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(54) Title: MICROWAVE ANTENNA HAVING A COAXIAL CABLE WITH AN ADJUSTABLE OUTER CONDUCTOR CONFIGURATION

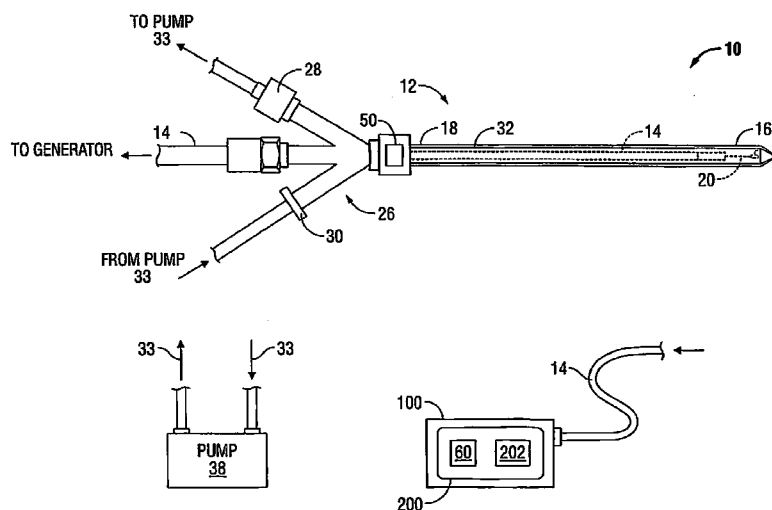


FIG. 1

(57) Abstract: A microwave ablation system is provided. The microwave ablation system includes a power source. A microwave antenna is adapted to connect to the power source via a coaxial cable that includes inner and outer conductors having a compressible dielectric operably disposed therebetween. The inner conductor in operative communication with a radiating section associated with the microwave antenna. The outer conductor includes a distal end transitionable with respect to each of the inner conductor, compressible dielectric and radiating section from an initial condition wherein the distal end has a first diameter to a subsequent condition wherein the distal end has a second diameter. Transition of the distal end from the initial condition to the subsequent condition enhances the delivery of microwave energy from the power source to the inner conductor and radiating section such that a desired effect to tissue is achieved.

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MICROWAVE ANTENNA HAVING A COAXIAL CABLE WITH AN ADJUSTABLE OUTER CONDUCTOR CONFIGURATION

BACKGROUND

Technical Field

[0001] The present disclosure relates to microwave antennas. More particularly, the present disclosure relates to microwave antennas having a coaxial cable with an adjustable outer conductor configuration.

Background of Related Art

[0002] Microwave ablation procedures, e.g., such as those performed for menorrhagia, are typically done to ablate the targeted tissue to denature or kill the tissue. Many procedures and types of devices utilizing electromagnetic radiation therapy are known in the art. Such microwave therapy is typically used in the treatment of tissue and organs such as the prostate, heart, and liver.

[0003] One non-invasive procedure generally involves the treatment of tissue (e.g., a tumor) underlying the skin via the use of microwave energy. The microwave energy is able to non-invasively penetrate the skin to reach the underlying tissue. Typically, microwave energy is generated by a power source, e.g., microwave generator, and transmitted to tissue via a microwave antenna that is fed with a coaxial cable that operably couples to a radiating section of the microwave antenna.

[0004] To enhance energy delivery efficiency from the microwave generator to the microwave antenna, impedance associated with the coaxial cable, the radiating section and/or tissue need to equal to one another, i.e., an impedance match between the coaxial cable, the radiating section and/or tissue. In certain instances, an impedance mismatch may be present between the coaxial cable, the radiating section and/or tissue, and the energy delivery efficiency

from the microwave generator to the microwave antenna is compromised, e.g., decreased, which, in turn, may compromise a desired effect to tissue, e.g., ablation to tissue.

SUMMARY

[0005] The present disclosure provides a microwave ablation system. The microwave ablation system includes a power source. A microwave antenna is adapted to connect to the power source via a coaxial cable that includes inner and outer conductors having a compressible dielectric operably disposed therebetween. The inner conductor is in operative communication with a radiating section associated with the microwave antenna. The outer conductor includes a distal end transitionable with respect to each of the inner conductor, compressible dielectric and radiating section from an initial condition wherein the distal end has a first diameter to a subsequent condition wherein the distal end has a second diameter. Transition of the distal end from the initial condition to the subsequent condition enhances the delivery of microwave energy from the power source to the inner conductor and radiating section such that a desired effect to tissue is achieved.

[0006] The present disclosure provides a microwave antenna adapted to connect to a power source for performing a microwave ablation procedure. The microwave antenna includes inner and outer conductors having a compressible dielectric operably disposed therebetween. The inner conductor is in operative communication with a radiating section associated with the microwave antenna. The outer conductor includes a distal end transitionable with respect to each of the inner conductor, compressible dielectric and radiating section from an initial condition wherein the distal end has a first diameter to a subsequent condition wherein the distal end has a second diameter. Transition of the distal end from the initial condition to the subsequent

condition enhances delivery of microwave energy from the power source to the inner conductor and radiating section such that a desired effect to tissue is achieved.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0007] The above and other aspects, features, and advantages of the present disclosure will become more apparent in light of the following detailed description when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

[0008] FIG. 1 is a schematic view of a microwave ablation system adapted for use with a microwave antenna that utilizes a coaxial cable with an adjustable outer conductor configuration according to an embodiment of the present disclosure;

[0009] FIG. 2A is partial, cut-away view of a distal tip of the microwave antenna depicted in FIG. 1 illustrating the coaxial cable with the adjustable outer conductor configuration coupled to a radiating section associated with microwave antenna;

[0010] FIG. 2B is a cross-sectional view taken along line segment "2B-2B" illustrated in FIG. 2A;

[0011] FIG. 2C is partial, cut-away view of an alternate distal tip design illustrating a coaxial cable with the adjustable outer conductor configuration coupled to a radiating section associated with microwave antenna according to an alternate embodiment of the present disclosure;

[0012] FIG. 3A is an enlarged view of the area of detail 3A depicted in FIG. 2A;

[0013] FIG. 3B is a side view of a coaxial cable depicted in FIG. 3A with a transitional distal end of an outer conductor shown in a compressed condition;

[0014] FIGS. 4A-4B are side views of an alternate embodiment of the coaxial cable depicted in FIGS. 3A and 3B with a transitional distal end of an outer conductor shown in noncompressed and compressed conditions, respectively;

[0015] FIGS. 5A-5B are side views of an alternate embodiment of the coaxial cable depicted in FIGS. 3A and 3B with a transitional distal end of an outer conductor shown in noncompressed and compressed conditions, respectively; and

[0016] FIGS. 6A-6B are side views of yet another embodiment of the coaxial cable depicted in FIGS. 3A and 3B with a transitional distal end of an outer conductor shown in noncompressed and compressed conditions, respectively.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0017] Embodiments of the presently disclosed system and method are described in detail with reference to the drawing figures wherein like reference numerals identify similar or identical elements. As used herein and as is traditional, the term “distal” refers to the portion which is furthest from the user and the term “proximal” refers to the portion that is closest to the user. In addition, terms such as “above”, “below”, “forward”, “rearward”, etc. refer to the orientation of the figures or the direction of components and are simply used for convenience of description.

