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(54) **ANASTOMOSIS SYSTEM WITH CUTTING ELEMENT**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A surgical tool for performing anastomosis between a graft vessel and a target vessel may include an anvil; a cutting element connected to the anvil; and an energy source connected to the cutting element, wherein the energy source is configured to deliver energy to the cutting element. A method for performing anastomosis with that tool may include placing an end of the graft vessel against a side of the target vessel; creating an opening in the wall of the target vessel at a first location; inserting an anvil through the opening from outside the wall of the target vessel into the lumen of the target vessel; creating an incision in the wall of the target vessel spaced apart from the first location; and connecting the graft vessel to the target vessel.

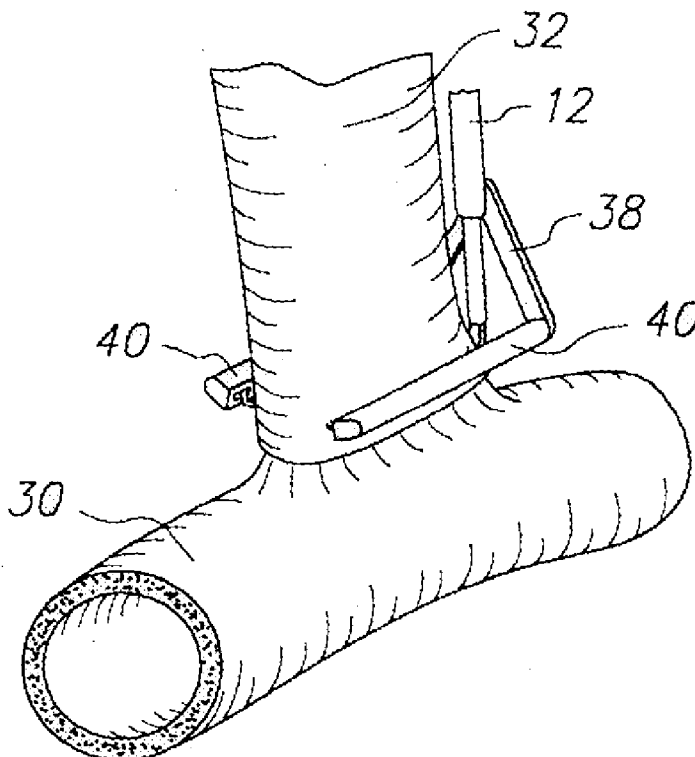
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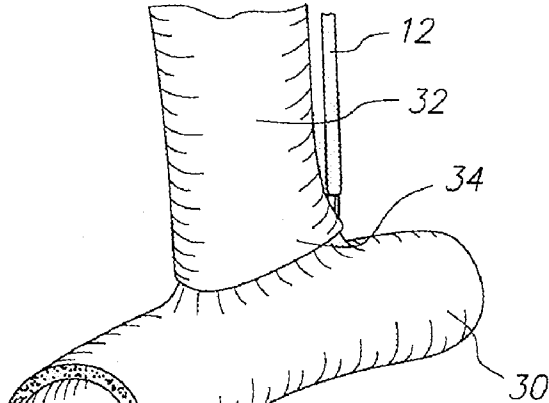
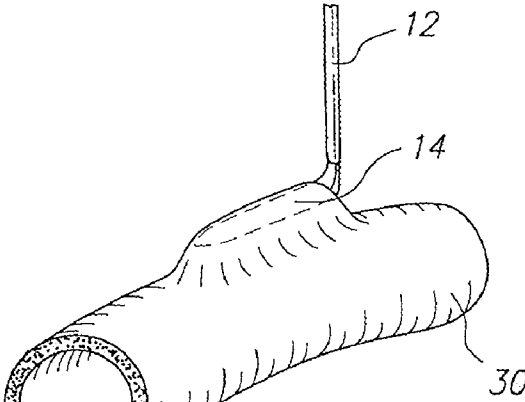
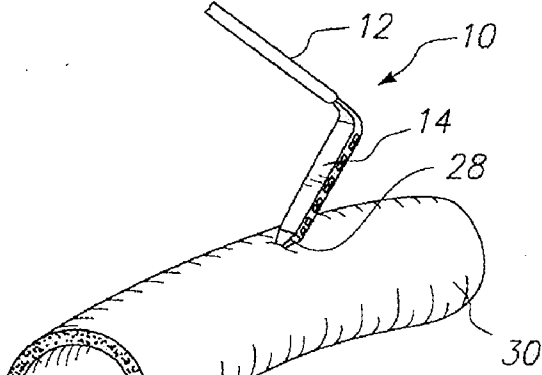
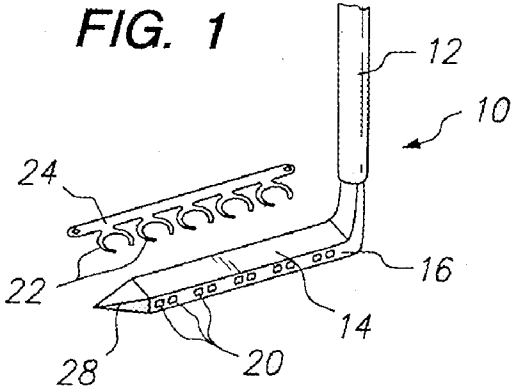
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(21) Appl. No.: **11/756,260**

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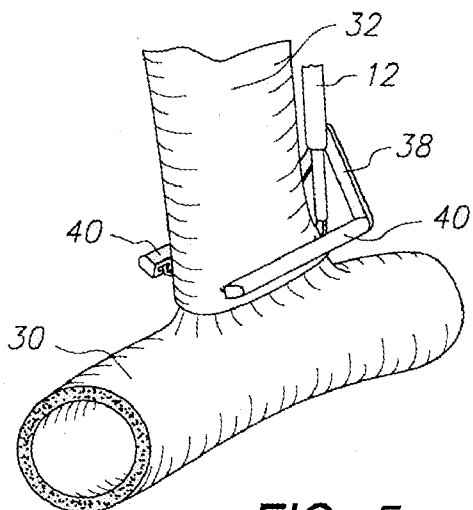


FIG. 5

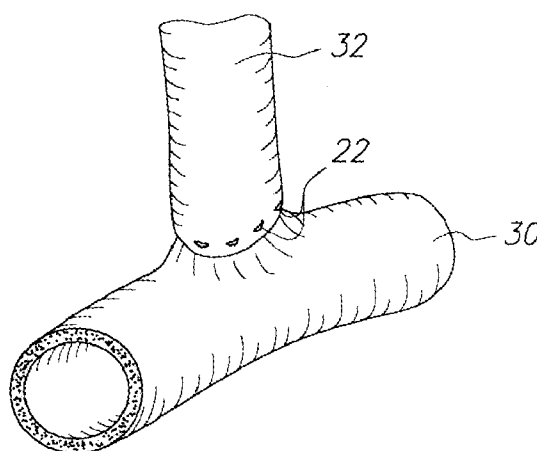


FIG. 6

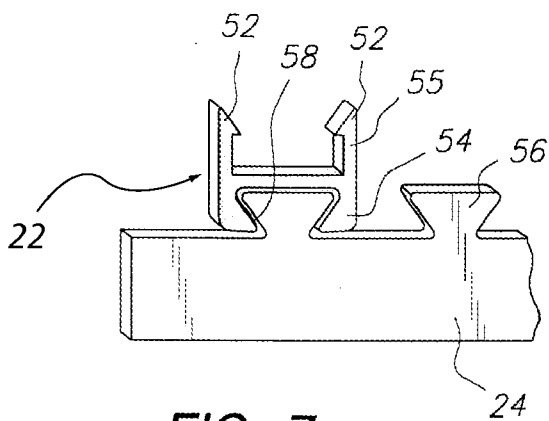


FIG. 7

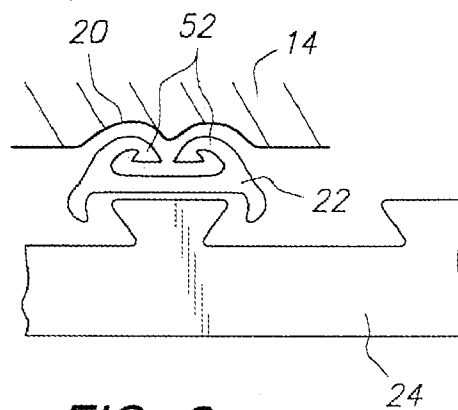


FIG. 8

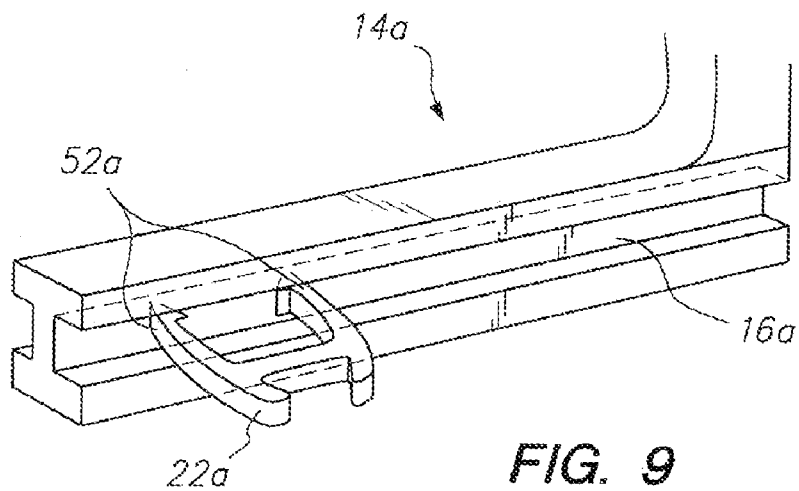


FIG. 9

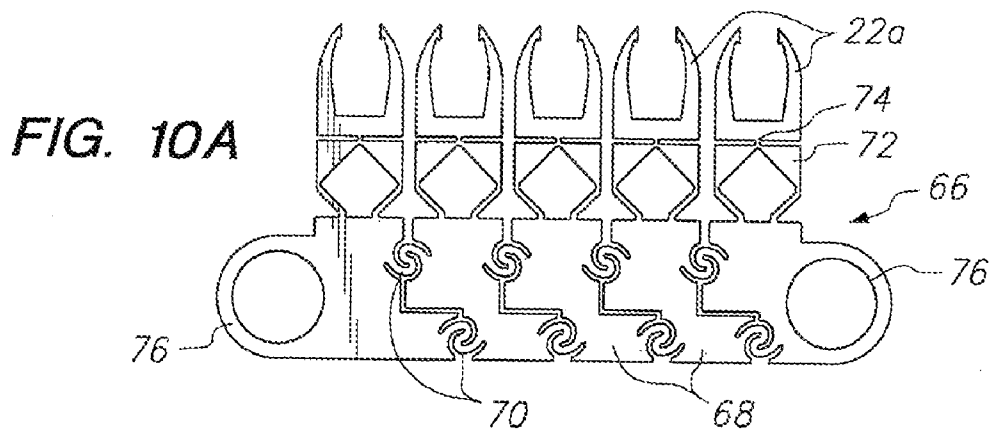


FIG. 10A

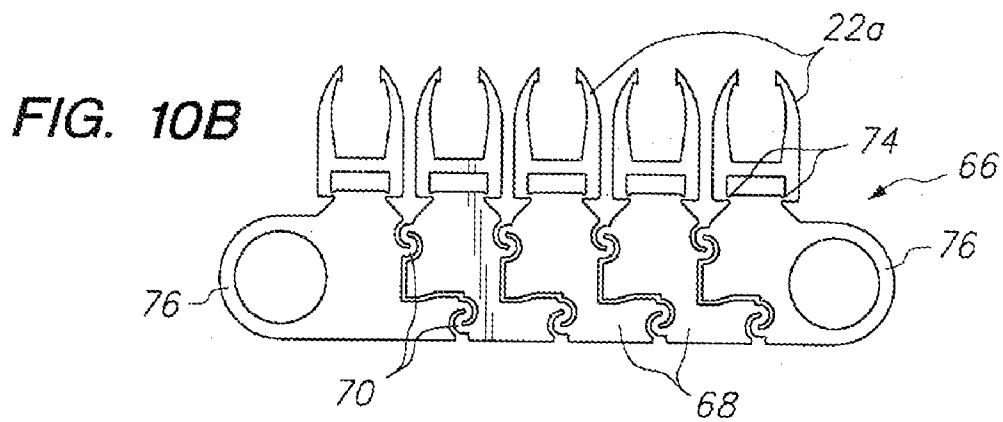
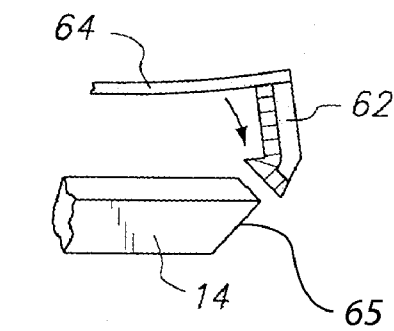
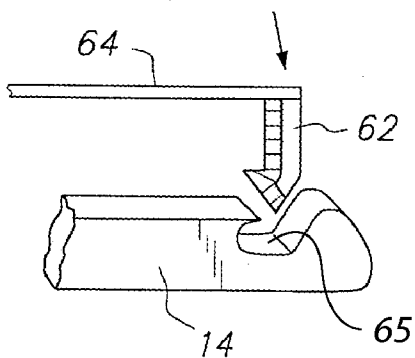
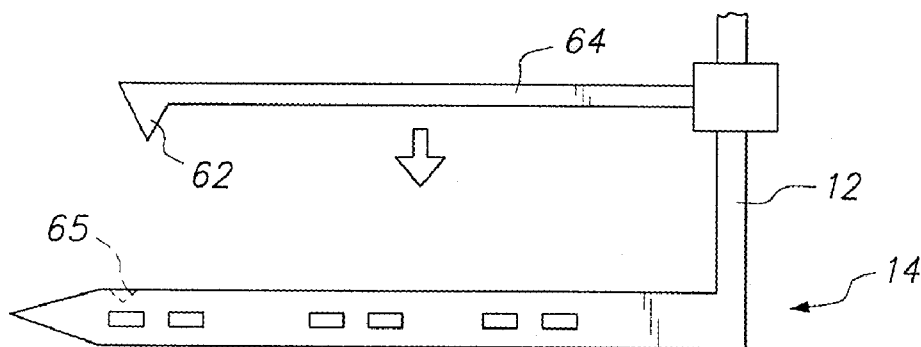
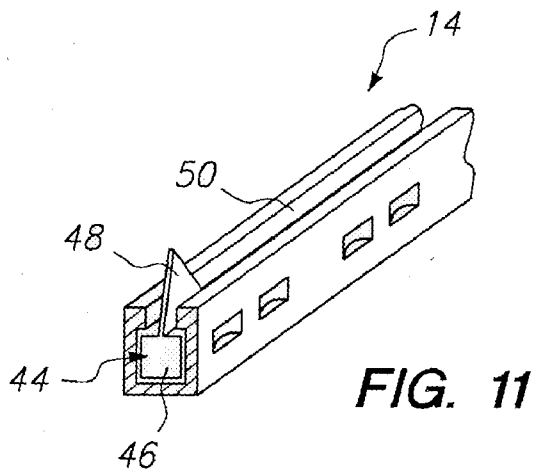


