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(54) Title: COATINGS FOR THE CONTROLLABLE RELEASE OF ANTIMICROBIAL METAL IONS

(57) Abstract: Antimicrobial metal ion coatings. In particular, described herein are coatings including an anodic metal (e.g., silver and/or zinc and/or copper) that is co-deposited with a cathodic metal (e.g., palladium, platinum, gold, molybdenum, titanium, iridium, osmium, niobium or rhenium) on a substrate (including, but not limited to absorbable/resorbable substrates) so that the anodic metal is galvanically released as antimicrobial ions when the apparatus is exposed to a bodily fluid. The anodic metal may be at least about 25 percent by volume of the coating, resulting in a network of anodic metal with less than 20% of the anodic metal in the coating fully encapsulated by cathodic metal.

COATINGS FOR THE CONTROLLABLE RELEASE OF ANTIMICROBIAL METAL IONS

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This patent claims priority to U.S. patent application no. 14/679,893, filed on April 6, 2015 (titled "COATINGS FOR THE CONTROLLABLE RELEASE OF ANTIMICROBIAL METAL IONS"), and to U.S. Patent Application No. 14/569,545, filed on Dec. 12, 2014, titled "BIOABSORBABLE SUBSTRATES AND SYSTEMS THAT CONTROLLABLY RELEASE ANTIMICROBIAL METAL IONS," (now U.S. 8,999,367), and to U.S. Patent Application No. 14/302,352, filed on Jun. 11, 2014 and titled "BIOABSORBABLE SUBSTRATES AND SYSTEMS THAT CONTROLLABLY RELEASE ANTIMICROBIAL METAL IONS" (now U.S. Patent No. 8,927,004). This patent application also claims priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 62/059,714, filed on Oct. 3, 2014 and titled "COATINGS FOR THE CONTROLLABLE RELEASE OF ANTIMICROBIAL METAL IONS." Each of these patents and patent applications is herein incorporated by reference in its entirety.

INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

[0002] All publications and patent applications mentioned in this specification are herein incorporated by reference in their entirety to the same extent as if each individual publication or patent application was specifically and individually indicated to be incorporated by reference.

FIELD

[0003] Described herein are substrates having antimicrobial metal ion coatings. In particular, described herein are substrates that are coated with an anodic metal (e.g., silver and/or zinc and/or copper) that is co-deposited with a cathodic metal (e.g., palladium, platinum, gold, molybdenum, titanium, iridium, osmium, niobium or rhenium) on the substrate to form a continuous path of interconnected veins of anodic metal within the matrix of cathodic metal or a continuous path of interconnected veins of cathodic metal within the matrix of anodic metal, wherein the continuous path extends from an outer surface of the coating to the substrate. Thus, the antimicrobial anodic metal (e.g., silver, zinc, copper) may be galvanically released as antimicrobial ions when the coated substrates is contacted by a conductive fluid environment, including when inserted into a subject's body.

BACKGROUND

[0004] Antimicrobial or antibiotic agents are widely used to treat as well as to prevent infection. In particular, silver is known to be antimicrobial and has been used (primarily as a coating) in various medical devices with limited success. Both active (e.g., by application of electrical current) and passive (e.g., galvanic) release of silver ions have been proposed for use in the treatment and prevention of infection. However, the use of silver-releasing implants have been limited because of the difficulty in controlling and distributing the release of silver ions as well as the difficulty in maintaining a therapeutically relevant concentration of silver ions in an appropriate body region. Zinc shares many of the same antimicrobial properties of silver, but has been less commonly used, and thus even less is known about how to control the amount and distribution of the release of silver ions to treat and/or prevent infection.

[0005] It would be highly beneficial to use an antimicrobial agent such as silver and/or zinc as part of an implant, including a bioabsorbable implant, in part because the risk of acquiring infections from bioabsorbable

materials in medical devices is very high. Many medical applications exist for bioabsorbable materials including: wound closure (e.g., sutures, staples, adhesives), tissue repair (e.g., meshes, such as for hernia repair), prosthetic devices (e.g., internal bone fixation devices, etc.), tissue engineering (e.g., engineered blood vessels, skin, bone, cartilage, liver, etc.) and controlled drug delivery systems (such as microcapsules and ion-exchange resins). The use of bioabsorbable materials in medical applications such as these may reduce tissue or cellular irritation and the induction of an inflammatory response.

[0006] Bioabsorbable materials for medical applications are well known. For example, synthetic bioabsorbable polymers may include polyesters/polylactones such as polymers of polyglycolic acid, glycolide, lactic acid, lactide, dioxanone, trimethylene carbonate etc., polyanhydrides, polyesteramides, polyortheoesters, polyphosphazenes, and copolymers of these and related polymers or monomers, as well as naturally derived polymers such as albumin, fibrin, collagen, elastin, chitosan, alginates, hyaluronic acid; and biosynthetic polyesters (e.g., 3-hydroxybutyrate polymers). However, like other biomaterials, bioabsorbable materials are also subjected to bacterial contamination and can be a source of infections which are difficult to control. Those infections quite often require their removal and costly antimicrobial treatments.

[0007] Efforts to render bioabsorbable materials more infection resistant generally have focused on impregnating the materials with antibiotics or salts such as silver salts, and have provided only limited and instantaneous antimicrobial activity. It is desirable to have an antimicrobial effect which is sustained over time, such that the antimicrobial effect can be prolonged for the time that the bioabsorbable material is in place. This can range from hours or days, to weeks or even years.

[0008] Further, although antimicrobial/antibacterial metal coatings on medical devices have been suggested, metal coatings (such as silver or copper coatings) have not been characterized or optimized. In such applications, it is important that the metal coatings do not shed or leave behind large metal particulates in the body, which may induce unwanted immune responses and/or toxic effects. Further, it is essential that the release of the antimicrobial agent (metal) be metered over the lifetime of the implant.

[0009] For example, U.S. Patent No. 8,309,216 describes substrates including degradable polymers that include an electron donor layer (such as silver, copper or zinc) onto which particles of palladium and platinum, plus one other secondary metal (chosen from gold, ruthenium, rhodium, osmium, iridium, or platinum) are deposited onto. Although such materials are described for anti-microbial implants (e.g., pacemakers, etc.), the separate layers formed by this method would be problematic for antimicrobial coatings in which the undercoating of silver, copper or zinc were being released, potentially undermining the platinum and secondary metal.

[0010] Similarly, U.S. Patent No. 6,719,987 describes bioabsorbable materials having an antimicrobial metal (e.g., silver) coating that can be used for an implant. The silver coating is for release of particles (including ions) and must be in a crystalline form characterized by sufficient atomic disorder. In this example, the silver is also deposited in one or more layers. U.S. Patent No. 6,080,490 also describes medical devices with antimicrobial surfaces that are formed by layers of metals (e.g., silver and platinum) to release ions; layers are etched to expose regions for release. The outer layer is always Palladium (and one other metal), beneath which is the silver.

[0011] Thus, it would be highly desirable to provide devices, systems and methods for the controlled release (particularly the controlled galvanic release) of a high level of silver, zinc or silver and zinc ions from a bioabsorbable material into the tissue for a sufficient period of time to treat or prevent infection.

[0012] Known systems and devices, including those described above, that have attempted to use ions (e.g., silver and/or zinc) on bioabsorbable materials to treat infection have suffered from problems such as: insufficient

amounts of ions released (e.g., ion concentration was too low to be effective); insufficient time for treatment (e.g., the levels of ions in the body or body region were not sustained for a long enough period of time); and insufficient region or volume of tissue in which the ion concentration was elevated (e.g., the therapeutic region was too small or limited, such as just on the surface of a device). Further, the use of galvanic release has generally been avoided or limited because it may effectively corrode the metals involved, and such corrosion is generally considered an undesirable process, particularly in a medical device.

[0013] There is a need for antimicrobial coatings for substrates generally. Antimicrobial coatings may be useful for any surface that will be exposed to a conductive fluid, including blood, sweat, lymph, etc., whether implanted or not. For example, there is a particular need for antimicrobial coatings for bioabsorbable materials, which can create an effective and sustainable antimicrobial effect, which do not interfere with the bioabsorption of the bioabsorbable material, and which do not shed or leave behind large metal particulates in the body as the bioabsorbable material disappears.

[0014] Therapeutically, the level of silver and/or zinc ions released into a body is important, because it may determine how effective the antimicrobial ions are for treating or preventing infection. As described in greater detail below, the amount or ions released galvanically may depend on a number of factors which have not previously been well controlled. For example, galvanic release may be related to the ratio of the anode to the cathode (and thus, the driving force) as well as the level of oxygen available; given the galvanic reaction, the level of oxygen may be particularly important for at the cathode. Insufficient oxygen at the cathode may be rate-limiting for galvanic release.

[0015] For example, with respect to silver, it has been reported that a concentration of 1 mg/liter of silver ions can kill common bacteria in a solution. Silver ions may be generated a galvanic system with silver as the anode and platinum or other noble metal as the cathode. However one of the challenges in designing a galvanic system for creation of silver ion in the body that has not been adequately addressed is the appropriate ratios of the areas of the electrodes (e.g., anode to cathode areas) in order to create the germicidal level of free silver ions. One challenge in designing a galvanic system is addressing the parasitic loss of current due to formation of silver chloride via reaction:

$$AgCl + e \rightarrow Ag + Cl(-) \qquad Eo = 0.222 \text{ volts}$$

[0016] We herein propose that it may be beneficial to have an area of the cathode under common biological condition that is at least larger than 8% of the silver area to sustain the germicidal level of silver ions. For the purpose of this discussion, the following assumptions have been made: for a concentration of: [H+] = 10^(-7) moles/liter; [OH-] = 10^(-7) moles/liter; [O2] = 5*10^(-3) moles/liter in the capillary; [Cl-]= 0.1 moles/liter. The values of the following were also assumed (as constants or reasonable approximations): Faraday's constant, F =96000 coulombs/mole; diffusivity of oxygen = 0.000234 cm2/sec; diffusivity of Ag+ = 10^(-6) cm2/sec; diffusivity of Cl- = 10^(-6) cm2/sec; R, Gas constant = 8.314 J K^{-1} mol^{-1}; T, temp. K; Mw of silver = 108 grams/mol; germicidal concentration of silver = 10^(-5) mol/ liter.

[0017] At equilibrium, for a galvanic cell it is acceptable to assume that the two electrodes are at the same potential. Using the Nernst equation, the equilibrium concentration of oxygen when the silver ion is at the germicidal level may be calculated:

$E=Eo - (RT/nF) \ln [(\text{Activity of products})/(\text{activity of reactants})]$

$E= Eo - (0.0592/n) \text{ Log } [(\text{product})/(\text{reactant})]$

[0018] For the half cell reaction at the anode (silver electrode): Ag → Ag(+) + e(-). This reaction is written as a reduction reaction below:

Ag(+) + e(-) →Ag Eo= 0.800 volt eq. (1)

[0019] [Ag+]= 1mg/ liter * (gr/1000mg) * (1mol/ 108 (Mw of Ag)) = 10^(-5) Ag+ mole/liter ; E= 0.800 – (0.0592/1) log [1/(10^(-5)]. Based on this, the resulting E= 8.00- (0.0592*5)= 0.504 volt.

[0020] For the cathode, the reactions are:

$O_2 + 2H_2O + 4e(-) \rightarrow 4\ OH(-)$ Eo= 0.401 volt eq. (2)

$O_2 + 4H(+) + 4\ e(-) \rightarrow 2H_2O$ Eo= 1.229 volt eq. (3)

[0021] In dilute aqueous solutions these two reactions are equivalent. At equilibrium the potential for the two half-cell potentials must be equal:

E = 0.401 – (0.0592/4) log {[OH(-)] ^4/ [O2]}

E(silver)= 0.504 = 0.401-(0.0592/4) log {[10^-7] ^4/ [O2]}

[0022] Solving for $[O_2]$, the result is: $[O_2]$ =10^(-21) atm. The result of this analysis is that, thermodynamically speaking, as long as the concentration of oxygen is above 10^(-21), the concentration of the sliver ion could remain at the presumed germicidal level.

[0023] However, a parasitic reaction to creation of silver ions is the formation of AgCl due to reaction of Cl- at the silver electrode. The half-cell potential for this reaction is:

AgCl + e(-) → Ag + Cl(-) Eo= 0.222

[0024] Solving the Nernst equation for this reaction with E= 0.504, the concentration of chloride [Cl-] = 2x 10^(-5). The importance of this reaction becomes apparent in evaluating the current needed to compensate for the losses of current due to this reaction and the increased in ratio of the area of the cathode to the anode.

[0025] The current density per until area requirements of the device can be estimated by combining Fick's and Faraday equations: the silver losses due to diffusion of silver from the device can be calculated using the Fick's equation:

j= D[C(d)- C (c)] / d Fick's equation

[0026] The current needed to create the silver ions (A/cm2): i= j*n*F, where, j is the mass flux, C(d) is the concentration of the silver at the device and C(c) is concentration of silver at the capillary bed (= 0). D is the diffusion coefficient of silver (10^(-6)) cm2/sec, d is the average distance of the device from the capillary bed (assumed to be= 0.5 cm in the bone), F is Faraday's constant (96000 col./mol), and n is the charge number.

[0027] The combination of the two equations for silver diffusion gives:

i (Ag) = D*.n. F (C(d)) / d

[0028] Thus:

i(Ag) ={10^(-6) * 1 * (10^(-5)) * (96000) * (5*10^(-3)) / 0.5 }* (1 liter/1000 cc)

= 2* 10^(-9) Amp/cm^2

[0029] The current needed to create the silver ions at the desired concentration is approximately 2 nanoAmp/cm^2. Similarly, the current density (A/cm2) required to reduce the chloride ions from biological level (0.1 molar) to the desired level of 2*10^(-5) molar could be calculated. For this equation the approximate values of the constants are D= 10^(-6), d= 0.1 cm. The change in the Chloride concentration it assumed to be (0.1 – 2*10^(-5)) = 0.1. The current needed to feed the parasitic reaction can then be determined:

i(cl) = { (10^(-6)) * (1) * (96000) * (0.1) / (0.1) } * (1lit/1000 cc)

= 9.6 *10^(-5)

= 96 microAmp/Cm^2

[0030] The total anodic current needed is: i(Ag) + i (Cl) = i(anodic) = 96 microAmps/cm^2. On the cathode, the reaction limitation is the flux of oxygen form the source to the surface of the electrode. The max i(cathodic) current could be approximated to:

i(O2)= { (0.000324) * (4)*(96000)* (5*10^(-3)) / (0.5)} (1 lit/ 1000cc)

= 1.24 * 10^(-3) Amps/cm^2

[0031] Since the total cathodic current must be equal to total Anodic current:

i(cathodic) * Area of the cathode = i (anodic) * Area of Anode

=> Area of the Cathode/ Area of the anode = (96*10^ (-6) / (1.24 * 10^(-3)) = 0.077

[0032] This suggests that the area of the cathode must be at least equal to 8% of that of anode.

[0033] In addition to the ratio of the cathode to the ratio of the anode, another factor affecting the release of silver ions that has not previously been accounted for in galvanic release of silver to treat infection is the concentration of oxygen needed.

[0034] The concentration of the oxygen needed to power the galvanic system is typically higher than that of the equilibrium concentration, since the system must overcome the activation energy of the reactions (over-potential) and supply the additional current. In the model below we evaluated the concentration of the oxygen needed to overcome the activation energy for the reactions. Using the Tafel equation:

$\eta = \beta \log [i/io]$

[0035] where i= current density, η= the over-potential, β= overpotential voltage constant, and io=intrinsic current density. For platinum, the oxygen over-potential constants are: β=0.05 volt and io= 10^(-9) A/m^2. Using i= 9.6* 10^ (-5) Amp then:

η = 0.05 log [9.6 * 10^ (-5) / (10^(-9))]

η=0.25 volt

[0036] Adding the over potential to the potential at the equilibrium (0.501 volts), and the total working half-potential needed at the cathode becomes equal to (0.501 + 0.25) = 0.751.

[0037] Using the Nernst equation to determine the concentration of oxygen at the cathode:

E= 0.751 = 0.401 – (0.0592/4) log {[OH(-)] ^4/ [O2]}

[0038] Thus, the concentration of oxygen at the electrode should be at least 7*10^ (-5) mole.

[0039] The results of this analysis show that an implanted galvanic system would benefit from having an area of the cathode to the area of the anode ($A_{cathode}/A_{anode}$) of greater that about 8% and the concentration of the oxygen at the site of implant to be at least 7*10^(-5) moles per liter, which may avoid rate-limiting effect.

[0040] Thus, to address the problems and deficiencies in the prior art mentioned above, described herein are systems, methods and devices (and in particular coatings, methods of coatings) for substrates that controllably release antimicrobial metal ions, including apparatuses (e.g., devices and/or systems) and methods for prevent infection and for eliminating existing infections. The coatings described herein may be used as part of any appropriate substrate, including medical devices (both implanted, inserted, and non-implanted/inserted medical devices), and non-medical devices including hand-held articles. In some particular examples, described below are implants including bioabsorbable substrates, and methods for using them.

SUMMARY OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0041] In general, described herein are coatings and methods of forming and using coatings for any substrate that will come into contact with a bodily fluid and/or secretion, in which the coating may galvanically release antimicrobial ions. The coatings are configured so that the release of the antimicrobial ions (e.g., silver, zinc and/or copper) is sustained over a predetermined time period of continuous or intermittent exposure to the bodily fluid, and further so that the amount and/or concentration of the antimicrobial ions released is above a predetermined threshold for effective antimicrobial effect either locally or within a region exposed to the coating.

[0042] Although particular attention and examples of types of substrates, such as medical devices, and in particular implantable medical device including bioabsorbable substrates, it should be readily understood that the coatings described herein may be used on any substrate surface that will come into contact with bodily fluids which would benefit from an antimicrobial effect, including devices that are not inserted or implanted into a body. Bodily fluids are generally electrically conductive, and may include any of: blood, blood serum, amniotic fluid, aqueous humor, vitreous humor, bile, breast milk, cerebrospinal fluid, cerumen, chyle, chyme, endolymph, perilymph, exudates, feces (diarrhea), female ejaculate, gastric acid, gastric juice, lymph, mucus (including nasal drainage and phlegm), pericardial fluid, peritoneal fluid, pleural fluid, pus, rheum, saliva, sebum, semen, sputum, synovial fluid, sweat, tears, urine, vaginal secretion, vomit, etc.

[0043] As used herein, a substrate may be any surface onto which the coating may be applied, which may be any appropriate material, including, but not limited to metals (e.g., alloys, etc.), ceramics, stone, polymers, wood, glass, etc., including combinations of materials. In some variations the surface of the substrate may be prepared before the coating is applied, as described herein. The substrate may be rigid or flexible. In particular, the coatings described herein may be applied to flexible and/or fiber-like materials such as strings, sutures, woven materials, thin electrical leads, and the like. As described in greater detail herein, the coating typically does not inhibit the flexibility, pliability, bendability, etc. of the substrate material.

[0044] The coatings described herein typically include co-depositions of an anodic metal (e.g., one or more of zinc, silver, and/or copper) and a cathodic metal (e.g., one or more of: palladium, platinum, gold, molybdenum, titanium, iridium, osmium, niobium and rhenium). The anodic and cathodic material in the coating are non-uniformly dispersed within the coating, so that there are veins (e.g., microdomains or microregions, such as clusters, clumps, etc.) of anodic metal within a matrix of cathodic metal and/or veins of cathodic metal within a matrix of anodic metal. The relative amounts of anodic metal in the coating may be between 20% and 80% by volume, or more preferably between 25% and 75% by volume, or more preferably still, between 30% and 70% by volume (e.g., greater than 20%, greater than 25%, greater than 30%, etc.).

[0045] The anodic metal within the coating typically forms a continuous path through the coating (extending from the outer surface of the coating all the way to the base of the coating, which may be the portion against the substrate), so that all or most all (e.g., greater than 80%, greater than 85%, greater than 90%, greater than 95%, greater than 96%, greater than 97%, greater than 98%, greater than 99%, etc.) of the anodic metal in the coating is interconnected, preventing entrapment of a substantial portion of the anodic metal within the coating. Similarly, the cathodic metal within the coating may be in continuous contact throughout the coating layer (extending from the outer surface of the coating all the way to the base of the coating, which may be the portion against the substrate) so that all or most all (e.g., greater than 80%, greater than 85%, greater than 90%, greater than 95%, greater than 96%, greater than 97%, greater than 98%, greater than 99%, etc.) of the cathodic metal in the coating is interconnected.

[0046] As mentioned, the coatings described herein may be applied to any appropriate substrate. For example, an apparatus that galvanically releases antimicrobial ions may include: a substrate; and a coating on the substrate comprising an anodic metal (that has been co-deposited with a cathodic metal on the substrate) to form a non-uniform mixture of the anodic and cathodic metals, wherein the coating comprises a plurality of microregions or microdomains of anodic metal in a matrix of cathodic metal or a plurality of microregions or microdomains of cathodic metal in a matrix of anodic metal, the microregions or microdomains forming a continuous path of interconnected veins of anodic metal within the matrix of cathodic metal or a continuous path of interconnected veins of cathodic metal within the matrix of anodic metal, wherein the continuous path extends from an outer surface of the coating to the substrate; further wherein the anodic metal is galvanically released as antimicrobial ions when the apparatus is inserted into a subject's body.

[0047] The substrate may be an implant configured to be inserted into a human body, including a medical device. The substrate may be device configured to be temporarily or permanently inserted into the body (e.g., surgical tools, implants, etc.). In some variations the substrate may be a device configured to be worn on a human body (e.g., jewelry, clothing, surgical gowns, masks, gloves, etc.). The substrate may be a structure configured to hold, support and/or house a subject (e.g., gurney, chair, bed, etc.). The coating may be applied to all or a portion of the substrate, particularly those surfaces of the substrate that may be placed in contact with a bodily fluid (e.g., a handle, supporting surface, etc.). The substrate may be a household item, such as a cutlery (e.g., spoons, baby spoons, forks, etc.), food handling items (e.g., platters, plates, straws, cups, etc.), handles (e.g., doorknobs, pushes, etc.), faucets, drains, tubs, toilets, toilet knobs, light switches, etc.

[0048] The anodic metal may be any combination of the anodic metals described herein (e.g., zinc, silver, copper, both zinc and silver, etc.). The anodic metal may be least about 30 percent by volume (or in some variations, by weight, e.g., when the densities of anodic and cathodic materials are similar) of the coating.

[0049] The cathodic metal may generally have a higher galvanic potential than the anodic metal. This may drive the galvanic (e.g., "corrosion") of the anodic metal when the coating is exposed to a bodily fluid. For example, the cathodic metal may comprise one or more of: palladium, platinum, gold, molybdenum, titanium, iridium, osmium, niobium and rhenium.

[0050] The coating may be formed by vapor deposition. For example, the anodic metal and the cathodic metal may have been vapor-deposited onto the substrate so that the anodic metal is not encapsulated by the cathodic metal, e.g., so that the anodic metal (and/or in some variations the cathodic metal) include veins that extend continuously through the coating from the outer surface to the base (e.g., the "bottom" of the coating adjacent to the substrate) of the coating. Thus, the continuous path of interconnected veins may be interconnected so that less than 15% of the anodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of cathodic metal, or less than 15% of the cathodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of anodic metal. The continuous path of interconnected veins may be interconnected so that less than 10% of the anodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of cathodic metal, or less than 10% of the cathodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of anodic metal.

[0051] An apparatus that galvanically releases antimicrobial ions may include: a substrate; and a coating on the substrate comprising zinc and silver and a cathodic metal that are all co-deposited onto the substrate, wherein the zinc and silver are at least about 25 percent by volume (or in some variations by weight) of the coating and form a non-uniform mixture of the zinc and the cathodic metal and a non-uniform mixture of the silver and the cathodic metal, wherein the coating comprises a plurality of microregions or microdomains of zinc and silver in a matrix of

cathodic metal or a plurality of microregions or microdomains of cathodic metal in a matrix of zinc and a matrix of silver, the microregions or microdomains forming a continuous path of interconnected veins of zinc and silver within the matrix of cathodic metal or a continuous path of interconnected veins of cathodic metal within the matrix of zinc and the matrix of silver, wherein the continuous paths extend from an outer surface of the substrate; further wherein the zinc and silver are galvanically released as antimicrobial ions when the apparatus is inserted into a subject's body.

