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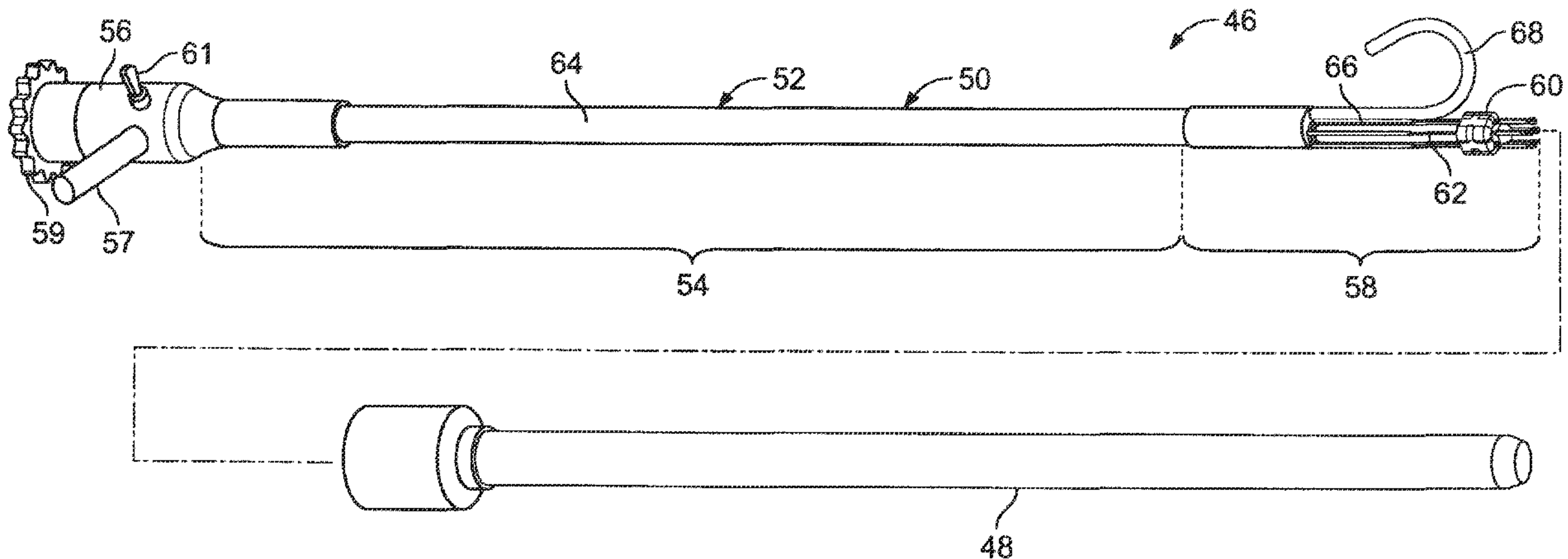
(72) **Inventeurs/Inventors:**
CREWS, SAMUEL T., US;
SWOPE, BRETTON, US;
ENGLAND, JUSTEN, US

(73) **Propriétaire/Owner:**
BOSTON SCIENTIFIC SCIMED, INC., US

(74) **Agent:** SMART & BIGGAR

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(54) Title: ENDOSCOPIC IMPLANT SYSTEM AND METHOD



(57) Abrégé/Abstract:

A system and device for implanting a food implant in a patient's stomach, by coupling the implant to a plurality of tissue-plication anchors already placed in the stomach, are disclosed. The device includes an elongate shaft assembly for accessing the stomach transorally, and on which the implant can be carried, and a plurality of cable members mounted on the shaft assembly. The cable members are disposed on the shaft assembly along a distal section thereof, and releasably attached to the shaft assembly's distal end. After a cable member engages a tissue-plication anchor, retracting the cable is operable to first release the member from a holder at the the distal end of the shaft assembly, then pull a portion of the anchor through an aperture in the implant. This process is repeated for each anchor in the stomach for attaching the implant to the stomach.

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(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US):
BAROSENSE, INC. [US/US]; 3698-c Haven Avenue,
Redwood City, CA 94063 (US).

(72) Inventors; and

(75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): **CREWS, Samuel, T.** [US/US]; 104040 Skyline Drive, Woodside, CA 94062 (US). **SWOPE, Bretton** [US/US]; 24812 Woodfield School Road, Gaithersburg, MD 20882 (US). **ENGLAND, Justen** [US/US]; 62 Langton Street, San Francisco, CA 94103 (US).

(74) Agents: **DEHLINGER Peter J.** et al.; **KING & SPALDING**, P.O. Box 889, Belmont, CA 94002-0889 (US).

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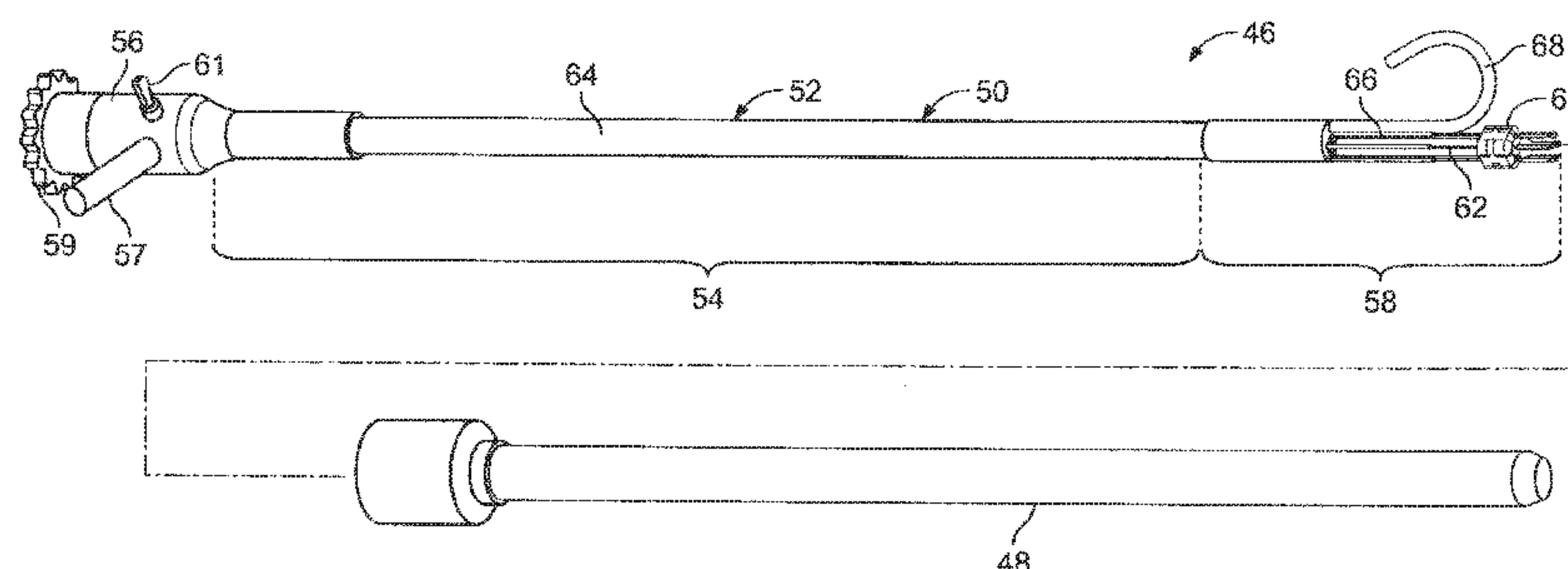


FIG. 3

(57) Abstract: A system and device for implanting a food implant in a patient's stomach, by coupling the implant to a plurality of tissue-plication anchors already placed in the stomach, are disclosed. The device includes an elongate shaft assembly for accessing the stomach transorally, and on which the implant can be carried, and a plurality of cable members mounted on the shaft assembly. The cable members are disposed on the shaft assembly along a distal section thereof, and releasably attached to the shaft assembly's distal end. After a cable member engages a tissue-plication anchor, retracting the cable is operable to first release the member from a holder at the the distal end of the shaft assembly, then pull a portion of the anchor through an aperture in the implant. This process is repeated for each anchor in the stomach for attaching the implant to the stomach.

ENDOSCOPIC IMPLANT SYSTEM AND METHOD

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to a device and method for accessing multiple targets within a hollow organ, for example, for use in attaching an implant to multiple tissue-supported anchors within the organ.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Non-invasive surgery to attach a medical implant within the body, e.g., within the interior of a hollow organ such as the stomach, has become an important surgical option. For example, bariatric surgery to limit food intake into the stomach, in the treatment of obesity, can now be done transorally, rather than having to penetrate the peritoneal cavity. In a transoral procedure, an access tube is placed in the patient's esophagus, as a guide for one more or more endoscopic tools used in attaching an implant to, and/or reconfiguring, the stomach.

[0003] An anatomical view of a human stomach S and associated features is shown in Fig. 1. The esophagus E delivers food from the mouth to the proximal portion of the stomach S. The z-line or gastro-esophageal junction Z is the irregularly-shaped border between the thin tissue of the esophagus and the thicker tissue of the stomach wall. The gastro-esophageal junction region G is the region encompassing the distal portion of the esophagus E, the z-line, and the proximal portion of the stomach S.

[0004] Stomach S includes a fundus F at its proximal end and an antrum A at its distal end. Antrum A feeds into the pylorus P which attaches to the duodenum D, the proximal region of the small intestine. Within the pylorus P is a sphincter that prevents backflow of food from the duodenum D into the stomach. The middle region of the small intestine, positioned distally of the duodenum D, is the jejunum J.

[0005] Several prior applications, including U.S. Publication No. US 2007/0276432 having a priority date of October 8, 2004 and U.S. Publication No. US 2008/0065122, filed May 23, 2006 describe methods according to which medical implants are coupled to tissue structures, such as plications or folds, formed within the stomach. Examples of methods and devices for forming such tissue structures are described in U.S. Publication No. US 2007/0219571 (entitled ENDOSCOPIC PLICATION DEVICES AND METHOD), filed October 3, 2006, U.S. Application No. 11/900,757 (entitled ENDOSCOPIC PLICATION DEVICE AND METHOD), filed September 13, 2007, and U.S. Application No. 12/050,169

(entitled ENDOSCOPIC STAPLING DEVICES AND METHODS), filed March 18, 2008.

[0006] As disclosed in these prior applications, more robust and long lasting coupling between the implant and the surrounding stomach wall tissue is achieved when the plications/folds are formed by retaining regions of serosal tissue (i.e., the tissue on the exterior surface of the stomach) in contact with one another. Over time, adhesions form between the opposed serosal layers. These adhesions help to create strong bonds that can facilitate retention of the plication fold over extended durations, despite the forces imparted on them by stomach movement and implanted devices

[0007] Several of the disclosed methods for forming tissue plications include a step in which a hole or cut is formed in the plication, using the plication forming device or a separate tissue-cutting device. Typically, the device also fastens the fold with an array of staples that are formed in the tissue about the hole. An example of this type of stapled tissue plication is shown in Fig. 2A, which is a cross-section taken along line 2B-2B in Fig. 1. Stapling devices and methods for forming such stapled tissue folds of this type are described in co-owned U.S. Application No. 11/542,457, entitled ENDOSCOPIC PLICATION DEVICES AND METHODS, filed October 3, 2006, and published September 20, 2007 as US 2007-0219571, and co-owned U.S. Application No. 12/050,169, entitled ENDOSCOPIC STAPLING DEVICES AND METHODS, filed March 18, 2008.

[0008] In a typical procedure that uses the stapled plications for implant attachment, a plurality of stapled tissue plications, each with an anchor-receiving hole, are formed in a tissue, such as illustrated in Figs. 2A and 2B. In the latter figure, five such plications are formed in the interior of the stomach, for attaching a food-restrictive pouch, or restrictor, near a patient's esophagus, to limiting food intake by the patient. After formation of the plications, an anchor (Fig. 2C) is placed in each hole (Fig. 2D), and the implant, e.g., restrictor, is attached to the plications by introducing, for each plication, an anchor that extends through the hole and through an anchor-receiving aperture in the implant (Fig. 2E). By way of illustration, for placement of a stomach restrictor attached to five plications formed within the stomach (Fig. 2F), the implant operation will require ten separate steps in which an endoscopic device is placed in and then removed from the stomach transorally: five for forming each of the stomach plications, and five for each anchor placement between a plication and anchor-receiving aperture in the restrictor. A system and method for implanting a food-restrictive device of this type are detailed in co-owned U.S. application

12/175,242, filed July 17, 2008, corresponding to PCT application PCT/US2008/008729.

[0009] Given the surgical time and inconvenience, and the patient discomfort, associated with each transoral-accessing step, it would be desirable to reduce the number of accessing steps needed for attaching an implant to a tissue plication. Co-owned U.S. Patent Application No. 12/434,226 for PPLICATION TAGGING DEVICE AND METHOD, filed May 1, 2009, discloses a device and method for placing an anchor in the plication at the time the plication is formed, thus reducing to five the number of accessing steps needed to place five tissue-attached anchors within the stomach. The present application discloses a device and method capable of accessing a plurality of spaced targets within the organ, such as the five tissue-supported anchors, and optionally, for attaching an implant to the targets in a single accessing step.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0010] The invention includes, in one aspect, a device for engaging a plurality of tissue targets within a hollow organ of a subject. The device includes an elongate shaft assembly having a proximal section terminating at a proximal end and a distal section terminating at a distal end. The shaft assembly comprises (a) a cable holder carried at the distal end of the shaft assembly, (b) a plurality of cable members extending along the shaft assembly, each cable member including (i) a cable whose axial position can be manipulated from the proximal end of the assembly and (ii) a distal-end tool for engaging a selected tissue target within the hollow organ, (c) for each cable member, a release structure for releasably attaching the associated cable on the holder, and (d) a steering mechanism extending along the shaft assembly by which the cable holder can be manipulated from the proximal end of the assembly to place a selected cable member tool adjacent a selected target within the organ.

[0011] With a selected cable-assembly tool positioned adjacent a selected tissue target and the tool manipulated to engage the selected target, axial movement of the tissue-engaged cable with respect to the holder and/or release of the cable from the holder allows the holder and its remaining attached cable members to be moved to place the tool of another selected cable member in position for engaging another selected tissue target.

[0012] The distal section of the shaft assembly may be detachable from the assembly's proximal section, for replacement or cleaning

The device may further include an endoscope carried on the shaft assembly, independently movable with respect to the cable holder at the distal end of the shaft assembly.

[0013] A proximal portion of each cable member may be disposed within a shaft assembly casing extending along the proximal section of the shaft assembly, and an exposed distal portion may be disposed along the distal section thereof, which is substantially less than proximal portion. The portion of each cable member disposed within the shaft assembly casing may be housed within a cable sheath.

[0014] The holder may include, for each cable member, an axially extending slot formed in the holder, and the release structure may include a passive capture member adapted to releasably hold the cable assembly within the slot, for axial movement therein, but deform when the tool and an engaged tissue target are pulled away from the slot, to release the cable member and engaged tool from the holder. Alternatively, the release structure in each holder may include an active capture member whose operation can be controlled at the proximal end of the shaft assembly between a capture position, in which the cable assembly is supported within the holder slot, for axial movement therein, and a release position in which the cable member and engaged tissue target are released from the holder.

[0015] In another general embodiment, the exposed portion of each cable member is housed within an axially compressible sheath that allows that distal end of the cable to be retracted, shortening the length of the exposed portion of the exposed portion of the cable member. The distal sheath of each cable member may have axially extending slots, to enhance the axial compressibility of the sheath. The release structure in this embodiment may be a distal-end fixture at the distal end of the sheath and which is releasably attached by friction fit to the holder. The distal-end fixture may be dimensioned to block the cable tool and attached tissue target, such that retracting the cable and engaged target against the distal-end fixture is effective, with further retraction, to pull the fixture, cable member and engaged tissue from the holder.

[0016] The cable in each cable member may include an inner wire that is axially shiftable within the cable, and the cable-assembly tool may include a pair of clamp arms carried at the distal end of the wire, such that movement of the wire within the cable in distal and proximal directions is effective to open and close the clamp arms, respectively.