FIG. 10B



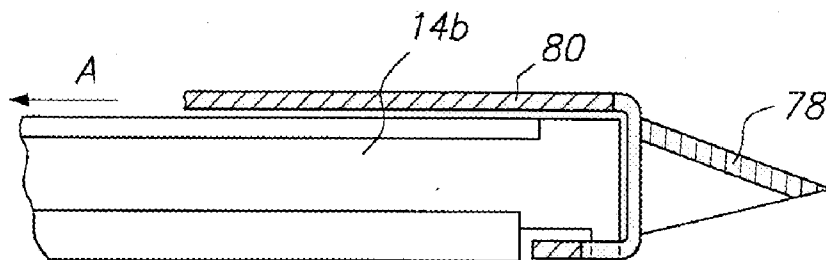


FIG. 13

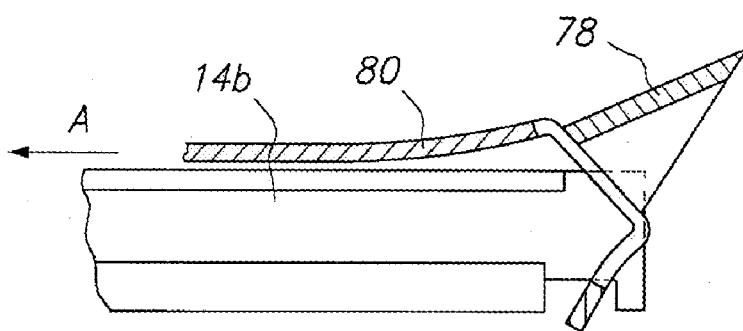


FIG. 14

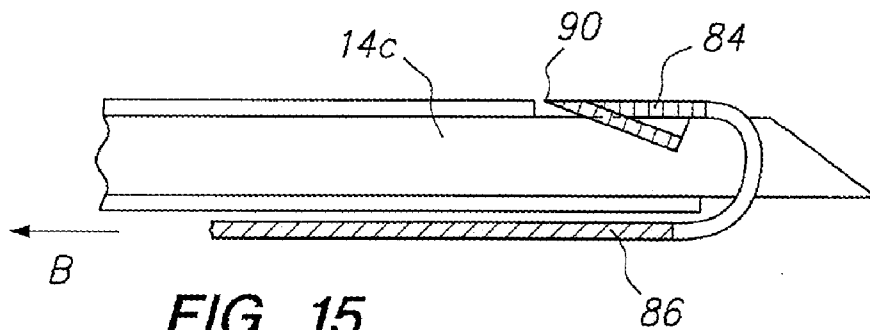


FIG. 15

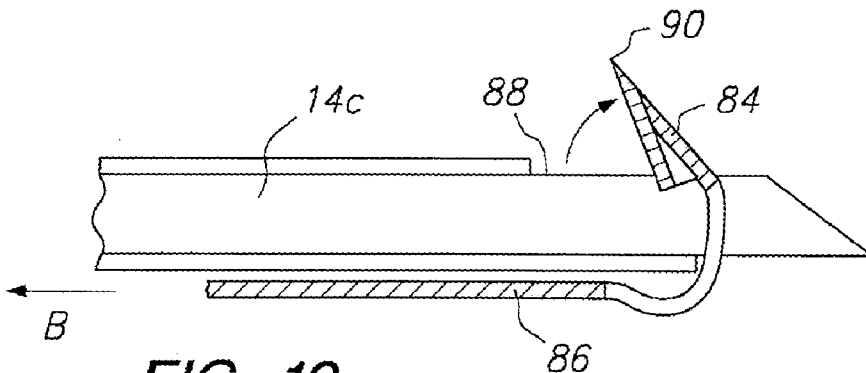


FIG. 16

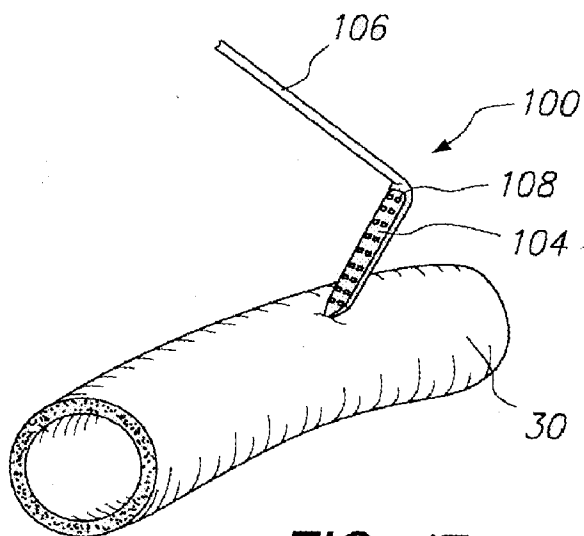


FIG. 17

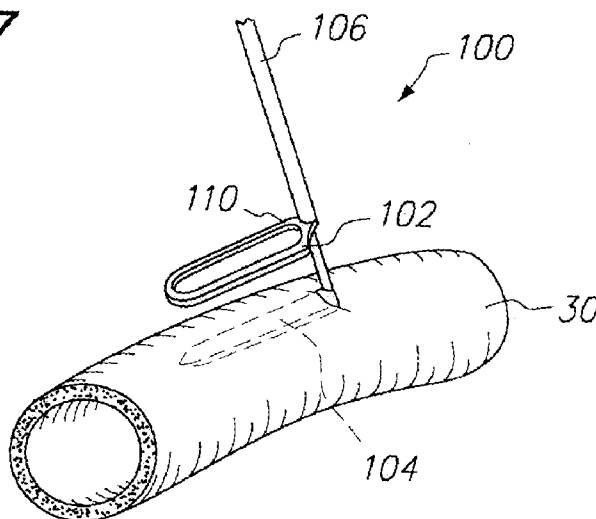


FIG. 18

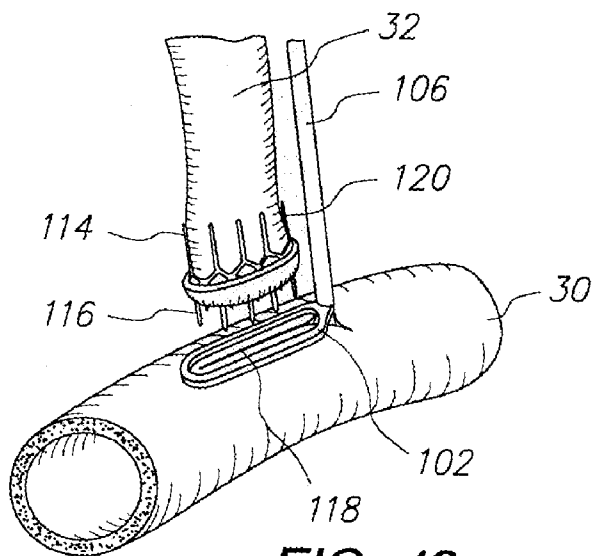


FIG. 19

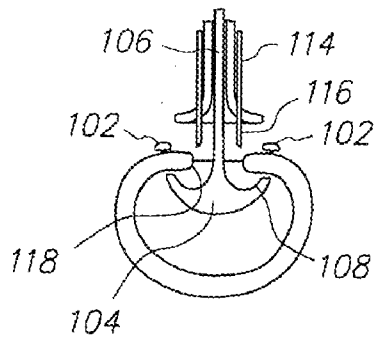


FIG. 20

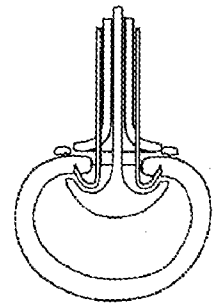


FIG. 21

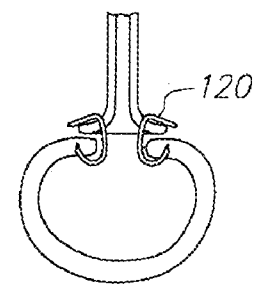


FIG. 22

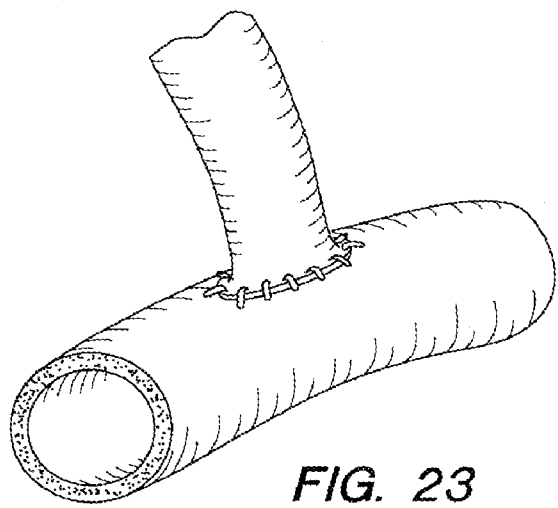


FIG. 23

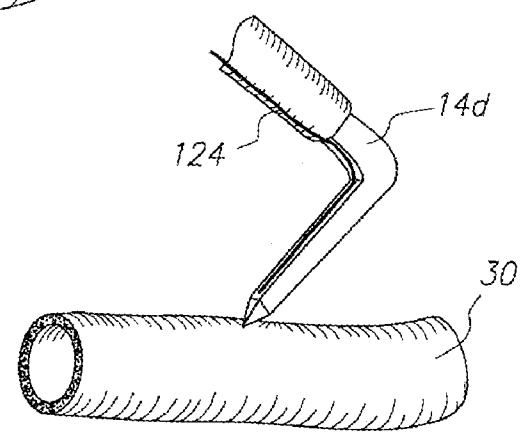


FIG. 24

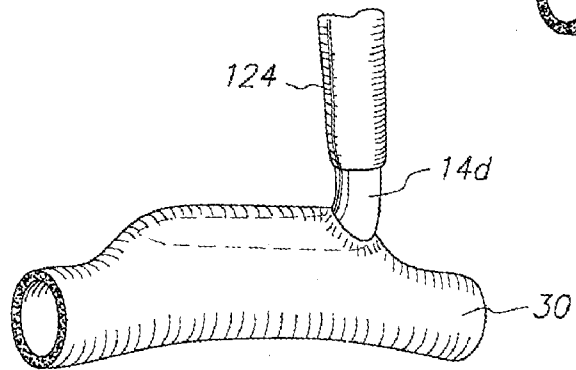


FIG. 25

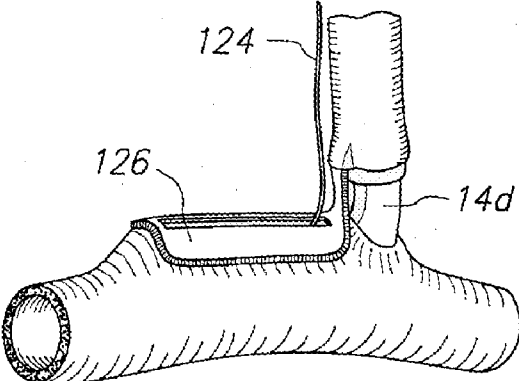


FIG. 26

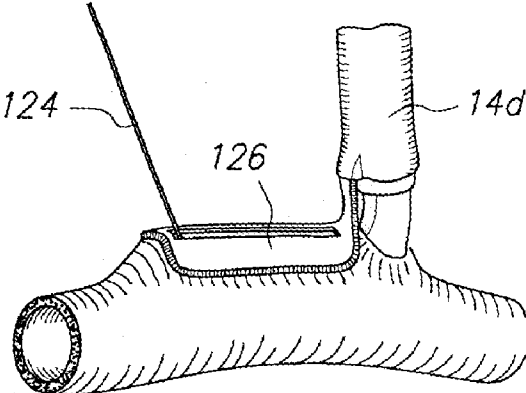


FIG. 27

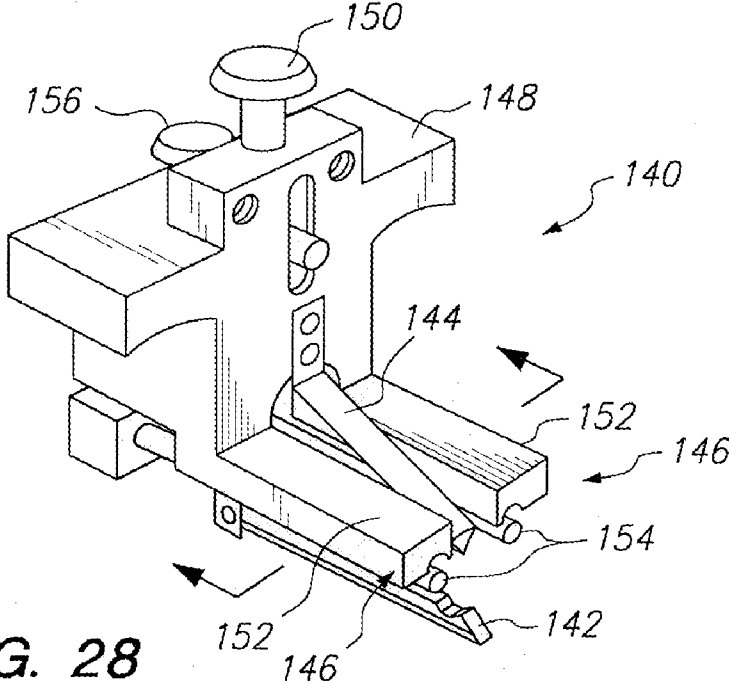


FIG. 28

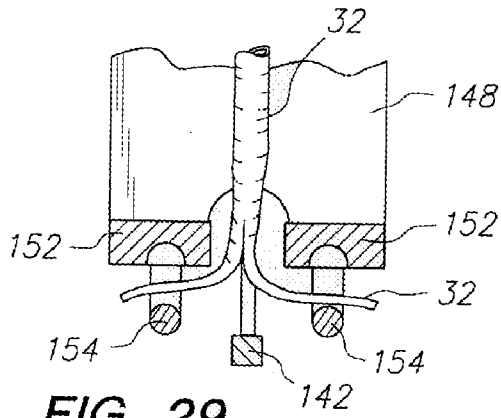


FIG. 29

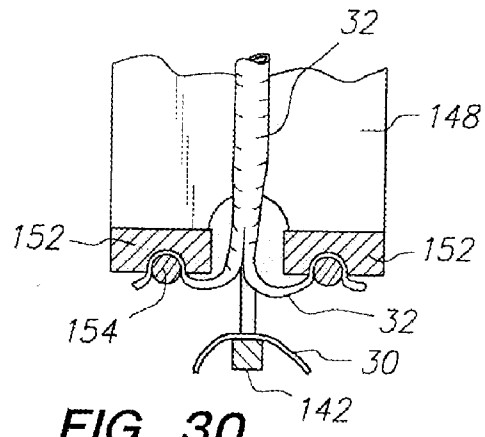


FIG. 30

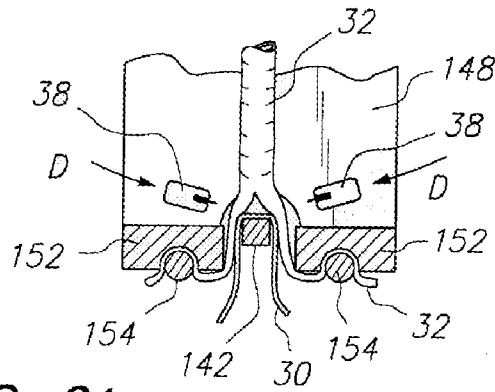


FIG. 31

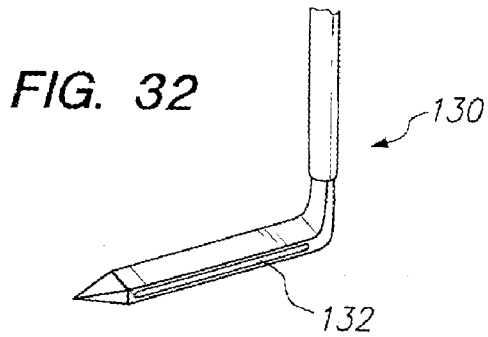


FIG. 32

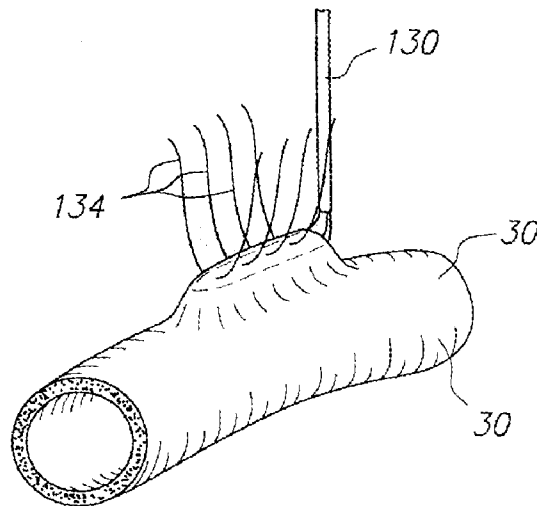


FIG. 33

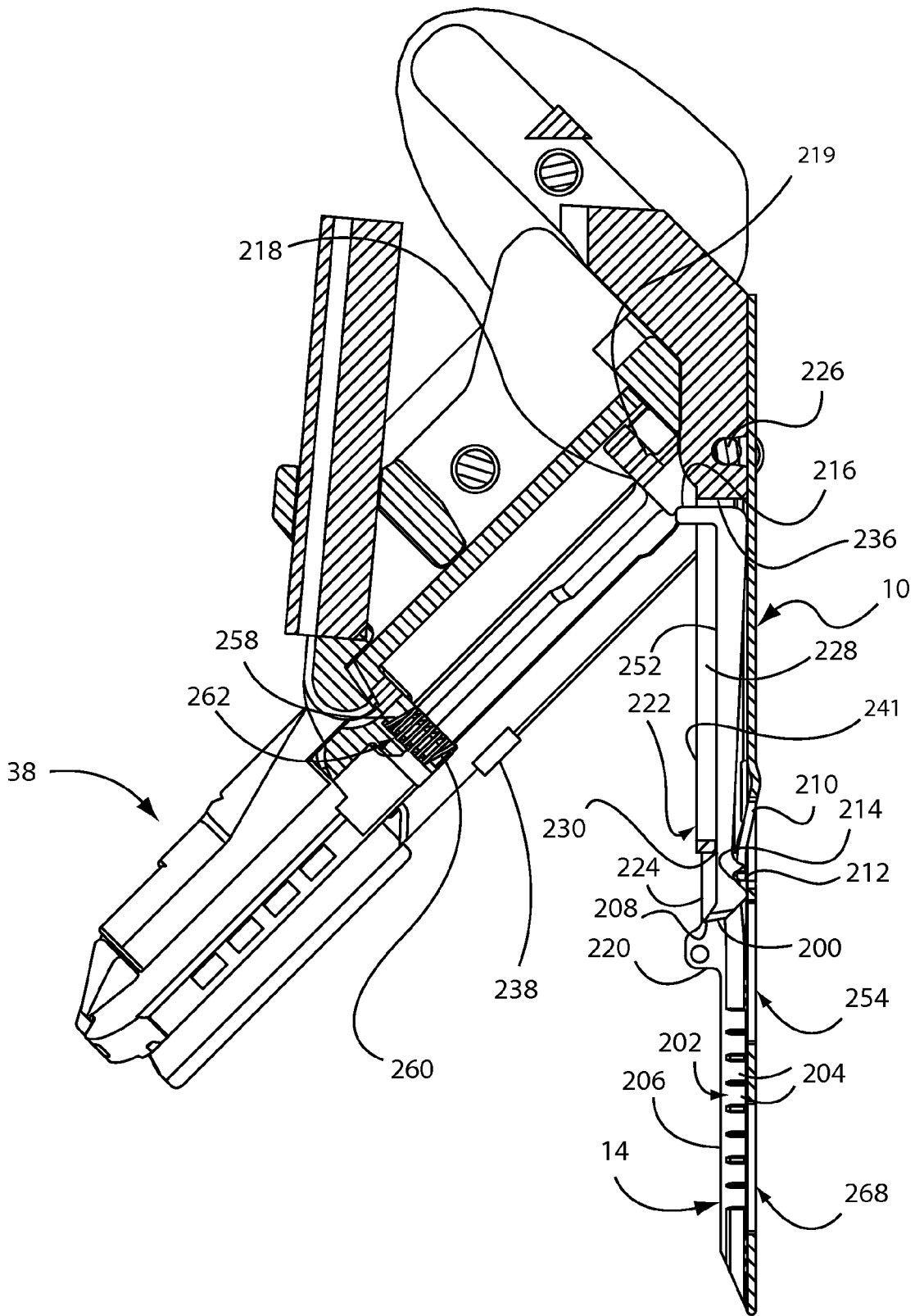


FIG. 34

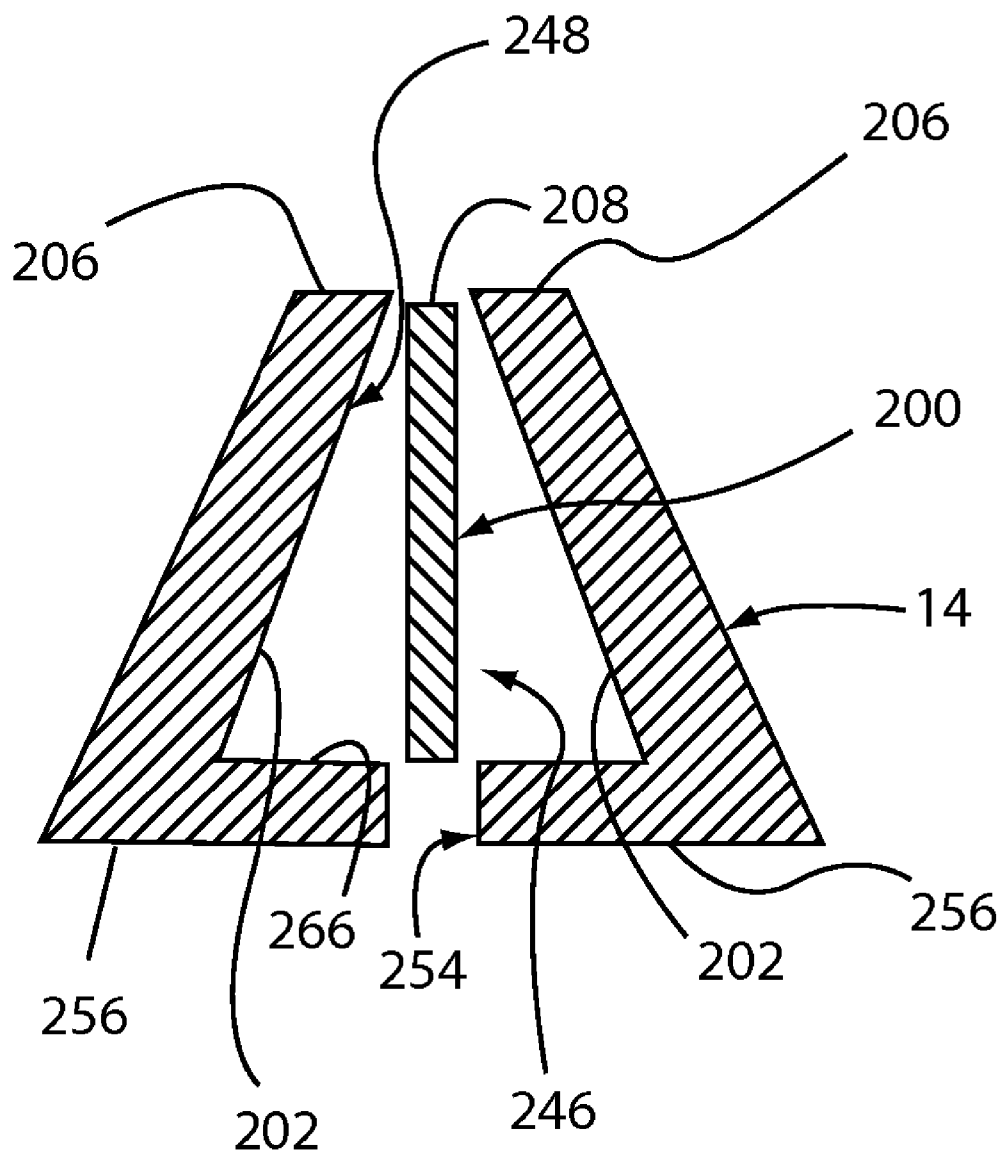


FIG. 35

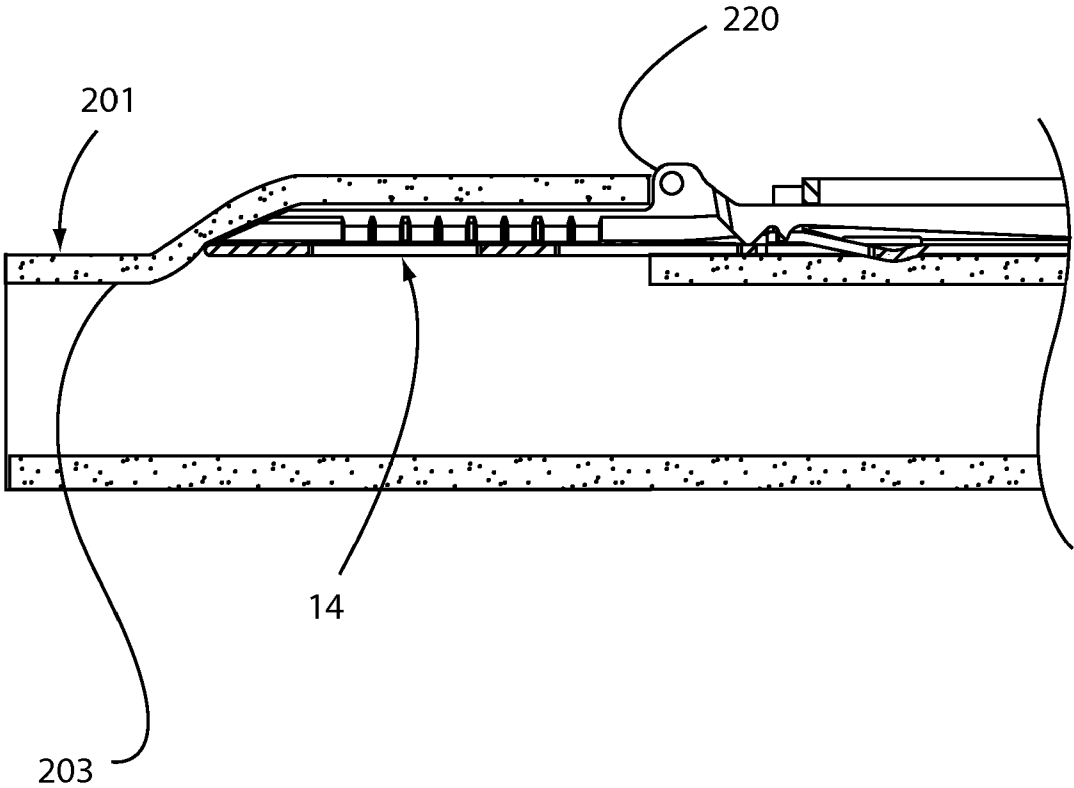


FIG. 36

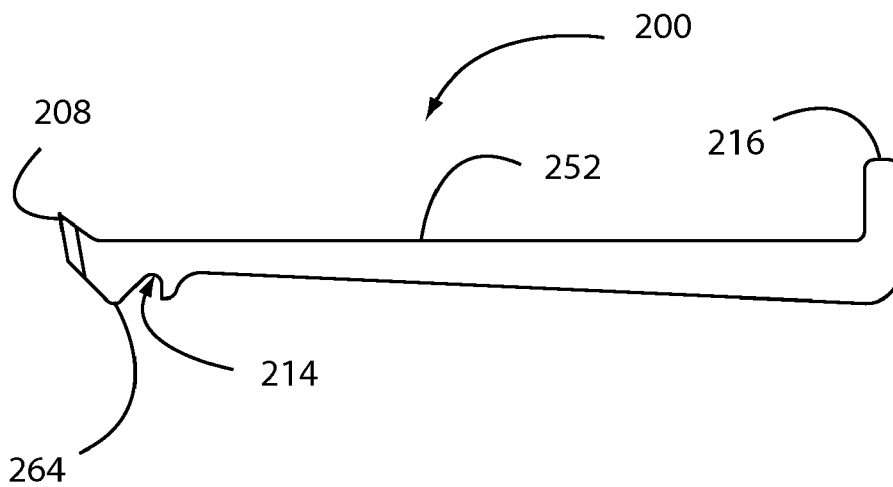


FIG. 37

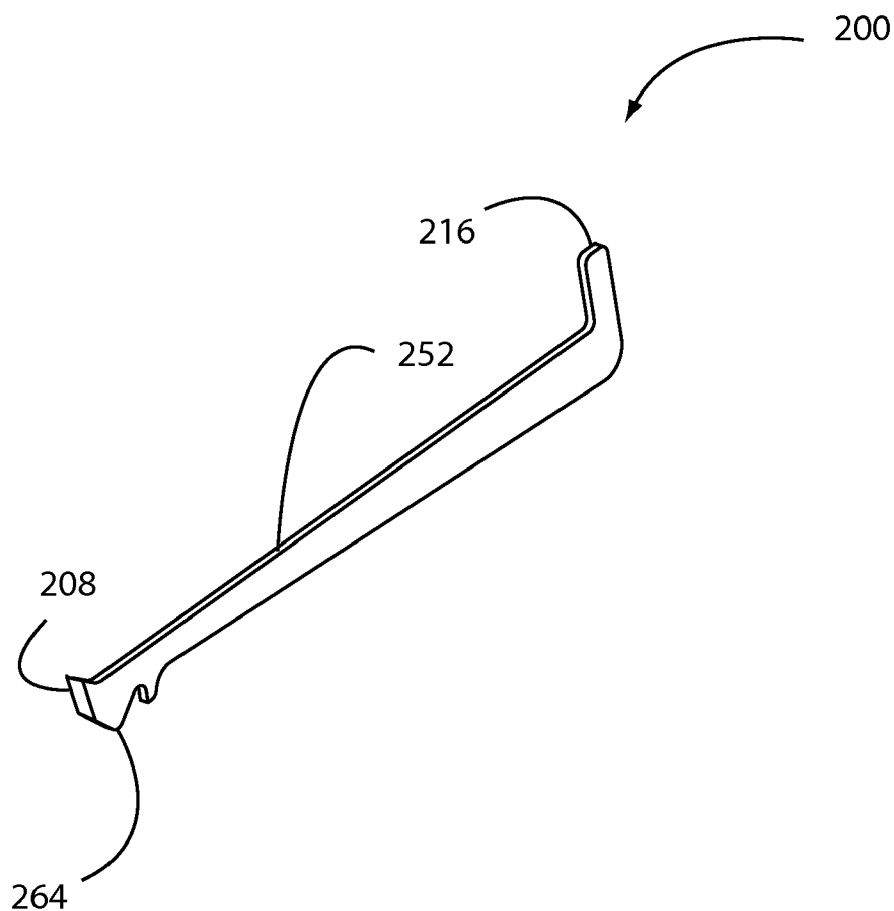


FIG. 38

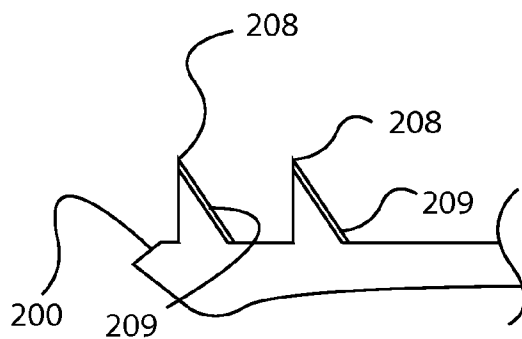


FIG. 39

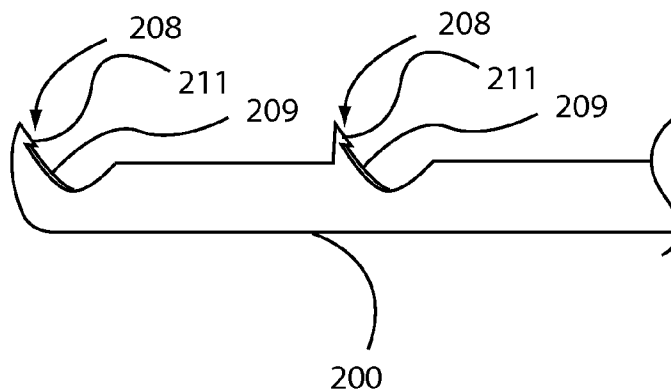


FIG. 40

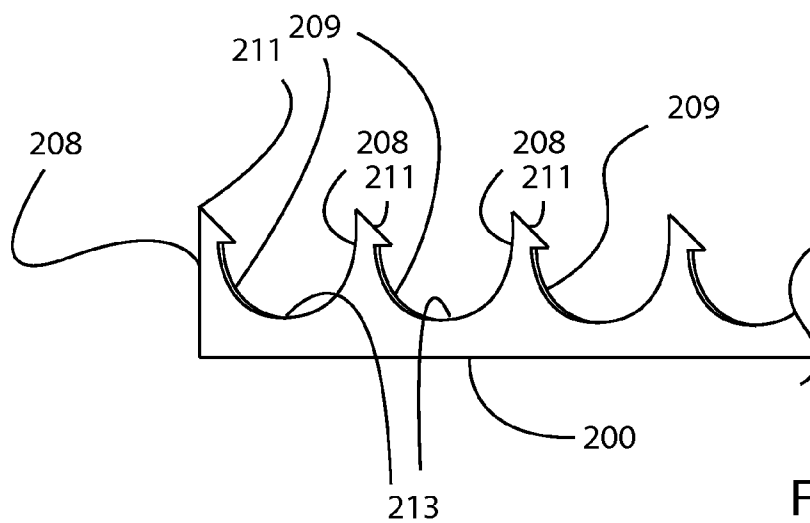


FIG. 41

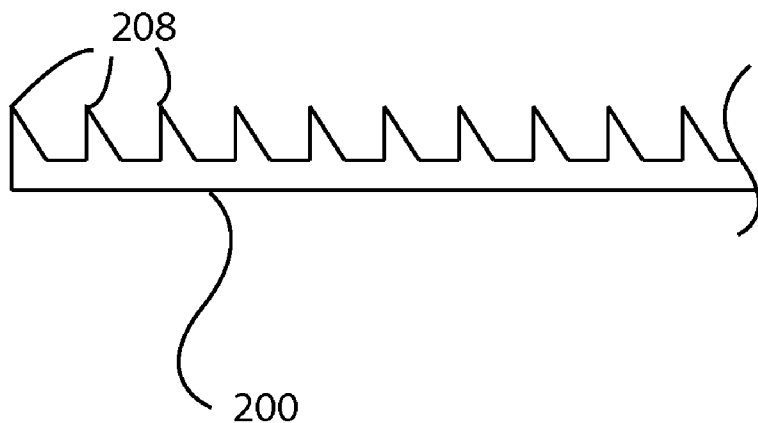


FIG. 42

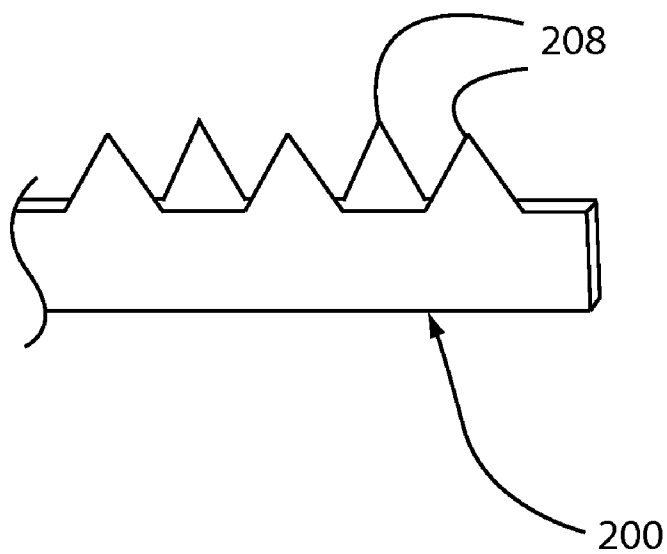


FIG. 43

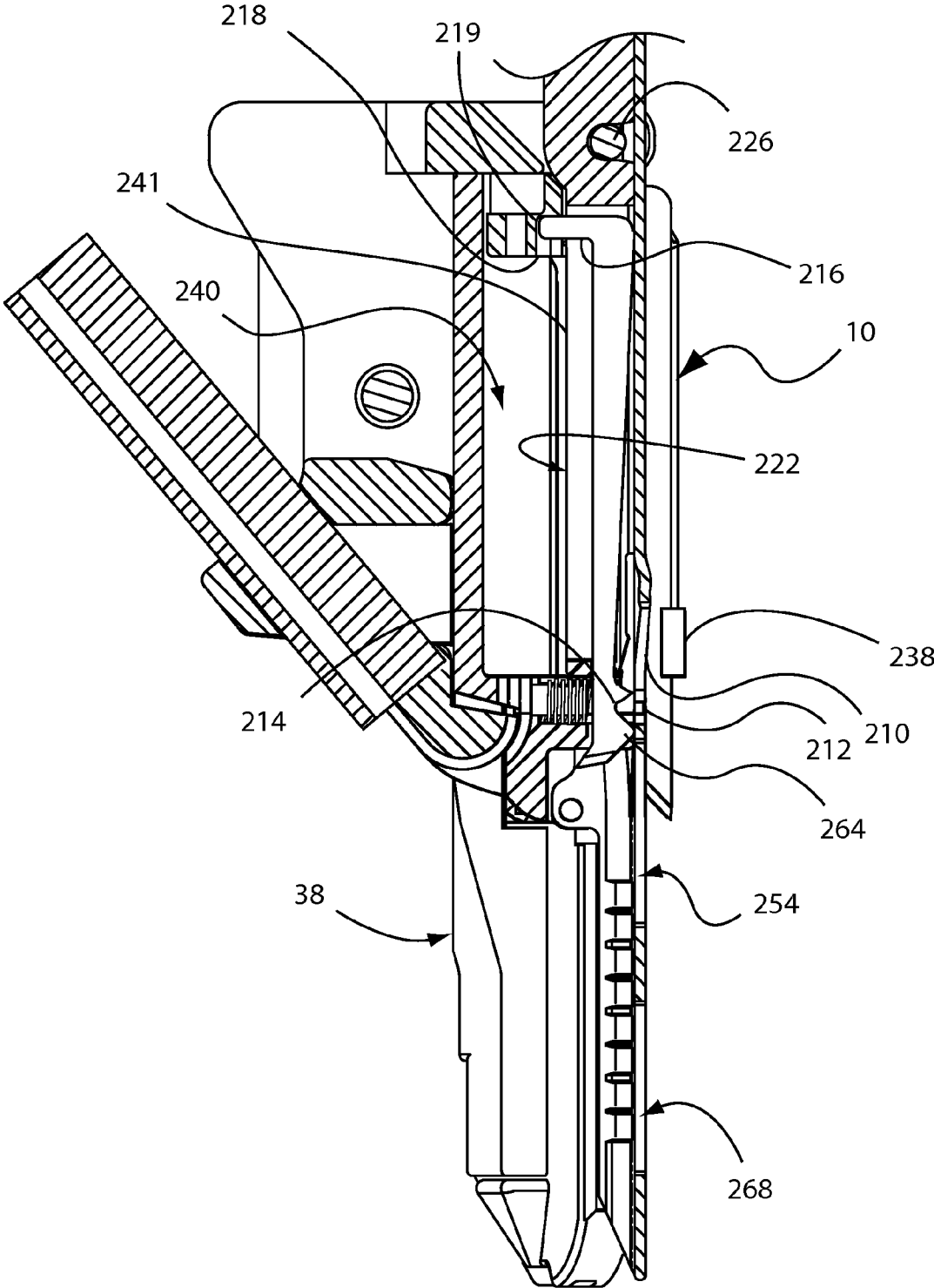


FIG. 44

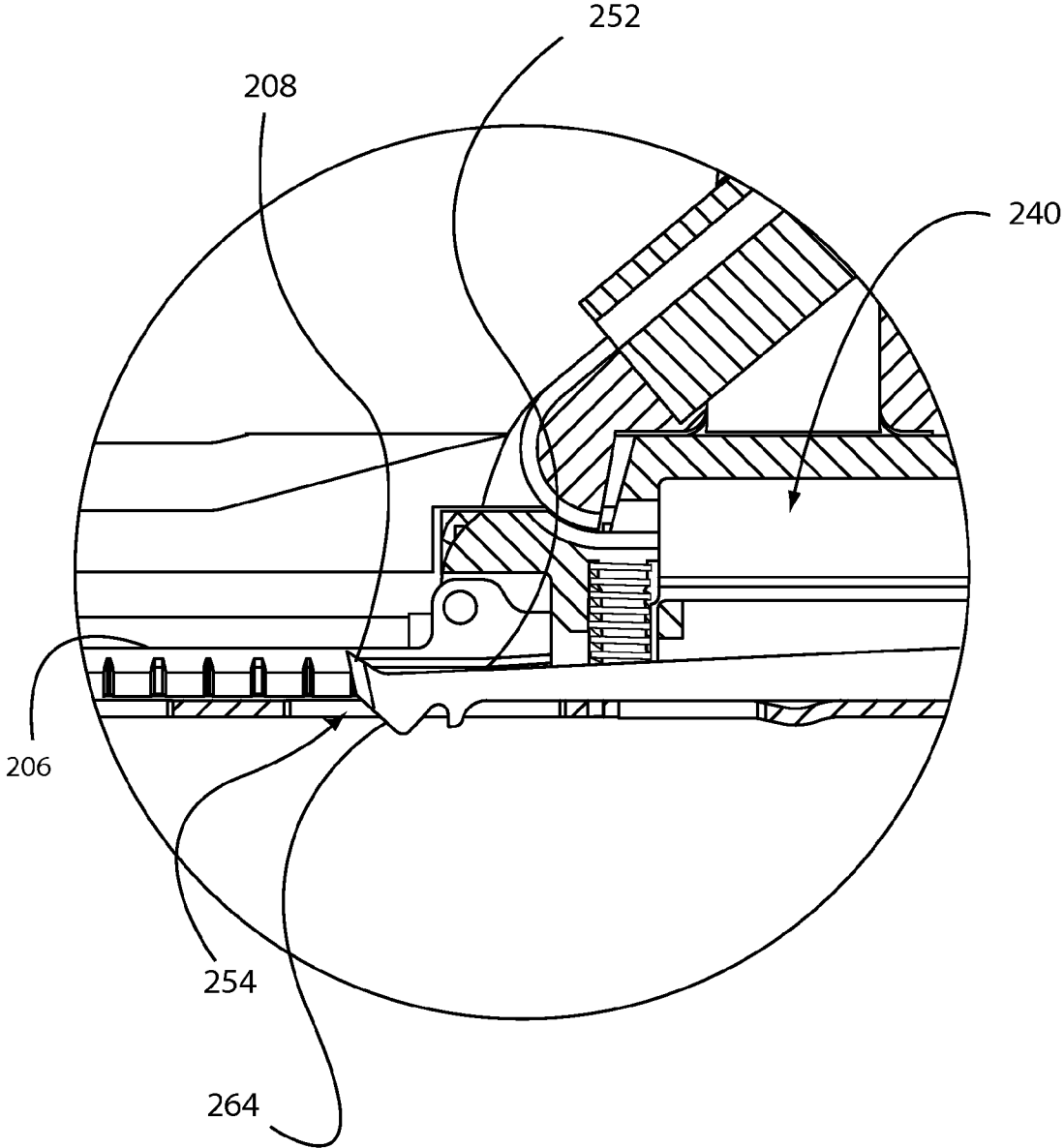


FIG. 45

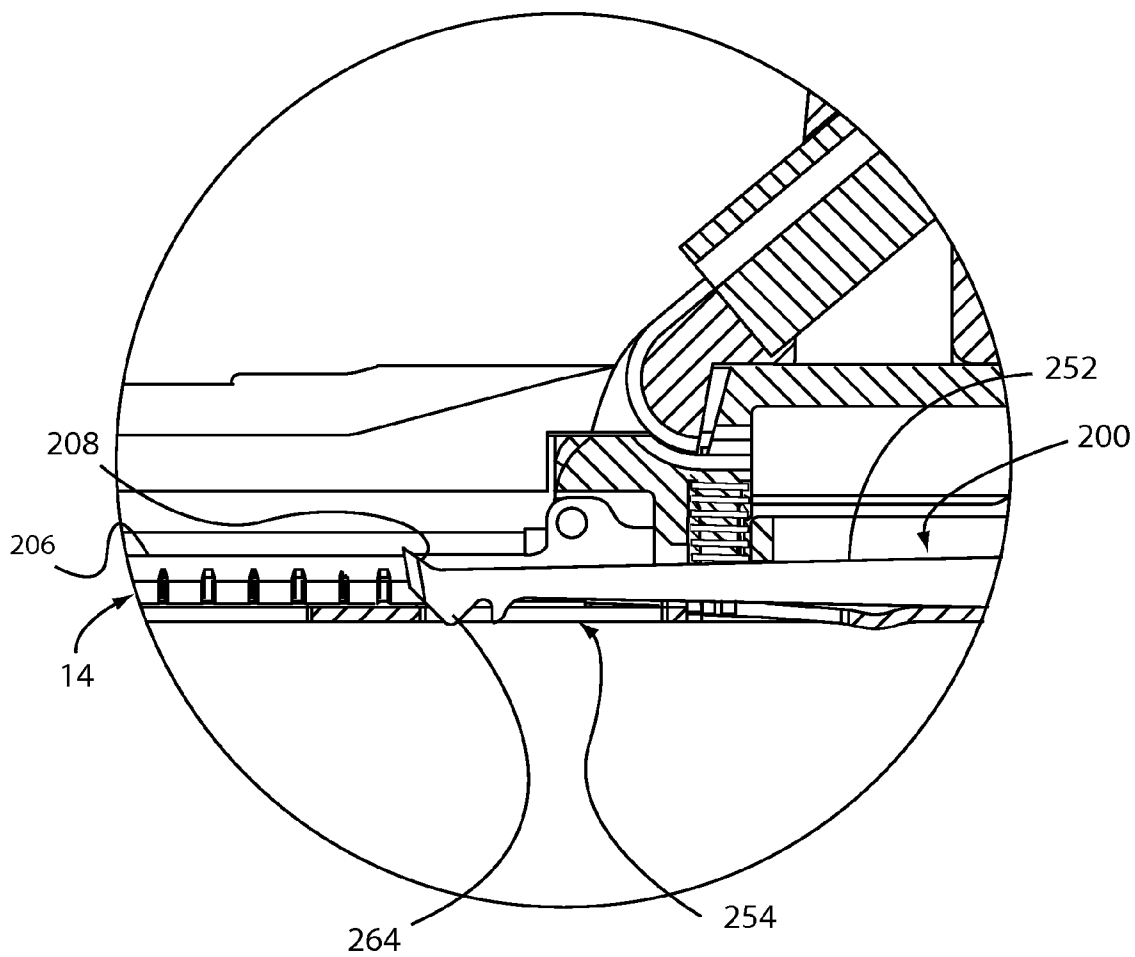


FIG. 46

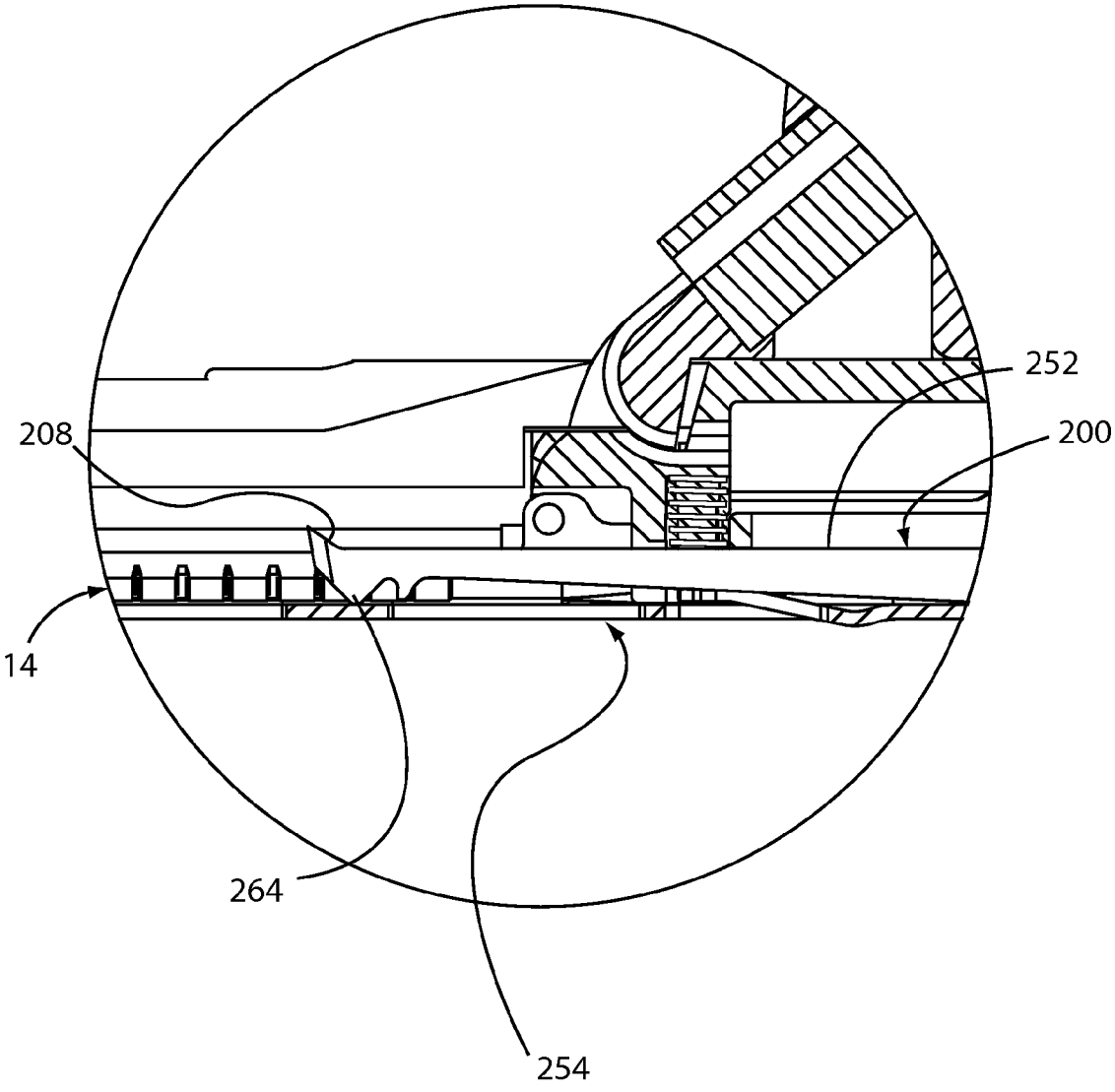


FIG. 47

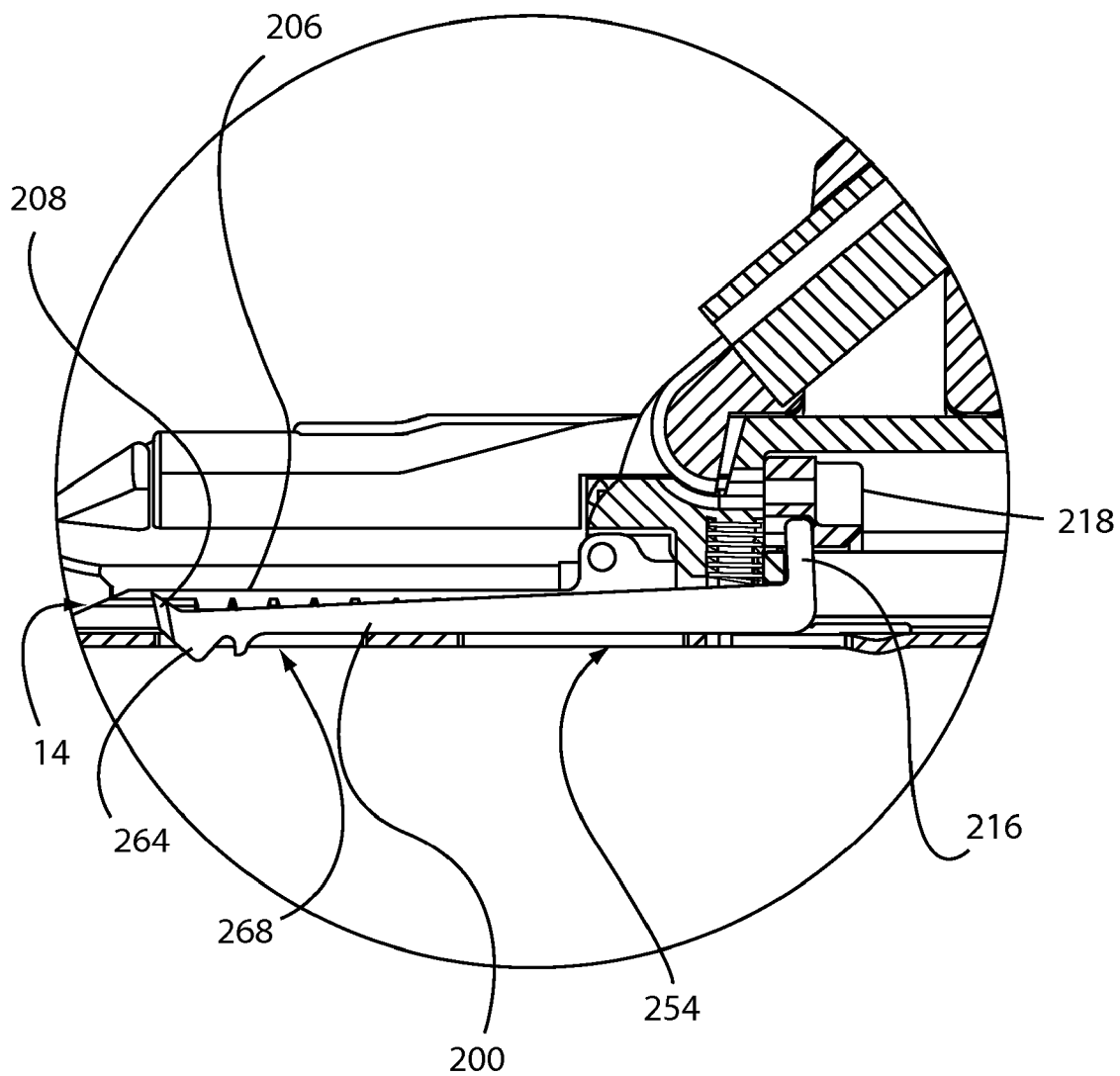


FIG. 48

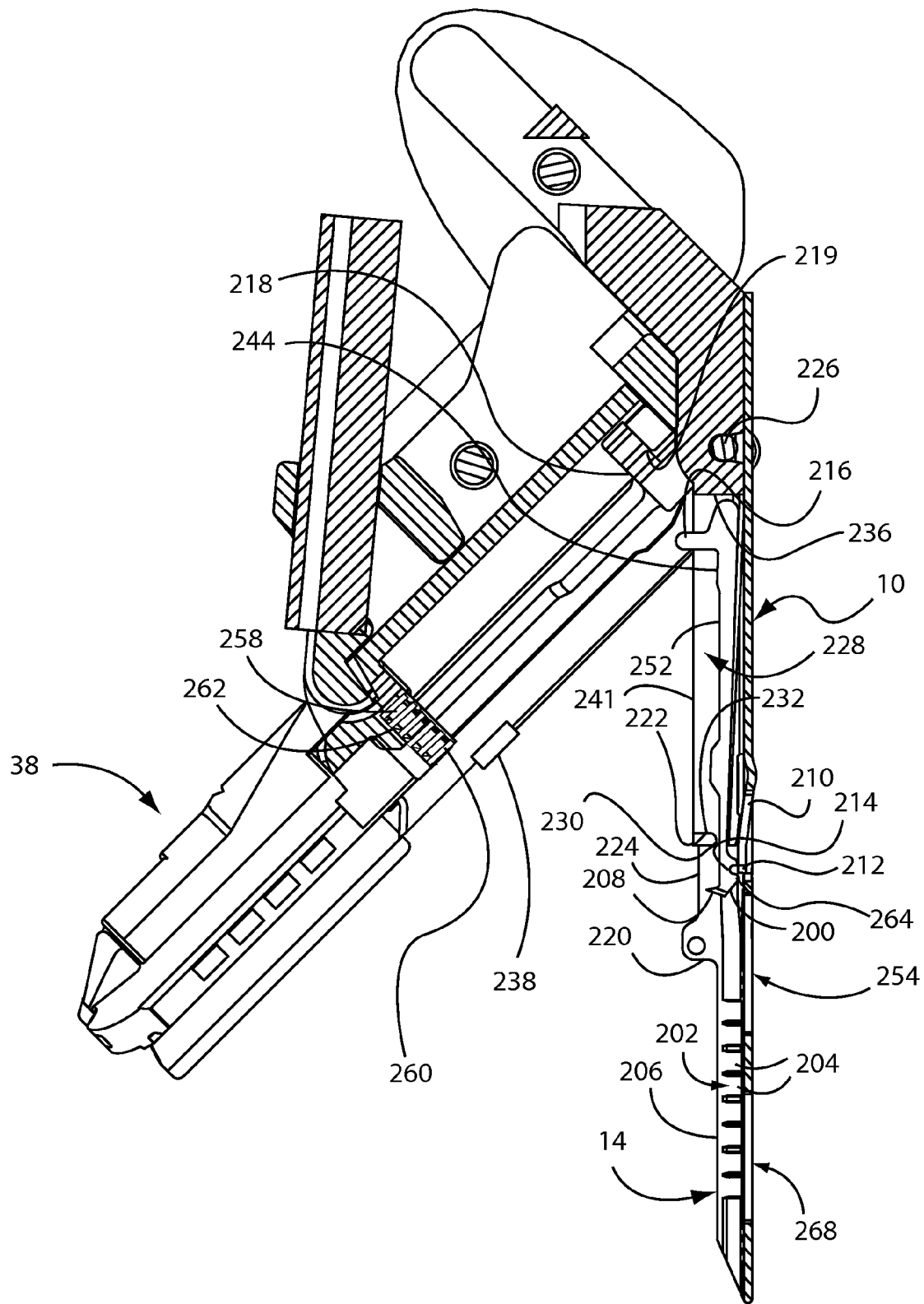


FIG. 49

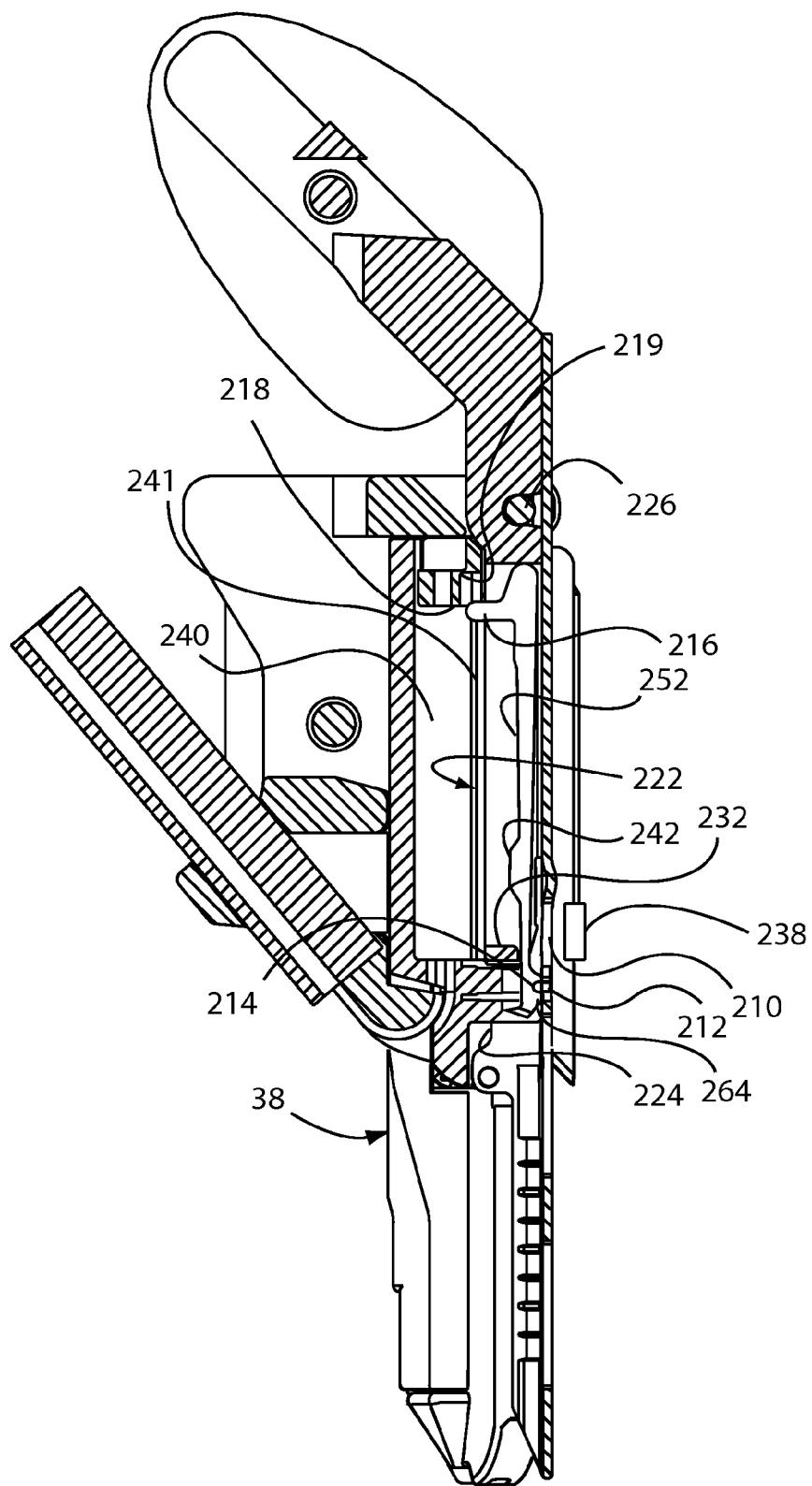


FIG. 50

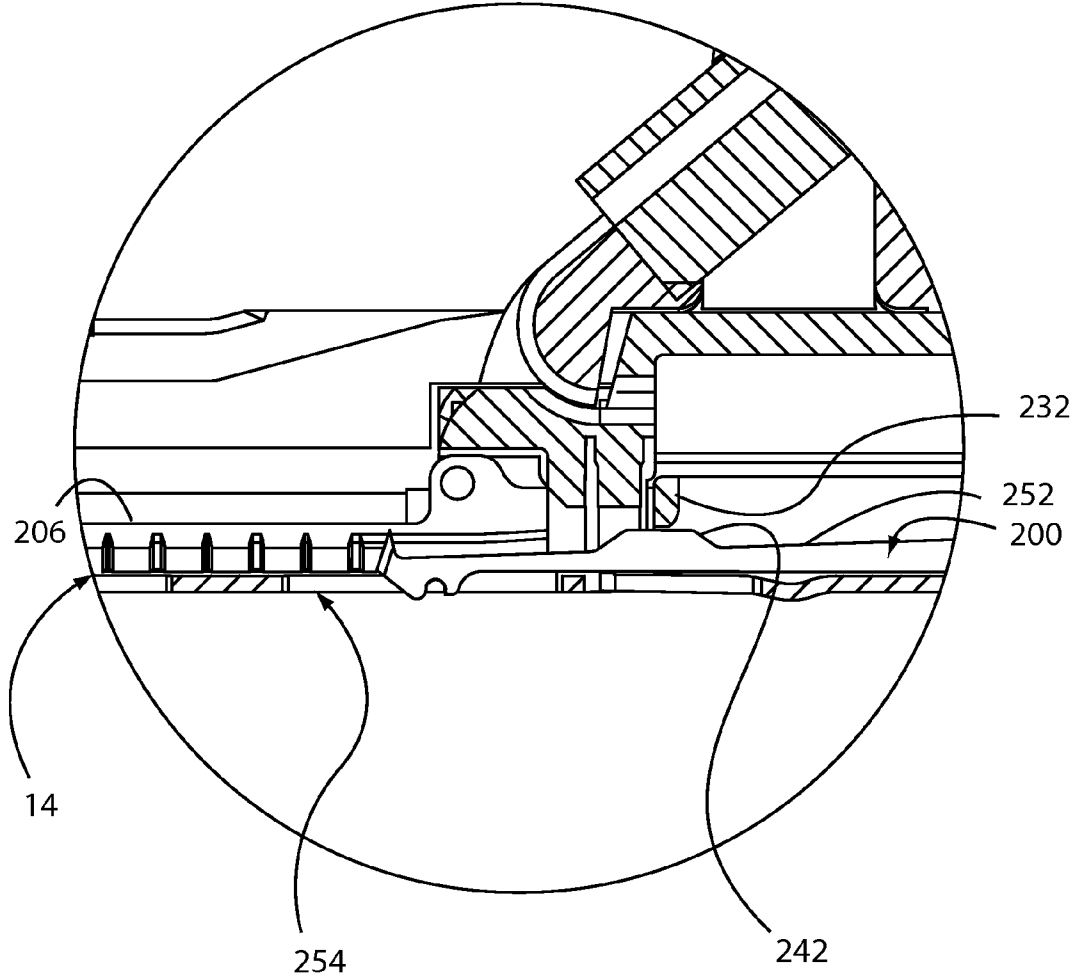


FIG. 51

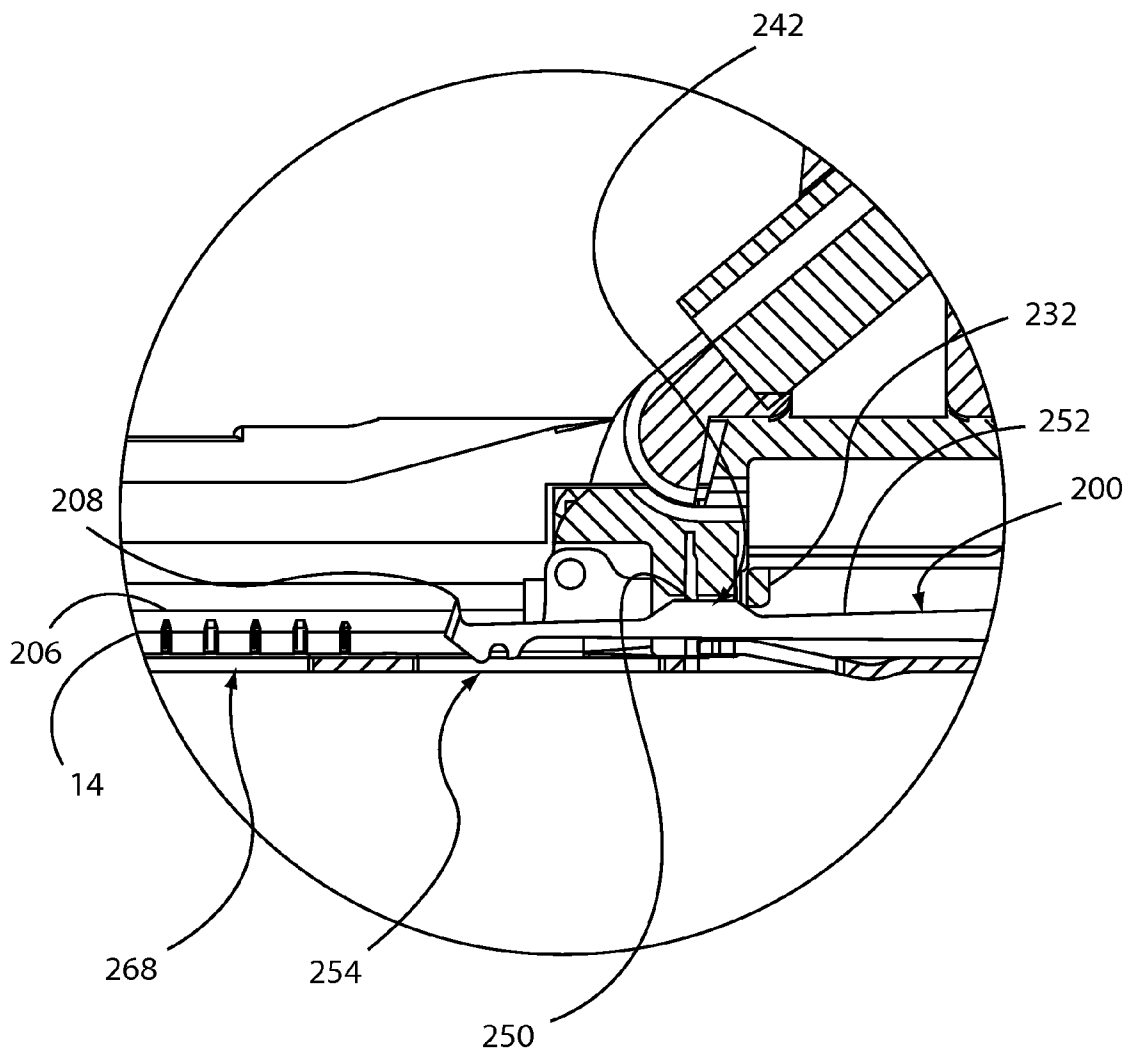


FIG. 52

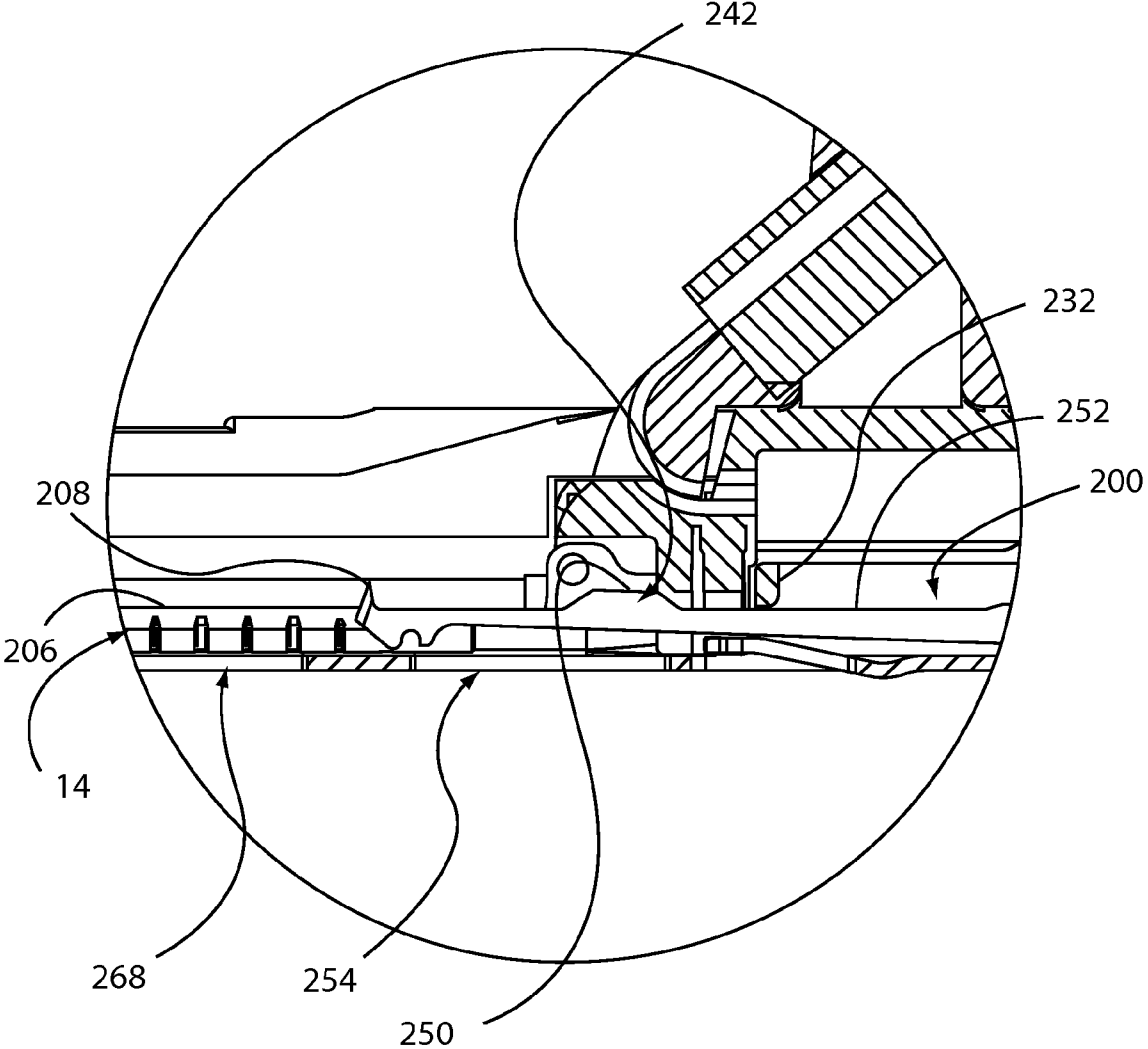


FIG. 53

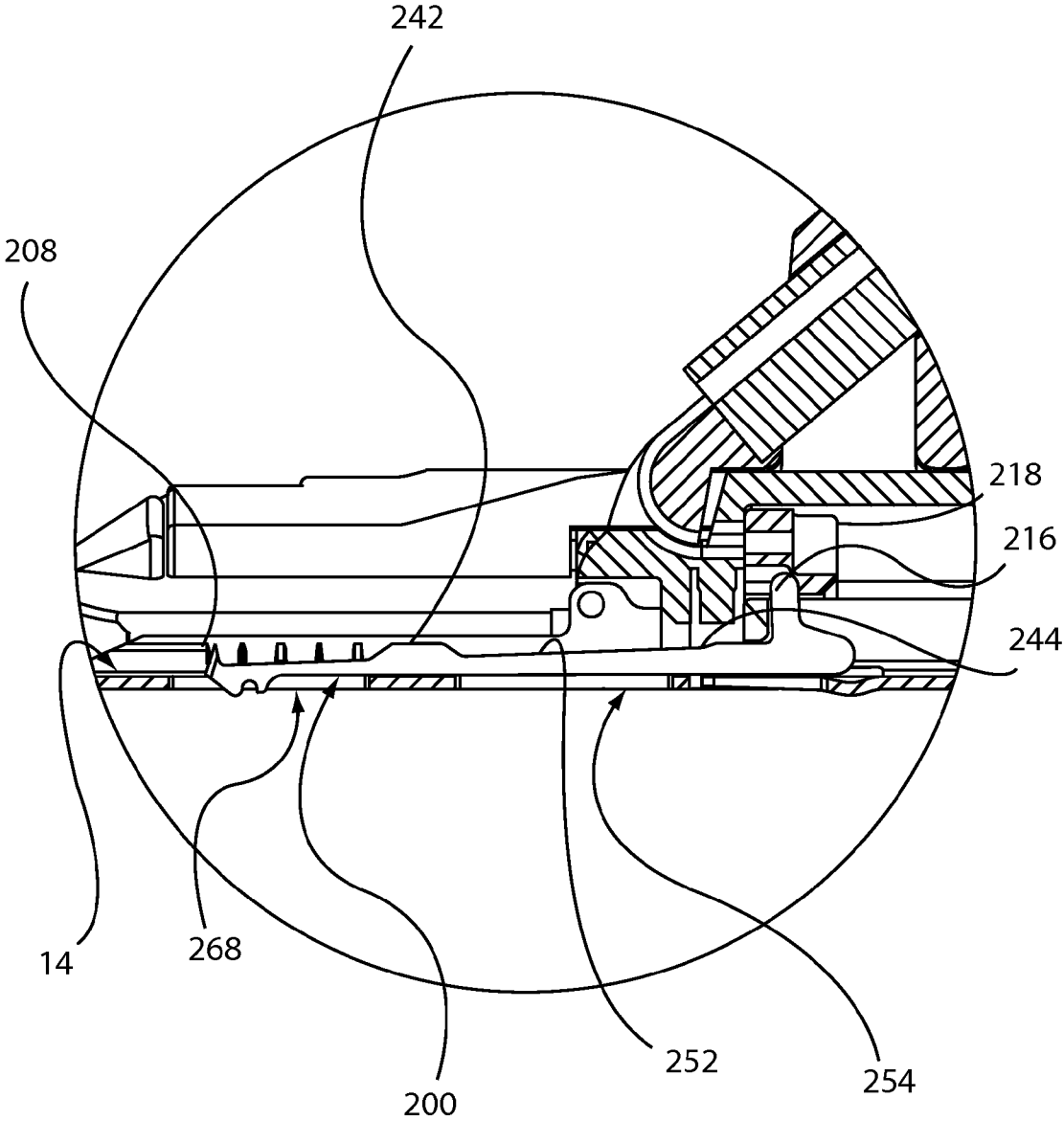


FIG. 54

ANASTOMOSIS SYSTEM WITH CUTTING ELEMENT

[0001] This application is a divisional of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/151,441, filed on May 20, 2002, which in turn is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/363,255, filed on Jul. 28, 1999, now U.S. Pat. No. 6,391,038, each of which is herein incorporated by reference in its entirety.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The invention relates to an apparatus and method for performing anastomosis.