[0052] In some variations, the substrate may be bio-absorbable. For example, in some variations, the substrate is configured to degrade within the body to form a degradation product including an anion that complexes with ions of the anodic metal and diffuses into the subject's body to form an antimicrobial zone. For example, a bioabsorbable apparatus that galvanically releases antimicrobial ions may include: an implant having an outer surface comprising a substrate; and a coating on the substrate comprising an anodic metal that is co-deposited with a cathodic metal on the substrate to form a non-uniform mixture of the anodic and cathodic metals, wherein the coating comprises a plurality of microregions or microdomains of anodic metal in a matrix of cathodic metal or a plurality of microregions or microdomains of cathodic metal in a matrix of anodic metal, the microregions or microdomains forming continuous paths of interconnected veins of anodic metal within the matrix of cathodic metal or continuous paths of interconnected veins of cathodic metal within the matrix of anodic metal, wherein the continuous paths extend from an outer surface of the coating to the substrate; further wherein the anodic metal is galvanically released as antimicrobial ions when the apparatus is inserted into a subject's body.

[0053] Thus, also described herein are bioabsorbable substrates, and particularly bioabsorbable filaments, that galvanically release antimicrobial ions. The bioabsorbable filament is coated with an anodic metal (such as silver, copper and/or zinc) that has been co-deposited with a cathodic metal (such as platinum, gold, palladium) along at least a portion of the length of the filament. The filament retains its flexibility. After insertion into the body, the anodic metal corrodes as the filament is bioabsorbed. The degradation of the filament may create a local pH that enhances the release of the silver and/or copper and/or zinc ions.

[0054] In general, the coated filaments may be arranged into structures (e.g., sutures, mesh, slings, yarns, etc.) that can be implanted into the body.

[0055] As mentioned, the anodic and cathodic metals forming the coatings described herein are typically co-deposited together, and not coated in layers (e.g., atop each other). For example, the metals may be jointly vapor deposited. Examples of jointly deposited anodic and cathodic materials include silver-platinum, copper-platinum, zinc-platinum, silver-gold, copper-gold, zinc-gold, etc. Different types of jointly deposited anodic and cathodic metals may be arranged on the bioabsorble substrate. For example, silver-platinum may be coated near (either not touching or touching) a region of zinc-platinum; different co-deposited anodic/cathodic metals may be a spacer region on the substrate.

[0056] In some variations, described herein are devices and methods for preventing an infection in an implantable device such as a pacemaker or a defibrillator when inserting it into a body by incorporating bioabsorbable materials that galvanically release antimicrobial/antibacterial metals such as silver and/or zinc and/or copper. For example, an implant may be inserted into a woven mesh made of a bioabsorbable material that is coated (or impregnated) with an anti-microbial anodic metal ions such as silver or zinc co-deposited with a catalytic cathodic metal such as platinum, gold, or palladium.

[0057] In general, as mentioned above, the anodic metal may be silver, zinc, or any other metal with germicidal activity, and the cathode metal may be platinum, gold, palladium, or any other metal with catalytic

action, including molybdenum, titanium, iridium, osmium, niobium and rhenium. The biodegradable substrate may be a biodegradable filament, such as polylactic acid (PLA), poly(lactic-co-glycolic acid) (PLGA), polyglycolide (PGA), polyglycoside-co-trimethylene carbonate (PGTMC), poly(caprolactone-co-glycoside), poly(dioxanone) (PDS), and poly(caprolactone) (PCL). As used herein the terms biodegradable and bioabsorbable may be used interchangeably.

[0058] For example, described herein are biodegradable filaments that may be formed into an envelope, pouch, pocket, etc. (generically, a co-implantable structure) made of a biodegradable polymer (such as PLGA, PGA, PLA, polycaprolactone, etc.). The implant may be co-implanted with the co-implantable structure, for example, by placing the mesh onto the implant before, during or after insertion into the body. The co-deposited metal coating of the co-implantable structure creates a galvanic system resulting in release of germicidal ions protecting the device from getting infected in the body once the device is implanted with the structure into a body. In the semi-aqueous environment of the body, the metal will corrode over time by releasing the ions (e.g., silver ions, copper ions, zinc ions, etc.). A coated bioabsorbable polymer could also or alternatively be used as an insert inside the lumen of the device such as a cannula, cannulated screw, or as a coating on a device. In another configuration the metal ions could be coupled with a poly-anionic (negatively charged) polymer and mixed with the polymer.

[0059] For example, described herein are bioabsorbable apparatuses that galvanically release antimicrobial ions. The apparatus may comprise: a flexible length of bioabsorbable filament; and a coating on the length of filament comprising an anodic metal that is co-deposited with a cathodic metal on the length of filament; wherein the coated filament is flexible; further wherein the anodic metal is galvanically released as antimicrobial ions when the apparatus is inserted into a subject's body.

[0060] In general, in apparatuses (systems and devices) in which the anodic metal and the cathodic metal are co-deposited (e.g., by vapor deposition) the anodic metal may be at least about 25 percent (e.g., at least about 30 percent, at least about 35 percent, etc.) by volume of the coating. This may prevent complete encapsulation of the anodic material (e.g., zinc, silver, etc.) by the cathodic material (e.g., palladium, platinum, gold, molybdenum, titanium, iridium, osmium, niobium and rhenium). As described in greater detail below, the coatings applied may be configured to result in microregions or microdomains of anodic material in a matrix of cathodic material. The microdomains may be interconnected or networked, or they may be isolated from each other. In general, however, the concentrations of anodic material and cathodic material may be chosen (e.g., greater than 25% by volume of the anodic material, between about 20% and about 80%, between about 25% and about 75%, between about 30% and about 70%, etc.) so that the majority of the anodic material in the coating thickness is connected to an outer surface of the coating, allowing eventual corrosion of most, if not all of the anodic metal as anti-bacterial metal ions, while providing sufficient cathodic material to provide adequate driving force for the corrosion of the anodic material. Thus, the coating may comprise the anodic metal and the cathodic metal that have been vapor-deposited onto the length of filament so that the anodic metal is not encapsulated by the cathodic metal.

[0061] As mentioned, the anodic metal may comprise zinc, copper or silver, or in some variations both zinc and silver. In general, the cathodic metal has a higher galvanic potential than the anode. For example, the cathodic metal may be one or more of: palladium, platinum, gold, molybdenum, titanium, iridium, osmium, niobium and rhenium.

[0062] As mentioned, in general the bioabsorbable substrate (e.g., filament) may comprise one or more of: polylactic acid (PLA), poly(lactic-co-glycolic acid) (PLGA), polyglycolide (PGA), polyglycoside-co-trimethylene carbonate (PGTMC), poly(caprolactone-co-glycoside), poly(dioxanone) (PDS), and poly(caprolactone) (PCL).

[0063] In general, the bioabsorbable substrate (including a length of bioabsorbable filament) is configured to degrade within the body to form a degradation product, including an anion that complexes with ions of the anodic metal and diffuses into the subject's body to form an antimicrobial zone.

[0064] The bioabsorbable substrate (e.g., bioabsorbable filament) may be configured as a mesh, bag, envelope, pouch, net, or the like, that may be configured to hold an implant. For example, the flexible structure may be configured to at least partially house a pacemaker, defibrillator, neurostimulator, or ophthalmic implant.

[0065] Also described herein are bioabsorbable apparatuses that galvanically release antimicrobial ions and comprise: a plurality of lengths of bioabsorbable filament arranged in a woven structure; and a coating on the lengths of filament comprising zinc and silver and a cathodic metal that are all co-deposited onto the lengths of filament, wherein the zinc and silver are at least about 25 percent by volume of the coating; further wherein the zinc and silver are galvanically released as antimicrobial ions when the apparatus is inserted into a subject's body. As mentioned, the woven structure may form a mesh, bag, envelope, pouch, net, or other structure that is configured to at least partially enclose an implant within the subject's body.

[0066] Also described herein are bioabsorbable apparatuses that galvanically releases antimicrobial ions and include: a plurality of lengths of bioabsorbable filament; and a coating on the lengths of filament comprising an anodic metal that is co-deposited with a cathodic metal on the lengths of filament; wherein the lengths of filament are arranged into a flexible structure; further wherein the anodic metal is galvanically released as antimicrobial ions when the apparatus is inserted into a subject's body.

[0067] Methods of forming any of these apparatuses are also described, including methods of forming a coated bioabsorbable substrate, for example, by co-depositing (vapor depositing) an anodic material and a cathodic material onto the substrate. The substrate may be a fiber or the structure formed of the fiber. In some variations the method may also include forming different regions of co-deposited anodic and cathodic materials, wherein the different regions include different combinations of anodic and cathodic materials. The different regions may be non-contacting. In general, co-deposing anodic and cathodic materials are typically performed so that the anodic material forms greater than 25% by volume of the coating, preventing encapsulation of the anodic material by cathodic material within the coating.

[0068] Also described are methods of treating a subject using the bioabsorbable materials that are co-deposited with one or more coating of anodic and cathodic metals (e.g., materials). For example, described herein are methods of galvanically releasing antimicrobial ions to form an antimicrobial zone around an implant that is inserted into a subject's tissue. The method may include step of: inserting into the subject's tissue an apparatus comprising a plurality of lengths of bioabsorbable filament having a coating comprising an anodic metal and a cathodic metal that are co-deposited onto the lengths of filament, wherein the implant is at least partially housed within the apparatus; galvanically releasing antimicrobial ions from the coating (e.g., galvanically releasing ions of silver and zinc); allowing the lengths of filament to degrade into a degradation product including anions, wherein the anions complex with antimicrobial ions of the anodic metal and diffuse into the tissue to form an antimicrobial zone around the implant. The method may also include inserting an implant into the apparatus before the apparatus is inserted into the subject's body. For example, inserting the apparatus into the body may comprise inserting a flexible apparatus comprising the plurality of length of bioabsorbable filaments forming a bag, envelope, pouch, net or other structure (woven or otherwise) formed to hold the implant. For example, the method may also include inserting a pacemaker, a defibrillator or a neurostimulator into the apparatus.

[0069] Inserting the apparatus may comprise inserting the apparatus having a plurality of lengths of bioabsorbable filaments coated with the anodic metal that comprises silver and zinc that are co-deposited onto the lengths of filament with the cathodic metal.

[0070] Allowing the lengths of filament to degrade may comprise degrading the lengths of filament into anions that bind to silver ions from the coating. For example, inserting the apparatus comprises inserting the apparatus having a plurality of lengths of bioabsorbable filaments coated with the anodic metal that is co-deposited onto the lengths of filament with the cathodic metal, wherein the anodic metal is at least about 25 percent by volume of the coating (e.g., at least about 30%, at least about 35%, etc.).

[0071] Inserting the apparatus comprising the plurality of lengths of bioabsorbable filament may comprise inserting the apparatus having a plurality of lengths of one or more of: polylactic acid (PLA), poly(lactic-co-glycolic acid) (PLGA), and polyglycolide (PGA).

[0072] In general, the antimicrobial zone around the implant may be sustained for at least seven days.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0073] The novel features of the invention are set forth with particularity in the claims that follow. A better understanding of the features and advantages of the present invention will be obtained by reference to the following detailed description that sets forth illustrative embodiments, in which the principles of the invention are utilized, and the accompanying drawings of which:

[0074] FIGS. 1A-1F illustrate the general concept of galvanic release of silver ions.

[0075] FIG. 2A shows a cross-sectional view through one example of a substrate having a combined coating, comprising an anodic metal that is co-deposited with a cathodic metal.

[0076] FIG. 2B is a schematic representation of an enlarged view of a portion of the coated substrate of FIG. 2A, schematically illustrating micro-domains or veins of anodic metal (not to scale) within a cathodic matrix.

[0077] FIG. 2C is another schematic representation of an enlarged view of a portion of the coated substrate of FIG. 2A.

[0078] FIG. 2D is an example of the galvanic release (and corrosion) of a coating on a substrate such as the one shown in FIG. 2A.

[0079] FIGS. 3A-3C illustrate top views of alternative variations of coating patterns for different combined coatings, such as silver/platinum and zinc/platinum.

[0080] FIG. 4 is an example of a bioabsorbable pouch woven from one or more strands, wherein the strands of the pouch are coated with the combined coatings described herein for release of antimicrobial ions.

[0081] FIG. 5A illustrates a fiber or filament (e.g., suture fiber) coated with a striped pattern of a combined coating for galvanic release of metal ions.

[0082] FIG. 5B illustrates a portion of a barbed suture fiber coated as described herein.

[0083] FIG. 5C is a portion of a suture fiber that is coated as described herein.

[0084] FIG. 5D is an example of a needle and suture (shown as a combined needle preloaded with suture) in which both needle and suture are coated as described herein.

[0085] FIG. 6 is an example of a length of suture formed from a bioabsorbable substrate onto which a combined coating has been regionally applied (e.g., near the distal end).

[0086] FIG. 7 illustrates one example of a medical device configured as a transvaginal mesh having a combined coating for release of metal ions after insertion into the body.

[0087] FIG. 8A is a side perspective view of one example of a plug or patch that may be used, e.g., to repair a hernia. The device is coated with multiple types of combined coatings for galvanic release of metal ions.

[0088] FIG. 8B shows an enlarged view of one region of the plug.

[0089] FIG. 9 is a perspective view of one variation of a bandage or patch including a combined coating, shown on a patient's knee.

[0090] FIG. 10 illustrates one variation of an artificial dura (mesh) including a combined coating for galvanic release of metal ions.

[0091] FIG. 11 shows an example of a material that may be used as within a wound or surgical site to prevent or treat infection. The material may be a porous and/or bioabsorbable mesh that is configured to galvanically release metal ions.

[0092] FIGS. 12A and 12B show side perspective and end views, respectively of one variation of a cannula including a pattern of a combined coating for the release of antimicrobial metal ions.

[0093] FIGS. 13A and 13B illustrate one example of a medical device (an implantable pacemaker) that may be used with the co-deposited galvanic coatings described herein.

[0094] FIG. 13C is a schematic depiction of a conventional cardiac stimulation and defibrillation arrangement.

[0095] FIGS. 14A and 14B illustrate another example of a medical device (a venous catheter) that may be coated with the co-deposited galvanic coatings described herein.

[0096] FIGS.15A and 15B show an example of a catheter (including a cuff) that may include a galvanically released antimicrobial coating that is co-deposited as described herein. FIG. 15A is an example of a triple lumen device and FIG. 15B is an example of a dual lumen device.

[0097] FIGS. 16 shows one example of a catheter that has been coated by co-deposition of the galvanic coating described herein.

[0098] FIG. 17A shows a cannulated bone screw that may be used with a coated insert as shown in FIG. 17B. The coated insert may be a bioabsorbable mesh, coated as described herein.

[0099] FIGS. 17C shows the bone screw of FIG. 17A with the mesh of FIG. 17B inserted.

[0100] FIG. 18A shows a bone screw coated as described herein.

[0101] FIG. 18B shows a bone screw similar to that shown in FIG. 18A, but which has been coated in a striped pattern (e.g., having regions that are either uncoated, or coated with different anionic materials/combinations of materials, as described in FIGS. 3A-3C, above.

[0102] FIG. 19A is another example of bone screw implant having openings or channels from which members (shown extending in FIG. 19B) may extend. Either or both the bone screw and the extending members may be coated as described herein.

[0103] FIG. 20 shows an example of an animal cage coated as described herein.

[0104] FIG. 21 shows an example of a doorknob coated as described herein.

[0105] FIG. 22A shows an example of cutlery (a fork and spoon) coated as described herein. FIG. 22B shows another example of spoon coated as described herein.

[0106] FIG. 23A show a cross-sectional view through an example of a substrate surface having a coating comprising an anodic metal co-deposited with a cathodic metal, in which the coating has been cracked, enhancing available surface area, as described herein.

[0107] FIG. 23B is a schematic representation of an enlarged view of a portion of the coated substrate of FIG. 23A, schematically showing (not to scale) micro-domains or veins of anodic metal within a cathodic matrix, showing cracks in the coating.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0108] In general, described herein are apparatuses (e.g., systems and devices) that include a coating or layer that galvanically releases antimicrobial ions over an extended period of time. The coating may be applied to a substrate, e.g., a bioabsorbable and/or biodegradable substrate that may degrade during the same period that the antimicrobial ions are being released, e.g., days, months, years. In some variations the substrate may be coated with an adhesion layer on the substrate. The substrate may be pre-treated (e.g., to remove oxides, such as the titanium oxide layer on a nickel titanium substrate). In general, the coating may include a combination of anodic metal, such as silver and/or zinc and/or copper, and a cathodic metal, such as palladium, platinum, gold, molybdenum, titanium, iridium, osmium, niobium and rhenium, where the anodic metal and cathodic metals are co-deposited (e.g., by vapor deposition) so that the anodic metal is exposed to an outer surface of the coating and not fully encapsulated in the cathodic metal, and there is sufficient cathodic metal to drive the galvanic release of anodic ions when exposed to bodily fluids such as blood, lymph, etc. (e.g., when implanted into the body).

[0109] For example, described herein are apparatuses including substrates onto which anodic metal and cathodic metals are co-deposited to form a coating, allowing the anodic metal to be galvanically released as ions (e.g., antimicrobial silver, copper and/or zinc ions) when the apparatus is exposed to a conductive fluid (e.g., a bodily fluid). The substrate may include an adhesive coating (such as a tantalum or titanium layer that is applied before the galvanic coating of co-deposited antic and cathodic metal).

Galvanically releasable coating

[0110] In general, the antimicrobial metal ion coatings described herein are galvanically releasable within a tissue, and include one or more anodic metal (typically silver and/or zinc and/or copper) that is co-deposited with a cathodic metal (typically platinum and/or palladium). The anodic metal and the cathodic metal are co-deposited, e.g., by sputtering or other appropriate methods described herein, so that the resulting coating is non-homogenous, with a percentage of anodic metal (e.g., silver) that is greater than about 30% co-distributed (typically in clusters, veins or clumps as illustrated and described below) with the cathodic metal (e.g., platinum), where the cathodic metal is greater than about 30% (e.g. % w/w) of the coating. The antimicrobial metal ion coatings described herein may be generally referred to as non-homogenous mixtures where the anode is distributed in connected clusters (veins) within the cathodic metal (or vice-versa). Generally, both the anodic metal and the cathodic metal are exposed in microdomains across the outer surface of the coatings, allowing galvanic release; as the anodic metal is released, it may form channels (e.g., tunnels, mines, etc.) through the coating, e.g., within the cathodic material. In some variations the cathodic material remains behind. In some variations some of the cathodic material may also be released.

[0111] Thus, in any of these variations, the coating may comprise a non-uniform mixture of the anodic and cathodic metals, with a plurality of microregions or microdomains of anodic metal in a matrix of cathodic metal,

and/or a plurality of microregions or microdomains of cathodic metal in a matrix of anodic metal. These microregions or microdomains may be formed by co-deposition as described herein.

[0112] Any of the coatings described herein may include co-deposited multiple anodic and/or multiple cathodic metals forming the coating. In some variations, it may be preferable to separate regions having a first anodic metal (e.g., silver) from regions having a second anodic metal (e.g., zinc), so that they are separated (e.g., in some variations electrically separated) and/or non-contacting, allowing preferential release of one metal ion (e.g., zinc) compared to silver. This may allow control of the release profile, and may extend the length of effective release time for as coating.

[0113] In general, these coatings may be any appropriate thickness. For example, the thickness could be a few microns thick or more (e.g., greater than 2 microns, greater than 5 microns, greater than 10 microns, greater than 15 microns), etc. For example, the thickness of the coating may be between about 10 microinches (approximately 2500 Angstroms or approximately 0.25 microns) and about 25 microinches (approximately 6350 Angstroms or about 0.64 microns). The thickness of the coating may be uniform or non-uniform. Only some regions of the substrate may be coated, while other regions may be masked to prevent coating. For example, in an electrical stimulation apparatus (e.g., cardiac stimulator, neurostimulator, etc.) the body and/or connectors of the device may be insulated while the electrical leads (electrical contacts) to deliver energy to the tissue may be uncoated. Alternatively in some variations the electrical contacts are coated as described herein.

[0114] FIGS. 1A-1F conceptually describe a simple galvanic cell setup such as for use in a body. The setup is shown treating an infection, but the same process could be applied to healthy tissue to prevent an infection (prophylactically). The components including a first metal 2 (e.g., silver), second metal 4 (e.g., platinum), and electrolytic fluid 6 (e.g., blood) are shown individually in FIGS. 1A-1C and arranged in a tissue in FIGS. 1D-1F. Electrolytic body fluid 6 is shown bathing or contacting healthy tissue 10 as well as infected tissue 8. When silver metal 2 contacts platinum metal 4 in body fluid 6, it forms a galvanic cell with a silver anode and platinum cathode. As shown in FIG. 1E, ionic silver 12 is generated and spreads through the body fluid, killing microorganisms and creating an infection-free zone 14 in body fluid 16 in the vicinity of the anode. After treatment is complete, the silver anode 2 may be completely corroded 20 leaving an infection-free body fluid 18. Any metal with a higher redox potential than silver may be used as the cathode. The metal may be a noble metal, such as gold, palladium or platinum. Although the example shown in FIGS. 1A-1F describes using a silver metal anode that is placed adjacent to a platinum metal cathode, described herein are coatings in which the anodic metal (e.g., silver, zinc, copper) is co-deposited onto a biodegradable substrate.

[0115] In general, a coating of anodic metal and cathodic metal may be configured so that the anodic metal and cathodic metal are within the same coating layer. The microregions of anodic metal may be embedded within the cathodic metal, including being embedded within a matrix of cathodic metal (or vice versa). As illustrated below, the microdomains or microregions of anodic metal are within a cathodic matrix, allowing a large spatial release pattern of anodic metal ions by galvanic action triggered by the contact of the anodic metal and the cathodic metal within the electrolytic bodily fluid. The coatings described herein, in which the anodic metal and the cathodic metal are combined as part of the same layer may be referred to as "combined" coatings, in which an anionic metal and a cationic metal are both jointly coated, and/or non-homogenous (non-uniform) mixtures of anodic and cathodic metal.

[0116] The combined coatings described herein may be non-uniform mixtures of anodic and cathodic metals. For example, the anionic metal may form microregions or microdomains within the cationic metal (or vice versa). In general, the cathodic metal microdomains may form one or more (typically a plurality) of continuous paths

through the cathodic metal. For example, the microdomains described herein may be veins, clusters, threads, clumps, particles, etc. (including interconnected veins, clusters, threads, clumps, particles, etc.) of anodic metal, e.g., silver, copper, and/or zinc, etc., that are connected to an outer surface of the coating, so that they are exposed to the electrolytic bodily fluid (e.g., blood). The microdomains of anodic metal may form a network within the matrix of the cathodic metal. Thus, the anodic metals may be present in one or more networks that are electrically connected within the cathodic matrix. The individual sizes of particles, threads, branches, veins, etc. forming the microdomains may be small (typically having a length and/or diameter, e.g., less than a 1 mm, less than 0.1 mm, less than 0.05, less than 0.01 mm, less than 0.001 mm, less than 0.0001 mm, less than 0.00001 mm, etc.). Similarly, in some variations the matrix may be the anodic metal and the cathodic metal may be referred to as forming microdomains (e.g., where the percentage of cathodic metal in the coating is less than 50%, less than 45%, less than 40%, less than 30%, etc. by volume of the coating).