[0017] The device may be used, for example, in attaching within a subject's stomach, to a plurality of tissue targets having anchors fastened to tissue plications within the stomach, an implant having a plurality of apertures adapted to engage the anchors, to attach the implant

within the stomach. In this embodiment, the shaft assembly may include an implant mount for holding the implant releasably on the shaft assembly, with the cable members received through the implant apertures, and the cable-assembly tools may be adapted to clamp the anchors, such that withdrawing a cable in a selected cable member, after clamping a selected anchor, is effective to release the cable member from its release structure in the distal-end holder, allowing the tool and engaged anchor to be retracted distally until a cap portion of the anchor is pulled through the associated aperture in the implant. The implant may have a distal opening, and may be adapted to be carried on the device with a distal portion of the shaft assembly inserted through the distal opening in the implant, where the implant is forced into collapsed condition when the cable members are attached to the distal-end holder. The implant mount may have a plurality of posts positioned about the shaft assembly, for mounting the implant on the shaft assembly, with the posts received in apertures spaced about a distal opening in the implant, wherein the implant can be disengaged from the device only when all of the cable members have been released from the holder.

[0018] Also disclosed is a system for implanting in a patient's stomach, to a plurality of tissue targets having anchors fastened to tissue plications within the stomach, an implant having a plurality of apertures adapted to engage the anchors, to attach the implant within the stomach. The system includes (A) an implantation device comprising an elongate shaft assembly having a proximal section terminating at a proximal end and a distal section terminating at a distal end, where the shaft assembly comprises (a) a cable holder carried at the distal end of the assembly, (b) a plurality of cable members extending along the shaft assembly, each cable member including a cable whose axial position can be manipulated from the proximal end of the assembly, and a distal-end tool for engaging a selected tissue supported-anchor within the stomach, (c) for each cable member, a release structure for releasably attaching the associated cable on the holder, (d) a steering mechanism by which the cable holder can be manipulated from the proximal end of the assembly, to place a selected cable member tool adjacent a selected tissue-supported anchor the organ, and (e) an implant mount carried on the shaft assembly's distal end section, for supporting the implant thereon.

[0019] With a selected cable-member tool positioned adjacent a selected tissue-supported anchor and its tool manipulated to engage that anchor, axial movement of the anchor-engaged cable with respect to the holder and/or release of the cable from the holder allows the holder and its remaining supported cable members to be moved to place the tool of another selected cable member in position for engaging another selected tissue-supported

anchor, and retracting the tool and engaged anchor is operable to successively (i) release the assembly tool and attached anchor from the release structure in the holder, and (ii) pull a cap of the anchor through the implant aperture, to attach that anchor to the implant.

[0020] Also forming part of the system is an overtube adapted for transoral placement in a patient, by which the device can be placed in the patient's stomach. The overtube may be axially movable on the device's shaft assembly between extended and retracted positions at which the overtube covers and exposes the implant mount and implant carried thereon, respectively.

[0021] The implant mount in the system device may have a plurality of posts positioned about the shaft assembly, with the posts received in apertures spaced about an opening formed in the implant, and wherein the implant can be disengaged from the device only when all of the cable members have been released from the holder.

The system may be used, for example, for implanting in a patient's stomach, (i) a food-restrictor implant having a proximal opening about which the apertures are arranged, and which in operative condition, is designed to receive food from the esophagus, (ii) a web-like food-restrictor implant having a plurality of connected arms, each having an aperture thereon; and (iii) a strap-like implant having one or more connected straps that have the anchor-engaging apertures formed therein.

[0022] In another aspect, the invention includes a method for implanting in a patient's stomach, to a plurality of tissue targets having anchors fastened to tissue plications within the stomach, an implant having a plurality of apertures adapted to engage the anchors, to attach the implant within the stomach. The method comprises the steps of:

(a) forming within the patient's stomach, adjacent the gastro-esophageal junction, a plurality of tissue plications, each supporting an anchor that is in contact with opposite sides of the plication, and which provides an elastomeric cap for anchoring to the implant;

(b) accessing the patient's stomach with an endoscopic device having a shaft assembly with a distal end holder that can be moved within the patient's stomach to selected positions, and a plurality of cable members releasably attached to holder, for movement therewith, each assembly having a distal-end tool operable to engage an anchor cap, where the implant is carried on the distal section of the device with the plurality of cable members received through the plurality of implant apertures;

(c) manipulating the device to position the holder adjacent a selected plication anchor in the stomach;

(d) manipulating the tool of a selected cable member to engage the cap of the anchor at the selected plication,

(e) without having to remove the device from the patient's stomach, repeating steps (c) and (d) until each cable member has been attached to each anchor; and

(f) before or after repeating steps (c) and (d) for any selected anchor, pulling the selected cable member tool and engaged anchor cap in a proximal direction through the associated aperture in the implant; and

(g) before or after each step (f), releasing the engaged anchor caps from the associated cable-assembly tool, and withdrawing the device from the patient's stomach.

[0023] The cable members may be releasably attached to the device's distal-end holder, wherein step (f) may include retracting the cable member tool and engaged anchor cap to release the tool from the distal-end holder.

[0024] These and other objects and features of the invention will become more fully apparent when the following detailed description of the invention is read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0025] Fig. 1 is a schematic illustration of a human stomach and a portion of the small intestine.

[0026] Fig. 2A is a partial section of a stomach wall showing a stomach wall plication having an opening formed in it.

[0027] Fig. 2B is a cross-section view taken along the plane designated 2B-2B in Fig. 1, and illustrating five plications formed in a gastro-esophageal junction region of the stomach.

[0028] Fig. 2C is a perspective view of an anchor used in practicing an embodiment of the invention designed for attaching a food restrictive implant (restrictor) to the stomach.

[0029] Fig. 2D is a perspective view of an anchor held in a tissue plication.

[0030] Fig. 2E is a perspective view of a restrictor employed in an embodiment of the invention.

[0031] Fig. 2F is a perspective view of the restrictor attached within the stomach adjacent the gastro-esophageal junction.

[0032] Fig. 3 illustrates an endoscopic implant system and device constructed in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

[0033] Figs. 4A and 4B are side and perspective views, respectively, of the distal end region of the device shown in Fig. 3.

[0034] Figs. 5A and 5B are perspective views of the distal end of the device illustrated in Fig. 3A, showing engagement of a cable-assembly tool with an anchor before (Fig. 5A) and after (Fig. 5B) release of the tool and engaged anchor from the holder at the end device.

[0035] Figs. 6A and 6B are perspective views of the distal end section of a device constructed according to an alternative embodiment of the invention.

[0036] Fig. 7A is an enlarged perspective view of a distal-end fixture in a cable assembly in the device illustrated in Figs. 6A and 6B.

[0037] Figs. 7B and 7C are enlarged perspective views of the distal end of the device in Figs. 6A and 6B, before (Fig. 7A) and after (Fig. 7B) placement of a restrictor on the device.

[0038] Figs. 8A and 8B are perspective views of the distal end of the device illustrated in Figs. 6A and 6B, showing engagement of a cable-assembly tool with an anchor before (Fig. 8A) and after (8B) release of the tool and engaged anchor from the holder at the end device.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0039] The system and device of the present invention are designed for engaging a plurality of spaced tissue targets within a hollow organ of a subject, such as the stomach. The targets that are accessed may be organ tissue itself, when it is desired to manipulate two or more organ tissue regions, for example, when reconfiguring the stomach in a bariatric operation to reduce stomach volume. More typically, the tissue targets to be engaged are fasteners, sutures, anchors, or the like that have been attached at selected regions within the organ, where “engaging a tissue target” means engaging a fastener, suture, anchor or the like that is attached to a tissue at a target region.

Tissue plications for coupling an implant to the stomach

[0040] One type of tissue target that will be described herein, for illustrative purposes, is an anchor coupled to a tissue plication as illustrated in Figs. 2A-2D. Fig. 2A shows a tissue plication 12 having an interior hole 14 formed therein and surrounded by one or more annular arrays of staples 15. In the exemplary embodiment described below for implanting a restrictive implant or pouch, referred to herein as a restrictor, five such plications are formed, as shown in Fig. 2B, approximately equally spaced about the esophageal/gastrointestinal

junction in the stomach. Each plication will receive an anchor, such as anchor 16 shown in Figs. 2C and 2D.

[0041] Representative anchor 16, which is shown in Fig. 2C, includes a base 18, a stem 20, and a head or cap 22. The anchor is formed using materials that are durable within the stomach environment, and provide desired elastomeric properties. For example, the cap may be molded out of a higher durometer compliant (elastomeric) material (such as 50 shore A durometer Silicone) while the stem and base may be molded out of a softer compliant material (such as 5 shore A durometer Silicone). Since the loading on the anchor from the restrictor implant can be seen as shear against the edges of the opening in the plication, the stem is formed to have a relatively large diameter (2mm – 8mm) to minimize stress and abrasion on the stomach wall tissue inside the opening. The edges of the anchor are molded with a generous fillet radii to minimize abrasion of stomach wall tissue. Cap 22 includes a ring 24 and a plurality of struts 26 coupling the ring to the stem, as shown., and loop 28 extending from the ring.

[0042] The anchor is elastically deformable to an elongated shape in response to application of tension to the ring 24 or loop 28 (collectively referred to as the “rim”). This allows the anchor to be drawn into a streamlined shape so that it can be drawn through the hole in the plication, illustrated in Fig. 2D, and also through an aperture 38 in the restrictor, as shown in Fig. 2F. When the cap is pulled from the rim, its shape lengthens and slims down to fit through a much smaller hole. For example in one embodiment, in its natural state the cap has an outer head diameter of approximately .600 inch (15mm), but in its streamlined orientation it can fit through a plication opening of .200 inch (5mm). However, once implanted, the cap’s shape resists pull-out force to a higher degree since the rim is not being pulled and lengthened directly. Also in this embodiment, the base is designed so it will not pull through the hole and may have an outer diameter of approximately 1 inch (25.4mm).

[0043] The food-restrictive pouch or restrictor, shown at 30 in Figs. 2E and 2F, is an implant designed to slow the passage of food from the esophagus into the stomach. The restrictor is positioned in the stomach such that food enters the restrictor through a proximal opening 32 and exits through a reduced-diameter distal opening 34. The restrictor and/or openings are proportioned to slow the rate at which food can move into or through the restrictor, and/or from the restrictor into the rest of the stomach.

[0044] In a preferred design, restrictor 30 includes features that minimize pulling against the anchors when the restrictor encounters stress as a result of food moving through the restrictor and/or movement of the stomach. Minimizing pulling at the anchors is

beneficial for minimizing stress on the stomach wall tissue coupled to the anchors. In general, the restrictor 30 is designed to have compliance between the anchor points (i.e., the points at which the implant is coupled to the tissue directly or using the anchors). This compliance may be achieved using the geometry of the restrictor and/or using restrictor materials selected to give compliance between the anchor points.

[0045] In the embodiment shown in Figs. 2E and 2F, restrictor 30 is a pouch having a wall 36 and a plurality of anchor apertures 38 formed in the wall and spaced about the proximal-end opening of the restrictor, each for receiving an anchor 16 therein in Fig. 2F, for coupling the restrictor to the anchors, and thus to the tissue plications formed in the stomach. The restrictor wall is may be undulating, as shown, defining multiple folds that give it compliance even when molded from a relatively more stiff material (such as 30 shore A silicone). When viewed from the side, the proximal edge 40 of the restrictor undulates to define peaks in the profile of the proximal edge, such as peaks 42.

[0046] As seen in Fig. 2E, the anchor apertures are positioned between the proximal-edge peaks. The apertures may be surrounded by reinforced sections formed using thicker regions of silicone, or a stronger material embedded in or attached to the silicone. Additional reinforcements, such as ribs 44, may extend from the proximal-end peaks towards the distal-end orifice 34.

[0047] The edge of the wall defining the distal-end orifice 34 preferably includes folds or undulations as shown, allowing the orifice to be compliant as well. In addition, small apertures 45 are arranged around the orifice to allow the restrictor to be coupled to the restrictor guide device of the illustrated invention, to deliver the restrictor into the stomach. Additional details of the tissue plication, anchor and restrictor are provided in co-owned PCT/US2008/008729.

[0048] It will be appreciated that from the description of the implant device and its operation that the method and device of the invention can be used to attach to an internal organ, e.g., the stomach, a variety of implants that are constructed to contain a plurality of anchor-engaging apertures. In the embodiment to be described below, the implant is a food-restrictor implant of the type illustrated in Figs. 2E and 2F. This implant is a cup-shaped device having a larger proximal opening about which the apertures are arranged, and a smaller distal opening designed to restrict flow of food from the esophagus through the proximal opening. As just noted, the distal opening itself contains apertures used in mounting the restrictor on the implant device during an implantation operation.

[0049] In another embodiment, the device is used for implanting a novel food-restrictor device (not shown) formed as a multiple-arm web. The web is made up of a plurality, e.g., five, arms which radiate outwardly from a central hub region, spoke like, and whose outer ends each have an aperture for engaging an anchor. The hub in the device may have an opening, like the distal opening formed in implant 30, with a second set of apertures, like apertures 45, for engaging the mount of the implant device during implant delivery. When implanted, this device presents a multi-arm, food-restricting web formed around the opening from the esophagus, acting to retard the the passage of food from the esophagus into the stomach, where the degree of food restriction can be controlled, for example, by the thickness and stiffness of the arms forming the web.

[0050] In still another embodiment, the implant is a strap-like device formed either of a single strap that contains a plurality of apertures along its length or as a plurality of linked straps, e.g., a radiating out from a central connecting hub, and having apertures formed in the strap free ends, as above. This types of implant may be used in an operation to remodel the stomach, by the steps of (i) placing a plurality, e.g., 3 or more, of plication anchors at selected, remote position within the stomach, and (ii) using the device and method of the invention to draw the anchor-containing plication regions of the stomach toward one another by attaching the individual anchors to associated apertures in the implant. As above, this implant may have a hub or other region having an opening and surrounding apertures, like apertures 45 in implant 30, by which the implant may be mounted on the implant device during an implant placement operation.

Implant system and device

[0051] Fig. 3 illustrates an endoscopic implant system 46 constructed in accordance with one embodiment of the invention, designed for implanting a restrictor of the type described above, by coupling the restrictor to a plurality of anchors supported in stomach plications, also as described above. However, it will be appreciated that the system of the invention may be used for a variety of purposes that involve (i) entry of the distal end of the system device into a hollow organ, and (ii) successively engaging and manipulating a plurality of spaced tissue targets within the organ.

[0052] System 46 includes an endogastric overtube 48 for establishing a working channel between the mouth and the stomach, and a device 50 designed to access a plurality of tissue targets in a hollow organ, e.g., stomach. Device 50 generally includes an elongate shaft assembly 52 having a proximal section 54 terminating at a proximal end 56 and a distal section 58 terminating at a distal end, and more particularly, a distal-end cable holder 60.

Preferably, and as well be seen below particularly with respect to Fig. 6A and 6B, the distal section is detachable from the proximal section, for replacement and/or cleaning.

[0053] Adjacent the proximal end of the shaft assembly are user controls, indicated at 57, 59, 61, for controlling steering and cable-member operations of the device, as will be described below. These operations are mediated by internal cables within the shaft assembly, according to well known construction, operation, and control of endoscopic tools and other remote-access surgical instruments, although hydraulic control of one or more of the device functions is also contemplated. Specifically, the controls are for (i) positioning the distal end of the shaft assembly, (ii) axial positioning of each of a plurality of cable members in the device (described below), and (iii) positioning of an endoscope in the device. In addition, where the cable members have actively controllable clamping tools (described below) additionally wire controls for these tools is provided.

[0054] The shaft assembly includes an endoscope 58, a plurality of cable members, such as cable member 62 seen in Figs. 4A, and 4B, and an internal steering guide (not shown), all of which are controllable from the proximal end in the assembly, as above, and all of which extend along the shaft assembly from the assembly's proximal to distal end regions. The endoscope conventionally includes an optical system, i.e., light source, lens and optical fibers, for visualizing the organ area near the distal end of the scope, and control cables within the endoscope for manipulating the position of the scope's distal end-region.