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Anastomosis is a procedure by which two hollow tissue structures are joined together. More particularly, vascular anastomosis is a procedure by which two blood vessels within a patient are surgically joined together. Vascular anastomosis is performed during treatment of a variety of conditions including coronary artery disease, diseases of the great and peripheral vessels, organ transplantation, and trauma. In coronary artery disease (CAD) an occlusion or stenosis in a coronary artery interferes with blood flow to the heart muscle. Treatment of CAD involves the grafting of a vessel in the form of a prosthesis or harvested artery or vein to reroute blood flow around the occlusion and restore adequate blood flow to the heart muscle. This treatment is known as coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG).

[0004] In the conventional CABG, a large incision is made in the chest and the sternum is sawed in half to allow access to the heart. In addition, a heart-lung machine is used to circulate the patient's blood so that the heart can be stopped and the anastomosis can be performed. In order to minimize the trauma to the patient induced by conventional CABG, less invasive techniques have been developed in which the surgery is performed through small incisions in the patient's chest with the aid of visualizing scopes. In both conventional and less invasive CABG procedures, the surgeon has to suture one end of the graft vessel to the coronary artery and the other end of the graft vessel to a blood-supplying artery, such as the aorta. The suturing process is a time consuming and difficult procedure requiring a high level of surgical skill. In order to perform the suturing of the graft to a target vessel such as the coronary artery or the blood supplying artery, a surgeon holds the edges of the incision in the target vessel with one handle and holds a needle in the other hand for suturing, or an assistant may hold the edges of the incision in the target vessel while a surgeon makes small stitches as close as possible to the edges of the incision. This suturing requires a high degree of precision and is quite time consuming. In addition, during conventional CABG procedures blood flow at the anastomosis site is stopped during suturing. This prevents bleeding from the incision site but also prevents blood from reaching a portion of the heart muscle served by the vessel. Further, during off-pump CABG procedures a side clamp or other device may be used to isolate a portion of the wall of the aorta to which a graft vessel is sutured. The use of a side clamp or similar device can cause emboli to detach from the wall of the aorta and enter the bloodstream, which is undesirable.