[0117] A combined anodic metal and cathodic metal forming a combined coating (or a portion of a coating) may be formed of a single anodic metal (e.g., silver) with a single cathodic metal (e.g., platinum), which may be referred to by the combined anodic metal and cathodic metals forming the coating or portion of a coating (e.g., as a combined silver/platinum coating, a combined silver/palladium coating, a combined zinc/platinum coating, a combined zinc/palladium coating, etc.). In some variations a combined coating may include multiple anodic and/or cathodic metals. For example, the combined coating may include zinc and silver co-deposited with platinum.

[0118] As mentioned, the anodic metal in the combined coating may include a continuous path connecting the anodic metal to an exposed outer surface of the coating so that they can be galvanically released from the coating. Deeper regions (veins, clusters, etc.) of the anodic metal may be connected to more superficial regions so that as the more superficial regions are corroded away by the release of the anodic ions, the deeper regions are exposed, allowing further release. This may also expose additional cathodic metal. Thus, in general, anodic metal microdomains are not completely encapsulated within the catholic metal. In some variations, the majority of the anodic metal is not completely encapsulated within the cathodic metal, but is connected to an exposed site on the surface of the coating via connection through a more superficial region of anodic metal; although some of the anodic metal may be completely encapsulated. For example, the coating may include an anodic metal in which less than 50 percent of the total anodic metal is completely encapsulated within the cathodic metal (e.g., less than 40%, less than 35%, less than 30%, less than 25%, less than 20%, less than 15%, less than 10%, etc.).

[0119] The co-deposited anodic and cathodic combined coatings described herein for the galvanic release of anodic ions may be formed by co-depositing the anodic metal and the cathodic metal so as to minimize the amount of encapsulation by the cathodic material. For example, the percentage of the anodic material may be chosen so that there is both an optimal amount of cathodic metal to drive reasonable galvanic release in the presence of an electrolyte, and so that there is sufficient continuity of anodic metal with the combined coating to form a continuous path to an exposed surface of the coating, making it available for galvanic release. For example, a coating may be formed by co-depositing the anodic metal and the cathodic metal (e.g., sputtering, vapor deposition, electroplating, etc.) where the concentration of the anodic metal is high enough to allow the formation of a sufficient number of continuous paths through the thickness of the coating. We have found that a combined coating in which more than 25% by volume (or more preferably more than 30%) of the coating is formed of the anodic metal is sufficient to form a combined coating with a cathodic metal in which more than half (e.g., >50%) of the anodic metal is connected by a continuous path to the surface of the coating, permitting galvanic release. For example, a coating having between about 33-67% of anodic metal and between about 67-33% of cathodic metal may be preferred. At these percentages, less than half of the anodic metal is fully encapsulated by the non-corroding cathodic metal and

trapped within the coating. Thus, in general, the combined coatings (also referred to as co-deposited coatings) may include more than 25% (e.g., 30% or greater, 35% or greater) by volume of anodic metal that is co-deposited with the cathodic metal. In some variations, the remainder of the coating (e.g., between 5% and 75%,) may be cathodic metal. Thus, the percent of anodic metal co-deposited with cathodic metal may be between 25%-95% (e.g., between about 30% and about 95%, between about 30% and about 90%, between about 30% and about 80%, between about 30% and about 70%, between about 25% and 75%, between about 25% and 80%, between about 25% and 85%, between about 25% and 90%, between about 35% and 95%, between about 35% and 90%, between about 35% and 85%, between about 35% and 80%, between about 35% and 75%, between about 35% and 70%, between about 35% and 65%, etc.), with the remainder of the coating being cathodic metal. Further, the coating (or at least the outer layer of the coating) may be primarily (e.g., >95%) formed of anodic and cathodic metals distributed in the micro-domains as described herein. In some variations the coating may also include one or more additional materials (e.g., a metal, polymer, or the like). The additional material(s) may be inert (e.g., not participating in the galvanic reaction between the anodic metal and the cathodic metal), or it may be electrically conductive. For example, the additional material may be co-deposited with the anodic and cathodic metals, and may also be distributed in a non-homogenous manner.

[0120] For example, a mixed coating may be formed using a PVD-system. Vaporization of metal components may be performed on a substrate (with or without an adhesive layer), e.g., using an arc and/or a magnetron sputter from metallic targets. Mixed coatings may be produced by simultaneous vaporization of both metals while the substrate is held fixed, or is moved (e.g., rotated). After coating, the coated materials may be cleaned, e.g., using an argon plasma and/or other methods.

[0121] As mentioned, any of the coatings described herein may be of any appropriate thickness. For example, the coatings may be between about 500 microinches and about 0.01 microinches thick, or less than about 200 microinches (e.g., between about 10 microinches and about 500 microinches), less than about 150 microinches, less than about 100 microinches, less than about 50 microinches, etc. The thickness may be selected based on the amount and duration (and/or timing) of the release of anodic metal. In addition, the coatings may be patterned, e.g., so that they are applied onto a substrate in a desired pattern, or over the entire substrate. As mentioned and described further below, different combined coatings may be applied to the same substrate. For example, a combined coating of silver/platinum may be applied adjacent to a combined coating of zinc/platinum, etc. The different combined coatings may have different properties (e.g., different anodic metal, different anodic/cathodic metal percentages, different thicknesses, etc.) and therefore different release profiles. Combinations in which different combined coatings are in (electrical) contact with each other may also have a different release profile than combinations in which the different coatings are not in electrical contact. For example, a material may include a first combined coating of zinc and a cathodic metal (e.g., zinc/platinum) and a second combined coating of silver and a cathodic metal (e.g., silver/platinum). If the first and second combined coatings are in electrical contact, the zinc will be galvanically released first. If the first and second combined coatings are not in electrical contact, then both zinc and silver will be concurrently released (though zinc may be released more quickly and my diffuse further).

[0122] For example, FIG. 2A illustrates one example of a substrate 120 onto which a combined coating of anodic and cathodic metals have been co-deposited 100. The substrate may be, for example, a bioabsorbable material. In some variations the substrate may be an adhesive layer, e.g., when applying the coating to some medical devices. For example, an adhesive layer may be a metal layer such as an undercoating of titanium or tantalum. The undercoating may be of any appropriate thickness (e.g., the same thickness or smaller than the

thickness of the galvanically releasing coating). In some variations the undercoating is thicker than the coating of the non-homogeneous mixture of anodic and cathodic metals that are galvanically released. Although an undercoating may be used in some variations, the coatings of anodic and cathodic metals described herein may be coated directly onto a medical device (e.g., implant) without the need for an undercoating.

[0123] Although the combined coatings described herein may be used with any substrate (even non-bioabsorbable substrates), any of the examples described herein may be used with bioabsorbable substrates. In the example of FIG. 2A the dimensions (thicknesses of the substrate and coating) are not to scale. For example, the coating may be less than 100 microinches thick. The substrate may be any thickness. In FIG. 2A, region B shows a portion of the coating and substrate, which is illustrated in the enlarged view of FIG. 2B.

[0124] In FIG. 2B, a portion of the substrate 120 (e.g. a bioabsorbable substrate) is shown coated with a combined coating 100. The anodic metal, e.g., silver, 110 is shown forming veins or microregions within the cathodic metal 130. In this example, the silver is schematically illustrated as forming veins through a matrix of cathodic metal, e.g., platinum, not shown to scale. The actual microdomains may be much smaller, and filamentous; for example, the microdomains may be on the order of 10-1000 Angstroms (or more) across. FIG. 2C is another schematic illustration of a section through a portion of a combined coating on a substrate, showing microdomains of anodic metal (e.g. silver) 110, within a matrix of cathodic metal (e.g., platinum) 130. In FIGS. 2B and 2C the majority of the microdomains of anodic metal are connected in continuous paths to the outer surface of the coating 100, allowing galvanic release of the anodic material.

[0125] FIG. 2D illustrates an example of the coating of FIG. 2C during the galvanic release process, in which the implant including the substrate and the combined coating is place into the body, so that the coating is exposed to blood. As shown in FIG. 2D, the anodic metal (silver) in the coating is progressively corroded as ions of silver are released into the body to locally diffuse and provide regional antimicrobial treatment. In this example the anodic metal (e.g., silver) 120 exposed to the surface is release, leaving a negative impression in the cathodic metal 130. Regions of the cathodic metal that are left behind may remain coated (though the substrate may also be biodegrading simultaneous with the release of anodic metal, not shown). Typically, when the substrate is part of an implanted apparatus, the coating layer is thin enough that any remaining cathodic metal (e.g., platinum) is small enough to be ignored or easily cleared by the body.

[0126] The combined layers are generally formed by co-depositing the anodic metal and the cathodic metal onto the substrate. For example, a combined layer may be formed by simultaneously sputtering the two metals onto the substrate to the desired thickness. For example, both silver and platinum may be placed into a sputtering machine and applied to the substrate. The amount of cathodic material and anodic material may be controlled, e.g., controlling the percentage of the coating that if anodic metal and the percentage that is cathodic (e.g., 30%-70% anodic/70-30% cathodic, such as 40% silver/60% platinum, etc.). This sputtering process results in a non-uniform pattern, as discussed above, and schematically illustrated in FIGS. 2B-2C, which may be observed. Alternatively, combined layers may be formed by vacuum deposition, or any other technique that can co-deposit the two (or more) metals onto the substrate. Formation of the coating(s) may include masking, for example, locating coatings in particular regions of the substrate.

[0127] In general, any of the substrates (e.g., bioabsorbable substrates) described herein may be applied in a pattern, including patterns of multiple different combined coatings. Further, coatings may be applied over only apportion of the substrate, which may allow more localized release of the antimicrobial ions and may prevent the coating from interfering with the properties of the substrate and/or the device that the substrate is part of (e.g.,

flexibility, surface characteristics, etc.). For example, FIGS. 3A-3C show a top view of a substrate coated with various combined coatings (co-deposited anodic and cathodic metals).

[0128] For example, in FIG. 3A, the surface of the substrate 210 of an implant 200 that includes alternating patterns of a first combined coating 212 of silver/platinum that have been co-deposited onto the substrate and a second combined coating 214 of zinc/platinum co-deposited onto the substrate. In this example the first and second coating regions are formed into strips extending along the width of the substrate; the first and second coating regions do not overlap and are not in electrical contact with each other. Thus, the silver ions in the first coating region(s) 212 will be galvanically released concurrently with the zinc ions galvanically released from the second coating region(s) 214 when exposed to an electrolytic bodily fluid (e.g., blood), corroding the two layers. FIG. 3B shows another example of a pattern of a first combined coating 212 (e.g., silver/platinum) and a second combined coating 214 (zinc/palladium) that are arranged with alternating stripes on the surface of the substrate 210, where the stripes are end-to-end with each other.

[0129] FIG. 3C shows another variation of a surface 210 of an implant 200 that includes a pattern, shown as a checkerboard pattern, of first and second combined coatings. In FIG. 3C, the edges of the different coating regions may contact each other or may be separated by a channel so that they are not in electrical contact for the galvanic reaction. For example, if the first and second regions do contact each other so that they are in electrical contact, then the galvanic reaction may drive the release of the zinc ions before the release of the silver ions; once the zinc has corroded, the silver ions may be released.

[0130] In general, there may be some benefit to including multiple coatings, and in particular coatings having multiple anodic metals. The antimicrobial region around the coated implant may be made larger and the ions may be released over a longer time period, than with a single type of anodic coating alone.

[0131] As mentioned, the combined coatings of co-deposited anodic and cathodic metals could be formed in any pattern.

Bioabsorbable substrates

[0132] In some variations, the substrate is bioabsorbable and/or biodegradable. For example, the substrate may be formed as a flexible filament, and the coating of anodic and cathodic metals that may corrode to release anodic ions may allow the flexible filament to remain flexible. Galvanic release results in degradation (e.g., corrosion) of the coating.

[0133] The substrate onto which the combined coatings may be applied may be any appropriate substrate, and in particular, may be a bioabsorbable substrate. Examples of bioabsorbable materials that may be used includes polymeric materials such as: polylactic acid (PLA), poly(lactic-co-glycolic acid) (PLGA), polyglycolide (PGA), polyglycoside-co-trimethylene carbonate (PGTMC), poly(caprolactone-co-glycoside), poly(dioxanone) (PDS), and poly(caprolactone) (PCL), and combinations of these.

[0134] In general, bioabsorbable materials for medical applications are well known, and include bioabsorbable polymers made from a variety of bioabsorbable resins; for example, U.S. Pat. No. 5,423,859 to Koyfman et al., lists exemplary bioabsorbable or biodegradable resins from which bioabsorbable materials for medical devices may be made. Bioabsorbable materials extend to synthetic bioabsorbable or naturally derived polymers.

[0135] For example, bioabsorbable substrates may include polyester or polylactone selected from the group comprising polymers of polyglycolic acid, glycolide, lactic acid, lactide, dioxanone, trimethylene carbonate, polyanhydrides, polyesteramides, polyortheoesters, polyphosphazenes, and copolymers of these and related

polymers or monomers. Other bioabsorbable substrates may include substrates formed of proteins (e.g., selected from the group comprising albumin, fibrin, collagen, or elastin), as well as polysaccharides (e.g., selected from the group comprising chitosan, alginates, or hyaluronic acid), and biosynthetic polymers, such as 3-hydroxybutyrate polymers.

[0136] The bioabsorbable substrate may be absorbed over a predetermined time period after insertion into a body. For example, the bioabsorbable substrate may be absorbed over hours, days, weeks, months, or years. The substrate may be bioabsorbed before, during or after release of the anodic metal ions from the combined coating. In some variations the release of the antimicrobial ions is timed to match the degradation/absorption of the substrate. Further, the absorption of the substrate may facilitate the release of the anodic metal ions. For example, some of the bioabsorbable substrates described herein may result in a local pH change as the substrate is bioabsorbed; the release of the metal ions may be facilitated by the altered pH.

[0137] FIG. 4 shows an example of a pouch device formed from woven lengths of bioabsorbable filament that is flexible. The filament is formed of a bioabsorbable polymer, PGLA, and this bioabsorbable substrate has been coated with the combined anodic metal/cathodic metal coating described above. In FIG. 4A, the pouch of PGLA fibers coated with (e.g., by vapor deposition) co-deposited silver and platinum galvanically releases silver ions after insertion into the body. The release of anodic metal ions (e.g., silver ions) is enhanced as the bioabsorbable substrate (e.g., PGLA) is hydrolyzed. Hydrolysis lowers the local pH and this may increase solubility of silver and bio-absorption.

[0138] The pouch of FIG. 4 may be used similarly to those described in U.S. Patent No. 8,591,531, herein incorporated by reference in its entirety.

[0139] In general, the bioabsorbable substrate may be formed into any appropriate shape or structure. For example, a bioabsorbable substrate may be a filament that is coated, completely or partially, by one or more of any of the combined coatings of anodic and cathodic metals co-deposited onto the bioabsorbable substrate. Coated strands (e.g., filaments, strings, wires, etc.) of bioabsorbable substrate may be used by themselves, e.g., as suture, ties, etc. within a body, or they may be used to form 2D or 3D implants, for example, by weaving them. The combined coatings described herein may be coated onto these structures either before or after they have been formed. For example, a coated filament may be woven into a net (or into a pouch for holding an implantable device, as shown in FIG. 4), or the filament may be woven into a net and then coated.

[0140] FIG. 5A shows an example of a filament that may be formed of a bioabsorbable substrate that is coated with a combined anodic/cathodic metal coating for galvanic release of anodic metal ions. In FIG. 5A, the fiber 500 may include uncoated regions 505 alternating with coated regions 503. The coated region(s) may be a spiral shape around the fiber, a ring around the fiber (as shown in FIG. 5) or any other pattern. Multiple coatings may be used (see, e.g., FIGS. 3A-3C). The coated fiber may retain its flexibility. In some variations the fiber may be used, e.g., as a suture.

[0141] FIGS. 5B-5D and 6 illustrate different variations of sutures that may be coated as described herein. Note that although some of these substrates forming the suture are bioabsorbable, they do not need to be. In some variations, the suture material (the substrate onto which the galvanically releasable coating is applied) is not biodegradable or bioabsorbable. Any variation of suture material may be used. For example, the suture material may be a barbed suture, as shown in FIG. 5B. The barbed suture 560 may be coated 565 or otherwise treated to include the co-deposited coating of anodic metal (e.g., 40% by volume of silver) and cathodic metal (e.g., 50% by volume of platinum) arranged with continuous microdomains of the anodic (and/or cathodic) metal extending from

the outer side of the outer surface of the coating through the thickness of the coating. An entire length of suture 580 may be coated 585, as shown schematically in FIG. 5C, or just a portion of the suture. The thickness of the coating may be below a threshold, which may help maintain the flexibility of the suture material. For example, the thickness may be between 10 microinches and 50 microinches. FIG. 5D illustrates a suture kit including a length of suture 580 and a needle 591; either or both the suture 580 and needle 591 may be coated. The same or different anodic metal and/or cathodic metal may be used on the needle as the thread. For example, the needle may include the more quickly releasing nickel as the anode, while the thread, which resides longer in the body, may use and anodic metal of silver.

[0142] FIG. 6 shows another example of a suture 600 that is coated 620 over the distal portion of the suture, which may be used in the body. The suture may be pre-loaded on a device (including an implant, needle, etc.). The suture may be formed of a bioabsorbable substrate 610 onto which the coating is applied.

[0143] In any of the devices described herein, the coating may be made directly onto the substrate. In some variations the coating may be made on top of another coating (e.g., a primer coating) which may be made to prepare the substrate for the coating. Examples of primer coatings are adhesion coatings. An example of a primer coating may include titanium and/or tantalum undercoatings, as described above.

[0144] Additional examples of woven structures are shown in FIGS. 7-11. In FIG. 7, the device 700 is formed of filaments 710 woven or arranged into a mesh (shown in the enlarged view 720) that are coated with a combined coating (or multiple types of combined coatings) as described herein. In this example, the mesh formed is configured as a transvaginal mesh (intravaginal mesh) that may be used for the treatment of vaginal prolapse, for example. Slings or other anatomical support structures, either durable or biodegradable, could also be formed. These devices may galvanically release one or more type of anionic metal ion having antimicrobial effect. For example the mesh may be coated with a coating of silver/platinum that is co-deposited onto the mesh or the fibers forming the mesh for galvanic release of silver from the coating.

[0145] FIGS. 8A and 8B illustrate another example of a structure, shown as a woven structure, that may also be configured as a non-woven (e.g., solid) structure. In FIG. 8A the device 400 is a patch or plug that may be used for treating a hernia. In this example, the patch is a woven mesh that includes two types of combined coatings: silver/platinum and zinc/platinum in different regions over the surface of the patch. Darker regions 803 may indicate the silver/platinum co-deposited coating regions, while the lighter regions 805 represent co-deposited zinc/platinum regions. The entire patch outer surface or only a portion of the outer surface may be coated; in FIG. 8A, only discrete regions are shown as coated, for the sake of simplicity. FIG. 8B shows an enlarged view illustrating the fibers forming the weave of the patch. As shown in FIG 8B, only some of the fibers are coated (e.g., every other fiber of the warp); in some variations, alternating fibers in one direction (warp) are coated with different anodic/cathodic metals, while fibers in the opposite direction (weft) are uncoated.

[0146] FIG. 9 illustrates another example of a woven material, formed of a bioabsorbable fiber, coated with the combined coatings described herein for galvanic release of antimicrobial metal ions. In FIG. 9, the device is a patch that could be used, e.g., within the knee after surgery, to reduce the chance of infection. In this example, as in FIGS. 8A and 8B above, the patch may include filaments/fibers having different coatings (e.g., silver/platinum, zinc platinum, silver palladium, zinc palladium, etc.) and/or different regions on the patch, as shown by the light and darker regions in FIG. 9. In some variations the patch may be worn outside of the body, e.g., it is "implanted" by placing it over a wound, rather than entirely within the body. Blood in the wound region may act as the electrolytic fluid, allowing galvanic release of the metal ions.

[0147] Similarly, FIG. 10 illustrates a dural replacement mesh 810 that may be implanted into a subject's head 812 to replace dural matter following trauma and/or surgery. The mesh may be formed of a non-bioabsorbable material (or a bioabsorbable material) that is coated as described above so as to galvanically release antimicrobial metal ions.

[0148] FIG. 11 illustrates another example of a fabric or mesh that may be implanted into a patient as part of a surgical procedure. In FIG. 11, the mesh is a woven fabric that has been coated with one or more combined coatings of anodic and cathodic metals co-deposited on the substrate (e.g., bioabsorbable substrate) for galvanic release of metal ions. The material may be used, for example, as part of a large joint procedure such as knee replacement, or spinal surgery (e.g., fixation using rods, screws, etc.) in place of currently used antibiotic powers. For example the coated bioabsorbable mesh could be in, around, or over the surgical site and used to galvanically release antimicrobial ions following surgery. The implant (material) would break down over time, and be absorbed following implantation (e.g., within 30 days following the procedure), allowing sufficient time for the patient to recover and avoid infection potentially introduced by the procedure and/or the resulting wound.

[0149] Although the devices described herein include flexible, e.g., filament or mesh, structures, the devices may also be configured as rigid or more traditional surgical implants, including screws, rods, staples, cannulas, etc. The substrate may be bioabsorbable.

[0150] For example, FIGS. 12A-12B shows one variation of a cannula that may be used within a body and galvanically release antimicrobial metal ions. In FIG. 12A, the cannula 300 includes a substrate 320 onto which a combined coating 330 is applied in a spiral pattern. The combined coating galvanically releases anodic metal ions (e.g., silver, zinc, copper), is includes the anodic metal that has been co-deposited with cathodic metal (e.g., platinum, palladium, etc.). In this example, the inner surface 310 of the cannula 300 may also be separately coated with a combined coating (the same or a different coating). FIG. 12B shows a side view of the catheter of FIG. 12A.

[0151] Any of the devices described herein may be used as part of a surgical procedure within a body (e.g., human, animal, etc.). In general, the combined coatings described herein may be implanted into the body and may galvanically release metal ions over an extended period of time (e.g., days, weeks, months). For example, in some variations the coating and/or apparatus (e.g., device) may be configured to galvanically release metal ions for 30 days, 60 days, 90 days, or more.

[0152] The anti-microbial coatings, devices and systems described herein may use two or more types of metal ions with anti-microbial properties, such as silver and zinc. The zone of inhibition of microbial activity/growth formed around the coated devices due to the released metal ions may be enhanced where two different types (e.g., silver and zinc) are released. The combination of zinc and silver has been observed to have a synergistic effect compared to either metal alone.

[0153] Further, when the combined coatings described herein are used in combination with a bioabsorbable (e.g., biodegradable) substrates or material, the metal ions may form complexes with the byproducts of degradation of the substrate (e.g., polymeric substrates including PLA, PLGA, PGA) such as lactate, galactate, or glucoate. These substrates may increase the anti-microbial activity. For example, the range of diffusion of the anionic metal ions (e.g., zinc, silver, etc.) may be increased by the creation of a complex between the metal ions and the polymeric degradation byproduct. Further, as mentioned above, degradation of the polymers may create acidic byproducts such as lactic acid, galactic acid, and/or glycolic acid. The drop in pH and formation of the anionic byproducts may further enhance the rate of the galvanic reaction.

[0154] Thus, the apparatuses and methods above may, in some variations, generally take advantage of the use of bioabsorbable substrates that are coated through a co-deposition process of a cathodic metal (e.g., platinum, palladium, gold, etc.) and an anodic metal (e.g., silver, zinc, copper) to form a galvanic circuit in a fluid (e.g., electrolytic) medium to create an antimicrobial zone. The degradation of the bioabsorbable substrate may further enhance this antimicrobial zone, e.g., by forming complexes with the released metal ions to further diffuse the ions as well as to alter the local pH to enhance the galvanic reaction. In general, as described above, the combined coatings described herein can be quite thin and do not compromise the flexibility, chemic structure, strength (e.g., tensile strength) or chemical properties of the underlying substrate(s).