[0055] Along the shaft assembly's proximal section, the steering guide, cable members and endoscope are contained within an outer sheath or casing 64 (Fig. 3). Along the assembly's distal section, the steering guide is contained within and substantially coextends with a guide tube 66, to control the position of the holder 60 mounted on the end of the guide tube, by controlling the steering guide from the proximal end of the assembly. The steering guide and guide tube are also referred to herein as a steering mechanism for controlling the position of the assembly's distal-end holder.

[0056] Also as seen in Fig. 3 and Figs. 4A and 4B, the endoscope and plural cable members 62 are exposed along the assembly's distal section, allowing the endoscope to be moved independently of guide tube 66 and holder 60, and allowing the guide tube and holder to be moved independently of the distal-regions of each cable member, after that cable member has engaged a tissue target, as will be described below. The proximal end of section 58, indicated at 61 in Fig. 4B, has a connector 61 for detachably coupling the distal section to the assembly's proximal shaft section. The connector is similar to a connector 84 described below with respect to Fig. 6B with respect to a second general embodiment of the device.

[0057] Cable member 62, which is representative, includes a cable 70 and a tool 72 carried at the distal end of the cable for engaging a tissue target. As indicated above, the axial position of the cable in each cable member, i.e., the cable's extended or retracted position along the shaft assembly, is controlled from a proximal-end control in the shaft assembly. Although not shown here, the portion of the cable assembly extending along the shaft assembly's proximal section (the portion within casing 64), is preferably housed in a cable sheath that provides a guide sleeve for axial movement of the cable. In the embodiment illustrated in Figs. 3-5, the exposed portion of the cable member extending along the assembly's distal section is unsheathed.

[0058] The cable member 62 shown in Figs. 4 and 5 is representative and includes a cable 70 terminating in a distal-end tool 72 having a rigid open-ring hook 74 designed to engage the ring portion of an anchor cap as illustrated in Figs. 5A and 5B. In this embodiment, the user manipulates the end of a cable assembly, as viewed through the endoscope to, to snare the anchor-cap ring 24 or loop 28 with hook 74. In an alternate embodiment (not shown), the tool includes a pair of clamping arms that are normally biased away from one another in a clamp-open condition, but can be retracted into a rigid sleeve at the end of the cable to draw the clamping arms moved to a closed, clamping condition. This embodiment includes a separate wire contained within the cable itself, for axial movement with respect thereto, to extend or retract the tool relative to the cable distal-end sleeve, to close and open the clamp, respectively. Such a tool is described, for example, in co-owned PCT/US2008/008729.

[0059] With reference Figs. 4 and 5, holder 60 is a single-piece, preferably molded article formed of relatively firm, but flexible material, such as a relatively rigid silicone. The holder includes a plurality of axially extending slots, one for each cable assembly, such as slot 76 for cable member 62 (Figs. 5A and 5B), and is dimensioned to allow axial movement of the cable within the slot, allowing the end of cable member to be pulled substantially against the holder, when it is desired to move the cable member with the holder, and to play out the cable member, to provide slack in the cable member to allow the holder to be moved independently with respect to the holder, after the cable member has engaged a target tissue. Each holder slot is covered by a deformable flap 77 which, in its undeformed condition (shown in the figures) covers the slot and supports the cable assembly within the slot, as seen in Fig. 5A, which shows a cable tool and attached anchor (the tissue target) being retracted toward holder 60. With continued cable retraction, the tool and attached anchor are blocked

from entry into slot 76, causing flap 77 to deform sufficiently to allow the tool and attached anchored to be pulled out of the slot, thus releasing cable assembly from the holder.

[0060] In the embodiment just described, the release structure in the holder that serves to releasably attach each cable member in the holder is a deformable flap that provides a passive release mechanism for cable release when the cable and an attached tissue target are pulled against the holder. It will be appreciated that a variety of other passive release structures for releasably supporting a cable member in the holder are suitable. For example, the deformable flap may be replaced by a spring mechanism that holds the cable member in its captured condition until a sufficient counterforce to the spring is applied. Alternatively, the release structures may include open channels or grooves formed along the holder and dimensioned to hold a rigid sleeve at the end of each cable member, such that retracting a cable member with an engaged anchor first pulls the anchor against the sleeve, then pulls the sleeve out of the holder groove. In still another embodiment, described below with respect to Figs. 6-8, the release structure is provided by a distal-end fixture on the cable assembly that provides both an axial channel for cable movement, and an element designed to interlock by friction fit with a complementary element on the holder, to attach the cable assembly to the holder.

[0061] The invention also contemplates actively controlled release structures, such as a spring-tensioned release mechanism or a solenoid device whose operation between closed, capture and open, release conditions can be controlled by a user at the proximal-end controls. However, a passive release structure, such as detailed above, provides advantages in simplicity of construction and operation.

[0062] Completing the description of the assembly, and with reference to Fig. 4B, distal section 58 includes a restrictor mount for carrying a restrictor 30 on the assembly in an implantation operation. The mount is not visible in the figure, but is similar to the restrictor mount described below with reference to Figs. 7B and 7C. In the fully assembled device (see below), the cable members, such as members 62, are each received through a corresponding restrictor aperture, such as apertures 38 shown in Fig. 4B, so that the cable members, when placed under moderate tension, serve to press and deform the restrictor against the assembly, preventing release of the restrictor from the assembly until the final cable member has been released.

Second general embodiment

[0063] Figs. 6-8 illustrate distal-end portions of an implantation device constructed in accordance with a second general embodiment of the invention. It will be understood that the

system and device of this second embodiment include the same or similar components as the first-described embodiment, except with respect to the distal-section elements illustrated in Figs. 6-8. It will be further understood that certain features of this second embodiment may be incorporated into the first embodiment, particularly the detachable connection between the proximal and distal shaft sections, described with respect to Fig. 6B, and the restrictor mount for supporting a restrictor on the distal section of the shaft assembly, described with respect to Figs. 7B and 7C.

[0064] Figs. 6A and 6B are perspective views of a detachable distal section 80 in a shaft assembly 82 in the device of the invention. The section includes a proximal end connector 84 by which the distal section is removable attached to the proximal end section (not shown) of the shaft assembly. As seen in Fig. 6B, connector 84 has a pair of openings 88, 86, which correspond to the lower (proximal) ends of a guide tube 90 and an endoscope tube 92, respectively, and five channels 94 through which the five cable members in the device are received. To attach the distal section to the proximal section, the portion of an endoscope (not shown) extending beyond the end of the assembly's proximal section is inserted into opening 86 and through tube 92, exiting through opening 96 shown in Figs. 7B and 7C; the portion of the steering guide extending beyond the end of the shaft assembly's proximal section is inserted through opening 88 into and through substantially the entire length of guide tube 90; and the portions of the five cable members (see below) extending beyond the end of the shaft assembly's proximal section are inserted through channels 94. The distal section is then secured to the proximal section by a threaded ring rotatably attached to the end of the proximal section, and engageable with threads 98 at the lower end of connector 84. As described with respect to the first embodiment, the steering guide contained within guide tube 90 is used for controlling the position of the guide tube from the shaft assembly's proximal end. The steerable guide and guide tube are also referred to herein as a steering mechanism for controlling the position of the assembly's distal-end holder.

[0065] The steerable distal portion of the guide tube, indicated at 90a in Fig. 6A, terminates in a distal-end holder 100. As in the embodiment described in Figs. 4 and 5, the holder is designed for releasable attaching a plurality of cable members, such as cable member, 104, through associated release structures, but in this embodiment, the release structures are distal-end fixtures 110 (described below with respect to Fig. 7A) that are attached to the holder by friction-fit elements, and which are released from the holder with the cable assembly.

[0066] A plurality of cable members in the device, such as cable member 104 in the figures, are operable to engage a tissue target within the organ and to manipulate the engaged target in accordance with the desired operation of the device, for example, to engage a tissue-plication anchor and pull it through an anchor aperture opening in a restrictor carried on the device. Cable member 104, which is representative, includes a cable 106 (Fig. 8A) that extends the length of shaft assembly and which can be manipulated at the proximal end of the shaft assembly, as above. Proximal and distal portions of the cable, corresponding roughly to the shaft assembly's proximal and distal shaft assembly regions, respectively, are housed within proximal and distal cable sheaths, respectively. The proximal and distal sheaths may be formed as a single uniform sheath. More preferably, however, the proximal sheath is a relatively stiff, relatively incompressible sheath, and the distal sheath is a relatively thin-wall compressible sheath, as discussed below. As in the first embodiment, the steering guide, cable members, and endoscope are housed within a outer casing along the shaft assembly proximal section, but are exposed for independent movement along the shaft's distal portion, that is, beyond connector 84.

[0067] Figs. 6A and 6B show the distal sheath 108 of a cable member 104. As noted above, the portion of each cable member that is co-extensive with distal section 80 is secured at its proximal end within connector 84, and releasably attached at its distal end to holder 100. So mounted on the shaft assembly's distal section, and with the cable member's distal end pulled against holder, the distal end of the cable member is constrained to move with the holder as the guide tube is manipulated to a selected position within an organ. However, by virtue of playing out additional cable in the cable member or by virtue of the cable member detaching from the holder, the holder and its remaining attached cable members may be repositioned within an organ, substantially independently of the cable member that is engaged with a tissue target. As will be seen below, this feature allows all of the cable members to be guided successively, under the control of a single guide structure, i.e., guide tube 90, but allows the holder to be moved independently of each cable member, after that cable member has engaged a tissue section and been released from the distal-end head.

[0068] In the embodiment shown, for use in attaching tissue plication anchors to a restrictor, the end of each cable member (and the engaged tissue-target anchor) must be pulled in a proximal direction, by retracting the cable, to engage the restrictor, which is carried on the shaft assembly near the end of the endoscope tube 92, as seen in Figs. 7B. This distal cable movement is accommodated by compressing sheath 108 axially, in essence, forcing it to bunch up as its length is reduced. To this end, the sheath is preferably formed of

a thin-walled plastic tube material. Further, all or a portion of the sheath may be slotted to further accommodate axial shortening of the sheath. In the embodiment shown in Fig. 6B, sheath 108 has a slotted portion 108b and an unslotted distal portion 108a. As the tool and attached anchor are retracted, the anchor cap will be pulled through an aperture 38 in the restrictor, thus coupling that anchor to the restrictor. The cable members may be color coded or otherwise identified to assist the user in matching a selected cable member with a selected tissue-plication during an implantation operation, as described below.

[0069] With reference particularly to Fig. 7A, distal sheath 108 in cable member 104 terminates at a distal-end fixture 110 that provides structure for releasably attaching the cable member to holder 100, and also provides a rigid sleeve 112 at the end of the sheath for engaging a tool 114 attached to the end of the cable (Fig. 8A). Fixture 110, which may be formed as a molded, rigid plastic article, has a curved body 116 whose lower surface is shaped to fit against the cylindrical end of holder 100, seen best in Fig. 8B, and a central bore 118 which forms a slot or channel through which the cable is axially shiftable. Fixture 110 is provided by a pair of wings 120 extending from opposite sides of the body. These wings each have, on their lower surfaces in Fig. 8A, a pair of projections 122 which are dimensioned to be received snugly within corresponding openings 124 in holder 100 (Fig. 8B), to releasably attach the end of the cable member to holder 100. That is, the projections and openings provide complementary friction-fit elements for releasably attaching the cable member to the holder.

[0070] Referring particularly to Figs. 8A and 8B, tool 114 carried at the end of cable 1066 is designed to for engaging a selected tissue site when the cable is position adjacent the target. In the embodiment shown, tool 114 is a open-ring clamp of the type described above, allowing the clip to engage a tissue target, such as ring 24, in an anchor 16 (Fig. 8A). In a related embodiment, the two arms of the tool may be spring biased away from one another, allowing the clip to open when its base portion is advanced out of the sleeve in the fixture and to close for clamping when the cable is retracted to pull the tool arms partially into the fixture.

[0071] As seen in Fig. 8B, tool 114 is outwardly flared at its proximal (lower) end, providing contact structure for blocking entry of the clip into the corresponding fixture sleeve. More generally, one of the engaging tool and sleeve member provides contacting structure for restricting movement of the tool into the sleeve member.

[0072] In another embodiment (not shown), the distal-end fixture in the cable member may be a cylindrical sleeve which is received, e.g., by friction fit, in a corresponding open

channel formed in the holder, where retraction of the tool and engaged tissue target against the fixture blocks further movement of the cable member with respect to the fixture, such that further retraction of the cable member causes the fixture to be pulled from the holder channel, releasing the cable assembly fixture from the holder.

[0073] Also included in the distal section is a restrictor mount for supporting a restrictor 30 on the distal section, as seen in Figs. 7B and 7C. As seen in these figures, endoscope tube 92 terminates in a manifold 124 which has an enlarged circumference base 126 which supports a plurality of posts 128 used in mounting a restrictor 30 on the distal shaft assembly section, as seen in Fig. 7B. In the embodiment shown, the device include five posts for engaging the five apertures 45 in restrictor 30, as shown in Fig. 7A. The manifold and posts are also referred to herein as a restrictor mount for supporting a restrictor on the assembly during an implantation operation.

[0074] An endoscope in the device, like the one shown and described at 68 in Fig. 3 for the first-described embodiment, extends along the shaft assembly from the proximal end thereof, where the user controls endoscope position, through connector 84 and through an opening 96 in manifold 124 beyond which the endoscope is freely movable, for viewing operations of the device within the hollow organ.

Preparing the device for an implant operation

[0075] The preparation of the device for implanting a restrictor to tissue-plication anchors in a patient's stomach will be described with respect to the embodiment of Figs. 6-8, it being understood that similar loading and preparation steps apply to the embodiment described with respect to Figs. 4 and 5. Initially, the two shaft sections are coupled together by feeding the endoscope tube, steering guide and five cable members through connector 84 and securing the two sections together. Color coding or other distinctive indicia on each cable member allow the user to determine the identity of each cable member and its relative position on the shaft assembly at the proximal end of the tool during an implantation operation. A restrictor is then placed on the shaft assembly's distal section, as shown in Fig. 7B, with the posts 128 on the manifold base 124 received in apertures 45 in the restrictor.

[0076] The cable assemblies are next threaded through apertures 38 in the restrictor, and the ends of the cable assembly are releasably attached to the holder, e.g., by securing the distal-end fixtures in the cable assembly to the holder, or, in the first embodiment, by threading the ends of the cable assembly through the holder slots.

[0077] It can be appreciated from Figs. 6A and 6B that attaching the distal ends of the cable members to the distal-end holder 100 acts to stretch the cable members along the distal

shaft assembly region, deforming the restrictor against the distal shaft assembly section, to secure restrictor in a compact condition during placement of the restrictor in the stomach by passage through overtube 48. In the final preparation step, an overtube is placed over the assembled shaft, the overtube's distal end being positioned to cover the restrictor carried near the shaft's distal end.

Implant operation

[0078] The initial phase of a restrictor implant operation involves forming tissue plications at plural selected locations, as shown in Fig. 2B, and attaching anchors within each plication hole, as described for example, in co-owned U.S. application 12/175,242, filed July 17, 2008, corresponding to PCT application PCT/US2008/008729. This phase of the operation may be carried out several days to weeks in advance of implanting the restrictor, to allow healing of the plications, or may be carried out immediately before implantation, as part of an operation in which the same overtube is used for accessing the stomach for forming tissue plications with attached anchors and for restrictor implantation.

[0079] With the implantation device prepared as described in the section above, the overtube and device are inserted in the patient for transoral access to the stomach, the present device is inserted into the stomach to place the distal-end holder 100 in the region of the tissue plications near the gastro/esophageal junction. Using the endoscope for guidance, the physician will select a given plication, and maneuver the distal section of the shaft assembly, by controlling the steering guide in the device, to place a selected cable member tool, e.g., identified by its color code, adjacent the anchor at that plication. That cable member is now manipulated, by extending the cable in a distal direction, to engage the target anchor with the tool, by moving the tool, if necessary, until the tool clip hooks onto the anchor cap ring.