[0005] Accordingly, it would be desirable to provide a vascular anastomosis system that allows the tissue at the

anastomosis site to be controlled during suturing or other connection of the graft and target vessels. It would also be desirable to provide a vascular anastomosis system that allows the connection of a graft vessel to a target vessel prior to making an incision in the target vessel which allows blood flow between the target vessel and the graft vessel.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0006] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of an anvil and a plurality of staples according to a first aspect of the present invention.

[0007] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the anvil of FIG. 1 being inserted into a target vessel.

[0008] FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the anvil tenting a wall of a target vessel for an anastomosis procedure.

[0009] FIG. 4 is a perspective view of a graft vessel placed adjacent an exterior of the tented target vessel for the anastomosis procedure.

[0010] FIG. 5 is a perspective view of the staples being applied to the graft vessel and the target vessel during an anastomosis procedure.

[0011] FIG. 6 is a perspective view of the completed anastomosis according to the first aspect of the present invention.

[0012] FIG. 7 is a perspective view of a staple supported on a staple holding strip.

[0013] FIG. 8 is a side view of the staple and staple holding strip of FIG. 7 when the ends of the staple have been bent by contact with an anvil.

[0014] FIG. 9 is a perspective view of an anvil and staple according to another aspect of the present invention.

[0015] FIGS. 10A and 10B are side views of a plurality of staples supported on two examples of expandable staple holding strips.

[0016] FIG. 11 is a perspective view of a portion of an anvil having a movable cutting device.

[0017] FIG. 12 is a side view of an anvil having an external cutting device.

[0018] FIGS. 12A and 12B are side views of a portion of an anvil and two cutting devices that snap onto the anvil.

[0019] FIG. 13 is a side view of a portion of an anvil with an extendable cutting device.

[0020] FIG. 14 is a side view of the anvil of FIG. 13 with the cutting device extended.

[0021] FIG. 15 is a side view of a portion of an anvil with an alternate extendable cutting device.

[0022] FIG. 16 is a side view of the anvil of FIG. 15 with the cutting device extended.

[0023] FIG. 17 is a perspective view of an anvil according to a second aspect of the invention being inserted into a target vessel.

[0024] FIG. 18 is a perspective view of the anvil of FIG. 17 positioning inside a target vessel and a clamp being advanced to clamp the wall of the target vessel between the anvil and the clamp.

