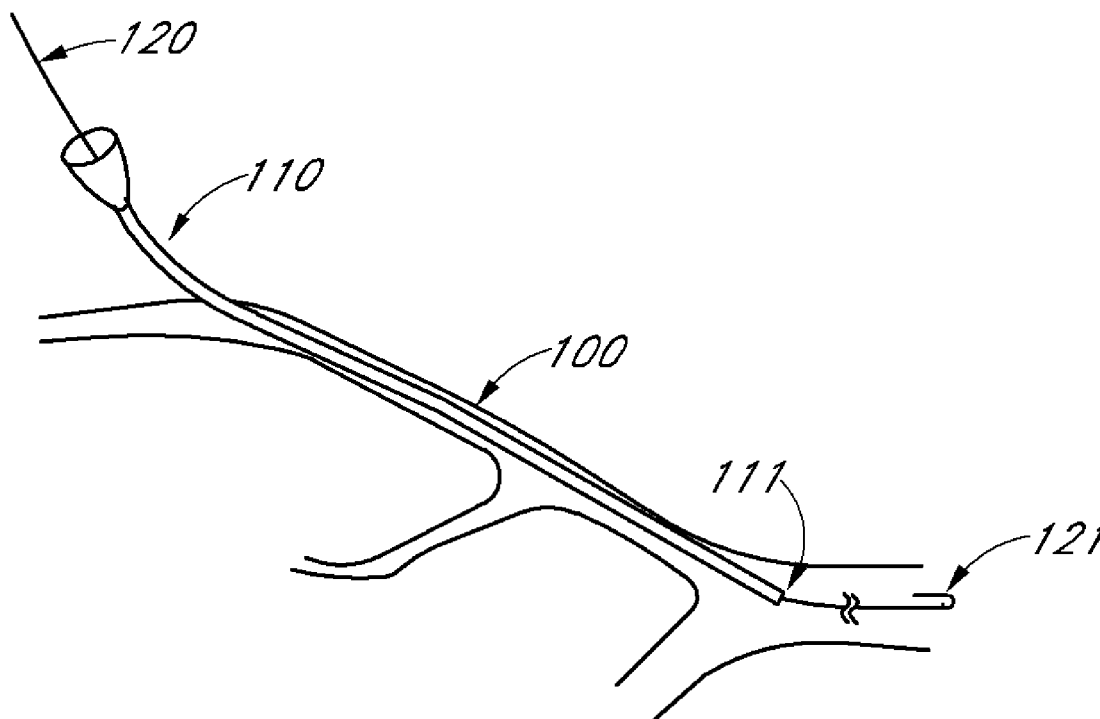




US 20130046376A1

(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Hassan et al.(10) **Pub. No.: US 2013/0046376 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Feb. 21, 2013**(54) **METHOD AND DEVICES FOR FLOW
OCCLUSION DURING DEVICE EXCHANGES***A61F 2/24* (2006.01)*A61M 25/10* (2006.01)(76) Inventors: **Ali Hassan**, Mountain View, CA (US);
Kevin To, San Jose, CA (US); **Andy
Uchida**, Los Altos, CA (US); **Jose
Garcia**, Fremont, CA (US); **Yi Yang**,
San Francisco, CA (US)(52) **U.S. Cl. 623/2.11**; 604/509; 604/510; 606/195;
604/99.02; 604/103.1; 604/97.02; 604/96.01(57) **ABSTRACT**(21) Appl. No.: **13/531,227**(22) Filed: **Jun. 22, 2012****Related U.S. Application Data**(60) Provisional application No. 61/501,125, filed on Jun.
24, 2011, provisional application No. 61/540,994,
filed on Sep. 29, 2011.**Publication Classification**(51) **Int. Cl.***A61M 25/09* (2006.01)*A61M 25/098* (2006.01)

A method of reducing the risk of clinical sequelae to catheter induced vascular injuries may include introducing a guide wire into a vascular sheath residing in a blood vessel, proximally retracting the vascular sheath while leaving the wire in place, and observing indicia of the presence or absence of a vascular injury caused to the blood vessel by the vascular sheath or a procedural catheter previously advanced through the vascular sheath. If indicia of a vascular injury are observed, the method may further involve proximally retracting the guide wire to position the inflatable balloon adjacent the injury and inflating the balloon to reduce blood flow past the injury, while leaving the guide wire in place to provide subsequent access to the injury.



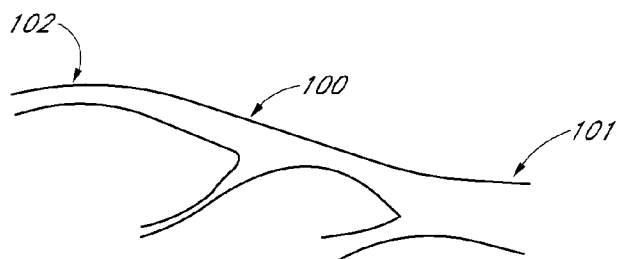


FIG. 1A

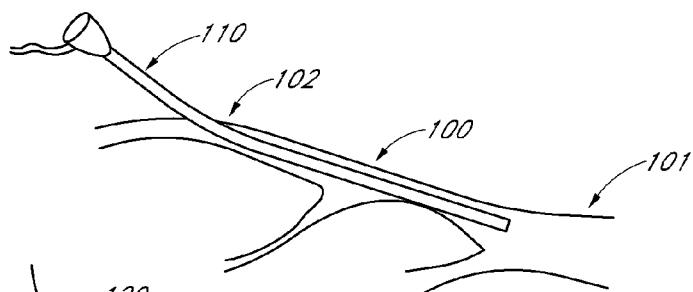


FIG. 1B

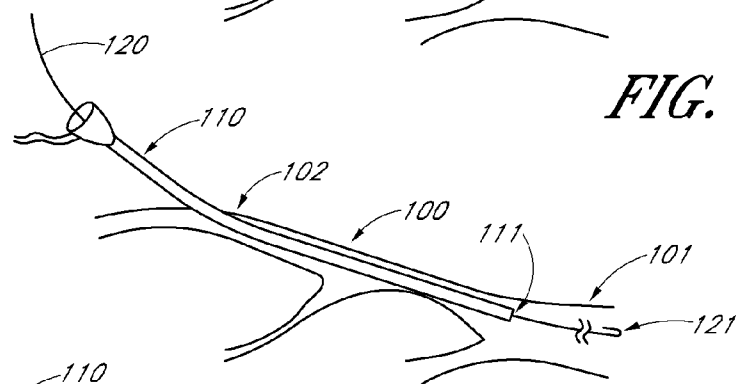


FIG. 1C

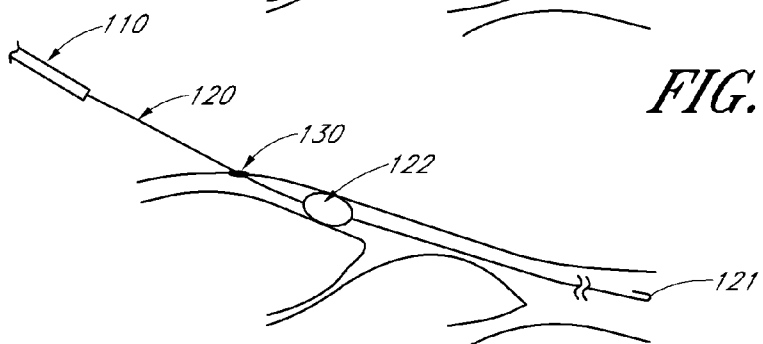


FIG. 1D

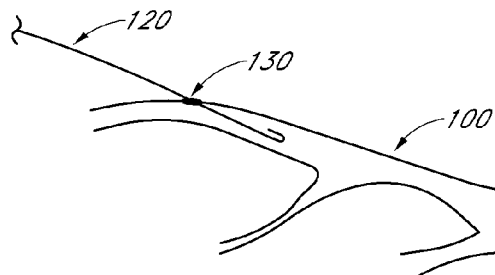
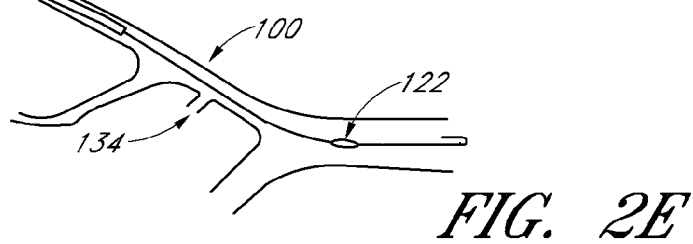
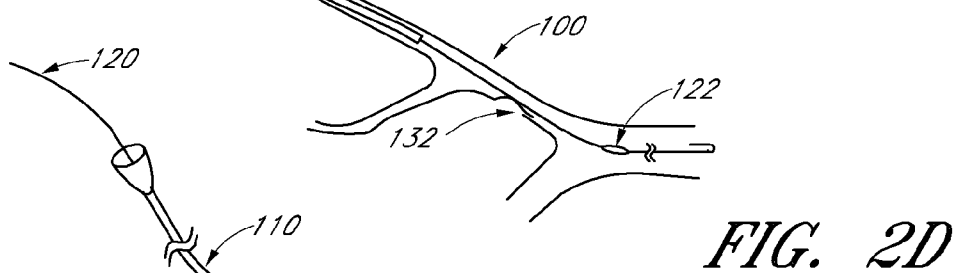
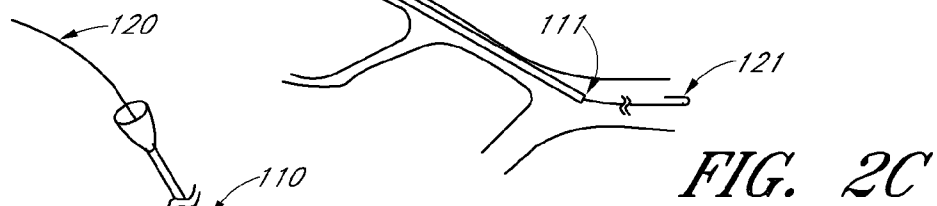
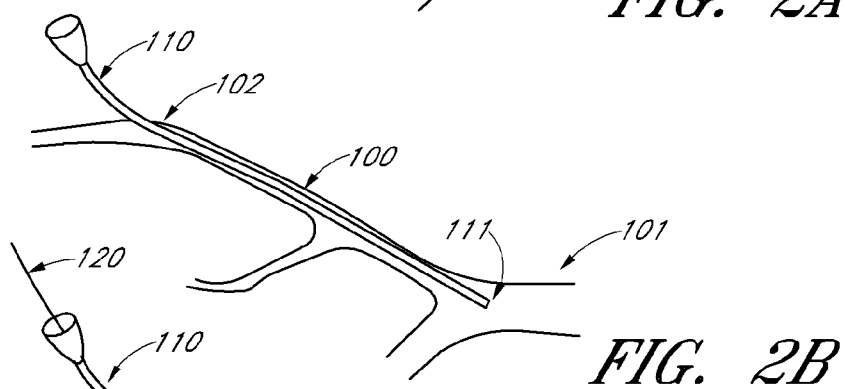
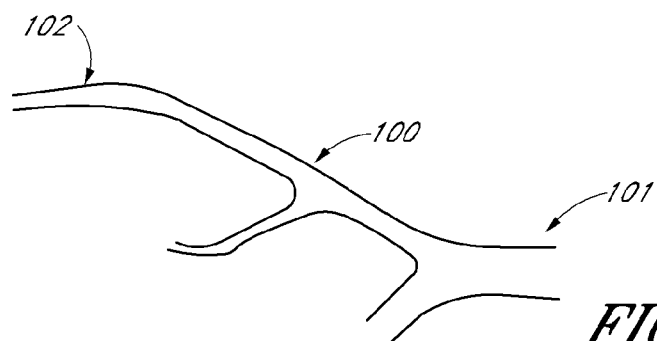
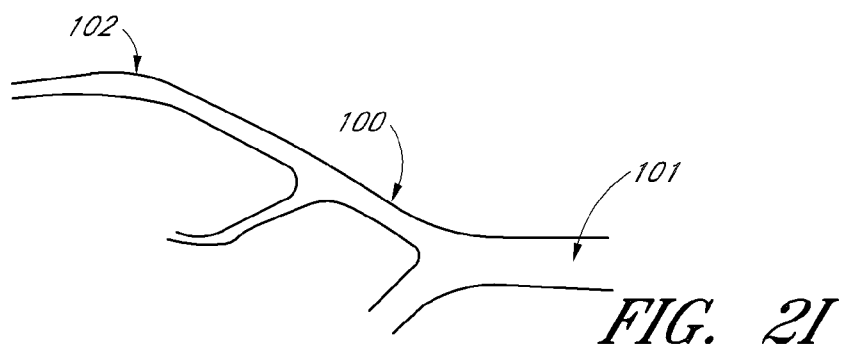
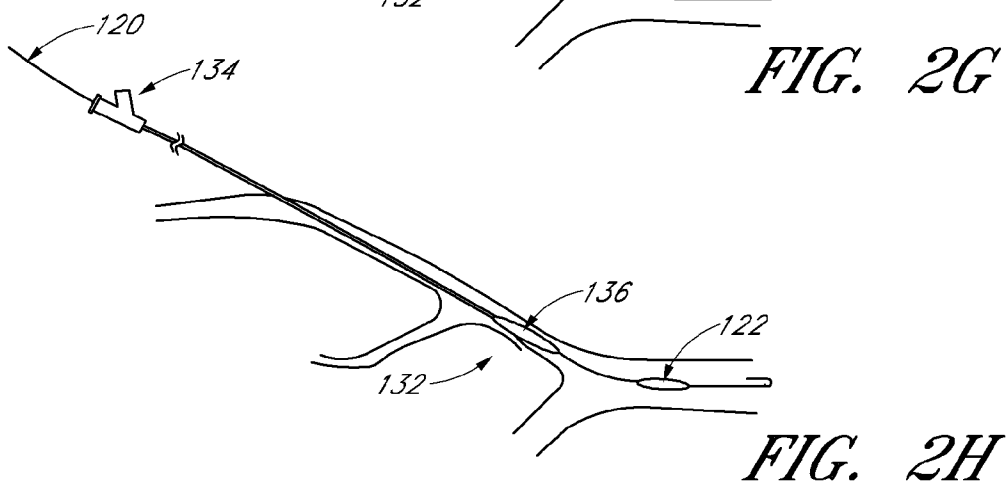
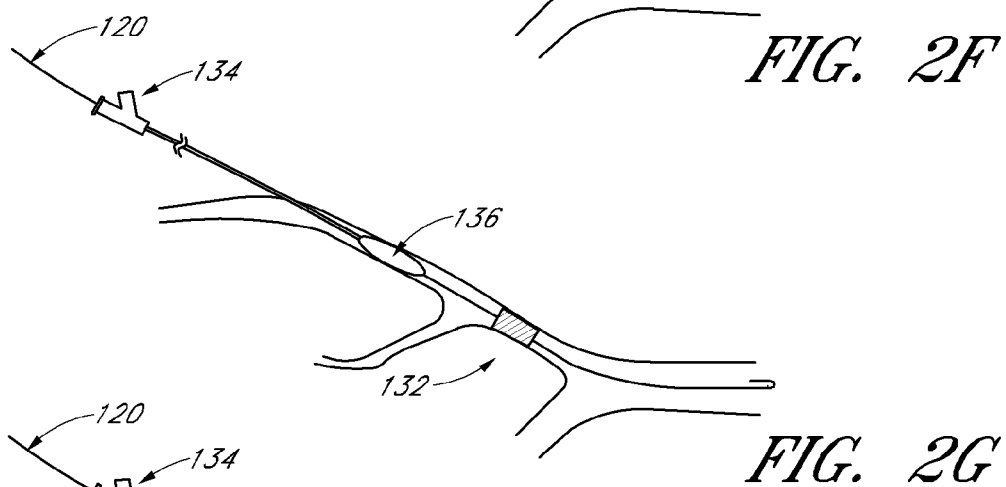
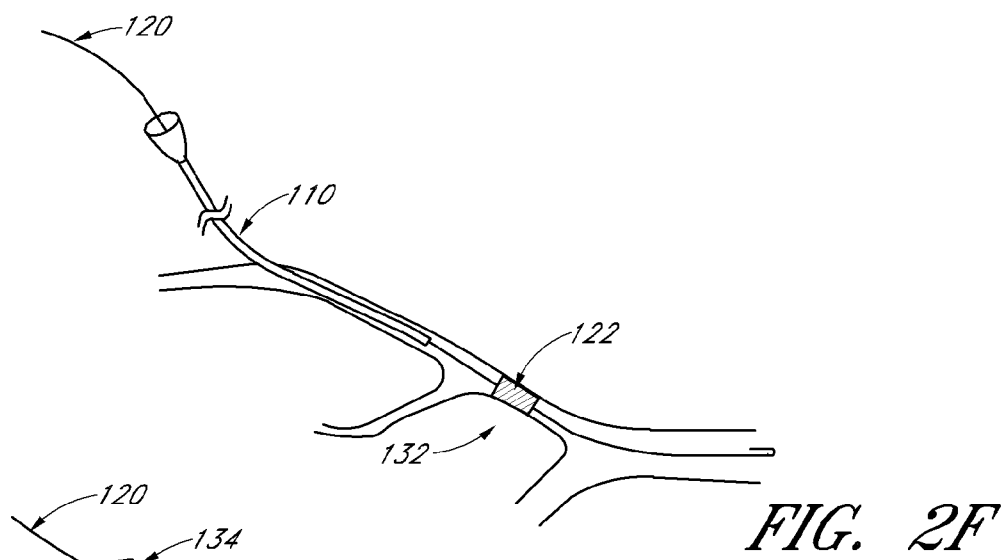
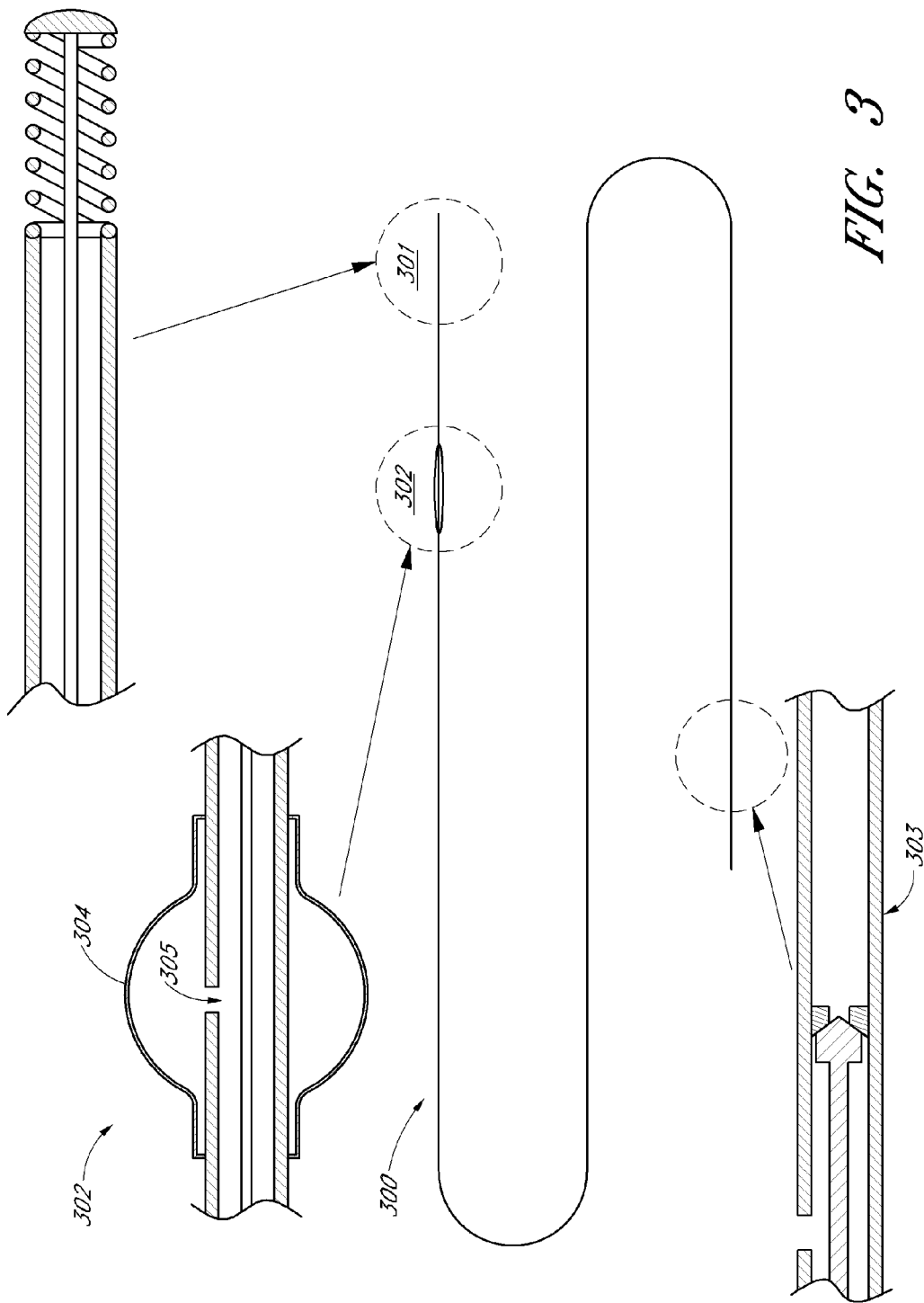