[0080] Once engagement with a tissue-plication anchor is made, the device is manipulated to place a next-in-place cable assembly tool adjacent a next-in-place tissue-plication anchor. Movement of the holder from the first to the second anchor is accommodated by either playing out cable in the engaged cable assembly, to provide cable slack between that assembly and the holder, or by retracting the engaged cable assembly until it is released from the holder, it being understood that ultimately, each engaged cable must be released from the holder to pull the engaged anchor through the associated aperture in restrictor 30. That is, the cable members may be operated to successively engage multiple anchors before any member is released from the holder, or the cable members can be operated to successively engage an anchor, be released from the holder, and couple to the

restrictor before the next-in-line cable assembly is engaged with the next-in-line tissue-plication anchor.

[0081] In either event, once a cable member is retracted, the cable member tool and engaged anchor are initially pulled against the associated release structure, then released from the holder, by the release structure releasing the cable member from the holder. Continued retraction of the cable assembly pulls the engaged anchor toward the restrictor, and continued retraction, with endoscopic observation, pulls the anchor cap through the corresponding anchor aperture 38 in the restrictor. The cable member may be further manipulated, to release the tool from the now-coupled anchor, or the tool may be retained in its engaged condition until all of the anchors have been coupled to the restrictor.

[0082] The process is repeated until all, e.g., five, plication anchors have been coupled to the corresponding restrictor aperture. If the cable members are still engaged with the anchors at this point, they are individually manipulated to release them from the anchors. The restrictor is now fully coupled to the tissue plications, so that with careful retraction of the implantation device, the restrictor will slide off the device and assume a fully expanded condition within the stomach.

[0083] From the foregoing, it will be appreciated how various objects and features of the invention are met. First, the multiple cable members in the device, each one required for engaging a separate tissue section and for manipulating the engaged section with respect to an implant, are maneuvered into desired positions within a hollow organ by a single steering mechanism, rather than requiring an independent steering mechanism for each cable member. This significantly reduces the amount of space, i.e., overall shaft assembly diameter required, allowing construction of a multiple assembly tool that can operate within the constraints of a transoral overtube. As noted above, movement of the distal-end holder to another tissue target, after engagement with a first target, is accommodated by playing out cable in the engaged cable member to create cable slack between the holder and engaged cable member, and/or by releasing the cable member from the holder.

[0084] The cable-assembly release feature allows the released cable assembled to be manipulated, e.g., retracted for coupling to the implant, independently of the shaft assembly's distal section and the remaining attached cable members. By the same token, the shaft assembly and still-attached cable members can be maneuvered to another selected tissue target, substantially independent of the released cable members. In one preferred embodiment, the cable release is effected by passive release, simply by retracting the cable with enough force to pull it away from its distal-end holder.

[0085] In the second general embodiment described above, the compressible cable sheaths in the device allow for normal cable operation, that is, movement of a cable within a guiding cable sleeve or cover, while still permitting the assembly to be retracted significantly to couple an engaged anchor with an implant carried on the shaft assembly of the device, as described above.

[0086] Finally, the device in one preferred embodiment allows the distal section of the device to be easily removed for cleaning and/or replacement. Although the attachment between the two shaft assembly sections was illustrated herein as a rotating ring attachment, it will be appreciated that the construction of the device is easily adaptable to a quick-lock type attachment.

[0087] Although the invention has been described with respect to particular embodiments and applications, it will be appreciated how the invention can be modified without departing from the spirit of the claims.

IT IS CLAIMED:

1. A device for engaging a plurality of spaced tissue targets within a hollow organ of a subject, comprising:

an elongate shaft assembly having a proximal section terminating at a proximal end and a distal section terminating at a distal end, where the shaft assembly comprises:

a cable holder carried at the shaft assembly's distal end,

a plurality of cable members extending along the shaft assembly, each cable member including (i) a cable whose axial position is configured to be manipulated from the proximal end of the assembly and (ii) a distal-end tool for engaging a selected tissue target within the hollow organ,

for each cable member, a release structure for releasably attaching that cable member to the cable holder, and

a steering mechanism configured to manipulate the cable holder from the proximal end of the assembly to place a selected distal-end tool whose cable member is attached to the holder adjacent a selected tissue target within the organ,

wherein, with the selected distal-end tool positioned adjacent the selected tissue target and the distal-end tool manipulated to engage the selected tissue target, axial movement of the tissue-engaged cable with respect to the holder and/or release of the cable from the holder allows the holder and its remaining attached cable members to be repositioned to place the distal-end tool of another selected cable member in position for engaging another selected tissue target.

2. The device of claim 1, further comprising an endoscope extending along the shaft assembly, the endoscope being independently movable with respect to the cable holder at the distal end of the shaft assembly.

3. The device of claim 1, wherein a proximal portion of each cable member is disposed within a shaft assembly casing extending along the proximal section of the shaft assembly, and an exposed distal portion of each cable member is disposed outside the shaft assembly casing along the distal section of the shaft assembly.

4. The device of claim 3, wherein the proximal portion of each cable member disposed within the shaft assembly casing is housed within a cable sheath.

5. The device of claim 4, wherein the exposed distal portion of each cable member disposed outside the shaft assembly casing is housed within an axially compressible distal sheath that allows a corresponding distal end of the cable to be retracted, shortening the length of the exposed portion of the cable member.

6. The device of claim 5, wherein the distal sheath of each cable member has axially extending slots, to enhance the axial compressibility of the sheath.

7. The device of claim 5, wherein the release structure for each cable member includes a distal-end fitting that is carried at a distal end of the distal sheath and that is releasably attached to the holder by friction fit, and the distal-end fitting is dimensioned to block the distal-end tool and engaged tissue target, such that retracting the cable and engaged tissue target against the fitting is effective, with further retraction, to release the cable member and engaged tissue target from the holder.

8. The device of claim 1, wherein the holder includes, for each cable member, an axially extending slot, and the release structure includes a passive capture member adapted to releasably hold the cable member within the slot, for axial movement therein, but deform when the tool and an engaged tissue target are pulled away from the slot, to release the cable member and engaged tool from the holder.

9. The device of claim 1, wherein the holder includes, for each cable member, an axially extending slot, and the release structure includes an active capture member whose operation is controllable between a capture position, in which the cable member is supported within the slot, for axial movement therein, and a release position in which the cable member and engaged tissue target are released from the holder.

10. The device of claim 1, wherein the cable of each cable member includes an inner wire that is axially shiftable within the cable, and the distal-end tool of each cable member includes a pair of clamp arms carried at a distal end of the corresponding wire, such that movement of the

wire within the cable in distal and proximal directions is effective to open and close the clamp arms, respectively.

11. The device of claim 1, further comprising an implant having a plurality of apertures, wherein the shaft assembly includes a distal-section implant mount for holding the implant releasably on the shaft assembly, with each cable member received through a corresponding aperture, and said cable-member tools are adapted to each clamp a selected anchor fastened to a selected tissue target, such that withdrawing a cable of a selected cable member, after clamping the selected anchor, is effective to release the cable member from its release structure in the cable holder, allowing the tool and engaged anchor to be retracted proximally until a cap portion of the anchor is pulled through the corresponding aperture in the implant.

12. The device of claim 11, wherein the implant has a distal opening, is adapted to be carried on the device with a distal portion of the shaft assembly inserted through the distal opening in the implant, and is forced into a collapsed condition when the cable members are attached to the cable holder.

13. The device of claim 12, wherein the implant mount includes a plurality of posts disposed about the shaft assembly for mounting the implant on the shaft assembly, with the posts received in apertures spaced about the implant's distal opening, and wherein the implant is configured to be disengaged from the device only when all of the cable members have been released from the holder.

14. The device of claim 1, wherein the shaft assembly's distal section is detachable from its proximal section.

15. A system for implanting in a patient's stomach an implant having a plurality of apertures each adapted to engage a corresponding anchor, comprising:

(A) an implantation device comprising an elongate shaft assembly having a proximal section terminating at a proximal end and a distal section terminating at a distal end, where the shaft assembly comprises:

a cable holder carried at the shaft assembly's distal end,

a plurality of cable members extending along the shaft assembly, each cable member including (i) a cable whose axial position is configured to be manipulated from the proximal end of the assembly, and (ii) a distal-end tool for engaging a selected anchor within the stomach,

for each cable member, a release structure designed to releasably attach the associated cable on the holder,

a steering mechanism extending along the shaft assembly configured to manipulate the cable holder from the proximal end of the assembly to place a selected distal-end tool adjacent a selected anchor, and

an implant mount carried on the shaft assembly's distal section, for supporting the implant thereon,

wherein, with the selected distal-end tool positioned adjacent the selected anchor and the distal-end tool manipulated to engage that anchor, axial movement of the anchor-engaged cable with respect to the holder and/or release of the cable from the holder allows the holder and its remaining attached cable members to be moved to place the tool of another selected cable member in position for engaging another selected anchor, and

retracting the tool and engaged anchor is operable to successively (i) release the tool and attached anchor from the holder, and (ii) pull a cap of the anchor through an implant aperture, to attach that anchor to the implant, and

(B) an overtube adapted for transoral placement in the patient, by which the device is configured to be placed in the patient's stomach.

16. The system of claim 15, wherein the implant mount has a plurality of posts positioned about the shaft assembly, with the posts received in apertures spaced about a distal opening in the implant, and wherein the implant is configured to be disengaged from the device only when all of the cable members have been released from the holder.

17. The system of claim 15, wherein the overtube is axially movable on the device shaft assembly between extended and retracted positions at which the overtube covers and exposes, respectively, the implant mount and implant carried thereon.

18. The system of claim 15, wherein the implant is a food-restrictor implant having a proximal opening about which the apertures are arranged, and which in operative condition, is designed to receive food from the esophagus.

19. The system of claim 15, wherein the implant is a web-like food-restrictor implant having a plurality of connected arms, each having an aperture thereon.

20. The system of claim 15, wherein the implant is a strap-like implant having one or more connected straps which have said apertures formed therein.

21. Use of the device defined by any one of claims 1 to 14 or system of any one of claims 15 to 20 for implantation into a subject in need thereof.

22. An endoscopic device for engaging a plurality of spaced tissue targets within a body of a subject, comprising:

an elongate shaft assembly extending from a proximal end to a distal end;

a plurality of cable members extending from the proximal end to the distal end of the shaft assembly, wherein each cable member of the plurality of cable member includes a distal-end tool adapted to engage a selected tissue target within the body;

a cable holder at the distal end of the shaft assembly, wherein the cable holder includes a release structure by which each cable member of the plurality of cable members is detachably attached to the cable holder, wherein detaching a first cable member of the plurality of cable members from the cable holder disconnects the first cable member from the cable holder and allows the cable holder with the remaining attached cable members to be repositioned within the body.

23. The device of claim 22, which further includes an endoscope extending along the shaft assembly and being independently movable with respect to the cable holder at the distal end of the shaft assembly.

24. The device of claim 22, wherein a proximal portion of each cable member is disposed within a shaft assembly casing extending along the proximal section of the shaft assembly, and an exposed distal portion is disposed outside the shaft assembly along the distal section thereof, which is substantially less than proximal portion.

25. The device of claim 24, wherein the portion of each cable member disposed within the shaft assembly casing is housed within a cable sheath.

26. The device of claim 25, wherein the exposed portion of each cable member disposed outside the shaft assembly casing is housed within a longitudinally compressible sheath allows that distal end of the cable to be retracted, shortening the length of the exposed portion of the cable member.

27. The device of claim 26, wherein the distal sheath of each cable member has longitudinally extending slots, to enhance the axial compressibility of the sheath.

28. The device of claim 26, wherein the release structure for each cable member includes a distal-end fitting that is carried at the distal end of the cable-member sheath and that is releasably attached to the holder by friction fit, and the distal-end fixture is dimensioned to block the cable tool and attached tissue target, such that retracting the cable and engaged target against the fixture is effective, with further retraction, to release the cable member and engaged tissue from the holder.

29. The device of claim 22, wherein the holder includes, for each cable member, an elongate slot and the release structure includes a passive capture member adapted to releasably hold the cable assembly within the slot, for movement therein, but deform when the tool and an engaged tissue target are pulled away from the slot, to release the cable member and engaged tool from the holder.

30. The device of claim 22, wherein the holder includes, for each cable member, an elongate slot and the release structure includes an active capture member whose operation can be controlled between a capture position, in which the cable assembly is supported within the slot,

for movement therein, and a release position in which the cable member and engaged tissue target are released from the holder.

31. The device of claim 22, wherein each cable member includes an inner wire that is shiftable within the cable member, and the distal-end tool includes a pair of clamp arms carried at the distal end of the wire, such that movement of the wire within the cable member in distal and proximal directions is effective to open and close the clamp arms, respectively.

32. The device of claim 22, for use in attaching a restrictor within a subject's stomach to a plurality of tissue targets having anchors fastened to tissue plications within the stomach, where the restrictor includes a proximal opening and a plurality of apertures spaced about the proximal opening, each for engaging an anchor to attach the restrictor within the stomach, wherein the shaft assembly includes a distal-section restrictor mount for holding the restrictor releasably on the shaft assembly, with the cable members received through said apertures, and said cable-member tools are adapted to clamp the anchors, such that withdrawing a cable of a selected cable member, after clamping a selected anchor, is effective to release the cable member from its release structure in the distal-end holder, allowing the tool and engaged anchor to be retracted distally until a cap portion of the anchor is pulled through the associated aperture in the restrictor.

33. The device of claim 32, wherein the restrictor has a central distal opening, is adapted to be carried on the device with a distal portion of the shaft assembly inserted through the distal opening in the restrictor, and is forced into a collapsed condition when the cable members are attached to the distal-end holder.

34. The device of claim 33, which further includes a restrictor mount having a plurality of posts disposed about the shaft assembly at a position along the shaft assembly's distal end section, for mounting the restrictor on the shaft assembly, with the posts received in apertures spaced about the restrictor's distal opening, and wherein the restrictor can be disengaged from the device only when all of the cable members have been released from the holder.

35. A system for implanting a restrictor device in a patient's stomach, the restrictor device including a plurality of spaced apart apertures, comprising:

(A) an implantation device comprising an elongate shaft assembly extending from a proximal end to a distal end, the shaft assembly including:

a plurality of cable members extending from the proximal end to the distal end of the shaft assembly, wherein each cable member of the plurality of cable member includes a distal-end tool adapted to engage a selected tissue target within the stomach;

a cable holder at the distal end of the shaft assembly, wherein the cable holder includes a release structure by which each cable member of the plurality of cable members is detachably attached to the cable holder, wherein detaching a first cable member of the plurality of cable members from the cable holder disconnects the first cable member from the cable holder and allows the cable holder with the remaining attached cable members to be repositioned within the stomach;

a restrictor mount configured to support the restrictor device thereon with each cable member of the plurality of cable members passing through a separate aperture of the plurality of apertures of the restrictor device;

and

(B) an overtube configured to direct the implantation device into the patient's stomach transorally.

36. The system of claim 35, wherein the restrictor mount in the device has a plurality of posts positioned about the shaft assembly, with the posts received in apertures spaced about the restrictor's distal opening, and wherein the restrictor can be disengaged from the device only when all of the cable members have been released from the holder.

37. The system of claim 35, wherein the overtube is movable on the device shaft assembly between extended and retracted positions at which the overtube covers and exposes the restrictor mount and restrictor carried thereon, respectively.

38. The device of claim 22, wherein the elongate shaft includes a proximal section removably coupled to a distal section.

39. The device of claim 22, wherein a separate distal-end tool is coupled to each cable member of the plurality of cable members.

40. The system of claim 35, wherein the elongate shaft of the implantation device includes a proximal section removably coupled to a distal section.

41. The system of claim 35, wherein the restrictor device is a device configured to restrict flow of food into the stomach, the restrictor device including a central opening configured to direct food from an esophagus into the stomach, the plurality of spaced apart apertures being positioned about the central opening.