[0025] FIG. 19 is a perspective view of a graft vessel being advanced to the target vessel with a continuous anastomosis staple while the anastomosis site on the target vessel is controlled by the anvil and clamp.

[0026] FIGS. 20-22 are side cross sectional views of the steps of performing the anastomosis with the continuous anastomosis staple shown in FIG. 19.

[0027] FIG. 23 is a perspective view of the completed anastomosis performed as shown in FIGS. 19-22.

[0028] FIGS. 24-27 are perspective views of the steps of an alternative anvil and clamp system for controlling an anastomosis site and forming an incision through the clamped tissue of the target vessel.

[0029] FIG. 28 is a perspective view of a system for controlling a tissue site and performing anastomosis according to the present invention.

[0030] FIG. 29 is a cross sectional view taken along line C-C of FIG. 28, showing a first step of the anastomosis procedure.

[0031] FIG. 30 is a cross sectional view taken along line C-C of FIG. 28, showing a second step of the anastomosis procedure.

[0032] FIG. 31 is a cross sectional view taken along line C-C of FIG. 28, showing a third step of the anastomosis procedure.

[0033] FIG. 32 is a perspective view of an anvil according to another aspect of the present invention for use with sutures.

[0034] FIG. 33 is a perspective view of the anvil of FIG. 32 positioned within a target vessel and used to locate a plurality of suture at an anastomosis site.

[0035] FIG. 34 is a side cutaway view of a first embodiment of an anvil, a cutter and a staple holder, where the anvil and staple holder are spaced apart from each other.

[0036] FIG. 35 is an end cross-section view of the anvil of FIG. 34.

[0037] FIG. 36 is a side cutaway view of a portion of the anvil inserted into the lumen of a target vessel.

[0038] FIG. 37 is a side view of the cutter.

[0039] FIG. 38 is a perspective view of the cutter of FIG. 37.

[0040] FIG. 39 is a side view of the distal end of a second embodiment of a cutter.

[0041] FIG. 40 is a side view of the distal end of a third embodiment of a cutter.

[0042] FIG. 41 is a side view of the distal end of a fourth embodiment of a cutter.

[0043] FIG. 42 is a side view of a portion of a fifth embodiment of a cutter.

[0044] FIG. 43 is a side view of the distal end of a sixth embodiment of a cutter.

[0045] FIG. 44 is a side cutaway view of the anvil and staple holder of FIG. 34, where the cutter is in a first position.

[0046] FIG. 45 is a side cutaway view of the anvil and staple holder of FIG. 34, where the cutter is in a second position.

[0047] FIG. 46 is a side cutaway view of the anvil and staple holder of FIG. 34, where the cutter is in a third position.

