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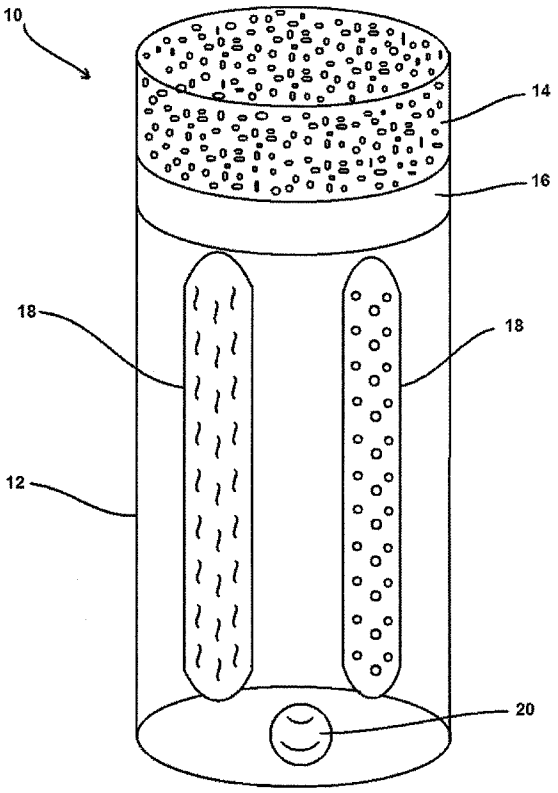
(54) **Title:** METHOD AND DEVICE FOR APPLYING HAIR COLOR



(57) **Abstract:** A device and method for coloring hair having at least two chambers within a larger container. At least one chamber wall or membrane is broken to allow the mixing of the content of the chambers, which combine to produce a hair coloring solution. The larger container has a brush or sponge like filter applicator through which the hair coloring solution can be dispensed directly onto the chosen hair area. The larger container preferably is manufactured from a squeezable material such as a polymer so that the larger container can be squeezed to assist in dispensing the hair color solution.

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METHOD AND DEVICE FOR APPLYING HAIR COLOR

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Technical Field.

The present invention generally is in the field of coloring hair, and more particularly is in the field of portable, disposable devices for coloring hair regrowth, particularly hair roots, and/or adding highlights and streaks, and methods for coloring hair using such devices.

2. Prior Art.

Salon owners continuously hear complaints from salon clients that their hair regrowth starts appearing shortly after receiving beautiful, expensive, professional color. More specifically, as human hair is in a continuous state of growth, very soon after a salon client has her or his hair colored, the salon client's hair roots begin to show, and the hair roots are not colored, but are the salon client's original hair color. This can lead to multi-colored hair and public knowledge that the salon client is coloring her or his hair.

Currently, to avoid the hair regrowth from showing, the salon client has several choices for maintaining the color of the hair and for coloring the regrowth of hair roots. One such choice is commercially available hair colorants, such as those that can be purchased in the store. However, many salon clients will not use such products in fear that it will ruin the professional color. Additionally, such commercially available products can be messy and difficult to apply to the hair, and even messier and more difficult to apply just to the hair root. Further, the color choices currently on the market often will not allow the salon client a precise match to the professional color, and the salon client has to guess the quantity to apply, and has to mix various colors and other chemicals and solutions together, which can be a hit or miss process. Therefore, the use of such commercially available products is not a satisfactory option of many salon clients.

Another choice is to continuously visit the salon for hair color touch ups between major coloring visits. During such interim visits, the salon professional can color the hair root regrowth using the professional color originally used on the

hair. However, such interim visits can be both time-consuming and expensive. The salon client must take time out of her or his day once a week or once every other week for such interim visits. Additionally, the salon professional often must charge the salon client for each such interim visit. Currently, many clients go to the salon every two to four weeks in need of such small but noticeable regrowth touch-ups, and in many cases, just a small perimeter touch-up. For the salon professional, this is a low profit activity and for the salon client, this is a high cost and time consuming activity. Therefore, such interim visits also are not a satisfactory option for many salon clients.

Accordingly, there is a need for a device and method that allows for the home coloring of hair regrowth, and especially hair root growth, between salon visits. There is also a need for such a device and method that is easy to use and to apply to the hair without messy or difficult mixing and application. There is a further need for such a device and method that is less costly and time-consuming than an equivalent visit to the salon for professional coloring touch-ups. There is an additional need for such a device and method that uses the same color formulation that was use by the salon professional for the initial hair coloring. There is also a need for such a device and method that is portable and compact such that the salon client can carry the device on her or his person or while traveling and can use the device and carry out the method without the need of additional devices. It is to these needs and others that the present invention is directed.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Briefly described, the present invention is a one-step, economical, precise way for the salon client to just touch-up regrowth of hair without causing damage to the rest of the hair. The present invention is suitable for use with most hair growth, including head hair, eyebrows, mustaches and beards. Currently, to the best of the inventor's knowledge and belief, there is nothing on the market that does not include a specific mixing step and that allows the salon client to apply the hair colorant to a precise area without effecting unwanted areas.

A first embodiment of the device of the present invention comprises a

breakable ampoule of a first solution, such as the colorant, contained within a larger container also containing a second solution, such as a carrier. The carrier preferably is a peroxide, as the combination of a hair colorant and a peroxide produces a permanent hair coloring solution. The larger container further comprises a brush or sponge like filter through which the hair coloring solution can be dispensed directly onto the chosen hair area and preferably is manufactured from a squeezable material such as a polymer so that the larger container can be squeezed to assist in dispensing the hair color solution. The ampoule preferably is manufactured from a breakable material such that the ampoule can be broken and its contents released into the larger container.

A second embodiment of the device of the present invention comprises a first breakable ampoule of a first solution, such as the colorant, and a second ampoule of a second solution, such as the carrier, both contained within a larger container. The carrier preferably is a peroxide, as the combination of a hair colorant and a peroxide produces a permanent hair coloring solution. Alternatively, the second ampoule also can contain the hair colorant or a second shade of hair colorant, and the larger container can contain the carrier. The larger container further comprises a brush or sponge like filter through which the hair coloring solution can be dispensed directly onto the chosen hair area and preferably is manufactured from a squeezable material such as a polymer so that the larger container can be squeezed to assist in dispensing the hair color solution. The ampoules preferably are manufactured from a breakable material such that the ampoules can be broken and their contents released into the larger container.

A third embodiment of the device of the present invention comprises a first breakable ampoule of a first solution, such as the colorant, a second ampoule of a second solution, such as the carrier, and one or more additional ampoules of additional solutions such as conditioners, oils or other hair care products, all contained within a larger container. Alternatively or additionally, the second and/or additional ampoules also can contain the hair colorant or a second shade of hair colorant and the larger container can contain one of the solutions. The carrier preferably is a peroxide, as the combination of a hair colorant and a

peroxide produces a permanent hair coloring solution. The larger container further comprises a brush or sponge like filter through which the hair coloring solution can be dispensed directly onto the chosen hair area and preferably is manufactured from a squeezable material such as a polymer so that the larger container can be squeezed to assist in dispensing the hair color solution. The ampoules preferably are manufactured from a breakable material such that the ampoules can be broken and their contents released into the larger container.

A fourth embodiment of the device of the present invention comprises a larger container having a first chamber with a first solution, such as a colorant, and a second chamber with a second solution, such as a carrier or catalyst, and an applicator for applying the hair colorant to hair. In this embodiment, there can be a dividing membrane or crushable disc (the term membrane includes crushable discs and the like throughout this specification) between the chambers themselves and a sealing membrane between the chambers and the applicator. The rupturing of the dividing membrane between the chambers allows the first solution to mix with the second solution and form an activated solution such as a suitable hair coloring solution, with or without an optional mixing ball. Further the rupturing of the sealing membrane between the chambers and the applicator, or by unscrewing a lid, or by otherwise opening the larger container, allows the hair coloring solution to flow through the applicator.

A first embodiment of the method of the present invention comprises the steps of (1) providing a device having at least one breakable ampoule of a first solution, such as the colorant, contained within a larger relatively flexible container also containing a second solution, such as a carrier; (2) breaking the ampoule so as to release the first solution into the larger container; (3) mixing the first solution with the second solution within the larger container so as to produce a permanent hair color solution; and (4) squeezing the larger container to dispense the hair color solution. The carrier preferably is a peroxide, as the combination of a hair colorant and a peroxide produces a permanent hair coloring solution. The larger container further comprises a brush or sponge like filter through which the hair coloring solution can be dispensed directly onto the chosen hair area and preferably is manufactured from a squeezable material such as a polymer so that

the larger container can be squeezed to assist in dispensing the hair color solution. The ampoule preferably is manufactured from a breakable material such that the ampoule can be broken and its contents released into the larger container.

A second embodiment of the method of the present invention comprises the steps of (1) providing a device having at least two breakable ampoules, a first ampoule of a first solution, such as the colorant, and a second ampoule of a second solution, such as a carrier, with both ampoules being contained within a larger relatively flexible container; (2) breaking the ampoules so as to release the first solution and the second solution into the larger container; (3) mixing the first solution with the second solution within the larger container so as to produce a permanent hair color solution; and (4) squeezing the larger container to dispense the hair color solution. The carrier preferably is a peroxide, as the combination of a hair colorant and a peroxide produces a permanent hair coloring solution. The larger container further comprises a brush or sponge like filter through which the hair coloring solution can be dispensed directly onto the chosen hair area and preferably is manufactured from a squeezable material such as a polymer so that the larger container can be squeezed to assist in dispensing the hair color solution. The ampoule preferably is manufactured from a breakable material such that the ampoule can be broken and its contents released into the larger container.

A third embodiment of the method of the present invention comprises the steps of (1) providing a device having at least two ampoules, a first ampoule of a first solution, such as the colorant, a second ampoule of a second solution, such as a carrier, and either (a) a third ampoule of a third solution, such as a conditioner, oil or other hair care product or (b) a conditioner, oil or other hair care product, all contained within a larger relatively flexible container; (2) breaking the ampoules so as to release the first solution, the second solution, and, if the third solution is contained in an ampoule, the third solution into the larger container; (3) mixing the first solution, the second solution, and the third solution within the larger container so as to produce a permanent hair color solution; and (4) squeezing the larger container to dispense the hair color solution. The carrier

preferably is a peroxide, as the combination of a hair colorant and a peroxide produces a permanent hair coloring solution. The larger container further comprises a brush or sponge like filter through which the hair coloring solution can be dispensed directly onto the chosen hair area and preferably is manufactured from a squeezable material such as a polymer so that the larger container can be squeezed to assist in dispensing the hair color solution. The ampoule preferably is manufactured from a breakable material such that the ampoule can be broken and its contents released into the larger container. This third embodiment also can have four or more ampoules and/or solutions.

A fourth embodiment of the method of the present invention comprises the steps of (1) providing a device having a first solution and a second solution contained within a larger container and separated from each other by a dividing membrane or crushable disc therein, (2) breaking the membrane, (3) mixing the first solution with the second solution within the larger container so as to produce the suitable hair coloring solution, and (4) dispensing the hair color solution through the applicator onto the chosen hair area.

One feature of the present invention is a consumer friendly device and method for the salon client who has had professional hair color applied to maintain the hair color, and especially the hair root regrowth color, between salon visits. Another feature of the present invention is a device and method allowing for the application of hair color to a precise area of hair without having to worry about applying color to unwanted areas of hair. Yet another feature of the present invention is a device and method for applying a pre-set color and amount of hair color and other hair care ingredients to a precise area of hair. Still another feature of the present invention is a low cost, economical, and simple to use device and method for the application of hair color.

These features, and other features and advantages of the present invention will become more apparent to those of ordinary skill in the relevant art when the following detailed description of the preferred embodiments is read in conjunction with the appended drawings in which like reference numerals represent like components throughout the several views.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a first embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a sectional side view of an embodiment of the present invention having a single ampoule and a sponge applicator.

FIG. 3 is a sectional side view of a first embodiment of the present invention having two ampoules and a flat filter applicator.

FIG. 4 is a sectional side view of a second embodiment of the present invention having two ampoules and a tapered filter applicator.

FIG. 5 is a sectional side view of a first embodiment of the present invention having three ampoules and a flat brush applicator.

FIG. 6 is a sectional side view of a second embodiment of the present invention having three ampoules and a tapered brush applicator.

FIG. 7 is a sectional side view of an embodiment of the present invention having a multi-chambered container with a breakable separating membrane and a sponge applicator.

FIG. 8 is a sectional side view of the embodiment of the present invention shown in FIG. 3 with the two ampoules broken and the solutions mixed in preparation for use.

FIG. 9 is a sectional side view of an embodiment of the present invention having two ampoules in a stacked relationship.

FIG. 10 is a perspective view of the present invention in use.

FIG. 11 is a sectional side view of a first embodiment of the present invention having rupturable membranes and/or crushable discs.

FIG. 12 is a sectional side view of a second embodiment of the present invention having rupturable membranes.

FIG. 13 is a sectional side view of a third embodiment of the present invention having rupturable membranes and/or crushable dividers.

FIG. 14 is a sectional side view of a fourth embodiment of the present invention having rupturable membranes.

FIG. 15 is a sectional side view of a fifth embodiment of the present invention having rupturable membranes.

FIG. 16 is a perspective view of an alternate embodiment of the present

invention having a stopper type sealing means.