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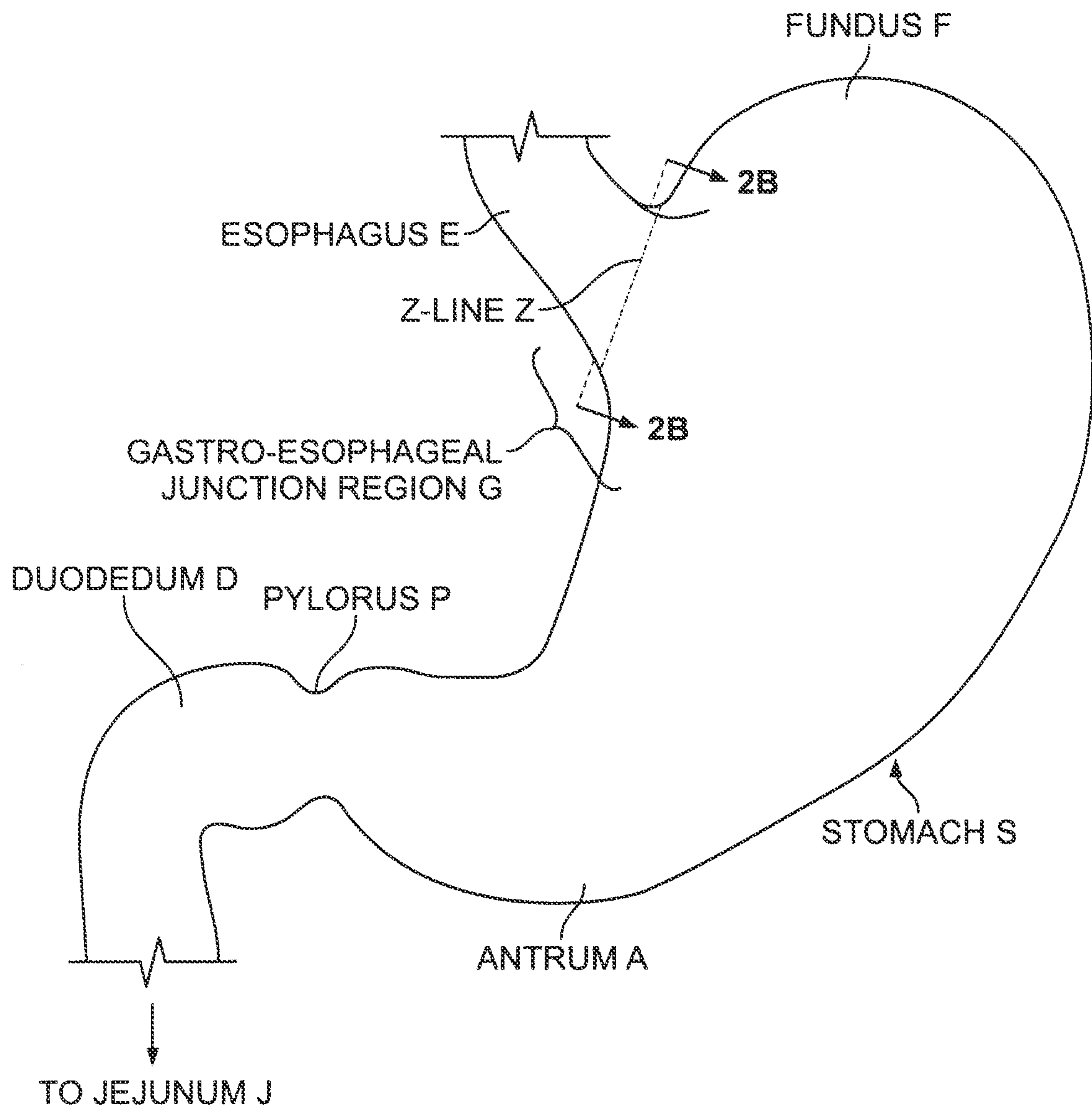


FIG. 1
(Prior Art)

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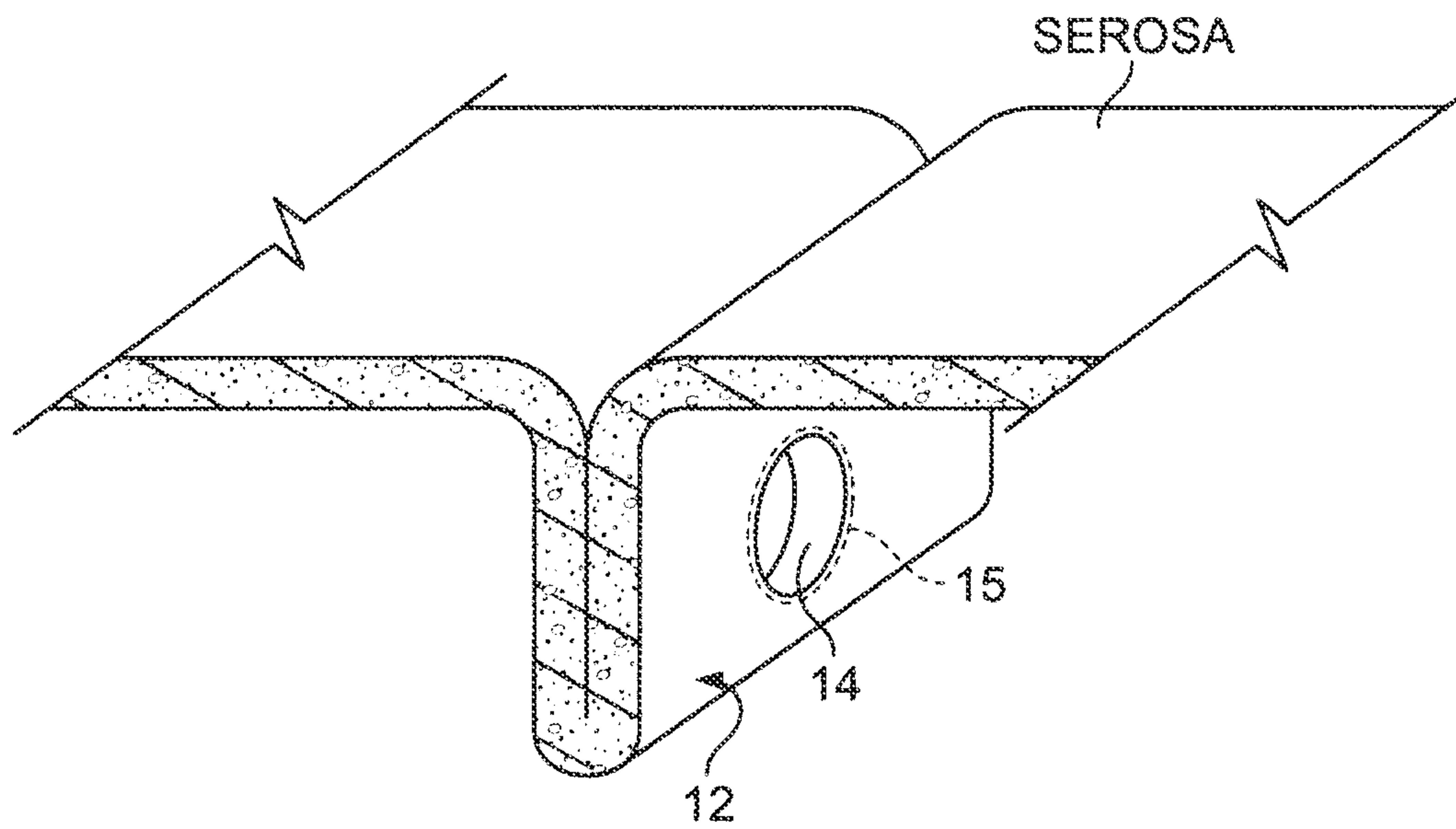


FIG. 2A
(Prior Art)

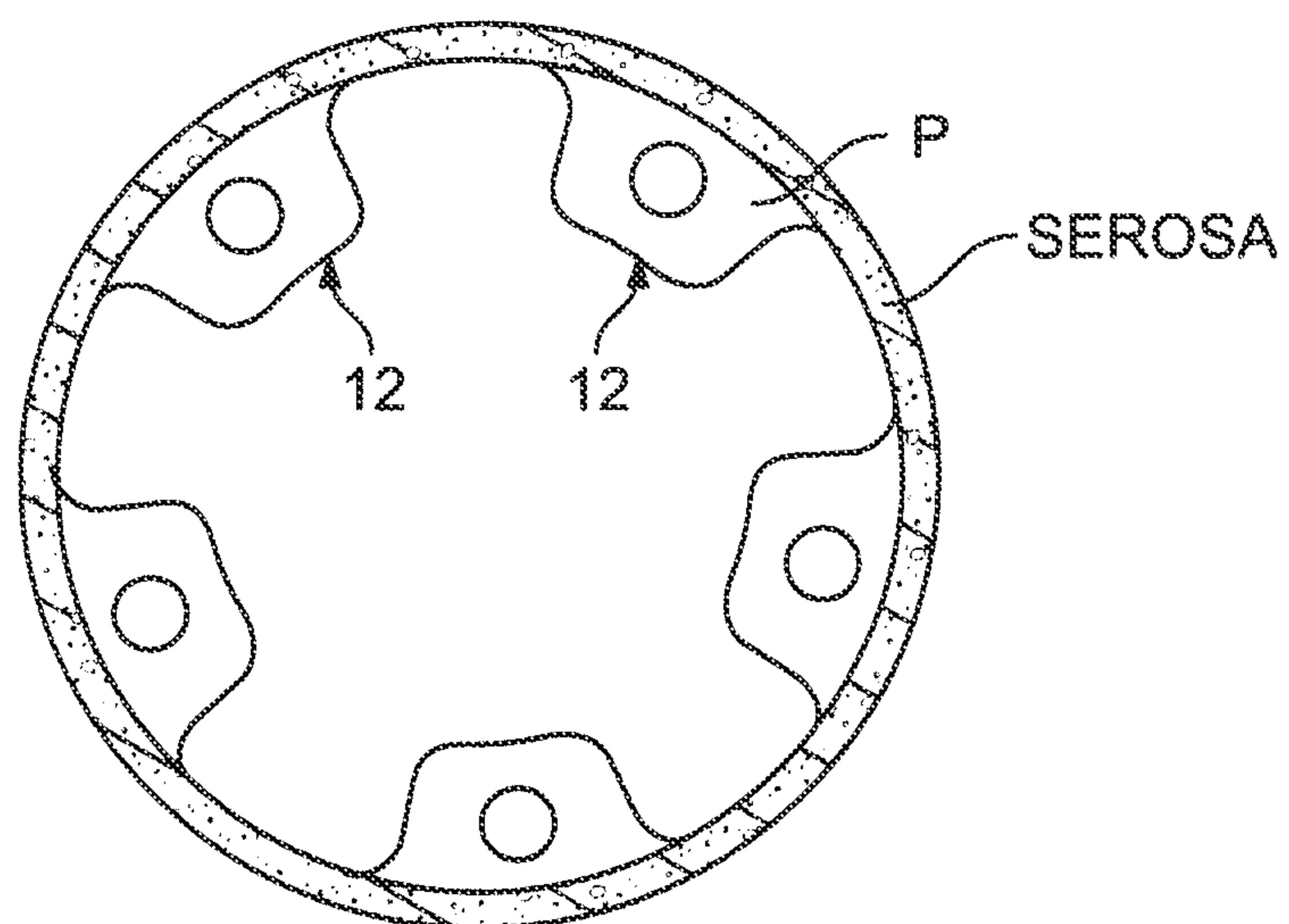


FIG. 2B
(Prior Art)

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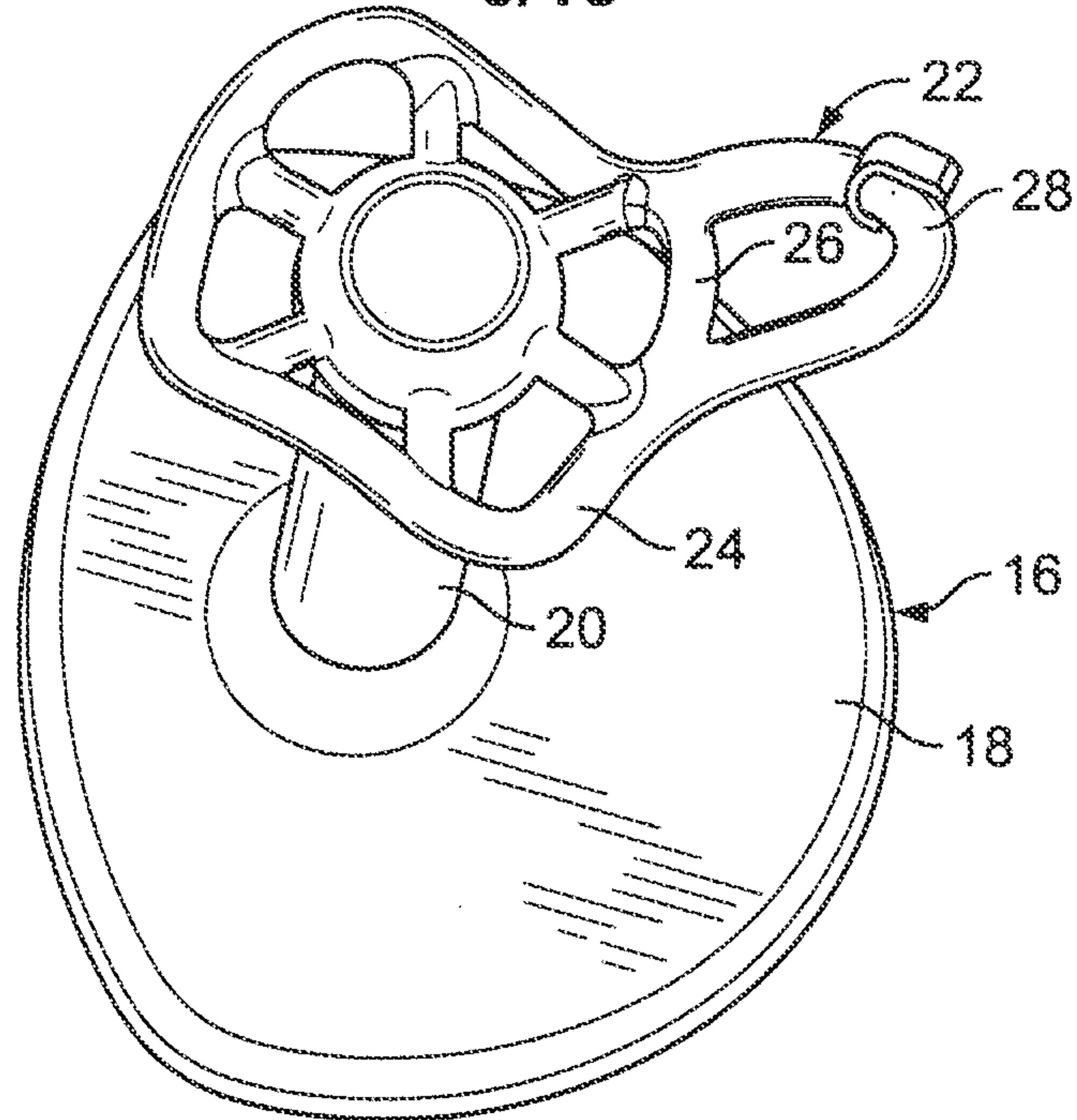


FIG. 2C
(Prior Art)