[0018] Referring now to FIGS. 1-2C, and initially with reference to FIG. 1, a microwave ablation system in accordance with an embodiment of the present disclosure is designated system 10. A microwave antenna 12 operably couples to generator 100 including a controller 200 that connects to the generator 100 via a flexible coaxial cable 14. In this instance, generator 100 is configured to provide microwave energy at an operational frequency from about 300 MHz to

about 10 GHz. Microwave antenna 12 includes a distal radiating portion or section 16 that is connected by a feedline or shaft 18 to coaxial cable 14. Microwave antenna 12 couples to the cable 14 through a connection hub 26. The connection hub 26 includes an outlet fluid port 28 and an inlet fluid port 30 connected in fluid communication with a sheath or cannula 32. Cannula 32 is configured to circulate coolant fluid 33 from ports 28 and 30 around the antenna assembly 12 via respective fluid lumens 34 and 35 (FIG. 2A). Ports 28 and 30, in turn, couple to a supply pump 38. For a more detailed description of the microwave antenna 12 and operative components associated therewith, reference is made to commonly-owned U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 12/401,268 filed on March 10, 2009.

[0019] With reference to FIGS. 2A-3B, and initially with reference to FIG. 2A, a coaxial cable 14 configuration according to an embodiment of the present disclosure is shown. Coaxial cable 14 extends from the proximal end of the microwave antenna 12 and includes an inner conductor 20 that is operably disposed within the shaft 18 and in electrical communication with a distal radiating section 16 (FIGS. 1 and 2A). Coaxial cable 14 includes a compressible dielectric 22 and an outer conductor 24 having an adjustable distal end 25 surrounding each of the inner conductor 20 and compressible dielectric 22. A portion of the coaxial cable 14 is movable in one or more directions to cause the distal end 25 to transition from a noncompressed condition to a compressed condition, described in greater detail below.

[0020] As noted above, an impedance mismatch may be present between a coaxial cable and a radiating section associated with conventional microwave antennas. As a result thereof, the energy delivery efficiency from the microwave generator to the microwave antenna may be compromised, e.g., decreased, which, in turn, may compromise a desired effect to tissue, e.g., tissue ablation. More particularly, impedance associated with the microwave antenna 12 varies

over the course of an ablation cycle due to, for example, tissue complex permittivity changes caused by temperature increase. That is, because the ablated tissue is in a “near field” of the microwave antenna 12, the ablated tissue essentially becomes part of the microwave antenna 12. The impedance changes cause an increase in reflective power back to the generator 100 and reduce energy deposits into tissue.

[0021] In accordance with the present disclosure, a length of the coaxial cable 14 is configured for tuning (i.e., impedance matching) an impedance associated with the inner conductor 20, outer conductor 24 and tissue at a target tissue site such that an optimal transfer of electrosurgical energy is provided from the generator 100 to the radiating section 16 such that a desired tissue effect is achieved at a target tissue site. More particularly, the distal end 25 associated with the outer conductor 24 is adjustable, e.g., transitionable, adjacent an antenna feed point, i.e., adjacent the radiating section 16, to compress the compressible dielectric 22 and alter the ratio between the outer conductor 24 and the inner conductor 20, see FIG. 3A in combination with 3B.

[0022] Referring to FIG. 3A, coaxial cable 14 includes inner conductor 20 that is configured similar to conventional inner conductors. More particularly, inner conductor 20 is made from one or more conductive materials, e.g., copper, and is substantially encased by a dielectric, e.g., compressible dielectric 22, see FIG. 2B, for example. A portion of the inner conductor 20 operably couples to the radiating section 16 by one or more suitable coupling methods. Inner conductor 20 serves as a conductive medium that transfers electrosurgical energy from the generator 100 to the radiating section 16. More particularly, a distal end 21 of the inner conductor extends past a feed point start (e.g., past outer conductor 24 and compressible dielectric 22, see FIG. 2C in combination with FIG. 3A) and couples to the radiating section 16

(see FIGS. 1 and 2A, for example). Typically, during initial transmission of electrosurgical energy from the generator 100 to the radiating section 16, the impedance present at the distal end 21 of the inner conductor 20 and the radiating section 16 is approximately equal to 50Ω (i.e., the characteristic impedance of the coaxial cable 14), as best seen in FIG. 3A. It should be noted that this 50Ω impedance is at least partially the result of the ratio of the diameter of the outer conductor 24 compared to the diameter of the inner conductor 20.

[0023] Compressible dielectric 22 is operably disposed between the outer conductor 24 and inner conductor 20 and, as noted above, substantially encases the inner conductor 20. Compressible dielectric 22 may be made from any suitable dielectric material that is capable of being deformed or compressed. Suitable material that compressible dielectric 22 may be made from includes but is not limited to electrical insulation paper, relatively soft plastics, rubber, etc. In certain embodiments, compressible dielectric 22 is made from polyethylene that has been chemically, or otherwise, treated to provide a degree of compressibility. In other instances, the compressible dielectric 22 may be made from polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE), air, etc. Compressible dielectric 22 extends along a length of the coaxial cable 14. In the illustrated embodiment, compressible dielectric 22 extends partially along a portion of the coaxial cable 14 that is operably disposed within the microwave antenna 12. In certain embodiments, it may prove useful to provide the entire length of the coaxial cable with the compressible dielectric 22. Compressible dielectric 22 is deformable from an initially noncompressed condition to a compressed condition when the distal end 25 of the outer conductor 24 transitions from an initial, noncompressed, condition to a, subsequent, compressed condition; the significance of which is described in greater detail below. A distal end of the compressible dielectric 22 (the distal end of

the compressible dielectric 22 is encased by the distal end 25 of the outer conductor and, as a result thereof, is not explicitly shown) defines a feed point start.

[0024] With continued reference to FIG. 3A, outer conductor 24 may be made from any suitable conductive material, e.g., a material having a generally rigid configuration, such as, for example, a pair of coaxially disposed circumferential sheets of copper. More particularly, outer conductor 24 includes a fixed outer conductor 24a and a movable or translatable outer conductor jacket or sleeve 24b ("outer sleeve 24b"). Fixed outer conductor 24a and outer sleeve 24b are disposed in electrical communication with one another. A portion, e.g., a distal end 40, of the fixed outer conductor 24a operably couples to the distal end 25. More particularly, distal end 40 of fixed outer conductor 24a is configured to support the distal end 25 such that the distal end 25 may transition from the noncompressed condition to the compressed condition. With this purpose in mind, the distal end 40 of the fixed outer conductor 24a may securely couple to the distal end 25 by one or more suitable coupling or securement methods. For example, in the illustrated embodiment, distal end 40 of fixed outer conductor 24a operably couples to the distal end 25 via one of soldering, welding and brazing. In certain embodiments, distal end 25 may be monolithically formed with the fixed outer conductor 24a. Fixed outer conductor 24a supports translatable outer sleeve 24b such that outer sleeve 24b may translate or rotate thereabout. In certain embodiments, one or more lubricious materials may be operably disposed between an external surface (not explicitly shown) of the fixed outer conductor 24a and an internal surface (not explicitly shown) of the outer sleeve 24b. For example, one or more suitable oils or waxes may be operably disposed between the external surface of the fixed outer conductor 24a and the internal surface of the outer sleeve 24b. Alternatively, or in combination therewith, one or both of the external surface of the fixed outer conductor 24a and the internal surface of the outer

sleeve 24b may be made from a material that has a low coefficient of friction, e.g., a material such as, Delron, Torlon, PTFE, etc. Fixed outer conductor 24a is configured such that fixed outer conductor 24a remains in a substantially fixed orientation when the outer sleeve 24b is translated thereabout. Accordingly, when outer sleeve 24b is translated (or in some instances rotated) about fixed outer conductor 24a, outer sleeve 24b and fixed outer conductor 24a remain in electrical communication with one another.