FIG. 1E







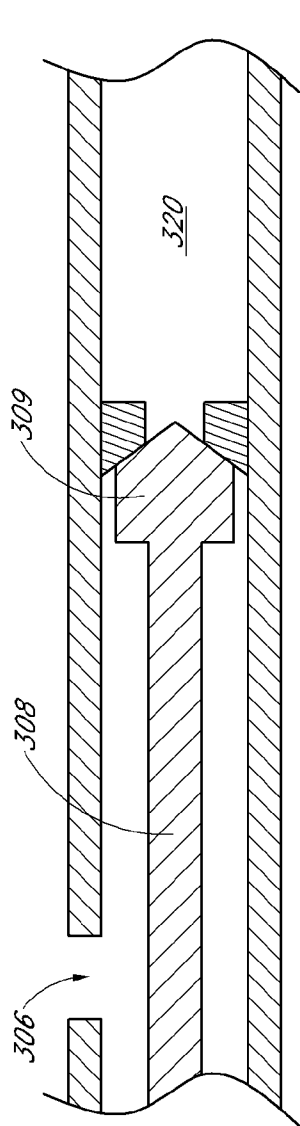


FIG. 4A

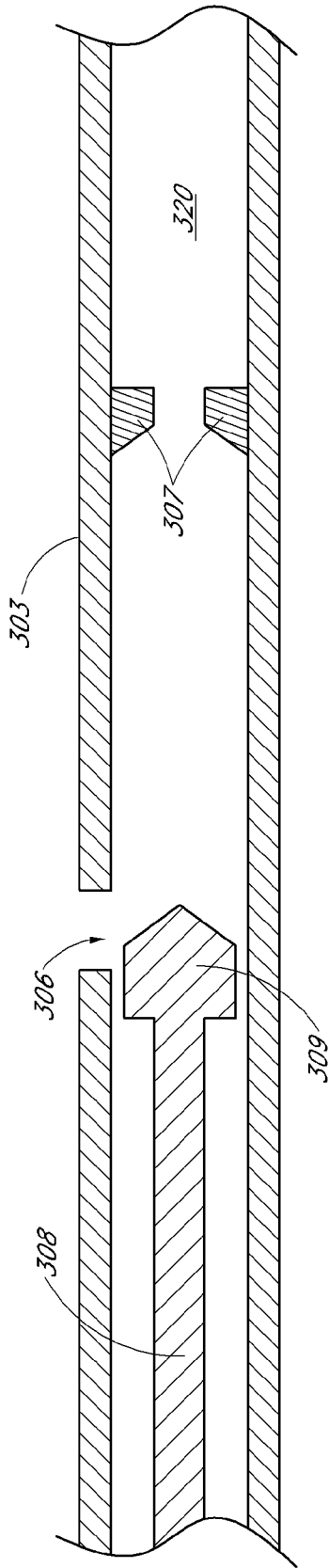


FIG. 4B

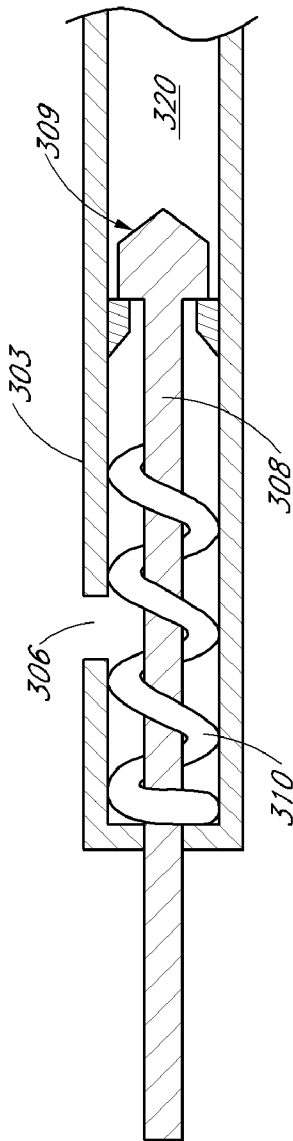


FIG. 5A

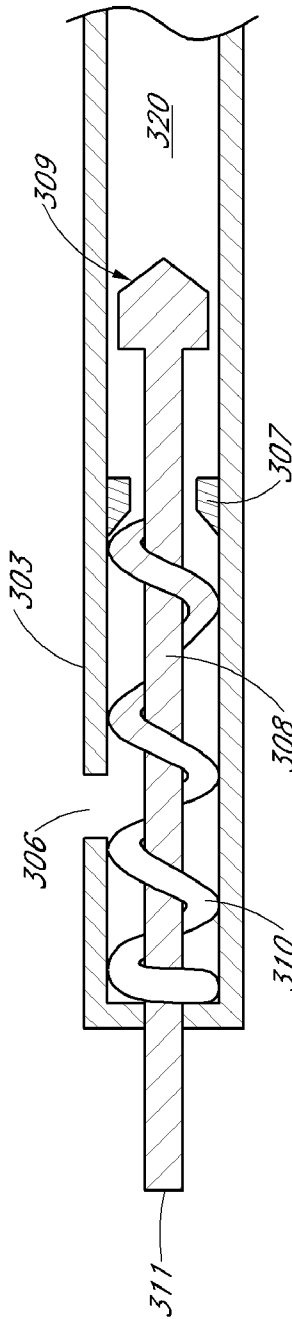


FIG. 5B

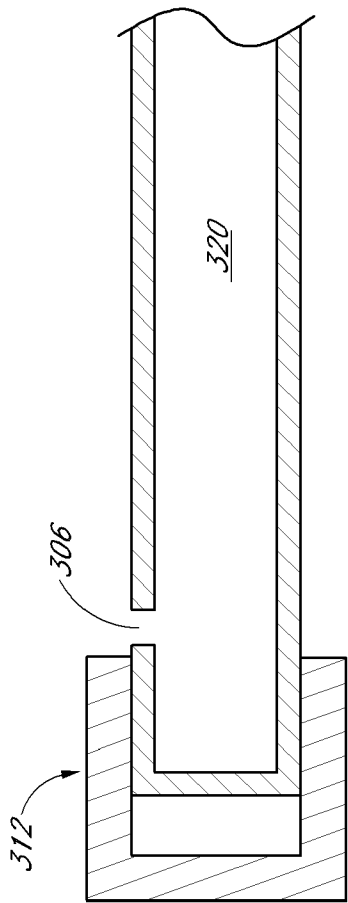


FIG. 6A

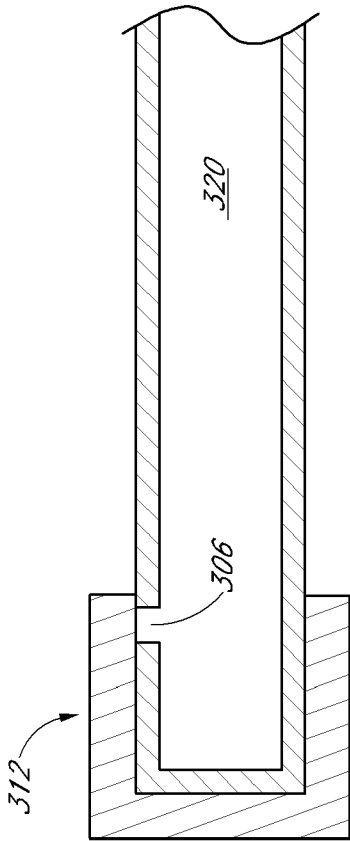


FIG. 6B

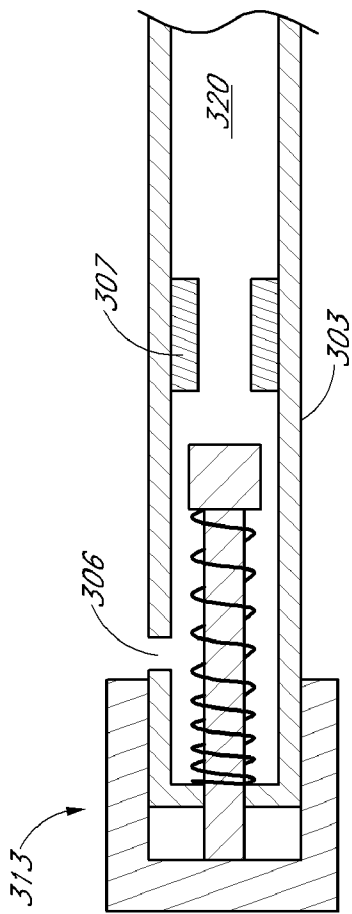


FIG. 7A

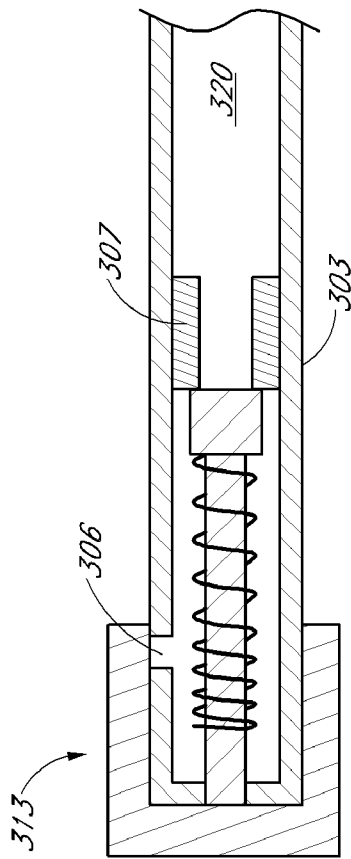
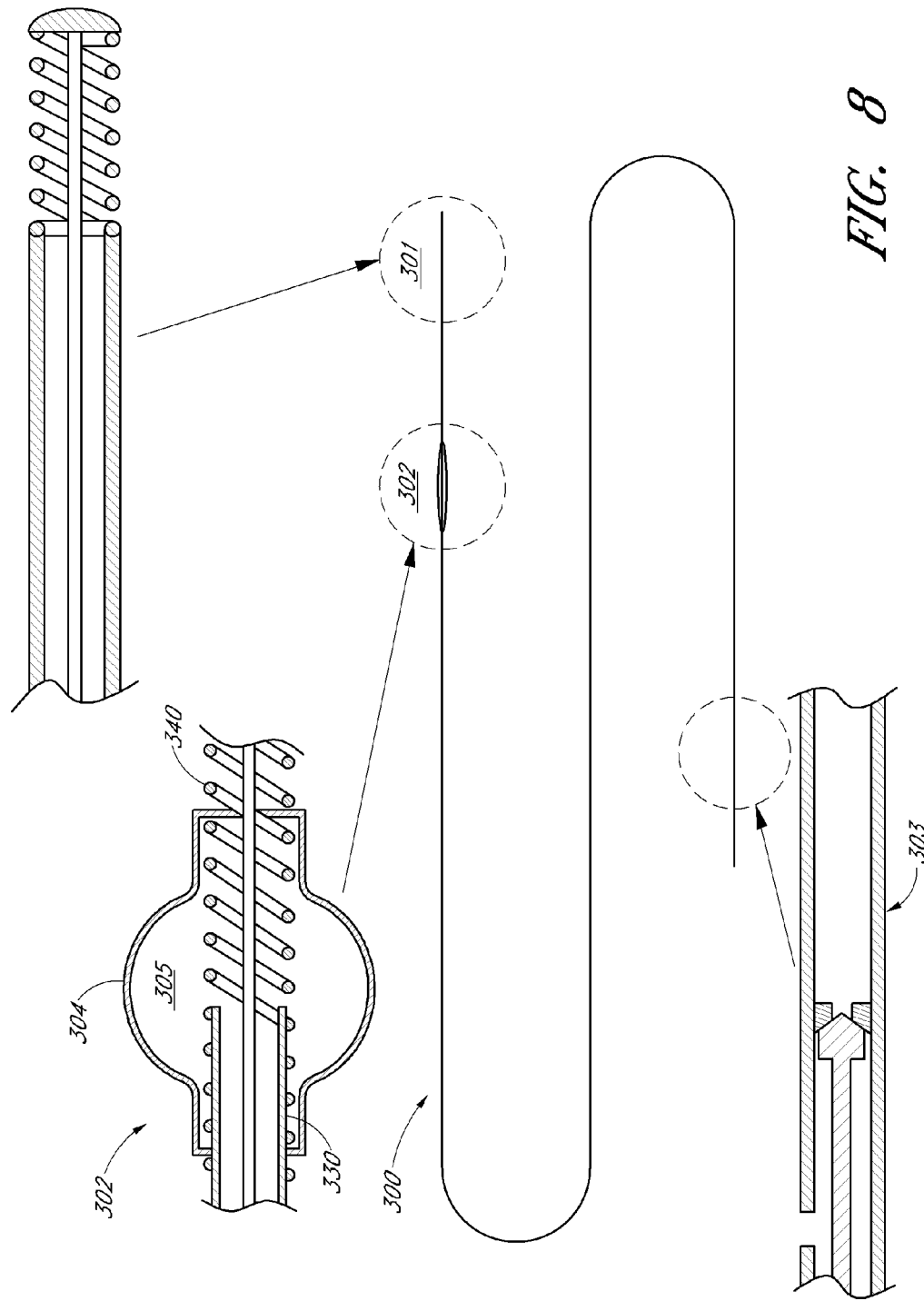