[0048] FIG. 47 is a side cutaway view of the anvil and staple holder of FIG. 34, where the cutter is in a fourth position.

[0049] FIG. 48 is a side cutaway view of the anvil and staple holder of FIG. 34, where the cutter is in a fifth position.

[0050] FIG. 49 is a side cutaway view of a second embodiment of an anvil and a staple holder, where the anvil and staple holder are spaced apart from each other.

[0051] FIG. 50 is a side cutaway view of the anvil and staple holder of FIG. 40, where the cutter is in a first position.

[0052] FIG. 51 is a side cutaway view of the anvil and staple holder of FIG. 40, where the cutter is in a second position.

[0053] FIG. 52 is a side cutaway view of the anvil and staple holder of FIG. 40, where the cutter is in a third position.

[0054] FIG. 53 is a side cutaway view of the anvil and staple holder of FIG. 40, where the cutter is in a fourth position.

[0055] FIG. 54 is a side cutaway view of the anvil and staple holder of FIG. 40, where the cutter is in a fifth position.

[0056] The use of the same reference symbols in different figures indicates similar or identical items.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0057] As shown in FIG. 1, one embodiment of an anvil 10 includes a handle 12 and an anvil arm 14 extending from the handle 12. The anvil arm 14 may be oriented substantially perpendicular to the handle 12, or oriented at a different angle. The anvil arm 14 may be provided with one or more staple bending features 16 on opposite sides of the anvil arm 14. In the anvil 10 shown in FIG. 1, the staple bending features 16 each include a plurality of recesses 20 which receive the ends of staples 22 and cause the staple ends to bend over. At least one of the staple bending features 16 may be configured differently or omitted, if desired. The staples 22 may be connected to a staple holding strip 24. The staples 22 are U-shaped and are arranged in a spaced apart parallel configuration such that the staples 22 all lie in a single plane. Alternately, the staples 22 may be shaped differently, and/or lie in one or more different planes. An exemplary anvil arm 14 has a height and a width of about 2 mm or less, advantageously about 1 mm or less, and a length of about 2 to 15 mm, advantageously 5 to 12 mm. The length of the anvil will vary depending on the diameter of the graft vessel selected. The length to width ratio of the anvil arm 14 is substantially between 2:1 and 15:1. A different length to width ratio may be used, if desired. As one example, the staples 22 have widths of about 0.2-3 mm. Advantageously, the staples 22 have widths of substantially 2 mm or less. The

leg lengths of the staples 22 are substantially 0.2-3 mm. Alternately, other leg lengths may be used.