[0025] Distal end 25 is transitionable with respect to each of the inner conductor 20, outer conductor 24 including fixed outer conductor 24a and outer sleeve 24b, compressible dielectric 22 and radiating section 16. More particularly, the distal end 25 transitions from an initial condition wherein the distal end 25 has a first diameter, to a subsequent condition wherein the distal end 25 has second diameter. That is, in a noncompressed condition, the distal end 25 includes a first diameter "D1" and when the distal end 25 is in a compressed condition the distal end 25 includes a second diameter "D2," wherein the diameter "D2" is less than diameter "D1," see FIG. 3A in combination with FIG. 3B, for example.

[0026] In the embodiment illustrated in FIGS. 3A and 3B, distal end 25 is made from a conductive wire mesh or weave 25a that is made from one or more suitable conductive materials, e.g., a wire mesh or weave made from copper, silver, gold, stainless steel, titanium, nickel or combination thereof. Wire mesh 25a includes a generally cylindrical configuration when in a pre-transition condition and a generally frustoconical configuration when in the post transition condition, as best seen in FIGS. 3A and 3B. The configuration of a wire mesh or weave 25a facilitates transitioning from one condition to another while providing structural integrity for the distal end 25. As noted above, the distal end 40 of the fixed outer conductor 24a operably couples to the distal end 25. Likewise, a portion of the wire mesh 25a operably couples to the

outer sleeve 24b by one or more suitable coupling methods including but not limited to one or more mechanical interfaces (e.g., weaving a portion of the wire mesh with and/or into the outer sleeve 24b), one or more types of bonding agents (e.g., epoxy adhesives), or other suitable coupling method. In the illustrated embodiment, a pair of loose proximal ends 29 couple and/or form part of the wire mesh or weave 25a and operably couple to the outer sleeve 24b via a heat cure adhesive, soldering, brazing, welding, etc. Accordingly, when the outer sleeve 24b is moved, e.g., translated proximally, it “pulls” the proximal ends 29, which, in turn, causes the wire mesh 25a of the distal end 25 to transition or tighten to the compressed condition, which, in turn, causes the compressible dielectric 22 to deform or compress to the compressed condition such that the diameter of the distal end 25 transitions from diameter “D1” to diameter “D2.”

[0027] In accordance with the present disclosure, transitioning of the distal end 25 from the noncompressed condition to the compressed condition maximizes delivery of microwave energy from the generator 100 to the inner conductor 22 and radiating section 16 such that a desired effect to tissue is achieved. To this end, outer sleeve 24b is translatable relative to the fixed outer conductor 24a. As noted above, outer sleeve 24b operably couples to the distal end 25 of the outer conductor 24 and is configured such that proximal translation of the outer sleeve 24b relative to the fixed inner conductor 24a causes the distal end 25 to transition from the initial, noncompressed, condition to the subsequent, compressed condition. In the illustrated embodiment, the distance that outer sleeve translates is equal to or corresponds to the decrease of the diameter associated with the distal end 25. More particularly, for a given amount of translation of outer sleeve 24b the diameter of the distal end 24b will decrease (or in some instances increase) proportionately. For example, in certain embodiments, a 1:1 ratio between translation of the outer sleeve 25b and transition of the distal end 25 from the first diameter “D1”

to the second diameter "D2" is utilized. That is, when the outer sleeve 24b translates .001 inches the second diameter "D2" of the distal end 25 decreases .001 inches from the original diameter "D1." The ratio may be altered to achieve a desired impedance, tissue effect, ablation zone shape, etc. One skilled in the art can appreciate that other ratios may be utilized when manufacturing and/or assembling the coaxial cable 14.

[0028] A drive mechanism 50 is in electrical communication with generator 100 via an electric circuit 60 (FIG. 1) and operably couples to outer sleeve 24b. More particularly, drive mechanism 50 is operably disposed within microwave antenna 12 adjacent hub 26. Drive mechanism 50 includes one or more components (e.g., a drive rod, servo, servo drives, or other suitable device(s)) that are operably coupled to the outer sleeve 24b and configured to translate the outer sleeve 24b proximally and, in some instances, distally. In certain instances, drive mechanism 50 includes one or more components (e.g., a drive rod, servo, servo drives, or other suitable device(s)) that are operably coupled to the outer sleeve 24b and configured to rotate the outer sleeve 24b, e.g., rotate the outer sleeve 24b in a clockwise and/or counterclockwise direction.

[0029] An outer plastic jacket or sheath 52 is operably disposed along a length of the coaxial cable 14. Sheath 52 functions similar to known sheaths that are typically associated with coaxial cables and, as such, only those features that are unique to sheath 52 are described hereinafter. One or more of the lubricious materials described above may be operably disposed between an internal surface of the sheath 52 and the external surface of the fixed outer conductor 24a and/or outer sleeve 24b.

[0030] In certain instances, sheath 52 (FIG. 2C) may operably couple to the distal end 25 and may be configured to "pull" the wire mesh 25a of the distal end 25. More particularly, and

in this instance, the outer conductor 24 includes a fixed conductor 24a and does not include an outer sleeve 24b. That is, the sheath 52 takes the place of the outer sleeve 24b. More particularly, the sheath 52 encases the fixed outer conductor 24a and is operably coupled to and in operative communication with the drive mechanism 50 via the one or more of the previously described components.

[0031] In certain instances, one or more springs (not shown) may be operably associated with the wire mesh 25a of the distal end 25. In this instance, the spring(s) may be configured to facilitate transitioning the wire mesh 25a. For example, in some instances, it may prove useful or necessary to increase the impedance between the inner conductor 20 and distal end 25 of the outer conductor 24. In this instance, the outer sleeve 24b may be configured for distal translation relative to the fixed outer conductor 24a. That is, the outer sleeve 24b may be configured to translate distally past the distal end 40 of the fixed outer conductor 24a and toward the distal end 25 and/or radiating section 16 such that the wire mesh 25a transitions from an unexpanded condition to an expanded condition and the impedance between the inner conductor 20 and distal end 25 of the outer conductor 24 is increased. In this instance, the drive mechanism 50, and operative components associated therewith, is configured to translate the outer sleeve 24b (or in some instances, the sheath 52) distally.

[0032] In one particular embodiment, the controller 200 is configured to automatically control operation of the operative components associated with the coaxial cable 14. More particularly, when the impedance of the microwave antenna 12 requires adjustment, one or more modules, e.g., coaxial adjustment control module 202 (FIG. 1), associated with the controller 200 commands electric circuit 60 to supply power to the drive mechanism 50 such that the outer sleeve 24b may be actuated. In one particular embodiment, the controller 200 may be configured

to determine a difference between forward and reflected power and determine a load mismatch thereby causing electric circuit to activate the drive mechanism 50.