FIG. 7B



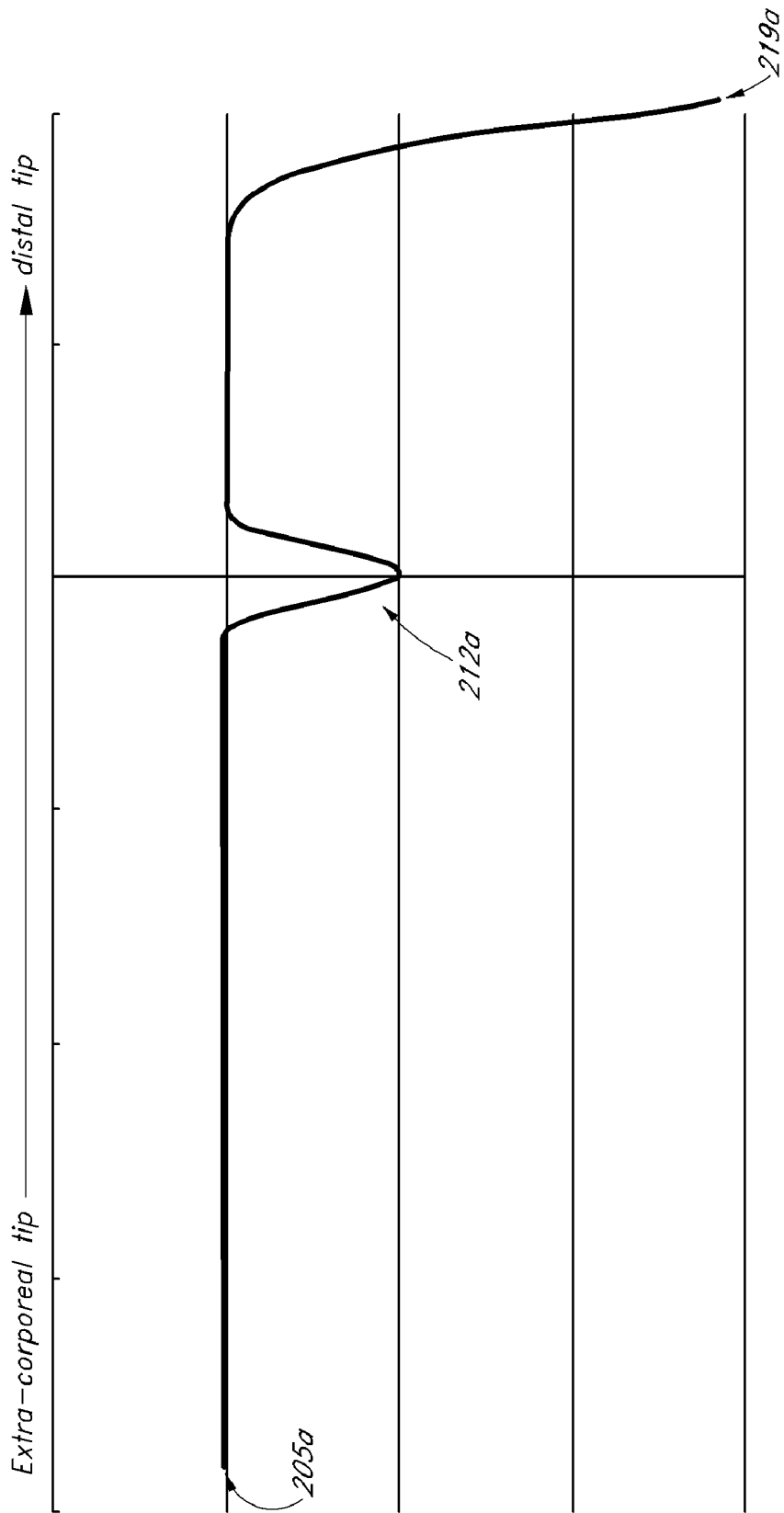


FIG. 9A

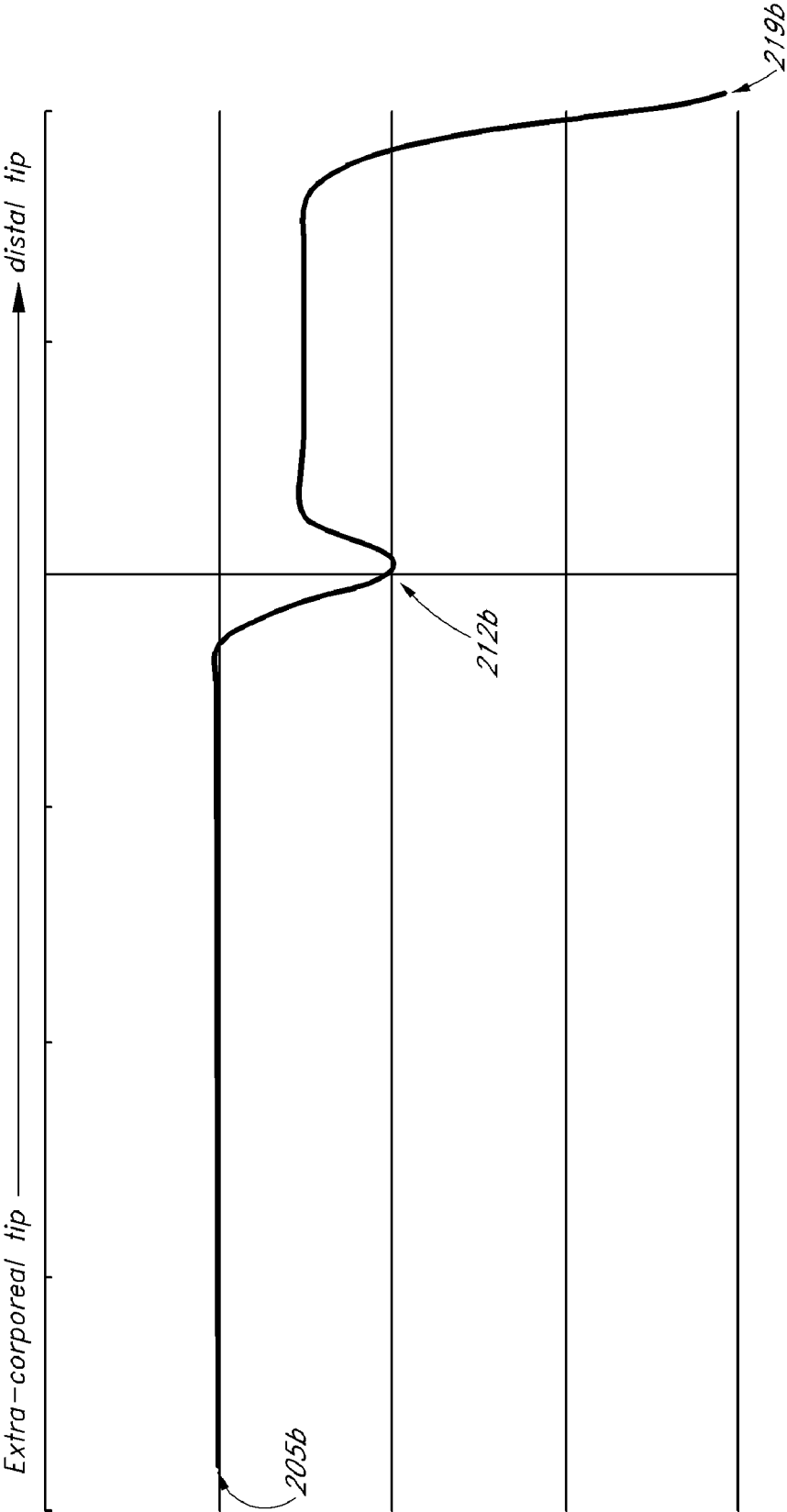


FIG. 9B

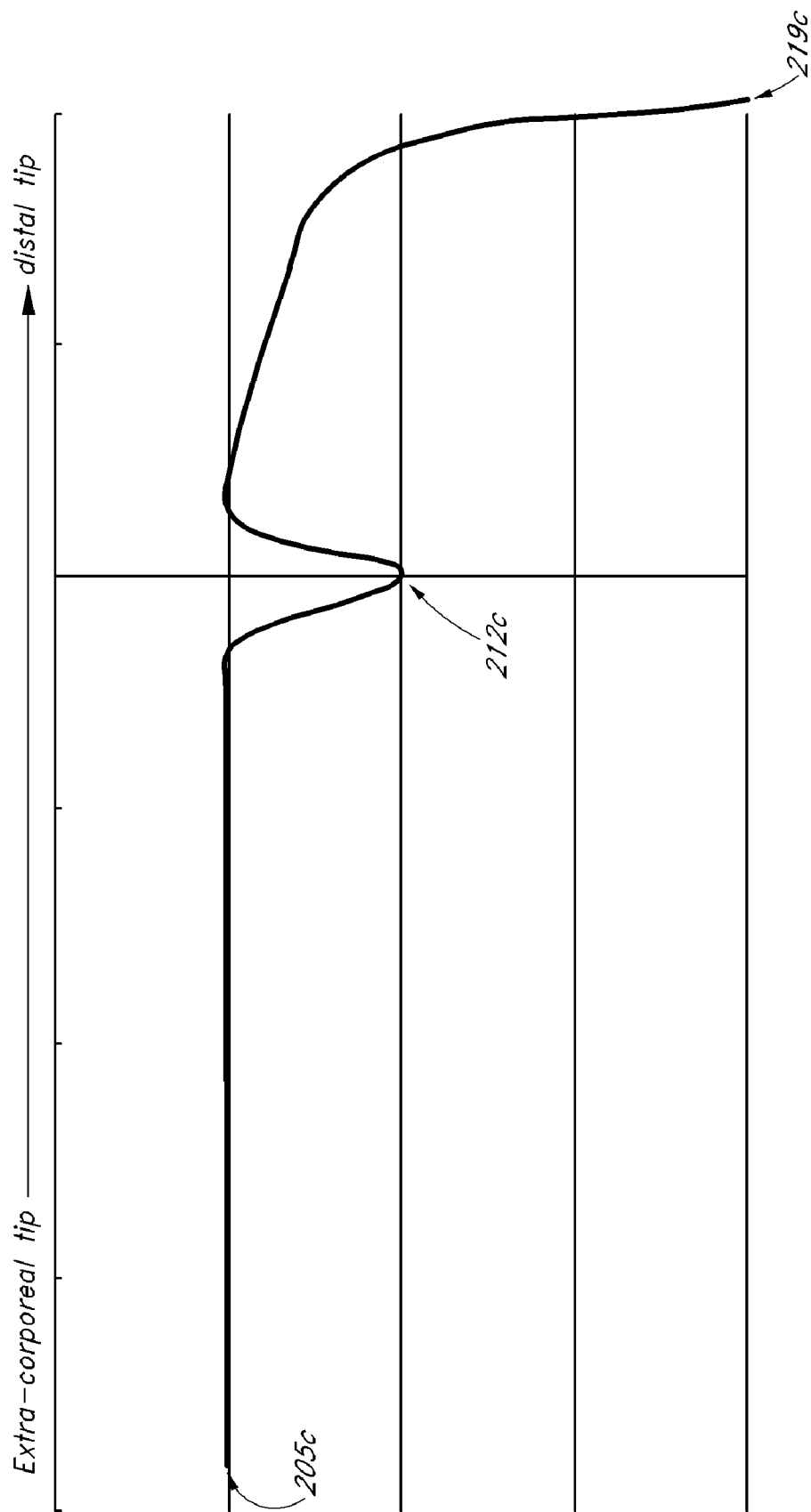


FIG. 9C

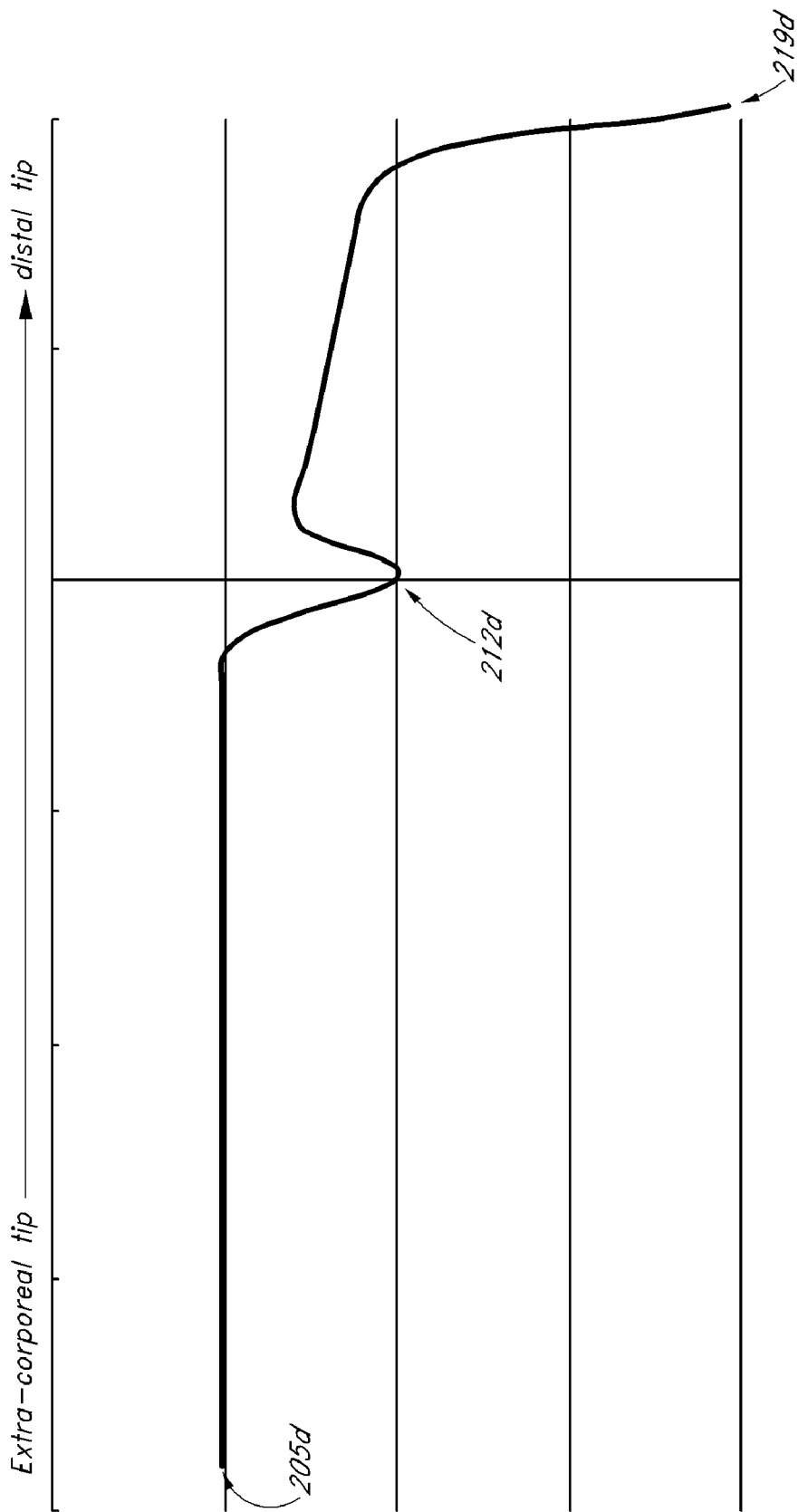


FIG. 9D

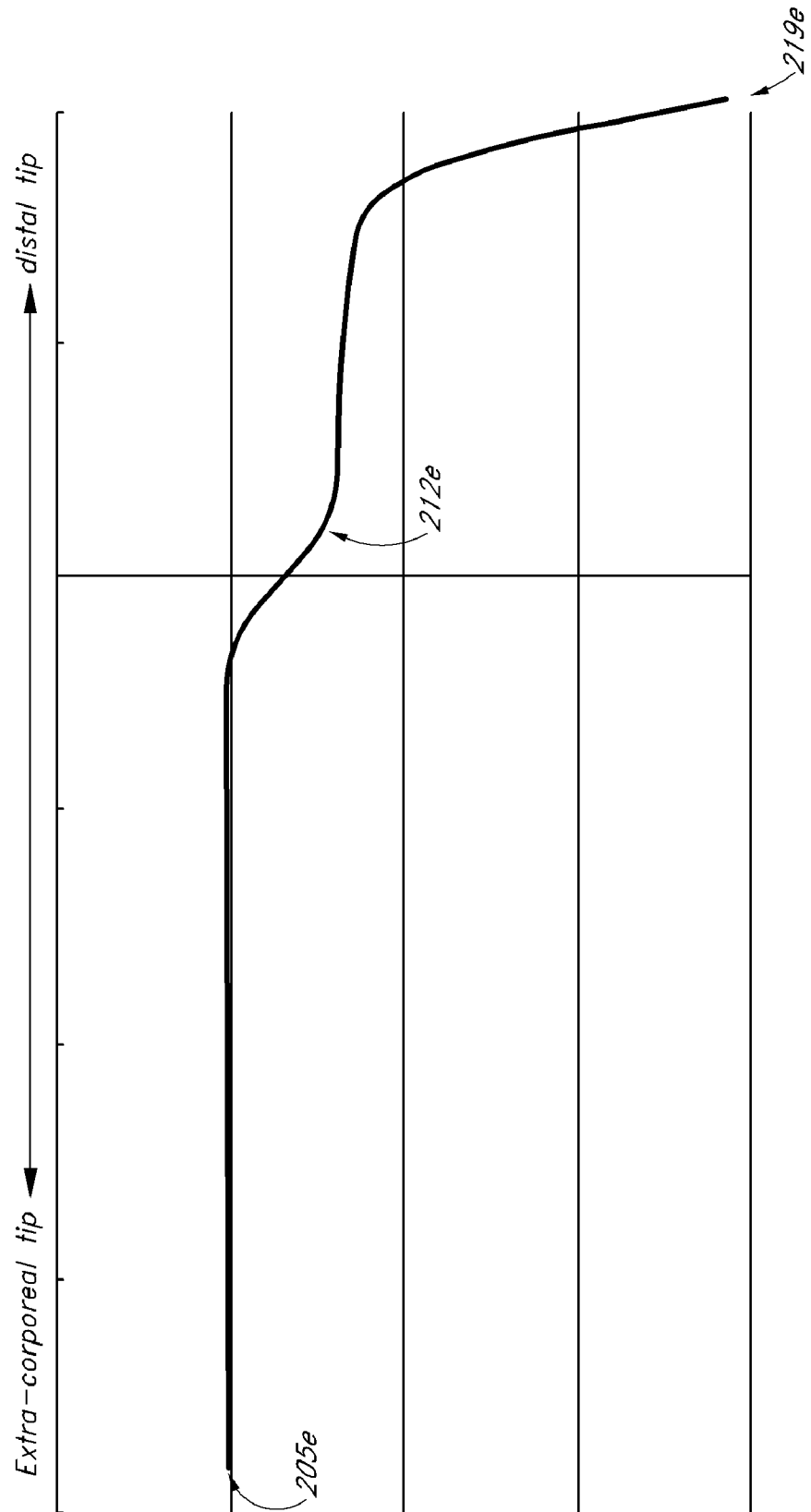


FIG. 9E

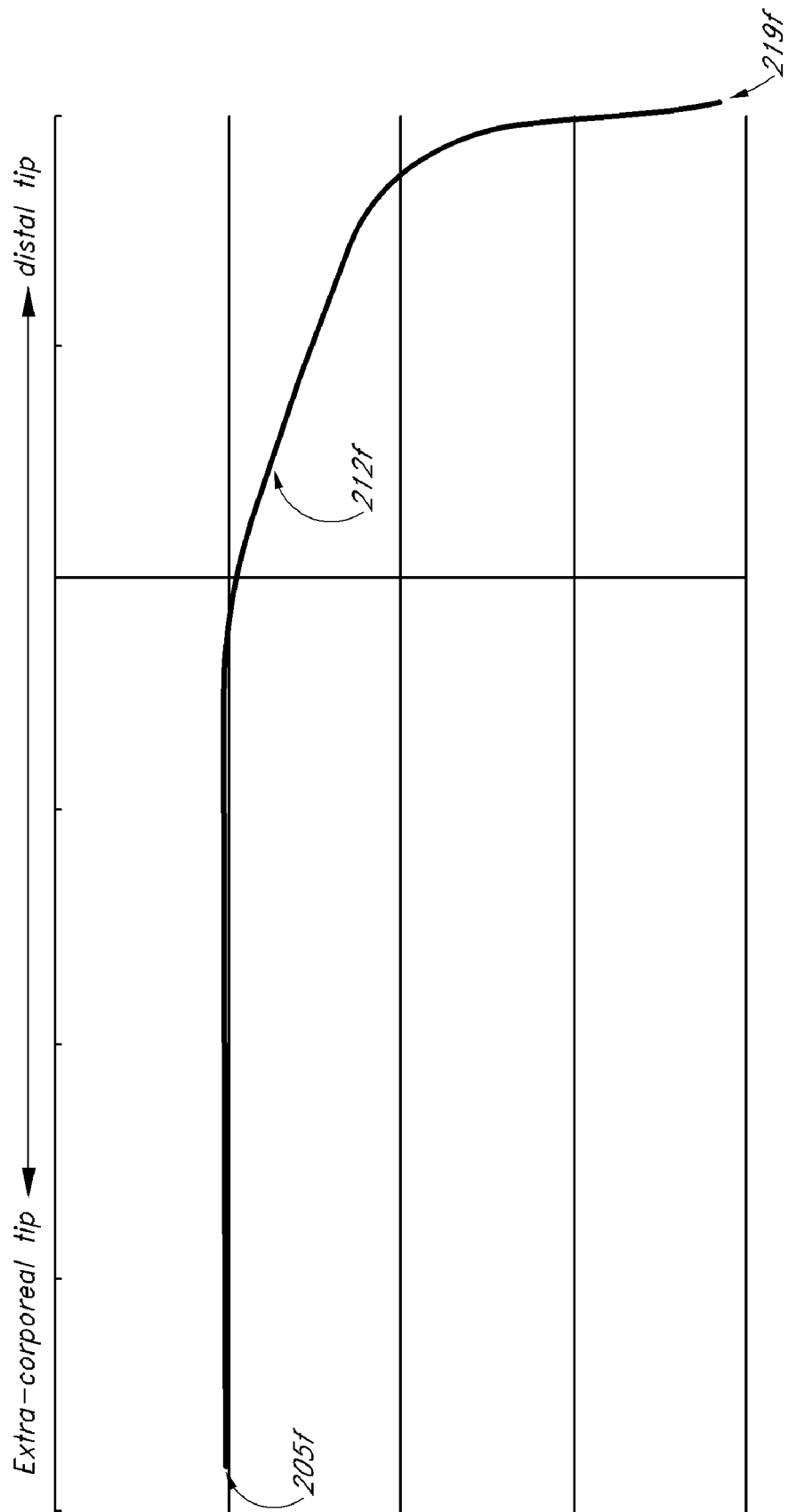


FIG. 9F

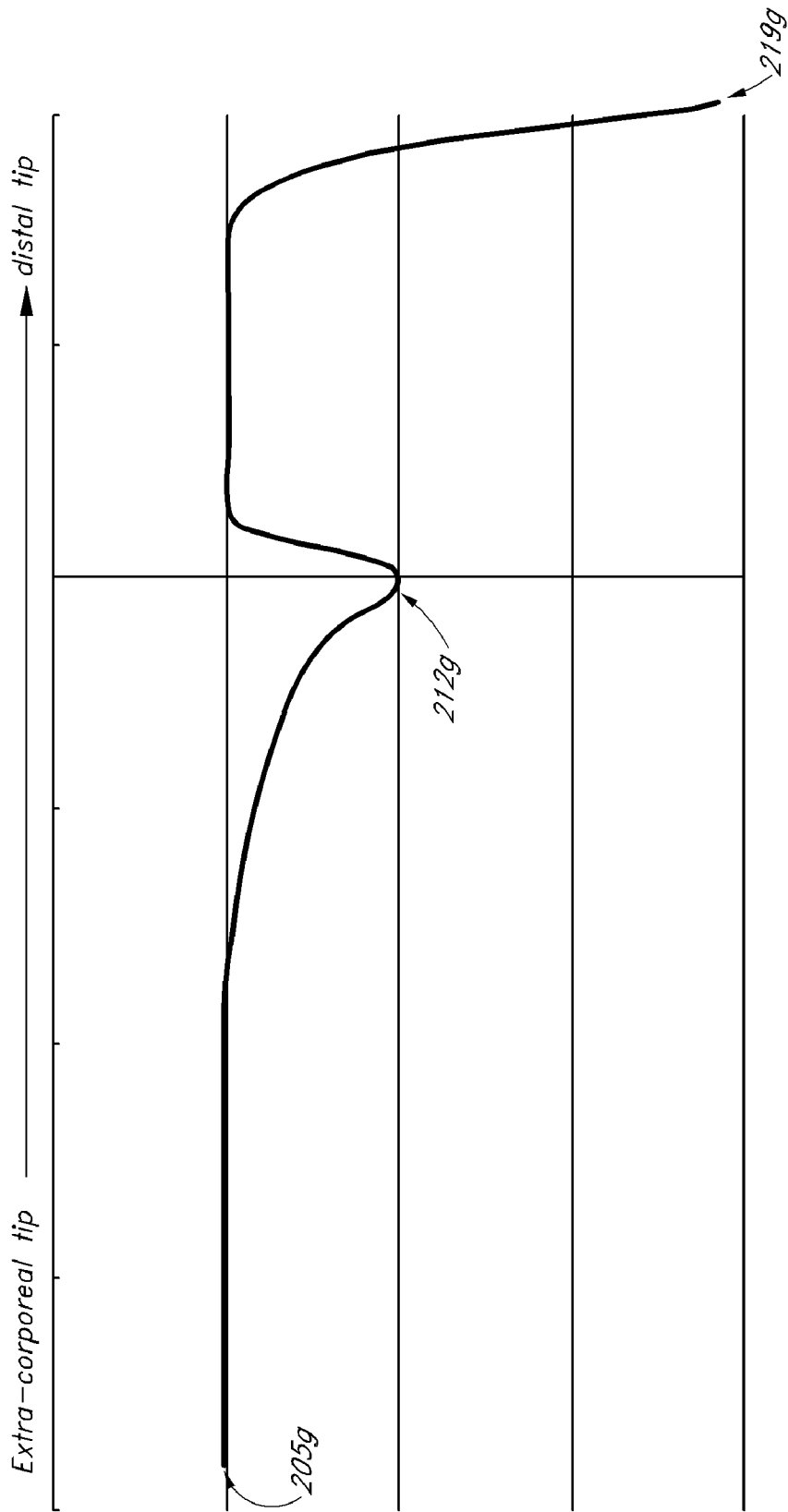


FIG. 9G

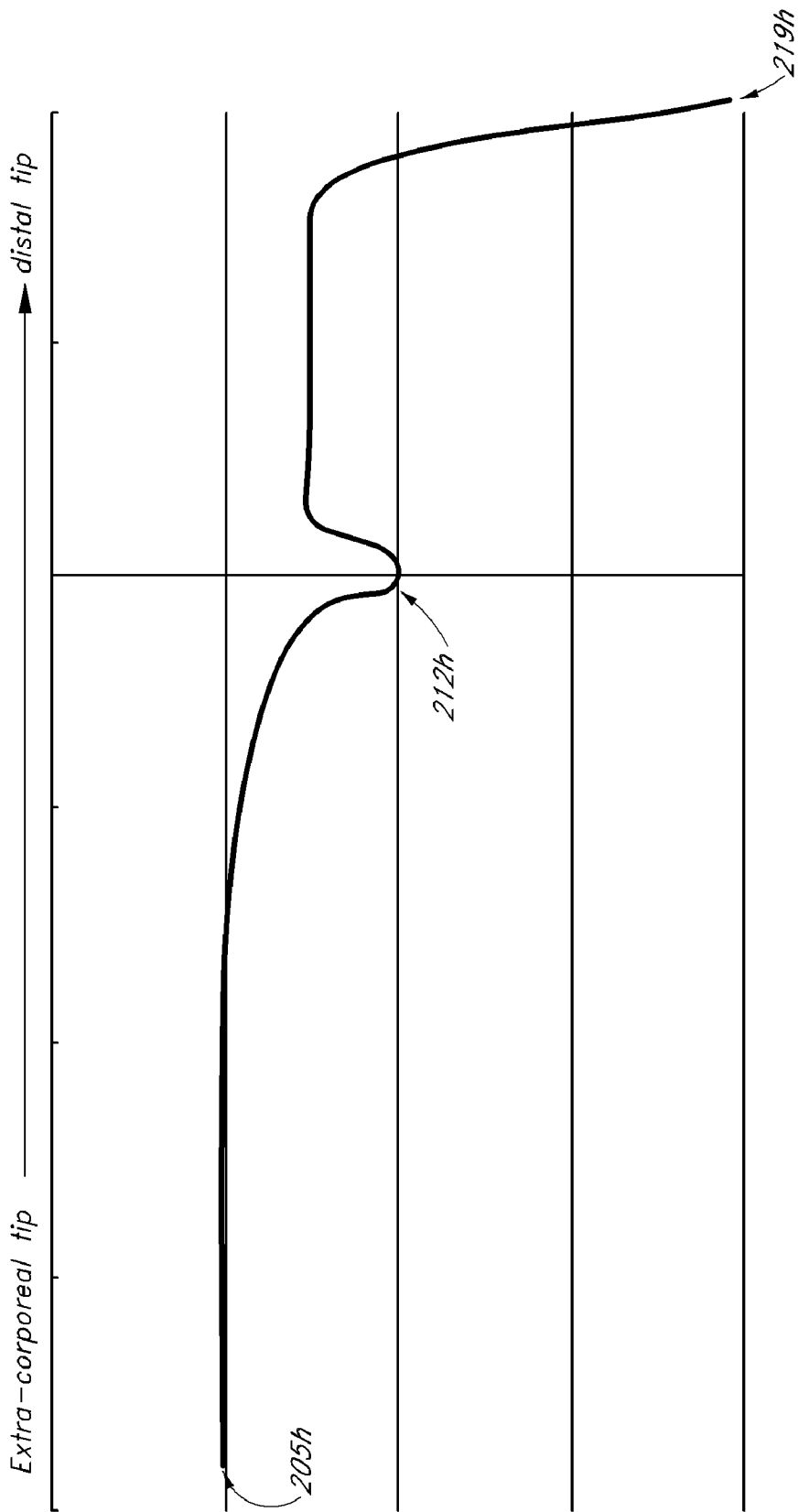


FIG. 9H

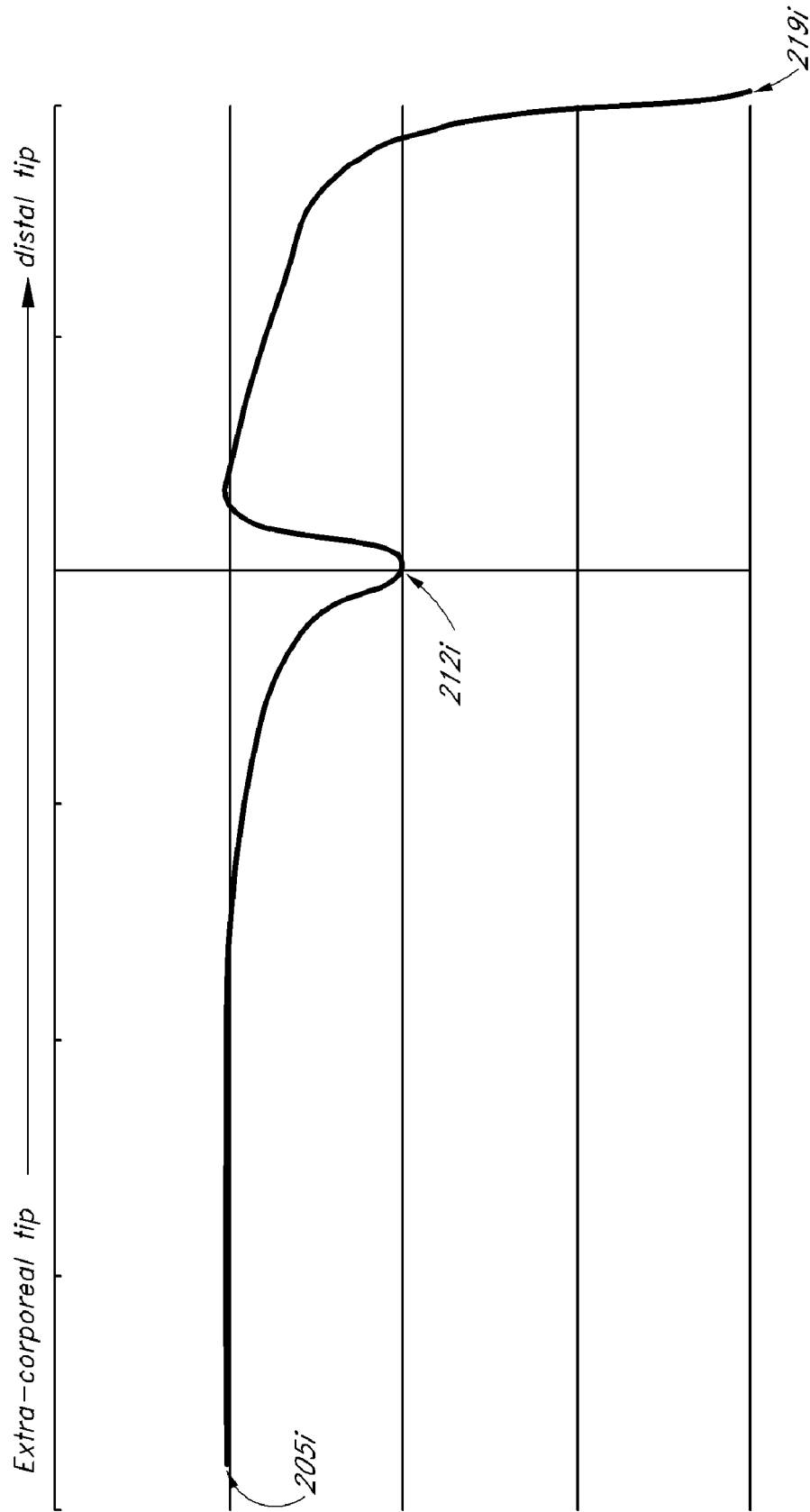


FIG. 9I

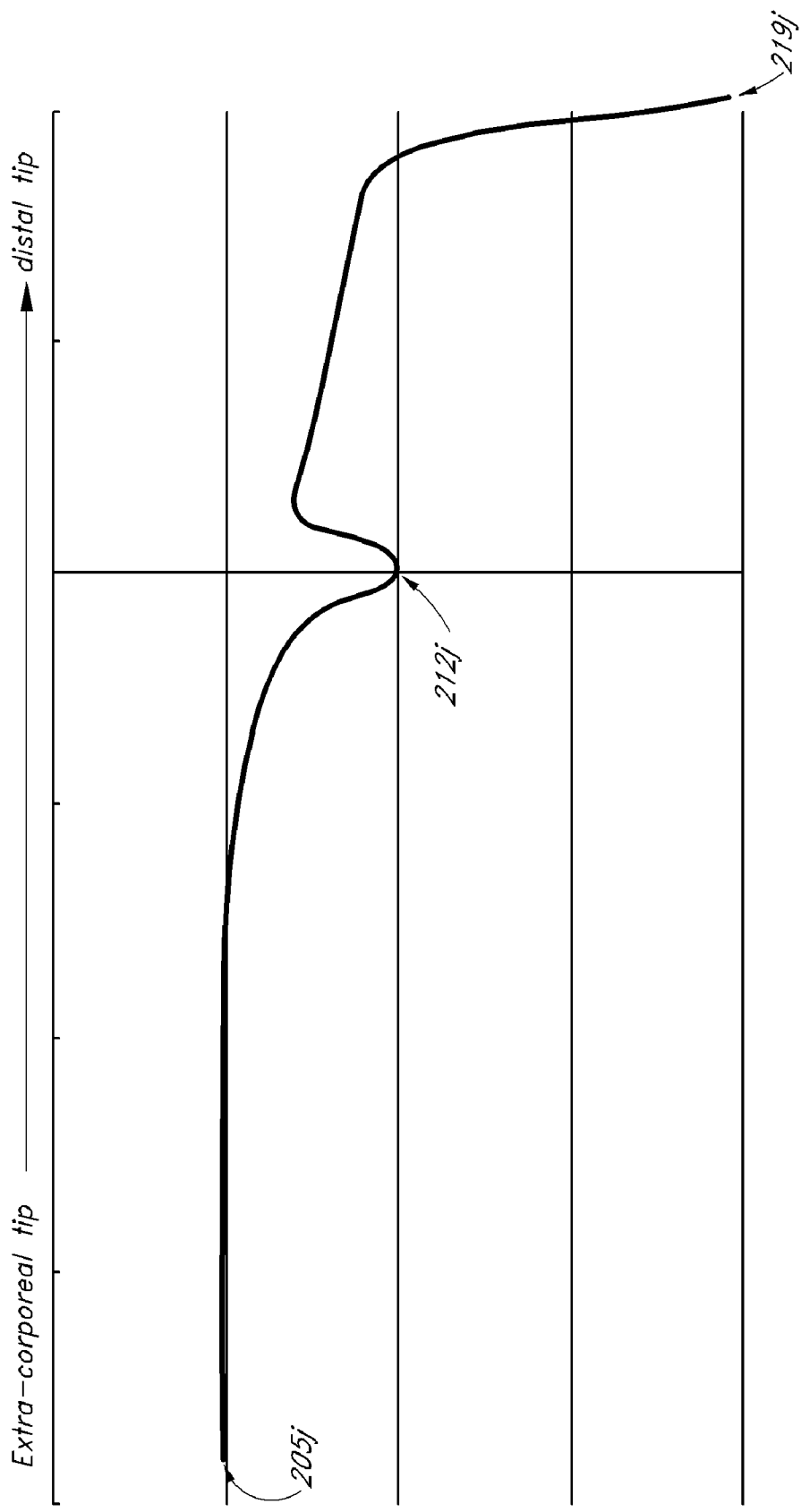


FIG. 9J