FIG. 17 is a perspective view of an alternate embodiment of the present invention having a foil type sealing means.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Illustrative embodiments of a device and method for applying color to hair according to the present invention are shown in FIGs. 1 through 9. FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a first embodiment of the present invention illustrating an example of a basic configuration. FIG. 2 is a sectional side view of an embodiment of the present invention having a single ampoule and a sponge applicator in which the hair colorant in contained in the ampoule and the carrier is contained in the larger container. FIG. 3 is a sectional side view of a first embodiment of the present invention having two ampoules and a flat filter applicator in which the hair colorant is contained in one ampoule and the carrier is contained in another ampoule. FIG. 4 is a sectional side view of a second embodiment of the present invention having two ampoules and a tapered filter applicator in which the hair colorant is contained in one ampoule and the carrier is contained in another ampoule and a third solution such as a conditioner is contained in the larger container.

FIG. 5 is a sectional side view of a first embodiment of the present invention having three ampoules and a flat brush applicator in which the hair colorant is contained in one ampoule, the carrier is contained in another ampoule, and a third solution such as a conditioner is contained in a third ampoule. FIG. 6 is a sectional side view of a second embodiment of the present invention having three ampoules and a tapered brush applicator in which the hair colorant is contained in one ampoule, the carrier is contained in another ampoule, a third solution such as a conditioner is contained in a third ampoule, and a fourth solution such as an additional hair care product is contained in the larger container. FIG. 7 is a sectional side view of an embodiment of the present invention having a multi-chambered container with a breakable separating membrane or crushable disc and a sponge applicator. FIG. 8 is a sectional side view of the embodiment of the present invention shown in FIG. 3 with the two

ampoules broken and the solutions mixed in preparation for use, and also showing the use of a puncture device. FIG. 9 is a sectional side view of an embodiment of the present invention having two ampoules in a stacked relationship. FIG. 10 is a perspective view of the present invention in use.

FIG. 11 is a sectional side view of a first embodiment of the present invention having rupturable membranes and/or crushable discs. FIG. 12 is a sectional side view of a second embodiment of the present invention having rupturable membranes with a dial assembly. FIG. 13 is a sectional side view of a third embodiment of the present invention having rupturable membranes and/or crushable dividers with a side-by-side configuration. FIG. 14 is a sectional side view of a fourth embodiment of the present invention having rupturable membranes with a separate mixing tube. FIG. 15 is a sectional side view of a fifth embodiment of the present invention having rupturable membranes with an over/under configuration. FIG. 16 is a perspective view of an alternate embodiment of the present invention having a stopper type sealing means. FIG. 17 is a perspective view of an alternate embodiment of the present invention having a foil type sealing means.

The present invention is a one-step, economical, precise way for the salon client to just touch-up regrowth of hair without causing damage to the rest of the hair. The present invention is suitable for use with most hair growth, including head hair, eyebrows, mustaches and beards. Currently, to the best of the inventor's knowledge and belief, there is nothing on the market that does not include a specific mixing step and that allows the salon client to apply the hair colorant to a precise area without effecting unwanted areas.

Referring now to FIG. 1, an illustrative example of the device 10 comprises a larger container 12, an applicator 14, and a connecting ring 16 for attaching the applicator 14 to the larger container 12. Within the container 12 are located at least one ampoule 18, two being shown in FIG. 1, and an optional mixing ball 20. As will be disclosed, various combinations of these components are contemplated in this invention. Further, throughout the drawings, hair colorant 22 is represented by circles (o), carrier 24 is represented by squiggly lines (~), a first additional hair care product such as conditioner 26 is represented by xs (x), and a second

additional hair care product 28 is represented by triangles (Δ). The final hair color solution 32 is represented by a squiggly line overlaying a circle.

Hair colorant 22 can be any of the known or future developed hair colorants, and can be prepackaged in ampoule 18 in a known manner. Carrier 24 can be any carrier or catalyst useful for formulating hair coloring solution 32, and also can be prepackaged in ampoule 18 in a known manner. Suitable carriers include but are not limited to peroxide and ammonia and other known carriers and catalysts. Carrier 24 preferably is a peroxide, as the combination of hair colorant 22 and peroxide 24 produces a permanent hair coloring solution 32. Additional hair care products 28 include but are not limited to conditioners 26, oils, crèmes, dyes, tints, lotions, bleaches, mousses and the like.

Larger container 12 preferably is hollow, has a closed bottom and sides and an open top, has a length between approximately 1 inch and 6 inches, and a diameter or width between approximately ¼ inch and 1 inch. Larger container 12 can be somewhat larger or smaller; however, it is preferable that larger container 12 be of such a size that it can be easily manipulated by the user with one or two hands. More specifically, larger container 12 preferably is structured to hold and contain liquids. Large container 12 preferably is made from a flexible material such as an amorphous (non-crystalline) polymer such that larger container 12 can be squeezed by the salon client. Such materials are known in the art and include without limitation polyethylene terephthalate (PET) and high density polyethylene (HDPE). Other less flexible and rigid materials also can be used, but are not preferred.

Applicator 14 preferably is a material shaped to generally correspond to the cross sectional shape of larger container 12 such that applicator 14 can more easily be attached to larger container 12. Applicator 14 is manufactured from a material that will allow a fluid contained within larger container 12 to travel through applicator 14 in a controlled manner. Applicator 14 preferably is a material that falls within the general known categories of sponges, brushes, and filters that can be used as fluid or solution applicators. One of ordinary skill in the art can select an appropriate applicator 14 material for use with the hair color solution contained within larger container 12 and ampoules 18 without undue experimentation.

Connecting ring 16 is optional and can serve at least two purposes. First, connecting ring 16 can allow applicator 14 to be connected to larger container 12. Second, connecting ring 16 can comprise a breakable or puncturable membrane 30 (see FIG. 2) sealing larger container 12 closed. Connecting ring 16 is a ring-like structure having a side wall but no top or bottom walls and can be attached to larger container 12 via any conventional means, such as for example a screw thread or friction. Membrane 30 can be attached to connecting ring 16 via any conventional means, such as for example adhesive, heat welding, or sonic welding. Membrane 30 can be any suitable material such as a thin polymer, foils, wax papers, and the like. Such materials are known in the art and include without limitation low density polyethylene (LDPE). If used, membrane 30 is attached about the internal circumference or perimeter of connecting ring 16.

Ampoules 18 are relatively small breakable vials filled with a selected hair care product, preferably in solution or liquid form. Ampoules 18 are of such a size that at least one, and preferably two or more, ampoules 18 can fit within the hollow interior of larger container 12. Thus, ampoules 18 can be of various sizes so long as ampoules 18 fit within larger container 12. Ampoules 18 are structured to hold and contain liquids. Ampoules 18 preferably are made from a rigid material such as a crystalline or other brittle polymer or glass such that ampoules 18 can be broken, thus releasing the solutions contained within ampoules 18 when larger container 12 is squeezed by the salon client. Such materials are known in the art and include without limitation glass, ceramic, polyvinylchloride (PVC), polypropylene, and polystyrene. Other flexible and less rigid materials also can be used, but are not preferred.

Mixing ball 20 is a relatively small sphere or other shaped structure and is contained within larger container 12. The purpose of mixing ball 20, mixing ball 20 being optional, is to assist in mixing the solutions contained within ampoules 18 and larger container 12 together for application by the salon client.

Referring now to FIG. 2, a first embodiment of the device 10 of the present invention comprises a breakable ampoule 18 of a first solution, such as hair colorant 22, contained within larger container 12 also containing a second solution, such as carrier 24. Alternatively, as some hair colorants 22 do not need

a carrier or catalyst, larger container 12 can contain only ampoule 18 containing hair colorant 22 and no second solution. Larger container 12 further comprises a sponge applicator 14 through which hair coloring solution 32 can be dispensed directly onto the chosen hair area 50 (see FIG. 9). As shown in this figure, sponge applicator 14 has a flat application surface 40. Larger container 12 preferably is manufactured from a squeezable material so that larger container 12 can be squeezed to assist in dispensing hair color solution 32. Ampoule 18 preferably is manufactured from a breakable material such that ampoule 18 can be broken and its contents released into larger container 12 (see FIG. 8). Connecting ring 16 in this example comprises membrane 30, which can be ruptured via pressure or via tube 34 (see FIG. 8). For example, after ampoule 18 is broken and hair colorant 22 is mixed with carrier 24 within larger container 12, further squeezing of larger container 12 by the salon client will increase the pressure within larger container 12, thus rupturing membrane 30 and allowing hair coloring solution 32 to be forced through applicator 14 and dispensed onto hair area 50.

Referring now to FIG. 3, a second embodiment of the device 10 of the present invention comprises first ampoule 18A of a first solution, such as hair colorant 22, and second ampoule 18B of a second solution, such as carrier 24, both contained within larger container 12. Larger container 12 further comprises a filter applicator 14, such as a cotton or other fiber filter, through which hair coloring solution 32 can be dispensed directly onto the chosen hair area 50 (see FIG. 9). As shown in this figure, filter applicator 14 has a flat application surface 40. Larger container 12 preferably is manufactured from a squeezable material so that larger container 12 can be squeezed to assist in dispensing hair color solution 32. Ampoules 18A, 18B preferably are manufactured from a breakable material such that ampoules 18A, 18B can be broken and their contents released into larger container 12. Connecting ring 16 in this example does not comprise membrane 30. Either connecting ring 16 has a puncturable lower wall 36 or larger container 12 has a puncturable upper wall 38, or both, which can be ruptured via pressure or via tube 34 (see FIG. 8). For example, after ampoules 18A, 18B are broken and hair colorant 22 is mixed with carrier 24 within larger container 12, further

squeezing of larger container 12 by the salon client will increase the pressure within larger container 12, thus rupturing wall 36 or 38 or both and allowing hair coloring solution 32 to be forced through applicator 14 and dispensed onto hair area 50.

Referring now to FIG. 4, an alternative of the second embodiment of the device 10 of the present invention comprises first ampoule 18A of a first solution, such as hair colorant 22, and second ampoule 18B of a second solution, such as carrier 24, both contained within larger container 12. Also contained within larger container 12 is a third solution or liquid, such as an additional hair care product, such as for example hair conditioner 26. Larger container 12 further comprises a filter applicator 14, such as a cotton or other fiber filter, through which hair coloring solution 32 can be dispensed directly onto the chosen hair area 50 (see FIG. 9). As shown in this figure, filter applicator 14 has a tapered application surface 40. Larger container 12 preferably is manufactured from a squeezable material so that larger container 12 can be squeezed to assist in dispensing hair color solution 32. Ampoules 18A, 18B preferably are manufactured from a breakable material such that ampoules 18A, 18B can be broken and their contents released into larger container 12. Connecting ring 16 in this example comprises membrane 30, which can be ruptured via pressure or via tube 34 (see FIG. 8). For example, after ampoules 18A, 18B are broken and hair colorant 22 is mixed with carrier 24 and conditioner 26 within larger container 12, further squeezing of larger container 12 by the salon client will increase the pressure within larger container 12, thus rupturing membrane 30 and allowing hair coloring solution 32 to be forced through applicator 14 and dispensed onto hair area 50.

Referring now to FIG. 5, a third embodiment of the device 10 of the present invention comprises first ampoule 18A of a first solution, such as colorant 22, second ampoule 18B of a second solution, such as carrier 24, and one or more additional ampoules 18C of additional solutions such as conditioners 26, oils or other hair care products, all contained within larger container 12. Larger container 12 further comprises brush applicator 14 through which hair coloring solution 32 can be dispensed directly onto the chosen hair area 50 (see FIG. 9). As shown in this figure, brush applicator 14 has a flat application surface 40. Brush applicator

14 is of a known type, comprising bristles 42 attached to a porous or perforated base 44. Larger container 12 preferably is manufactured from a squeezable material so that larger container 12 can be squeezed to assist in dispensing hair color solution 32. Ampoules 18A, 18B, 18C preferably are manufactured from a breakable material such that ampoules 18A, 18B, 18C can be broken and their contents released into larger container 12. Connecting ring 16 in this example does not comprise membrane 30. Either connecting ring 16 has a puncturable lower wall 36 or larger container 12 has a puncturable upper wall 38, or both, which can be ruptured via pressure or via tube 34 (see FIG. 8). For example, after ampoules 18A, 18B, 18C are broken and hair colorant 22 is mixed with carrier 24 and conditioner 26 within larger container 12, further squeezing of larger container 12 by the salon client will increase the pressure within larger container 12, thus rupturing wall 36 or 38 or both and allowing hair coloring solution 32 to be forced through applicator 14 and dispensed onto hair area 50.

Referring now to FIG. 6, an alternative of the third embodiment of the device 10 of the present invention comprises first ampoule 18A of a first solution, such as colorant 22, second ampoule 18B of a second solution, such as carrier 24, and third ampoule 18C of and additional solution, such as conditioner 26, all contained within larger container 12. Also contained within larger container 12 is a fourth solution or liquid, such as an additional hair care product 28. Larger container 12 further comprises brush applicator 14 through which hair coloring solution 32 can be dispensed directly onto the chosen hair area 50 (see FIG. 9). As shown in this figure, brush applicator 14 has a tapered application surface 40. Brush applicator 14 is of a known type, comprising bristles 42 attached to a porous or perforated base 44. Larger container 12 preferably is manufactured from a squeezable material so that larger container 12 can be squeezed to assist in dispensing hair color solution 32. Ampoules 18A, 18B, 18C preferably are manufactured from a breakable material such that ampoules 18A, 18B, 18C can be broken and their contents released into larger container 12. Connecting ring 16 in this example comprises membrane 30, which can be ruptured via pressure or via tube 34 (see FIG. 8). For example, after ampoules 18A, 18B, 18C are broken and hair colorant 22 is mixed with carrier 24, conditioner 26 and fourth

solution 28 within larger container 12, further squeezing of larger container 12 by the salon client will increase the pressure within larger container 12, thus rupturing wall 36 or 38 or both and allowing hair coloring solution 32 to be forced through applicator 14 and dispensed onto hair area 50.