[0033] Operation of system 10 is now described. A portion of the microwave antenna, e.g., a radiating section 16, is positioned adjacent a target tissue site. Initially, the diameter of the wire mesh 25a is approximately equal to "D1" that corresponds to an initial characteristic impedance "ZO" of the coaxial cable 14, e.g., an impedance "ZO" that is approximately equal to 50Ω. Thereafter, electrosurgical energy is transmitted from the generator 100 to the radiating section 16 of the microwave antenna 12 such that a desired tissue effect may be achieved at the target tissue site. As the radiating portion 16 emits electromagnetic energy into tissue and the tissue desiccates, an impedance mismatch between the microwave antenna 12 and tissue may be present at the target tissue site. To compensate for this impedance mismatch, the outer sleeve 24b (or in certain instances, the sheath 52) is "pulled" proximally. The compressible dielectric 22 allows the wire mesh 25a of the distal end 25 to transition, e.g., compress or tighten, under the pulling force provided by the outer sleeve 24b. The wire mesh 25a of the distal end 25 will compress to a diameter that is approximately equal to "D2," which, in turn, decreases the impedance and compensates for the impedance mismatch. In accordance with the present disclosure, the configuration of adjustable distal end 25 of the fixed outer conductor 24a and inner conductor 20 improves electrosurgical energy transfer from the generator 100 to the microwave antenna 12 and/or the target tissue site and allows the microwave antenna 12 or portion associated therewith, e.g., radiating section 16, to be utilized with more invasive ablation procedures.

[0034] With reference to FIGS. 4A and 4B an alternate embodiment of the coaxial cable 14 is shown designated 114. Coaxial cable 114 is substantially similar to that of coaxial cable

14. As a result thereof, only those features that are unique to coaxial cable 114 are described in detail.

[0035] Coaxial cable includes an inner conductor 120, an outer conductor 124 and a compressible dielectric 122 that surrounds the inner conductor 120. A distal end 125 operably couples to a distal end 140 of the outer conductor 124 and is made from one or more suitable types of a shape memory alloy (e.g., Nitinol) that forms a wire mesh 125a. More particularly, shape memory alloys (SMAs) are a family of alloys having anthropomorphic qualities of memory and trainability and are particularly well suited for use with medical instruments. Nitinol which can retain shape memories for two different physical configurations and changes shape as a function of temperature. SMAs undergo a crystalline phase transition upon applied temperature and/or stress variations. A particularly useful attribute of SMAs is that after it is deformed by temperature/stress, it can completely recover its original shape on being returned to the original temperature. The ability of an alloy to possess shape memory is a result of the fact that the alloy undergoes a reversible transformation from an austenite state to a martensite state with a change in temperature (or stress-induced condition). This transformation is referred to as a thermoelastic martensite transformation. Under normal conditions, the thermoelastic martensite transformation occurs over a temperature range which varies with the composition of the alloy, itself, and the type of thermal-mechanical processing by which it was manufactured. In other words, the temperature at which a shape is “memorized” by an SMA is a function of the temperature at which the martensite and austenite crystals form in that particular alloy.

[0036] Unlike the configuration of coaxial cable 14 depicted in FIGS. 3A and 3B, the mesh 125a does not rely on a “pulling” force to transition from a noncompressed condition to a compressed condition. More particularly, a pair of loose proximal ends 129 associated with the

wire mesh 125 is in electrical communication with the generator 100 and/or one or more modules associated with the controller 200. In this instance, the generator, or an operative component associated therewith, e.g., electrical circuit 60, supplies current to the wire mesh 125a such that the wire mesh 125a may transition from a noncompressed condition, to a compressed condition, e.g., its original cold forged shape. More particularly, as current is supplied, via the proximal ends 129, to the wire mesh 125a, the current heats the wire mesh 125a and causes the wire mesh 125a to transition back to its (referring to the wire mesh 125a) cold forged shape, e.g., a distal end 125 having a generally frustoconical shape with a diameter approximately equal to "D2," see FIG. 4B, for example.

[0037] Operation of system 10 that includes a microwave antenna 12 with a coaxial cable 112 is now described. Only those operative features that are unique to the microwave antenna 12 with a coaxial cable 112 are described hereinafter.

[0038] To compensate for an impedance mismatch, electrical current is supplied to the wire mesh 125a such that current may resistively heat the wire mesh 125a. Resistively heating the wire mesh 125a causes the wire mesh 125a to transition back to the cold forged shape of the wire mesh 125a. The compressible dielectric 122 allows the wire mesh 125a of the distal end 25 to transition, e.g., compress or tighten, to a generally frustoconical shape with a diameter approximately equal to "D2," which, in turn, decreases the impedance and compensates for the impedance mismatch. In accordance with the present disclosure, the configuration of adjustable distal end 125 of the outer conductor 124 and inner conductor 120 improves electrosurgical energy transfer from the generator 100 to the microwave antenna 12 and/or the target tissue site and allows the microwave antenna 12 or portion associated therewith, e.g., radiating section 16, to be utilized with more invasive ablation procedures.

[0039] With reference to FIGS. 5A and 5B an alternate embodiment of the coaxial cable 14 is shown designated 214. Coaxial cable 214 is substantially similar to that of coaxial cable 14. As a result thereof, only those features that are unique to coaxial cable 214 are described in detail.

[0040] Coaxial cable includes an inner conductor 220, an outer conductor 224 that includes a fixed outer conductor 224a and a rotatable outer sleeve 224b, and a compressible dielectric 222 that surrounds the inner conductor 220. Outer sleeve 224b is rotatably coupled to the fixed internal outer conductor 224a and wire mesh 225a of distal end 225 such that rotation of the outer sleeve 224b causes wire mesh 225a to transition from a noncompressed condition to a compressed condition. In the embodiment illustrated in FIGS. 5A and 5B, the outer sleeve 224b is rotatably coupled to the fixed outer conductor 224a by one or more suitable mechanical interfaces. More particularly, one or more ramped threads 201 are in mechanical communication with one or more corresponding slots 203. For illustrative purposes, the ramped threads 201 are shown operably disposed along an exterior surface of the fixed outer conductor 224a and the corresponding slots 203 are shown operably disposed along an interior surface of the outer sleeve 224b. This configuration of ramped threads 201 and corresponding slots 203 ensures that clockwise rotation of the outer sleeve 224b causes proximal translation of the outer sleeve 224b, which, in turn, causes the wire mesh 225a to transition from a noncompressed condition to a compressed condition. Conversely, counterclockwise rotation of the outer sleeve 224b causes distal translation of the outer sleeve 224b, which, in turn, causes the wire mesh 225a to transition from the compressed condition back to the noncompressed condition. While the present disclosure describes a configuration of a ramped threads 201 and corresponding slots 203 to facilitate rotation of the outer sleeve 224b with respect to fixed outer conductor 224a, it is within

the purview of the present disclosure that one or more other methods or devices may be utilized to achieve the intended purposes described herein.

[0041] Distal end 225 operably couples to a distal end 240 of the fixed outer conductor 224a in a manner as described above with respect to distal end 25 and distal end 24.

[0042] A pair of loose proximal ends 229 associated with the wire mesh 225 is operably coupled to the outer sleeve 224b such that rotation of outer sleeve 224b causes the wire mesh 225a to transition from a noncompressed condition, to a compressed condition. Proximal ends 229 may be coupled to the outer sleeve 224b by one or more suitable coupling methods, e.g., one or more coupling methods previously described above with respect to proximal ends 29.