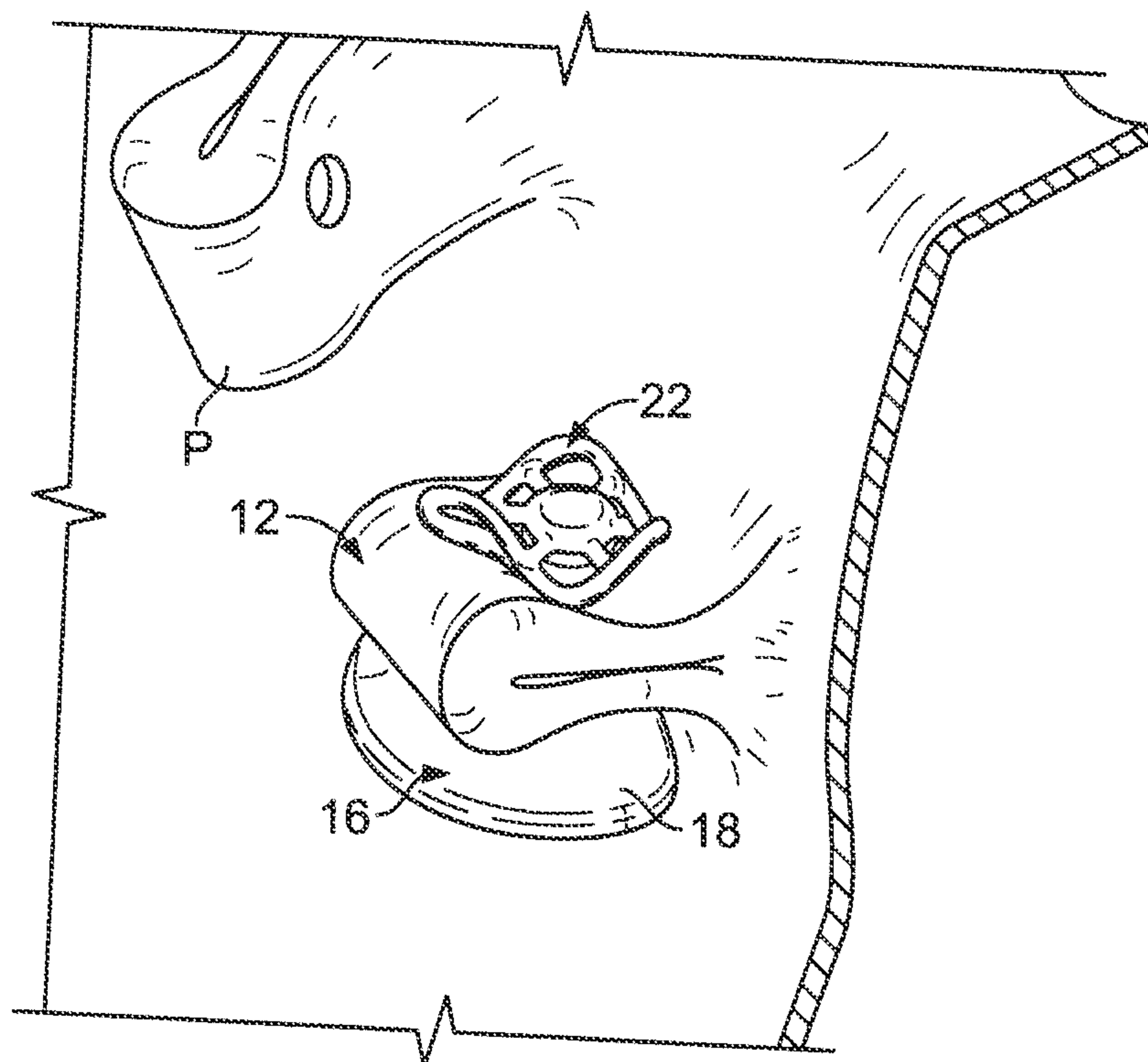
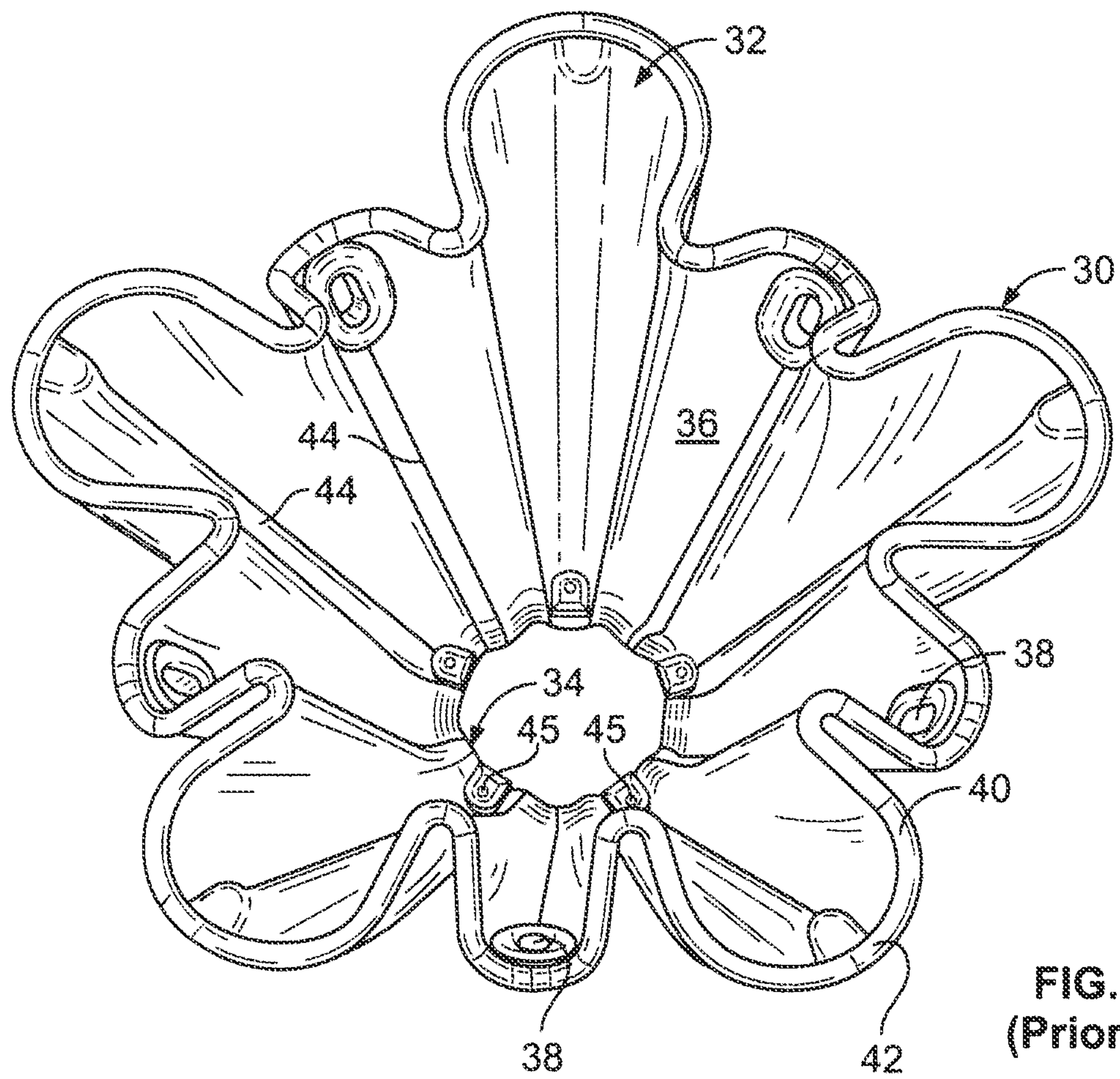
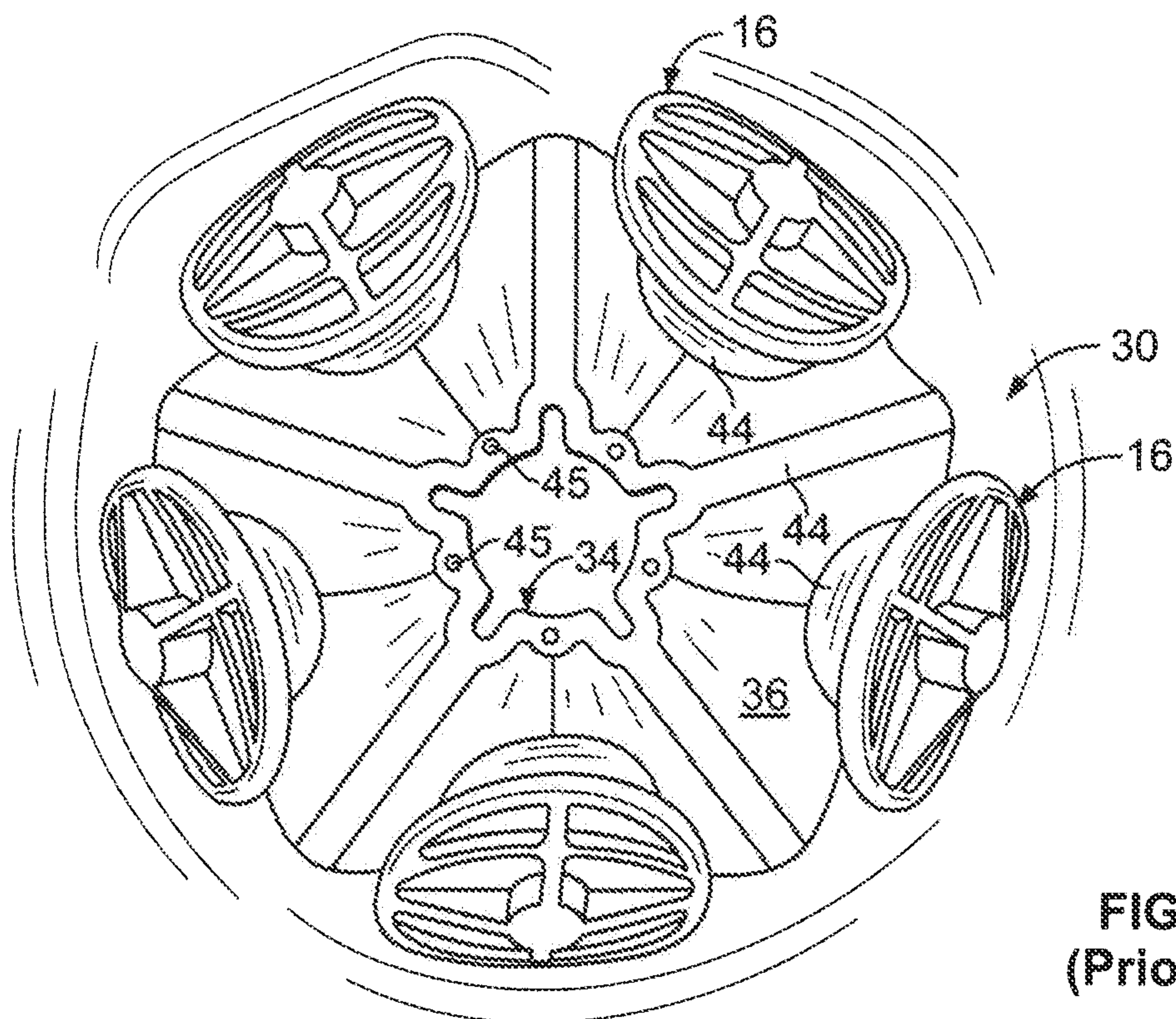
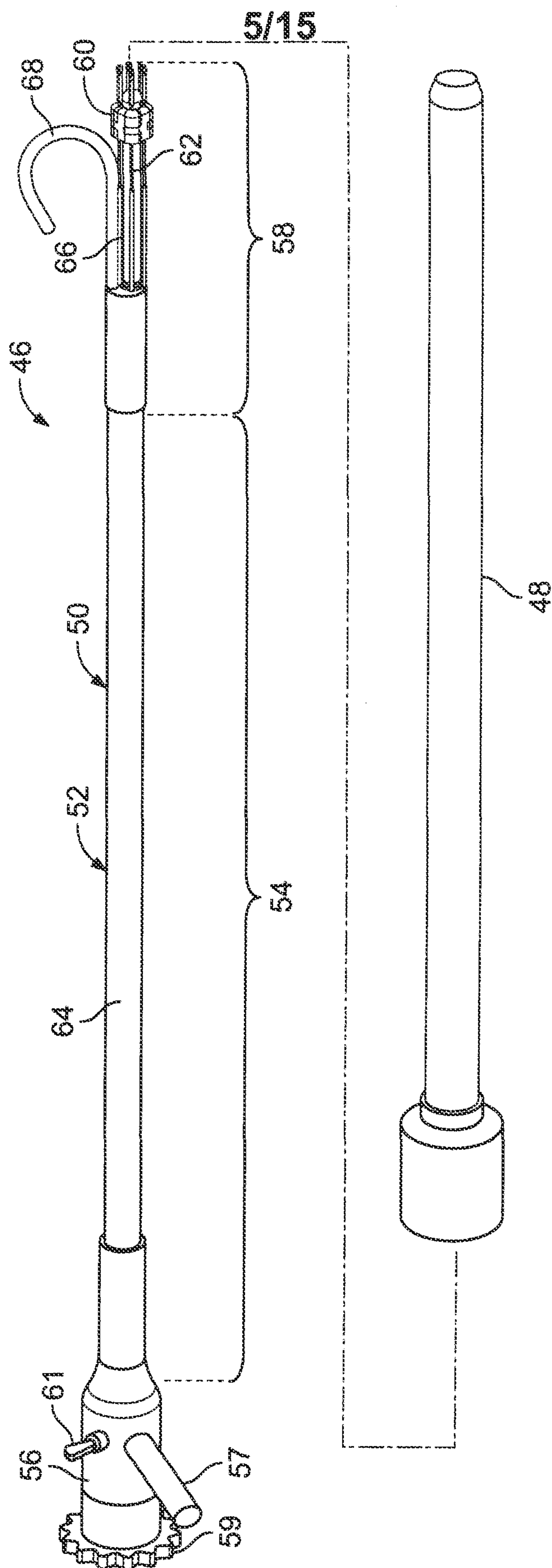


FIG. 2D
(Prior Art)

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FIG. 2E
(Prior Art)FIG. 2F
(Prior Art)