Referring now to FIG. 7, a fourth embodiment of the device 10 of the present invention comprises larger container 12 having first compartment 60 containing a first solution, such as colorant 22, and second compartment 62 containing a second solution, such as carrier 24. Larger container 12 further comprises sponge applicator 14 through which hair coloring solution 32 can be dispensed directly onto the chosen hair area 50 (see FIG. 9). As shown in this figure, sponge applicator 14 has a flat application surface 40. Larger container 12 preferably is manufactured from a squeezable material so that larger container 12 can be squeezed to assist in dispensing hair color solution 32. Compartments 60, 62 preferably comprise a breakable, rupturable or puncturable top wall 64 that can be broken, ruptured or punctured and the contents of compartments 60, 62 released. Connecting ring 16 in this example comprises membrane 30, which can be ruptured via pressure or via tube 34 (see FIG. 8). For example, after top walls 64 are broken by the squeezing of larger container 12 by the salon client, hair colorant 22 is mixed with carrier 24 within connecting ring 16. Then, the salon client will increase the pressure within larger container 12 by further squeezing, allowing hair coloring solution 32 to be forced through applicator 14 and dispensed onto hair area 50. Alternatively, side walls 66, 68 of first compartment 60 and second compartment 62, respectively, can comprise a breakable, rupturable or puncturable material that can be broken, ruptured or punctured and the contents of compartments 60, 62 released and mixed within the now single compartment formed in larger container 12 when side walls 66, 68 rupture.

Referring now to FIG. 8, a sectional side view of the embodiment of the device 10 of the present invention shown in FIG. 3 with the two ampoules 18A, 18B broken and the solutions 22, 24 mixed in preparation for use is illustrated. In this illustrative example, the device 10 of the present invention comprises first breakable (shown as broken) ampoule 18A of a first solution, such as hair colorant 22, and second breakable (also shown as broken) ampoule 18B of a second

solution, such as carrier 24, both contained within larger container 12. Larger container 12 further comprises a filter applicator 14, such as a cotton or other fiber filter, through which hair coloring solution 32 can be dispensed directly onto the chosen hair area 50 (see FIG. 9). As shown in this figure, filter applicator 14 has a flat application surface 40. Larger container 12 preferably is manufactured from a squeezable material so that larger container 12 can be squeezed by the user, as indicated by arrows S, to place pressure on and break ampoules 18A, 18B. Once ampoules 18A, 18B are broken, hair colorant 22 and carrier 24 mix within larger container 12 to form hair coloring solution 32. Connecting ring 16 in this example does not comprise membrane 30. Either connecting ring 16 has a puncturable lower wall 36 or larger container 12 has a puncturable upper wall 38, or both, which can be ruptured via pressure or via tube 34. For example, after ampoules 18A, 18B are broken and hair colorant 22 is mixed with carrier 24 within larger container 12, connecting ring 16 can be screwed or otherwise placed onto the top of larger container 12 such that tube 34, shown with a piercing end 70, punctures lower wall 36, upper wall 38, or both, or membrane 30 if a membrane 30 configuration is used. Further squeezing of larger container 12 by the salon client will increase the pressure within larger container 12, thus allowing hair coloring solution 32 to be forced through applicator 14 and dispensed onto hair area 50. Tube 34 can be attached to connecting ring 16 via struts 72 or the like.

FIG. 9 illustrates an alternative embodiment of the present invention showing an elongated larger container 12 structured to receive and hold two ampoules 18A, 18B in a stacked relationship.

Referring now to FIG. 10, the present invention further comprises a method for applying hair coloring solution 32 to a chosen hair area on the salon client. Several exemplary methods are disclosed with general reference to FIGs. 1-9 and specific reference to FIG. 10.

A first embodiment of the method of the present invention comprises the steps of (1) providing a device 10 having at least one breakable ampoule 18 of a first solution 22, such as the colorant, contained within a larger relatively flexible container 12 also containing a second solution, such as a carrier 24; (2) breaking the ampoule 18 so as to release the first solution 22 into the larger container 12;

(3) mixing the first solution 22 with the second solution 24 within the larger container 12 so as to produce a permanent hair color solution 32; and (4) squeezing the larger container 12 to dispense the hair color solution 32. The larger container 12 further comprises a brush or sponge like filter applicator 14 through which the hair coloring solution 32 can be dispensed directly onto the chosen hair area 50. Larger container 12 preferably is manufactured from a squeezable material so that the larger container 12 can be squeezed to break ampoule 18 and to assist in dispensing the hair color solution 32. The ampoule 18 preferably is manufactured from a breakable material such that the ampoule 18 can be broken and its contents released into the larger container 12.

A second embodiment of the method of the present invention comprises the steps of (1) providing a device 10 having at least two breakable ampoules 18A, 18B, a first ampoule 18A of a first solution 22, such as the colorant, and a second ampoule 18B of a second solution, such as a carrier 24, with both ampoules 18A, 18B being contained within a larger relatively flexible container 12; (2) breaking the ampoules 18A, 18B so as to release the first solution 22 and the second solution 24 into the larger container 12; (3) mixing the first solution 22 with the second solution 24 within the larger container 12 so as to produce a permanent hair color solution 32; and (4) squeezing the larger container 12 to dispense the hair color solution 32. The larger container 12 further comprises a brush or sponge like filter applicator 14 through which the hair coloring solution 32 can be dispensed directly onto the chosen hair area 50. Larger container 12 preferably is manufactured from a squeezable material so that the larger container 12 can be squeezed to break ampoules 18A, 18B and to assist in dispensing the hair color solution 32. The ampoules 18A, 18B preferably are manufactured from a breakable material such that the ampoules 18A, 18B can be broken and their contents 22, 24 released into the larger container 12.

A third embodiment of the method of the present invention comprises the steps of (1) providing a device 10 having at least two ampoules 18A, 18B, a first ampoule 18A of a first solution 22, such as the colorant, a second ampoule 18B of a second solution 24, such as a carrier, and either (a) a third ampoule 18C of a third solution 26, such as a conditioner, oil or other hair care product or (b) a

conditioner, oil or other hair care product, all contained within a larger relatively flexible container 12; (2) breaking the ampoules 18A, 18B, 18C so as to release the first solution 22, the second solution 24, and, if the third solution 26 is contained in an ampoule 18C, the third solution 26 into the larger container 12; (3) mixing the first solution 22, the second solution 24, and the third solution 26 within the larger container 12 so as to produce a permanent hair color solution 32; and (4) squeezing the larger container 12 to dispense the hair color solution 32. The larger container 12 further comprises a brush or sponge like filter applicator 14 through which the hair coloring solution 32 can be dispensed directly onto the chosen hair area 50 and preferably is manufactured from a squeezable material so that the larger container 12 can be squeezed to break ampoules 18A, 18B, 18C and to assist in dispensing the hair color solution 32. The ampoules 18A, 18B, 18C preferably are manufactured from a breakable material such that the ampoules 18A, 18B, 18C can be broken and their contents 22, 24, 26 released into the larger container 12. This third embodiment also can have four or more ampoules 18 and/or solutions 22, 24, 26, 28.

The device 10 can be prepared at the salon with each of the various parts of the device 10 being supplied separately and then combined at the salon in a desired configuration. For example, the salon professional can take one of larger containers 12 and insert one or more ampoules 18 of hair colorant or colorants 22, carrier 24 and/or additional solutions into larger container 12. Additionally, one of the solutions can be poured into larger container 12 if desired. Then a connecting ring 16 and/or applicator 14 can be attached to larger container 12 and the completed device 10 given or sold to the salon client. In this manner, the device can be a custom made hair regrowth touch up device or kit.

Referring now to FIGs. 11-15, several embodiments of the present invention having a single larger container 12 divided into two or more sub-chambers 15 rather than ampoules 18, and with rupturable membranes or crushable discs or dividers, all of which will be referred to generally as dividers 21, separating the chambers from each other are shown. In one generalized embodiment, the device 10 for applying a hair coloring solution 32 to hair comprises (1) a larger container 12 divided into at least a first chamber 15A

having a first solution and a second chamber 15B with a second solution, and (2) an applicator 14 for applying the hair coloring solution 32 to hair. In this generalized embodiment, there can be a first divider 21 between the chambers 15A, 15B themselves and a separating membrane 30 or a second divider 21 between the chambers 15A, 15B and the applicator 14. The rupturing of the first divider 21 between the chambers 15A, 15B allows the first solution (such as a hair colorant 22) to mix with the second solution (such as a carrier or catalyst 24), with or without a mixing ball, to form an activated solution such as a suitable hair coloring solution 32. Further the rupturing of the separating membrane 30 or second divider 21 between the chambers 15A, 15B and the applicator 14 allows the hair coloring solution 32 to flow through the applicator 14. An optional cap 33 can be included to close the larger container 12 if some hair coloring solution 32 remains and is desired to be saved for later use. As disclosed herein, various combinations of these components are contemplated in this invention.

Referring now to FIG. 11, a first embodiment of the present invention having rupturable membranes and/or crushable dividers comprises a larger container 12, an applicator 14, and a connecting ring 16 for attaching the applicator 14 to the larger container 12. Within the larger container 12, there can be up to three chambers 15A, 15B, 15C, or more, separated by divider 21. In this arrangement, which is an over/under arrangement, the first chamber 15A can contain the hair colorant 22 or other agent, the second chamber 15B can include the carrier or catalyst 24 that activates or carries the hair colorant 22, and the optional third chamber 15C can be fragrance or other type of masking ingredient, or an additional ingredient complimentary to the hair colorant 22. As the larger container 12, which preferably is made from a flexible material as disclosed herein, is squeezed, the dividers 21 located between the middle chamber 15A and the lower chamber 15B and between the middle chamber 15A and the upper chamber 15C breaks or ruptures, which allows solutions in chambers 15A, 15B, 15C to mix so to form a final hair coloring solution 32 with, in this particular illustrative example, a fragrance. The same pressure, or further pressure, or using the screw-dial embodiment, causes separating membranes 30 or an additional divider to rupture, allowing the hair coloring solution 32 to be dispensed

using the applicator 14.

Referring now to FIG. 12, a second embodiment of the present invention having rupturable membranes and/or crushable dividers with a dial assembly comprises a larger container 12, an applicator 14, a connecting ring 16 for attaching the applicator 14 to the larger container 12, and a dial-shaft assembly 19. Within the larger container 12, there can be at least two independent chambers 15A, 15B, separated by divider 21. In this embodiment, chambers 15A, 15B are separate structures from, and located within the interior of, larger container 12. The first chamber 15A can contain the hair colorant 22 or other active agent, and the second chamber 15B can include a carrier or catalyst 24 that activates the hair colorant 22. At the bottom of the device 10, there is a combined dial-shaft assembly 19 known in the art having a dial 23 and a threaded shaft 25, which when operated by twisting the dial 23 to rotate the threaded shaft 25, provides a means for pressing the chambers 15A, 15B against a two-sided cutting blade 27.

In this example, the colorant 22 is dispensed using the applicator 14 after the dial-shaft assembly 19 forces lower chamber 15B upwards such that the divider 21A of lower chamber 15B, in this case the top surface of the lower chamber 15B, into one side of the cutting blade 27, which in turn presses the other side of the cutting blade 27 into the divider 21B of upper chamber 15A, in this case the bottom surface of the upper chamber 15B, thus cutting or puncturing the top surface of lower chamber 15A and the bottom surface of upper chamber 15B. Although blade 27 can be of many various configurations, a suitable blade 27 has a generally cylindrical structure such that after blade 27 cuts through or punctures dividers 21A, 21B, hair colorant 22 and carrier or catalyst 26 can flow through the hollow interior of blade 27, thus allowing the hair colorant 22 to mix with the carrier or catalyst 26 to form the hair coloring solution 32. At this stage, the hair colorant 22 and carrier or catalyst 26 can be mixed together by, for example, shaking the larger container 12, use of a mixing ball 20 if included, or squeezing the flexible body of larger container 12.

Continued twisting of the dial-shaft assembly 19 forces both chambers 15A, 15B upwards such that divider 21C, in this case the top surface of upper chamber

15B, is forced against another cutting blade 27A, thus cutting or puncturing top surface of upper chamber 15B and allowing hair coloring solution 32 to be released through the applicator 14.