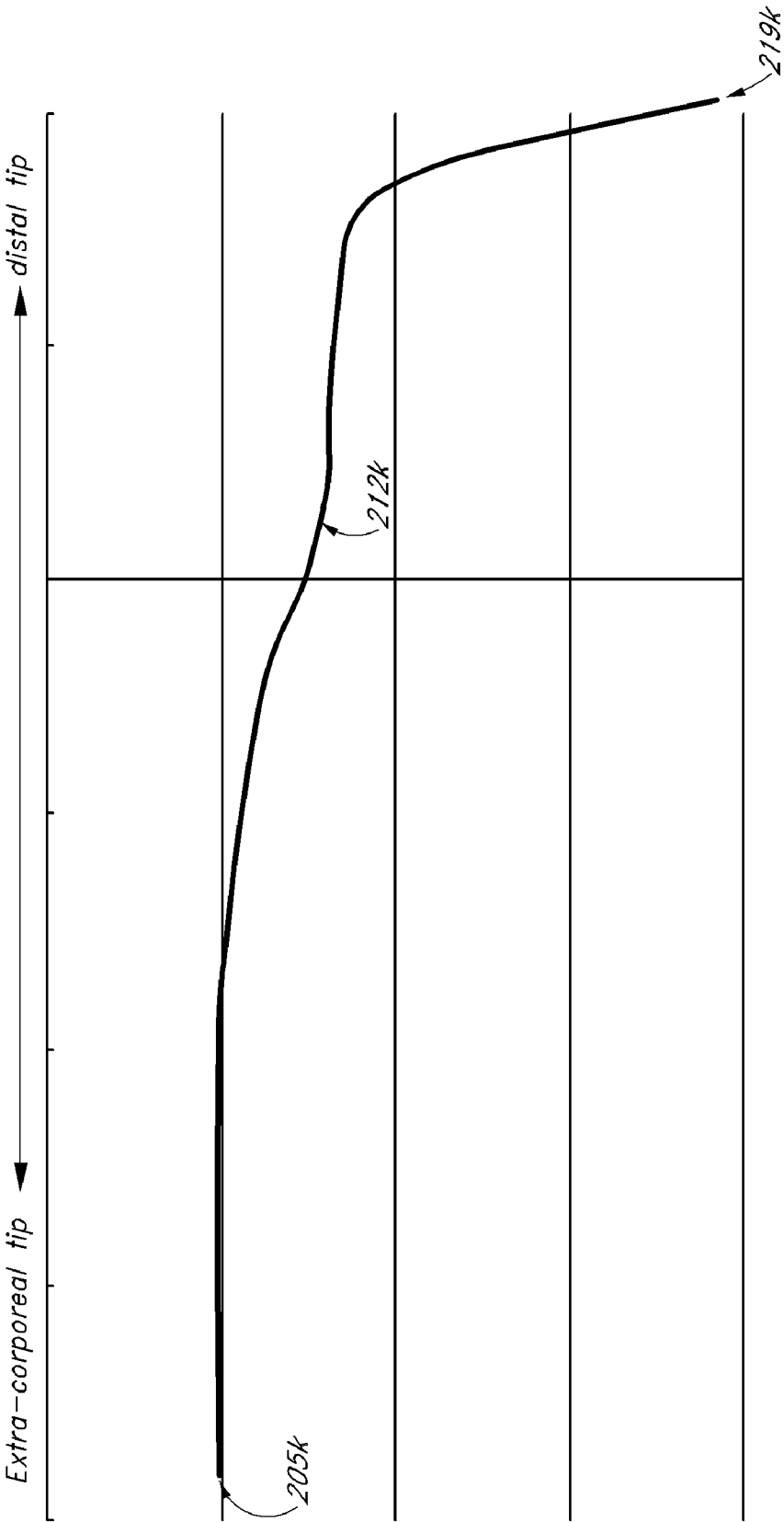


FIG. 9K

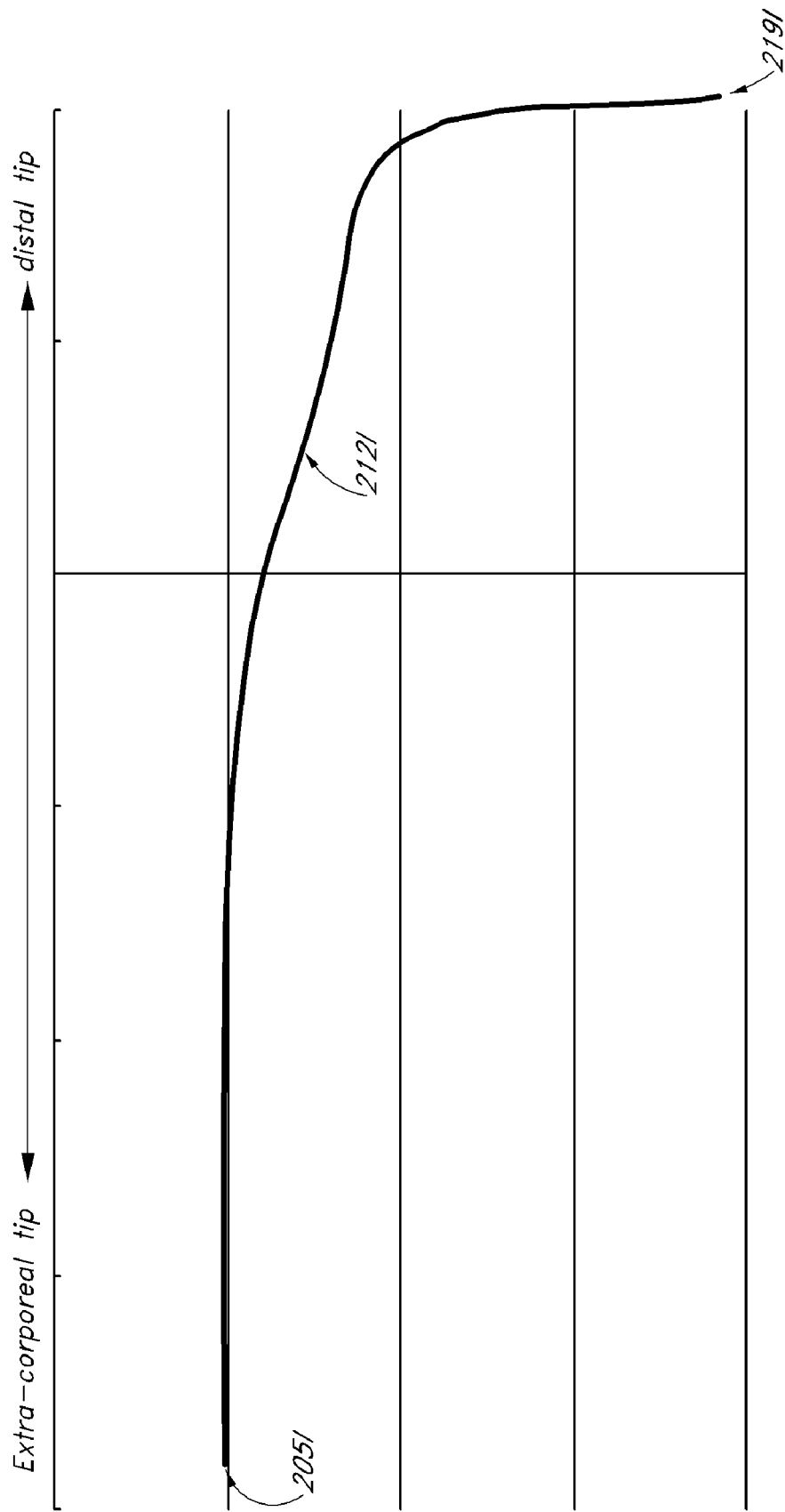


FIG. 9L

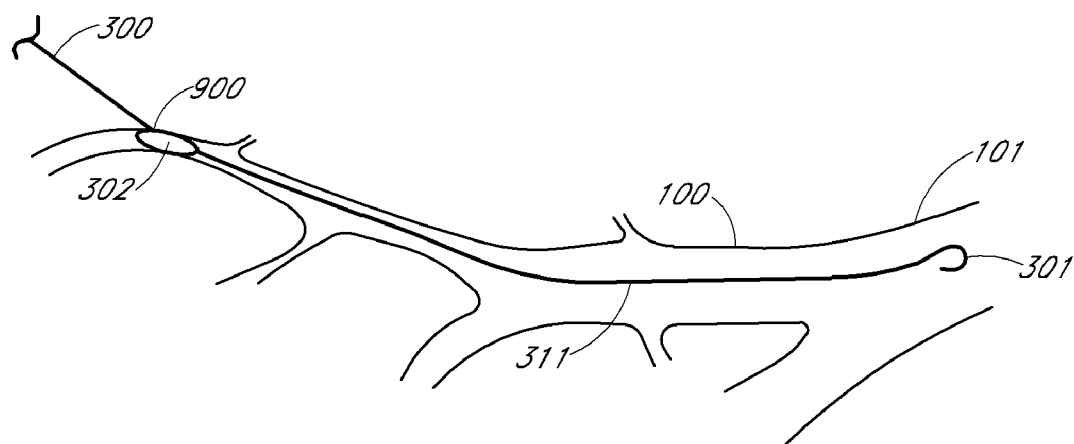


FIG. 10

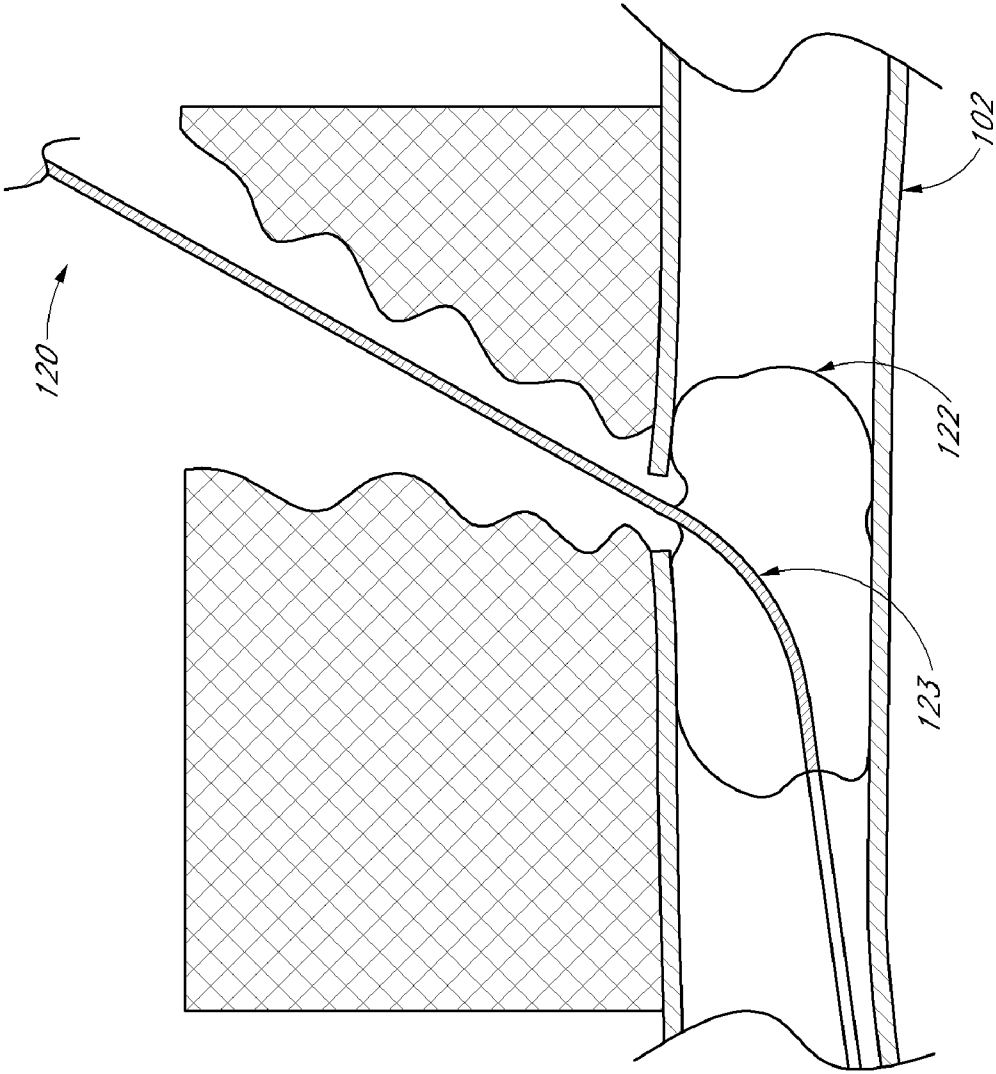


FIG. 11

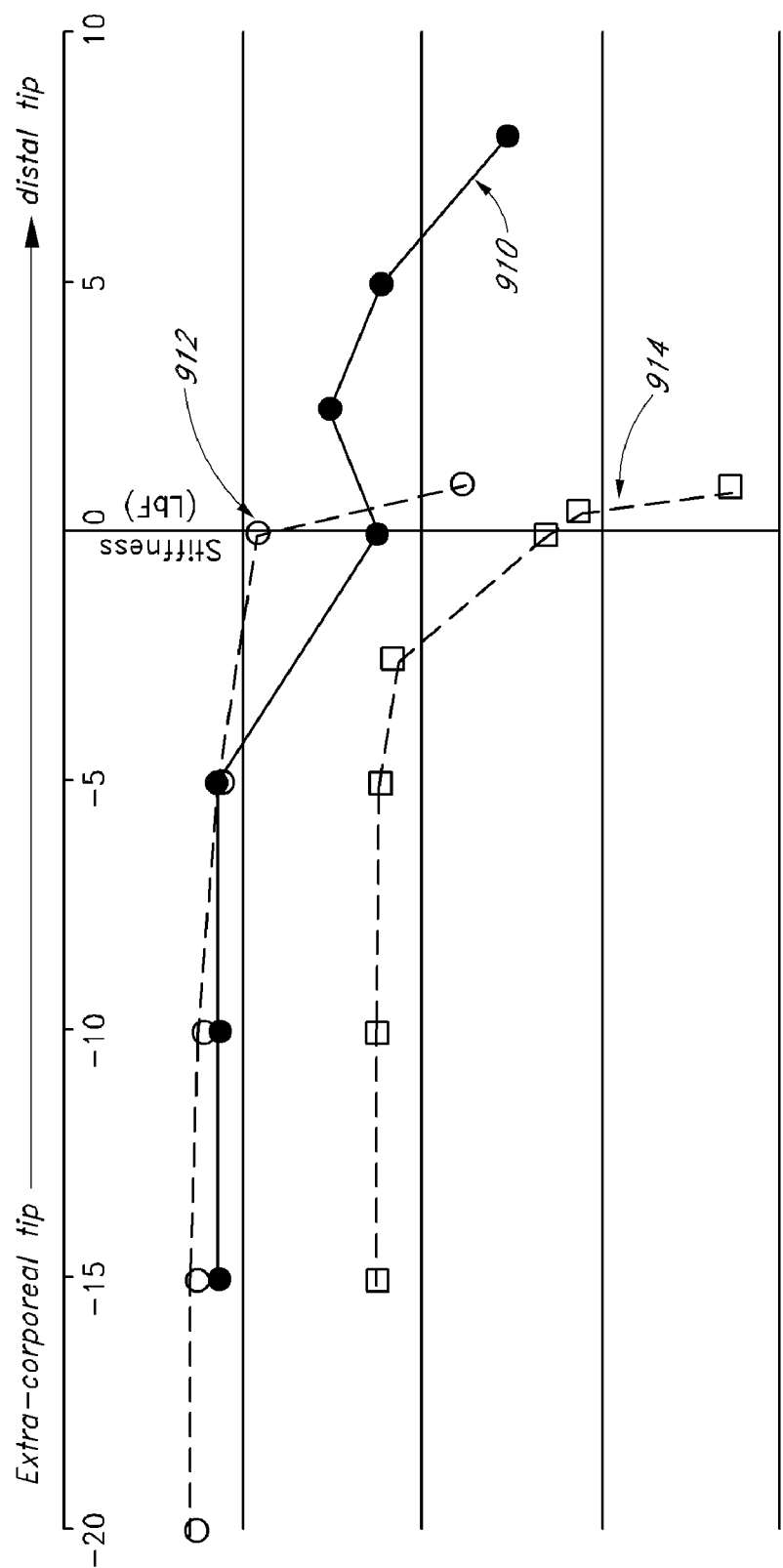


FIG. 12

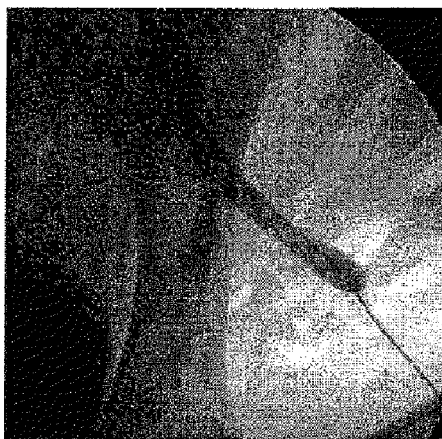


FIG. 13

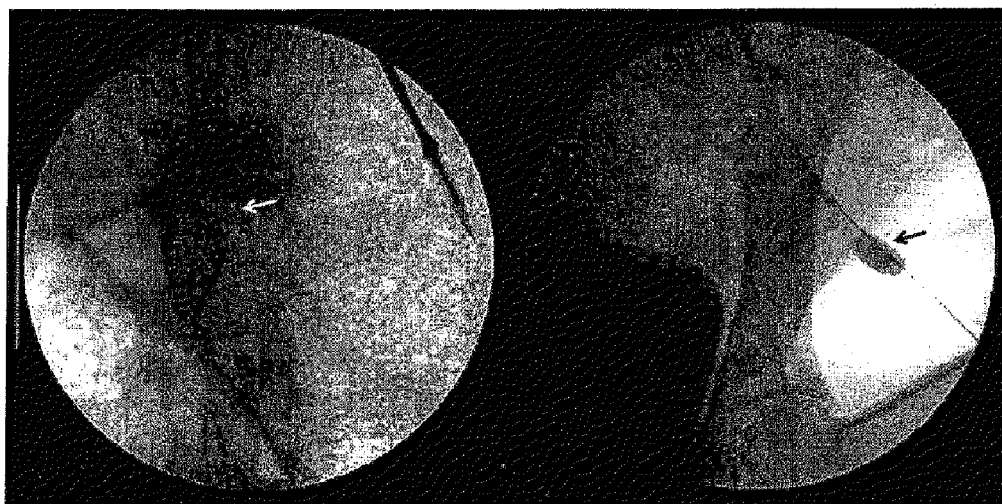


FIG. 14A

FIG. 14B

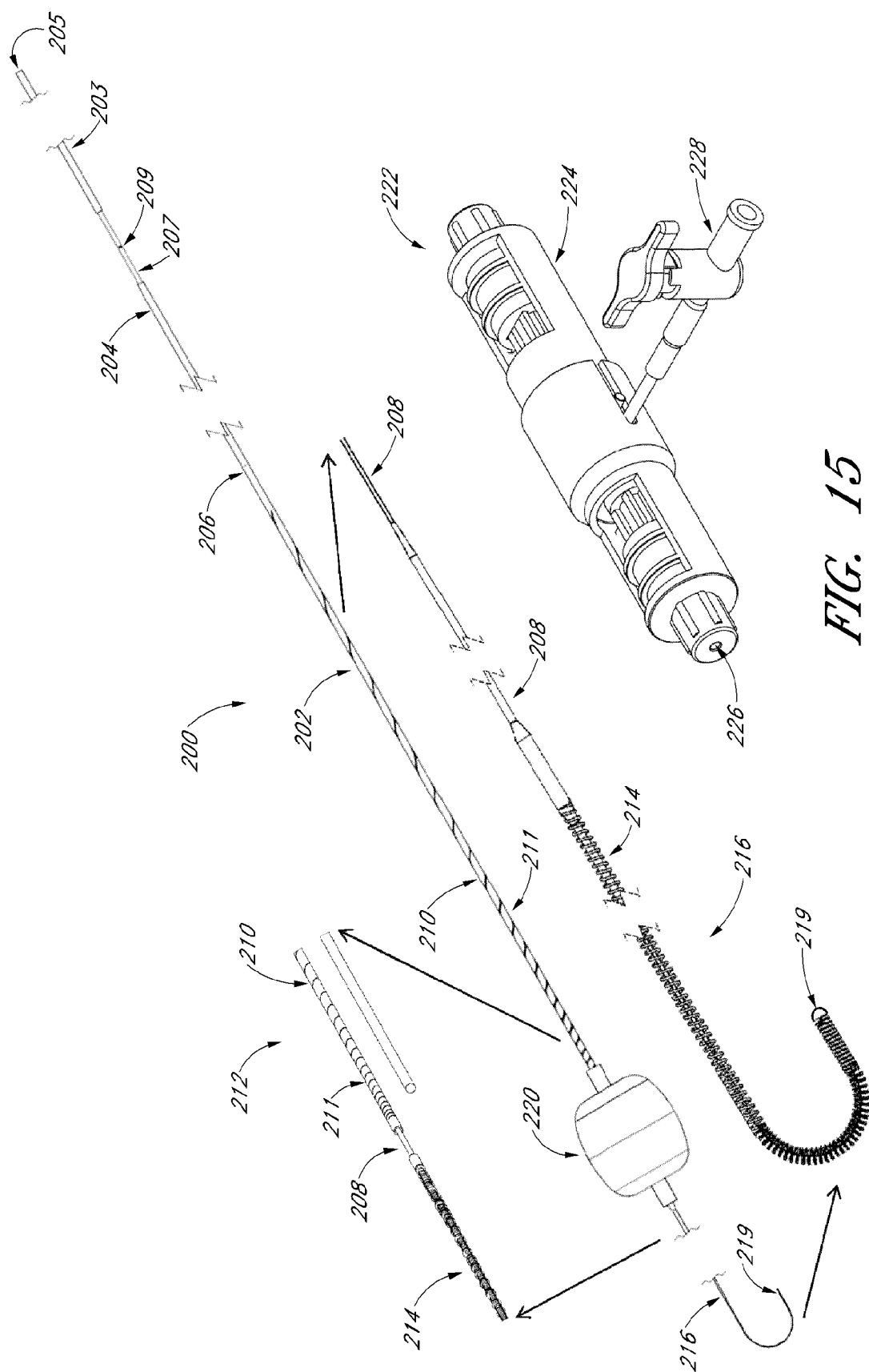


FIG. 15

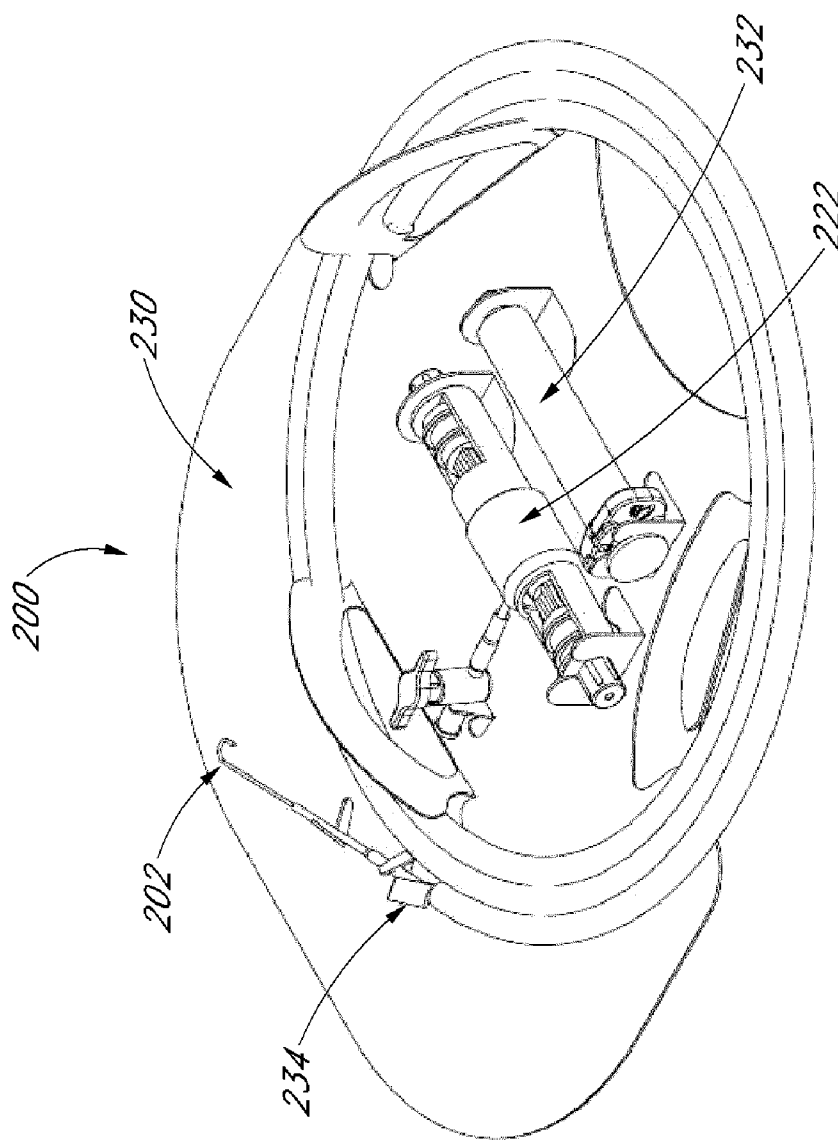
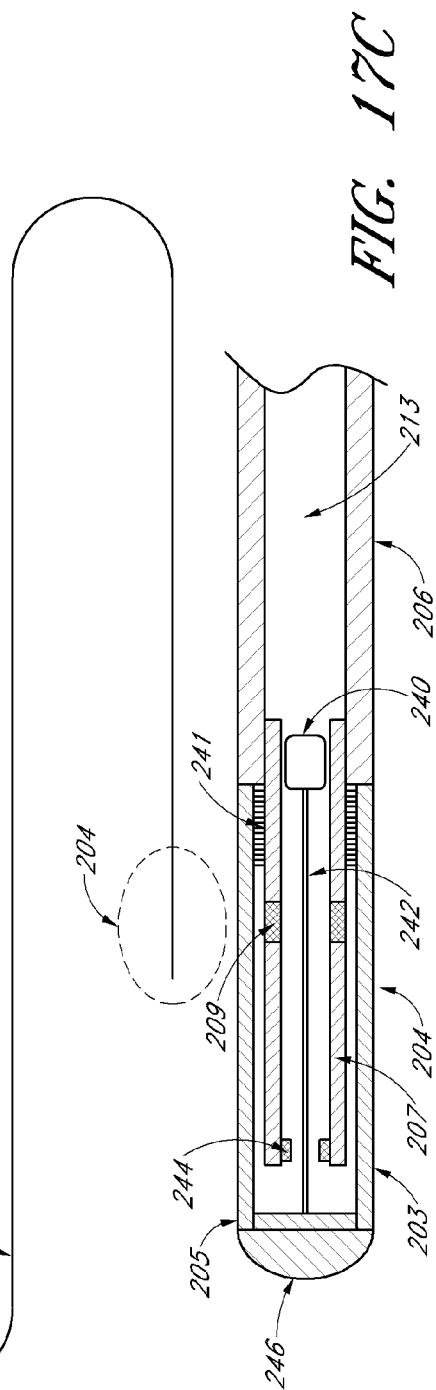
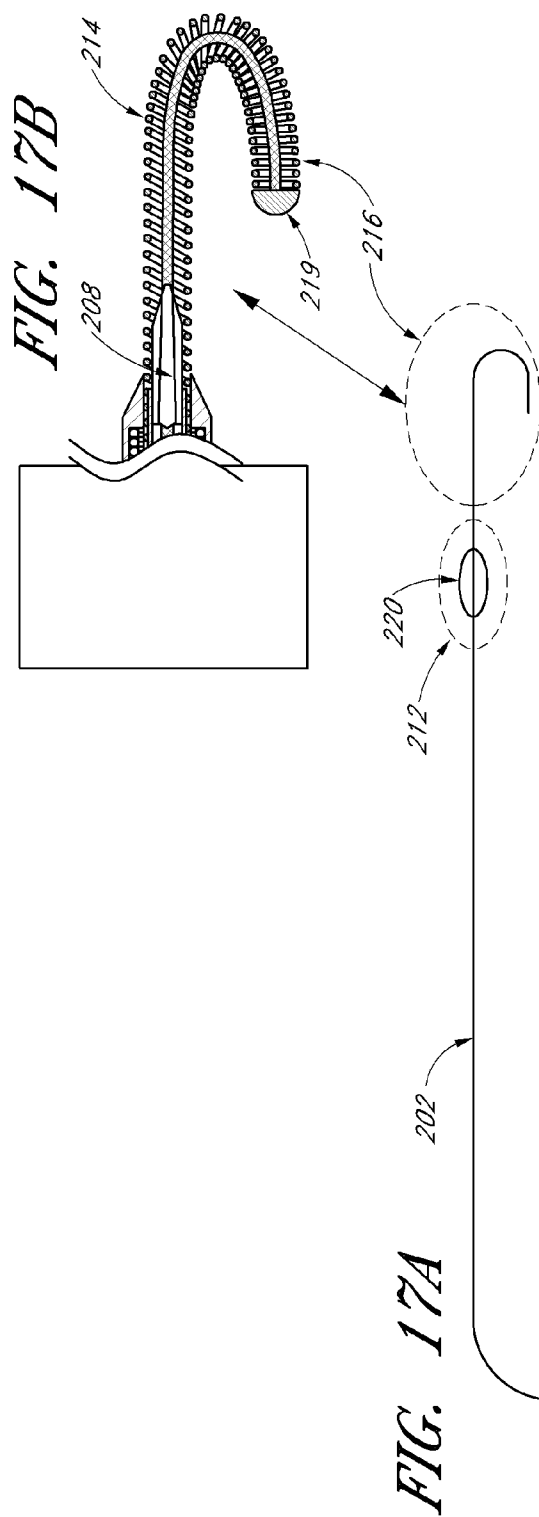