Examples

[0155] Any of the coatings described herein may be included on all or a portion of a medical device. For example, any of the following devices may be wholly or partially coated with a mixture of an anodic metal and a cathodic metal as described herein: shunts (e.g., drainage shunts, dialysis shunts, etc.), catheters (e.g., urinary catheters, intravascular catheters, etc.), ports (e.g., portacath, etc.), artificial joints (e.g., total hip, knee, etc.), pacemakers, defibrillators (ICD), pain management implants, neuro-stimulators, neuro-pacemakers, stents, bariatric balloons, artificial heart valves, orthodontic braces, pumps (drug pumps, e.g., insulin pumps, etc.), implantable birth control devices, IUDs, etc.

[0156] Any of the coatings described herein may be included on all or a portion of a medical tool. For example, any of the following materials for use in operating on a subject may be wholly or partially coated with a mixture of an anodic metal and a cathodic metal as described herein: surgical gauze, surgical sponges, wound packing materials, augmentation and/or cosmetic implants (e.g., breast/chin/facial implants), surgical retractors, needles, clamps, forceps, and the like.

[0157] For example, FIG. 13B illustrates one example of an implant that may be coated on an outer surface with any of the antimicrobial coatings comprising a non-homogeneous mixture of anodic and cathodic metals for galvanic release of anti-microbial ions, as described herein, and implant as illustrated in FIG. 13A. In this example all or just a portion of a pacemaker 1301 may be coated on an outer surface with the mixture of between about 30% and 70% by volume of an anodic metal, and between about 30% to 70% by volume of a cathodic metal. The anodic and cathodic metals may be co-deposited on the outer substrate surface to form a non-uniform mixture of the anodic and cathodic metals, wherein the coating comprises a plurality of microregions or microdomains of anodic metal in a matrix of cathodic metal or a plurality of microregions or microdomains of cathodic metal in a matrix of anodic metal. In some variations different regions may be coated with different anodic metals (e.g., forming a pattern of silver, nickel, etc. releasing regions). In some variations the electrical leads (e.g., an outer surface of the leads that are tunneled through the body, as illustrated in FIG. 13A) may be coated as described herein. Similarly, electrical leads for other devices (e.g., neurostimulators) may be coated as described herein. In general, these coatings may terminate before the electrically active regions of the lead.

[0158] For example, FIG. 13C shows a schematic depiction of an implantable pacemaker (defibrillator) system 1300 including electrodes implanted in the heart H of a subject (patient). A cardiac stimulation and defibrillation device 1310 is connected to the heart H via an electrode lead 1320 which comprises three lead branches or electrode supply leads 1330, 1340 and 1350. Each lead branch comprises sensing or stimulation electrodes (which are not depicted individually) on or near the distal end thereof, and lead branch 1350 also comprises an elongated defibrillation electrode 1360. In the arrangement shown, lead branch 1330 is placed in the

right atrium, lead branch 1340 is placed in the left atrium of the heart H, and lead branch 1350 on which defibrillation electrode 1360 is installed is placed in the right ventricle (RV). As mentioned above, any of the leads described herein may be coated with the mixture of between about 25% to 75% (e.g., 30% and 70%) by volume of an anodic metal, and a cathodic metal that are co-deposited on the outer substrate surface to form a non-uniform mixture of the anodic and cathodic metals. The coatings may include the electrical contacts (not shown) or the contacts may not be coated. Different coatings may be used (e.g., different anodic and/or cathodic metals, different patterns of coating, etc.) may be used. In general, the coating comprises a plurality of microregions or microdomains of anodic metal in a matrix of cathodic metal or a plurality of microregions or microdomains of cathodic metal in a matrix of anodic metal. This coating may be made on the leads without detrimentally affecting the flexibility of the leads. For example, the coating may be applied thin enough to allow the lead to bend easily, while still providing sufficient elution of antimicrobial metal ions (e.g., silver ions) over a long time period (of weeks and months).

[0159] FIGS. 14A and 14B, as well as FIGS. 15A and 15B illustrate another variation of a type of device, a catheter such as a Venus catheter that may be partially or completely coated as described herein. The coatings described herein may benefit virtually any type of catheter; a Venus catheter is generally a tube inserted into a vein in the neck (as shown in FIG. 14A), chest, or leg, e.g., near the groin, usually only for short-term hemodialysis. In FIG. 14A, the tube splits in two after the tube exits the body. The two tubes have caps designed to connect to the line that carries blood to the dialyzer and the line that carries blood from the dialyzer back to the body. A person must close the clamps on each line when connecting and disconnecting the catheter from the tubes. Any portion (or the entire device) may be coated as described herein. For example, in FIGS. 14A and 14B, the outer surface of the catheter 1405 and/or the Venus and arterial lines may be coated as described herein.

[0160] In some devices, it may be helpful to provide a cuff or cuffs on the device that are specifically configured for the galvanic release of antimicrobial ions. For example, FIGS. 15A and 15B illustrate catheters 1500, 1501 for long-term vascular access that includes a cuff that may be at least partially coated as described herein for the release of antimicrobial ions. Adjacent to the ion-releasing cuff 1505 is a tissue-ingrowth cuff 1507.

[0161] In general, the wide use of invasive medical devices, including intravascular catheters has led to an increase in infections related to the use of the medical device. However, intravascular catheters are often associated with serious infectious complications, such as catheter-related bloodstream infection (CRBSI). In fact, CRBSI is considered to be the most common type of nosocomial bloodstream infection, a finding that has been attributed to the wide use of intravascular catheters in hospitalized patients. It is estimated that 7 million central venous catheters (CVCs) will be inserted annually in the United States. Even with the best available aseptic techniques being used during insertion and maintenance of the catheter, 1 of every 20 CVCs inserted will be associated with at least 1 episode of bloodstream infection.

[0162] In the early 2000's, an estimated 300,000 cases of catheter-related bloodstream infection (CRBSI) occurred in the United States each year. Existing interventions to control CRBSI include anticoagulant/antimicrobial lock, use of ionic silver at the insertion site, employment of an aseptic hub model, and antimicrobial impregnation of catheters. However, these solutions have not proven ideal.

[0163] Several factors pertaining to the pathogenesis of CRBSI have been identified during the last decade. The skin and the hub are the most common sources of colonization of percutaneous vascular catheters. For short-term, nontunneled, noncuffed catheters, the organisms migrate from the skin insertion site along the intercutaneous segment, eventually reaching the intravascular segment or the tip. Thus, it may be beneficial to include the galvanic release coating(s) described herein along any (or all) portions of the catheters that are inserted into the patient, to

allow galvanic release of the antimicrobial ions (e.g., silver, nickel, etc.) as described above. For example, FIG. 16 illustrates one variation of a catheter 1601 (shown as an intravascular catheter in this example) that has been coated along its length (or over a region) with a layer of the mixture of between about 25% to about 75% (e.g., 30% and 70%) by volume of an anodic metal, and between about 25% to about 75% (e.g., 30% to 70%) by volume of a cathodic metal co-deposited on an outer substrate surface to form a non-uniform mixture of the anodic and cathodic metals. The coating may comprise a plurality of microregions or microdomains of anodic metal in a matrix of cathodic metal or a plurality of microregions or microdomains of cathodic metal in a matrix of anodic metal. The anodic metal is galvanically released as antimicrobial ions when the apparatus is inserted into a subject's body.

[0164] Generally, long-term catheters (particularly those that are cuffed or surgically implanted, such as those illustrated in FIGS. 15A-15B), the hub is a major source of colonization of the catheter lumen, which ultimately leads to bloodstream infections through luminal colonization of the intravascular segment. Thus, in some variations the hub region may be coated as described herein.

[0165] In addition to the examples described above, other insertable or implantable device that may be coated as described herein may include implantable devices such as drug delivery devices (e.g., pumps), cardiac management devices (e.g., pacemakers), cochlear implants, analyte sensing devices, catheters, cannulas or the like. Essentially any medical device which experiences microbial colonization and/or biofilm formation and/or encrustation is appropriate for the practice of the present invention, including analyte sensing devices such as electrochemical glucose sensors, drug delivery devices such as insulin pumps, devices which augment hearing such as cochlear implants, urine contacting devices (for example, urethral stents, urinary catheters), blood contacting devices (including needles, blood bags, cardiovascular stents, venous access devices, valves, vascular grafts, hemodialysis and biliary stents), and body tissue and tissue fluid contacting devices (including biosensors, implants and artificial organs). Medical devices include but are not limited to permanent catheters, (e.g., central venous catheters, dialysis catheters, long-term tunneled central venous catheters, short-term central venous catheters, peripherally inserted central catheters, peripheral venous catheters, pulmonary artery Swan-Ganz catheters, urinary catheters, and peritoneal catheters), long-term urinary devices, tissue bonding urinary devices, vascular grafts, vascular catheter ports, wound drain tubes, ventricular catheters, hydrocephalus shunts, cerebral and spinal shunts, heart valves, heart assist devices (e.g., left ventricular assist devices), pacemaker capsules, incontinence devices, penile implants, small or temporary joint replacements, urinary dilator, cannulae, elastomers, hydrogels, surgical instruments, dental instruments, tubings, such as intravenous tubes, breathing tubes, dental water lines, dental drain tubes, and feeding tubes, fabrics, paper, indicator strips (e.g., paper indicator strips or plastic indicator strips), adhesives (e.g., hydrogel adhesives, hot-melt adhesives, or solvent-based adhesives), bandages, orthopedic implants, and any other device used in the medical field. Medical devices also include any device which may be inserted or implanted into a human being or other animal, or placed at the insertion or implantation site such as the skin near the insertion or implantation site, and which include at least one surface which is susceptible to colonization by biofilm embedded microorganisms. Medical devices also include any other surface which may be desired or necessary to prevent biofilm embedded microorganisms from growing or proliferating on at least one surface of the medical device, or to remove or clean biofilm embedded microorganisms from the at least one surface of the medical device, such as the surfaces of equipment in operating rooms, emergency rooms, hospital rooms, clinics, and bathrooms. Non-implanted devices for use in a medical procedure that may be coated as described herein include surgical tools, e.g., suturing devices, forceps, retractors, sponges, etc.

[0166] Orthopedic devices may in particular benefit from the coatings described herein. An implant as described herein may be used to treat bone and/or soft tissue. In some variations the implants are bone implants

specifically, and may be configured to support as well as treat the bone. For example, the implant may be used to secure (as a screw, nail, bolt, clamp, etc.) another member such as a plate, rod, or the like, or the implant may itself include a support member such as a rod, plate, etc. In some variations, the implant is a soft tissue implant that is configured to be secured within non-bone body structures.

[0167] For example, FIGS. 17A-17C illustrate one variation of an apparatus for use in delivering an antimicrobial ion (e.g., silver ions) to a repair site to prevent or treat infection. In this example, apparatus includes a replaceable/removable insert that is coated. The insert maybe a mesh or other material having a relatively large surface to volume ratio (e.g., large surface area). For example, FIG. 17A shows a cannulated bone screw 1701, e.g., a bone screw having a central cannula region (not visible in FIG. 17A) into which another device or element may be inserted, such as the bioabsorbable material 1703 (mesh) shown in FIG. 17B. In FIG. 17A, the bone screw includes a distal threaded region 1705 and a more proximal head 1707. In FIG. 17B the bioabsorbable mesh 1703 is coated with the antimicrobial ion releasing coating such as described herein (e.g., 30% silver/70% platinum) to a thickness of 100 microinches. The cannulated bone screw 1701 may also be coated, or may not be coated. Either before or after inserting the bone screw into the body, the bioabsorbable insert 1703 may be inserted into the cannula of the bone screw 1701. This is illustrated in FIG. 17C. In practice, multiple inserts 1703 may be added to the bone screw device.

[0168] In some variations, the bone screw may itself be coated, without the use of an additional element (e.g., a bioabsorbable insert). FIGS. 18A and 18B illustrate different variations of implants (e.g., bone screw) that include antimicrobial ion releasing coatings as described herein. In FIG. 18A, the entire bone screw 1801 is coated with an antimicrobial ion releasing coating comprising a mixture of between about 25% to 75% (e.g., 30% and 70%) by volume of an anodic metal, and between about 25% to 75% (e.g., 30% to 70%) by volume of a cathodic metal co-deposited on the outer substrate surface to form a non-uniform mixture of the anodic and cathodic metals, wherein the coating comprises a plurality of microregions or microdomains of anodic metal in a matrix of cathodic metal or a plurality of microregions or microdomains of cathodic metal in a matrix of anodic metal, the microregions or microdomains forming a continuous path of interconnected veins of anodic metal through the coating thickness, or a continuous path of interconnected veins of cathodic metal through the coating thickness, wherein the continuous path extends from an outer surface of the coating to the substrate to the opposite side of the coating (which may be adjacent to the substrate). In FIG. 18B, the bone screw apparatus is a screw that has not been completely coated, but includes differently coated regions, or regions that are both coated and uncoated. In this example the substrate is the surface of a bone screw having a striated pattern of regions of coatings alternating with uncoated regions.

[0169] FIGS. 19A-19B illustrate another variation in which the implant is configured as an orthopedic device (e.g., bone screw) having extendable members that can be extended out of the body of the bone screw to project into the tissue and allow release of antimicrobial ions into the surrounding tissue. In this variation, the implant 1901 is configured as a bone screw that is hollow or contains a hollow inner body region (not visible in FIG. 19A) into which a replaceable/rechargeable treatment cartridge may be inserted and/or removed. The cartridge may be itself screwed into the body, or it may be otherwise secured within the body. The cartridge may include one or more (e.g., a plurality) of ion release members 1909 extending or extendable from the cartridge and therefore the implant. The ion release member(s) may be configured to release silver, zinc or silver and zinc and may be coated with any of the coatings described herein. In general, an ion release member may be configured as an elongate member such as an arm, wire, branch, or the like. The ion release member may be a coated member such as a Nitinol or other shape-memory member coated with an antimicrobial ion releasing coating comprising a mixture of between about 25% to about 75% (e.g., 30% and 70%) by volume of an anodic metal (e.g., silver), and between about 25% to about 75%

(e.g., 30% to 70%) by volume of a cathodic metal (e.g., platinum) co-deposited on the outer substrate surface to form a non-uniform mixture of the anodic and cathodic metals, wherein the coating comprises a plurality of microregions or microdomains of anodic metal in a matrix of cathodic metal or a plurality of microregions or microdomains of cathodic metal in a matrix of anodic metal, the microregions or microdomains forming a continuous path of interconnected veins of anodic metal through the coating thickness, or a continuous path of interconnected veins of cathodic metal through the coating thickness, wherein the continuous path extends from an outer surface of the coating to the substrate to the opposite side of the coating (which may be adjacent to the substrate). As mentioned, the implant (or the treatment cartridge portion) may include a plurality of ion release members.

[0170] These implants may have one or more exit channels 1905. In general the exit channels may be openings from the inner hollow region (e.g. cannulated body) of the implant through a side wall of the implant and out, possibly in the threaded region 1907. Thus, in FIGS. 19A and 19B, the exit channel is configured to deflect the one or more ion release members away from a long axis of the implant. For example, the exit channel may be configured to deflect the one or more ion release members against a thread of the outer threaded region so that it deflects away from the implant. In some variations a plurality of exit channels extending through the cannulated body 1903.

[0171] An implant such as the one shown in FIGS. 19A-19B may also include a guide (or guide element, including a rail, keying, etc.) within the channel configured to guide or direct the one or more ion release member out of the cannulated body 1903 from the at least one exit channel 1905. The exit channels may be configured to allow tissue (e.g., bone) ingrowth, which may help with stability of the device once implanted. For example, the exit channels may be slightly oversized compared to the ion release members, permitting or encouraging in-growth. In some variations the exit channels may be doped or otherwise include a tissue-growth enhancing or encouraging factor (such as a growth factor), or may be otherwise modified to encourage tissue growth.

[0172] A treatment cartridge may be replaceable. For example, a treatment cartridge may be configured to be removable from the cannulated body of the implant *in situ*, without removing the body of the implant from the device. Thus, the body of the implant may be structurally supportive (e.g., supporting the bone) while the silver-releasing cartridge arms may be re-charged by inserting another (replacement) cartridge after the previous cartridge has corroded. For example, an elongate cannulated body 1903 may be configured as bone screw (e.g., an intramedullary bone screw).

[0173] In addition, the antimicrobial coatings described herein may also be effective for use in non-implantable and/or insertable devices. As mentioned above, any apparatus that may come into contact with a conductive (e.g., electrolytic) fluid, such as bodily fluids, may benefited from the antimicrobial coatings described herein; such apparatuses are not limited to medical devices and systems.

[0174] For example, also descried herein are garments (e.g., gloves, masks, scrubs), including facial masks (surgical masks, filters, or the like), sporting equipment (e.g., facemasks, mouthpieces, helmets, etc.), shoes (sole/shoe inserts, etc.), jewelry (necklaces, bracelets, rings, etc.) and the like, that may be coated or may include a coated region, wherein the coating comprises any of the antimicrobial ion releasing coatings described herein, such as a coating comprising a mixture of between about 25% to about 75% (e.g., 30% and 70%) by volume of an anodic metal (e.g., silver), and between about 25% to about 75% (e.g., 30% to 70%) by volume of a cathodic metal (e.g., platinum) co-deposited on the outer substrate surface to form a non-uniform mixture of the anodic and cathodic metals, wherein the coating comprises a plurality of microregions or microdomains of anodic metal in a matrix of cathodic metal or a plurality of microregions or microdomains of cathodic metal in a matrix of anodic metal, the

microregions or microdomains forming a continuous path of interconnected veins of anodic metal through the coating thickness, or a continuous path of interconnected veins of cathodic metal through the coating thickness, wherein the continuous path extends from an outer surface of the coating to the substrate to the opposite side of the coating (which may be adjacent to the substrate).

[0175] FIG. 20 is one example of a non-medical application of a coating as described herein. For example, an animal cage 2005 may be coated (particularly on the bottom region) with any of the antimicrobial coatings described herein. In this example, the cage may include an antimicrobial ion releasing coatings as described herein, such as a coating comprising a mixture of between about 25% to about 75% (e.g., 30% and 70%) by volume of an anodic metal (e.g., silver), and between about 25% to about 75% (e.g., 30% to 70%) by volume of a cathodic metal (e.g., platinum) co-deposited on the outer substrate surface to form a non-uniform mixture of the anodic and cathodic metals, wherein the coating comprises a plurality of microregions or microdomains of anodic metal in a matrix of cathodic metal or a plurality of microregions or microdomains of cathodic metal in a matrix of anodic metal, the microregions or microdomains forming a continuous path of interconnected veins of anodic metal through the coating thickness, or a continuous path of interconnected veins of cathodic metal through the coating thickness, wherein the continuous path extends from an outer surface of the coating to the substrate to the opposite side of the coating (which may be adjacent to the substrate).

[0176] Similarly, any household apparatus that may be exposed to a bodily fluid (including sweat and/or mucus, as from sneezing or coughing) may be coated with any of the coatings described herein, to act as an effective antimicrobial barrier. For example, FIG. 21 illustrates a doorknob 2101 that may be partially or completely coated with any of the antimicrobial ion releasing coatings described herein on a portion that will be held by an operator's hand 2109. Thus, this region may be coated with a coating comprising an antimicrobial ion releasing coating such as a coating comprising a mixture of between about 25% to about 75% (e.g., 30% and 70%) by volume of an anodic metal (e.g., silver), and between about 25% to about 75% (e.g., 30% to 70%) by volume of a cathodic metal (e.g., platinum) co-deposited on the outer substrate surface to form a non-uniform mixture of the anodic and cathodic metals, wherein the coating comprises a plurality of microregions or microdomains of anodic metal in a matrix of cathodic metal or a plurality of microregions or microdomains of cathodic metal in a matrix of anodic metal, the microregions or microdomains forming a continuous path of interconnected veins of anodic metal through the coating thickness, or a continuous path of interconnected veins of cathodic metal through the coating thickness, wherein the continuous path extends from an outer surface of the coating to the substrate to the opposite side of the coating (which may be adjacent to the substrate). Other household fixtures that may be readily coated include light switches, door handles/pulls, kitchen appliances (and particularly handles/controls for kitchen appliances), tabletop and/or countertop surfaces, and bathroom surfaces. For example, a toilet handle, toilet (including toilet seat and/or bowl), sink, and/or faucet may be coated as described herein.

[0177] In addition, cookware, dining wear, and/or cutlery may be coated. Such coatings are safe, and non-toxic, though still antimicrobial, and may be extremely long lasting (e.g., extending over months or years, depending on coating thicknesses and use). Further, these coatings do not degrade or lose their antimicrobial activity, which is dependent primarily or exclusively on the galvanic release of ions (e.g., silver ions). For example, as shown in FIGS. 22A-22B, cutlery (e.g., spoons 2205, forks 2207, etc.) may be coated as described herein, particularly on the portions to be placed in a user's mouth. FIG. 22B shows an example of an infant spoon 2205' having an elongate handle and end region 2230 forming the spoon that is to be placed in an infant's mouth; this end region 2230 may be coated specifically, e.g., with an antimicrobial ion releasing coating as described herein, such as a coating comprising a mixture of between about 25% to about 75% (e.g., 30% and 70%) by volume of an anodic metal (e.g.,

silver), and between about 25% to about 75% (e.g., 30% to 70%) by volume of a cathodic metal (e.g., platinum) co-deposited on the outer substrate surface to form a non-uniform mixture of the anodic and cathodic metals, wherein the coating comprises a plurality of microregions or microdomains of anodic metal in a matrix of cathodic metal or a plurality of microregions or microdomains of cathodic metal in a matrix of anodic metal, the microregions or microdomains forming a continuous path of interconnected veins of anodic metal through the coating thickness, or a continuous path of interconnected veins of cathodic metal through the coating thickness, wherein the continuous path extends from an outer surface of the coating to the substrate to the opposite side of the coating (which may be adjacent to the substrate). The substrate may be stainless steel, polymer, or any other appropriate material. The coating is both washable and sterilizable without losing efficacy.

[0178] In some variations, the substrate is a particle, such as a micro (or nano) particle that is coated as described herein, to form a powder or other material that may be added to a device or system to provide antimicrobial activity. For example, polymeric particles may be coated (or a polymeric material may be coated and ground/broken up into smaller particles) with any of the antimicrobial ion releasing coatings described herein, such as a coating comprising a mixture of between about 25% to about 75% (e.g., 30% and 70%) by volume of an anodic metal (e.g., silver), and between about 25% to about 75% (e.g., 30% to 70%) by volume of a cathodic metal (e.g., platinum) co-deposited on the outer substrate surface to form a non-uniform mixture of the anodic and cathodic metals, wherein the coating comprises a plurality of microregions or microdomains of anodic metal in a matrix of cathodic metal or a plurality of microregions or microdomains of cathodic metal in a matrix of anodic metal, the microregions or microdomains forming a continuous path of interconnected veins of anodic metal through the coating thickness, or a continuous path of interconnected veins of cathodic metal through the coating thickness, wherein the continuous path extends from an outer surface of the coating to the substrate to the opposite side of the coating (which may be adjacent to the substrate). The resulting particles (which may be referred to as an antimicrobial powder) may be added, e.g., into structures or onto surfaces that will come into contact with bodily fluids.

Surface treatments

[0179] As mentioned above, the antimicrobial coatings described herein may be applied directly to any appropriate substrate; the substrate may, in some variations, form a part of another device or system that comes into contact with a bodily fluid and therefore benefits from the use of these antimicrobial coatings. For example, a coating may be made directly onto the substrate, or it may be made onto another coating (e.g., a primer coating) which may be made to prepare the substrate for the coating. Examples of primer coatings are adhesion coatings, which may include a titanium and/or tantalum undercoating, as described above.

[0180] In some variations, the material is pretreated to prepare the surface to receive the coating. For example, in some metals (e.g., nickel titanium, stainless steel, etc.) the surface may oxidize naturally, and it may be beneficial to remove this oxide layer prior to applying the antimicrobial coatings described herein. For example, a substrate may be prepared by removing an oxide layer (or for other reasons) by vacuum blast cleaning with a noble gas such as argon (e.g., argon blasting or argon blast cleaning under a vacuum). Removing the thin outer oxide layer may enhance adhesion of the coating. In general, vacuum cleaning may be helpful, and may be performed immediately before applying the coating (e.g., co-sputtering the anodic and cathodic materials).