[0058] The anvil arm 14 has a sharp distal end 28 for puncturing the tissue of a target vessel to insert the anvil arm 14 into the target vessel. As illustrated in FIG. 2, the anvil arm 14 is inserted into a pressurized or unpressurized target vessel 30 by puncturing the target vessel with the distal end 28 of the anvil arm 14. The hole that is formed in the wall of the target vessel 30 by the anvil arm 14 is small enough to prevent significant bleeding through the puncture site. Alternately, the hole is closed by hand suturing. Alternately, the hole is closed with a biocompatible glue, adhesive or the like. Alternately, the hole is closed with a clip, clamp, or other implantable device that remains on the target vessel. Such a device may be positioned on the outer surface and/or inner surface of the target vessel, and may extend into the hole. A device for closing the hole may be constructed from nitinol or other superelastic or pseudoelastic material, or from stainless steel or other material, where that device moves between a first configuration and a second configuration during deployment, and where the second configuration holds the hole closed. The hole is less than substantially 2 mm wide, and advantageously less than 1 mm wide. Alternately, the anvil arm 14 has a blunt distal end 28 that is inserted through a hole created with a separate instrument, by a different instrument connected to the anvil arm 14, or by a sharp member connected to the anvil arm 14 that can be retracted into the anvil arm 14 or otherwise blunted or concealed after puncturing or creating an incision in the wall of the target vessel.

[0059] Once the anvil arm 14 has been inserted into the target vessel 30, the anvil arm 14 may be pulled against an inner wall of the target vessel 30, causing tenting of the thin tissue of the vessel wall as illustrated in FIG. 3. This tenting of the vessel wall provides control over the anastomosis site during an anastomosis procedure that is described with respect to FIGS. 4-6. However, tenting of the target vessel wall need not be tented in order to control the anastomosis site during the anastomosis procedure.

[0060] As shown in FIG. 4, a graft vessel 32 is advanced to the anastomosis site and an end 34 of the graft vessel 32 is positioned adjacent an exterior surface of the target vessel 30 at the anastomosis site. The tented portion of the target vessel 30 is positioned within the perimeter of the end 34 of the graft vessel 32. As shown in FIG. 5, a staple holder 38 is provided having two arms 40 which are pivotally connected to the handle 12 of the anvil 10. Alternatively, the pivoting arms 40 of the staple holder 38 may be connected to the handle 12 in a different way, or may be connected to a separate or additional device. The arms 40 are spaced apart from one another across at least a part of their length. Thus, the graft vessel can be positioned between the arms 40. That is, the arms 40 are positioned on substantially opposite sides of the graft vessel. In this way, each arm 40 may be positioned against a flap at an end of the graft vessel, as illustrated in FIGS. 29-31. The arms 40 may be configured differently, if desired.

[0061] Referring also to FIG. 1, the staple holder 38 may be used to hold individual staples 22 and/or staple holding strips 24. In one embodiment, each arm 40 of the staple holder 38 carries one row of staples 22 or one staple holding strip 24, where the staples 22 are arranged in a substantially

linear row. Alternately, staples 22 or staple strips 24 may be arranged in two or more rows, parallel or otherwise, on one or more arms 40. Alternately, the staples 22 may be staggered on one or more arms, such that at least one row of staples 22 does not fall along a straight line. The staples 22 or staple strips 24 may be arranged or aligned in any manner on each arm 40 that results in a secure anastomosis between the graft vessel and the target vessel. The staples 22 are inserted through the flaps at the end of the graft vessel 32, or another portion of the target vessel, and into the target vessel 30 by pivoting the arms 40 of the staple holder 38 towards the anvil arm 14. The staple bending features 16 are positioned in a configuration corresponding to the configuration of the staples 22, such that each staple 22 engages a corresponding staple bending feature 16 during deployment. When the ends of the staples 22 engage the staple bending features 16 on the anvil arm 14, the ends of the staples 22 are bent over, securing the graft vessel 32 and target vessel 30 together. Once the staple ends are bent over, the staples 22 are released from the staple holding strip 24 or the staple holder 38, resulting in spaced apart staples 22 securing the graft vessel 32 and the target vessel 30 together as shown in FIG. 6. Alternately, the staple holder 38 is a connector deployer that deploys connectors other than or in addition to staples 22.

[0062] After stapling is complete, an incision is formed in the wall of the target vessel 30 to allow blood flow between the target vessel and the graft vessel 32. Some examples of methods and devices for forming the incision will be described in further detail below. FIG. 6 illustrates a completed anastomosis between a target vessel 30 and a graft vessel 32 with a plurality of staples 22. The spacing between the staples 22 is approximately 1 to 4 mm. This spacing is similar to the spacing between sutures in a conventional sutured anastomosis. A different spacing between the staples 22 may be used if desired. After completion of the anastomosis, the anvil arm 14 is withdrawn from the target vessel 30 between adjacent staples 22. The withdrawal of the anvil arm 14 leaves a gap that is approximately the same as the spacing between adjacent staples. Accordingly, substantially no blood leakage occurs at the location where the anvil arm has been withdrawn.

[0063] FIGS. 7 and 8 illustrate one example of a staple 22 connected to a staple holding strip 24. This staple 22 includes barbed staple ends 52 extending from the front portion of the staple 22 and a C-shaped portion 54 extending from a rear of the staple 22 for connecting the staple 22 to the staple holding strip 24. The staple holding strip 24 includes a plurality of protrusions 56 for receiving the staples 22. The C-shaped portion 54 of each staple 22 is received around one of the protrusions 56 and is secured in place at one or more locations, such as by welds 58 or by a frangible linkage or connection. Alternately, the C-shaped portion 54 of each staple 22 may be secured to the staple holding strip 24 in a different way. As shown in FIG. 8, when the staple holding strip 24 is advanced toward the anvil arm 14, the barbed staple ends 52 are received in the recesses 20 in the anvil arm 14. Contact between each staple end 52 and the corresponding recess 20 generates a moment that causes the barbed staple ends 52 to bend towards one another. At the same time that the barbed staple ends 52 bend over, or after the bending of the staple ends 52, the staple 22 is detached from the staple holding strip 24. The staple 22 may be detached from the staple holding strip 24 by the action of

bending the barbed staple ends 52 such that the C-shaped portion 54 of the staple 22 splays outward and breaks apart from the corresponding protrusion 56 on the staple holding strip 24, by bending a frangible connection between the staple holding strip and the staples to separate the staples, or any other known separation methods, such as melting of a connection between the staple and the staple holding strip.

[0064] FIG. 9 illustrates an alternate staple 22a having inwardly curved barbed staple ends 52a. Because the staple ends 52a are themselves curved, the corresponding staple bending feature or features 16a need not be curved to bend the ends 52a of the staples 22a. As shown in FIG. 9, the staple bending features 16a on each side of the anvil arm 14a may be formed as a single longitudinal groove along the anvil arm 14a, where the staple bending feature 16a has a substantially flat surface. When the curved ends 52a of the staple 22a are received in the groove 16a of the anvil arm 14a, the ends bend inward to secure the tissue with the staple. Alternately, the staple may be configured differently. Alternately, two or more different kinds of staples are deployed by the staple holder 38 in order to form a single anastomosis.

[0065] Referring also to FIG. 10A, a plurality of staples 22a are positioned on an expandable staple holding strip called an expandable backbone 66. The expandable backbone 66 includes a plurality of elements 68 which are interconnected by one or more expanding members 70. Each of the backbone elements 68 is provided with a connecting diamond member 72 that is connected to one of the staples 22a. As shown in FIG. 10A, each staple 22a is connected to the corresponding diamond member 72 by a thin connecting section 74. The expandable backbone 66 allows the spacing between the staples 22a to be adjusted for the particular anastomosis to be performed. The backbone 66 allows expansion of the distance between staples from a distance of approximately 0.1 mm to a distance of approximately 1 to 4 mm, i.e., expansion of up to 40 times the original spacing. Alternately, the backbone 66 allows a different amount of expansion. The expanding backbone 66 also includes two openings 76 at opposite ends which may be engaged by holding pins (not shown) on an anastomosis system or staple holder. The opening 76 allow the backbone 66 to be easily expanded by relative motion of the holding pins. The connecting diamond members 72 are configured to collapse inwardly toward the backbone when the staples 22a engage the staple bending surface or surfaces 16a of the anvil. The collapsing of each diamond member 72 forces the corresponding staple 22a to separate from the diamond member 72 at a connecting section 74. The connecting section 74 is a frangible linkage connecting a staple 22a to a corresponding diamond member 72.

[0066] FIG. 10B illustrates another example of staples 22a detachably connected to a backbone 66. The staples 22a are each connected to the associated backbone elements 68 at two connecting sections 74. The staples 22a, backbone 66, and associated components are substantially as described above with regard to FIG. 10A.

[0067] FIG. 11 shows a portion of an anvil arm 14 with a movable cutting device 44. The cutting device 44 includes a base 46 and a blade 48. The base 46 of the cutting device 44 is positioned in a longitudinal groove 50 in the anvil arm 14. After the anvil arm 14 has been inserted into the target

vessel, the cutting device 44 may be moved longitudinally along the anvil arm 14 to form an incision in the target vessel.

[0068] FIGS. 12, 12A, and 12B illustrate external cutting devices that are advanced down onto the anvil arm 14 after the anastomosis procedure and cut an incision in the target vessel from an exterior of the target vessel as the anvil arm 14 is withdrawn. As shown in FIG. 12, a knife 62 is positioned on a knife arm 64 that is movable along the handle 12 of the anvil. The knife 62 is moved downward in a direction substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis of the handle 12 until the knife 62 engages a recess 65 in the anvil arm 14. The knife 62 is thereby positioned substantially at the anastomosis site. The end of the graft vessel is then placed substantially against the wall of the target vessel at the anastomosis site, over the knife 62 and knife arm 64. As the anvil arm 14 is withdrawn from the anastomosis site, the knife 62 forms an incision in the target vessel. The knife 62 and knife arm 64 exit the anastomosis site via the joint between the graft vessel and the target vessel. The withdrawal of the anvil arm 14, knife 62 and knife arm 64 leaves a gap in the wall of the target vessel that is approximately the same as the spacing between adjacent staples to minimize or eliminate leakage through that gap. Alternately, the knife 62 may be moveable relative to the handle 12 in at least one direction in addition to a direction substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis of the handle 12. For example, the knife 62 may be moveable in a direction substantially parallel to the wall of the target vessel to create an arteriotomy in the target vessel at the junction between the graft vessel and the target vessel.

[0069] FIGS. 12A and 12B illustrate two alternate examples of the knife 62 which snap onto a corresponding engagement surface 65 of the anvil arm 14 so that the knife and anvil are secured together for formation of the incision during removal of the anvil arm 14 from the anastomosis site.

[0070] FIGS. 13-16 illustrate two variations of extendable cutting devices for making an incision in the target vessel while withdrawing the anvil arm 14 from the target vessel. FIG. 13 illustrates an anvil arm 14b having a blade 78 connected to a flexible blade support 80. When the blade support 80 is pulled in the direction of the arrow A with respect to the anvil arm 14b, the blade 78 moves from a forwardly extending position shown in FIG. 13 to an upwardly extending position shown in FIG. 14 as a result of flexure of the blade support 80. The blade 78 in the forwardly extending position may be used to form a small opening in the wall of the target vessel through which the anvil arm 14 is inserted into the target vessel. After an anastomosis has been performed, or while an anastomosis is performed, the blade 78 is moved to an upwardly angled or a vertical position in which the blade 78 is used to form an incision in the target vessel as the anvil arm 14b is removed from the target vessel.

[0071] FIGS. 15-16 illustrate an alternate example of an anvil arm 14c having a blade 84 and a blade support 86. While the anvil arm 14c is inserted into the target vessel and during the anastomosis procedure, the blade 84 is positioned in a recess 88 in the anvil arm. The blade 84 may be moved from the position of FIG. 15 to the extended position of FIG. 16 by moving the blade support 86 in the direction of the

arrow B with respect to the anvil arm. The blade **84** is flexible and stressed, such that freeing the blade **84** from the recess **88** causes the blade **84** to move to the extended position. Alternatively, the blade **84** may be extended automatically upon withdrawal of the anvil arm **14** when a blade tip **90** catches on an interior surface of the target vessel wall during withdrawal of the anvil arm.

[0072] The extendable cutting devices shown in FIGS. 13-16 are merely shown as examples of the type of cutting devices which may be used for making the incision. Once these cutting devices or blades have been extended from the anvil arm, they may be fixed to perform cutting as the anvil arm is removed from the target vessel or the blades may be movable along the anvil arm to make an incision prior to removal of the anvil arm from the target vessel.

[0073] Another embodiment of the anvil **10** also includes a cutter **200** that is moveable relative to the anvil **10** for making an incision in the wall of a target vessel. Referring to FIGS. 34 and 35, a tissue stop **220** is formed into or connected to the anvil **10**. The portion of the anvil **10** distal to the tissue stop **220** is configured to penetrate into the wall of a target vessel, and may be referred to as the anvil arm **14**. A channel **246** is defined within the anvil arm **14**, through which a cutter **200** is configured to move. The cutter **200** is narrower than the channel **246**, such that interior surfaces **202** on either side of the channel **246** may guide the translation of the cutter **200** relative to the anvil arm **14**. As used in this document, the term "translation" as used in regard to the cutter **200** refers to motion of the cutter **200** in the distal or proximal direction, whether or not the cutter **200** or a portion thereof moves upward or downward during that motion. For convenience, the direction substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal centerline of the anvil arm **14** toward the wall of the target vessel may be referred to as "upward", and the direction substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal centerline of the anvil arm **14** away from the wall of the target vessel may be referred to as "downward". However, the positioning of the anvil arm **14** in use is not limited to an orientation in which these directions correspond to absolute directions measured relative to the ground. Similarly, for convenience, motion upward or downward may be referred to as "vertical" motion, and motion substantially parallel to the longitudinal centerline of the anvil arm **14** may be referred to as "horizontal" motion.

[0074] The anvil arm **14** includes a contact surface **206**. Referring also to FIG. 36, in use, the contact surface **206** of the anvil arm **14** is placed substantially against the inner surface **203** of a target vessel **201**. The contact surface **206** substantially defines a place that is substantially parallel to the longitudinal centerline of the anvil arm **14**. Alternately, the contact surface **206** is contoured and/or oriented differently. An upper opening **248** extends along at least a portion of the contact surface **206** in a direction substantially parallel to the longitudinal centerline of the anvil arm **14**, and opens into the channel **246**. The upper opening **248** may divide the contact surface **206** into symmetrical or asymmetrical sections. Further, the contact surface **206** may be formed by two substantially planar surfaces, by one substantially planar surface and a differently-shaped surface, or by another set of surfaces. Additionally, the contact surface **206** may be formed by two thin edges, each edge occurring at the intersection of a wall of the upper opening **248** and an outer surface of the anvil arm **14**. The upper opening **248** need not

extend proximally any further than the tissue stop **220**. However, the upper opening **248** may extend proximal to the tissue stop **220**, if desired. A first lower opening **254** and a second lower opening **268** are defined through a lower surface **256** of the anvil arm **14**. The lower surface **256** of the anvil arm **14** may be substantially parallel to the contact surface **206** or may be oriented differently relative to the contact surface **206**. Alternately, the first lower opening **254** and/or the second lower opening **268** do not extend completely through the anvil arm **14**, and instead are depressions extending along at least part of a bottom surface **266** of the channel **246**.

[0075] Referring also to FIGS. 37-38, the cutter **200** is a thin, rigid member, shaped such that it can be held within the channel **246** in the anvil arm **14**. The cutter **200** has a substantially constant width along its entire length. Alternately, the width of the cutter **200** may vary along its length. The cutter **200** may be made of metal, ceramic, plastic, or other material, or from a combination of different materials. A sharp projection **208** extends upward from the cutter **200** at or near its distal end. The projection **208** is substantially triangular, but may be shaped differently. The projection **208** may be smooth or serrated, or otherwise shaped or formed. A portion of the projection **208** may be ground or otherwise honed to a sharp edge to facilitate the motion of the projection **208** through the tissue of the wall of a target vessel, as described in greater detail below. If so, the cutter **200** is composed of a material that can be sharpened adequately to cut tissue. Alternately, the cutter **200** may be flexible, at least in part. Further, the projection **208** may be located at a different position on the cutter **200** than at or near its distal end. An additional sharp point (not shown) may be provided at the distal end of the cutter **200**, extending in a distal direction, in order to create an initial puncture or incision in the wall of the target vessel. Such a point may be as described in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/134,081, which is herein incorporated by reference in its entirety.