FIG. 16



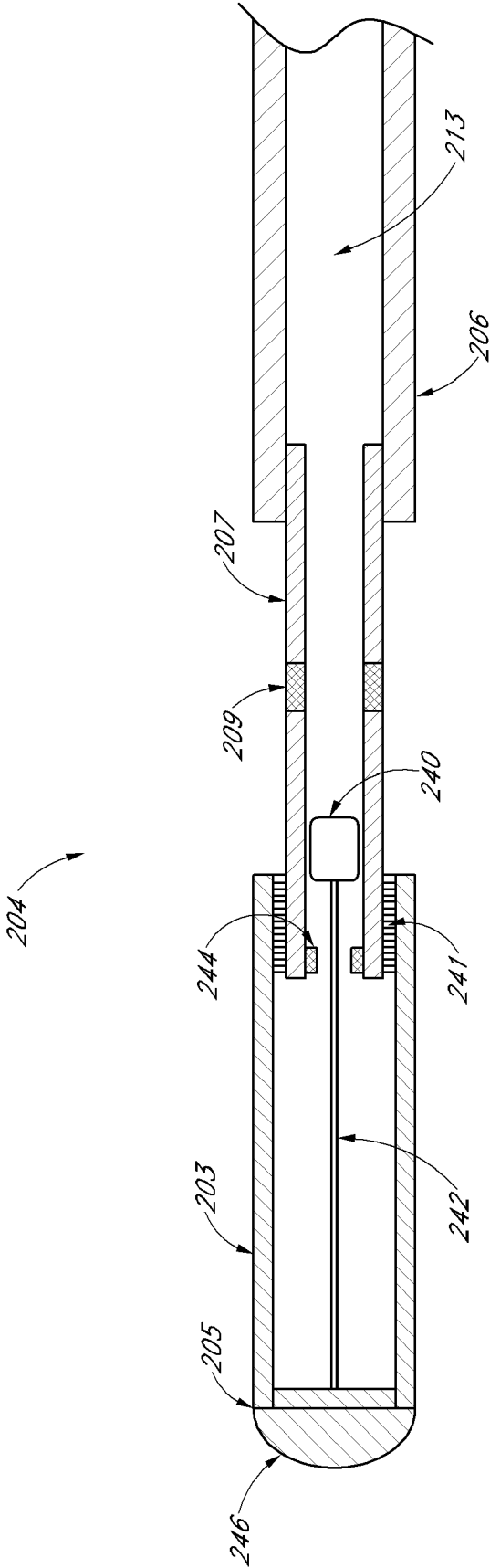


FIG. 17D

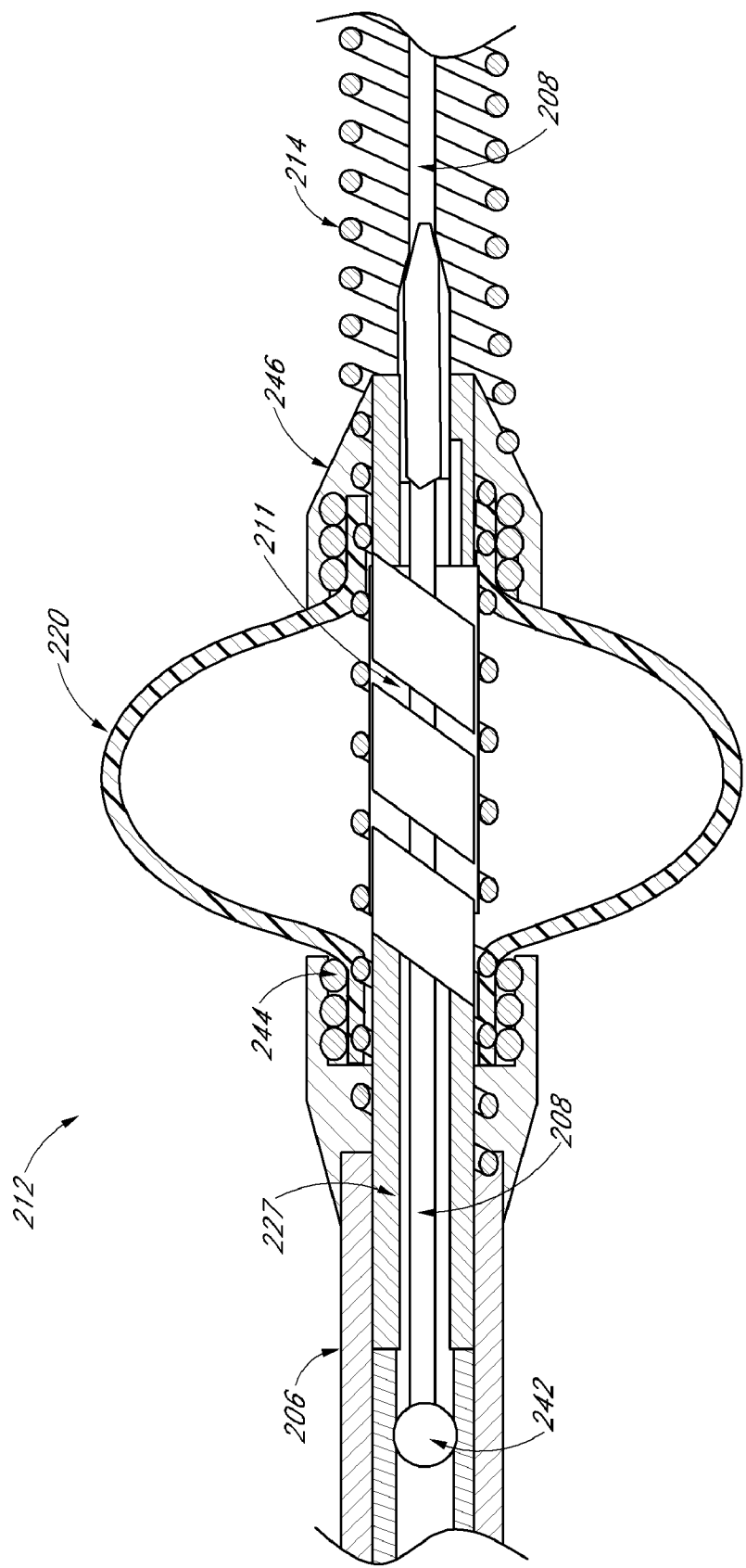


FIG. 18

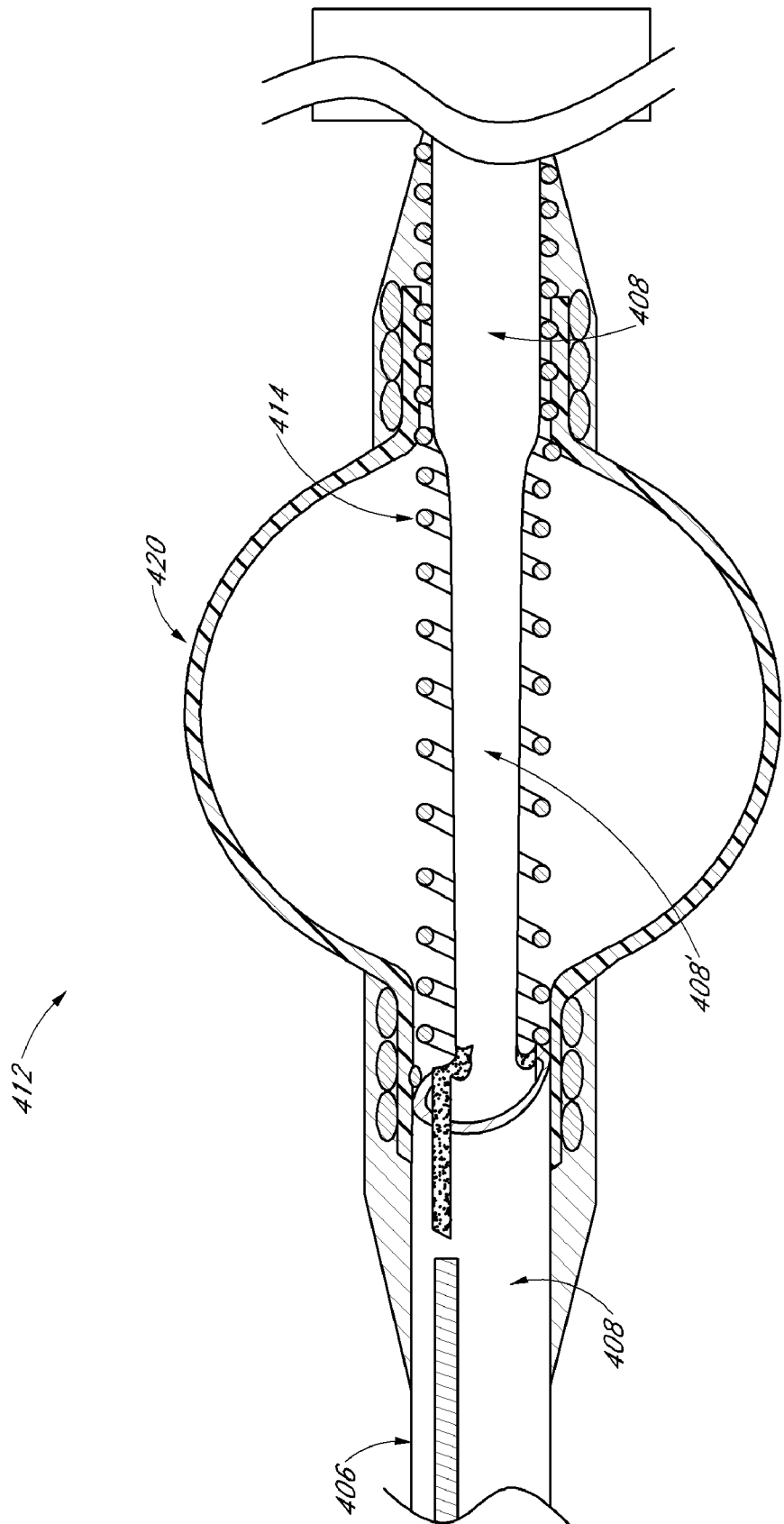


FIG. 19

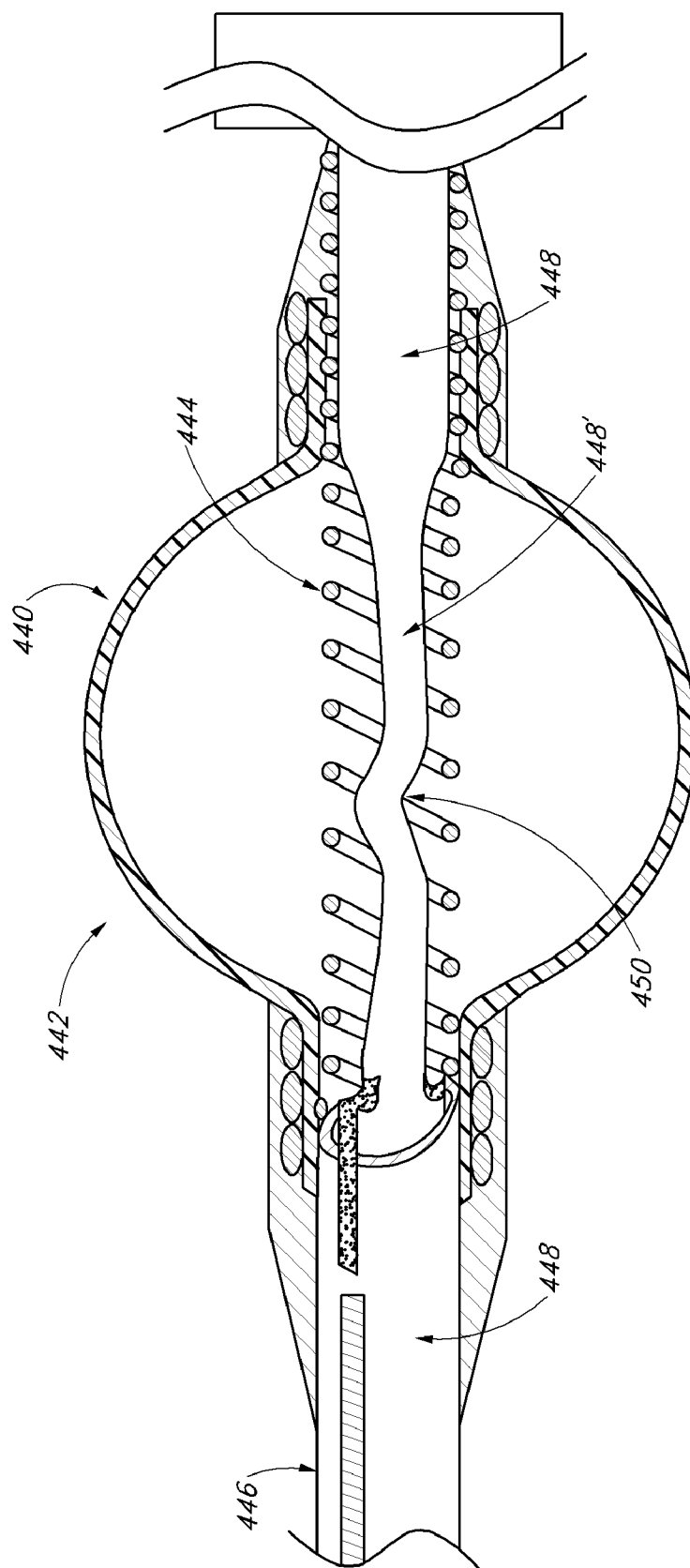


FIG. 20

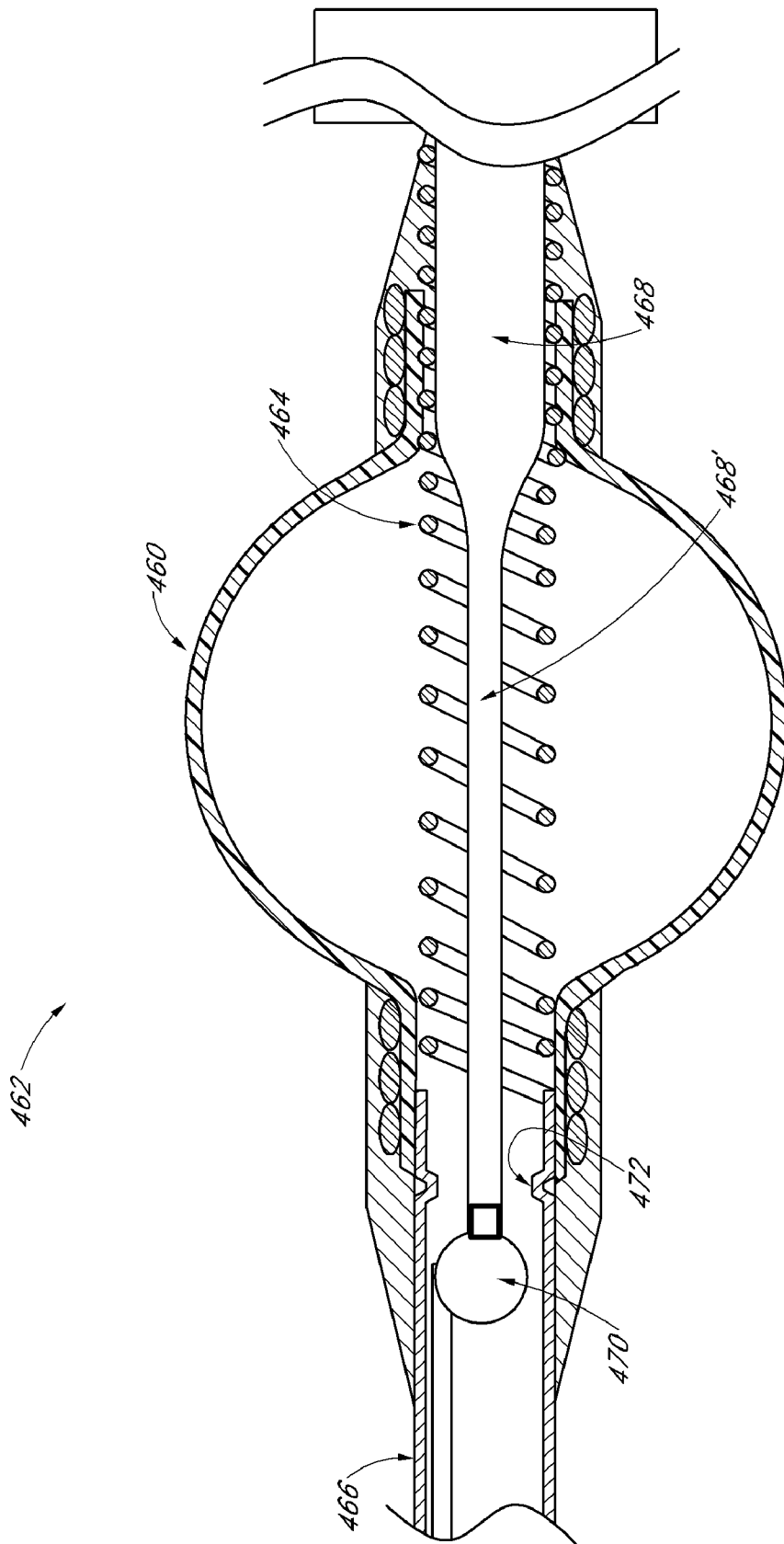


FIG. 21

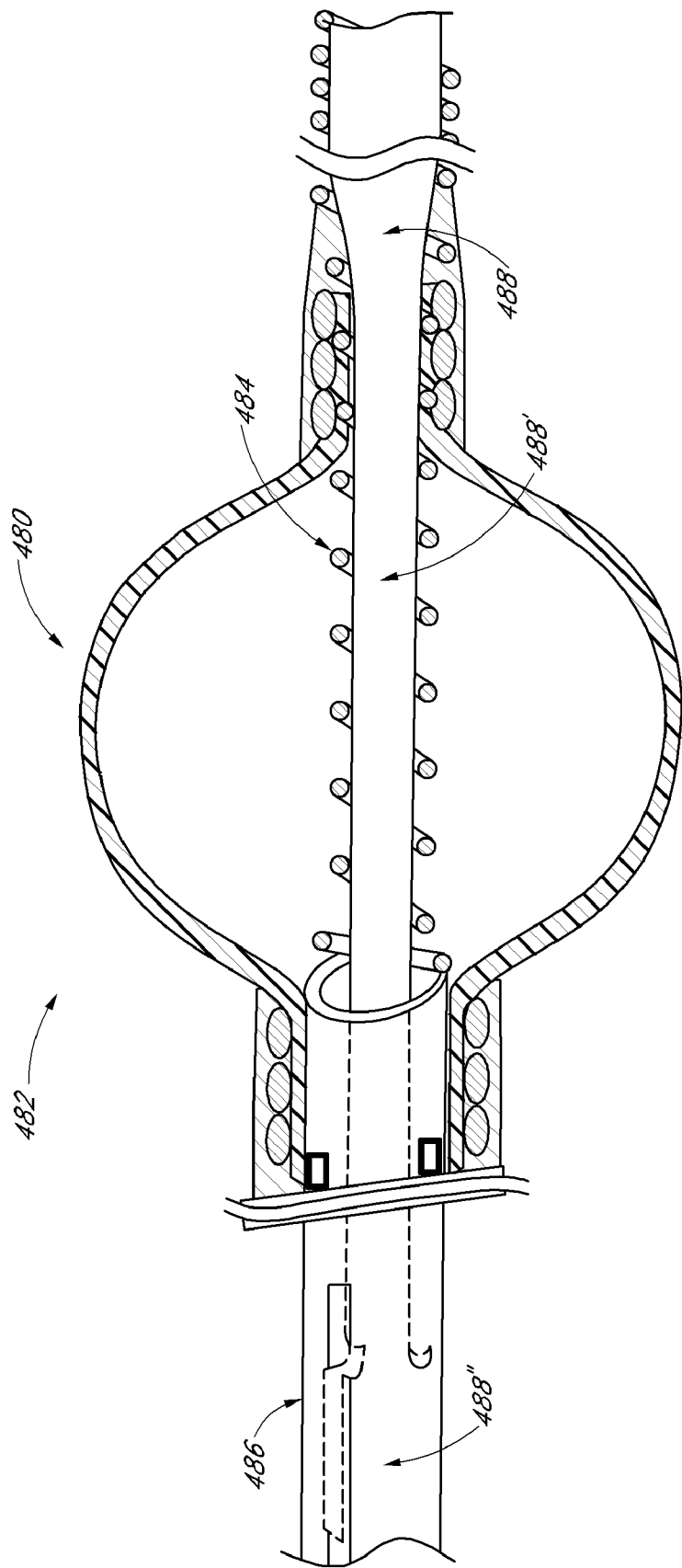


FIG. 22

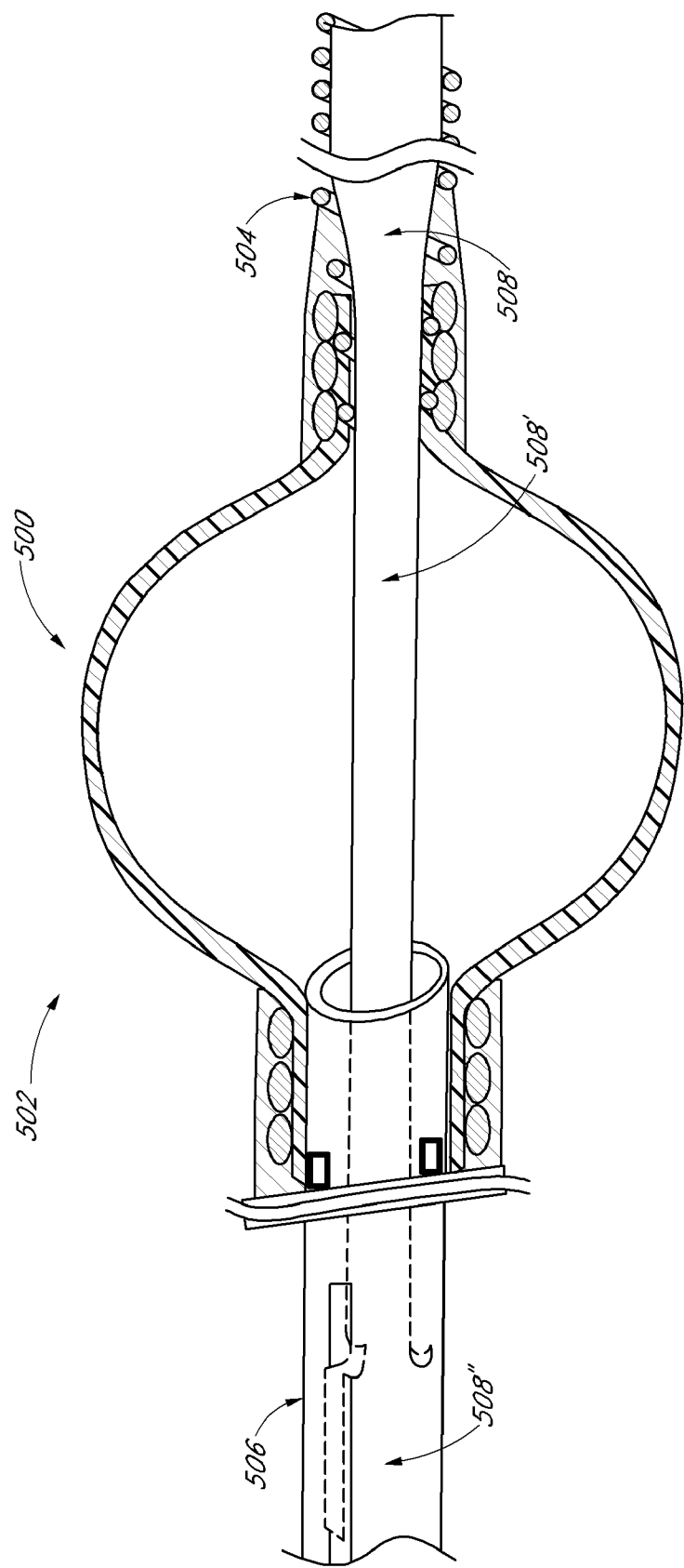


FIG. 23

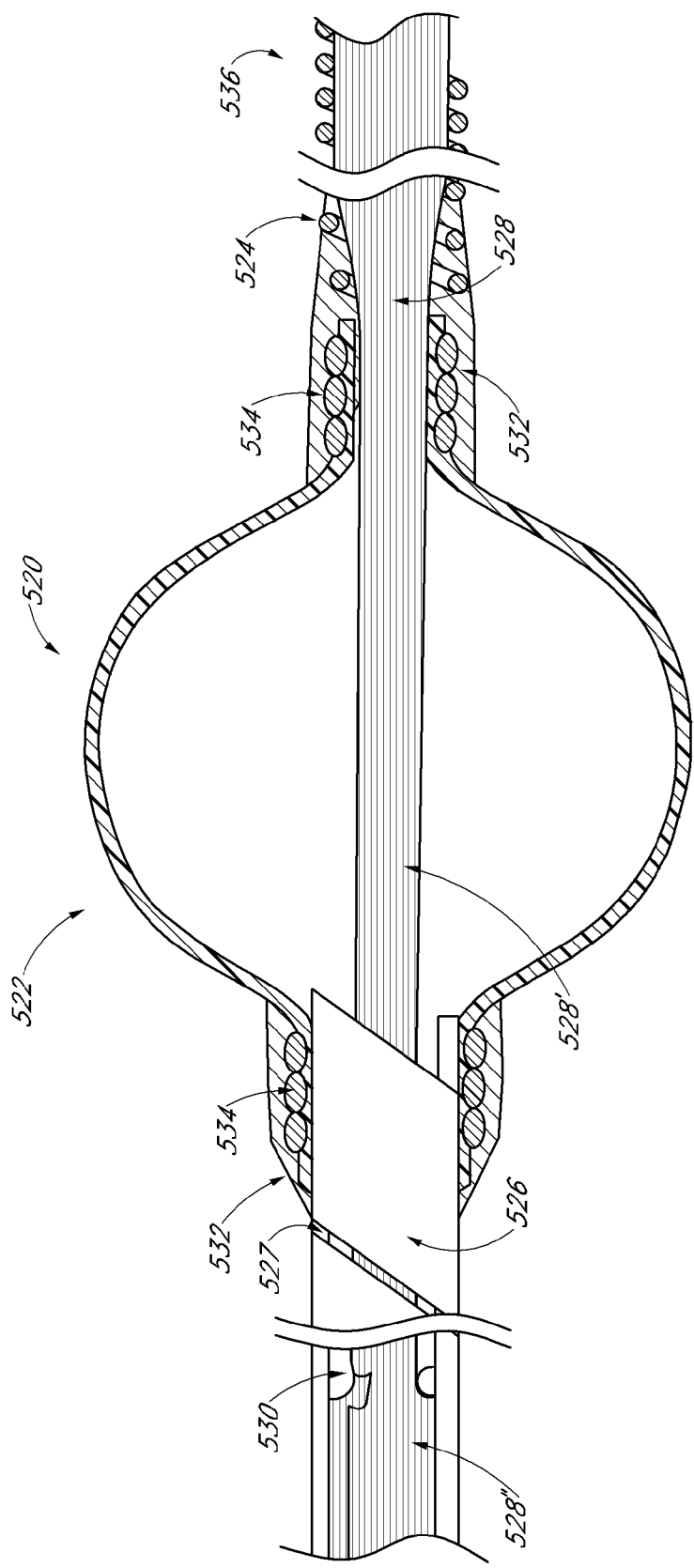


FIG. 24

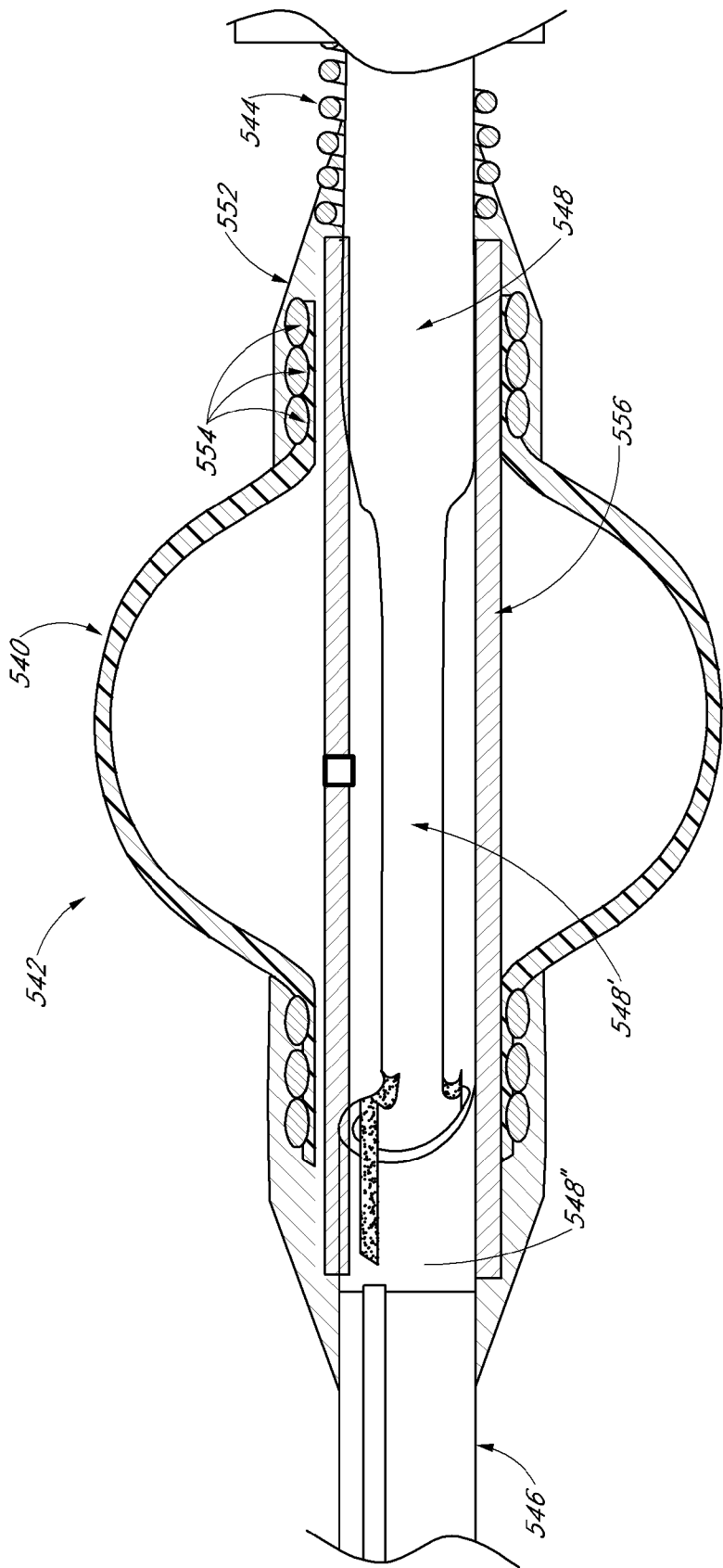


FIG. 25

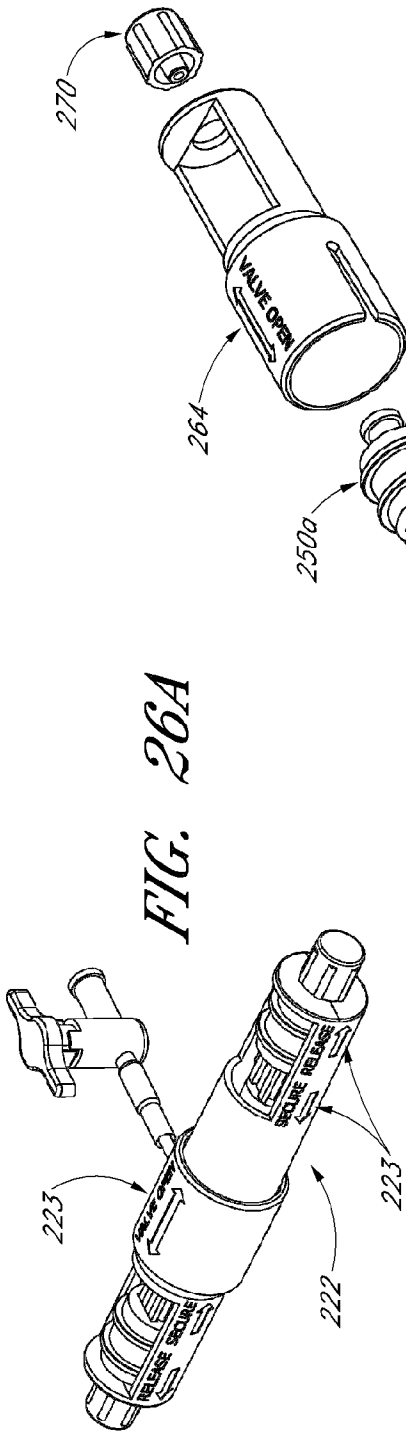


FIG. 26A

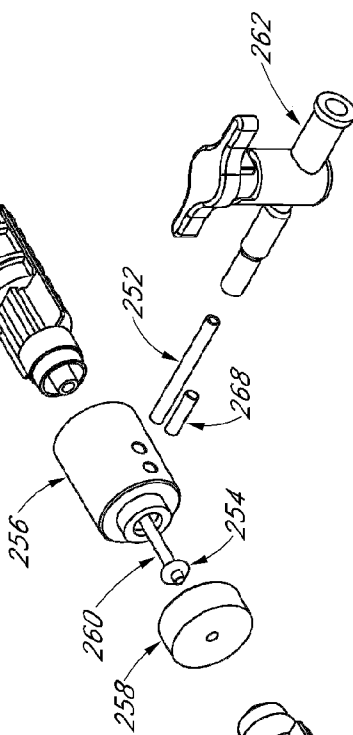


FIG. 26B

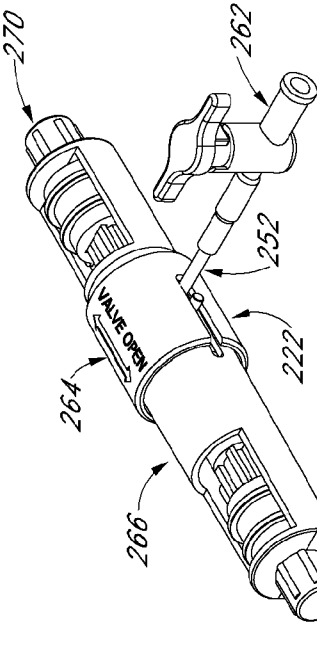


FIG. 26D

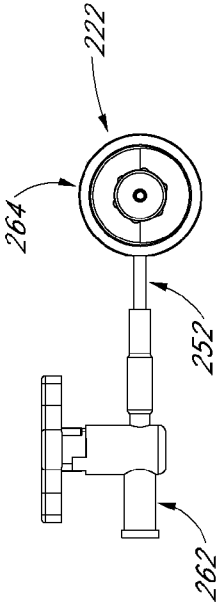


FIG. 26F

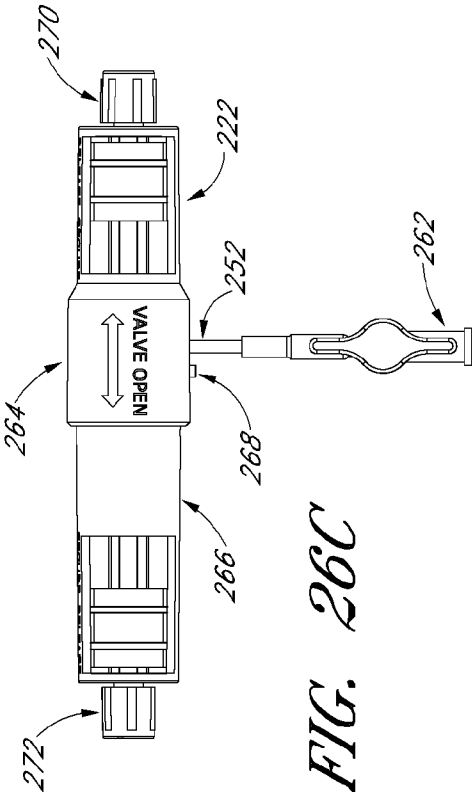


FIG. 26C

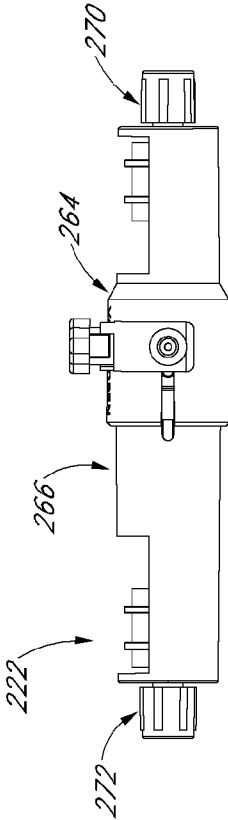


FIG. 26E

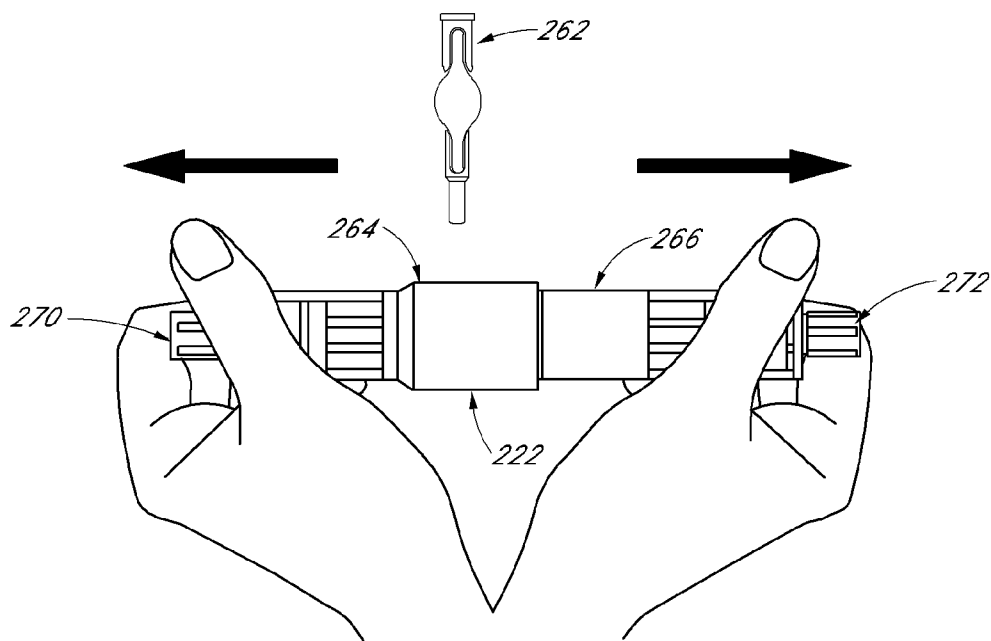


FIG. 27A

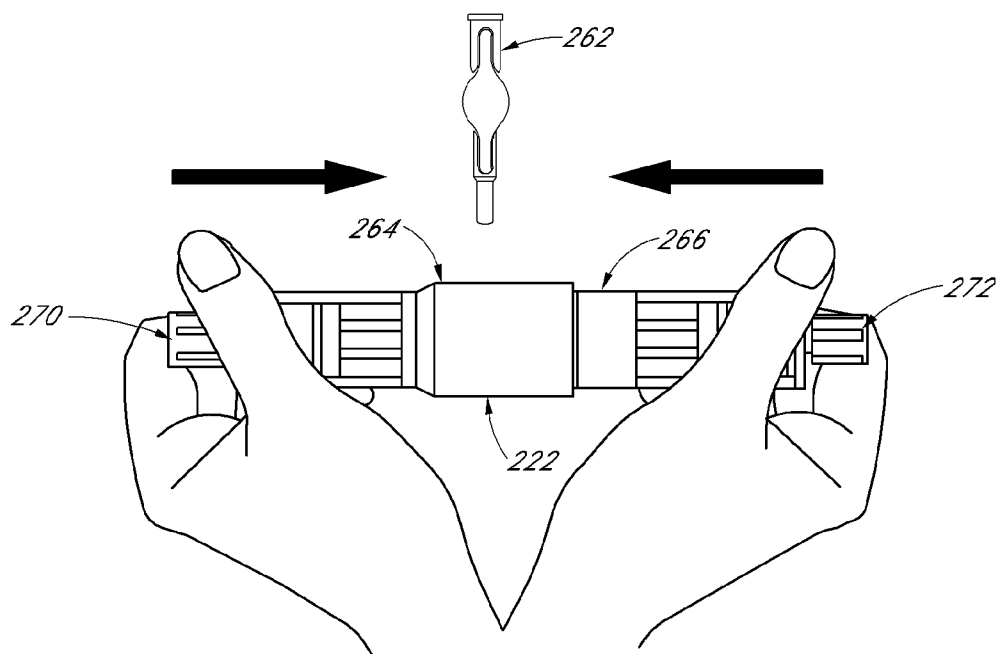


FIG. 27B

METHOD AND DEVICES FOR FLOW OCCLUSION DURING DEVICE EXCHANGES

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. Nos. 61/501,125 (Attorney Docket Number ACI-043P), entitled “Methods, Devices, and Systems for Flow Occlusion During Device Exchanges,” filed on Jun. 24, 2011; and 61/540,994, entitled “Method and Devices for Flow Occlusion During Device Exchanges,” filed on Sep. 29, 2011. This application is related to U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/112,877, entitled “Apparatus and Methods for Sealing a Puncture in Tissue,” filed on Apr. 22, 2005, and now issued as U.S. Pat. No. 8,002,742. The full disclosures of these references are hereby incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The field of the present application pertains to medical devices, and more particularly, to methods and systems for maintaining vascular access and/or minimizing bleeding, for example, during and after catheter-based interventions, for example, in the settings of device exchanges, vascular access closure, and the management of vascular complications.

[0004] 2. Description of the Related Art

[0005] Catheter-based medical procedures using large diameter (or “large bore”) vascular access sheaths are becoming increasingly more common. Two examples of such large bore catheterization procedures that are gaining rapid popularity are Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation (“TAVI”) and EndoVascular abdominal Aortic aneurysm Repair (“EVAR”). Although these procedures may often be effective at treating the condition addressed, they often cause injury to the blood vessel in which the large bore vascular access catheter is inserted to gain access for performing the procedure. In fact, vascular injury requiring treatment occurs in as many as 30-40% of large bore vascular procedures, according to some sources. Injury to the blood vessel may include perforation, rupture and/or dissection, which causes blood to flow out of the artery (“extravascular bleeding”), often requiring emergency surgery to repair the damaged blood vessel wall. If not properly treated, such a vascular injury may lead to anemia, hypotension or even death.

[0006] Vascular injury during large bore intravascular procedures is typically caused by the vascular access sheath itself and/or one or more instruments passed through the sheath to perform the procedure. Larger diameter vascular access sheaths are required in a number of catheter-based procedures, such as those mentioned above, where relatively large catheters/instruments must be passed through the sheath. Several other factors may increase the risk of vascular injury, including occlusive disease of the access vessel(s) and tortuosity/angulation of the access vessel(s). Another vascular injury caused by large bore intravascular procedures that can be challenging is the access site itself. Typically, large bore catheterizations create a significantly large arteriotomy, due to a disproportionately large ratio of the diameter of the vascular access catheter to the diameter of the artery in which it is placed. Large arteriotomies may require special management and multiple steps during closure. This may lead to significant blood loss while access closure is attempted.

[0007] Several techniques have been attempted to reduce the incidence of vascular injury in large bore vascular access procedures. For example, preoperative imaging of the blood vessel to be accessed, in the form of CT and MR angiography, may provide the physician with an idea of the anatomy of the vessel. If a particular vessel appears on imaging studies to be relatively tortuous or small, possible adjunctive maneuvers to prevent arterial dissection include pre-dilatation angioplasty of the iliofemoral vessels prior to large bore sheath placement, utilization of smaller access sheaths when possible, stiffer wires to aid in sheath placement and/or use of hydrophobic sheaths. In another attempt at preventing vessel injury, sheath placement may be performed under fluoroscopic guidance, and advancement may be halted when resistance is encountered. Despite the availability of these techniques, vascular injury requiring treatment still occurs in a large percentage of large bore vascular procedures.

[0008] Vascular injuries caused by intravascular procedures are generally quite difficult to diagnose and treat. When an arterial dissection occurs, it often remains undetected until the catheterization procedure is completed and the vascular access sheath is removed. For example, upon removal of the access sheath, large segments of the dissected vessel wall may be released within the vessel. The dissected vessel wall may lead to a breach in the artery wall, a flow-limiting stenosis, or distal embolization. Perforation or rupture of the iliofemoral artery segment may occur from persistent attempts to place large access sheaths in iliac arteries that are too small, too diseased, and/or too tortuous. Here too, a perforation may be likely to remain silent until sheath withdrawal.

[0009] Generally, vascular perforations and dissections caused by large bore vascular procedures allow very little time for the interventionalist to react. Frequently, these vascular injuries are associated with serious clinical sequelae, such as massive internal (retroperitoneal) bleeding, abrupt vessel closure, vital organ injuries, and emergency surgeries. In some cases, an interventionalist may first attempt to repair a vascular injury using an endovascular approach. First, the injury site may be controlled/stabilized with a balloon catheter, in an attempt to seal off the breached vessel wall and/or regain hemodynamic stability in the presence of appropriate resuscitation and transfusion of the patient by the anesthesiologist. Subsequently, endovascular treatment solutions may be attempted, for example if wire access is maintained through the true lumen. This may involve placement of one or more balloons, stents, or covered stents across the dissection/perforation. If the hemorrhage is controlled with these maneuvers and the patient is hemodynamically stabilized, significant reduction in morbidity and mortality may be realized. If attempts at endovascular repair of the vessel fail, emergency surgery is typically performed.