[0181] Other useful pre-treatments may include applying an undercoating layer (e.g., of platinum, parylene, etc.). Such undercoatings may be applied first (e.g., by sputter deposition, etc.).

[0182] One additional benefit of the coatings described herein is that they may be applied in a relatively cool application process, e.g., in which the temperature at which the co-deposition of the anodic material and cathodic material is applies is relatively cool (e.g., less than 150°C, less than 120°C, less than 100°C, less than 90°C, less than 80°C, less than 70°C, less than 60°C, less than 50°C, etc.). The temperature of application may be adjusted along with the time to form the coating (e.g., cooler application may generally take longer). Cooler application may be particularly beneficial when the substrates to which it is being applied is temperature sensitive, or when it is being applied to a device (including devices having active/electronic parts) that are rate below a predetermined temperature.

Post-coating treatments

[0183] Any of the apparatuses described herein (e.g., any of the coatings described herein) maybe treated to enhance the galvanic release of antimicrobial ions (e.g., silver). Such treatments may be referred to as post-coating treatments because they may be performed after the coating has been applied. For example, any of the apparatuses described herein may include coatings that are treated to enhance the surface area by cracking, fracturing, or otherwise roughening the coating, which may increase the exposed surface area of the coating.

[0184] Post-coating treatments may include thermal treatments (e.g., exposing the surface to a cooler temperature to crack or fracture the coating), and/or energy (e.g., ultrasound, RF, etc.) to fracture the surface. For example, in some variations the coating may be connected to an oscillating high voltage source that makes cracks in the coating. For example, FIG. 23A and 23B illustrates a variation of a substrate 2320 (similar to the example shown in FIGS. 2A-2D) has been coated with an antimicrobial ion releasing coating 2300 as described above. In this example, after co-depositing the anodic and cathodic metals, the coated apparatus has been treated to fracture the coating, forming breaks/fractures 2350 (shown schematically in FIG. 23B from the enlarged region B in FIG. 23A). In this example, the fractures 2350 are formed vertically into the coating to expose more of the anodic metal and cathodic metal, potentially allowing for greater (and/or faster) release of anodic antimicrobial ions.

[0185] Thus, in any of the apparatuses described herein, the coatings may be fractured (cracked, etc.) to enlarge the surface area. Cracks or fractures may be formed of a predetermined density and/or depth. For example, the coating may be fractured or may include cleavage regions into the thickness of the coating at a density of between 0.01% and 80% of the surface (e.g., greater than 0.1%, greater than 1%, greater than 5%, greater than 10%, greater than 15%, etc.). The percentage of fracturing typically results in an increase the in the surface area, and may therefore be referred to as a percentage increase in the surface area. For example the percent increase in the surface area due to fracturing the surface may result in an increase of greater than 0.25 times the un-fractured surface area (e.g., a 25% or greater surface area following fracturing). In some variations the surface area may be increased greater than 0.3 times (e.g., 0.35x or greater,. 0.40x or greater, 0.45x or greater, 0.5x or greater, 0.6x or greater, 0.75x or greater, 0.8x or greater, 0.9x or greater, 1x or greater, 2x or greater, 3x or greater, etc.).

[0186] When a feature or element is herein referred to as being "on" another feature or element, it can be directly on the other feature or element or intervening features and/or elements may also be present. In contrast, when a feature or element is referred to as being "directly on" another feature or element, there are no intervening features or elements present. It will also be understood that, when a feature or element is referred to as being "connected", "attached" or "coupled" to another feature or element, it can be directly connected, attached or coupled to the other feature or element or intervening features or elements may be present. In contrast, when a feature or element is referred to as being "directly connected", "directly attached" or "directly coupled" to another feature or

element, there are no intervening features or elements present. Although described or shown with respect to one embodiment, the features and elements so described or shown can apply to other embodiments. It will also be appreciated by those of skill in the art that references to a structure or feature that is disposed "adjacent" another feature may have portions that overlap or underlie the adjacent feature.

[0187] Terminology used herein is for the purpose of describing particular embodiments only and is not intended to be limiting of the invention. For example, as used herein, the singular forms "a", "an" and "the" are intended to include the plural forms as well, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise. It will be further understood that the terms "comprises" and/or "comprising," when used in this specification, specify the presence of stated features, steps, operations, elements, and/or components, but do not preclude the presence or addition of one or more other features, steps, operations, elements, components, and/or groups thereof. As used herein, the term "and/or" includes any and all combinations of one or more of the associated listed items and may be abbreviated as "/".

[0188] Spatially relative terms, such as "under", "below", "lower", "over", "upper" and the like, may be used herein for ease of description to describe one element or feature's relationship to another element(s) or feature(s) as illustrated in the figures. It will be understood that the spatially relative terms are intended to encompass different orientations of the device in use or operation in addition to the orientation depicted in the figures. For example, if a device in the figures is inverted, elements described as "under" or "beneath" other elements or features would then be oriented "over" the other elements or features. Thus, the exemplary term "under" can encompass both an orientation of over and under. The device may be otherwise oriented (rotated 90 degrees or at other orientations) and the spatially relative descriptors used herein interpreted accordingly. Similarly, the terms "upwardly", "downwardly", "vertical", "horizontal" and the like are used herein for the purpose of explanation only unless specifically indicated otherwise.

[0189] Although the terms "first" and "second" may be used herein to describe various features/elements, these features/elements should not be limited by these terms, unless the context indicates otherwise. These terms may be used to distinguish one feature/element from another feature/element. Thus, a first feature/element discussed below could be termed a second feature/element, and similarly, a second feature/element discussed below could be termed a first feature/element without departing from the teachings of the present invention.

[0190] Throughout this specification and the claims which follow, unless the context requires otherwise, the word "comprise", and variations such as "comprises" and "comprising" means various components can be co-jointly employed in the methods and articles (e.g., compositions and apparatuses including device and methods). For example, the term "comprising" will be understood to imply the inclusion of any stated elements or steps but not the exclusion of any other elements or steps.

[0191] As used herein in the specification and claims, including as used in the examples and unless otherwise expressly specified, all numbers may be read as if prefaced by the word "about" or "approximately," even if the term does not expressly appear. The phrase "about" or "approximately" may be used when describing magnitude and/or position to indicate that the value and/or position described is within a reasonable expected range of values and/or positions. For example, a numeric value may have a value that is +/- 0.1% of the stated value (or range of values), +/- 1% of the stated value (or range of values), +/- 2% of the stated value (or range of values), +/- 5% of the stated value (or range of values), +/- 10% of the stated value (or range of values), etc. Any numerical range recited herein is intended to include all sub-ranges subsumed therein.

[0192] Although various illustrative embodiments are described above, any of a number of changes may be made to various embodiments without departing from the scope of the invention as described by the claims. For example, the order in which various described method steps are performed may often be changed in alternative embodiments, and in other alternative embodiments one or more method steps may be skipped altogether. Optional features of various device and system embodiments may be included in some embodiments and not in others. Therefore, the foregoing description is provided primarily for exemplary purposes and should not be interpreted to limit the scope of the invention as it is set forth in the claims.

[0193] The examples and illustrations included herein show, by way of illustration and not of limitation, specific embodiments in which the subject matter may be practiced. As mentioned, other embodiments may be utilized and derived there from, such that structural and logical substitutions and changes may be made without departing from the scope of this disclosure. Such embodiments of the inventive subject matter may be referred to herein individually or collectively by the term "invention" merely for convenience and without intending to voluntarily limit the scope of this application to any single invention or inventive concept, if more than one is, in fact, disclosed. Thus, although specific embodiments have been illustrated and described herein, any arrangement calculated to achieve the same purpose may be substituted for the specific embodiments shown. This disclosure is intended to cover any and all adaptations or variations of various embodiments. Combinations of the above embodiments, and other embodiments not specifically described herein, will be apparent to those of skill in the art upon reviewing the above description.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus that galvanically releases antimicrobial ions, the apparatus comprising:
   a substrate surface; and
   a coating on the outer substrate surface, the coating comprising a mixture of between about 25% and 75% by volume of an anodic metal, and between about 25% to 75% by volume of a cathodic metal co-deposited on the substrate surface, wherein the coating comprises a plurality of microregions or microdomains of anodic metal in a matrix of cathodic metal or a plurality of microregions or microdomains of cathodic metal in a matrix of anodic metal, the microregions or microdomains forming a continuous path of interconnected veins of anodic metal through the coating thickness, or a continuous path of interconnected veins of cathodic metal through the coating thickness, wherein the continuous path extends from an outer surface of the coating through the coating to an opposite side of the coating;
   wherein the anodic metal is galvanically released as antimicrobial ions when the apparatus is exposed to a bodily fluid.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein less than 30% of the anodic metal is fully encapsulated within the matrix of cathodic metal and connects through a microregion or microdomain of anodic metal to the outer surface of the coating.

3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein less than 20% of the anodic metal is fully encapsulated within the matrix of cathodic metal and connects through a microregion or microdomain of anodic metal to the outer surface of the coating.

4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the anodic metal comprises both zinc and silver.

5. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the anodic metal comprises silver, zinc or copper.

6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the cathodic metal comprises one or more of: palladium, platinum, or gold.

7. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the cathodic metal comprises one or more of: palladium, platinum, gold, molybdenum, titanium, iridium, osmium, niobium and rhenium.

8. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the coating comprises the anodic metal and the cathodic metal that have been vapor-deposited onto the length of filament so that the anodic metal is not encapsulated by the cathodic metal.

9. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the surface is an outer surface of one of: a pacemaker, defibrillator, neurostimulator, or ophthalmic implant.

10. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the surface is an outer surface of one of: an implantable shunt, an artificial joint, a hip implant, a knee implant, a catheter, a stent, an implantable coil, a pump, an intrauterine

device (IUD), a heart valve, a surgical fastener, a surgical staple, a surgical pin, a surgical screw, an implantable electrical lead, or an implantable plate.

11. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the surface is an outer surface of one of: a retractor, a bariatric balloon, an orthodontic brace, a breast implant, a surgical sponge, a gauze, or a wound packing material.

12. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the coating is fractured.

13. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the coating is fractured so that a surface area of the coating is increased by at least 25% compared to the surface area of the coating in an unfractured state.

14. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the substrate is a bioabsorbable filament.

15. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the substrate is a bioabsorbable filament comprise one or more of: polylactic acid (PLA), poly(lactic-co-glycolic acid) (PLGA), polyglycolide (PGA), polyglycoside-co-trimethylene carbonate (PGTMC), poly(caprolactone-co-glycoside), poly(dioxanone) (PDS), and poly(caprolactone) (PCL).

16. A method of galvanically releasing antimicrobial ions to form an antimicrobial zone around an implant that is inserted into a subject's tissue, the method comprising:

inserting into the subject's tissue an apparatus comprising a coating on an outer surface, the coating comprising a mixture of between about 25% and 75% by volume of an anodic metal, and between about 25% to 75% by volume of a cathodic metal co-deposited on the substrate surface, wherein the coating comprises a plurality of microregions or microdomains of anodic metal in a matrix of cathodic metal or a plurality of microregions or microdomains of cathodic metal in a matrix of anodic metal, the microregions or microdomains forming a continuous path of interconnected veins of anodic metal through the coating thickness, or a continuous path of interconnected veins of cathodic metal through the coating thickness, wherein the continuous path extends from an outer surface of the coating through the coating to an opposite side of the coating;

galvanically releasing antimicrobial ions of the anodic metal from the coating.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein inserting comprises inserting a pacemaker.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein inserting comprises inserting a defibrillator.

19. The method of claim 16, wherein inserting comprises inserting a neurostimulator.

20. The method of claim 16, wherein inserting comprises inserting one of: an implantable shunt, an artificial joint, a hip implant, a knee implant, a catheter, a stent, an implantable coil, a pump, an intrauterine device (IUD), a heart valve, a surgical fastener, a surgical staple, a surgical pin, a surgical screw, an implantable electrical lead, or an implantable plate.

21. The method of claim 16, wherein galvanically releasing antimicrobial ions from the coating comprises galvanically releasing ions of silver, zinc or silver and zinc.

22. The method of claim 16, wherein the antimicrobial zone around the implant is sustained for greater than two weeks.

23. The method of claim 16, wherein the antimicrobial zone around the implant is sustained for greater than thirty days.

24. An apparatus that galvanically releases antimicrobial ions, the apparatus comprising:

a substrate; and

a coating on the substrate comprising an anodic metal that is co-deposited with a cathodic metal on the substrate to form a non-uniform mixture of the anodic and cathodic metals, wherein the coating comprises a plurality of microregions or microdomains of anodic metal in a matrix of cathodic metal or a plurality of microregions or microdomains of cathodic metal in a matrix of anodic metal, the microregions or microdomains forming a continuous path of interconnected veins of anodic metal within the matrix of cathodic metal or a continuous path of interconnected veins of cathodic metal within the matrix of anodic metal, wherein the continuous path extends from an outer surface of the coating to the substrate;

further wherein the anodic metal is galvanically released as antimicrobial ions when the apparatus is inserted into a subject's body.

25. The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the substrate comprises an implant configured to be inserted into a human body.

26. The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the anodic metal is at least about 30 percent by volume of the coating.

27. The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the anodic metal comprises both zinc and silver.

28. The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the anodic metal comprises silver, zinc or copper.

29. The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the cathodic metal has a higher galvanic potential than the anodic metal.

30. The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the cathodic metal comprises one or more of: palladium, platinum, gold, molybdenum, titanium, iridium, osmium, niobium and rhenium.

31. The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the coating comprises the anodic metal and the cathodic metal that have been vapor-deposited onto the substrate so that the anodic metal is not encapsulated by the cathodic metal.

32. The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the substrate is configured to degrade within the body to form a degradation product including an anion that complexes with ions of the anodic metal and diffuses into the subject's body to form an antimicrobial zone.

33. The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the continuous path of interconnected veins are interconnected so that less than 15% of the anodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of cathodic metal, or less than 15% of the cathodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of anodic metal.

34. The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the continuous path of interconnected veins are interconnected so that less than 10% of the anodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of cathodic metal, or less than 10% of the cathodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of anodic metal.

35. An apparatus that galvanically releases antimicrobial ions, the apparatus comprising:

a substrate; and

a coating on the substrate comprising zinc and silver and a cathodic metal that are all co-deposited onto the substrate, wherein the zinc and silver are at least about 30 percent by volume of the coating and form a non-uniform mixture of the zinc and the cathodic metal and a non-uniform mixture of the silver and the cathodic metal, wherein the coating comprises a plurality of microregions or microdomains of zinc and silver in a matrix of cathodic metal or a plurality of microregions or microdomains of cathodic metal in a matrix of zinc and a matrix of silver, the microregions or microdomains forming a continuous path of interconnected veins of zinc and silver within the matrix of cathodic metal or a continuous path of interconnected veins of cathodic metal within the matrix of zinc and the matrix of silver, wherein the continuous paths extend from an outer surface of the substrate;

further wherein the zinc and silver are galvanically released as antimicrobial ions when the apparatus is inserted into a subject's body.

36. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the cathodic metal has a higher galvanic potential than the silver or zinc.

37. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the cathodic metal comprises one or more of: palladium, platinum, gold, molybdenum, titanium, iridium, osmium, niobium and rhenium.

38. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the coating comprises the silver and zinc and the cathodic metal that have been vapor-deposited onto the substrate so that the anodic metal is not encapsulated by the cathodic metal.

39. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the substrate is configured to degrade within the body to form a degradation product including an anion that complexes with ions of the silver and zinc and diffuses into the subject's body to form an antimicrobial zone.

40. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the substrate comprises an implant configured to be inserted into a human body.

41. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the continuous path of interconnected veins are interconnected so that less than 15% of the zinc is completely encapsulated within the matrix of cathodic metal and less than 15% of the silver is completely encapsulated within the matrix of cathodic metal, or less than 15% of the cathodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of zinc and less than 15% of the cathodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of silver.

42. The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the continuous path of interconnected veins are interconnected so that less than 10% of the zinc is completely encapsulated within the matrix of cathodic metal and less than 10%

of the silver is completely encapsulated within the matrix of cathodic metal, or less than 10% of the cathodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of zinc and less than 10% of the cathodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of silver.

43. A bioabsorbable apparatus that galvanically releases antimicrobial ions, the apparatus comprising:
an implant having an outer surface comprising a substrate; and
a coating on the substrate comprising an anodic metal that is co-deposited with a cathodic metal on the substrate to form a non-uniform mixture of the anodic and cathodic metals, wherein the coating comprises a plurality of microregions or microdomains of anodic metal in a matrix of cathodic metal or a plurality of microregions or microdomains of cathodic metal in a matrix of anodic metal, the microregions or microdomains forming continuous paths of interconnected veins of anodic metal within the matrix of cathodic metal or continuous paths of interconnected veins of cathodic metal within the matrix of anodic metal, wherein the continuous paths extend from an outer surface of the coating to the substrate;
further wherein the anodic metal is galvanically released as antimicrobial ions when the apparatus is inserted into a subject's body.

44. The apparatus of claim 43, wherein the continuous path of interconnected veins are interconnected so that less than 15% of the anodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of cathodic metal, or less than 15% of the cathodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of anodic metal.

45. The apparatus of claim 43, wherein the continuous path of interconnected veins are interconnected so that less than 10% of the anodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of cathodic metal, or less than 10% of the cathodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of anodic metal.

46. A bioabsorbable apparatus that galvanically releases antimicrobial ions, the apparatus comprising:
a flexible length of bioabsorbable filament; and
a coating on the length of filament comprising an anodic metal that is co-deposited with a cathodic metal on the length of filament to form a non-uniform mixture of the anodic and cathodic metals, wherein the coating comprises a plurality of microregions or microdomains of anodic metal in a matrix of cathodic metal or a plurality of microregions or microdomains of cathodic metal in a matrix of anodic metal, the microregions or microdomains forming a continuous path of interconnected veins of anodic metal within the matrix of cathodic metal or a continuous path of cathodic metal within the matrix of anodic metal, wherein the continuous path extends from an outer surface of the coating to the filament;
wherein the coated filament is flexible;
further wherein the anodic metal is galvanically released as antimicrobial ions when the apparatus is inserted into a subject's body.

47. The apparatus of claim 46, wherein the anodic metal is at least about 30 percent by volume of the coating.

48. The apparatus of claim 46, wherein the anodic metal comprises both zinc and silver.

49. The apparatus of claim 46, wherein the anodic metal comprises silver, zinc or copper.

50. The apparatus of claim 46, wherein the cathodic metal has a higher galvanic potential than the anodic metal.

51. The apparatus of claim 46, wherein the cathodic metal comprises one or more of: palladium, platinum, gold, molybdenum, titanium, iridium, osmium, niobium and rhenium.

52. The apparatus of claim 46, wherein the coating comprises the anodic metal and the cathodic metal that have been vapor-deposited onto the length of filament so that the anodic metal is not encapsulated by the cathodic metal.

53. The apparatus of claim 46, wherein the length of bioabsorbable filament comprises one or more of: polylactic acid (PLA), poly(lactic-co-glycolic acid) (PLGA), polyglycolide (PGA), polyglycoside-co-trimethylene carbonate (PGTMC), poly(caprolactone-co-glycoside), poly(dioxanone) (PDS), and poly(caprolactone) (PCL).

54. The apparatus of claim 46, wherein the length of filament is configured to degrade within the body to form a degradation product including an anion that complexes with ions of the anodic metal and diffuses into the subject's body to form an antimicrobial zone.

55. The apparatus of claim 46, wherein the flexible length of bioabsorbable filament comprises a mesh.

56. The apparatus of claim 46, wherein the flexible length of bioabsorbable filament comprises a bag, envelope, pouch or net configured to hold an implant.

57. The apparatus of claim 46, wherein the flexible length of bioabsorbable filament is configured to at least partially house a pacemaker, defibrillator, neurostimulator, or ophthalmic implant.

58. The apparatus of claim 46, wherein the continuous path of interconnected veins are interconnected so that less than 15% of the anodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of cathodic metal, or less than 15% of the cathodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of anodic metal.

59. The apparatus of claim 46, wherein the continuous path of interconnected veins are interconnected so that less than 10% of the anodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of cathodic metal, or less than 10% of the cathodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of anodic metal.

60. A bioabsorbable apparatus that galvanically releases antimicrobial ions, the apparatus comprising:

a plurality of lengths of bioabsorbable filament arranged in a woven structure; and

a coating on the lengths of filament comprising zinc and silver and a cathodic metal that are all co-deposited onto the lengths of filament, wherein the zinc and silver are at least about 30 percent by volume of the coating and form a non-uniform mixture of the zinc and the cathodic metal and a non-uniform mixture of the silver and the cathodic metal, wherein the coating comprises a plurality of microregions or microdomains of zinc and silver in a matrix of cathodic metal or a plurality of microregions or microdomains of cathodic metal in a matrix of zinc and a matrix of silver, the microregions or microdomains forming a continuous path of interconnected veins of zinc within the matrix of cathodic metal and a continuous path of

interconnected veins of silver within the matrix of cathodic metal, wherein the continuous paths extend from an outer surface of the coating to the filament;

further wherein the zinc and silver are galvanically released as antimicrobial ions when the apparatus is inserted into a subject's body.

61. The apparatus of claim 60, wherein the cathodic metal has a higher galvanic potential than the silver or zinc.

62. The apparatus of claim 60, wherein the cathodic metal comprises one or more of: palladium, platinum, gold, molybdenum, titanium, iridium, osmium, niobium and rhenium.

63. The apparatus of claim 60, wherein the coating comprises the silver and zinc and the cathodic metal that have been vapor-deposited onto the lengths of filament so that the anodic metal is not encapsulated by the cathodic metal.

64. The apparatus of claim 60, wherein the lengths of bioabsorbable filament comprise one or more of: polylactic acid (PLA), poly(lactic-co-glycolic acid) (PLGA), polyglycolide (PGA), polyglycoside-co-trimethylene carbonate (PGTMC), poly(caprolactone-co-glycoside), poly(dioxanone) (PDS), and poly(caprolactone) (PCL).

65. The apparatus of claim 60, wherein the lengths of filament are configured to degrade within the body to form a degradation product including an anion that complexes with ions of the silver and zinc and diffuses into the subject's body to form an antimicrobial zone.

66. The apparatus of claim 60, wherein the woven structure comprises a mesh, a bag, envelope, a pouch or a net configured to at least partially enclose an implant within the subject's body.

67. The apparatus of claim 60, wherein the continuous path of interconnected veins are interconnected so that less than 15% of the zinc is completely encapsulated within the matrix of cathodic metal and less than 15% of the silver is completely encapsulated within the matrix of cathodic metal, or less than 15% of the cathodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of zinc and less than 15% of the cathodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of silver.

68. The apparatus of claim 60, wherein the continuous path of interconnected veins are interconnected so that less than 10% of the zinc is completely encapsulated within the matrix of cathodic metal and less than 10% of the silver is completely encapsulated within the matrix of cathodic metal, or less than 10% of the cathodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of zinc and less than 10% of the cathodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of silver.

69. A bioabsorbable apparatus that galvanically releases antimicrobial ions, the apparatus comprising:

a plurality of lengths of bioabsorbable filament; and

a coating on the lengths of filament comprising an anodic metal that is co-deposited with a cathodic metal on the lengths of filament to form a non-uniform mixture of the anodic and cathodic metals, wherein the coating comprises a plurality of microregions or microdomains of anodic metal in a matrix of cathodic metal or a plurality of microregions or microdomains

of cathodic metal in a matrix of anodic metal, the microregions or microdomains forming continuous paths of interconnected veins of anodic metal within the matrix of cathodic metal or continuous paths of cathodic metal within the matrix of anodic metal, wherein the continuous paths extend from an outer surface of the coating to the filament;

wherein the lengths of filament are arranged into a flexible structure;

further wherein the anodic metal is galvanically released as antimicrobial ions when the apparatus is inserted into a subject's body.