Referring now to FIG. 13, a third embodiment of the present invention having rupturable membranes and/or crushable dividers with a side-by-side configuration comprises a larger container 12, an applicator 14, and a connecting ring 16 for attaching the applicator 14 to the larger container 12. Within the container 12 are located at least two chambers 15A, 15B that are divided by a divider 21. In this embodiment, squeezing the larger container 12 causes the divider 21 to break allowing the solutions in the chambers 15A, 15B to mix. The same or further pressure causes separating membrane 30, or another divider 21, which in this example can be either the top portion of chambers 15A, 15B or a separate membrane 30 or divider 21 located proximal to or with connecting ring 16, to break, which allows the hair coloring solution 32 to be released through the applicator 14. As an alternative in this embodiment, as well as in the other embodiments disclosed herein, a separate or additional mixing chamber can be located or present within the volume bounded by connecting ring 16. With such a mixing chamber, the solutions 22, 24 can leave chambers 15A, 15B and mix within the mixing chamber prior to being dispensed through applicator 14. A mixing ball 20 optionally can be present in the mixing chamber.

Referring now to FIG. 14, a fourth embodiment of the present invention having rupturable membranes and/or crushable dividers with a separate mixing tube comprises a larger container 12, a mixing tube 12A, and an applicator 14. In this arrangement, the larger container 12 can contain at least two chambers 15A, 15B, the tops of which can be separating membrane 30 or dividers 21. The mixing tube 12A can have a means for penetrating 34A, 34B the separating membrane 30. Alternatively, the means for penetrating can be similar to blade 27 disclosed in connection with FIG. 12 and located between larger container 12 and mixing tube 12A. Mixing tube 12A can be separated from the larger container 12 by a spring/compression or screw arrangement located as or within an intermediate structure 51 between the larger container 12 and the mixing tube 12A.

In the spring/compression arrangement, the larger container 12 is moved towards the mixing tube 12A such that the piercing end of the means for penetrating 34A, 34B pierces the top ends or surfaces of chambers 15A, 15B. Intermediate structure 51 can be an accordion-like structure (or a material that will allow an accordion-like flexing) that will allow the larger container 12 to be moved towards the mixing tube 12A such that the means for penetrating 34A, 34B can rupture the divider 21, which in this case are the tops of chambers 15A, 15B, and allow the solutions 22, 24 to travel through the means for penetrating 34A, 34B into the mixing tube 12A. In this embodiment, the means for penetrating 34A, 34B can be structured similarly to blade 27. Alternatively, rather than accordion-like, the intermediate structure 51 can be a twisting area such that twisting the larger container 12 about the intermediate structure 51 causes the a membrane 30 or divider 21, which in this case are the tops of chambers 15A, 15B, to rip or rupture, thus allowing the solutions 22, 24 to mix. In this alternative embodiment, the means for penetrating 34A, 34B are not necessary or can be replaced with a cutting structure that, as larger container 12 and mixing tube 12A are twisted relative to each other, cuts the tops of chambers 15A, 15B.

Alternatively, intermediate structure 51 can be a screw-thread structure such that twisting the larger container 12 relative to the mixing tube 12A causes the larger container 12 to move towards the mixing tube 12A. More specifically, the bottom of mixing tube 12A and the top of larger container 12 can have complimentary threaded portions that when twisted relative to each other bring larger container 12 and mixing tube 12A closer together. As the larger container 12 and the mixing tube 12A come together, the means for penetrating 34A, 34B can rupture the membrane 30 or divider 21, which in this case are the tops of chambers 15A, 15B, and allow the solutions 22, 24 to travel through the means for penetrating 34A, 34B into the mixing tube 12A. The means for penetrating 34A, 34B allow fluid communication into mixing tube 12A, thus allowing hair colorant 22 and carrier or catalyst 24 to enter the mixing tube 12A. If the larger container 12 is made of a flexible material, the squeezing of larger container 12 and mixing tube 12A can increase the pressure within larger container 12 and mixing tube 12A so to allow or force the hair coloring solution 32 through applicator 14 and to

be dispensed onto hair area 50. Alternatively, the larger container 12 can be made of a rigid or semi-rigid material, in which case the solutions 22, 26 can travel into mixing tube 12A via gravity when the entire device is tipped or inverted. A membrane 30 or divider 21 also can be located between the mixing tube 12A and the applicator 14, which can be ruptured to allow the application of the hair coloring solution 32.

Referring now to FIG. 15, a fifth embodiment of the present invention having rupturable membranes or crushable dividers with an over/under configuration comprises an alternative rupturing means in the form of two cutting blades 27. In this embodiment, the two chambers 15A, 15B are in an over/under configuration in which the upper chamber 15B has a cutting blade 27, the lower chamber 15A has a cutting blade 27, and the chambers 15A, 15B are separated from each other by a spring or twisting arrangement in an intermediate structure 51 located between the chambers 15A, 15B. In operation and use, the lower chamber 15A is moved towards or twisted towards the upper chamber 15B such that the cutting blade 27 of each chamber 15A, 15B pierces the lower surface and the upper surface, respectively, of the other chamber 15B, 15A. As disclosed herein in connection with FIG. 14, intermediate structure 51 can be an accordion-like structure (or a material that will allow an accordion-like flexing), a twisting area, a screw-thread structure.

Referring now to FIG. 16, an embodiment of a sealing cap 80 is shown. In this embodiment, membrane 30 or divider 21 located between applicator 14 and connecting ring 16 already has a port or hole 82 therethrough to allow hair coloring solution 32 to be dispensed from larger container 12 to applicator 14. Cap 80 has a stopper 84 depending therefrom that can cooperate with port or hole 82 so as to seal port or hole 82 and prevent hair coloring solution 32 from being dispensed. Similarly, this embodiment can be used to store excess hair coloring solution 32 within larger container 12 for later use or to prevent excess hair coloring solution 32 from leaking out of larger container 12 and causing undesirable staining.

Referring now to FIG. 17, an embodiment of a seal 90 is shown. In this embodiment, seal 90 is located across the top opening of larger container 12 in

place of or in addition to membrane 30 or divider 21. Connecting ring 16 and larger container 12 can have cooperating screw threads 92 such that connecting ring 90 along with applicator 14 can act as a cap for larger container 12. In use, applicator 14 and connecting ring 16 can be screwed off of larger container 12, and seal 90 removed, thus giving access to the interior of larger container and therefore to hair coloring solution 32. Applicator 14 and connecting ring 16 then can be screwed on to larger container 12 and hair coloring solution 32 dispensed through applicator 14. Seal can be any suitable material, such as foils, plastics, papers and treated papers (such as wax or other waterproof papers), and the like.

The membrane 30 and the divider 21 can be any material or structure that can rupture upon an amount of pressure that a user can create. For example, a brittle plastic or ceramic of sufficient thinness, plastic sheeting, metal foils, thin glass, and the like can be suitable for use as the membrane 30 or divider 21. Similarly, the membrane 30 or divider 21 can be simply a dividing wall between the chambers 15A, 15B and therefore made of the same material as the chambers 15A, 15B.

The foregoing detailed description of the preferred embodiments and the appended figures have been presented only for illustrative and descriptive purposes and are not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the scope and spirit of the invention. The embodiments were selected and described to best explain the principles of the invention and its practical applications. One of ordinary skill in the art will recognize that many variations can be made to the invention disclosed in this specification without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention.

CLAIMS

What is Claimed is:

1. A device for applying color to hair comprising:

(a) a larger container;

(b) a first chamber with a first solution;

(c) a second chamber with a second solution; and

(d) an applicator for applying the hair colorant to hair,

wherein a dividing membrane is between the first chamber and the second chamber; rupturing the membrane allows the first solution to mix with the second solution and to form a combination solution; and the combination solution is dispensed from the applicator.

2. The device for applying color to hair as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising a connecting ring for attaching the applicator to the larger container.

3. The device for applying color to hair as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising a mixing ball.

4. The device according to Claim 1, wherein the larger container is made from a flexible material such that the larger container can be squeezed to dispense the hair colorant

5. The device according to Claim 1, further comprising a mixing tube.

6. The device according to Claim 1, further comprising a dial in connection with a shaft, whereby rotating dial moves the shaft so to apply pressure to chambers.

7. The device according to Claim 1, wherein the first chamber is within a first smaller container and the second chamber is within a second smaller container.

8. The device according to Claim 1, wherein the first chamber and the second chamber are arranged side by side within the larger container.

9. The device according to Claim 1, wherein the chambers are vials.

10. The device according to Claim 1, wherein the applicator is selected from the group consisting of sponges, brushes, and filters that can be used as fluid or solution applicators.

11. The device according to Claim 1, wherein the larger container is flexible.

12. The device according to Claim 1, further comprising a connecting ring for connects the applicator to the larger container.

13. The device according to Claim 1, further comprising a slip having indicia over the larger container.

14. A device for applying color to hair comprising:

(a) a larger container;

(b) a first chamber with a first solution of a colorant;

(c) a second chamber with a carrier; and

(d) a means for allowing the first solution to mix with the second chamber;

(e) an applicator for applying the hair colorant to hair,

wherein a dividing membrane is between the first chamber and the second chamber; rupturing the membrane allows the first solution to mix with the second solution and to form an hair colorant; and the hair colorant is dispensed from the applicator.

15. The device according to Claim 14, wherein the chambers are vials.

16. The device according to Claim 14, further comprising a connecting ring for attaching the applicator to the larger container.

17. The device according to Claim 14, further comprising a mixing ball.

18. A method for applying hair colorant comprising:

(a) providing a device with an applicator and having a first solution and a second solution contained within a larger flexible container and separated by a dividing membrane therein;

(b) breaking the membrane so as to release the first solution;

(c) mixing the first solution with the second solution within the larger container so as to produce the hair colorant; and

(d) dispensing the hair color solution through the applicator onto the chosen hair area.