[0010] Presently, vascular injuries and complications occurring during and after large bore intravascular procedures are managed using a contralateral balloon occlusion technique (“CBOT”). CBOT involves accessing the contralateral femoral artery (the femoral artery opposite the one in which the large bore vascular access sheath is placed) with a separate access sheath, and then advancing and maneuvering a series of different guidewires, sheaths and catheters into the injured (ipsilateral) femoral or iliofemoral artery to treat the injury. Eventually, a (pre-sized) standard balloon catheter is advanced into the injured artery, and the balloon is inflated to reduce blood flow into the area of injury, thus stabilizing the injury until a repair procedure can be performed. Typi-

cally, CBOT involves at least the following steps: (1) Place a catheter within the contralateral iliofemoral artery (this catheter may already be in place for use in injecting contrast during the intravascular procedure); (2) Advance a thin, hydrophilic guidewire through the catheter and into the vascular access sheath located in the ipsilateral iliofemoral artery; (3) Remove the first catheter from the contralateral iliofemoral artery; (4) Advance a second, longer catheter over the guidewire and into the vascular access sheath; (5) Remove the thin, hydrophilic guidewire; (6) Advance a second, stiffer guidewire through the catheter into the vascular access sheath; (7) In some cases, an addition step at this point may involve increasing the size of the arteriotomy on the contralateral side to accommodate one or more balloon catheter and/or treatment devices for treating arterial trauma on the ipsilateral side; (8) Advance a balloon catheter over the stiffer guidewire into the damaged artery; (9) Inflate the balloon on the catheter to occlude the artery; (10) Advance one or more treatment devices, such as a stent delivery device, to the site of injury and repair the injury.

[0011] As this description suggests, the current CBOT technique requires many steps and exchanges of guidewire and catheters, most of which need to be carefully guided into a vascular access catheter in the opposite (ipsilateral) iliofemoral artery. Thus, the procedure is quite challenging and cumbersome. Although considered the standard of care in the management of vascular complications, the CBOT technique may not provide immediate stabilization of an injured segment, may lack ipsilateral device control, and/or may not provide ready access for additional therapeutics such as stents, other balloons and the like.

[0012] Therefore, in the management of vascular injuries and complications stemming from large bore intravascular procedures, it would be useful to provide a solution for minimizing blood loss and bridging the time to treatment (for example, an endovascular or surgical procedure) while maintaining an access pathway for delivering one or more treatment devices (balloon catheters, stents, etc.) to the injury site. It would also be desirable to provide blood flow occlusion during vascular closure after femoral artery catheterization. Ideally, a device for blood flow occlusion would be compatible with commonly available blood vessel closure devices and techniques, to facilitate blood flow occlusion during closure and occlusion device removal after closure. At least some of these objectives will be met by the embodiments described herein.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0013] Example embodiments described herein have several features, no single one of which is indispensable or solely responsible for their desirable attributes. Without limiting the scope of the claims, some of the advantageous features of some embodiments will now be summarized.

[0014] The present application is directed generally to medical devices, and more particularly, to methods and devices for maintaining vascular access and/or minimizing bleeding during percutaneous interventions.

[0015] For example, the methods and devices described herein may allow for simultaneous blood flow occlusion and device exchanges in the iliofemoral segment. In addition or alternatively, the methods and devices may maintain percutaneous vascular access while allowing for simultaneous flow occlusion and device exchanges. Optionally, the methods and devices may be utilized through the same (ipsilateral) inter-

ventional access site. The methods and devices may also be compatible with commonly available balloon/stent, and/or vascular closure systems.

[0016] In one aspect, a method of reducing the risk of clinical sequelae to catheter induced vascular injuries may involve: introducing a guide wire into a vascular sheath residing in a blood vessel, the guide wire having a distal end and an inflatable balloon at least 5 cm proximal of the distal end; proximally retracting the vascular sheath while leaving the wire in place; and observing indicia of the presence or absence of a vascular injury caused to the blood vessel by the vascular sheath or a procedural catheter previously advanced through the vascular sheath. If indicia of a vascular injury are observed, the method may further include proximally retracting the guide wire to position the inflatable balloon adjacent the injury and inflating the balloon to reduce blood flow past the injury, while leaving the guide wire in place to provide subsequent access to the injury.

[0017] In some embodiments, prior to the introducing step, the vascular sheath may be used for performing an intravascular procedure, such as but not limited to implantation of an aortic valve (TAVI/TAVR) and abdominal aortic aneurysm repair (EVAR). In some embodiments, observing indicia may involve observing contrast injected into the blood vessel using a radiographic imaging device. In some embodiments, the vascular sheath may have an external diameter at least about 80 percent as large as an internal diameter of the blood vessel. In some embodiments, the vascular sheath may be disposed in a femoral artery, the inflatable balloon may be at least 15 cm proximal of the distal end, and introducing the guide wire may involve advancing a tip of the wire into an aorta.

[0018] In some embodiments, inflating the balloon may involve inflating at a location of the vascular injury. Alternatively, inflating the balloon may involve inflating at a location upstream of the vascular injury. In some embodiments, the method may further include: removing the vascular sheath from the blood vessel; forming at least a partial seal at a puncture site in the blood vessel through which the vascular sheath was removed from the blood vessel; deflating the inflatable balloon of the guide wire; and removing the guide wire from the blood vessel through the seal at the puncture site, where the seal closes around a small hole left in the seal when the guide wire is removed. In some embodiment, the method may further involve introducing a vascular repair device over the guide wire and repairing the vascular injury using the vascular repair device. In some embodiments, the vascular repair device may include a stent deployment catheter, and repairing the vascular injury comprises placing a stent in the blood vessel.

[0019] In another aspect, a method of treating a patient may include: advancing a guide wire into a vascular sheath following an intravascular procedure, the guide wire comprising a distal end and a radially expandable structure spaced at least 5 cm proximally of the distal end; proximally withdrawing the sheath; evaluating the presence of a vascular injury caused by the sheath or a device introduced through the sheath; and if a vascular injury is observed, repositioning the guide wire and expanding the radially expandable structure to stabilize the injury. In some embodiments, the vascular sheath may be located in an iliofemoral artery, and advancing the guide wire may involve advancing the wire through into the vascular sheath from outside the body.

[0020] In one embodiment, the intravascular procedure includes implantation of an aortic valve. In another embodiment, the intravascular procedure includes an abdominal aortic aneurysm repair. In some embodiments, expanding the radially expandable structure may involve inflating a balloon. In some embodiments, expanding the radially expandable structure to stabilize the injury may involve reducing blood flow in an area around the vascular injury.

[0021] In another aspect, a method of treating a patient may involve introducing a guide wire into a blood vessel, the guide wire comprising a distal end and an inflatable balloon spaced at least 5 cm proximally of the balloon, introducing an index procedure catheter over the wire, and conducting an index procedure proximally of the balloon. In some embodiments, the index procedure may include implantation of an aortic valve. In some embodiments, the index procedure may include an abdominal aortic aneurysm repair.

[0022] In another aspect, a method of reducing the risk of clinical sequelae to catheter induced vascular injuries may include introducing a guide wire into a vessel, the guide wire having a distal end and a radially enlargeable structure at least 5 cm proximal of the distal end, advancing a procedure catheter along the wire, and performing a procedure with the procedure catheter, such that if the procedure catheter or an access sheath used introduce the procedure catheter produces a vascular injury, the guide wire can be advanced or retracted to position the radially enlargeable structure adjacent the injury, and the structure can be radially enlarged to control the injury while leaving the guide wire in place to provide subsequent access to the injury. In one embodiment, the procedure catheter may be an over the wire catheter. In one embodiment, the procedure catheter may be a rapid exchange catheter. In one embodiment, the procedure may be a heart valve repair. In one embodiment, the procedure may be a heart valve replacement. In one embodiment, the procedure may be implantation of an abdominal aortic aneurysm graft.

[0023] In some embodiments, if a vascular injury is not observed, the guide wire may be advanced or retracted without radially enlarging the radially enlargeable structure. In some embodiments, the radially enlargeable structure may be an inflatable balloon. Some embodiments may further include the step of evaluating the presence of a vascular perforation using Doppler ultrasound. Some embodiments may further include the step of evaluating the presence of a vascular perforation using contrast injection. In some embodiments, a vascular perforation is observed, the radially enlargeable structure is enlarged to control the injury, and a repair catheter is advanced along the guide wire. In some embodiments, the repair catheter may include a stent delivery catheter. In some embodiments, the repair catheter may include a graft delivery catheter. In some embodiments, a vascular injury is observed, the radially enlargeable structure is enlarged to control the injury, and the injury is thereafter surgically repaired.

[0024] In another aspect, a method of treating a catheter induced vascular injury may involve: advancing an inflatable balloon of a guide wire through a vascular sheath disposed in an iliofemoral artery, where the vascular sheath was used to perform a catheter based intravascular procedure; retracting the vascular sheath proximally; assessing the artery for injury; repositioning the guide wire within the artery; inflating the balloon to occlude the artery; removing an inflation device from the guide wire, wherein the balloon remains inflated after the inflation device is removed; advancing a

vascular repair device over a proximal end of the guide wire; performing a repair procedure on the artery, using the repair device; removing the repair device over the guide wire; deflating the balloon using the inflation device; and removing the guide wire from the artery.

[0025] In some embodiments, prior to the advancing step, the vascular sheath is used for performing an intravascular procedure, such as but not limited to implantation of an aortic valve or abdominal aortic aneurysm repair. In some embodiments, observing indicia involves observing contrast injected into the artery using a radiographic imaging device. In some embodiments, the vascular sheath may be disposed in a femoral artery, the inflatable balloon may be at least 15 cm proximal of a distal end of the guide wire, and advancing the guide wire may involve advancing a tip of the wire into an aorta. In some embodiments, inflating the balloon may involve inflating at a location of the vascular injury. In some embodiments, inflating the balloon may involve inflating at a location upstream of the vascular injury.

[0026] In another aspect, a vascular guide wire may include: an elongate tubular body having a proximal end, a distal end and a lumen extending longitudinally through at least part of the body, which may include a proximal portion, a flexible distal tip that is at least about 15 cm long and is more flexible than the proximal portion, and a transition portion between the proximal and distal portions. The guide wire may further include an inflatable balloon disposed on the transition portion and in communication with the lumen and a valve on the proximal portion of the elongate body configured to couple with an inflation device to allow for inflation and deflation of the balloon.

[0027] In some embodiments, the valve may include an axially movable occluder, positioned within the lumen, and the valve may be configured to lock inflation fluid inside the lumen when in a closed position, to allow the inflation device to be removed, thus leaving a hubless proximal end over which one or more devices may be advanced. In some embodiments, the occluder may be movable between a proximal position and a distal position, and the valve may be closed when the occluder is in the distal position. In some embodiments, the distal tip may include a proximal section having a first flexibility and a J-tip at the distal end of the elongate body having a second flexibility that is greater than the first flexibility. In some embodiments, the proximal section may have a length of at least about 15 cm, and the J-tip may have a length of at least about 5 cm. In some embodiments, the distal tip may have a length of at least about 20 cm. In some embodiments, the distal tip may have a length approximately equal to an average length of an iliofemoral artery.

[0028] In some embodiments, the proximal portion may include a tube with a spiral cut along a portion of its length nearer its distal end, and the spiral cut may have decreasing spacing toward the distal end. In some embodiments, the distal tip may include a core wire wrapped in a coil, and the core wire may extend through the transition portion and into the proximal portion. Optionally, some embodiments may further include a coating over the spiral cut to prevent fluid from passing out of the lumen through the cut.

[0029] In another aspect, a vascular guide wire may include an elongate tubular body having a proximal end, a distal end, and a lumen extending longitudinally through at least part of the body. The elongate body may include a proximal section having a first average stiffness, a transition section having a second average stiffness that is less than the first stiffness, and

a distal tip having a length of at least about 15 cm and a third average stiffness that is less than the second stiffness. The guide wire may further include an expandable member disposed on the transition section, wherein the expandable member is expandable via fluid advanced through the central lumen of the elongate body.

[0030] In some embodiments, the distal tip may have approximately the same stiffness as the transition section immediately adjacent a distal end of the transition section and may become significantly more flexible toward the distal end of the elongate body. In some embodiments, the guide wire may also include a valve within the tubular body. In some embodiments, the valve may include a locking feature for locking in an inflated configuration to maintain the expandable member in an expanded configuration even after an inflation device is removed from the wire. In some embodiments, the distal tip may include a preformed J-tip such that a curved sidewall of the J-tip rather than the distal end of the elongate body is the leading structure during normal transvascular advance.

[0031] Optionally, the guide wire may also include at least one radiopaque marker for indicating a position of the expandable member. In some embodiments, the expandable member may be an inflatable balloon. In some embodiments, the distal tip may have a length of at least about 20 cm. In some embodiments, the distal tip may have a length approximately equal to an average length of an iliofemoral artery. In some embodiments, the proximal end of the elongate body may be hubless, such that at least one additional device may be passed over the proximal end while the guide wire device is in the patient with the expandable member in an expanded configuration.

[0032] In another aspect, a vascular guide wire system may include a guide wire device and an inflation device. The guide wire device may include an elongate tubular body having a proximal portion, a flexible distal tip that is at least about 15 cm long and is more flexible than the proximal portion, a transition portion between the proximal and distal portions, and a lumen extending longitudinally through at least part of the body. The guide wire device may also include an inflatable balloon disposed on the transition portion and in communication with the lumen and a valve on the proximal portion of the elongate body. The inflation device may be configured to couple with the elongate body to open and close the valve and allow for inflation of the inflatable balloon.

[0033] In some embodiments, the valve may include an axially movable occluder, positioned within the lumen, and the valve may be configured to lock inflation fluid inside the lumen when in a closed position, to allow the inflation device to be removed, thus leaving a hubless proximal end of the elongate body, over which one or more devices may be advanced. Optionally, some embodiments of the system may further include an inflation medium injection device, such as but not limited to a pump. In some embodiment, the distal tip of the guide wire device may be a J-tip and may have a length of at least about 20 cm. In some embodiments, the proximal end of the elongate body may be hubless. In some embodiments, the distal tip of the guide wire device may include a core wire wrapped in a coil, and the core wire may extend through the transition portion and into the proximal portion.

[0034] These and other aspects and embodiments of the invention will be described below in further detail, in relation to the attached drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0035] FIGS. 1A-1E are diagrammatic illustrations of a femoral artery, iliofemoral segment and aorta portion, showing an exemplary method for controlling blood flow during vascular access closure, according to one embodiment;

[0036] FIGS. 2A-2I are diagrammatic illustrations of a femoral artery, iliofemoral segment and aorta portion, showing an exemplary method for stabilizing vascular injuries and managing blood flow during interventions to treat vascular injuries, according to one embodiment;

[0037] FIG. 3 is a side view of an exemplary guide wire balloon device, along with close-up, cross-sectional views of a distal tip, balloon section and valve section of the device, according to one embodiment;

[0038] FIGS. 4A and 4B are cross-sectional side views of an alternative embodiment of a valve section (fluid regulator/valve), shown in a valve-closed configuration (FIG. 4A) and a valve-open configuration (FIG. 4B), which may be included in a guide wire device, such as the guide wire device shown in FIG. 3;

[0039] FIGS. 5A and 5B are cross-sectional side views of another alternative embodiment of a valve section (fluid regulator/valve), shown in a valve-closed configuration (FIG. 5A) and a valve-open configuration (FIG. 5B), which may be included in a guide wire device, such as the guide wire device shown in FIG. 3;

[0040] FIGS. 6A and 6B are cross-sectional side views of an alternative embodiment of a valve section (fluid regulator/valve), shown in a valve-open configuration (FIG. 6A) and a valve-closed configuration (FIG. 6B), which may be included in a guide wire device, such as the guide wire device shown in FIG. 3;

[0041] FIGS. 7A and 7B are cross-sectional side views of an alternative embodiment of a valve section (fluid regulator/valve), shown in a valve-open configuration (FIG. 7A) and a valve-closed configuration (FIG. 7B), which may be included in a guide wire device, such as the guide wire device shown in FIG. 3;

[0042] FIG. 8 is a side view of a guide wire balloon device, along with close-up, cross-sectional views of a distal tip, balloon section and valve section of the device, according to an alternative embodiment;

[0043] FIGS. 9A-9L illustrate alternative stiffness characteristics of the individual segments of a guide wire device, according to various alternative embodiments;

[0044] FIG. 10 is a diagrammatic illustration of a femoral artery, iliofemoral segment and aorta portion, illustrating the relative length of a portion of a guide wire device, with the device in position across an iliofemoral segment, according to one embodiment;

[0045] FIG. 11 is a diagrammatic illustration of a femoral artery access site and a side view of a portion of a guide wire device passed through an access site in the artery, where the guide wire device has a flexible distal end, extending across a nonlinear path at the vascular access site, according to one embodiment;

[0046] FIG. 12 is a chart illustrating experimental results comparing the stiffness characteristics of a guide wire device according to one embodiment with existing products;

[0047] FIG. 13 shows an angiogram of a guide wire device according to one embodiment, illustrating the device's ability to occlude blood flow in a blood vessel;

[0048] FIGS. 14A and 14B show angiographic images of the guide wire device of FIG. 13 extending from an iliofemoral segment to an aorta;

[0049] FIG. 15 is a perspective view of a guide wire balloon system, including close-up views of an inflation device, a balloon section of a guide wire device, and a core wire and distal tip of the guide wire device, according to one embodiment;

[0050] FIG. 16 is a perspective view of the system of FIG. 15 partially packaged in a kit with other components, according to one embodiment;

[0051] FIG. 17A is a side view of a guide wire device such as that shown in FIG. 15;

[0052] FIG. 17B is a side, cross-sectional view of the distal tip of the guide wire device of FIG. 17A;

[0053] FIGS. 17C and 17D are side, cross-sectional views of the valve section of the guide wire device of FIG. 17A, shown in a valve-closed configuration (FIG. 17C) and a valve-open configuration (FIG. 17D);

[0054] FIGS. 18-25 are side, cross-sectional views of balloon sections of guide wire devices, according to various alternative embodiments;

[0055] FIG. 26A is a perspective view of an inflation device for use with a guide wire balloon device, according to one embodiment;

[0056] FIG. 26B is an exploded view of the inflation device of FIG. 26A;

[0057] FIGS. 26C-26F are top, perspective, side and end-on views, respectively, of the inflation device of FIG. 26A; and

[0058] FIGS. 27A and 27B are top views of an inflation device and the hands of a user, illustrating a method for using the inflation device, according to one embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0059] Although certain embodiments and examples are disclosed below, inventive subject matter extends beyond the specifically disclosed embodiments to other alternative embodiments and/or uses, and to modifications and equivalents thereof. Thus, the scope of the claims appended hereto is not limited by any of the particular embodiments described below. For example, in any method or process disclosed herein, the acts or operations of the method or process may be performed in any suitable sequence and are not necessarily limited to any particular disclosed sequence. Various operations may be described as multiple discrete operations in turn, in a manner that may be helpful in understanding certain embodiments; however, the order of description should not be construed to imply that these operations are order dependent. Additionally, the structures, systems, and/or devices described herein may be embodied as integrated components or as separate components.

[0060] For purposes of comparing various embodiments, certain aspects and advantages of these embodiments are described. Not necessarily all such aspects or advantages are achieved by any particular embodiment. Thus, for example, various embodiments may be carried out in a manner that achieves or optimizes one advantage or group of advantages as taught herein without necessarily achieving other aspects or advantages as may also be taught or suggested herein.

[0061] Referring now to FIGS. 1A-1E, one embodiment of a method for controlling bleeding during vascular closure, for example after femoral artery catheterization, is illustrated.

FIG. 1A shows a segment of an arterial pathway, including the iliofemoral artery 100, the femoral artery 102, and the aorta 101. (This and other anatomical drawings are not drawn to scale and are not necessarily anatomically correct but are provided for descriptive, exemplary purposes.) Many of the descriptions herein discuss accessing and treating an iliofemoral artery (or “iliofemoral segment”), which is a length of an artery extending from a portion of a femoral artery to a portion of an iliac artery. These descriptions are for exemplary purposes only, and in various embodiments, other blood vessels may be accessed and/or treated, such as but not limited to femoral arteries, iliac arteries, aortas and the like. For example, using various devices and methods described below, a guide wire balloon catheter device may be advanced into a femoral artery, a distal tip of the device may be passed into the aorta, and the device may then be used to occlude flow within, and provide access to, an iliofemoral artery. Thus, the descriptions below should not be interpreted to limit the scope of the invention to a particular blood vessel.

[0062] FIG. 1B shows a vascular access sheath 110 inserted through a vascular access site in the femoral artery 102 and extending through the iliofemoral segment 100 for conducting any suitable diagnostic and/or therapeutic catheterization procedure. The sheath 110 may have a diameter of 14F, 16F, 18F or the like in some embodiments, or may be smaller or larger in alternative embodiments. Generally, the sheath 110 may be any suitable sheath for performing an intravascular procedure and is placed in the iliofemoral artery 100 to perform the procedure (i.e., prior to the introduction and use of the guide wire device described herein.) The sheath 110 may be introduced in a retrograde orientation, as shown, or alternatively, in some procedures, the sheath 110 and/or other devices herein may be introduced antegrade relative to the patient's blood flow, as appropriate for a given application.

[0063] Referring now to FIG. 1C, upon completion of the catheter-based procedure, and before sheath withdrawal, a guide wire balloon device 120 or system (for example, any of the embodiments described elsewhere herein or in the applications incorporated by reference herein) may be inserted into the sheath 110 such that a tip 121 of the guide wire device 120, for example, a floppy “J tip,” is positioned past the distal tip 111 of the sheath 110 inside the aorta 101. The guide wire balloon device 120 may be described herein as a “guide wire,” “guide wire balloon catheter,” “guide wire device” or the like. As described further elsewhere herein, the guide wire device 120 may have a cross-sectional size that allows the sheath 110 to be inserted, withdrawn and/or exchanged over the guide wire shaft (and/or allow secondary devices to be advanced over the device 120). Thus, the sheath 110 may be withdrawn (partially or completely) proximally and/or advanced distally over the guide wire device 120 to adjust positioning of the sheath 110 relative to the device 120.

[0064] As illustrated in FIG. 1D, in a next step, the sheath 110 may be retracted/withdrawn relative to the guide wire device 120, while maintaining the device 120 in position, to expose a balloon 122 or other expandable member on the guide wire device 120. The balloon 122 may be positioned and inflated at a desired occlusion site before, during, or after complete withdrawal of the sheath, as shown in FIG. 1D.

[0065] With continuing reference to FIG. 1D, after the sheath 110 has been removed from the femoral artery, the vascular access site may be closed, for example, with a suture/sealant combination 130, advanced about or otherwise in cooperation with the guide wire device 120 at the site of

arteriotomy. Exemplary closure devices and methods that may be delivered over or otherwise in conjunction with the guide wire device **120** (or any of the embodiments herein) are disclosed in U.S. Pat. Nos. 7,316,704, 7,331,979, 7,335,220 and 7,806,856, and U.S. Patent Application Publication Nos. 2007/0231366, 2008/0082122, 2009/0088793, 2009/0254110, 2010/0168789, 2010/0274280 and 2010/0280546. The entire disclosures of these references are expressly incorporated by reference herein.

[0066] As shown in FIG. 1E, next the balloon **122** may be deflated, and the guide wire device **120** may be withdrawn through the closed arteriotomy. In these embodiments, the sealant **130** may be capable of closing the hole left by the guide wire device **120** after withdrawal.

[0067] Referring now to FIGS. 2A-2I, another method is provided for managing vascular complications and/or controlling bleeding during or after trans-femoral catheterization. FIG. 2A again illustrates the femoral artery **102**, iliofemoral artery **100** (or “iliofemoral segment”) and a small portion of the aorta **101**. As shown in FIG. 2B, the method may initially include inserting a vascular access sheath **110** (or “procedure sheath”) into the femoral artery **102** and advancing its distal end **111** into the iliofemoral segment **100** for conducting a catheterization procedure, similar to the previous embodiment. In most embodiments, the vascular access sheath **110** will be used for performing one or more intravascular or transvascular procedures, such as but not limited to EVAR or TAVI (also called transvascular aortic valve replacement, or “TAVR”). Next, as illustrated in FIG. 2C, upon completion of the procedure, and before withdrawing the vascular access sheath **110**, a guide wire balloon device **120** (for example, any of the embodiments described elsewhere herein or in the applications incorporated by reference herein) may be inserted into the procedure sheath **110**, such that a tip **121** of the guide wire device **120** is positioned past the sheath tip **111** inside the aorta **101** (or other body lumen).

[0068] Referring to FIGS. 2D and 2E, the sheath **110** may then be withdrawn, for example, under angiographic guidance, while maintaining the position of the guide wire device **120** in the iliofemoral artery **100**. If sheath withdrawal uncovers a vascular injury, such as dissections **132** (shown in FIG. 2D) or perforations **134** (shown in FIG. 2E), expedient catheter management of the injury is possible by the guide wire device **120**, which is positioned in the true lumen of the vessel **100**. As shown in FIG. 2F, as a first step, the balloon **122** may be positioned at the location of the vascular injury **132** and inflated, in an effort to stabilize the vessel wall at the site of injury, and/or to bridge the complication for further treatment options.

[0069] With reference to FIG. 2G, the guide wire device **120** may provide a path for ipsilateral insertion of a treatment device, such as a catheter **134** with a balloon **136** and possibly a stent mounted on the balloon **136**, for treating the vascular injury **132**. In most or all embodiments, the guide wire device **120** may be “hubless,” meaning that once an inflation device (not shown) is removed from the device **120**, one or more instruments may be passed over the proximal end of the guide wire device **120** without having to remove or navigate over a proximal hub. This hubless feature provides a significant advantage in ease of use for passing one or more additional devices to the area of the vascular injury. In other embodiments, alternative or additional treatment devices may be advanced over guide wire device **120**, such as but not limited

to any suitable catheter device, such as balloon expandable devices, stent delivery devices, graft delivery devices, radiofrequency or other energy delivery devices or the like. Under such scenarios, the device(s) **134** may be inserted into the target vessel over the guide wire device **120** while the injury is stabilized and bleeding is minimized by the expanded balloon **122**, as shown in FIG. 2G.

[0070] Referring now to FIG. 2H, to facilitate positioning of a treatment device **134**, the balloon **122** of the guide wire device **120** may be deflated and moved as desired within the vessel, for example, to an upstream location, as shown. Optionally, the tip **121** may be positioned past the iliofemoral segment **100** in the aorta **101** at anytime during the procedure, for example, in order to prevent tip-related injury. In such procedures, the floppy tip **121**, which may include the entire length distal to the balloon **122**, may be sufficiently long to extend into the aorta when the balloon **122** is positioned in the iliofemoral segment **100**. For example, in various embodiments, the tip **121** may be at least longer than the average length of the iliofemoral segment **100**, such as at least about 15 cm, more preferably at least about 20 cm, and even more preferably between about 20 cm and about 25 cm.

[0071] In the embodiments described above, the guide wire device **120** and therapeutic device(s) **134** are advanced to the injury site through vasculature on the same side of the patient's body that the procedural vascular access sheath **110** was placed. For the purposes of this application, this side of the patient is referred to as the ipsilateral side of a patient. In other words, in this application, “ipsilateral” refers to the side of the patient's body on which the main access was achieved for performing a given endovascular procedure. For example, the “ipsilateral femoral artery” or “ipsilateral iliofemoral artery” will generally be the artery in which a vascular access sheath **110** (or any other access device) is placed for advancing instruments to perform the intravascular procedure (TAVI, EVAR, etc.). “Contralateral” refers to the opposite side of the patient, relative to the procedure access side. In this regard, “ipsilateral” and “contralateral” relate to the side on which access is gained to perform the main procedure and do not relate to where the physician stands to perform the procedure. In any case, various embodiments of the methods and devices described herein may be used exclusively via an ipsilateral approach, exclusively via a contralateral approach, or interchangeably via an ipsilateral or contralateral approach.

[0072] The method just described in relation to FIGS. 2A-2I may have a number of advantages over the prior art contralateral balloon occlusion technique (CBOT). One advantage, for example, is that the guide wire balloon device **120** will typically be located very close to the vascular injury **132**, **134** when the vascular sheath **110** is withdrawn. Thus, the balloon **122** may be inflated quickly within the iliofemoral artery **100**, aorta **101** or femoral artery **102**, perhaps after minor positional adjustments, to quickly occlude the vessel and stabilize the injury **132**, **134** while treatment options are being assessed and prepared. Another potential advantage of the method described above is that only one combined guide wire balloon device **120** is needed to stop blood flow/stabilize the injury **132**, **134** and to provide a path along which treatment device(s) **134** may be advanced into the vessel. In other words, the method does not require multiple different guidewires, guide catheters, introducer sheaths and the like, nor does it require difficult threading of a guidewire into a contralaterally placed sheath. In general, therefore, the

described method may be easier and quicker to perform, thus facilitating a quicker and more effective vascular repair.

[0073] FIG. 3 illustrates one embodiment of a guide wire device **300** for performing the various procedures described herein, such as occluding an artery to stop blood flow past a vascular injury and to provide a path for delivering one or more treatment devices to the injury site. Generally, the guide wire device **300** may include a hollow guide wire body having a central lumen **320**, an occlusion balloon **302** (or other expandable member) attached to or otherwise carried on a distal end of the guide wire **300** adjacent a distal tip of the guide wire **300**, and a hubless extracorporeal or proximal end **303** including a valve with an inflation port **306** in communication with the lumen **320** and a balloon inflation port **305**.