70. The apparatus of claim 69, wherein the continuous path of interconnected veins are interconnected so that less than 15% of the anodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of cathodic metal, or less than 15% of the cathodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of anodic metal.

71. The apparatus of claim 69, wherein the continuous path of interconnected veins are interconnected so that less than 10% of the anodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of cathodic metal, or less than 10% of the cathodic metal is completely encapsulated within the matrix of anodic metal.



FIG. 1A



FIG. 1B



FIG. 1C

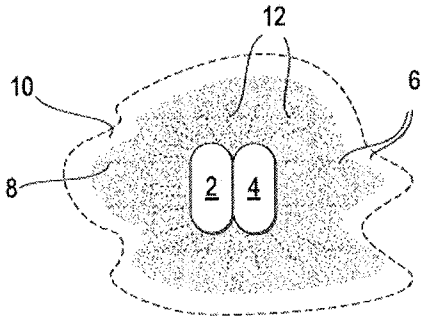


FIG. 1D

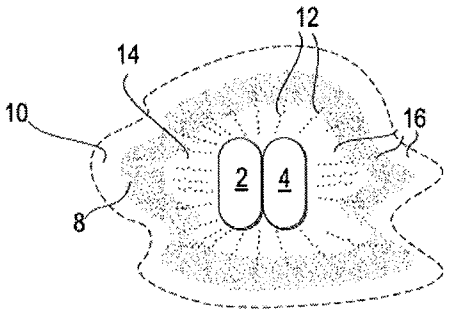


FIG. 1E

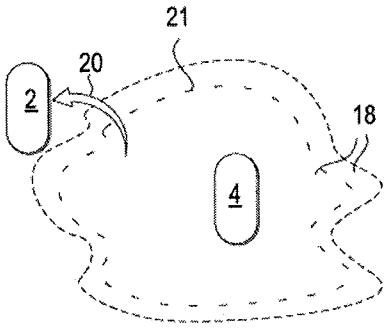


FIG. 1F

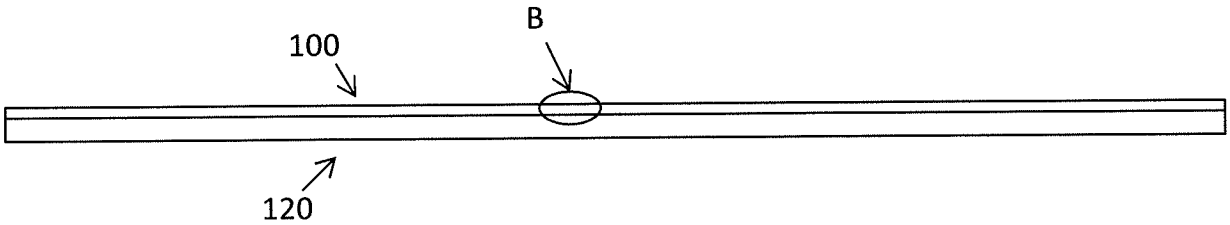


FIG. 2A

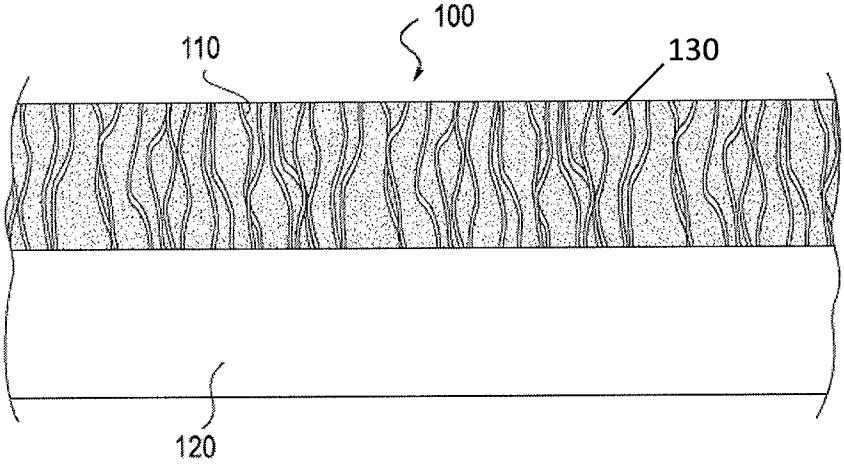


FIG. 2B

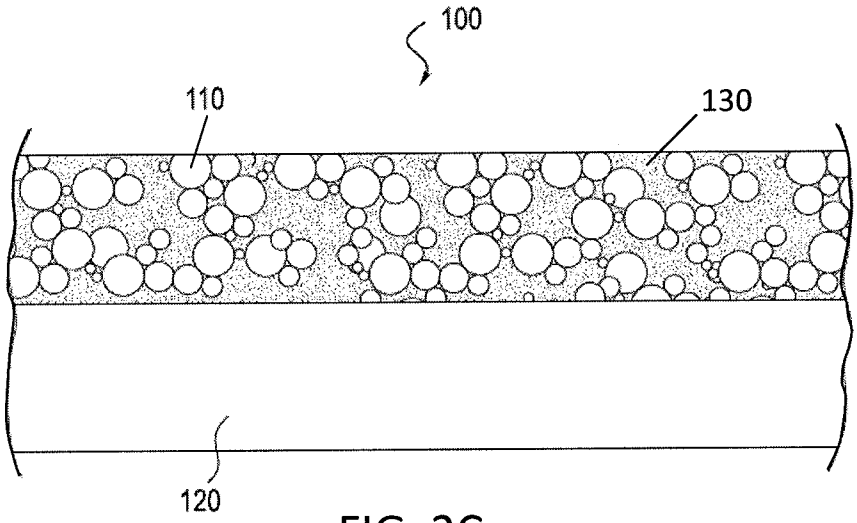


FIG. 2C

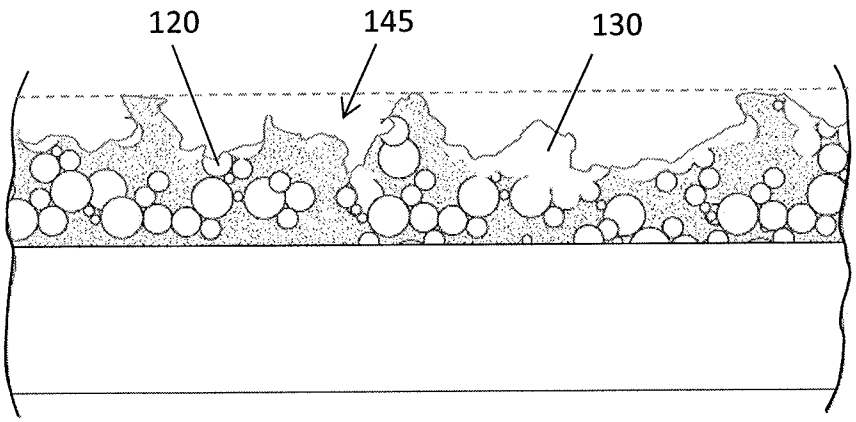


FIG. 2D

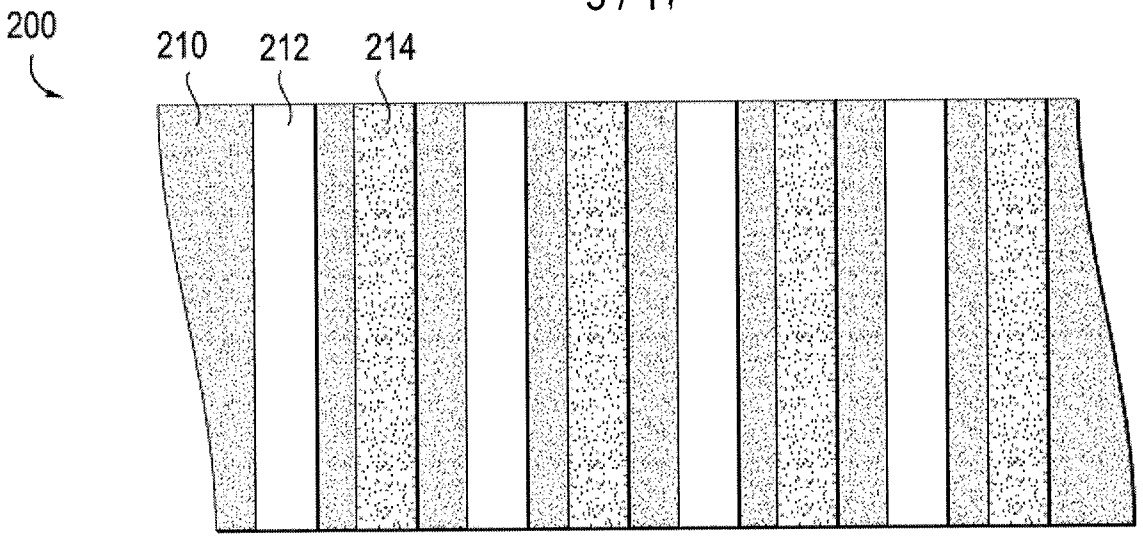


FIG. 3A

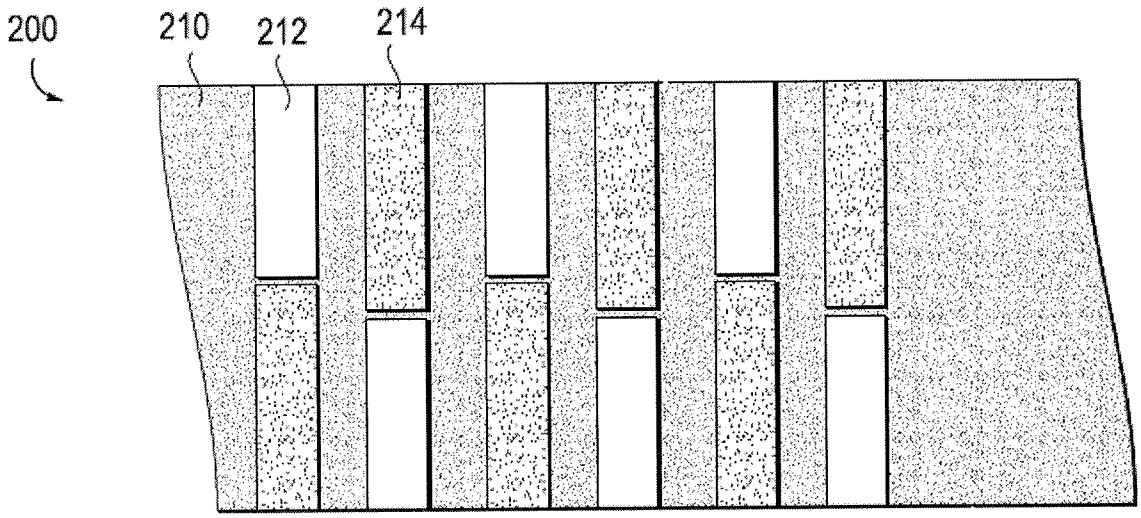


FIG. 3B

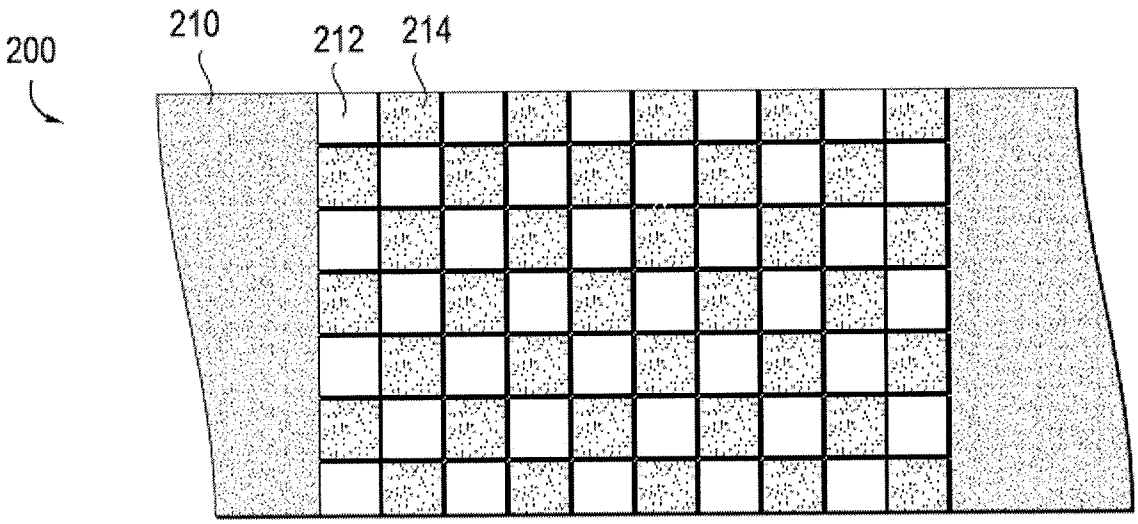


FIG. 3C

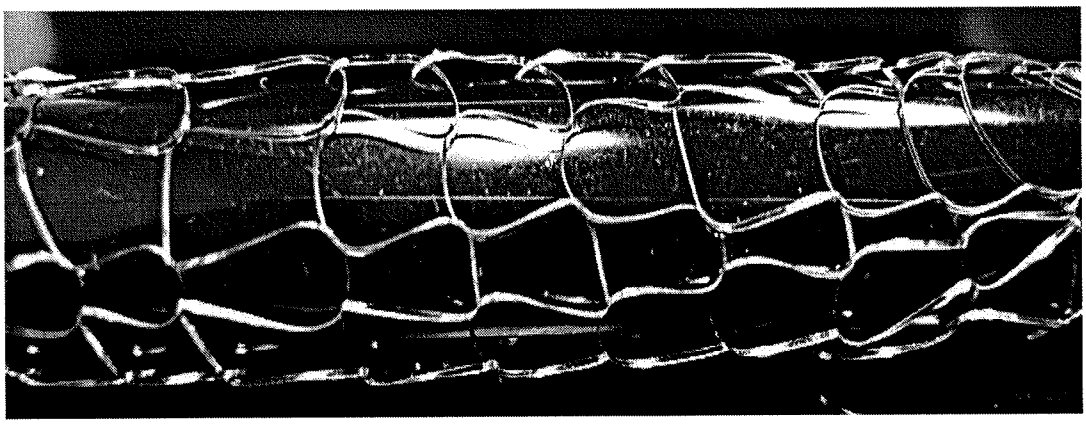


FIG. 4

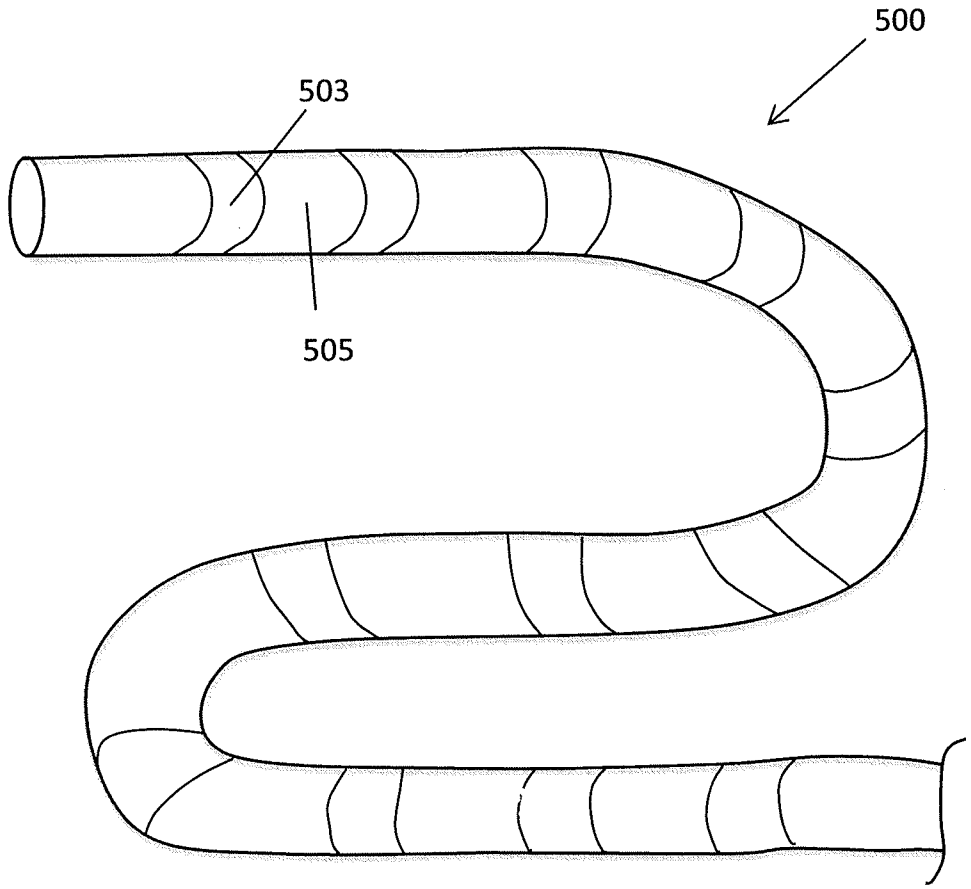


FIG. 5A

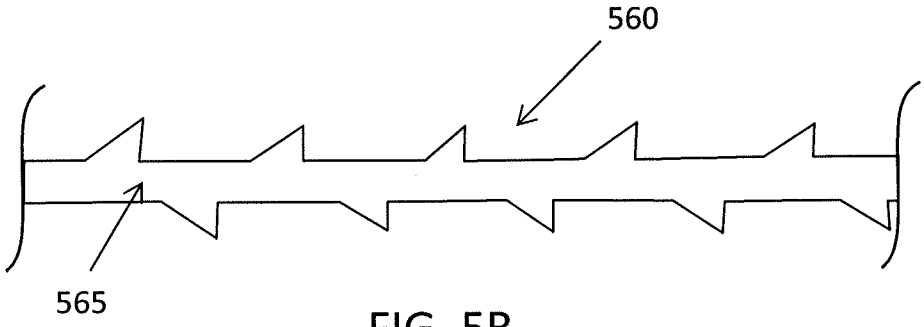


FIG. 5B

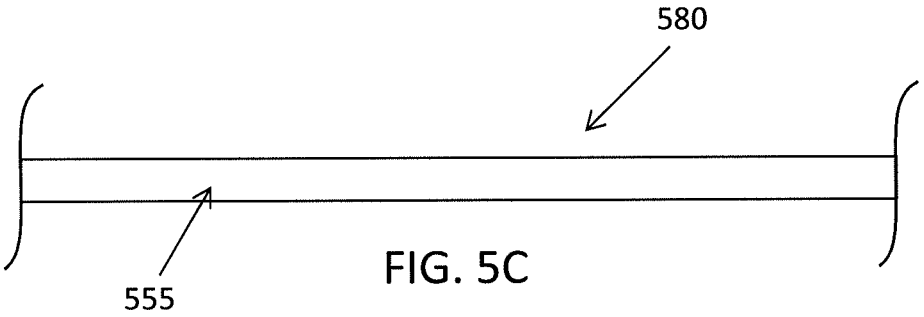


FIG. 5C

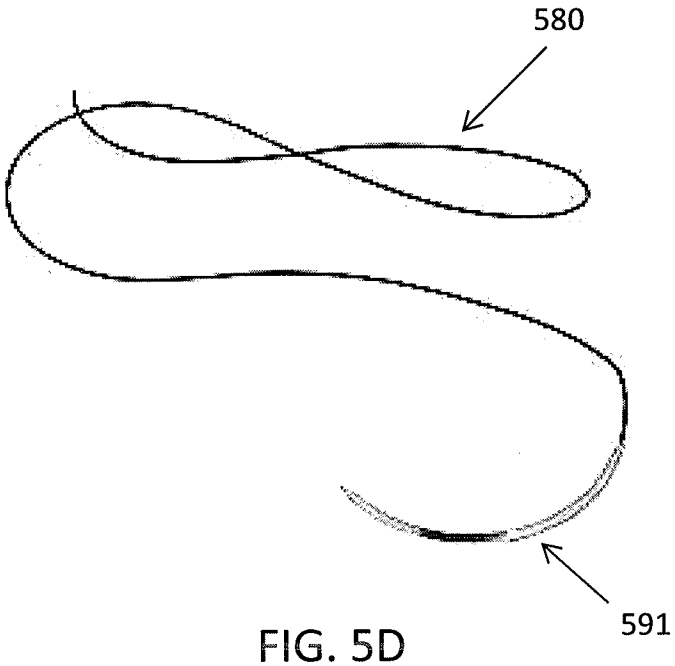


FIG. 5D

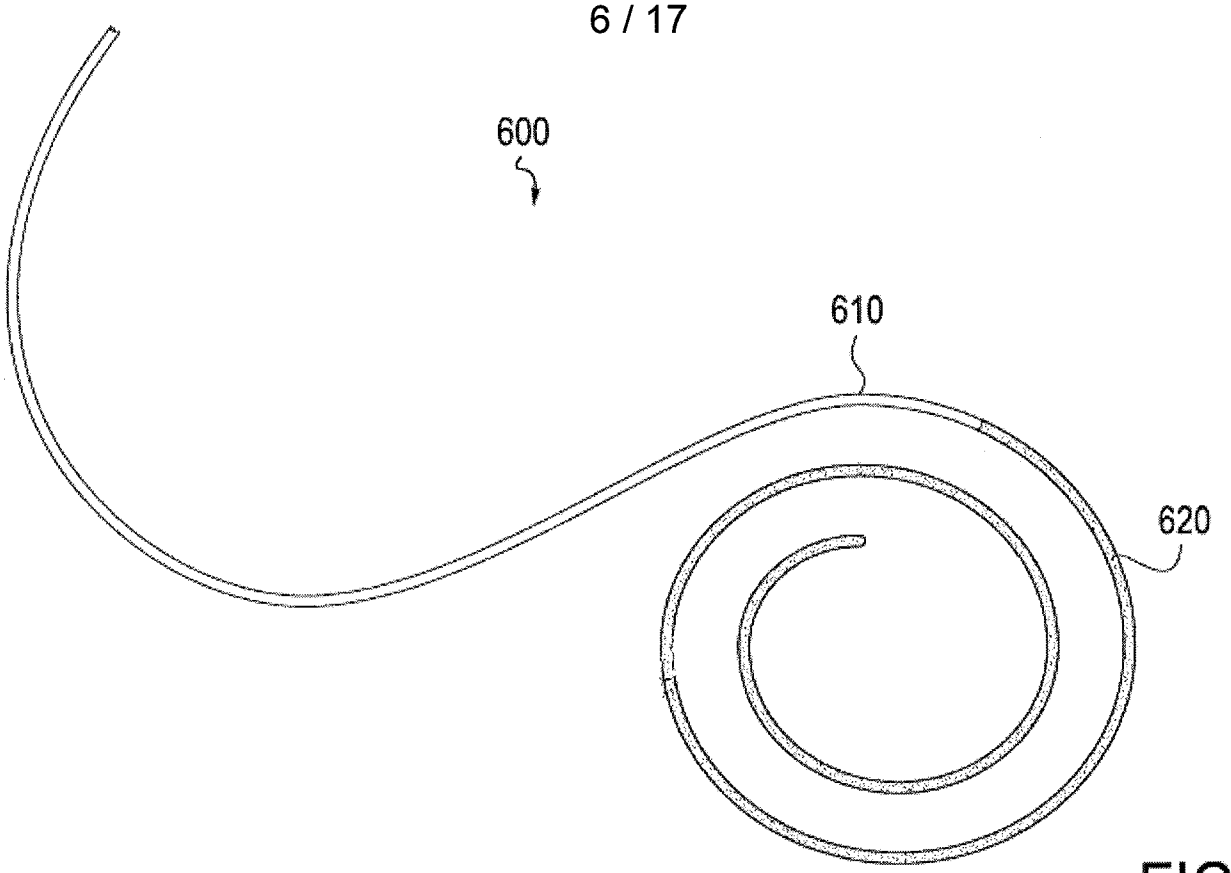


FIG. 6

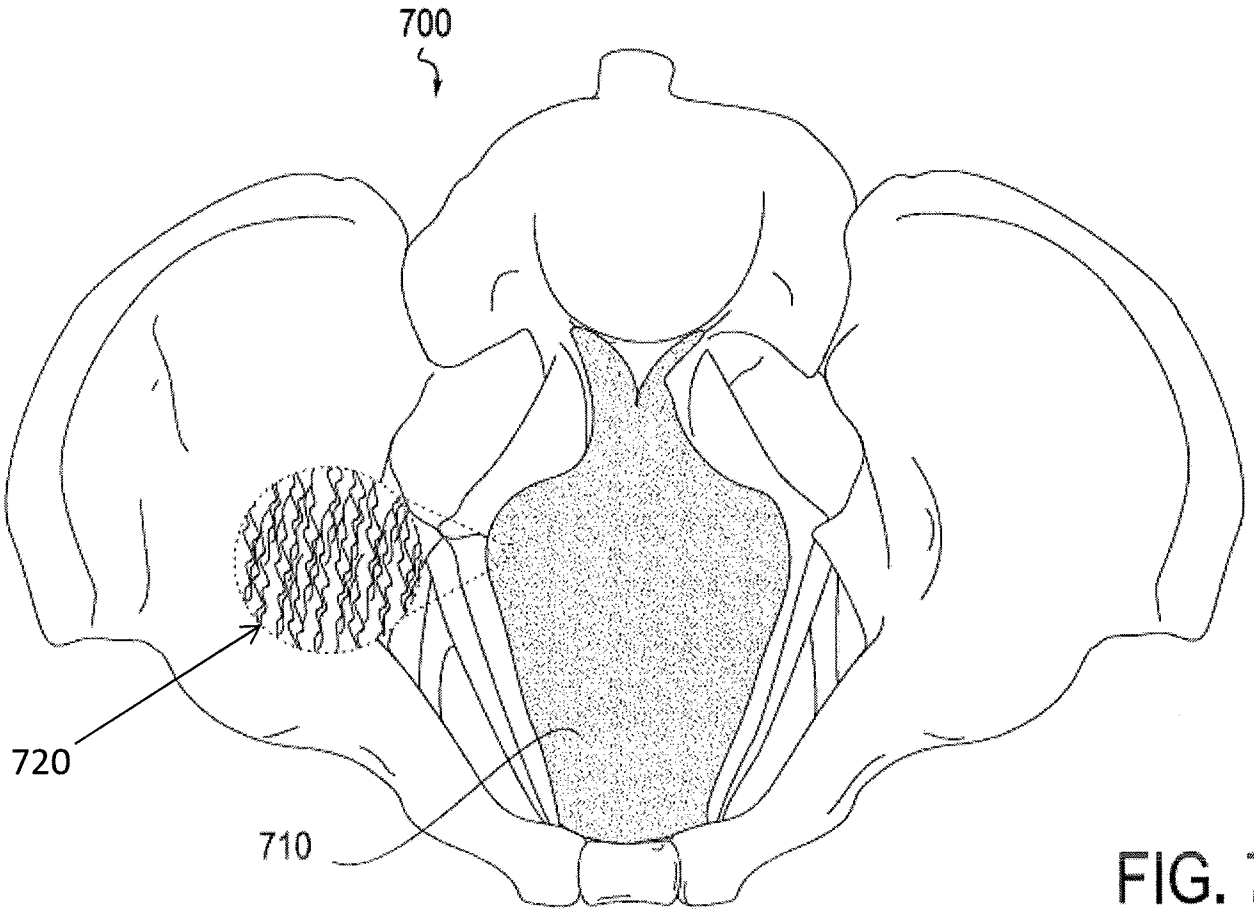


FIG. 7

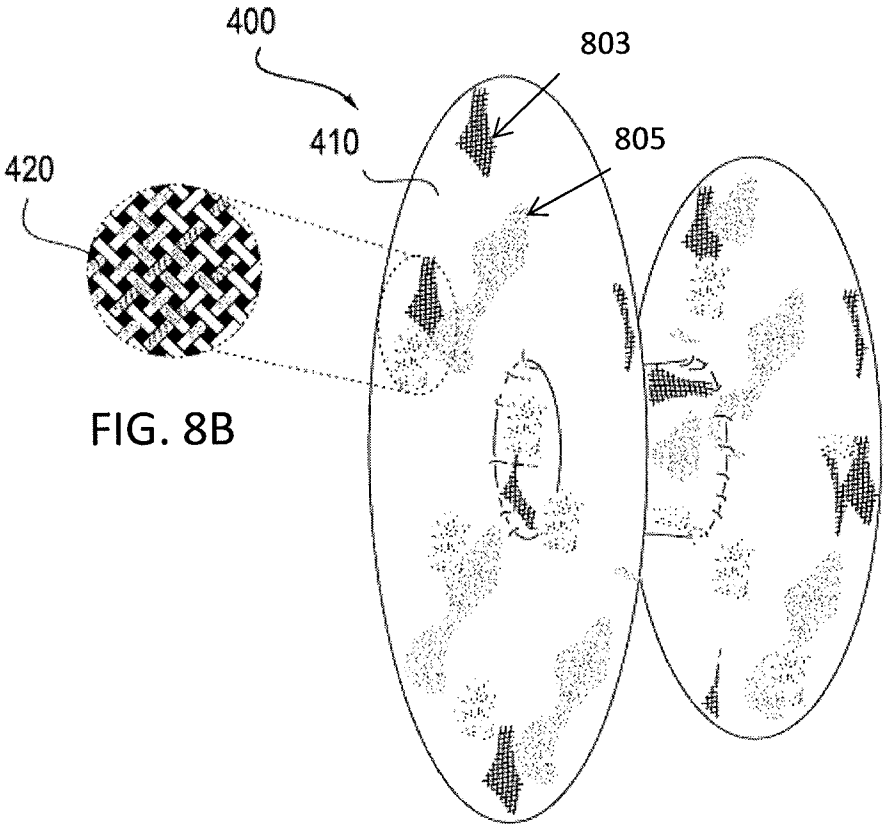


FIG. 8B

FIG. 8A

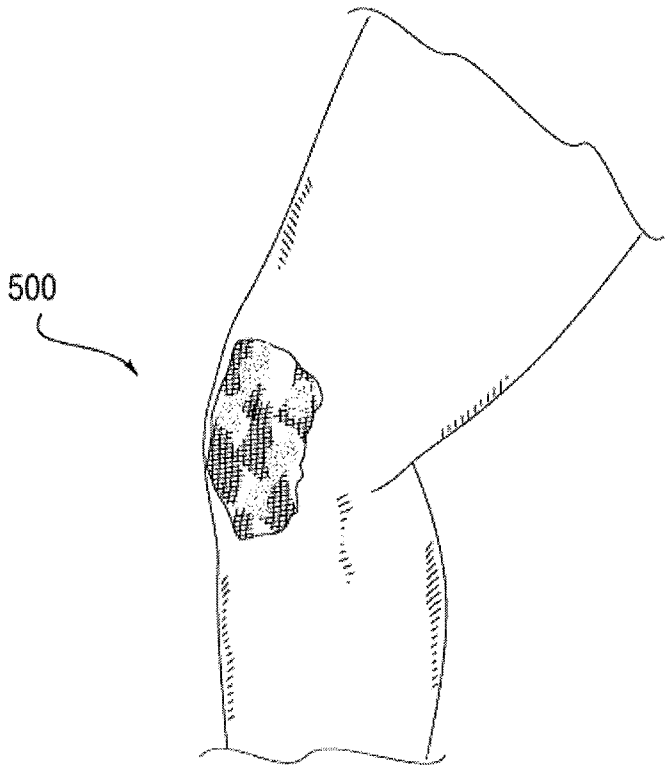


FIG. 9

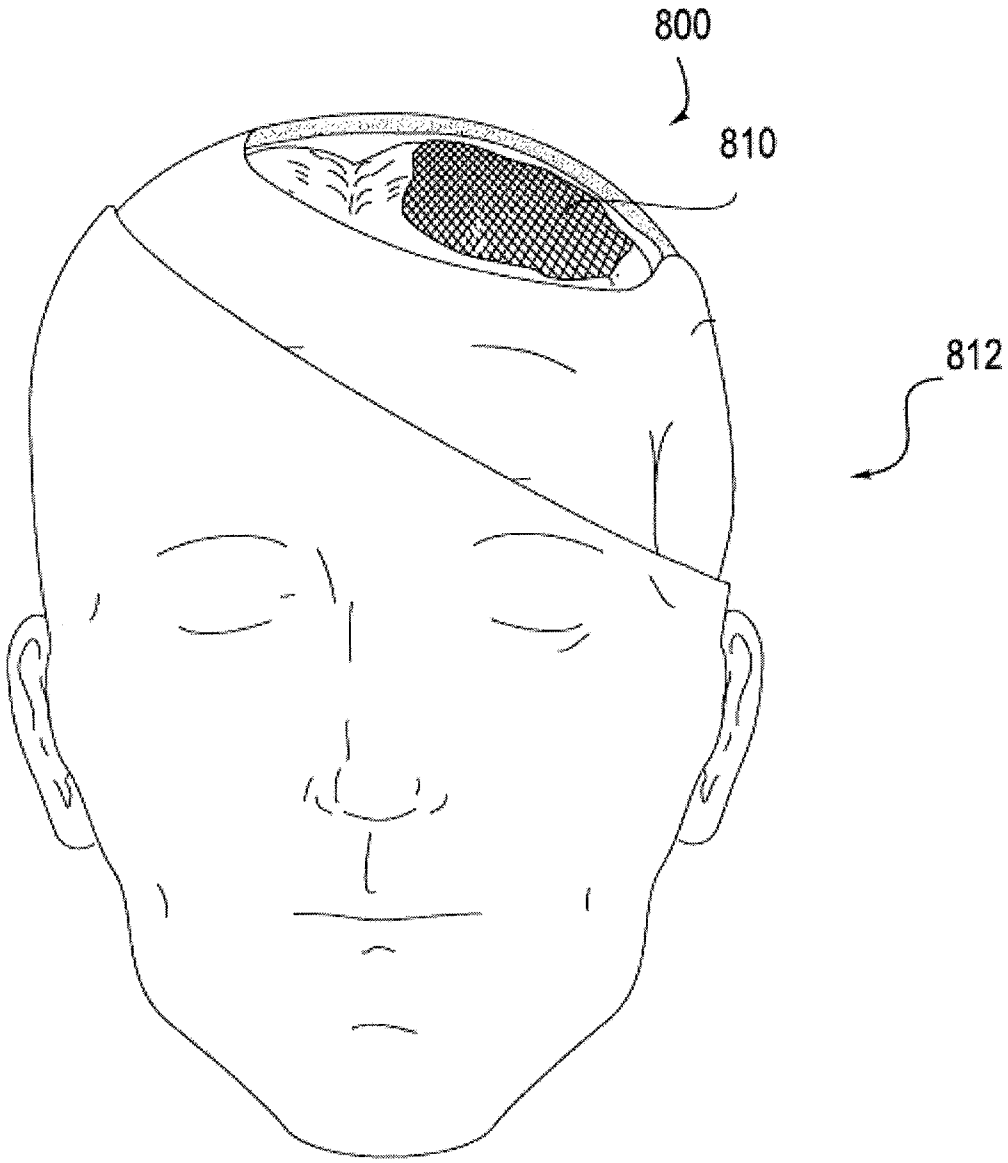


FIG. 10

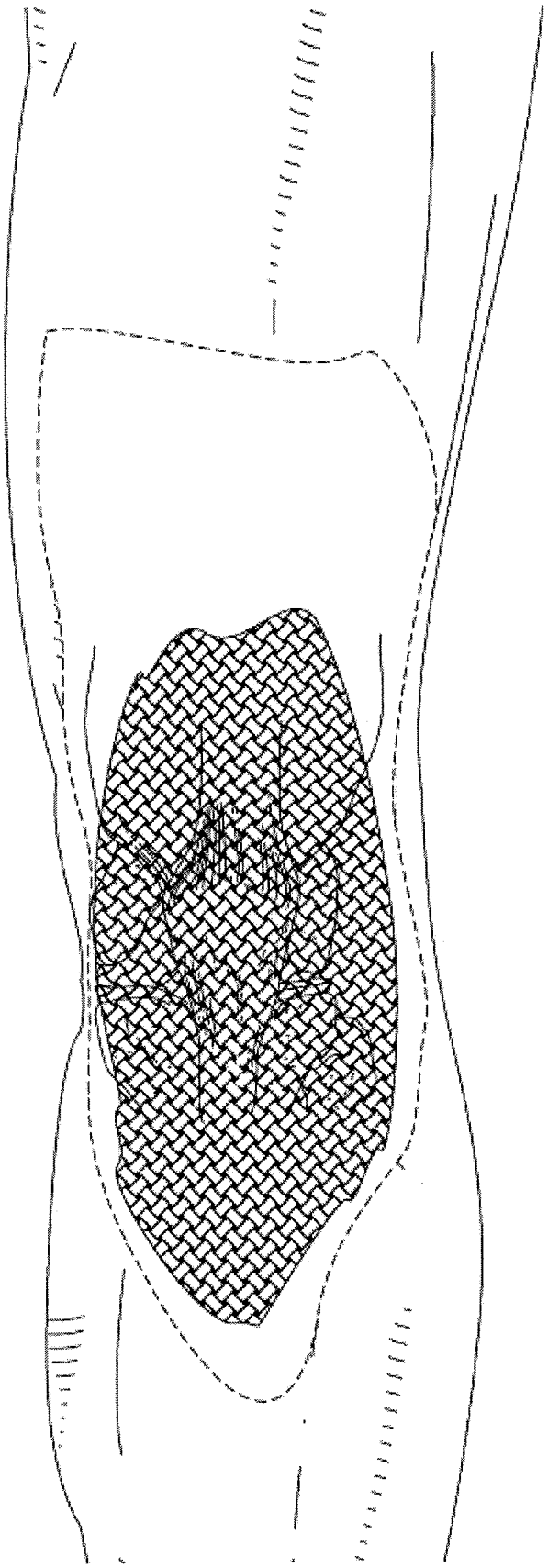


FIG. 11

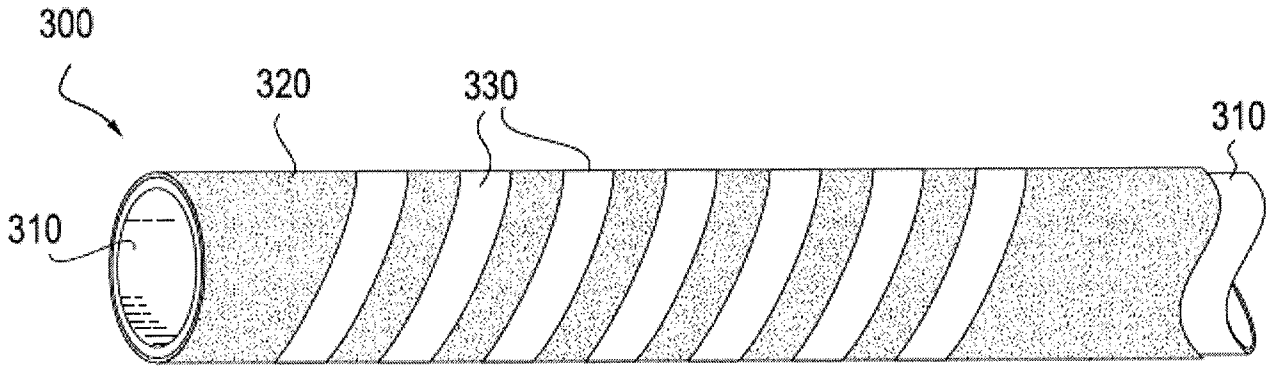


FIG. 12A

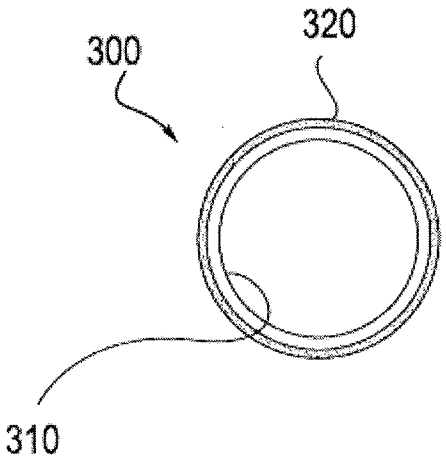


FIG. 12B

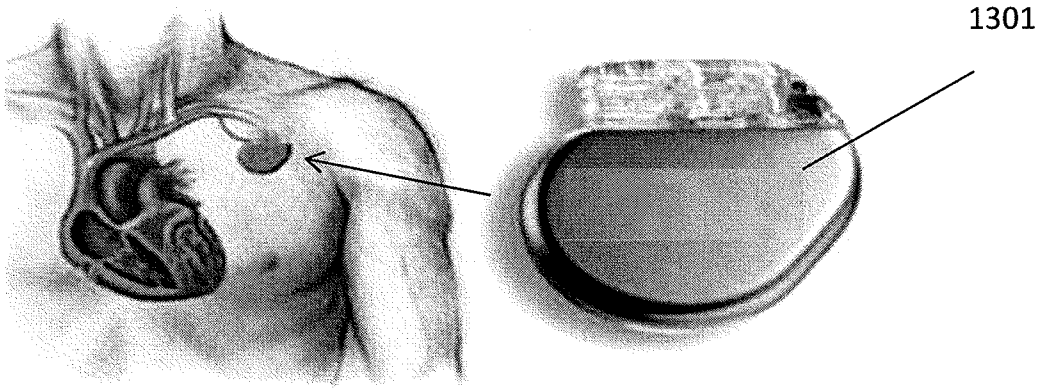


FIG. 13A FIG. 13B

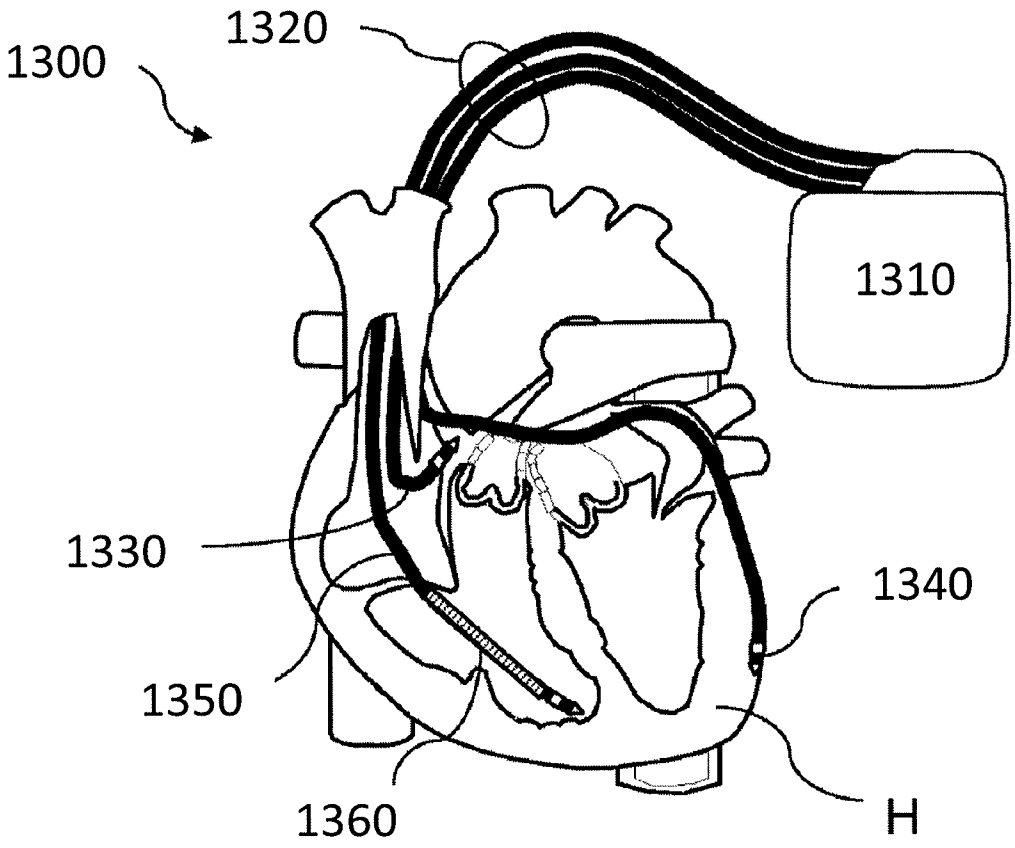


FIG. 13C

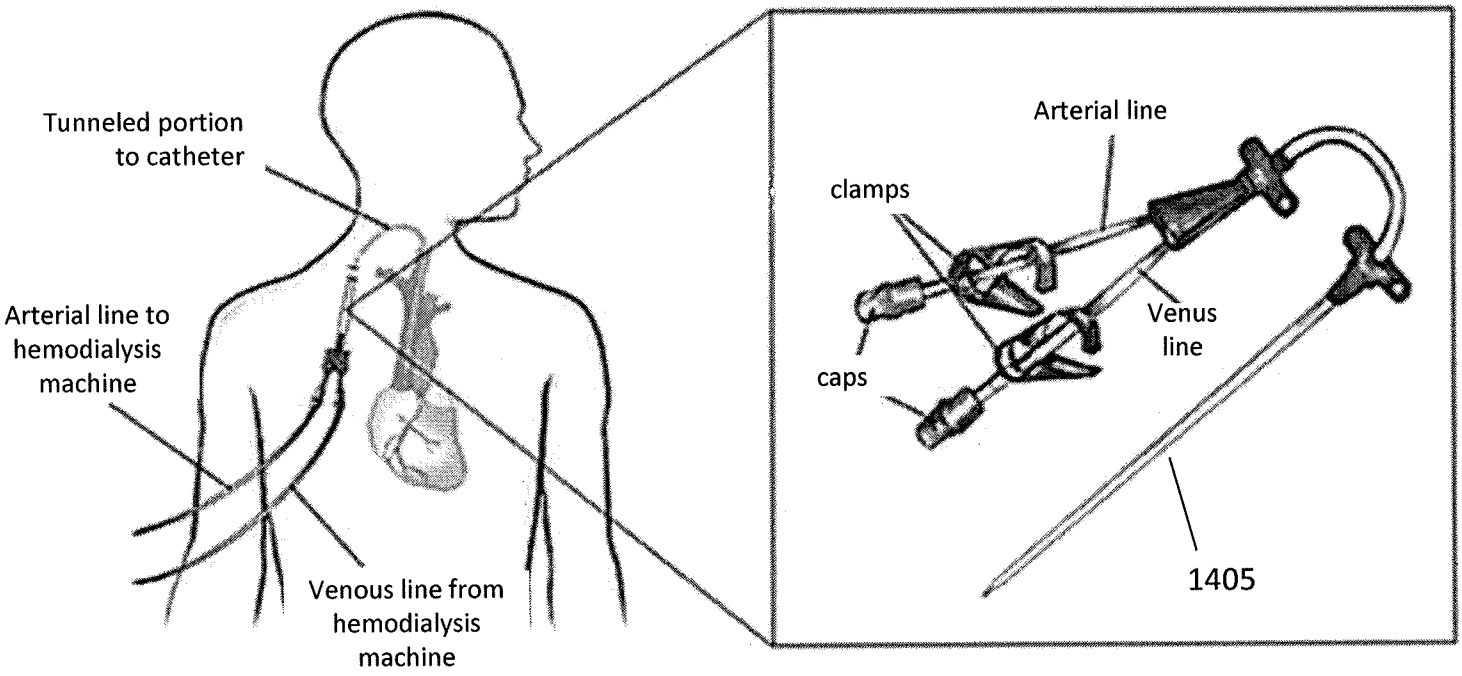


FIG. 14A FIG. 14B

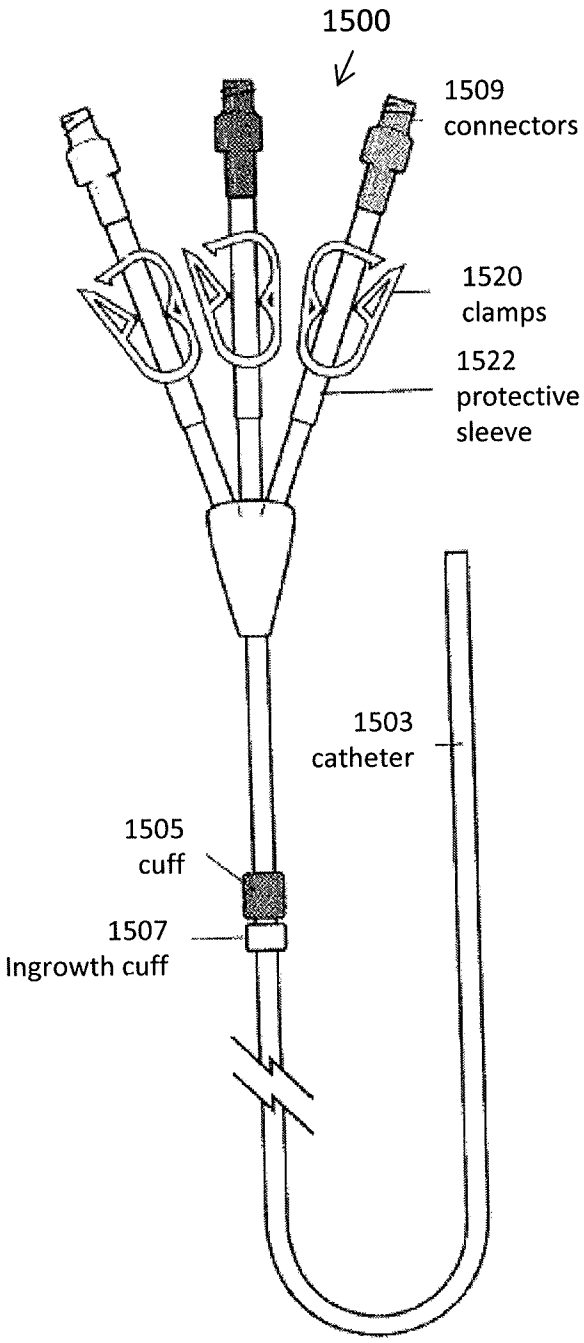


FIG. 15A

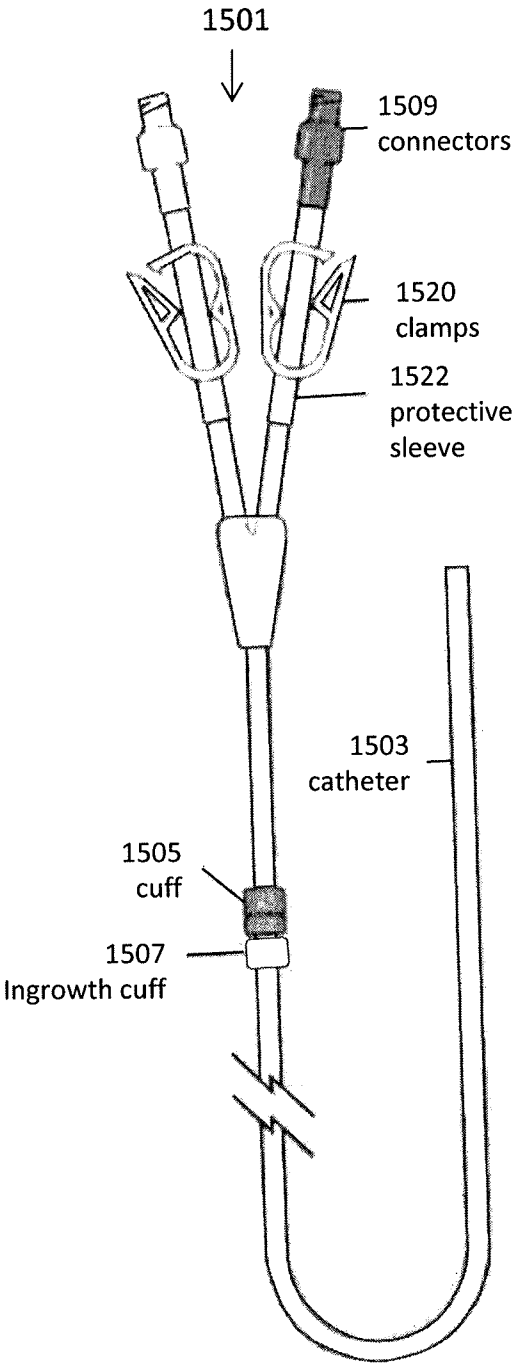


FIG. 15B

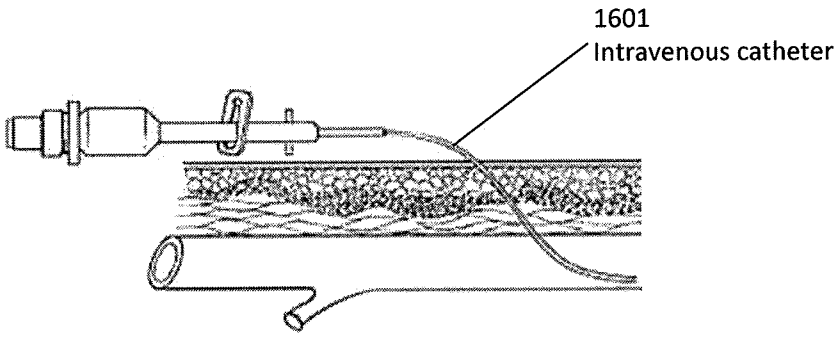


FIG. 16

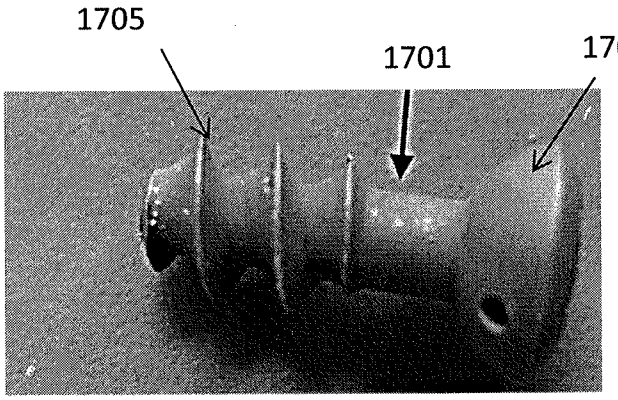


FIG. 17A

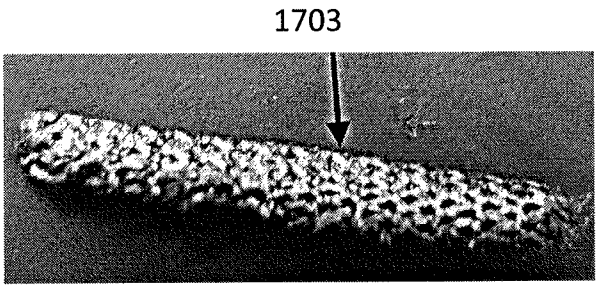


FIG. 17B

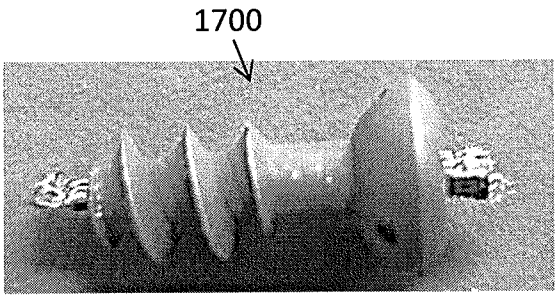


FIG. 17C

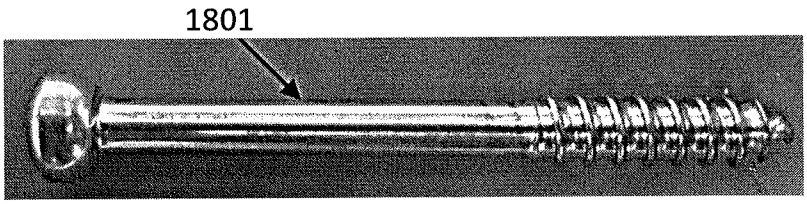


FIG. 18A

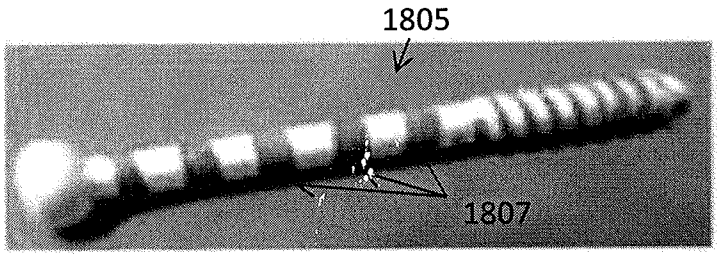


FIG. 18B

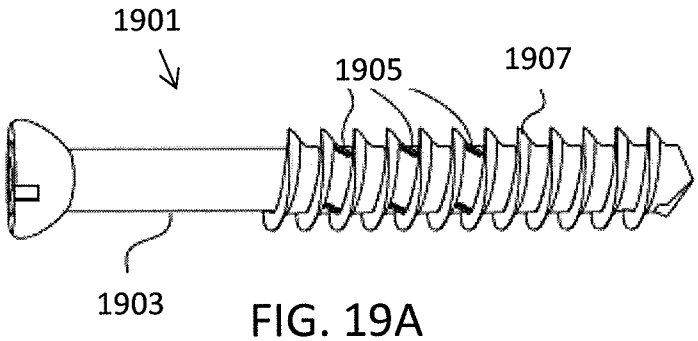


FIG. 19A

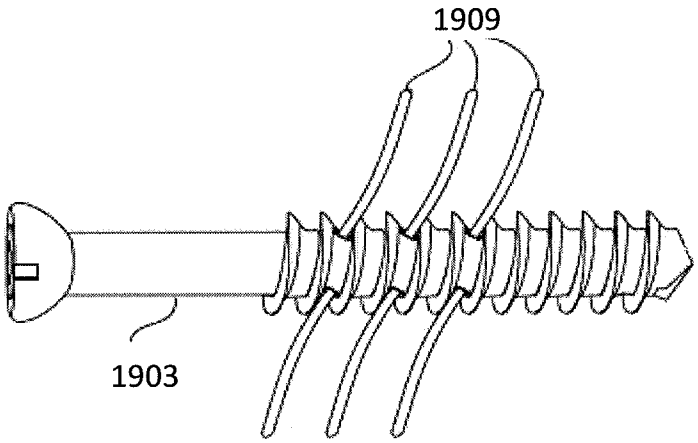


FIG. 19B

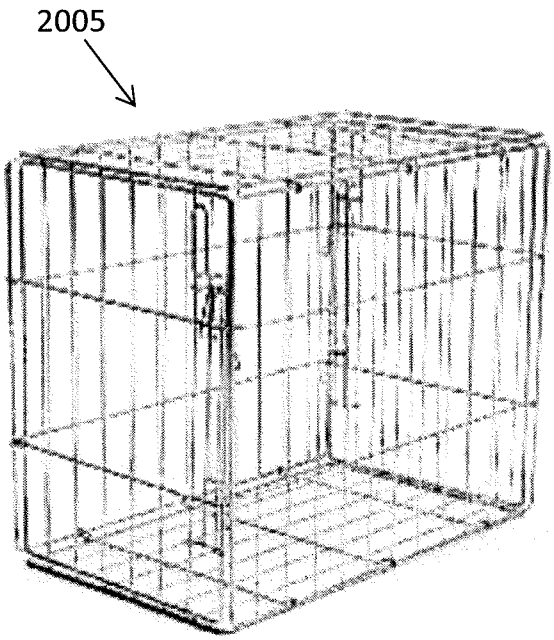


FIG. 20

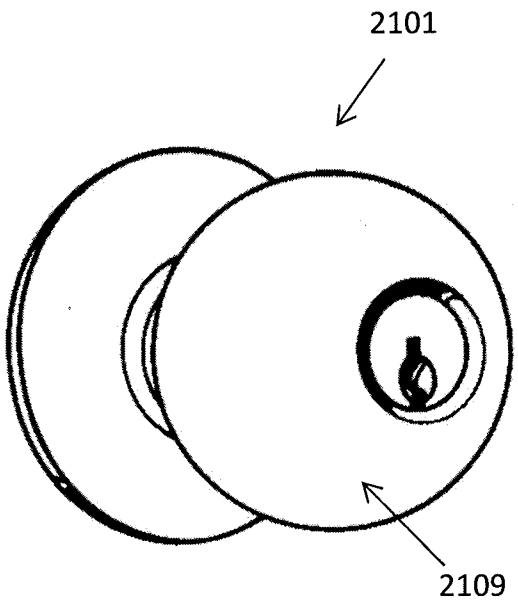


FIG. 21

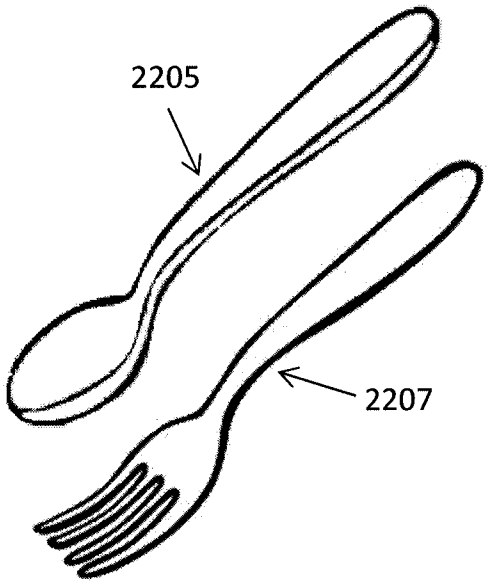


FIG. 22A

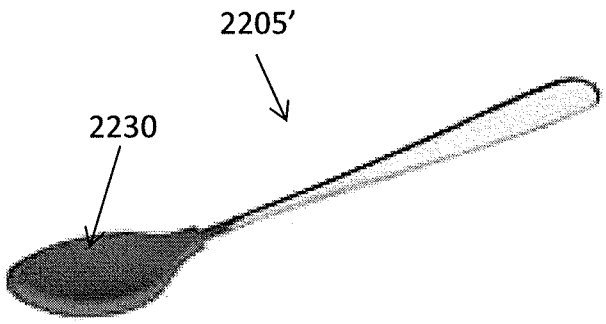


FIG. 22B

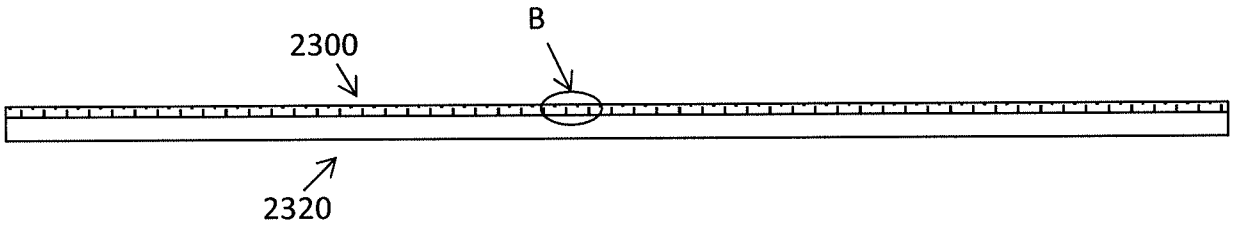


FIG. 23A

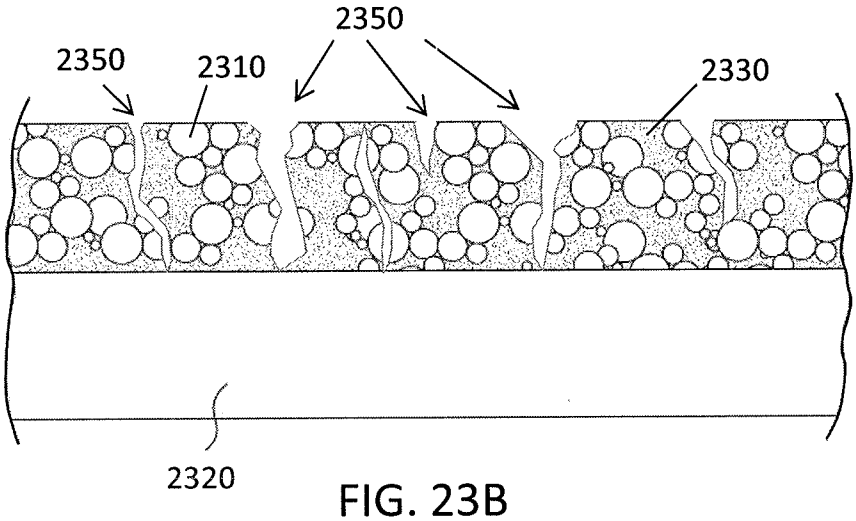


FIG. 23B

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US 15/32131

Box No. II Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This international search report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:

2. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they relate to parts of the international application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful international search can be carried out, specifically:

3. ☐ Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box No. III Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:
This application contains the following inventions or groups of inventions which are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1. In order for all inventions to be examined, the appropriate additional examination fees must be paid.

Group I: Claims 1-23, drawn to an apparatus comprising coating further comprising a mixture of between about 25% and 75% by volume of an anodic metal, and between about 25% to 75% by volume of a cathodic metal.