19. The method of Claim 18, wherein the membrane is broke applying pressure to the larger container.

20. The method of Claim 18, further comprising the step of shaking the device.

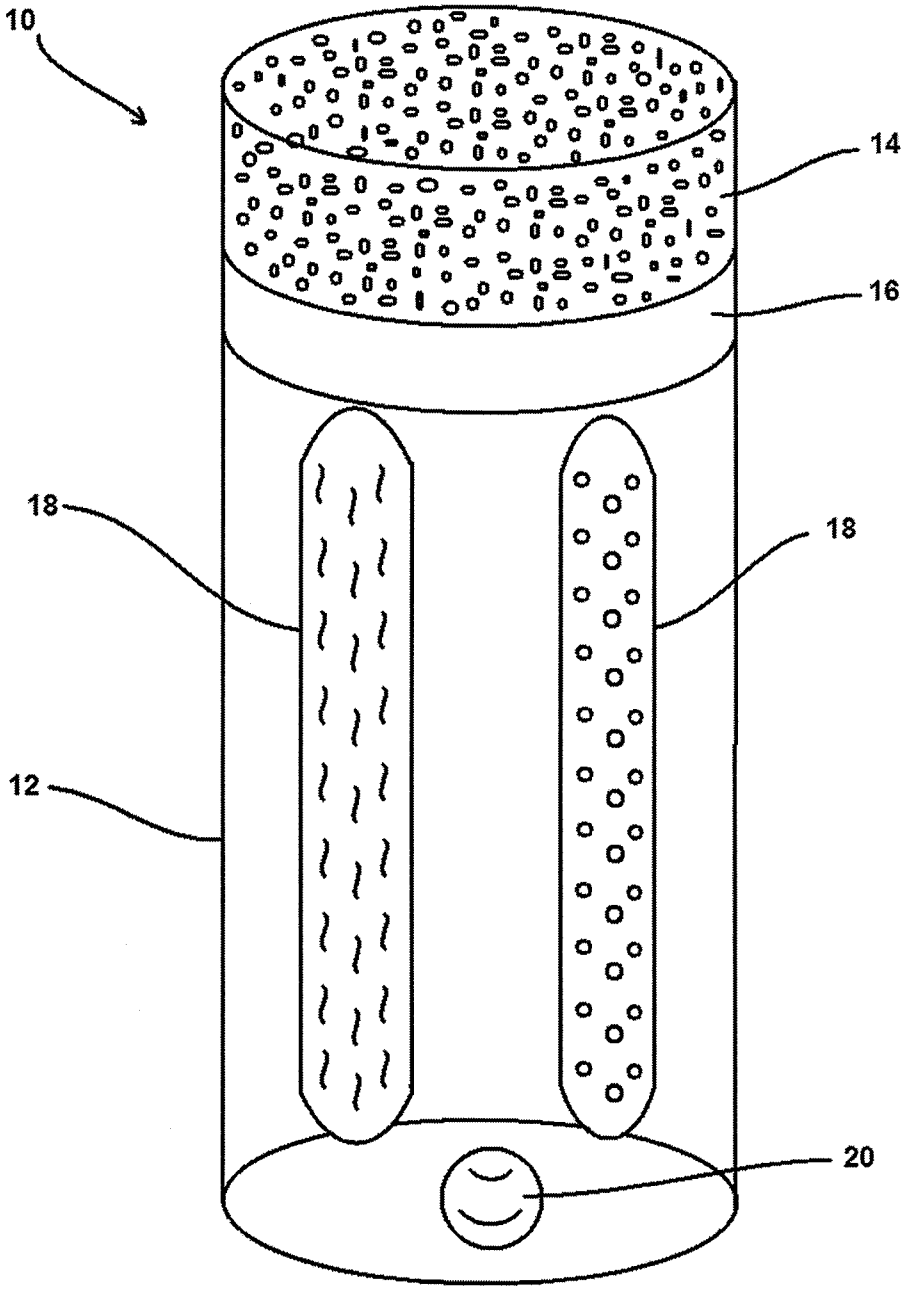


FIG. 1

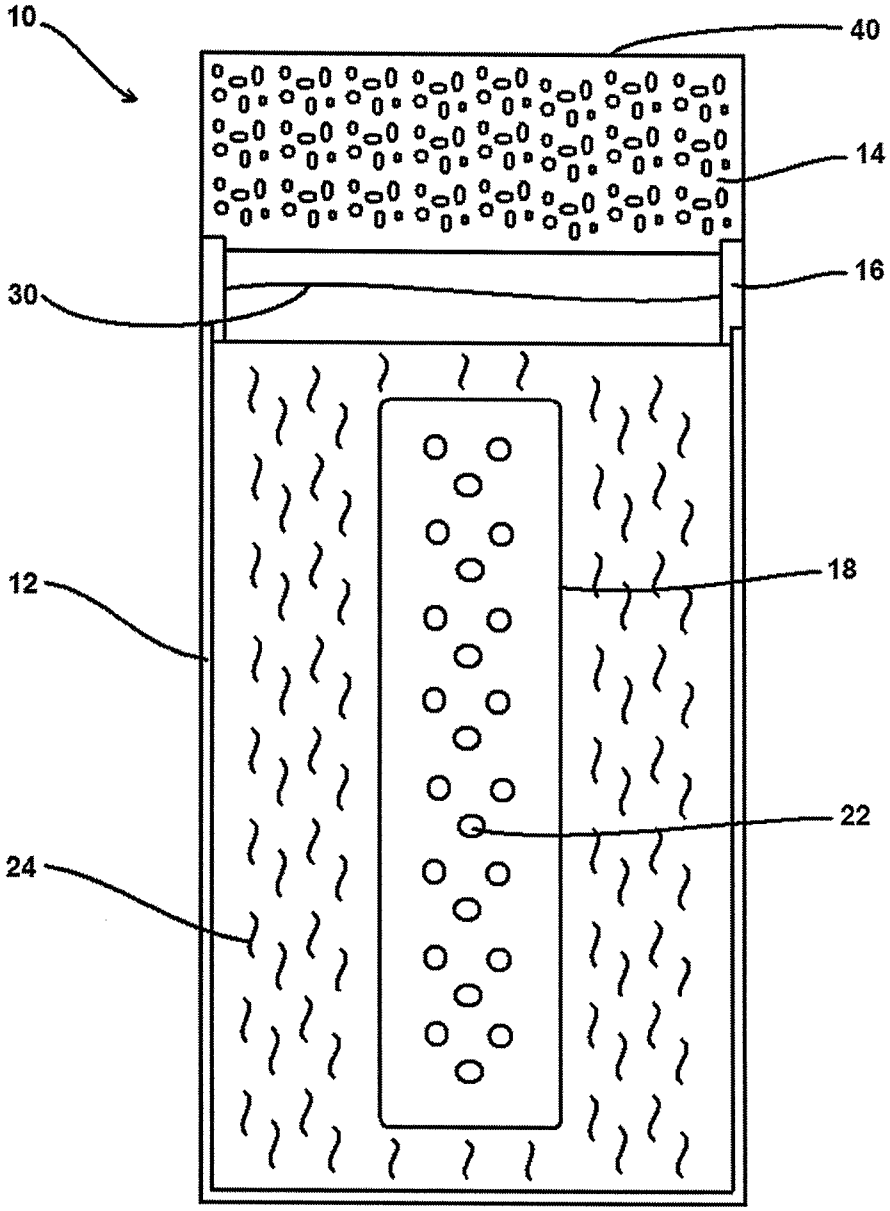


FIG. 2

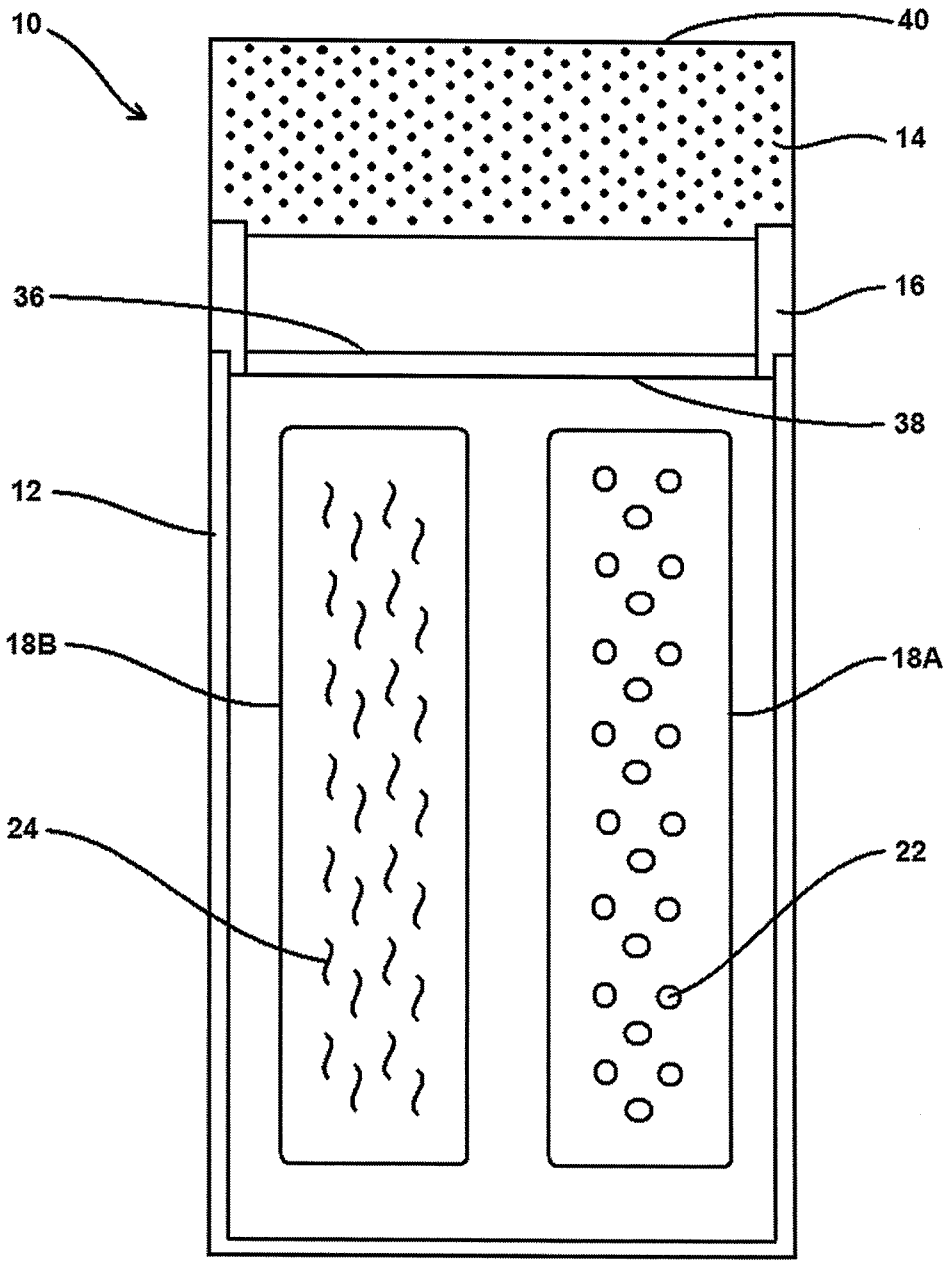


FIG. 3

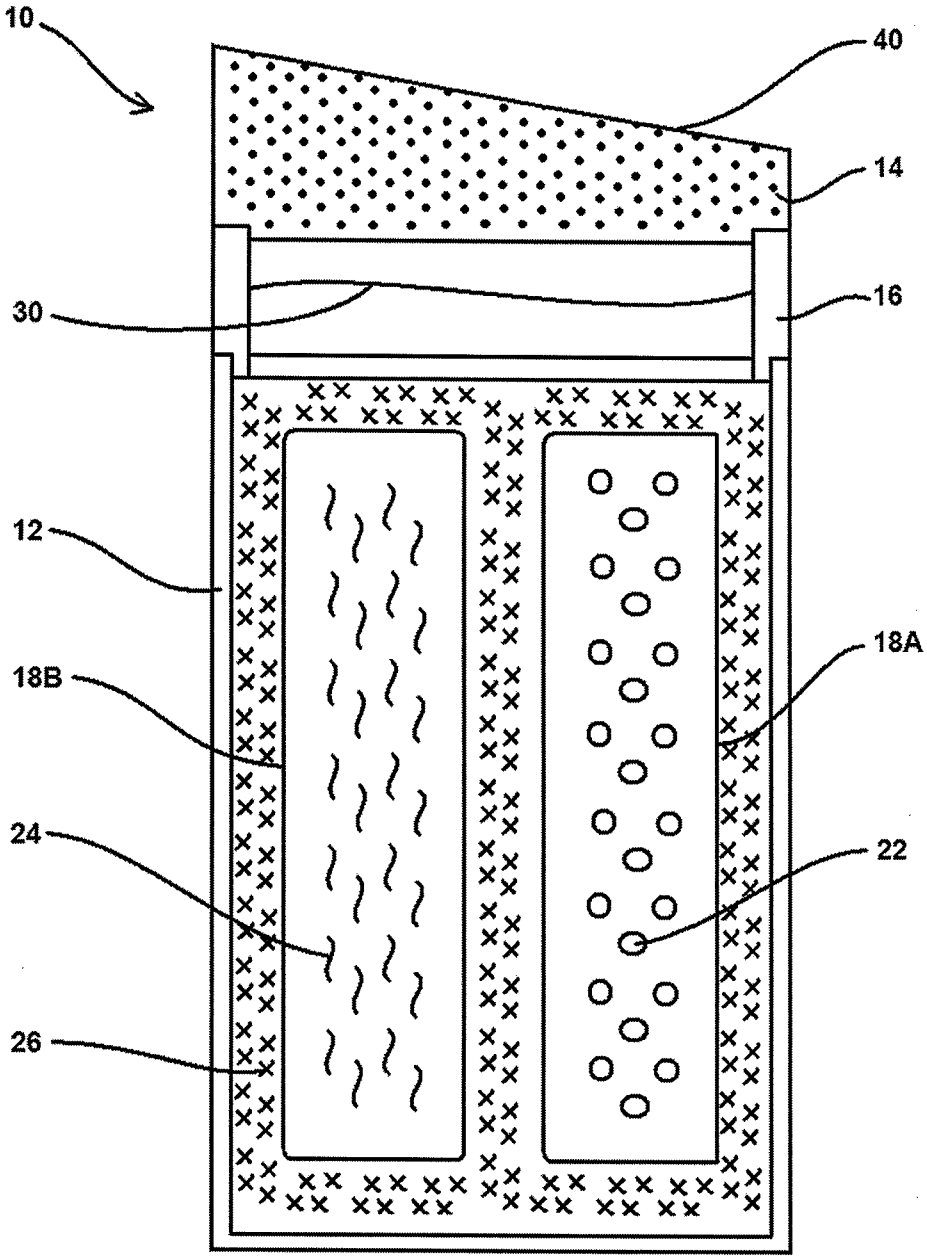


FIG. 4

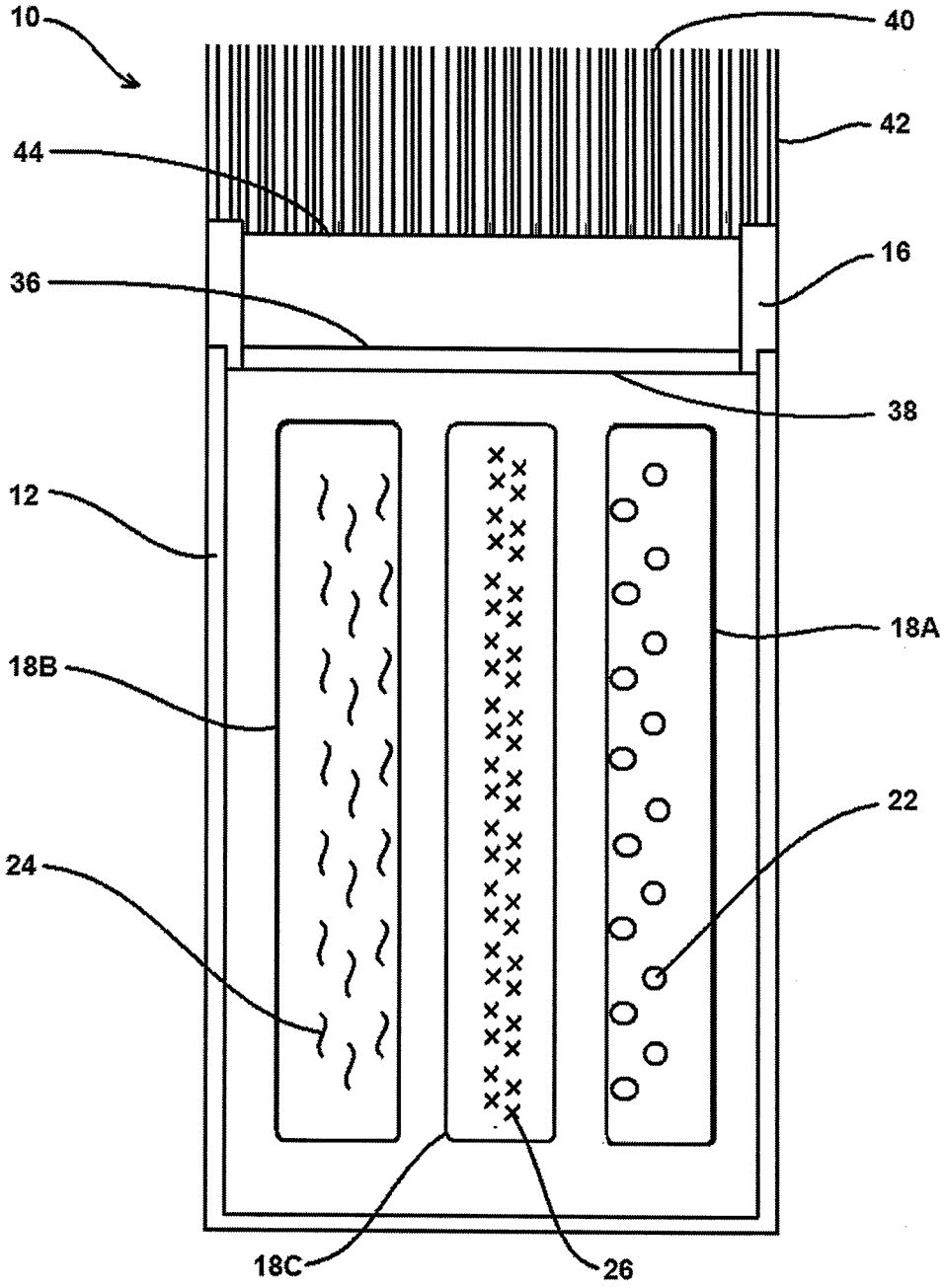