[0043] A drive mechanism 50, configured in a manner as described above, is in operable communication with the outer sleeve 224b. More particularly, the drive mechanism 50 is configured to impart rotational motion of the outer sleeve 224b such that the outer sleeve 224b may translate proximally and, in some instances, distally.

[0044] To compensate for an impedance mismatch, the outer conductor (or in certain instances, the sheath 52) is rotated in a clockwise direction. The compressible dielectric 222 allows the wire mesh 225a of the distal end 225 to transition, e.g., compress or tighten, under the rotational or pulling force provided by the outer sleeve 224b. The wire mesh 225a of the distal end 225 will to compress to a diameter that is approximately equal to "D2," which, in turn, decreases the impedance and compensates for the impedance mismatch. In accordance with the present disclosure, the configuration of adjustable distal end 225 of the outer conductor 224 and inner conductor 220 improves electrosurgical energy transfer from the generator 100 to the microwave antenna 12 and/or the target tissue site and allows the microwave antenna 12 or

portion associated therewith, e.g., radiating section 16, to be utilized with more invasive ablation procedures.

[0045] With reference to FIGS. 6A and 6B an alternate embodiment of the coaxial cable 14 is shown designated 314. Coaxial cable 314 is substantially similar to that of coaxial cable 14. As a result thereof, only those features that are unique to coaxial cable 314 are described in detail.

[0046] Coaxial cable includes a translatable inner conductor 320, an outer conductor 324 and a compressible dielectric 322 that surrounds the inner conductor 320. Unlike the inner conductors previously described, inner conductor 320 is configured to translate, e.g., proximally and/or distally, relative to the outer conductor 324 and compressible dielectric 322. To this end, one or more lubricious materials described above may be operably disposed between the compressible dielectric 322 and inner conductor 320 to facilitate translation of the inner conductor 320.

[0047] An incompressible dielectric disk 323 (disk 323) of suitable proportion and having a suitable shape is operably disposed on (e.g., via one or more suitable securement methods) and along a length of the inner conductor 320. Disk 323 is configured to “push” against a distal portion of the compressible dielectric 322 when the inner conductor 320 is translated proximally such that the compressible material is caused to compress or deform radially inward. To this end, disk 323 is of substantially rigid construction including a generally circumferential configuration having a diameter that is less than a predetermined diameter, e.g., diameter “D2,” of a wire mesh 325a when the wire mesh 325a is in a compressed state. Disk 323 may be made from any suitable material including but not limited to those previously described herein, e.g., polyethylene.

[0048] Compressible dielectric 322 may be configured in a manner as previously described, e.g., compressible dielectric 22. In the embodiment illustrated in FIGS. 6A and 6B, compressible dielectric 322 is operably coupled or secured to the wire mesh 325a by one or more suitable coupling or securement methods. More particularly, compressible dielectric 322 is secured to the wire mesh 325 via an epoxy adhesive. Accordingly, when the compressible dielectric 322 deforms or compresses, the wire mesh 325a transitions to the compressed condition.

[0049] A drive mechanism 50, configured in a manner as described above, is in operable communication with the inner conductor 320. More particularly, the drive mechanism 50 is configured to impart translation of the inner conductor 320 such that the inner conductor 320 may translate proximally and, in some instances, distally.

[0050] Outer conductor 324 includes a distal end 325 that operably couples to a distal end 340 that forms a wire mesh 325a.

[0051] To compensate for an impedance mismatch, inner conductor 320 including disk 323 is moved proximally relative to outer conductor 324 and compressible dielectric 322. The compressible dielectric 322 pushes against the wire mesh 325a of the distal end 325, this, in turn, causes the wire mesh 325a to transition, e.g., compress or tighten, under the pushing force against the compressible dielectric 322 provided by the disk 323 and inner conductor 320. The wire mesh 325a of the distal end 325 will to compress to a diameter that is approximately equal to "D2," which, in turn, decreases the impedance and compensates for the impedance mismatch.

[0052] From the foregoing and with reference to the various figure drawings, those skilled in the art will appreciate that certain modifications can also be made to the present disclosure without departing from the scope of the same. For example, one or more modules

associated with the generator 100 and/or controller 200 may be configured to monitor the impedance at the target tissue site during the transmission of electrosurgical energy from the generator 100 to the microwave antenna 12. More particularly, one or more sensors (e.g., one or more voltage, impedance, current sensors, etc.) may be operably positioned at a predetermined location and adjacent the radiating section 16 and/or target tissue site. More particularly, the sensor(s) may be operably disposed along a length of the microwave antenna 12 and in operative communication with the module(s) associated with the generator 100 and/or controller 200. The sensor(s) may react to or detect impedance fluctuations associated with the microwave antenna 12 and/or tissue at the target tissue site during the ablation procedure. In this instance, the sensor(s) may be configured to trigger a control signal to the module(s) when an impedance mismatch is present. When the module(s) detects a control signal, the module calls for power to be supplied to an electrical circuit that is in operative communication with the drive mechanism 50 such that the drive mechanism 50 actuates one or more of the operative components, e.g., outer sleeve 24b, such that a respective wire mesh, e.g., wire mesh 25a of distal end 25, is caused to transition from the noncompressed condition to the compressed condition.

[0053] While several embodiments of the disclosure have been shown in the drawings and/or discussed herein, it is not intended that the disclosure be limited thereto, as it is intended that the disclosure be as broad in scope as the art will allow and that the specification be read likewise. Therefore, the above description should not be construed as limiting, but merely as exemplifications of particular embodiments. Those skilled in the art will envision other modifications within the scope and spirit of the claims appended hereto.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A microwave ablation system, comprising:

 a power source; and

 a microwave antenna adapted to connect to the power source via a coaxial cable that includes inner and outer conductors having a compressible dielectric operably disposed therebetween, the inner conductor in operative communication with a radiating section associated with the microwave antenna, the outer conductor including a distal end transitionable with respect to each of the inner conductor, compressible dielectric and radiating section from an initial condition wherein the distal end has a first diameter to a subsequent condition wherein the distal end has second diameter.

2. A microwave ablation system according to claim 1, wherein the outer conductor includes a fixed outer conductor and an outer sleeve operably coupled to the fixed outer conductor and translatable relative thereto, the outer sleeve configured such that proximal translation of the outer sleeve relative to the fixed outer conductor and inner conductor causes the distal end to transition from the initial condition to the subsequent condition.

3. A microwave ablation system according to claim 2, wherein when the distal end is in the initial condition the distal end is in a noncompressed condition and when the distal end is in the subsequent condition the distal end is in a compressed condition.

4. A microwave ablation system according to claim 1, wherein the distal end of the outer conductor includes a wire mesh configuration.

5. A microwave ablation system according to claim 1, wherein the distal end is made from a shape memory alloy.

6. A microwave ablation system according to claim 5, wherein the shape memory alloy is Nitinol.

7. A microwave ablation system according to claim 5, wherein the distal end of the outer conductor is operably coupled to an electric circuit for providing resistive heating to the distal end.

8. A microwave ablation system according to claim 1, wherein the outer conductor includes a fixed outer conductor and an outer sleeve operably coupled to the fixed outer conductor and translatable relative thereto, the outer sleeve configured such that distal translation of the outer sleeve relative to the fixed outer conductor and inner conductor causes the distal end to transition from the initial condition to the subsequent condition.