3
6
11
18

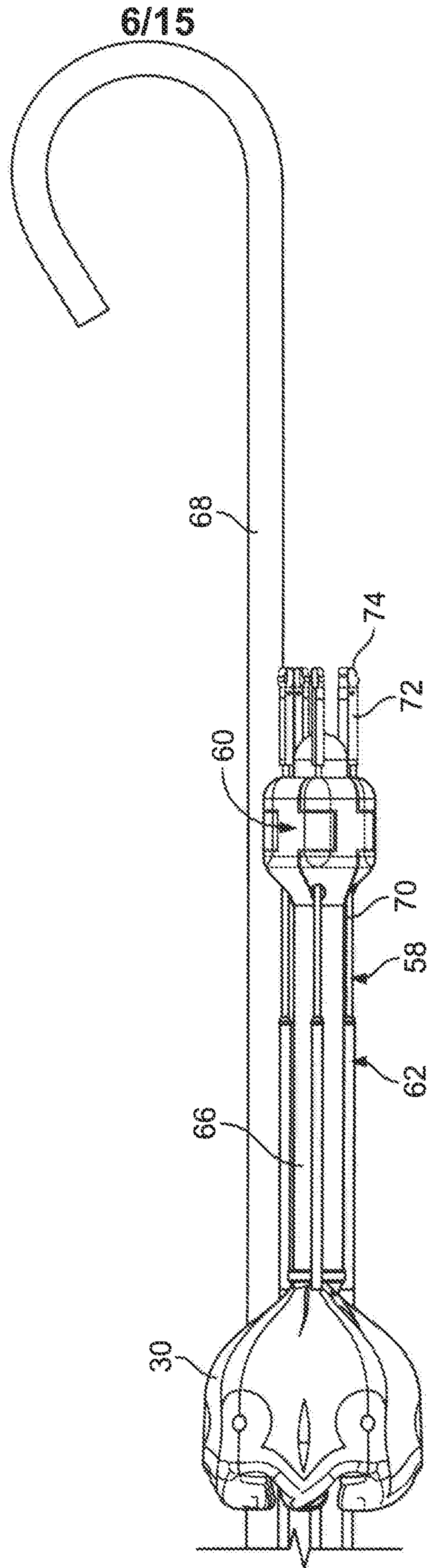


FIG. 4A

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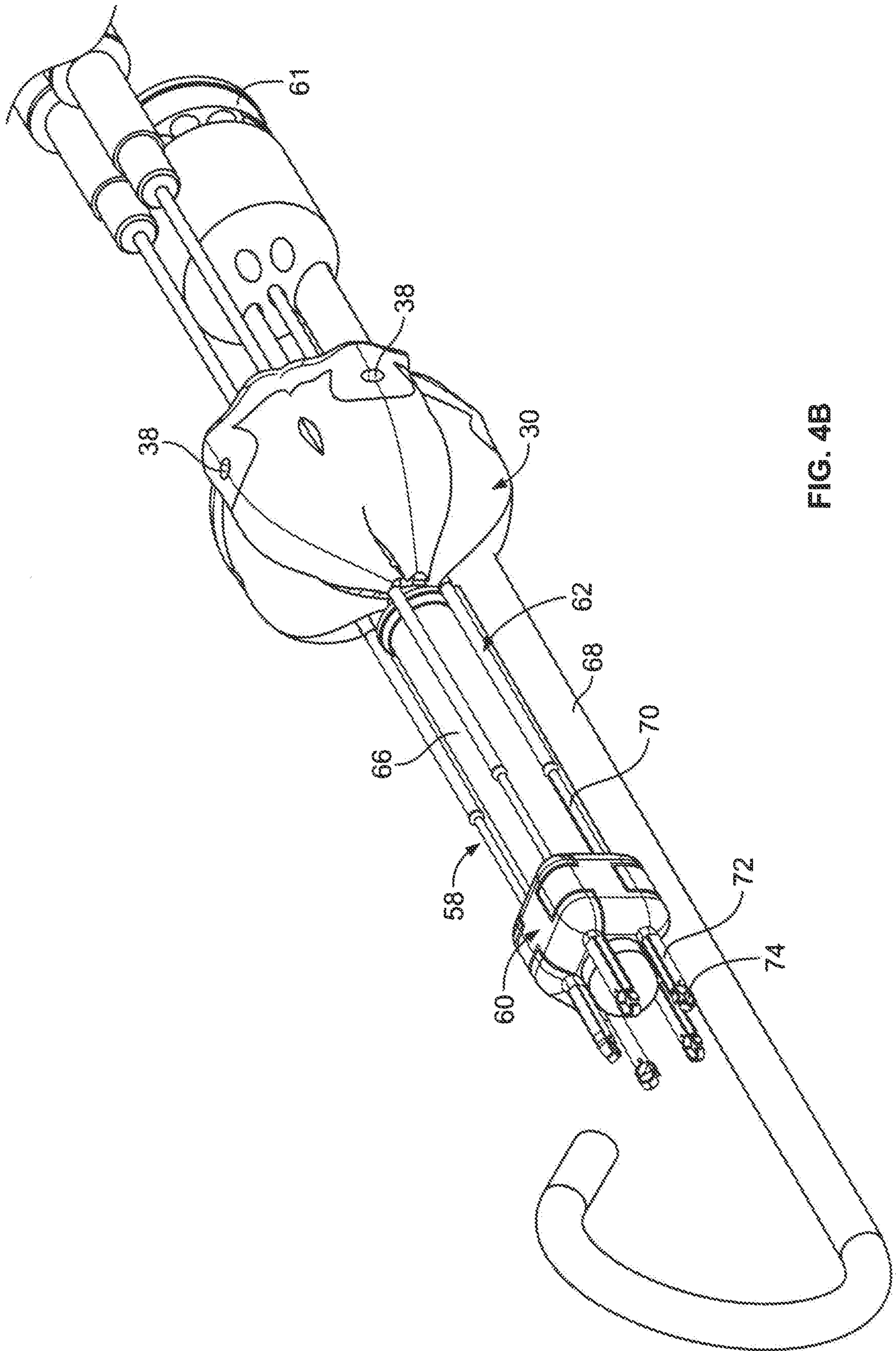


FIG. 4B

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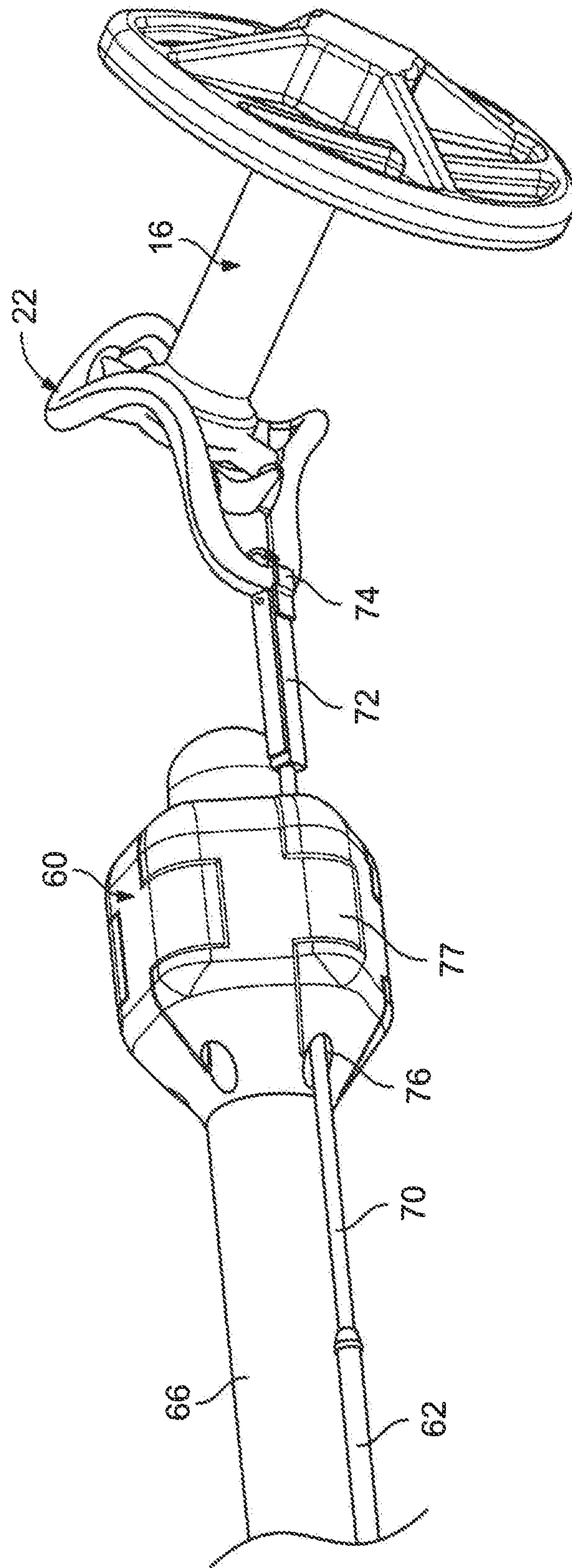


FIG. 5A

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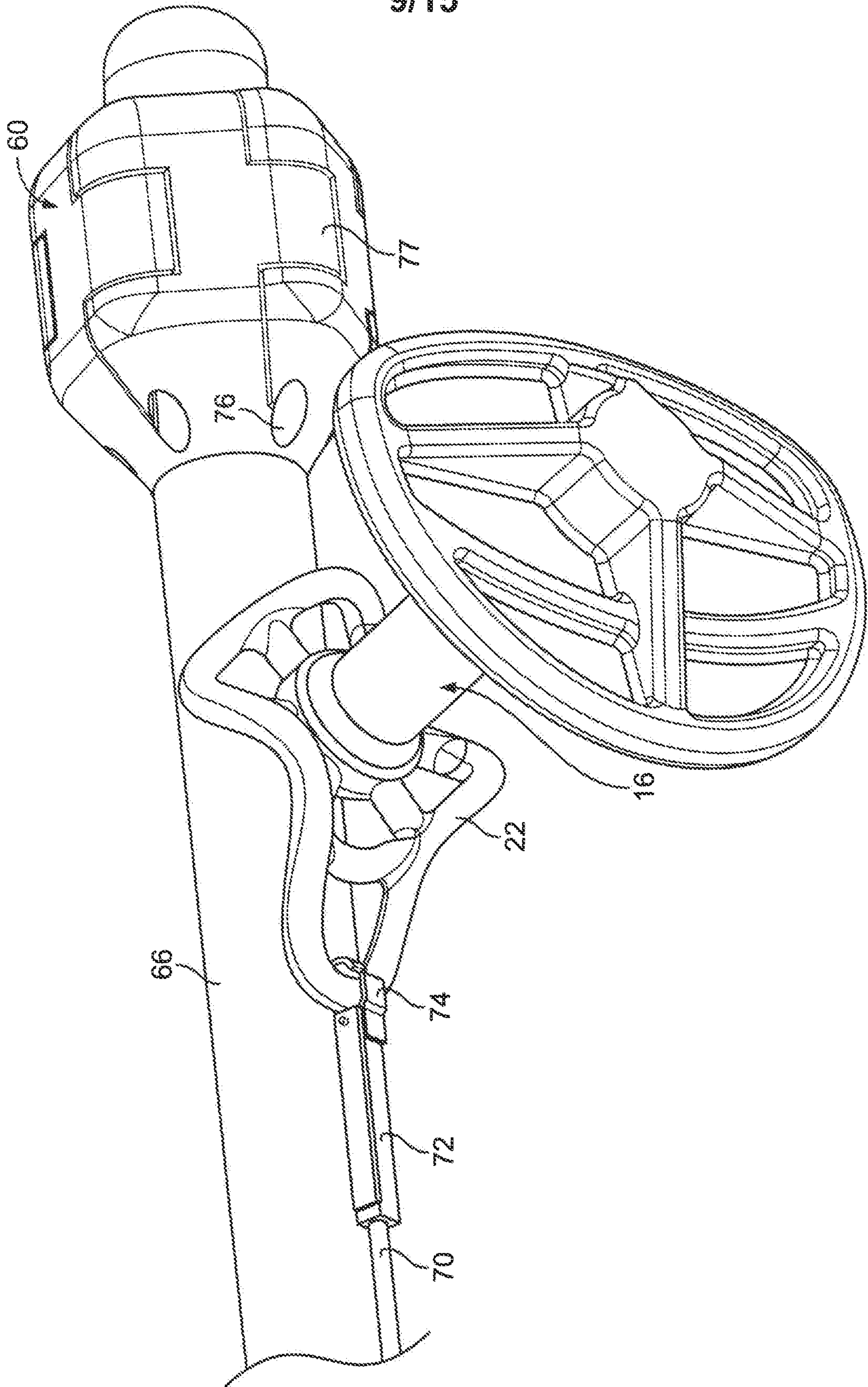
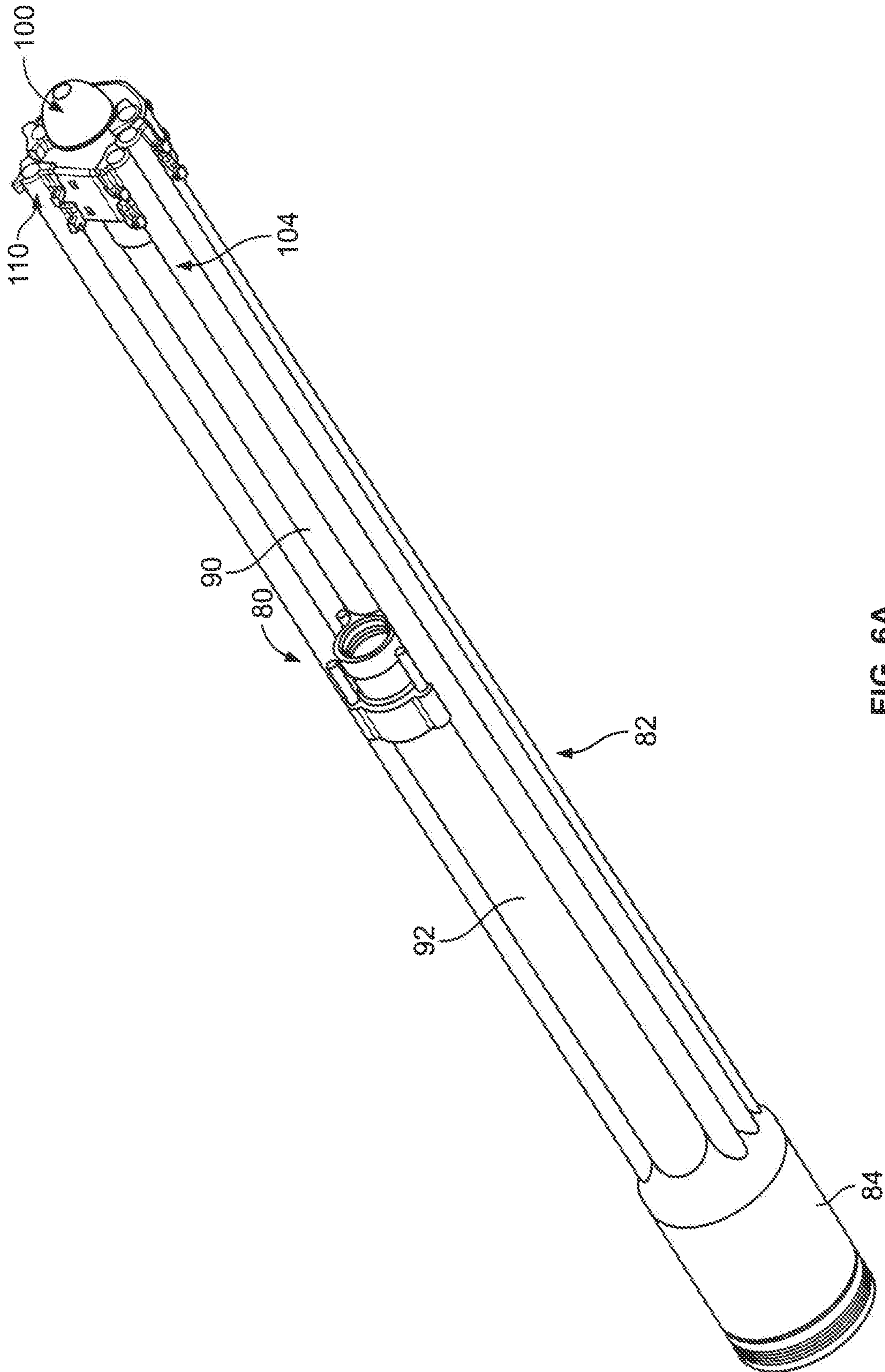
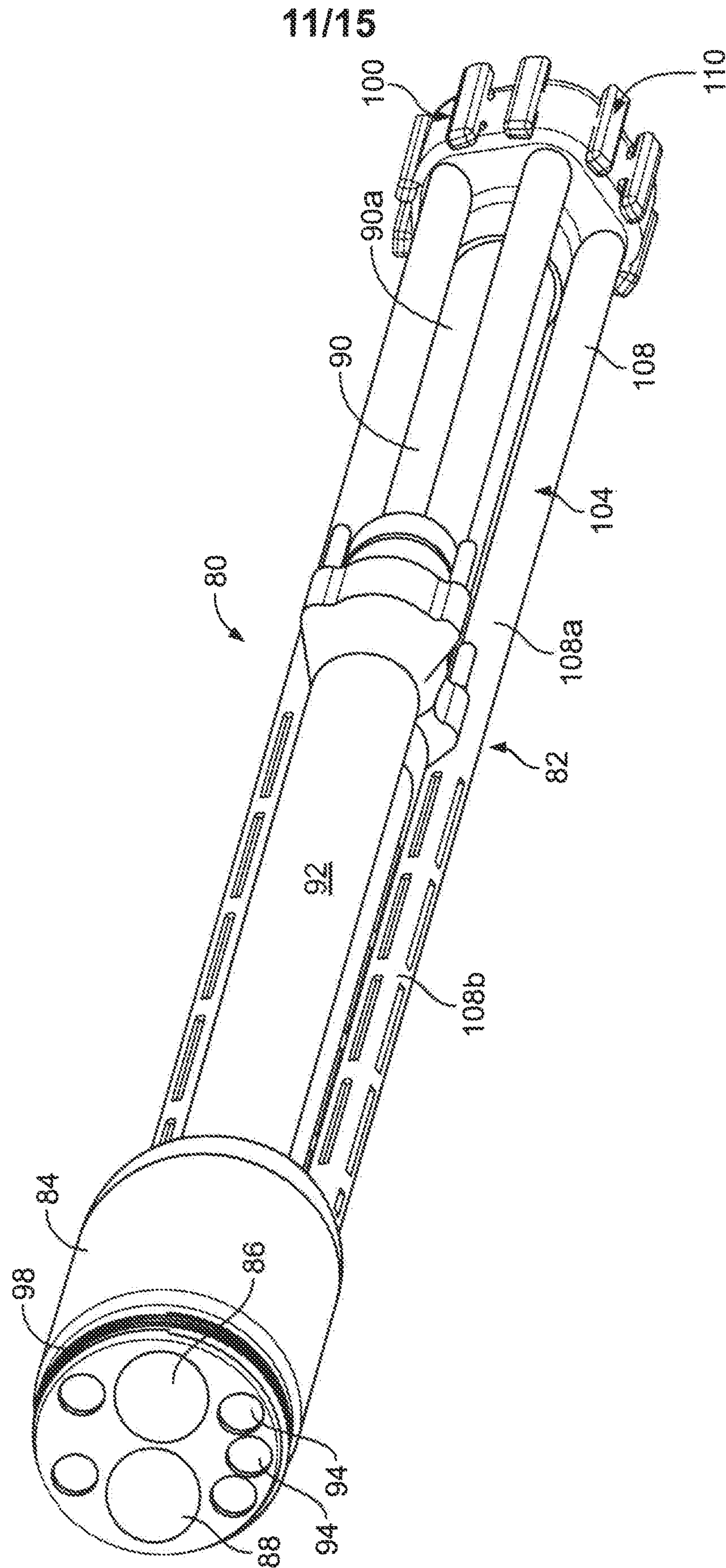