FIG. 5

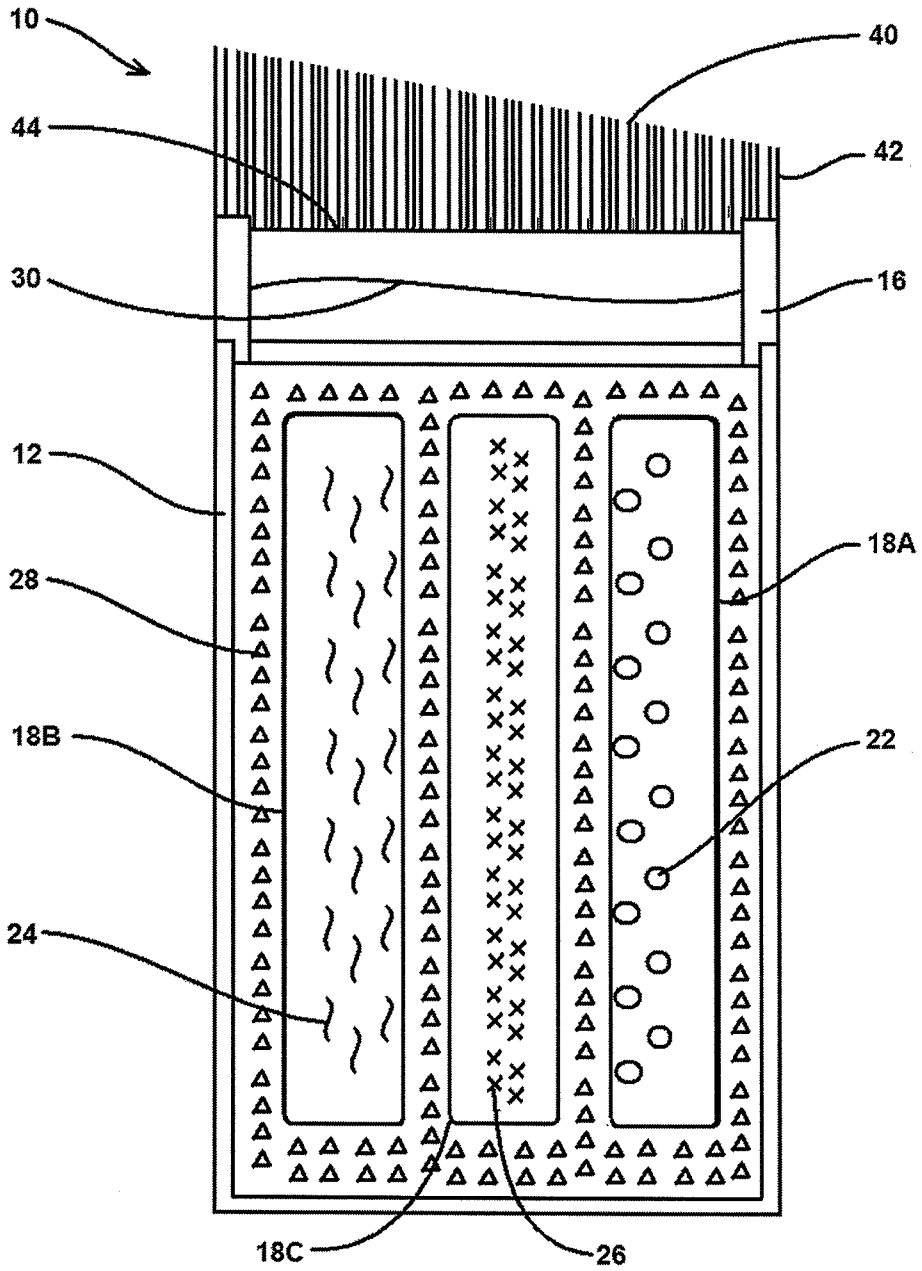


FIG. 6

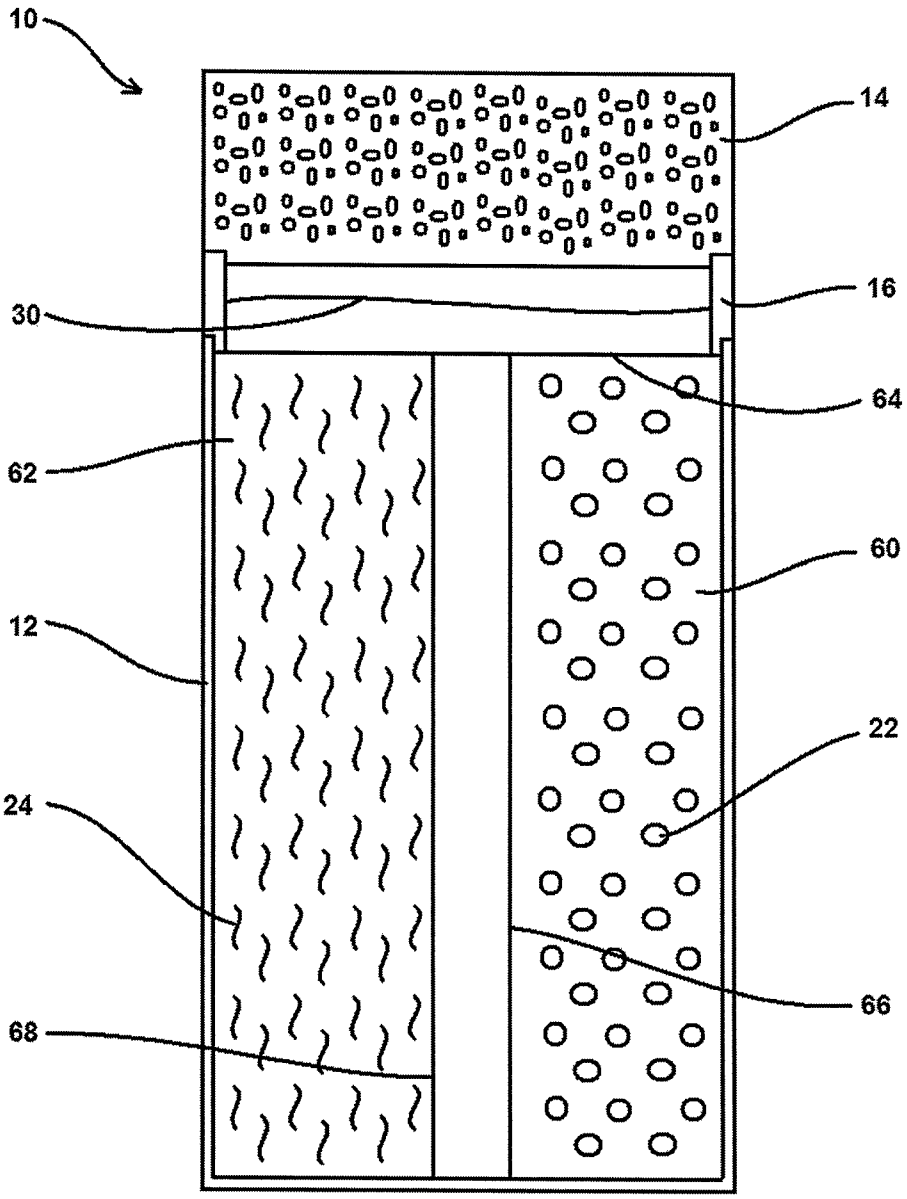


FIG. 7

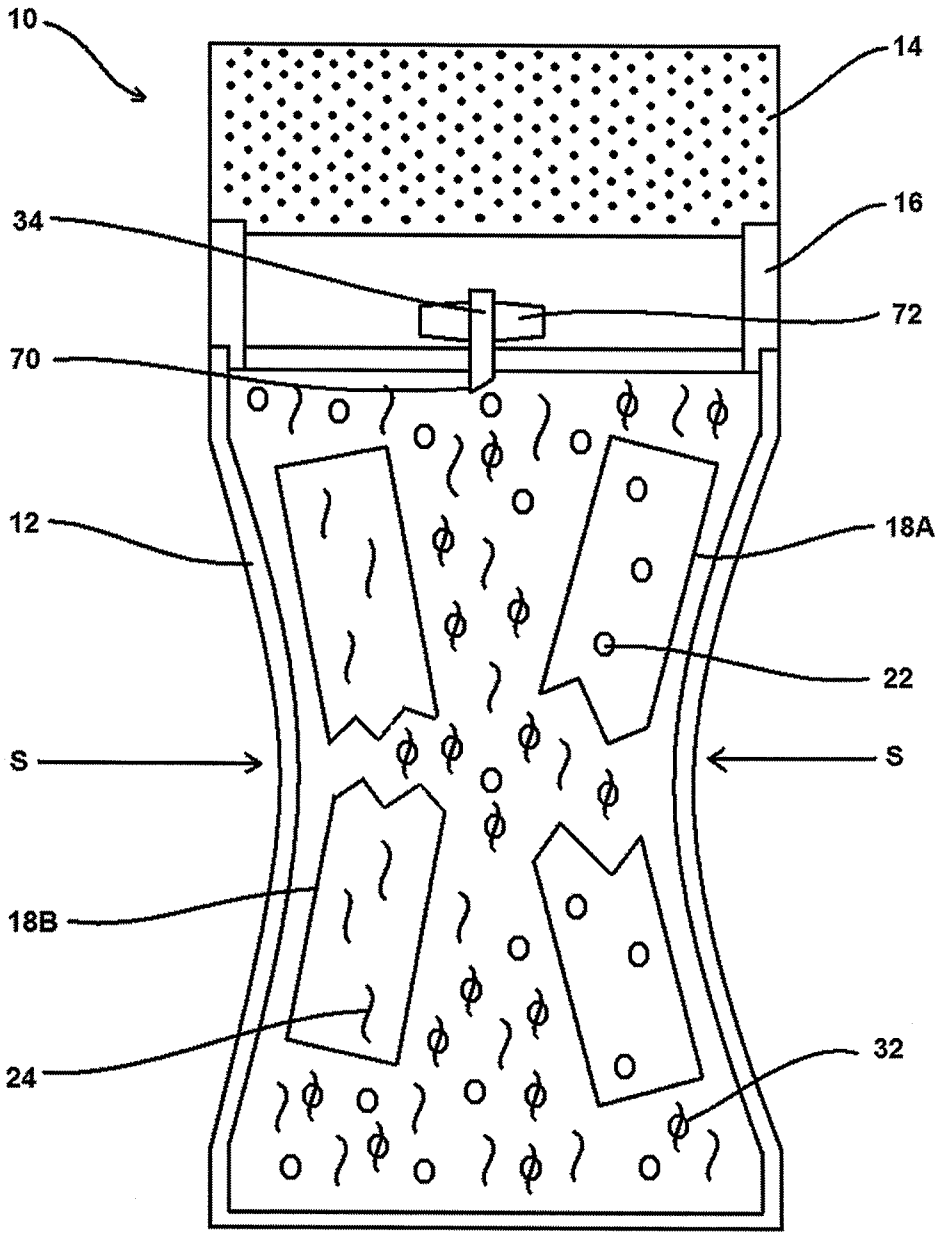


FIG. 8

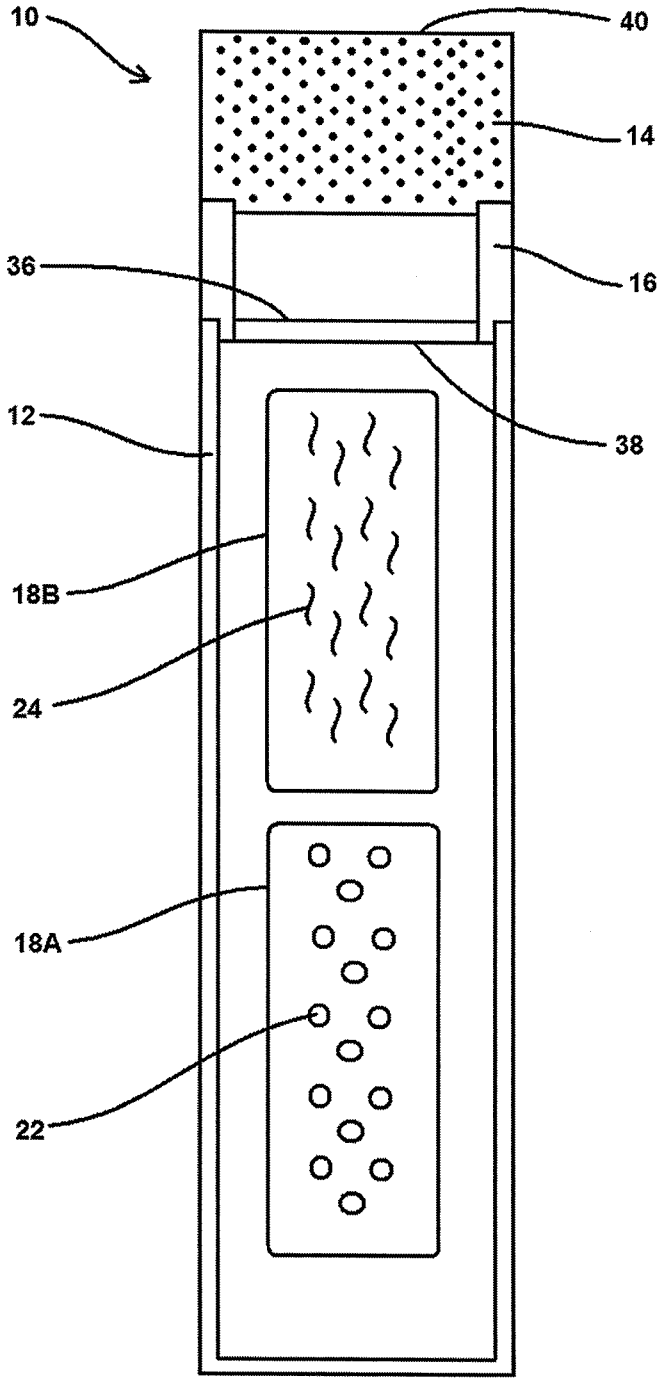


FIG. 9

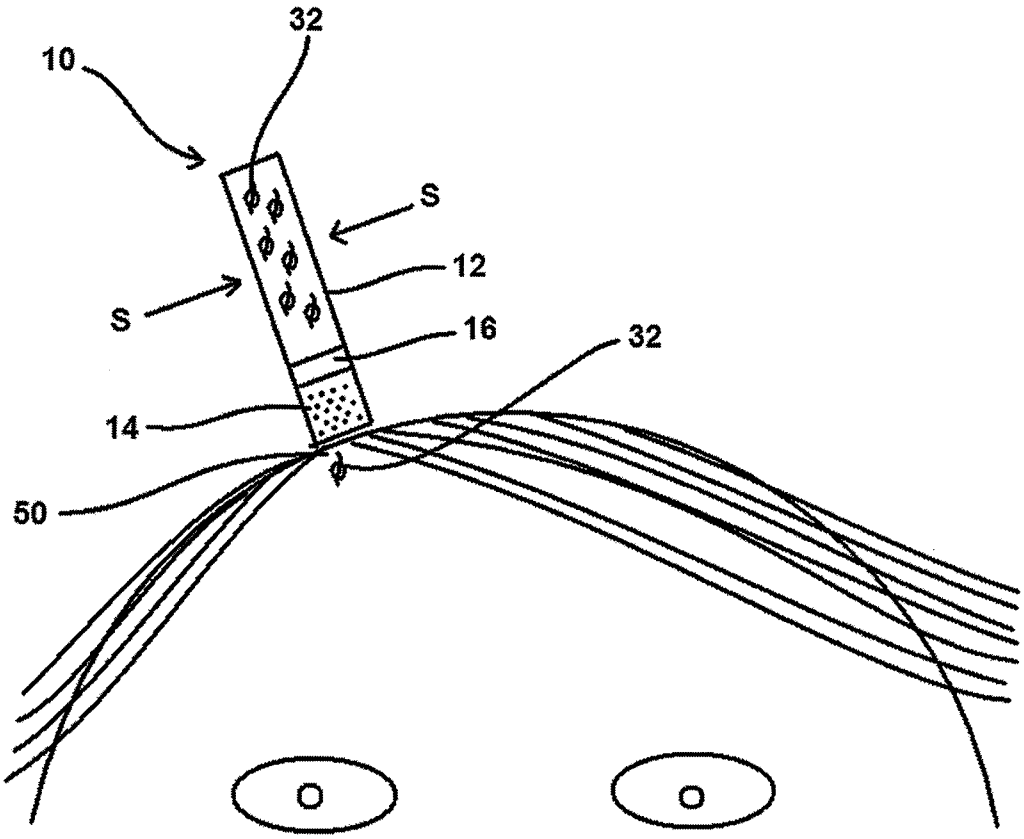


FIG. 10

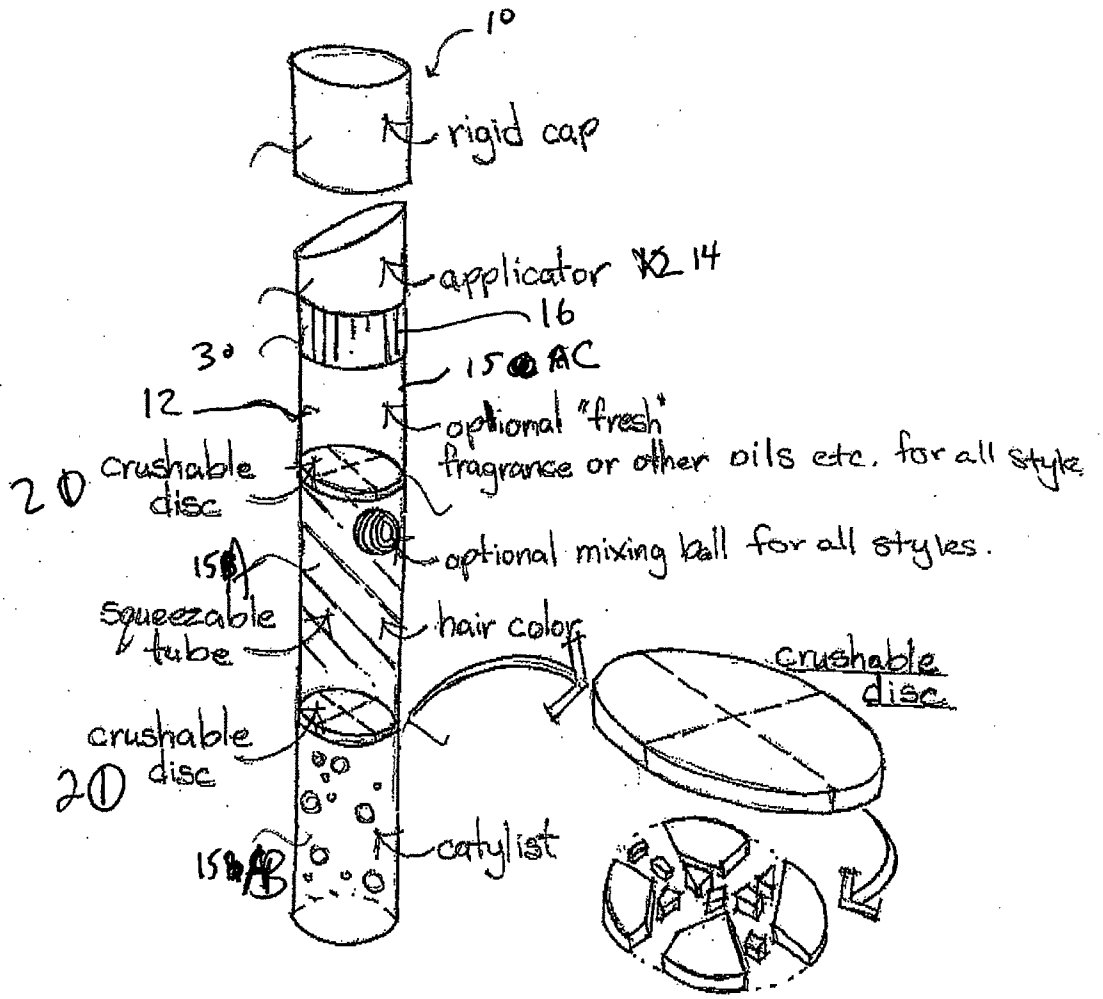

10
rigid cap
applicator 14
16
30
15
12
optional "fresh" fragrance or other oils etc. for all style
20