9. A microwave ablation system according to claim 8, wherein when the distal end is in the initial condition the distal end is in an unexpanded condition and when the distal end is in the subsequent condition the distal end is in an expanded condition.

10. A microwave ablation system according to claim 9, wherein a spring is operably associated with the distal end and is configured to facilitate transitioning the distal end from the unexpanded condition to expanded condition.

11. A microwave ablation system according to claim 10, wherein the spring is selected from the group consisting of torsion springs, leaf springs and compression springs.

12. A microwave ablation system according to claim 1, wherein the inner conductor is translatable relative to the compressible dielectric.

13. A microwave ablation system according to claim 1, wherein an incompressible dielectric disk operably couples to the inner conductor and is surrounded by the compressible dielectric such that when the inner conductor is translated proximally, the distal end transitions with respect to each of the inner conductor, compressible dielectric and radiating section from an initial condition wherein the distal end has a first diameter to a subsequent condition wherein the distal end has second diameter.

14. A microwave antenna adapted to connect to a power source for performing a microwave ablation procedure, comprising:

a coaxial cable that includes inner and outer conductors having a compressible dielectric operably disposed therebetween, the inner conductor in operative communication with a radiating section associated with the microwave antenna, the outer conductor including a distal end transitionable with respect to each of the inner

conductor, compressible dielectric and radiating section from an initial condition wherein the distal end has a first diameter to a subsequent condition wherein the distal end has second diameter.

15. A microwave antenna according to claim 14, wherein the outer conductor includes a fixed outer conductor and an outer sleeve operably coupled to the fixed outer conductor and translatable relative thereto, the outer sleeve configured such that proximal translation of the outer sleeve relative to the fixed outer conductor and inner conductor causes the distal end to transition from the initial condition to the subsequent condition.

16. A microwave antenna according to claim 15, wherein when the distal end is in the initial condition the distal end is in an noncompressed condition and when the distal end is in the subsequent condition the distal end is in a compressed condition.

17. A microwave antenna according to claim 15, wherein the distal end of the outer conductor includes a wire mesh configuration.

18. A microwave antenna according to claim 14, wherein the distal end is made from a shape memory alloy.

19. A microwave antenna according to claim 18, wherein the distal end of the outer conductor is operably coupled to an electric circuit for providing resistive heating to the distal end.

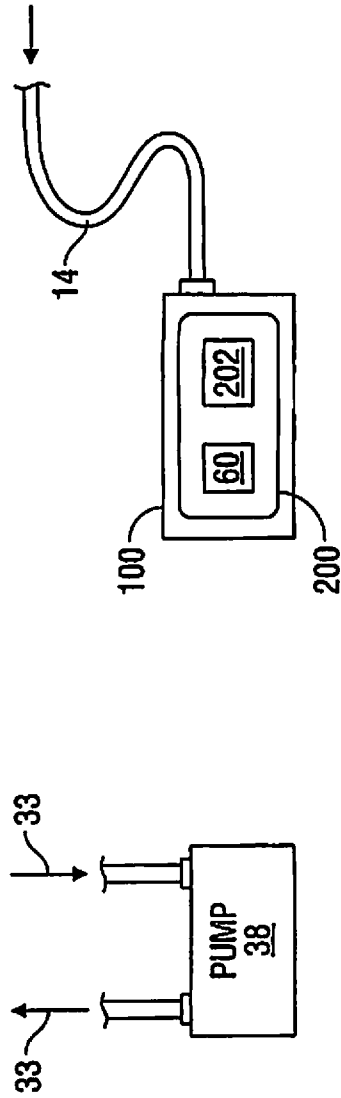
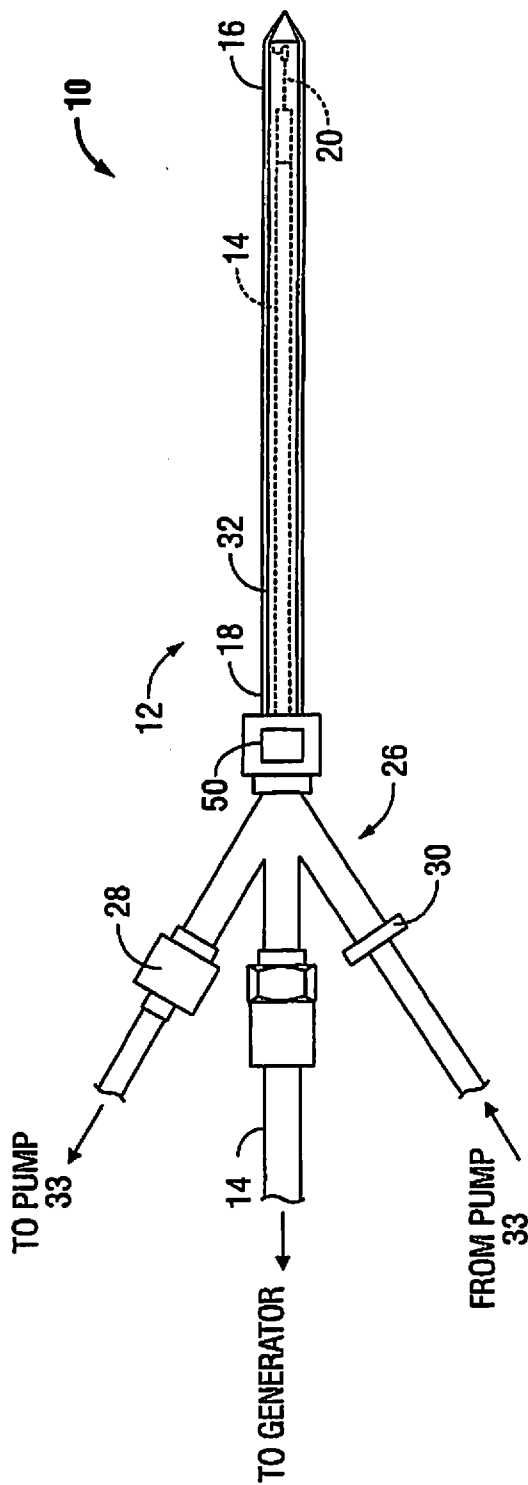