[0074] The guide wire device **300** may have dimensions and/or characteristics similar to conventional guide wires. For example, the guide wire device **300** may allow for introduction of other devices, such as catheters or other tubular devices carrying therapeutic and/or diagnostic elements (for example stents, covered stents, stent-grafts, balloons, etc.) In certain embodiments, the guide wire device **300** (including the balloon **302** in a collapsed state) may be sized to be received in and/or to occlude an arterial or other body lumen, for example, sized between about 3 mm and about 15 mm in some embodiments and in other embodiments as large as about 30-40 mm. The guide wire device **300** may also have a sufficient working length to allow introduction of other devices over the guide wire shaft.

[0075] The entire length or the distal end of the guide wire device may be made of compliant material that provides a flexible shape and/or accommodates the distal end conforming to the target lumen geometry. Alternatively, the proximal end **303** may be rigid, semi-rigid, or simply stiffer than the distal end to facilitate advancement of the guide wire device **300** from the proximal end **303**.

[0076] In some embodiments, the central lumen **320** of the guide wire **300** may communicate with the external surface or environment of the device through a series of valves (or other flow regulators) for example, within or on the proximal end **303** of the guide wire device **300**.

[0077] In some embodiments, the deflated balloon **302** may have an overall low profile substantially similar to the guide wire shaft dimension, for example, such that at least the distal end has a substantially uniform diameter and/or the entire length of the guide wire device **300** has a substantially uniform diameter.

[0078] In certain embodiments, the proximal end **303** of the guide wire shaft may be attached to a detachable inflation unit for balloon **302** inflation/deflation. The inflation unit may be sealingly attached around or otherwise to the balloon shaft to provide inflation.

[0079] Some embodiments may include a fluid regulation system, for example, within the proximal end **303** of the guide wire shaft, that maintains inflation/deflation state during operation, for example, when the inflation unit has been utilized to inflate or deflate the balloon **302** and then removed. The fluid regulation system may include a plurality of fluid regulators that are serially installed in order to maintain the balloon **302** in an inflation state, for example, in case of failure of an individual fluid regulator (for example, as a result of balloon catheter manipulation). In one embodiment, the fluid regulator system may include an internal fluid regulator and an external fluid regulator, which are operatively coupled such that opening the internal fluid regulator may cause the

external fluid regulator to open as well. The fluid regulation system may also include one or more mechanisms designed to automatically lock at least one fluid regulator. In certain embodiments, the fluid regulator system may also include one or more protective features to prevent or minimize accidental manipulation, kinking etc., which may adversely affect inflation or deflation status. For example, one or more protective sleeves, caps, segments of enhanced stiffness, locking mechanisms, etc. (not shown) may be provided.

[0080] In one embodiment, the guide wire shaft may be configured to accept parts that enable extension of the guide wire shaft. For example, a shaft extension mechanism may be connected to the fluid regulator system in an effort to simplify overall design.

[0081] In certain embodiments, the guide wire device **300** may be compatible with vascular closure devices, for example, utilizing sutures, clips, and other implants, etc. The guide wire device **300** may also include one or more radiographic markers, for example, on the distal end adjacent to the balloon **302**, to aid radiographic positioning.

[0082] FIG. 3 shows an exemplary embodiment of a guide wire balloon device or system **300** that includes a guide wire shaft or other outer tubular member including a proximal end **303**, a distal end terminating in a substantially non traumatic distal tip **301**, and a balloon or other expandable member **302** carried on the distal end. The balloon **302** may be formed from a soft membrane **304**, for example, to provide a compliant balloon. The balloon **302** communicates with an internal guide wire lumen **320** of the guide wire shaft, for example, via one or more inflation ports **305** in a side wall of the tubular member. Optionally, an internal wire may be provided within the guide wire shaft, for example, within the lumen **320**, to stiffen, straighten, or otherwise support the distal end or the entire length of the guide wire shaft. The internal wire may be smaller than the lumen **320**, as shown, for example, to accommodate fluid delivery through the lumen **320** around the internal wire. Optionally, the distal tip **301** may include a "J" tip and/or other features (not shown) beyond the balloon **302**, similar to conventional guide wires, if desired.

[0083] The proximal (extra-corporeal) end **303** of the guide wire device **120** may be connected to an inflation device (not shown) for balloon inflation and deflation. In addition, the proximal end **303** may have an integrated flow regulator (valve) system designed to maintain balloon **302** inflation/deflation state, for example, when inflation device is disconnected, such as the embodiments described elsewhere herein and/or in the applications incorporated by reference herein.

[0084] Turning to FIGS. 4A and 4B, an exemplary embodiment of a fluid regulator (valve) system is shown that includes an internal piston **309** that may be directed to sealingly engage and disengage an internal valve **307** within the proximal end **303** of the guide wire shaft, for example, when piston shaft **308** is moved axially relative to the guide wire shaft. For example, as shown in FIG. 4A, the piston shaft **308** may be advanced distally until the piston **309** engages the valve **307** in a distal position. Thus, in the distal position, the lumen **320** of the guide wire shaft may be substantially sealed, for example, after delivering sufficient fluid into the lumen **320** to inflate the balloon **302**. Conversely, as shown in FIG. 4B, the piston shaft **308** may be retracted proximally until the piston **309** reaches a proximal position proximal to an outlet or side port **306** in a side wall of the proximal end **303** of the tubular member. The internal lumen **320** may communicate with the external environment adjacent the proximal end **303** through

the outlet 306 when the piston shaft 308 is retracted to the proximal position such that fluid may be delivered into or evacuated from the lumen 320, for example, to inflate or deflate the balloon 302 (not shown). Optionally, a low profile plunger (not shown) may be provided on the proximal end of the piston shaft 308 outside the proximal end of the guide wire shaft to facilitate actuation of the valve system. Alternatively, a cap (not shown) similar to other embodiments herein may be provided on the proximal end of the guide wire shaft that is coupled to the piston shaft 308. The cap may have a profile small enough to accommodate advancing supplementary devices (not shown) over the cap onto the guide wire shaft. For example, the proximal end of the guide wire shaft may be smaller than the adjacent length of the guide wire shaft such that the cap provides a substantially uniform outer diameter ("O.D.") on the guide wire device.

[0085] Turning to FIGS. 5A and 5B another embodiment of a fluid regulator (valve) system is shown that may be provided on the proximal end 303 of a guide wire device, such as device 300 described above. In this embodiment, the internal piston 308 is driven by a spring 310, for example, a tension spring, which, in a substantially relaxed or relatively lower energy position (FIG. 5A) maintains a substantially sealed and/or closed fluid regulator (valve) system. As shown in FIG. 5B, when the piston 308 is moved distally relative to the guide wire shaft, the internal valve 307 may be opened to allow communication between the internal lumen 320 and the external environment of the guide wire device through outlet or side port 306. When the piston shaft is advanced distally to open the valve 307, the spring 310 may be subjected to increased tension such that, when the piston shaft is released, the piston shaft may resiliently retract proximally to engage the piston 308 with the valve 307 to automatically seal the lumen 320, for example, after inflating or deflating the balloon (not shown), similar to the previous embodiments.

[0086] FIGS. 6A and 6B show yet another embodiment of a fluid regulator (valve) system that may be provided on a guide wire device, such as any of the embodiments herein, whereby an external cap 312 covers the outlet or side port 306 that communicates between the guide wire internal lumen 320 and the external environment of the guide wire device 300. The cap 312 may be moved relative to the outlet 306, for example, between a proximal position (shown in FIG. 6A) and a distal position (shown in FIG. 6B) to open and substantially seal the outlet 306, for example, to allow fluid to be delivered into and evacuated from the lumen 320, similar to the previous embodiments.

[0087] Turning to FIGS. 7A and 7B, still another embodiment of a fluid regulator (valve) system is shown that may be provided on a balloon guide wire device. Unlike the previous embodiments, the system includes an internal valve element 307 and an external valve element 306, which are operatively (serially) connected such that a single actuation step may open both valves (as shown in FIG. 7A) or close them (as shown in FIG. 7B). Such a combination of valves may assure that flow within wire's internal lumen 320 is controlled to maintain a desired balloon inflation state.

[0088] In certain embodiments, devices and methods described herein may be compatible with existing devices and work-flow, for example, such that the guide wire device may be the last device to be removed from the target artery. Therapeutic device exchanges may be possible while vascular complications are stabilized endovascularly with a balloon. This may be especially significant, for example, if bleeding occurs

at vascular segments that are inaccessible for manual compression (for example, the iliac artery, the proximal femoral artery, specific patient anatomy, etc.).

[0089] In certain clinical scenarios, there might be a need for the guide wire device to be introduced before or during sheath advancement, i.e. through devices with true wire lumens. Therefore, in some embodiments, the guide wire device may have a uniform diameter over the entire length including the inflatable segment and the distal tip.

[0090] The devices and methods described herein may also ensure that access to the true lumen of the target vessel is maintained, when vascular complications are anticipated, but before they are encountered.

[0091] In some embodiments, the devices and methods described herein may facilitate an ipsilateral approach, for example, for better device control and improved blood loss management.

[0092] In certain clinical scenarios, it may be necessary to obtain angiographic guidance during insertion/withdrawal/maneuver of the guide wire device. Therefore, the guide wire device could incorporate mechanisms allowing for contrast injection at or close to the distal tip of the device. Such mechanisms may include channels, valves, and orifices for contrast injection. Alternatively, a custom sheath could be used in conjunction with the guide wire device. Such a custom sheath may be sufficiently dimensioned for housing the guide wire device and allowing for simultaneous contrast flow. The custom sheath may be equipped with a contrast injection port and an extracorporeal valve that prevents contrast back-flow during injection.

[0093] In special clinical scenarios, it may also be useful to assess intravascular pressure, flow, temperature, general morphology, or other properties of the anatomy encountered, for example, to interrogate a special condition beyond angiography. In one embodiment, the guide wire device or system may include elements providing physiological or image data during operation. These elements may include one or more pressure, flow and/or temperature sensors, and/or ultrasound, light, infrared, or other imaging elements. Additionally, one or more features may be provided for assessing intravascular dimensions, including balloon inflation dimension and/or pressure, for example, for estimating vessel sizes, and/or for targeting a specific inflation threshold.

[0094] The devices and systems herein may also have characteristics that allow it to be integrated into a robotic vascular surgery environment, such as the DaVinci system, the Zeus System, the Sensei system, etc.

[0095] In special scenarios, additional treatment to a body lumen or other target segment may be needed beyond balloon inflation. In one embodiment, the system may provide capabilities of local drug or agent or energy delivery through the guide wire system, for example, more desirably through the balloon.

[0096] In special scenarios, it may also be useful to provide a source of therapeutic and/or diagnostic agents, for example, including one or more devices for injection of agents about the target treatment area. For example, the system may include a syringe, pump, or other source for intravascular injection of agents. Such guide wire devices may include an extracorporeal injection port in the proximal end, an injection channel or other lumen, and/or a distal agent release port located in proximity to the balloon.

[0097] In certain clinical scenarios, the best therapy option is endovascular stent implantation. The guide wire device

may, thus, incorporate a stent delivery system that is readily available for treatment or in anticipation of vascular injuries.

[0098] The guide wire device may integrate additional lumens for introduction of therapeutic/diagnostic agents/devices. Alternatively, the guide wire system may be provided with a larger sheath that can be introduced over the wire, thereby forming a channel around the external surface of the wire.

[0099] In cases where prolonged flow occlusion is desired, it may be useful to provide simultaneous occlusion of a target region, and perfusion of distal regions. Therefore, the guide wire device or system may include tissue perfusion across the balloon occlusion area. Such features may include perfusion channels in the shaft or balloon, for example, with appropriate ports, valves, and/or flow drivers.

[0100] In special clinical scenarios, it may be useful to isolate a specified segment of a body lumen for diagnostic or treatment purposes. In one embodiment, the guide wire system can be combined with a standard balloon catheter to create a double-balloon catheter system that is capable of isolating a targeted vessel or other bodily passages.

[0101] In certain embodiments, the balloon may provide an anchoring mechanism for the guide wire device, for example, such that over-the-wire device insertion is facilitated.

[0102] In certain embodiments, the occlusion balloon may be conforming to the lumen shape, and may grow axially/longitudinally during inflation. The balloon could exhibit varying wall thicknesses to provide preferential inflation shape. For example, thinner sections inflate first followed by thicker sections as the thin walled portions contact the vessel wall. The balloon could be corrugated by thicker wall sections or Kevlar inflation restrictions to mitigate pressure on the vessel wall.

[0103] In some scenarios, balloon occlusion/inflation is required over long vascular segments. One embodiment could incorporate a device shaft with multiple balloon units that collectively cover a longer vascular segment. The balloon units could be collectively or individually connected to the same/multiple inflation system(s).

[0104] In certain clinical scenarios, balloon dilatation might be required. The guide wire balloon device could incorporate a balloon that fulfills occlusion and dilatation function.

[0105] In one embodiment, the guide wire device could be a closed system with balloon inflation agent stored inside a sealed tubing system. Collapse (or expansion) of the internal lumen of the tubing system would move the fluid into (or away) from the balloon thereby causing balloon inflation (or deflation). This embodiment foresees a tubing system that is not in communication with the external surface and has a pre-installed balloon inflation agent.

[0106] In special clinical scenarios, it may be desirable to have a system for facilitating device insertion through tortuous vascular segments. For example, it might be desirable to have a guide wire device or system that includes a flexible tip designed for retrograde insertion and a stiffer shaft proximal to the tip designed for facilitating over-the-wire device insertion through tortuous segments.

[0107] In certain clinical scenarios, vessel tortuosity may require straightening in order to ease device (sheath) insertion/retraction. The guide wire device could have a stiff shaft capable of non-traumatic straightening originally tortuous vessel. The stiffness could vary along the length. The distal section should be flexible and atraumatic.

[0108] In certain clinical scenarios, vessel tortuosity may require intravascular shape change of the distal tip. The proposed system may integrate steerability mechanisms that allow for temporary shape change of individual segments of the device.

[0109] Referring now to FIG. 8, in certain clinical scenarios, the target treatment segment may be rigid and/or tortuous and may not respond to straightening attempts. Therefore, it would be desirable for the balloon to adapt to vessel tortuosity. In one embodiment, the inflatable segment (i.e., the portion of the device 300 along which the balloon 302 is mounted) may include a more flexible, distal segment 340 (or joint), which allows for the inflatable segment to bend and provide flexibility, and a less flexible, proximal segment 330. The flexible segment 340 will not impact the balloon inflation functionality.

[0110] Referring now to FIGS. 9A-9L, in certain clinical scenarios, insertion or advancement of the guide wire device requires a minimum of catheter shaft back-bone support (stiffness). This guide wire characteristic is required for segments of the guide wire device such as the device shaft and the proximal part of the distal tip. FIGS. 9A-9L illustrate the stiffness characteristics of the balloon segment 212a-212l relative to the stiffness proximal and distal to the balloon segment 212a-212l, according to various alternative embodiments of the guide wire device. The stiffness/flexibility along each embodiment is designated, from a proximal end 205a-205l to a distal end 219a-219l. In the graphs, the upward direction designates more stiffness (i.e., less flexibility), and the lower direction designates less stiffness (i.e., more flexibility). In all the embodiments shown, the balloon segment 212a-212l may be described as a transition zone or transition segment between a proximal portion and a distal portion. Also, in all embodiments, there is a drop-off in stiffness (increased flexibility) in the balloon segment 212a-212l relative to the proximal portion. In some embodiments, such as those shown in FIGS. 9A-9D and 9G-9J, flexibility is greater in the balloon segments 212a-212d, 212g-212j of the guide wire devices than in the areas of the devices immediately proximal and distal to the balloon segments 212a-212d, 212g-212j. In alternative embodiments, such as those shown in FIGS. 9E, 9F, 9K and 9L, flexibility is greater in the balloon segments 212e, 212f, 212k, 212l of the guide wire devices than in the areas of the devices immediately proximal to the balloon segments 212e, 212f, 212k, 212l, but the portions of the devices immediately distal to the balloon segments 212e, 212f, 212k, 212l are either as flexible as, or more flexible than, the balloon segments 212e, 212f, 212k, 212l. In other alternative embodiments, other flexibility profiles may be possible. In general, however, it may be advantageous to have a balloon segment 212a-212l of a guide wire device that is positioned between a relatively proximal portion and a relatively stiff distal section, where the balloon segment 212a-212l is more flexible than at least the proximal portion.

[0111] In some embodiments, the removable inflation handle may integrate a torque system that provides torqueing of the guide wire device during operation if desired.

[0112] Referring now to FIG. 10, in certain clinical scenarios, it is necessary to provide occlusion at the level of the femoral arteriotomy 900, for example with an inflatable occlusion balloon 302 of a guide wire balloon device 300, while maintaining position of the distal tip 301 of the device 300 in the aorta 101. It is therefore desirable for the distal end 311 of the device 300 to be of sufficient length to extend

through the iliofemoral **100** segment and be safely positioned (during femoral occlusion) in the aorta **101**, as shown in FIG. **10**. In one embodiment of the guide wire device **300**, the outer diameter of the device **300** may be between about 0.014 and about 0.038 inches. In one embodiment, the length of the distal tip **311** of the device **300** may be between about 20 cm and about 50 cm. Optionally, the distal tip **311** may include a J-tip **301**, as shown, and/or other features (not shown) beyond the balloon **302**, similar to conventional guide wires, if desired.

[0113] As shown in FIG. **11**, in certain embodiments, a distal portion and/or balloon portion **123** of the guide wire device **120** may be capable of bending at sites of procedural bends such as the site of percutaneous catheter insertion. The embodiment shown in FIG. **11** may have a similar “flexibility profile” to those shown in FIGS. **9A-9E**, where the portion of the device **120** between the proximal and distal ends of the balloon **122** is more flexible than the shaft of the device **120** immediately proximal and immediately distal to the balloon.

[0114] Referring now to FIG. **11**, several catheter characteristics such as pushability, trackability, and adaptability to vessel tortuosities are directly related to stiffness patterns of the catheter along its shaft. To determine the appropriate stiffness patterns for the guide wire device described herein, the following experiment was performed. The device disclosed herein was compared to the Guardwire balloon system (Medtronic PercuSurge, 0.014”) and the Guideright guide wire (St. Jude, 0.038”). Each device was inserted into a catheter fixture, and the region of interest was aligned with the fixture. After the Instron was calibrated with regard to push force, deflection, and position, the Instron was advanced to cause a 5 mm deflection at the region of interest. Deflection force (LbF, N) and position of deflection (distance from inflatable segment) were recorded. The procedure was then repeated for each additional region of interest. The experimental results are illustrated in FIG. **12**, where the solid line **910** represents the flexibility profile of the exemplary embodiment of the device **120** described herein, the dashed line **912** represents the profile of the Guardwire device, and the dashed line **914** represents the profile of the Guideright device.

[0115] Two catheters, the guide wire device disclosed herein and Guardwire, showed comparable stiffness profiles at the distal tip. The guide wire device, however, showed a different stiffness profile marked by the segmental decrease in stiffness at the balloon segment (position 0) relative to the proximal catheter shaft and the distal tip. This functionality lends a special flexibility feature to the balloon and allows for balloon occlusion at sites of significant tortuosity (where complications are expected), and/or at sites of procedure induced bends (such as transitions from tissue tract into arteriotomy).

[0116] Referring now to FIGS. **13**, **14A** and **14B**, the utility of the guide wire device was successfully tested in the sheep and showed that the intended design of decreased stiffness at the balloon segment allowed for balloon occlusion at sites of significant tortuosity (where complications are expected), and/or at sites of procedure induced bends (such as transitions from tissue tract into arteriotomy). FIG. **13** shows an angiogram of the sheep femoral artery at the site of 18Fr arteriotomy, showing the guide wire device’s ability to occlude blood (contrast) flow at the site of percutaneous catheter insertion (arteriotomy). FIG. **14B** is an angiographic image showing a clinical scenario where an occlusion at the femoral

arteriotomy is required. In this scenario, as shown in FIG. **14A**, it would be desirable for the J-tip of the distal tip to be of sufficient length to extend through the iliofemoral segment and be safely positioned (during femoral occlusion) in the aorta.

[0117] Referring now to FIG. **15**, in another embodiment, a guide wire balloon system **200** (or “guide wire system”) for providing blood vessel occlusion, blood vessel injury stabilization and/or a device along which one or more treatment devices may be introduced during or after a large bore or other intravascular procedure may include a guide wire device **202** (or “guide wire balloon device”) and an inflation device **222**. Optionally, the system **200** may also include an inflation medium container/injection device (not shown), such as but not limited to a syringe, a pump or the like. The guide wire device **202** extends from a hubless proximal end **205** to a distal end **219** and includes an expandable member such as an inflatable balloon **220** closer to the distal end **219** than the proximal end **205**. The guide wire device **202** may be described as having a valve portion **204** (or “proximal portion”), a middle portion **210**, a balloon portion **212** (or “transition portion”, “transition section” or “transition zone”) and a flexible tip **216** (or “J-tip,” “distal tip” or “distal portion”). These designations of the various portions of the guide wire device **202** are made for descriptive purposes only and do not necessarily connote specific demarcations or mechanical differences between the various portions, although in some embodiments, the various portions may have one or more unique characteristics.

[0118] The guide wire device **202** may further include a shaft **206** that extends from the valve portion **204** of the guide wire device **202** to at least a proximal end of the balloon **220**. In one embodiment, the shaft **206** may be a hypotube, made of Nitinol, stainless steel, or some other metal, and may include a spiral cut **211** along part of its length to increase flexibility, as will be described in greater detail below. Inside the shaft **206**, within the valve portion **204**, there may reside an inflation hypotube **207** (or “inner tube”) with an inflation port **209**, through which inflation fluid may be introduced. A valve cap **203** may be slidably disposed over the proximal end of the inflation hypotube **207**, such that it may be moved proximally and distally to close and open, respectively, the inflation port **209**. As best seen in the bottom magnified view of FIG. **15**, a core wire **208** may be disposed within the shaft **206** along at least part of the middle portion **210** and may extend through the balloon portion **212** and in some embodiments through at least part of the distal tip portion **216**. A coil **214** may be wrapped around part of the core wire **208** and may also extend beyond the core wire **208** to the extreme distal end **219**. Various aspects and features of the shaft **206**, inflation hypotube **207**, core wire **208**, coil **214**, etc. will be described in further detail below.

[0119] The inflation device **222**, which is also described in more detail below, may generally include a handle **224**, a wire lumen **226** for inserting the guide wire device **202**, and a locking inflation port **228**. The handle **224** may be movable from a first position in which the guide wire device **202** may be inserted into the lumen **226** to a second position in which the handle **224** locks onto the shaft **206** and the valve cap **203**. The handle may also be moveable from a valve-open position, in which inflation fluid may be passed into the inflation port **209** of the guide wire device **202**, to a valve-closed position, in which the inflation fluid is trapped inside the balloon **220**

and guide wire device **202**. These positions and other aspects of a method for using the inflation device **222** will be described further below.

[0120] In one embodiment, the guide wire device **202** may have varying amounts of stiffness along its length, typically being stiffest at the proximal end **205** and most flexible at the distal end **219**. The proximal/valve portion **204** and a proximal portion of the middle portion **210** of the guide wire device **202** are typically the stiffest portions of the device and will have sufficient stiffness to allow the device **202** to be advanced through a sheath and into a blood vessel, typically against the direction of blood flow (i.e., retrograde advancement). Along the middle portion **210**, the device **202** may be relatively stiff at a most proximal end and quite flexible at a distal end (within, or adjacent the proximal end of, the balloon **220**). This change in stiffness/flexibility may be achieved using any of a number of suitable mechanical means. In the embodiment shown, for example, the shaft **206** includes a spiral cut **211** along its length, where the spacing between the cuts becomes gradually less along the middle portion **210** from proximal to distal. In other words, the “threads” of the spiral cut are closer together distally. In alternative embodiments, increasing flexibility of the shaft **206** from proximal to distal may be achieved by other means, such as gradually thinning the wall thickness of the shaft, using different materials along the length of the shaft or the like.

[0121] In the embodiment of FIG. **15**, the spiral cut **211** may be configured such that the shaft **206** has a relatively constant stiffness along a the valve portion **204** and a proximal part of the middle portion **210**. As the shaft **206** approaches the proximal end of the balloon **220**, the stiffness may fall off abruptly. In other words, the stiff shaft **206** has a significant drop-off in stiffness immediately proximal to the balloon **220**. This type of stiffness/flexibility profile is in direct contrast to the typical prior art balloon catheter, which simply becomes more flexible at a gradual, consistent rate over its length. The unique stiffness profile of the guide wire device **202** may be advantageous, because maintaining significant stiffness along most of a proximal length of the device **202** provides for enhanced pushability against blood flow, while a significantly more flexible portion immediately proximal to, within, and distal to the balloon **220** will help to prevent injury to the vessel through which the device **202** is being advanced. A stiffer proximal portion **204** and middle portion **210** may also help temporarily straighten out a tortuous blood vessel, which may facilitate stabilizing and/or treating an injury in the vessel.

[0122] The top portion of FIG. **15** is a close up of the balloon section **212** of the guide wire device **202**, with the balloon **220** removed. In this embodiment, the shaft **206** extends into a portion of the balloon section **212**, with the spiral cut getting tighter, and then ends, leaving a small portion of the core wire **208** exposed. Inflation fluid exits from the distal end of the shaft **206** to inflate the balloon **220**. The shaft **206** thus forms an inflation lumen (not visible in FIG. **15**), and in the embodiment with the spiral cut **211**, a coating or sleeve may be used to seal the shaft **206** to prevent inflation fluid from escaping the shaft **206** through the spiral cut **211**. For example, a polymeric coating may be used, such as a shrink wrap coating, sprayed-on coating, dip coating, or the like. In alternative embodiments, the shaft **206** may end at the proximal end of the balloon **206** or may continue through the entire length of the balloon **220** and include one or more inflation ports in its sidewall. A distal portion of the core wire

208 is wrapped by the core wire **214**. In these or other alternative embodiments, core wire **214** may stop at a distal end of the balloon **220** or alternatively extend all the way through the balloon **220**. A number of various embodiments of the balloon section **212** will be described below in greater detail.

[0123] Referring now to the bottom close-up of FIG. **15**, the core wire **208** may, in some embodiments, have a varying diameter at one or more points along its length. In alternative embodiments, it may have a continuous diameter. In the embodiment shown, for example, the core wire **208** has a relatively small diameter proximally, widens to a wider diameter, widens again to a widest diameter, and contracts gradually to a smallest diameter the flexible, J-tip portion **216**. As will be described in greater detail below, the proximal end of the core wire **208** (not visible in FIG. **15**) may also be widened, flattened or otherwise shaped to facilitate attaching the proximal end to an inner wall of the shaft **206** via gluing, welding, soldering or the like. The widest diameter section of the core wire **208**, in this embodiment, is located where the distal end of the balloon **220** is mounted onto the core wire **208**. This widest portion thus helps provide strength at an area of stress of the device **202**. In some embodiments, the proximal end of the core wire **208** is attached to an inner surface of the shaft **206** by any suitable means, such as by welding, soldering, gluing or the like. In some embodiments, the attachment point of the core wire **208** to the shaft **206** is proximal to the area along the shaft **206** where the spiral cut **211** begins. Alternatively, the core wire **208** may be attached at any other suitable location.

[0124] As illustrated in the bottom close-up of FIG. **15**, in one embodiment, the diameter of the core wire **208** gets smaller and smaller distally along the length of the flexible J-tip portion **216**, thus forming the most flexible, J-curved, distal portion of the guide wire device **202**. In alternative embodiments, the core wire **208** may end proximal to the extreme distal end **219** of the guide wire device **202**, and the coil **214** may continue to the distal end **219**. In other alternative embodiments, the distal tip **216** may be straight, may include two core wires **208**, may include more than two core wires **208**, may be straightenable and/or the like. In the embodiment shown, the core wire includes a flat portion through the curve of the J-shape of the tip **216** and is attached to the coil **214** at the distal end **219** via a weld (or “weld ball”). The distal, curved portion of the J-tip is designed to be atraumatic to blood vessels through which it is advanced, due to its flexibility and shape.

[0125] The distal J-tip **216** of the guide wire device **202** may include special properties and/or features allowing for retrograde (against blood flow) insertion, maneuvering, and/or placement. For example, the “J-tip” shape of the distal tip **216** allows it to be advanced against blood flow without accidentally advancing into and damaging an arterial wall. Additionally, the distal tip **216** has a proximal portion through which the core wire **208** extends and a distal portion that is more flexible and includes only the coil **214**. This provides for a slightly stiffer (though still relatively flexible) proximal portion of distal tip **216** and a more flexible (or “floppy”) distal portion of distal tip **216**, thus providing sufficient pushability while remaining atraumatic. The extreme distal end **219** may also have a blunt, atraumatic configuration, as shown. In various embodiments, the distal tip **216** may also include a tip configuration, flexibility, radiopacity, rail support, core material, coating, and/or extension characteristics

that enhance its function. Alternatively or in addition, device length considerations and/or overall shaft stiffness may be modified accordingly.