crushable disc
optional mixing ball for all styles.
15
squeezable tube
hair color
crushable disc
crushable disc
20
catylist
15

FIG. 11

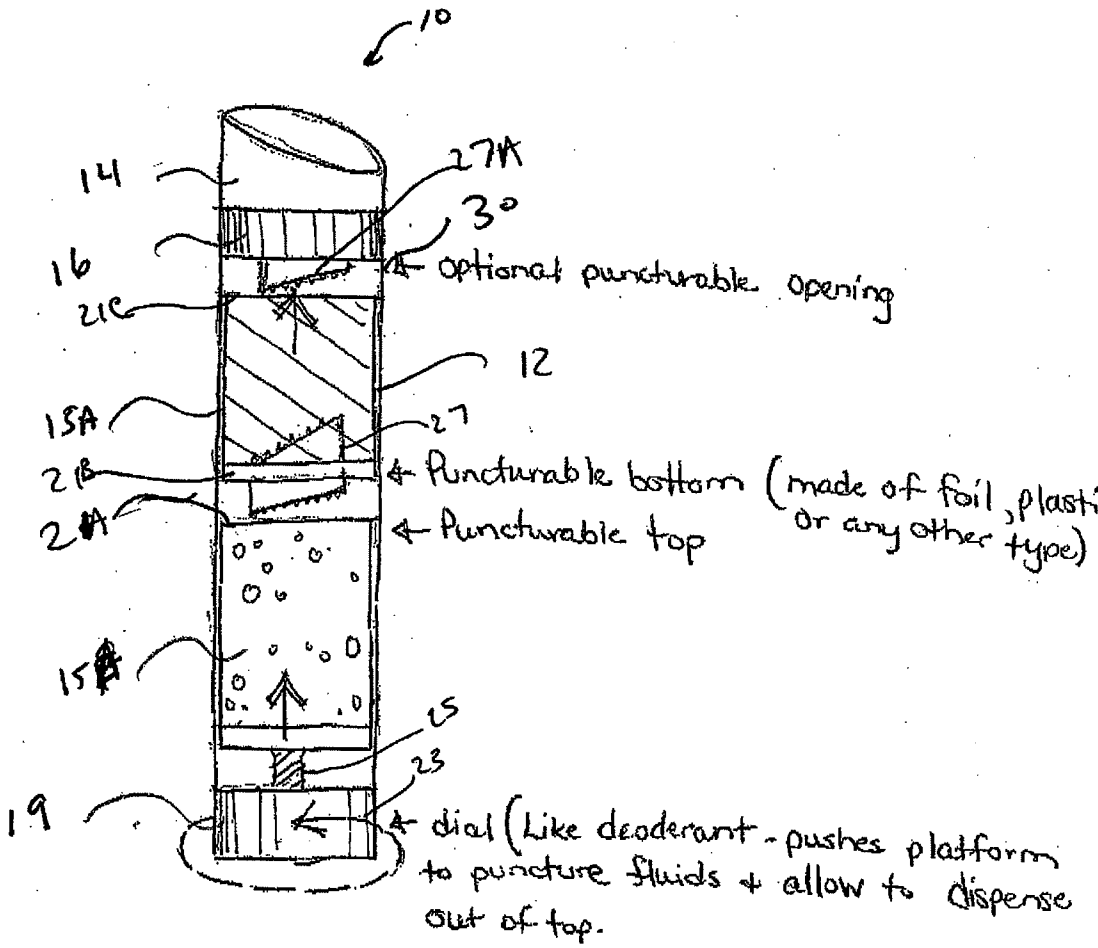

10
14
27A
30
16
Optional punctureable opening
21C
12
15A
27
21B
Puncturable bottom (made of foil, plastic or any other type)
21A
Punctureable top
15
25
23
19
dial (Like deoderant - pushes platform to puncture fluids + allow to dispense out of top.