FIG. 1

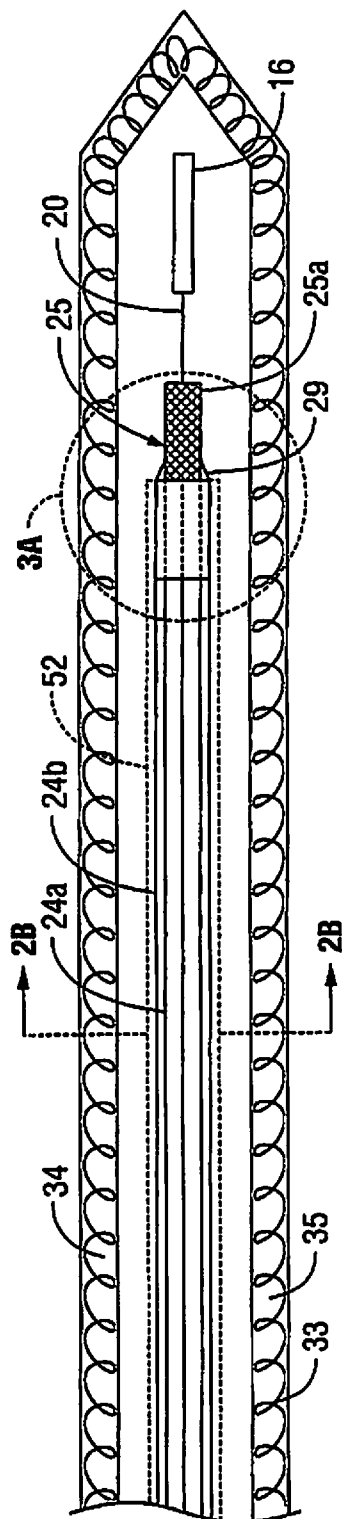


FIG. 2A

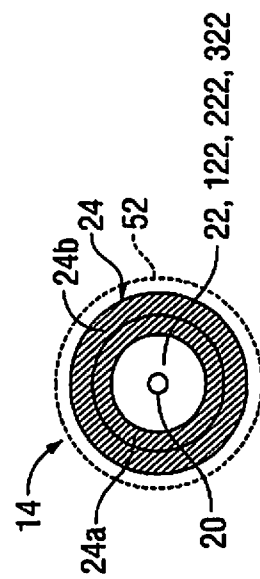


FIG. 2B

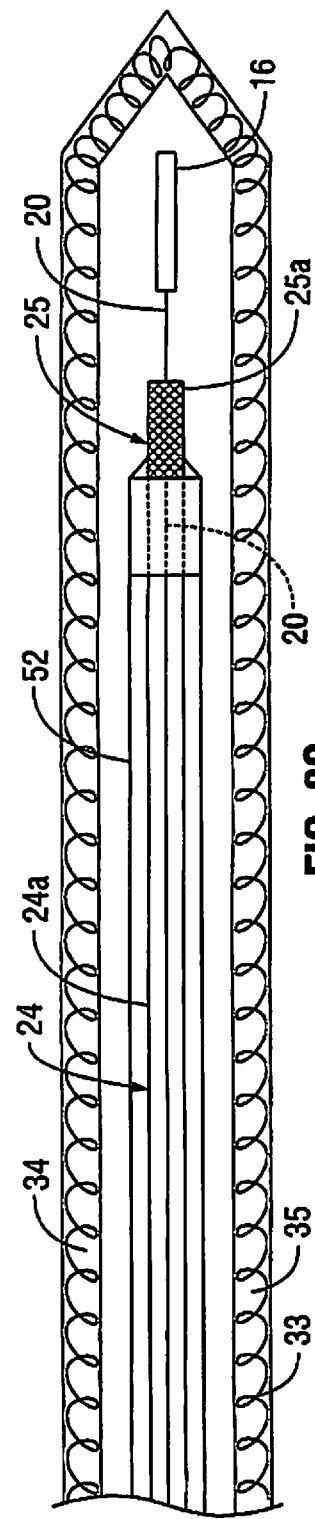


FIG. 2C

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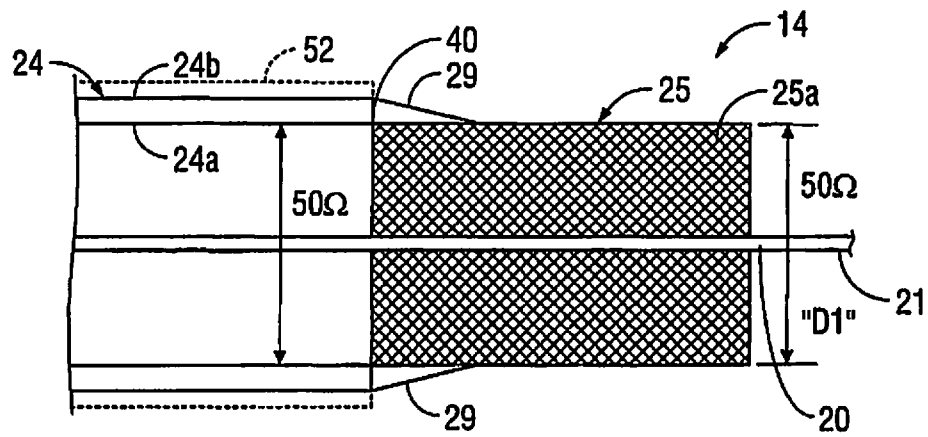


FIG. 3A

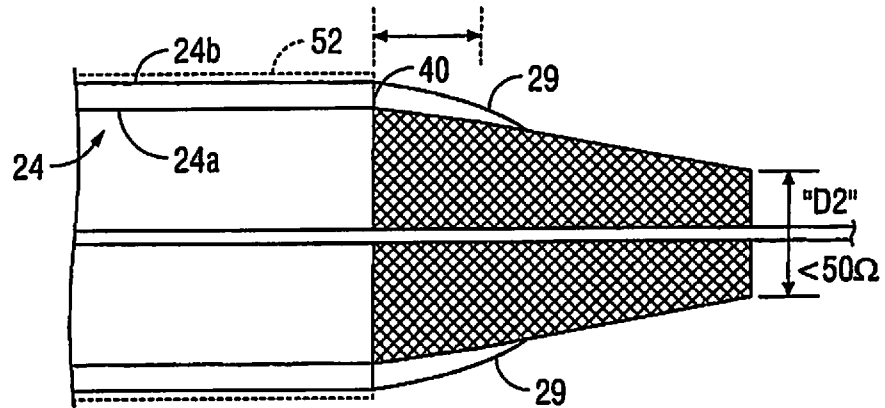


FIG. 3B

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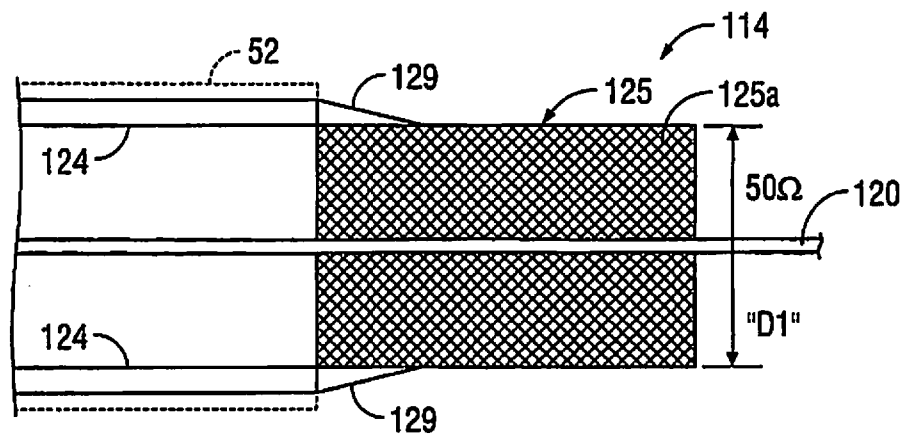