[0126] The core wire **208**, the shaft **206** and the coil **214** may be made of any of a number of suitable materials, including but not limited to stainless steel, Nitinol, other metals and/or polymers. Each of these components may also have any suitable size and dimensions. For example, in one embodiment, the shaft **206** has an outer diameter of approximately 0.035 inches (approximately 0.9 mm). The guide wire device **202** may also have any suitable overall length as well as lengths of its various parts. Generally, the distal tip **216** will have a length that allows it to extend into an aorta when the balloon is inflated anywhere within an iliofemoral artery. In other words, the distal tip **216** may be at least approximately as long as the average iliofemoral artery. In various embodiments, for example, the distal tip **216** (measured from the distal end **219** of the device **202** to a distal end of the balloon **220**) may be at least about 15 cm long, and more preferably at least about 20 cm long, and even more preferably between about 20 cm and about 25 cm long, or in one embodiment about 23 cm long. In various embodiments, the balloon section **212** of the device **202** may have a length of between about 10 mm and about 15 mm, or in one embodiment about 12 mm. In various embodiment, the middle section **210** of the device **202** may have a length of between about 70 cm and about 90 cm, and more preferably between about 75 cm and about 85 cm, or in one embodiment about 80 cm. And finally, in some embodiments, the valve section **204** may have a length of between about 10 cm and about 3 mm, or in one embodiment about 5 cm. Therefore, in some embodiments, the overall length of the device **202** might be between about 85 cm and about 125 cm, and more preferably between about 95 and about 115 cm, and even more preferably between about 105 cm and about 110 cm. Of course, other lengths for the various sections and for the device **202** overall are possible. For example, in some embodiments, the distal tip **216** may be longer than 25 cm, and in various embodiments, the overall length of the guide wire device **202** may range from may be longer than 115 cm. It may be advantageous, however, for ease of use and handling, to give the guide wire device **202** an overall length that is shorter than most currently available catheter devices. For an ipsilateral approach, the device **202** should generally have a length such that it is possible for the proximal portion **204** to extend at least partially out of the patient with the balloon **220** positioned within the iliofemoral artery and the distal end **219** residing in the aorta.

[0127] The balloon **220** of the guide wire balloon device **202** is generally a compliant balloon made of any suitable polymeric material, such as polyethylene terephthalate (PET), nylon, polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) or the like. The balloon **220** may be inflatable to any suitable diameter outside and inside the body. In one embodiment, for example, the balloon **220** may be inflatable within a blood vessel to a diameter of between about 6 mm and about 12 mm. In alternative embodiments, the balloon **220** may be semi-compliant or noncompliant. In some embodiments, the balloon **220** and/or portions of the device **202** immediately proximal and distal to the balloon **220** may include one or more radiopaque markers, to facilitate visualization of the balloon outside a patient's body using radiographic imaging techniques and thus facilitate placement of the balloon **220** in a desired location. The balloon **220** may be inflated, according to various

embodiments, by any suitable inflation fluid, such as but not limited to saline, contrast solution, water and air.

[0128] With reference now to FIG. 16, the guide wire balloon system **200** is shown in kit form, with one embodiment of a packaging component. The guide wire device **202** and inflation device **222** are shown, along with a guide wire balloon packaging card **230**, a syringe **232** (for example 10 mL syringe with clips) for inflating the balloon **220**, and a guide wire balloon sheath valve introducer **234**. The sheath valve introducer **234** is generally a funnel-shaped device for facilitating introduction of the J-tip **216** into a vascular sheath through which the device **202** is to be introduced. In various embodiments, the system **200** or kit may include fewer or more components.

[0129] Referring now to FIGS. 17A-17D, further details of the guide wire device **202** are shown. FIG. 17A shows the entire length of the guide wire device **202**, though it may not be drawn to scale. FIG. 17B shows a close-up view of the J-tip portion **216**, including the core wire **208**, coil **214** and distal end **219**. For simplicity, the core wire **208** is shown as transitioning from a larger diameter proximally to a smaller, constant diameter distally. Alternatively, however, the core wire **208** may transition to a gradually smaller and smaller diameter distally.

[0130] FIGS. 17C and 17D show the inner workings of one embodiment of the valve portion **204**. As mentioned previously, in at least some embodiments, the proximal end **205** and valve/proximal portion **204** of the guide wire device **202** are hubless, meaning that no hub or other obstruction is located on these portions to interfere with the advancement of one or more additional devices over the proximal end **205**. The inflation device **222** is, of course, attached to inflate or deflate the balloon **220**, but once the balloon **220** is inflated, the inflation device **222** may be removed, leaving the balloon **220** inflated and the proximal end **205** (located outside the patient's body) free for advancement of one or more additional devices.

[0131] In the embodiment shown, the valve portion **204** includes a proximal portion of the shaft **206**, which forms an inflation lumen **213**, and the valve cap **203**, which is slidably disposed over the inflation hypotube **207** and abuts the proximal end of the shaft **206**. In this embodiment, the valve cap **203** has a different wall thickness than that of the shaft **206**. The valve cap **203** may be made of the same material as the shaft **206** or, in alternative embodiments, a different material, such as but not limited to Nitinol, stainless steel, other metals or polymers. The inflation hypotube **207**, which is fixedly attached to an inner surface of the proximal end of the shaft **206**, may also be made of Nitinol, stainless steel or any other suitable material, and may be the same material as the shaft **206** and the valve cap **203** in one embodiment. The inflation hypotube **207** also includes the inflation port **209**, as described previously. In one embodiment, a silicone ring **241** (or "coating") may be positioned on an inner surface of the valve cap **203** at or near its distal end. The silicone ring **241** may form a seal between the valve cap **203** and the inflation hypotube **207**, thus preventing the escape of inflation fluid between the two.

[0132] The valve portion **204** may also include a proximal end cover **246** attached to the proximal end **205** of the valve cap **203**. A post **242** (or "wire") may be attached to the proximal end cover **246**, and a flow regulator **240** may be attached to the post **242**. Finally, the valve portion **204** may also include a stop member **244** on an inside surface of the

inflation hypotube 207 at or near its proximal end. The stop member 244 may stop the flow regulator 240 from being drawn too far proximally and thus being pulled out of the inflation hypotube 207.

[0133] These components of the valve portion 204 effectively form a two-part valve, where inflation fluid is blocked from escaping externally by the valve cap 203 and is blocked internally by the flow regulator 240. The valve portion 204 may work as follows. Referring to FIG. 17C, to close the valve, the valve cap 203 is advanced distally to cover the inflation port 209 and abut the proximal end of the shaft 206. In this valve-closed configuration, the flow regulator 240 is positioned distal to the inflation port 209, thus blocking inflation fluid from entering the inflation hypotube 207 from the inflation lumen 213. Thus, again, inflation fluid is prevented from entering or exiting the inflation lumen 213 by the flow regulator 240 and the valve cap 203.

[0134] Referring now to FIG. 17D, to open the valve, the valve cap 203 may be moved proximally to expose the inflation port 209 and to move the flow regulator 240 proximal to the inflation port 209. At this point, with the valve portion 204 in the valve-open position, the inflation device 222 may be used to pass contrast solution, saline solution, air, water or other inflation medium through the inflation port 209 and into the inflation lumen 213 of the shaft 206 to inflate the balloon 220. When the balloon 220 is inflated, the valve cap 203 may be once again advanced distally to the valve-closed position, thus covering the inflation port 209 and blocking the inflation hypotube 207 with the flow regulator 240. If desired, the inflation device 222 may then be removed from the guide wire device 202, and one or more therapeutic devices may be passed over the hubless proximal end 205 of the device 202. In one embodiment, the inflation device 222 may be used to advance and retract the valve cap 203, as will be described further below.

[0135] Referring to FIGS. 18-25, balloon segments of various alternative embodiments of guide wire balloon devices are shown. In general, in all the embodiments described in FIGS. 18-25, various structural configurations are included to provide a desired flexibility/stiffness profile immediately proximal to the balloon, between the two ends of the balloon, and immediately distal to the balloon. In the embodiment shown in FIG. 18, for example, the balloon segment 212 includes a balloon 220, an shaft 206 proximal to the balloon 220, an extension 227 extending distally from the shaft 206 and on which the balloon 220 is mounted, a core wire 208 extending through the extension 227 and attached to the shaft 206 via an attachment member 242, and a coil 214 wrapped around the core wire 208 and a portion of the extension 227. The extension 227 fits within the distal end of the shaft 206. The balloon 220 may be mounted to the extension 227 via one or more threads 224 and epoxy 246 or other form of adhesive. The extension 227 includes a spiral cut 211, which increases its flexibility. The core wire 208 may have a varying diameter along its length, for example a widened section to close off the inner lumen of the extension 227 to prevent air or other inflation fluid from escaping distally out of the balloon 220. The proximal end of the core wire 208 may be attached to the shaft 206 by any suitable attachment member 242 or attachment means. For example, attachment member 242 may be a weld, glue, other adhesive, anchor or the like.

[0136] With reference to FIG. 19, in an alternative embodiment, a balloon segment 412 of a guide wire balloon device may include a balloon 420, a shaft 406, a core wire 408 with

a thinner balloon section 408' and a coil 414 around at least part of the core wire 408. The shaft 406 may, for example, be a hypotube. A flattened proximal end of the core wire 408 may be attached to the shaft 406 by any suitable means, such as welding, gluing, soldering or the like. Coil 414 provides extra support to the balloon segment 412.

[0137] In another alternative embodiment, and with reference now to FIG. 20, a balloon segment 442 of a guide wire balloon device may include a balloon 440, a shaft 446, a core wire 448 with a thinner balloon section 448' and a coil 444 around at least part of the core wire 448. In this embodiment, the thinner balloon section 448' may include a bend 450 (or fold), which may help provide stress relief when the balloon segment 442 is bent during use. A flattened proximal end of the core wire 448 may be attached to the shaft 446 by any suitable means, such as welding, gluing, soldering or the like. Coil 444 provides extra support to the balloon segment 442.

[0138] Referring to FIG. 21, in another alternative embodiment, a balloon segment 462 of a guide wire balloon device may include a balloon 460, a shaft 466, a core wire 468 with a thinner balloon section 468' and a coil 464 around at least part of the core wire 468. In this embodiment, a proximal end of the core wire 468, which may be part of the thinner balloon section 468', may include (or be attached to) a ball-shaped member 470. Shaft 466 may include an inward facing stop member 472. Together, the ball-shaped member 470 and the stop member 472 act as a joint, allowing the balloon segment to flex at the joint and thus accommodate bending during use. Coil 464 provides extra support to the balloon segment 462.

[0139] Referring to FIG. 22, in another alternative embodiment, a balloon segment 482 of a guide wire balloon device may include a balloon 480, a shaft 486, a core wire 488 with a thinner balloon section 488' and a coil 484 around at least part of the core wire 488. In this embodiment, a proximal end of the core wire 488" may be flattened to facilitate attachment to shaft 486 via welding, gluing, soldering or the like. The thinner balloon section 488' may continue up to the proximal end 488". Coil 484 provides extra support to the balloon segment 482.

[0140] Referring to FIG. 23, in another alternative embodiment, a balloon segment 502 of a guide wire balloon device may include a balloon 500, a shaft 506, a core wire 508 with a thinner balloon section 508' and a coil 504 around at least part of the core wire 508. In this embodiment, as in the previously described embodiment, a proximal end of the core wire 508" may be flattened to facilitate attachment to shaft 506 via welding, gluing, soldering or the like. The thinner balloon section 508' may continue up to the proximal end 508". Unlike the previous embodiment, in this embodiment, the thinner balloon section 508' is not covered with the coil 504. This will make the thinner balloon section 508' more flexible than in the previously described embodiment.

[0141] With reference now to FIG. 24, in yet another alternative embodiment, the balloon segment 522 may include a balloon 520, a shaft 526 having a spiral cut 527 along at least a portion of its length proximal to a proximal end of the balloon 520, a core wire 528 extending from the distal tip 536 and through the extension balloon segment 522 and attached to the shaft 526 proximally, and a coil 524 disposed over at least a portion of the core wire 528 distal to the balloon 520. The core wire 528 may include a thinner balloon section 528' underlying the balloon 520 and a flattened proximal end 528", which may facilitate attachment to the shaft 526 via welding, gluing, soldering or the like. As in most or all embodiments,

the shaft 526 forms an inflation lumen 530 for inflating the balloon 520. Due to the spiral cut 527, the shaft 526 will typically be coated or covered with a sheath, such as a polymeric coating or sheath, to prevent inflation fluid (air, saline, etc.) from leaking through spiral cut 527. The balloon 520 may be mounted to the shaft 526 proximally and to the core wire 528 distally via threads 534 and epoxy 532 or other form of adhesive.

[0142] Referring now to FIG. 25, in another alternative embodiment, the balloon segment 542 may include a balloon 540, a shaft 546 proximal to the balloon 540, an extension tube 556 extending distally from the shaft 206 and on which the balloon 540 is mounted, a core wire 548 extending through the extension 556 and attached to the shaft 546 via welding, gluing, soldering or the like of a flattened proximal end 548" to the shaft 546, and a coil 544 wrapped around a portion of the core wire 548 distal to the balloon 540. The extension tube 556 attaches to the proximal end of the shaft 546 by fitting around its outer surface. In one embodiment, the extension tube 556 may be made of polyamide or other flexible plastic. The balloon 540 may be mounted to the extension tube 556 via one or more threads 554 and epoxy 552 or other form of adhesive. The core wire 548 may have a varying diameter along its length, such as a thinner balloon section 548' and a wider proximal end 548". The wider proximal end 548" may be attached to the shaft 546 by any suitable attachment means.

[0143] The foregoing examples of balloon sections of various embodiments of a guide wire balloon device are provided for exemplary purposes only and should not be considered as an exhaustive list or as limiting the scope of the claims of this application. Various features and elements described above may be interchanged or eliminated and/or other features may be added in alternative embodiments.

[0144] Referring now to FIGS. 26A-26F, further detail of the inflation device 222 is shown. As shown in FIG. 26A, the inflation device 222 may include one or more markings 223, for example to show which direction the parts of the device 222 may be moved to release or secure the guide wire device, to open or close the valve, etc. As shown in FIG. 26B, the inflation device 222 may suitably include a high pressure luer 250a, 250b, extension tubing 252, O-ring seal 254, a handle body main portion 256, a handle body cap 258, a flared hypotube 260, a one-way stopcock/luer 262, a handle outer shell slider 264, a handle outer shell main portion 266, an outer shell pin 268, a handle luer cap 270, and a non-vented luer cap 272. In various alternative embodiments, one or more of these components may be changed, replaced with another like component, repositioned, etc., without departing from the scope of an inflation device as described in the claims. In various embodiments, the components of the inflation device 222 may be made of one or more polymers, metals or combinations thereof. Some or all of the various components will be described in further detail below, in relation to an exemplary method for using the device 222.

[0145] FIGS. 26C-26F are top, perspective, side and end-on views of the inflation device 222, respectively, according to one embodiment. The inflation device 222 may have any of a number of suitable configurations and dimensions. For example, it may be advantageous to have an inflation device 222 that can be easily held in one hand, so a user may use his/her other hand for holding a syringe or other inflation medium carrying/injecting device coupled with the inflation device 222. The inflation device 222 may also have a size

selected such that a user may grip the outer shell slider 264 with one hand and the outer shell main portion 266 with the other hand, to move the two portions 264, 266 away from and towards one another to open and close the valve of the guide wire balloon device. In some embodiments, for example, an outer diameter of the outer shell slider 264 may be between about 20 mm and about 30 mm, or more preferably between about 24 mm and about 25 mm. In some embodiments, the inflation device 222 may have an overall length from one end of the luer cap 270 to an opposite end of the non-vented luer cap 272 of between about 120 mm and about 150 mm, or more preferably between about 130 mm and about 140 mm. These and other dimensions may be different in alternative embodiments and are thus provided here for exemplary purposes only.

[0146] Referring now to FIGS. 27A and 27B, a method for using the inflation device 222, according to one embodiment, will be described. First, the proximal end of a guide wire balloon device (not shown in these figures) may be passed into the inflation device via the wire lumen 226 on the handle luer cap 270 (inflation port 226 visible in FIG. 15). In one embodiment, the proximal end of the guide wire device may be advanced into the inflation device 222 until it contacts a stop. To lock the inflation device 222 onto the guide wire device, the two slide members 250a, 250b that make up the high pressure luer 250a, 250b may be moved towards one another within the outer shell slider 264 and the outer shell main portion 266, as designated by the words "SECURE" and the accompanying arrows marked on the outer shell slider 264 and the outer shell main portion 266. Next, as in FIG. 27A, the outer shell slider 264 and outer shell main portion 266 may be moved apart from one another to open the valve of the guide wire balloon device (i.e., to expose the inflation port 209 shown in FIGS. 15, 17C and 17D). This may optionally be designated, for example, by markings 223, such as the "VALVE OPEN" marking and arrows shown in FIG. 26A. At this point (or, alternatively, at any time before this point), an inflation medium carrying and injection device, such as but not limited to a syringe, pump or the like, may be attached to the stopcock/luer 262, and inflation medium may be introduced into the guide wire to inflate the balloon. In some embodiments, for example, approximately 2-3 mL of diluted contrast solution (e.g., about 50% contrast and about 50% saline) may be used to inflate the balloon. In other embodiments, more or less fluid and/or some other fluid may be used, such as saline, undiluted contrast, water, air or the like.

[0147] Next, as illustrated in FIG. 27B, once the balloon of the guide wire device (or other expandable member) is inflated, the outer shell slider 264 and outer shell main portion 266 may be moved toward one another to close the valve of the guide wire balloon device, thus locking the inflation medium inside the balloon so that it maintains its inflated configuration. The slide members 250a, 250b of the high pressure luer 250a, 250b may next be moved away from one another to unlock the inflation device 222 from the guide wire device, and the inflation device 222 may then be removed from the guide wire device. At this point, the guide wire device has its balloon (or other expandable member) locked in the expanded/infused configuration and has a hubless proximal end, over which one or more additional devices (such as vessel treatment devices) may be passed.

[0148] Once a vascular repair procedure is complete, or whenever the user wants to deflate the balloon of the guide wire device, the user may reattach the inflation device 222 to

the guide wire device and repeat the steps outlined above, except that the inflation fluid is withdrawn instead of injected. This process may be repeated as many times as desired, for example to reposition the balloon of a guide wire balloon device within an iliofemoral artery, aorta and/or femoral artery one or more times.

[0149] Elements or components shown with any embodiment herein are exemplary for the specific embodiment and may be used on or in combination with other embodiments disclosed herein.

[0150] While the invention is susceptible to various modifications, and alternative forms, specific examples thereof have been shown in the drawings and are herein described in detail. It should be understood, however, that the invention is not to be limited to the particular forms or methods disclosed, but to the contrary, the invention is to cover all modifications, equivalents and alternatives thereof.

1. A method of reducing the risk of clinical sequelae to catheter induced vascular injuries, the method comprising:

introducing a guide wire into a vascular sheath residing in a blood vessel, the guide wire having a distal end and an inflatable balloon at least 5 cm proximal of the distal end;

proximally retracting the vascular sheath while leaving the wire in place;

observing indicia of the presence or absence of a vascular injury caused to the blood vessel by the vascular sheath or a procedural catheter previously advanced through the vascular sheath; and

if indicia of a vascular injury are observed:

proximally retracting the guide wire to position the inflatable balloon adjacent the injury; and

inflating the balloon to reduce blood flow past the injury, while leaving the guide wire in place to provide subsequent access to the injury.

2. A method as in claim 1, wherein, prior to the introducing step, the vascular sheath is used for performing an intravascular procedure selected from the group consisting of implantation of an aortic valve and abdominal aortic aneurysm repair.

3. A method as in claim 1, wherein observing indicia comprises observing contrast injected into the blood vessel using a radiographic imaging device.

4. A method as in claim 1, wherein the vascular sheath has an external diameter at least about 80 percent as large as an internal diameter of the blood vessel.

5. A method as in claim 1, wherein the vascular sheath is disposed in a femoral artery, wherein the inflatable balloon is at least 15 cm proximal of the distal end, and wherein introducing the guide wire comprises advancing a tip of the wire into an aorta.

6. A method as in claim 1, wherein inflating the balloon comprises inflating at a location of the vascular injury.

7. A method as in claim 1, wherein inflating the balloon comprises inflating at a location upstream of the vascular injury.

8. A method as in claim 1, further comprising:

removing the vascular sheath from the blood vessel;

forming at least a partial seal at a puncture site in the blood vessel through which the vascular sheath was removed from the blood vessel;

deflating the inflatable balloon of the guide wire; and

removing the guide wire from the blood vessel through the seal at the puncture site, wherein the seal closes around a small hole left in the seal when the guide wire is removed.

9. A method as in claim 1, further comprising:

introducing a vascular repair device over the guide wire; and

repairing the vascular injury using the vascular repair device.

10. A method as in claim 9, wherein the vascular repair device comprises a stent deployment catheter, and wherein repairing the vascular injury comprises placing a stent in the blood vessel.

11. A method of treating a patient, the method comprising: advancing a guide wire into a vascular sheath following an intravascular procedure, the guide wire comprising a distal end and a radially expandable structure spaced at least 5 cm proximally of the distal end;

proximally withdrawing the sheath;

evaluating the presence of a vascular injury caused by the sheath or a device introduced through the sheath; and

if a vascular injury is observed, repositioning the guide wire and expanding the radially expandable structure to stabilize the injury.

12. A method as in claim 11, wherein the vascular sheath is located in an iliofemoral artery, and wherein advancing the guide wire comprises advancing the wire through into the vascular sheath from outside the body.

13. A method as in claim 11, wherein the intravascular procedure comprises implantation of an aortic valve.

14. A method as in claim 11, wherein the intravascular procedure comprises an abdominal aortic aneurysm repair.

15. A method as in claim 11, wherein expanding the radially expandable structure comprises inflating a balloon.

16. A method as in claim 11, wherein expanding the radially expandable structure to stabilize the injury comprises reducing blood flow in an area around the vascular injury.

17. A method of treating a patient, the method comprising: introducing a guide wire into a blood vessel, the guide wire comprising a distal end and an inflatable balloon spaced at least 5 cm proximally of the balloon;

introducing an index procedure catheter over the wire; and conducting an index procedure proximally of the balloon.

18. A method as in claim 17, wherein the index procedure comprises implantation of an aortic valve.

19. A method as in claim 17, wherein the index procedure comprises an abdominal aortic aneurysm repair.

20. A method of reducing the risk of clinical sequelae to catheter induced vascular injuries, the method comprising:

introducing a guide wire into a vessel, the guide wire having a distal end and a radially enlargeable structure at least 5 cm proximal of the distal end;

advancing a procedure catheter along the wire; and

performing a procedure with the procedure catheter, such that if the procedure catheter or an access sheath used introduce the procedure catheter produces a vascular injury, the guide wire can be advanced or retracted to position the radially enlargeable structure adjacent the injury, and the structure can be radially enlarged to control the injury while leaving the guide wire in place to provide subsequent access to the injury.

21. A method as in claim 20, wherein the procedure catheter is an over the wire catheter.

22. A method as in claim 20, wherein the procedure catheter is a rapid exchange catheter.

23. A method as in claim 20, wherein the procedure comprises a heart valve repair.

24. A method as in claim 20, wherein the procedure comprises a heart valve replacement.

25. A method as in claim 20, wherein the procedure comprises implantation of an abdominal aortic aneurysm graft.

26. A method as in claim 20, wherein if a vascular injury is not observed, the guide wire is advanced or retracted without radially enlarging the radially enlargeable structure.

27. A method as in claim 20, wherein the radially enlargeable structure comprises an inflatable balloon.

28. A method as in claim 20, further comprising the step of evaluating the presence of a vascular perforation using Doppler ultrasound.

29. A method as in claim 20, further comprising the step of evaluating the presence of a vascular perforation using contrast injection.

30. A method as in claim 20, wherein a vascular perforation is observed, the radially enlargeable structure is enlarged to control the injury, and a repair catheter is advanced along the guide wire.

31. A method as in claim 30, wherein the repair catheter comprises a stent delivery catheter.

32. A method as in claim 30, wherein the repair catheter comprises a graft delivery catheter.

33. A method as in claim 20, wherein a vascular injury is observed, the radially enlargeable structure is enlarged to control the injury, and the injury is thereafter surgically repaired.

34. A method of treating a catheter induced vascular injury, the method comprising:

- advancing an inflatable balloon of a guide wire through a vascular sheath disposed in an iliofemoral artery, wherein the vascular sheath was used to perform a catheter based intravascular procedure;
- retracting the vascular sheath proximally;
- assessing the artery for injury;
- repositioning the guide wire within the artery;
- inflating the balloon to occlude the artery;
- removing an inflation device from the guide wire, wherein the balloon remains inflated after the inflation device is removed;
- advancing a vascular repair device over a proximal end of the guide wire;
- performing a repair procedure on the artery, using the repair device;
- removing the repair device over the guide wire;
- deflating the balloon using the inflation device; and
- removing the guide wire from the artery.

35. A method as in claim 34, wherein, prior to the advancing step, the vascular sheath was used for performing an intravascular procedure selected from the group consisting of implantation of an aortic valve and abdominal aortic aneurysm repair.

36. A method as in claim 34, wherein observing indicia comprises observing contrast injected into the artery using a radiographic imaging device.

37. A method as in claim 34, wherein the vascular sheath is disposed in a femoral artery, wherein the inflatable balloon is at least 15 cm proximal of a distal end of the guide wire, and wherein advancing the guide wire comprises advancing a tip of the wire into an aorta.

38. A method as in claim 34, wherein inflating the balloon comprises inflating at a location of the vascular injury.

39. A method as in claim 34, wherein inflating the balloon comprises inflating at a location upstream of the vascular injury.

40. A vascular guide wire, comprising:

- an elongate tubular body having a proximal end, a distal end and a lumen extending longitudinally through at least part of the body, the elongate body comprising:
 - a proximal portion;
 - a flexible distal tip that is at least about 15 cm long and is more flexible than the proximal portion; and
 - a transition portion between the proximal and distal portions;
- an inflatable balloon disposed on the transition portion and in communication with the lumen; and
- a valve on the proximal portion of the elongate body configured to couple with an inflation device to allow for inflation and deflation of the balloon.

41. A guide wire as in claim 40, wherein the valve comprises an axially movable occluder, positioned within the lumen, and wherein the valve is configured to lock inflation fluid inside the lumen when in a closed position, to allow the inflation device to be removed, thus leaving a hubless proximal end over which one or more devices may be advanced.

42. A guide wire as in claim 41, wherein the occluder is movable between a proximal position and a distal position, and the valve is closed when the occluder is in the distal position.

43. A guide wire as in claim 40, wherein the distal tip comprises:

- a proximal section having a first flexibility; and
- a J-tip at the distal end of the elongate body having a second flexibility that is greater than the first flexibility.

44. A guide wire as in claim 43, wherein the proximal section has a length of at least about 15 cm, and wherein the J-tip has a length of at least about 5 cm.

45. A guide wire as in claim 40, wherein the distal tip has a length of at least about 20 cm.

46. A guide wire as in claim 40, wherein the distal tip has a length approximately equal to an average length of an iliofemoral artery.

47. A guide wire as in claim 40, wherein the proximal portion comprises a tube with a spiral cut along a portion of its length nearer its distal end, wherein the spiral cut has decreasing spacing toward the distal end.

48. A guide wire as in claim 47, wherein the distal tip comprises a core wire wrapped in a coil, and wherein the core wire extends through the transition portion and into the proximal portion.

49. A guide wire as in claim 47, further comprising a coating over the spiral cut to prevent fluid from passing out of the lumen through the cut.

50. A vascular guide wire, comprising:

- an elongate tubular body having a proximal end, a distal end, and a lumen extending longitudinally through at least part of the body, the elongate body comprising:
 - a proximal section having a first average stiffness;
 - a transition section having a second average stiffness that is less than the first stiffness; and
 - a distal tip having a length of at least about 15 cm and a third average stiffness that is less than the second stiffness; and

an expandable member disposed on the transition section, wherein the expandable member is expandable via fluid advanced through the central lumen of the elongate body.

51. A guide wire as in claim **50**, wherein the distal tip has approximately the same stiffness as the transition section immediately adjacent a distal end of the transition section and becomes significantly more flexible toward the distal end of the elongate body.

52. A guide wire as in claim **50**, further comprising a valve within the tubular body.

53. A guide wire as in claim **52**, wherein the valve includes a locking feature for locking in an inflated configuration to maintain the expandable member in an expanded configuration even after an inflation device is removed from the wire.

54. A guide wire as in claim **50**, wherein the distal tip comprises a preformed J-tip such that a curved sidewall of the J-tip rather than the distal end of the elongate body is the leading structure during normal transvascular advance.

55. A guide wire as in claim **50**, further comprising at least one radiopaque marker for indicating a position of the expandable member.

56. A guide wire as in claim **50**, wherein the expandable member comprises an inflatable balloon.

57. A guide wire as in claim **50**, wherein the distal tip has a length of at least about 20 cm.

58. A guide wire as in claim **50**, wherein the distal tip has a length approximately equal to an average length of an iliofemoral artery.

59. A guide wire as in claim **50**, wherein proximal end of the elongate body is hubless, such that at least one additional device may be passed over the proximal end while the guide wire device is in the patient with the expandable member in an expanded configuration.

60. A vascular guide wire system, comprising:
a guide wire device comprising:

an elongate tubular body comprising a proximal portion, a flexible distal tip that is at least about 15 cm long and is more flexible than the proximal portion, a transition portion between the proximal and distal portions, and a lumen extending longitudinally through at least part of the body;

an inflatable balloon disposed on the transition portion and in communication with the lumen; and

a valve on the proximal portion of the elongate body; and an inflation device configured to couple with the elongate body to open and close the valve and allow for inflation of the inflatable balloon.

61. A guide wire system as in claim **60**, wherein the valve comprises an axially movable occluder, positioned within the lumen, and wherein the valve is configured to lock inflation fluid inside the lumen when in a closed position, to allow the inflation device to be removed, thus leaving a hubless proximal end of the elongate body, over which one or more devices may be advanced.

62. A guide wire system as in claim **60**, further comprising an inflation medium injection device selected from the group consisting of a syringe and a pump.

63. A guide wire system as in claim **60**, wherein the distal tip of the guide wire device comprises a J-tip and has a length of at least about 20 cm.

64. A guide wire system as in claim **60**, wherein a proximal end of the elongate body is hubless.

65. A guide wire system as in claim **60**, wherein the distal tip of the guide wire device comprises a core wire wrapped in a coil, and wherein the core wire extends through the transition portion and into the proximal portion.

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