FIG. 12

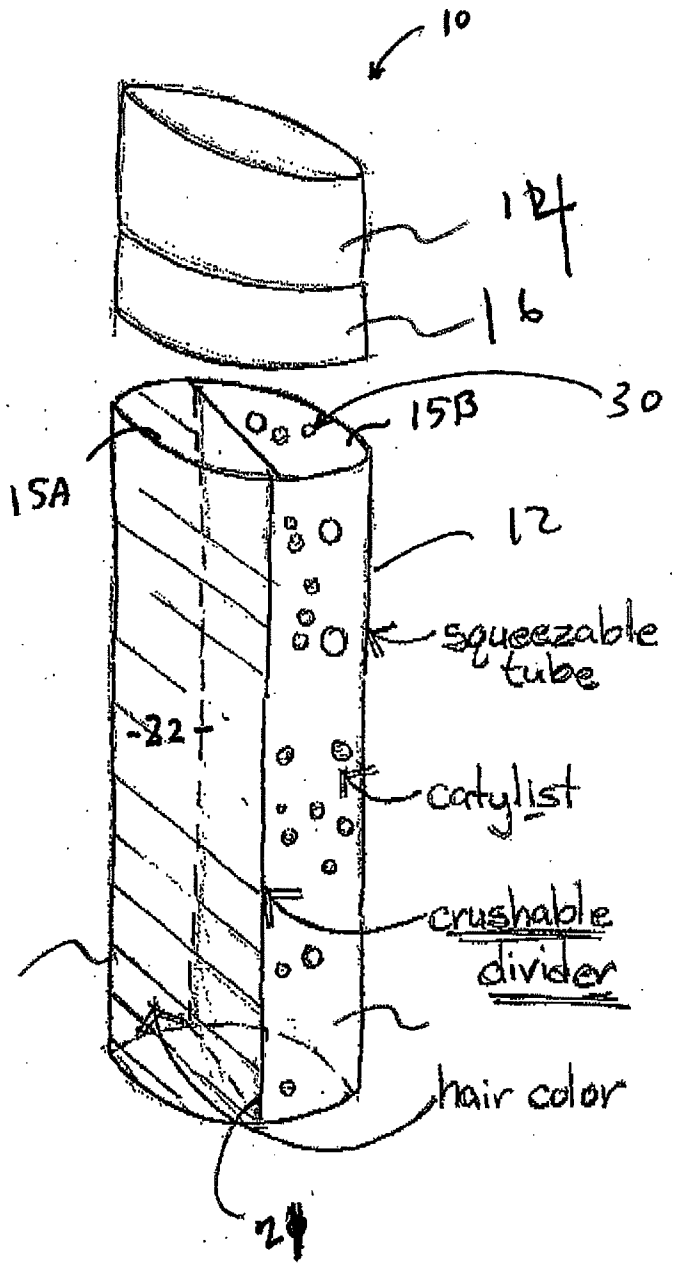

10
14
16
30
15B
15A
12
squeezable tube
22
catylist
crushable divider
hair color
24

FIG. 13

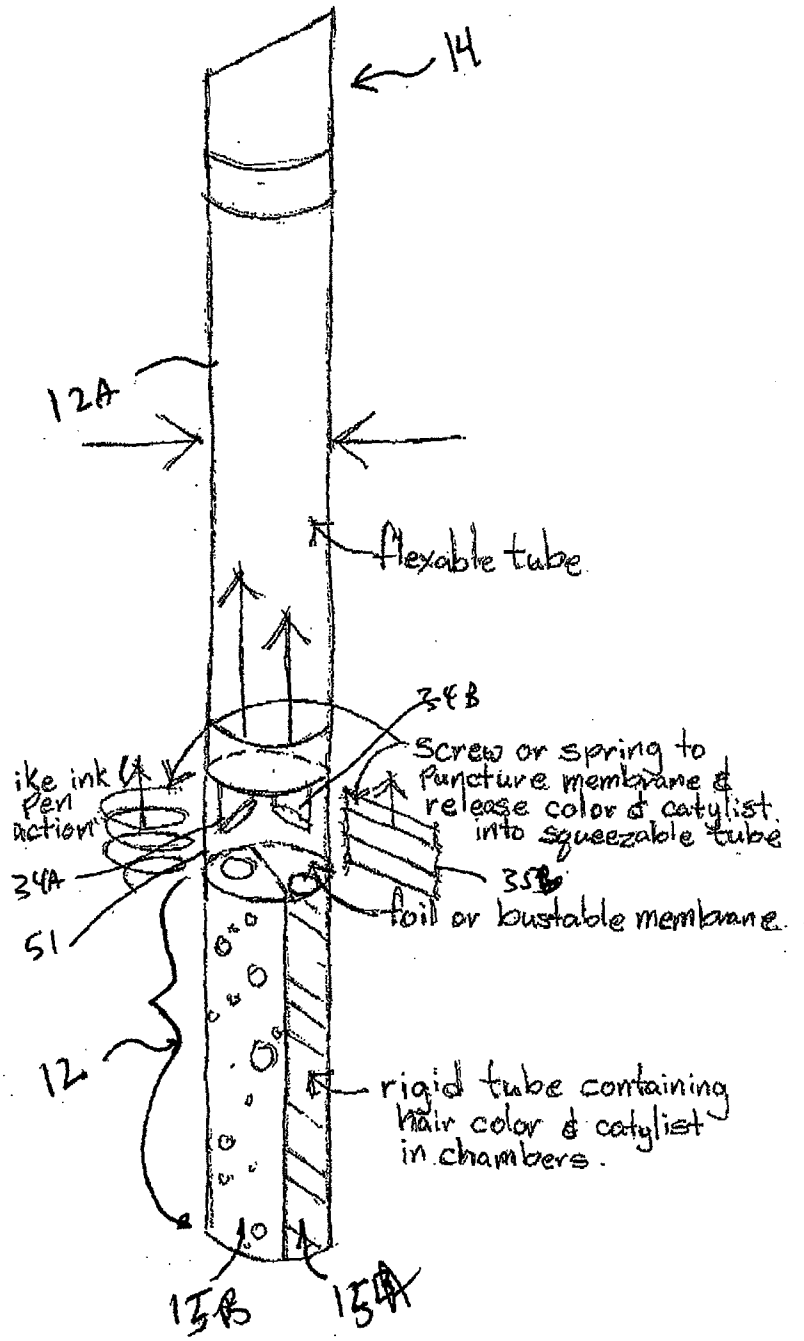
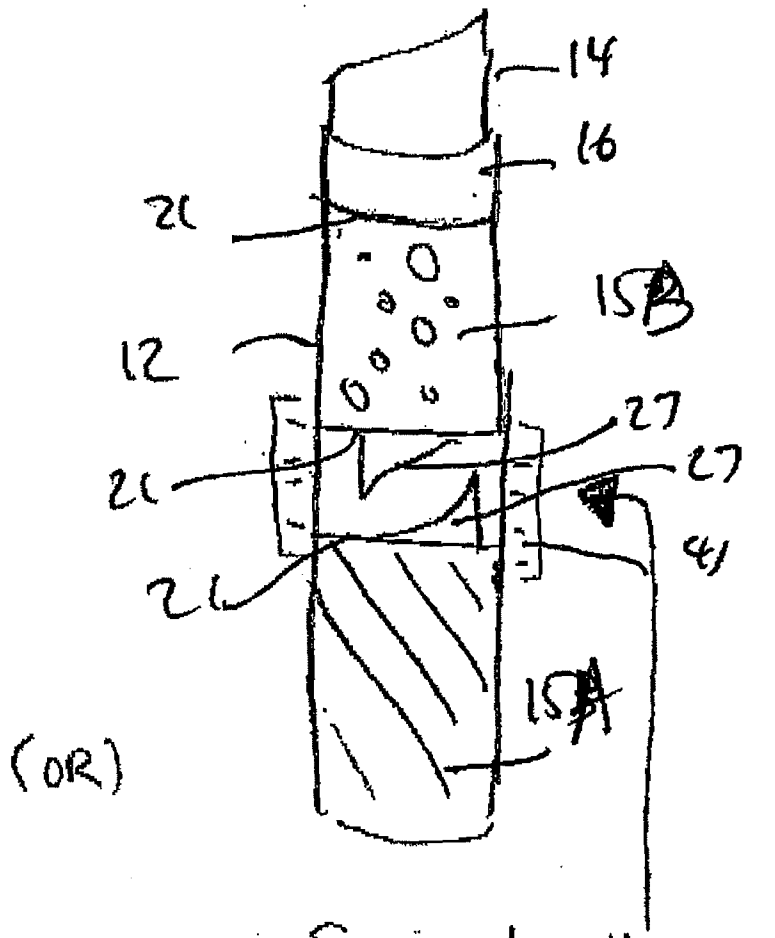

14
12A
flexable tube
35B
Screw or spring to Puncture membrane & release color & catylist into squeezable tube
like ink pen action
34A
35B
foil or bustable membrane
51
12
rigid tube containing hair color & catylist in chambers.
15B
15A

FIG. 14



Screw together & both liquids puncture at the same time to allow mixing.

FIG. 15

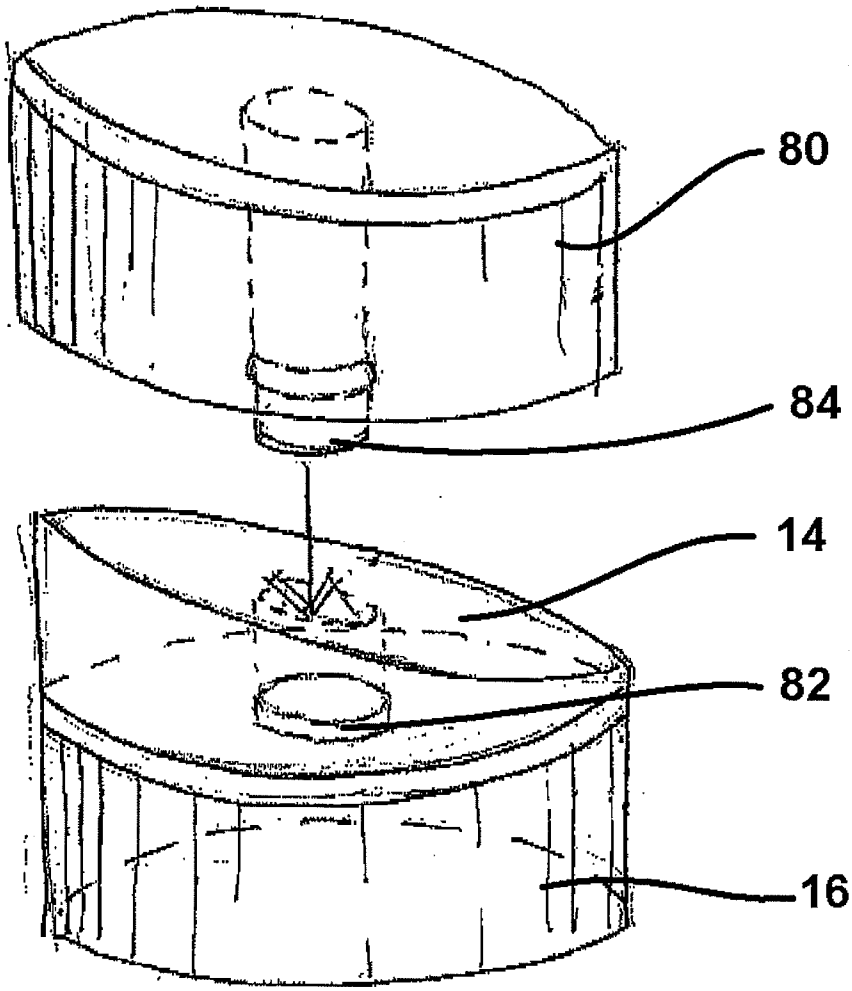


FIG. 16

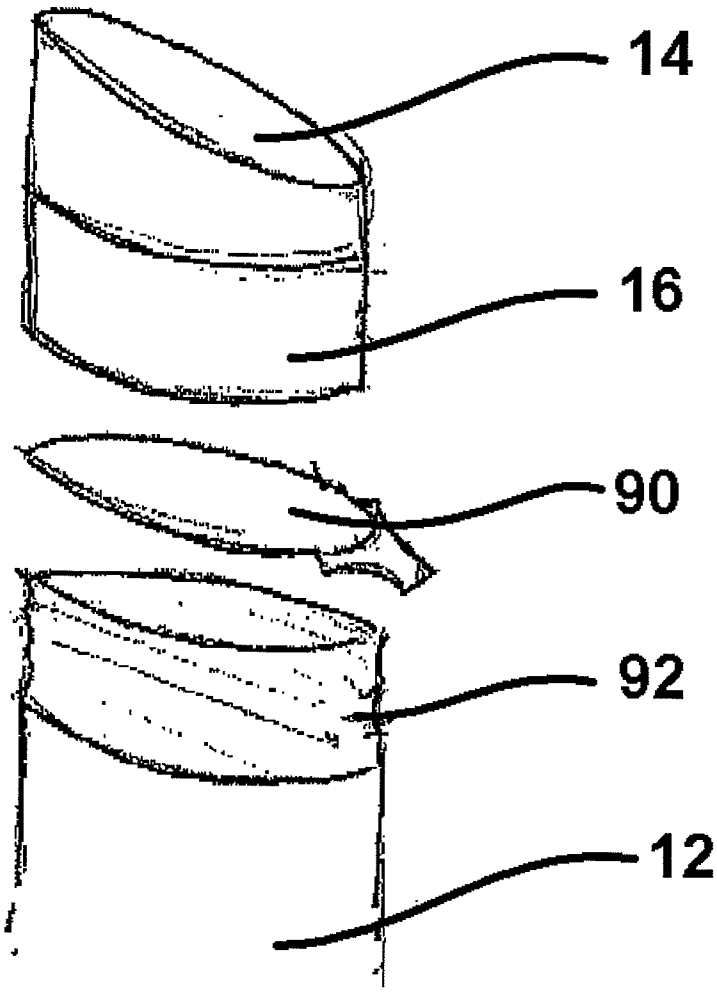


FIG. 17