Group II: Claims 24-45, drawn to an apparatus inserted/implanted into a subject's body.

Group III: Claims 46-71, drawn to an apparatus comprising filaments.

-- Please See Supplemental Box --

1. ☒ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers all searchable claims.

2. ☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying additional fees, this Authority did not invite payment of additional fees.

3. ☐ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this international search report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:

4. ☐ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this international search report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

Remark on Protest

☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest and, where applicable, the payment of a protest fee.

☐ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest but the applicable protest fee was not paid within the time limit specified in the invitation.

☒ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US 15/32131

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC(8) - A61F 2/02, A61L 15/18, B32B 3/02, H01B 1/02 (2015.01)
CPC - A01N 1/0215, A01N 2300/00, A61F 2250/0043, A61L 2300/104, A61L 2420/04, B32B 2535/00
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC(8)- A61F 2/02, A61L 15/18, B32B 3/02, H01B 1/02 (2015.01);
CPC- A01N 1/0215, A01N 2300/00, A61F 2250/0043, A61L 2300/104, A61L 2420/04, B32B 2535/00

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched
USPC- 252/500, 252/514, 427/2.14, 427/125, 427/321, 427/538, 428/114, 438/364, 438/400, 623/16.11, 977/701;
Patents and NPL (classification, keyword; search terms below)

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
Pub West (US EP JP WO), Pat Base (AU BE BR CA CH CN DE DK EP ES FI FR GB IN JP KR SE TH TW US WO), Google Patent, Google Scholar, Free Patents Online; search terms: release, deliver, bioabsorb, galvanize, antimicrobial, antibacterial, antibiotic, biocide, zinc, silver, copper, palladium, platinum, gold, coat, implant, joint, wound, stent...

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	US 2013/0245783 A1 (THULL) 19 September 2013 (19.09.2013), Fig. 4; para [0002], [0006]-[0011], [0013], [0015], [0019], [0031]-[0035], [0041]	1-71
Y	US 2010/0326835 A1 (SPEITLING) 30 December 2010 (30.12.2010), para [0021], [0046], [0067]-[0071]	1-71
Y	US 5,695,857 A (BURRELL et al.) 09 December 1997 (09.12.1997), col 3, ln 18 to col 11, ln 55	12, 13
Y	US 2007/0168012 A1 (RAGHEB et al.) 19 July 2007 (19.07.2007), para [0011], [0025], [0053], [0062], [0076]	15, 53, 64
Y	US 2012/0251592 A1 (NEFF et al.) 04 October 2012 (04.10.2012), para [0020]-[0177]	1-71
Y	US 2012/0148633 A1 (SUN et al.) 14 June 2012 (14.06.2012), para [0004]-[0272]	1-71
Y	US 2012/0089232 A1 (CHOI et al.) 12 April 2012 (12.04.2012), para [0006]-[0146]	1-71

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. ☐

* Special categories of cited documents:
"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date
"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed
"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search report
07 September 2015 (07.09.2015)	29 SEP 2015
Name and mailing address of the ISA/US Mail Stop PCT, Attn: ISA/US, Commissioner for Patents P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450 Facsimile No. 571-273-8300	Authorized officer: Lee W. Young PCT Helpdesk: 571-272-4300 PCT OSP: 571-272-7774

Form PCT/ISA/210 (second sheet) (January 2015)

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US 15/32131

Continued from Box No. III, Observations where unity of invention is lacking,

Special Technical Features

The inventions listed as Groups I, II, and III do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, they lack the same or corresponding special technical features for the following reasons:

