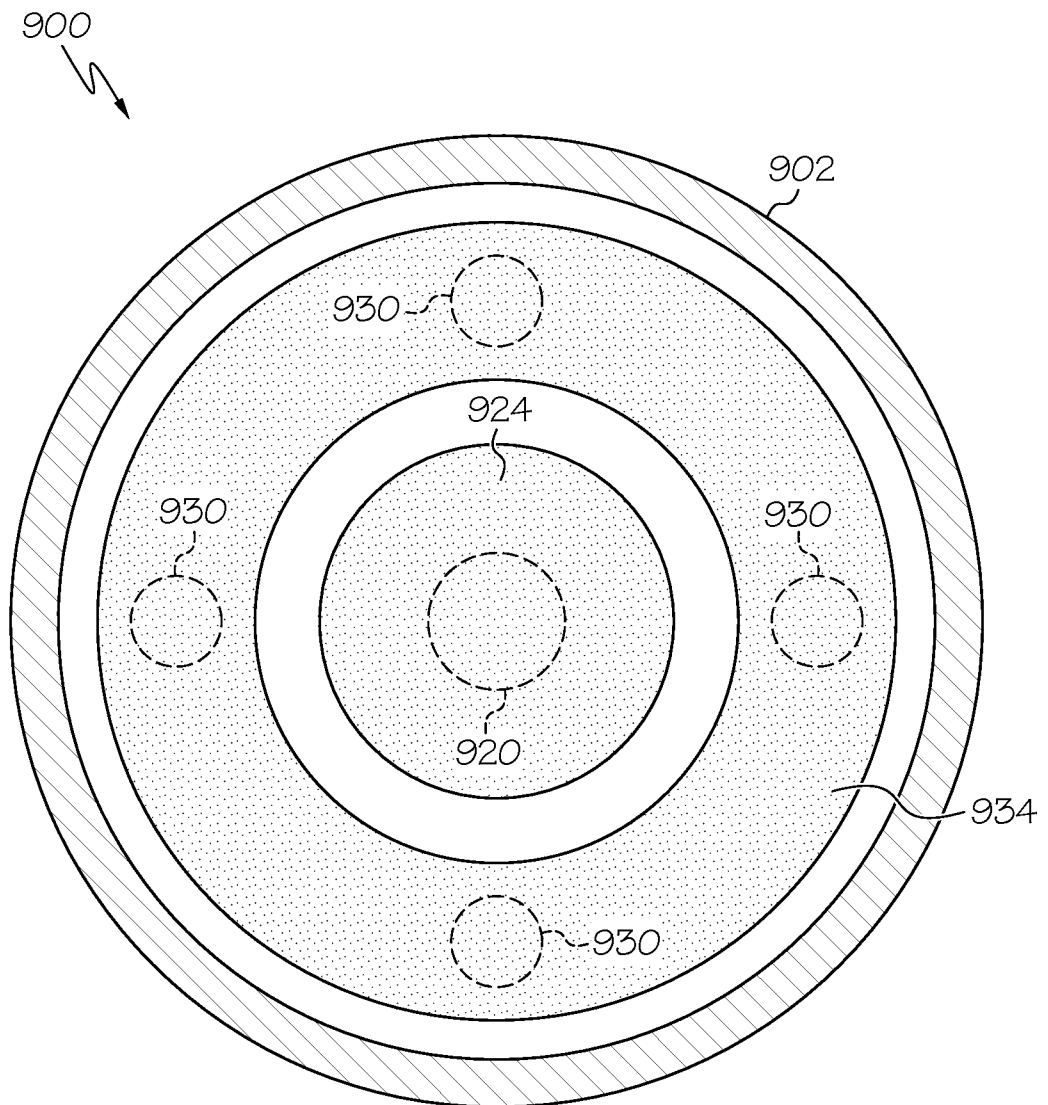


FIG. 7

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No
PCT/US2015/037795

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER INV. A61M5/158 A61J1/05 A61M5/38 A61M5/145 A61M5/142 ADD.		
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC		
B. FIELDS SEARCHED		
Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols) A61M A61J		
Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched		
Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used) EPO-Internal, WPI Data		
C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
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Y	figure 3	2-11, 13-17, 19-32
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Y	paragraph [0048] - paragraph [0052]; figures	2-11, 13-17, 19-32
	----- -/-	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> See patent family annex.		
* Special categories of cited documents : "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance "E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified) "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed "T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention "X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone "Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art "&" document member of the same patent family		
Date of the actual completion of the international search 5 August 2015		Date of mailing of the international search report 17/08/2015
Name and mailing address of the ISA/ European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016		Authorized officer Ehrsam, Fernand

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