FIG. 4A

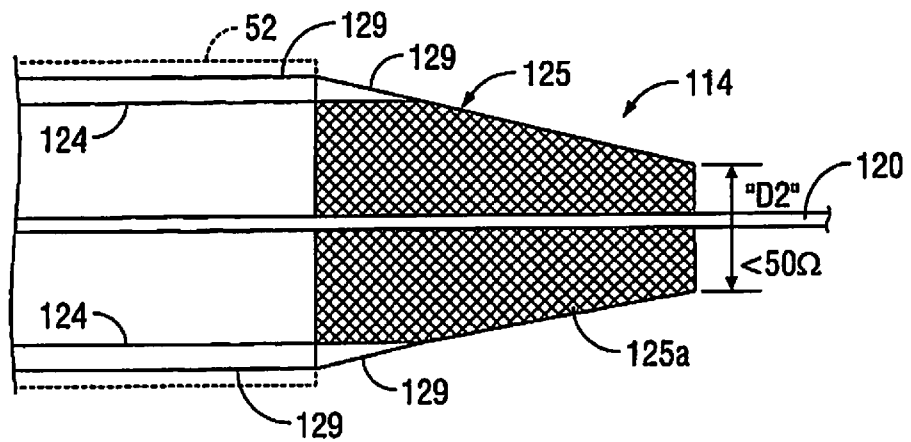


FIG. 4B

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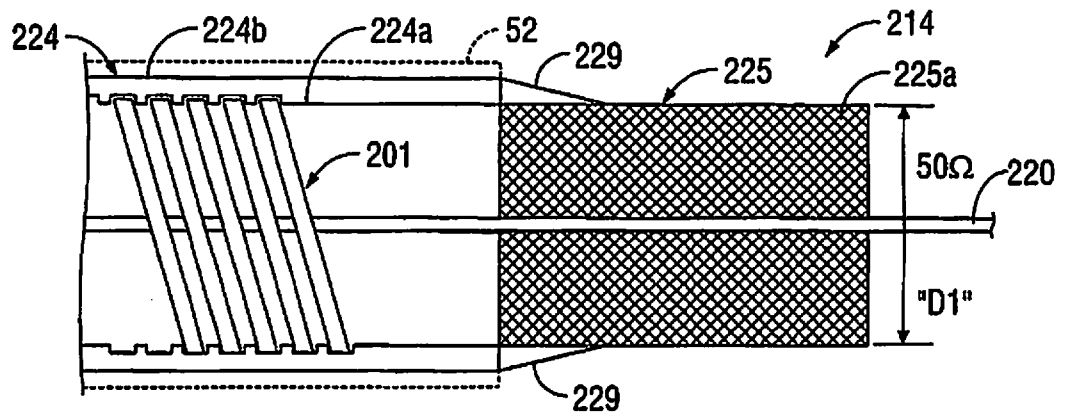


FIG. 5A

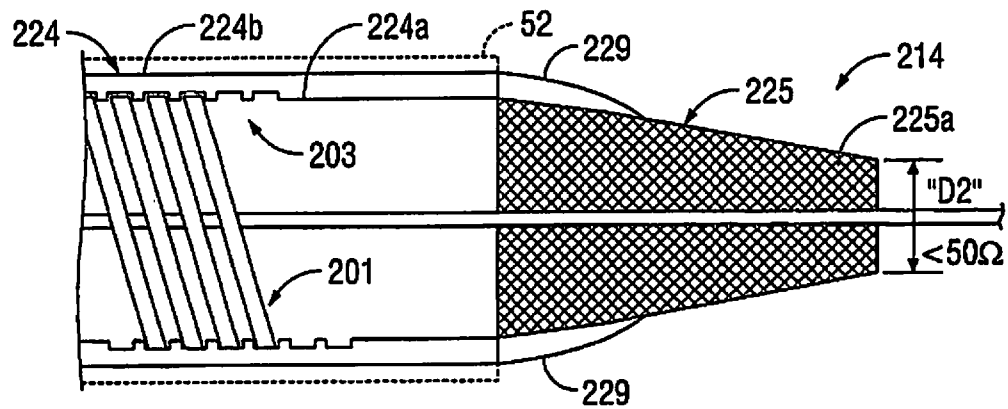


FIG. 5B

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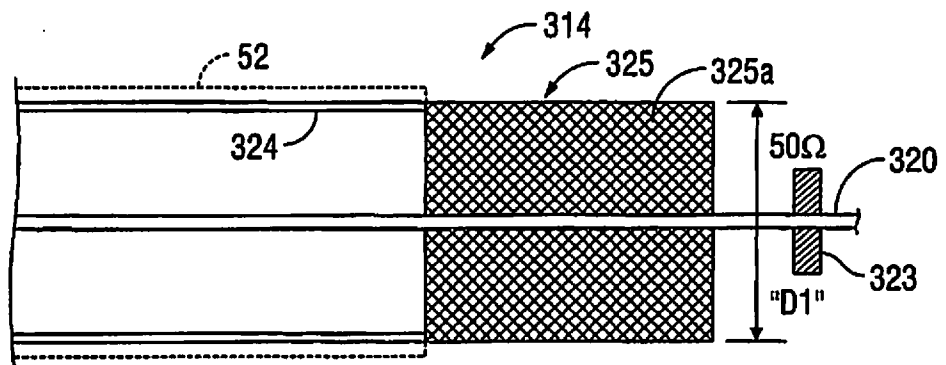


FIG. 6A

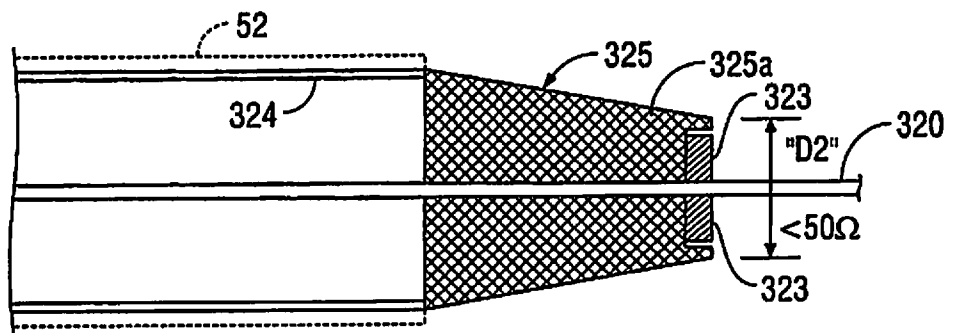


FIG. 6B

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US2012/050149**A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER*****A61B 18/18(2006.01)i, A61B 18/04(2006.01)i, A61L 31/02(2006.01)i***

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)

A61B 18/18; A61F 2/00; H05K 13/00; H01P 11/00; A61N 5/02

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Korean utility models and applications for utility models

Japanese utility models and applications for utility models

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

eKOMPASS(KIPO internal) & Keywords: ablation system, microwave antenna, dielectric, diameter, transitionable.

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 2011-0056069 A1 (KENLYN S. BONN) 10 March 2011 See abstract; claim 1; and figures 1-9.	1-19
A	US 2010-0234839 A1 (IAN SMITH et al.) 16 September 2010 See abstract; claim 1; and figures 1-6B.	1-19
A	US 05776176 A (ERIC N. RUDIE) 07 July 1998 See abstract; claim 1; and figure 2.	1-19
A	US 6496736 B1 (JAMES R. CARL et al.) 17 December 2002 See the whole document.	1-19

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.☒ See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:

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"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

27 DECEMBER 2012 (27.12.2012)

Date of mailing of the international search report

02 JANUARY 2013 (02.01.2013)

Name and mailing address of the ISA/KR

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Facsimile No. 82-42-472-7140

Authorized officer

YOO Min Jeong

Telephone No. 82-42-481-3463



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No.

PCT/US2012/050149

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