Groups II and III do not require a mixture of between about 25% and 75% by volume of an anodic metal, and between about 25% to 75% by volume of a cathodic metal, as required by Group I.

Groups I and III do not require an apparatus inserted/implanted into a subject's body, as required by Group II.

Groups I and II do not require an apparatus comprising coated filaments that are flexible, as required by Group III.

Group I does not require a bioabsorbable apparatus; non-uniform mixture of the anodic and cathodic metals; and zinc and silver are at least about 30 percent by volume of the coating, as required by Groups II and III.

Shared Common Features

The only feature shared by Groups I, II, and III that would otherwise unify the groups is a coating on the substrate comprising an anodic metal that is co-deposited with a cathodic metal on the substrate to form a mixture of the anodic and cathodic metals, wherein the coating comprises a plurality of microregions or microdomains of anodic metal in a matrix of cathodic metal or a plurality of microregions or microdomains of cathodic metal in a matrix of anodic metal, the microregions or microdomains forming a continuous path of interconnected veins of anodic metal within the matrix of cathodic metal or a continuous path of interconnected veins of cathodic metal within the matrix of anodic metal, wherein the continuous path extends from an outer surface of the coating to the substrate; further wherein the anodic metal is galvanically released as antimicrobial ions and inserted into a subject. However, this shared technical feature does not represent a contribution over prior art, because the shared technical feature is anticipated by US 2012/0089232 A1 to Choi, et al. (hereinafter 'Choi').

Choi discloses a coating on the substrate comprising an anodic metal that is co-deposited with a cathodic metal on the substrate to form a mixture of the anodic and cathodic metals (para [0032], [0035], [0038]), wherein the coating comprises a plurality of microregions or microdomains of anodic metal in a matrix of cathodic metal or a plurality of microregions or microdomains of cathodic metal in a matrix of anodic metal, the microregions or microdomains forming a continuous path of interconnected veins of anodic metal within the matrix of cathodic metal or a continuous path of interconnected veins of cathodic metal within the matrix of anodic metal, wherein the continuous path extends from an outer surface of the coating to the substrate (Fig. 2; para [0027], [0036], [0126]; surface of mesh strands comprising galvanic aggregates and also bead-like particles... wherein the particulates comprise a first metal and coated with a second metal.);
further wherein the anodic metal is galvanically released as antimicrobial ions (para [0034], [0064], [0066]) and inserted into a subject (para [0062], [0088]).

The only feature shared by Groups II and III that would otherwise unify the groups is a bioabsorbable apparatus; non-uniform mixture of the anodic and cathodic metals; and zinc and silver are at least about 30 percent by volume of the coating. However, this shared technical feature does not represent a contribution over prior art, because the shared technical feature is anticipated by Choi. Choi discloses a bioabsorbable apparatus (para [0038], [0040]); non-uniform mixture (Fig. 2; para [0126]; surface of mesh strands comprising galvanic aggregates and also bead-like particles.) of the anodic and cathodic metals (para [0032]); and zinc and silver are at least about 30 percent by volume of the coating (para [0028], [0032]).

As the technical feature was known in the art at the time of the invention, this cannot be considered a special technical feature that would otherwise unify the groups.

Groups I, II, and III therefore lack unity under PCT Rule 13 because they do not share a same or corresponding special technical feature.