FIG. 5B

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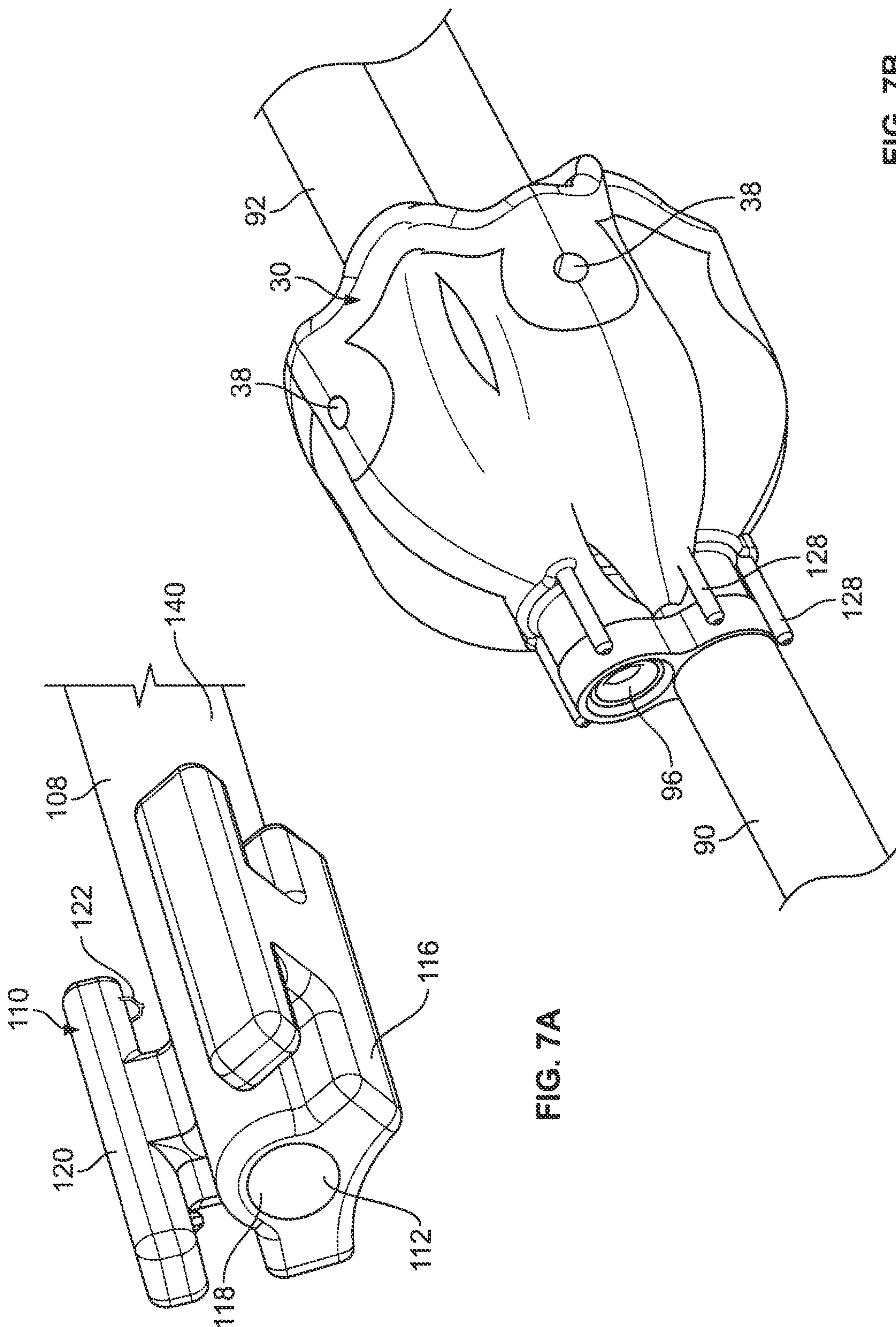


FIG. 7A

FIG. 7B

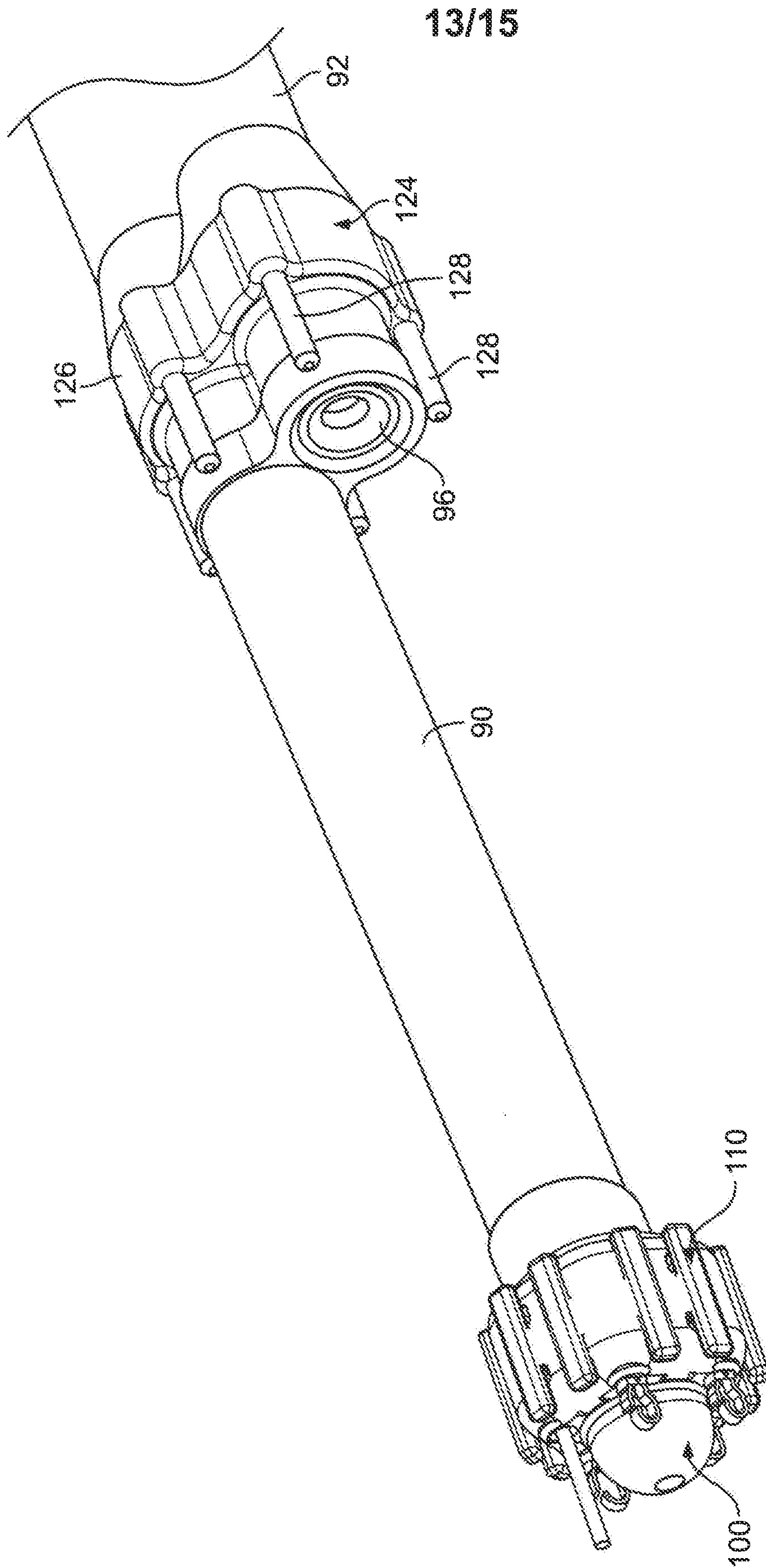


FIG. 7C

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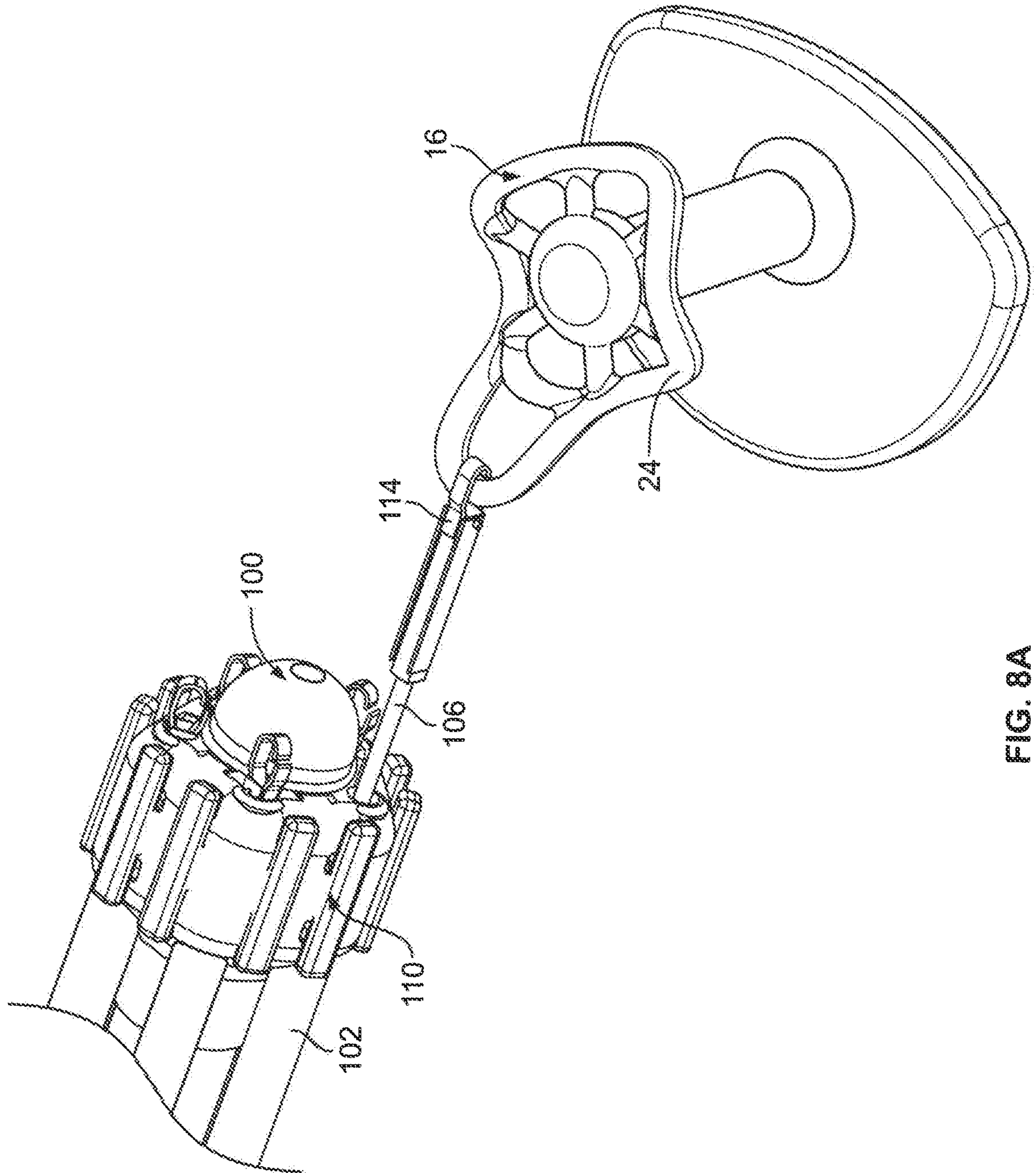


FIG. 8A

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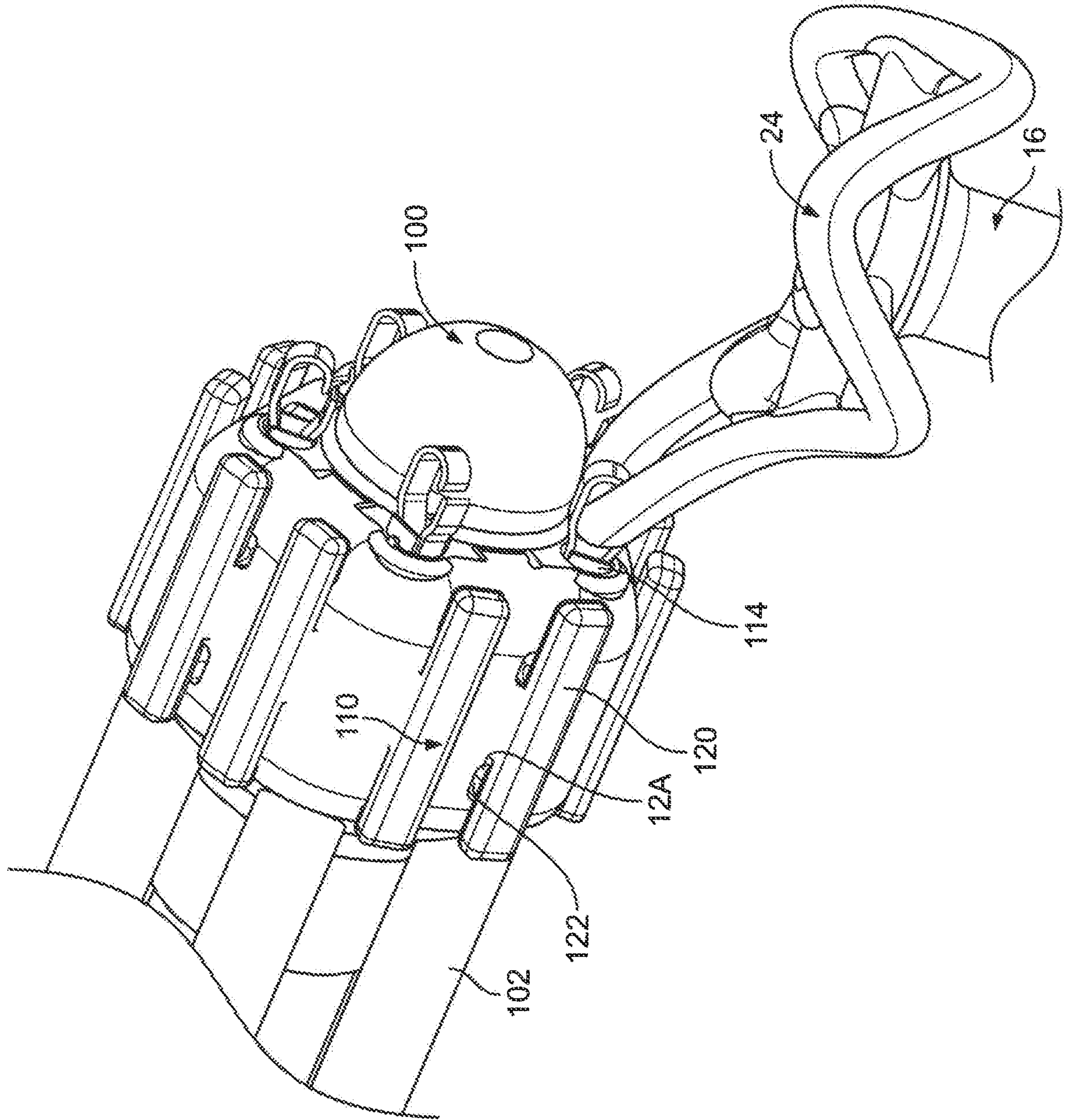


FIG. 8B