[0076] One or more additional projections **208** may be provided, if desired. For example, two or more projections **208** may extend upward from the cutter **200**. Where multiple projections **208** are used, they may cooperate with one another to create an incision in the wall of the target vessel. Referring also to FIG. 39, a second projection **208** extends upward from the cutter **200** proximal to a first projection **208**. The projections **208** are both substantially the same triangular shape and the same size. However, the projections **208** may be shaped and sized differently. The projections **208** are both substantially planar, and are aligned such that both projections **208** lie in substantially the same plane. Each projection **208** may include at least one sharpened or beveled edge **209** oriented to engage and incise the wall of the target vessel when the cutter **200** is translated, as described below. Referring to FIG. 40, at least two projections **208** extend upward from the cutter **200**. The projections **208** each have a barb **211** at the tip. However, the barb **211** may be omitted from some or all of the projections **208**. Under the barb **211**, a sharpened or beveled edge **209** extends downward and proximally. The edge **209** may be straight or curved. The upper end of the edge **209** is distal to the lower, proximal end of the corresponding barb. The edge **209** of each projection **208** is oriented to engage and incise the wall of the target vessel when the cutter **200** is translated. Referring to FIG. 41, at least two projections **208** extend upward from the cutter **200**, at least one of which has a barb

211 at its tip. The edge **209** associated with each projection **208** is more curved than the edge **209** shown in FIG. 40. Alternately, the edge **209** is substantially straight, or gently curved, or positioned on a portion of a larger curved segment **213** extending downward from and proximal to the barb **211**. Referring to FIG. 42, a number of projections **208** may be placed along a length of the cutter **200**. This length may be comparable to the desired length of the incision in the wall of the target vessel. These projections **208** may be substantially triangular as shown, or may be shaped differently. Where more than one projection **208** is used on the cutter **200**, the projections **208** need not have the same configuration. For example, projections **208** such as the exemplary projections **208** shown in FIGS. 39-41 may be mixed together on the same cutter **200**. Alternately, one or more of the projections **208** are moveable relative to the cutter **200**, such that one or more projections **208** can be moved upward or downward relative to the cutter **200**.

[0077] As another example of a configuration of the projections **208**, referring to FIG. 43, the projections **208** extending upward from the cutter **200** each are substantially planar, and are aligned such that not all of the projections **208** lie in the same plane. In such a configuration, the projections **208** may create a wider incision in the wall of the target vessel than would be created if the projections **208** were substantially aligned. For example, one set of projections **208** may be aligned substantially in a first plane, and a second set of projections **208** may be aligned substantially in a second plane substantially parallel to the first plane. The second plane and the first plane may be oriented differently relative to one another, if desired. As another example, none of the projections **208** lie in a common plane with one or more other projections **208**. Referring to FIGS. 39-42, by using multiple projections, the cutter **200** need not be translated as far to make an incision in the wall of the target vessel as it would if only a single projection **208** were used, as described in greater detail below.

[0078] Referring back to FIGS. 34-35, an interior surface **202** is located on each side of the channel **246**. Each interior surface **202** may be substantially planar, curved, or may be shaped differently. Further, each interior surface **202** may be oriented at an angle to vertical or substantially vertical. The interior surfaces **202** may be formed such that the channel **246** is substantially bilaterally symmetrical, or may be formed to result in a channel **246** that is not bilaterally symmetrical. The interior surfaces **202** of the channel **246** within the anvil arm **14** may include raised features **204** that correspond to depressed staple bending features (not shown) on the outer surface of the anvil arm **14**. That is, if the staple bending features are stamped into the anvil arm **14**, or formed in another way that causes deformation of the anvil arm **14**, the depressed staple bending features result in corresponding raised features **204** on the interior surface **202** of the channel **246**. The raised features **204** do not interfere with the motion of the cutter **200** through the channel **246**. Alternately, the raised features **204** are not present on the interior surface **202** of the channel **246**.

[0079] A safety feature **210** is connected to the underside of the anvil **10** and is biased toward the anvil **10** and the cutter **200**. The safety feature **210** may be biased into the channel **246** within the anvil **10**. Alternately, the safety feature **210** is connected to a different location, such as the underside of the anvil arm **14**. The safety feature **210** may be

flexible or rigid. The safety feature **210** includes a tip **212** that is oriented substantially transverse to the longitudinal centerline of the cutter **200**. Alternately, the tip **212** may be oriented in a different direction. The cutter **200** includes a safety recess **214** defined in it, corresponding to the tip **212** of the safety feature **210**. The tip **212** is shaped and sized such that it can engage the safety recess **214**. The tip **212** may be a bar or rod oriented substantially transverse to the direction of translation of the cutter **200**, or may be shaped or oriented differently. In FIG. 34, the staple holder **38** has not yet been moved into position to perform anastomosis. In this position, the tip **212** of the safety feature **210** is biased upward to engage the safety recess **214**. The engagement between the safety recess **214** and the tip **212** of the safety feature **210** substantially prevents translation of the cutter **200** within the channel **246**. Thus, the cutter **200** and the projection **208** are prevented from deploying until the staple holder **38** has been moved into the appropriate position relative to the anvil arm **14**, and inadvertent deployment of the cutter **200** is prevented.

[0080] The cutter **200** includes an engagement member **216** extending upward from a location at or near its proximal end. The engagement member **216** instead may extend downward from the cutter **200** or to the side of the cutter **200**. Further, the engagement member **216** may be positioned at a location other than at or near the proximal end of the cutter **200**. The engagement member **216** is configured to engage at least a portion of a corresponding receiver **218** in the staple holder **38**. Thus, after engagement between the engagement member **216** and the receiver **218**, translation of the receiver **218** results in translation of the cutter **200**. The receiver **218** is a structure that is at least partially open on its underside and that includes at least one surface **219** configured to engage the engagement member **216**. As shown in FIG. 34, the surface **219** is a partially-curved surface shaped to receive the curved upper end of the engagement member **216**. However, the receiver **218** may be a flat vertical surface, a curved surface, a structure such as an inverted cup that is open on its underside and that has a wall or walls encircling the engagement feature **216**, or any other structure or mechanism capable of engaging the engagement feature **216** and urging it distally.

[0081] An anvil insert **222** is fixed to the anvil **10**. Alternately, the anvil insert **222** is connected to and capable of motion relative to the anvil **10**. Further, the anvil insert **222** may be connected to the proximal end of the anvil arm **14**, or another location on the anvil arm **14**. A cavity **228** is defined within the anvil insert **222**. An aperture **230** is defined through the distal end of the anvil insert **222** into the cavity **228**, connecting the channel **246** in the anvil arm **14** and anvil **10** to the cavity **228**. The cutter **200** extends through the aperture **230**, such that the distal end of the cutter **200** is positioned within the channel **246** and the proximal end of the cutter **200** is positioned within the cavity **228**.

[0082] A cutter stop **236** may be formed into or connected to the anvil insert **222**. The cutter stop **236** may engage the proximal end of the cutter **200** if the cutter **200** is moved to a defined position within the cavity **228**, thereby restricting its proximal translation. A cavity **262** may be defined within the staple holder **38** or a separate component connected to the staple holder **38**. A post **258** is positioned at the upper end of the cavity **262**, where the post **258** is oriented

downward. A biasing element **260** is connected at one end to the post **258**. The biasing element **260** may be a coil spring, a leaf spring, a different type of spring, an elastomer, a wire form, or other structure or mechanism capable of exerting a biasing force. The biasing element **260** is positioned within and protected by the cavity **262**, where the cavity **262** is used. The cavity **262** may be a cylindrical opening having a diameter substantially the same as the outer diameter of the biasing element **260**, such that the cavity **262** restricts the biasing element **260** to motion substantially along the axis of the cavity **262** and thus directs the force exerted by the biasing element **260** in a substantially downward direction, preventing bending or other undesirable motion of the biasing element **260**. The end of the biasing element **260** that is not connected to the post **258** contacts the cutter **200**. As an example, the biasing element **260** may be a compression spring that is compressed between the post **258** and the cutter **200**, resulting in a force on the cutter **200** that biases the cutter **200** downward. The cutter **200** is slidable relative to the biasing element **260**, such that the biasing element **260** exerts a downward force on the cutter **200** at different locations along its upper surface **252** as the cutter **200** translates. Thus, at least the distal end of the cutter **200** is biased downward throughout its translation along the anvil **10**. The entire cutter **200** may be biased downward, if desired. Alternately, the post **258** is omitted, and the biasing element **260** is fixed to an upper surface of the cavity **260**. Alternately, the biasing element **260** is omitted, and the cutter **200** is biased downward in another way. For example, the cutter **200** may be constructed from an elastic or super-elastic material that is formed in such a way as to produce a downward bias.

[0083] As shown in FIG. **34**, the distal end of the anvil arm **14** initially is spaced apart from the staple holder **38**. While the distal end of the anvil arm **14** is spaced apart from the staple holder **38**, the anvil arm **14** is inserted through the wall of the target vessel, which is not shown for clarity. Advantageously, the anvil arm **14** has a cross-section small enough to allow it to enter the target vessel easily and to result in minimal or no leakage from the target vessel after the anvil arm **14** is removed. The distal tip of the anvil arm **14** may be sharp such that the anvil arm **14** itself penetrates the wall of the target vessel, resulting in an opening in the wall of the target vessel substantially the same size as the cross-section of the anvil arm **14**. Alternately, a sharp retractable projection (not shown) is provided at the distal end of the anvil arm **14**. The retractable projection is extended to allow the distal end of the anvil arm **14** to penetrate the wall of the target vessel, then retracted into the anvil arm **14**. The retractable projection may be a wire, a blade, a substantially conical member, a screw or a screw-tipped rod, or any other sharp structure or mechanism capable of penetrating the wall of the target vessel. Such a retractable projection may be as described in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/134,081, which is herein incorporated by reference in its entirety. Alternately, the cutter **200** includes a blade (not shown) at its distal end, where the blade is configured to swivel. In a first position, the blade is configured to extend substantially distal to the distal end of the anvil arm **14**, such that the blade can penetrate the wall of the target vessel. Then, the blade is swiveled upward such that it can act as a protrusion **208** such as described in FIGS. **39-42**. Alternately, a separate

mechanism or structure is used to penetrate the wall of the target vessel, and the anvil arm **14** is later inserted through that penetration.

[0084] Referring also to FIG. **36**, after insertion, the distal end of the anvil arm **14** enters the lumen of the target vessel. The anvil arm **14** is advanced into the target vessel until a tissue stop **220** on the anvil arm **14** encounters the edge of the penetration in the wall of the target vessel. The tissue stop **220** is substantially flat and/or blunt, and extends upward or in another direction relative to the anvil arm **14** to increase the height and/or width of the anvil arm **14**. The tissue stop **220** increases the cross-section of the anvil arm **14** such that the anvil arm **14** cannot easily move further into the penetration in the wall of the target vessel after the tissue stop **220** encounters the outer wall of the target vessel. Because the tissue stop **220** is blunt, it does not penetrate the wall of the target vessel or act to expand the size of the existing penetration. Thus, the distance between the distal end of the anvil arm **14** and the tissue stop **220** substantially determines how much of the anvil arm **14** is allowed into the lumen of the target vessel. After the anvil arm **14** has been inserted into the lumen of the target vessel, the contact surface **206** of the anvil arm **14** is substantially in contact with the inner surface of the wall of the target vessel.

[0085] Next, referring also to FIG. **44**, the staple holder **38** and the anvil **10** are rotated or otherwise moved closer to one another to a standby position. As the staple holder **38** and anvil **10** move closer together, the staple holder **38** holds flaps at the end of the graft vessel, which are configured substantially as shown in FIGS. **29-31**, against the surface of the target vessel at the site of the anastomosis. The flaps are substantially fixed relative to the surface of the target vessel, such that the end of the graft vessel is substantially immobile relative to the wall of the target vessel. Thus, the position of the end of the graft vessel relative to the wall of the target vessel remains substantially unchanged throughout the duration of the anastomosis procedure. The perimeter of the end of the graft vessel defines a closed area on the wall of the target vessel. Consequently, the location of a connection made between the end of the graft vessel and the wall of the target vessel is substantially registered with an opening made within the closed area in the wall of the target vessel, regardless of the order in which the connection and the opening are made. Further, the position of the end of the graft vessel relative to the wall of the target vessel substantially maintains position registration throughout the duration of the anastomosis procedure relative to the opening in the wall of the target vessel through which the anvil arm **14** is inserted. For clarity, the flaps and graft vessel are not shown in FIG. **44**. The staple holder **38** and anvil **10** may be actuated to move between the position shown in FIG. **34** and the position shown in FIG. **44** by any structure, mechanism or method. As one example, a cable (not shown) is connected to the anvil **10** at or near a shoulder **224** proximal to the tissue stop **220**. This connection may be made by soldering, welding, winding the cable tightly around the anvil **10** at the shoulder **224**, or in any other way that results in a secure connection between the cable and the anvil **10**. To move the anvil **10** and the staple holder **38** relative to one another, the cable is tensioned, causing the anvil **10** and/or the connected anvil insert **222** to rotate around a pivot point such as a pin **226** that pivotally connects the staple holder **38** to the anvil **10**. The pin **226** may be formed into or otherwise fixed to the staple holder **38** or anvil arm **14**, if desired. Thus,

the anvil 10 and the staple holder 38 rotate relative to one another to the standby position.

[0086] As the staple holder 38 and anvil 10 move together, the engagement member 216 engages the receiver 218. Further, the relative motion of the staple holder 38 and the anvil 10 causes the staple holder 38 to contact the safety feature 210 and urge it downward against its upward bias. Consequently, the tip 212 of the safety feature 210 is moved downward out of engagement with the safety recess 214 of the cutter 200. Alternately, another structure or mechanism is configured to engage the safety feature 210 when the staple holder 38 and anvil 10 are moved together, so as to urge the tip 212 out of the safety recess 214. Thus, in the standby position, the cutter 200 is freed for translation along the channel 246

[0087] Optionally, an interface structure 238 may be connected to or formed into the staple holder 38. The interface structure 238 engages the anvil 10 or a component associated with the anvil 10 as the staple holder 38 and the anvil 10 move to the standby position, such as by snapping onto a corresponding feature (not shown) on the anvil 10. By doing so, the interface structure 238 holds the staple holder 38 substantially fixed relative to the anvil 10, in order to maintain registration between the target vessel, the graft vessel, the anvil 10 and the staple holder 38. The interface structure 238 may be a tab, rail, bump, or any other feature that is capable of engaging a corresponding feature and holding the staple holder 38 substantially fixed relative to the anvil 10. Alternately, the interface structure 238 is formed into or connected to the anvil 10 and engages a corresponding feature on the staple holder 38.

[0088] Referring also to FIG. 45, after the cutter 200 has been freed for translation, the cutter 200 is urged distally relative to the anvil arm 14. Advantageously, the staple holder 38 has stapled or otherwise connected the graft vessel to the target vessel before the cutter 200 is urged forward, such that the two vessels are connected before the cutter 200 makes an incision between them. Alternately, the cutter 200 may be urged forward while the staple holder 38 is stapling or otherwise connecting the graft vessel to the target vessel, or before the staple holder 38 has stapled or otherwise connected the graft vessel to the target vessel.

[0089] The cutter 200 is urged distally by the receiver 218, which engages the engagement feature 216 of the cutter 200. The receiver 218 is configured to travel along a guide structure 241. The guide structure 241 is a rail or other structure along which the receiver 218 slide, and the receiver 218 interfaces with and translates along the rail. Thus, the guide structure 241 guides the translation of the receiver 218. Alternately, the guide structure 241 is a hollow channel defined within the staple holder 38, such that the walls of the channel guide the translation of the receiver 218. Alternately, the guide structure 241 may be any other structure or mechanism capable of guiding the translation of the receiver 218. The guide structure 241 is substantially aligned with the anvil arm 14. That is, the longitudinal centerline of the guide structure 241 is substantially parallel to the longitudinal centerline of the anvil arm 14. Thus, motion of the receiver 218 along the guide structure 241 causes translation of the engagement feature 216 and therefore translation of the cutter 200 substantially parallel to the centerline of the anvil arm 14. The receiver 218 may be actuated to translate along

the guide structure 241 by an actuator (not shown). The actuator may directly transmit force from a human hand or the like to the cutter, such as via a cable (not shown). The cable may be the same cable described above that may be utilized to rotate the anvil 10 and staple holder 38 relative to one another, or may be a different cable. Alternately, the actuator may convert stored energy to force that is applied to the cutter. Such stored energy may be provided by a spring, battery, source of compressed gas, or other source. Alternately, any mechanism, structure or method, using stored energy or not, may be used to translate the receiver 218 along the guide structure 241. The particular mechanism, structure or method used to cause translation of the cutter 200 is not critical to the invention. A cavity 240 is provided in the staple holder 38 adjacent to the guide structure 241 to allow for motion of the receiver 218 along the guide structure 241. The cavity 240 is sized to allow the receiver 218 to translate freely.

[0090] The upper surface 252 of the cutter 200 is substantially planar proximal to the projection 208. The biasing element 260 contacts the upper surface 252 of the cutter 200 and biases the cutter 200 downward. The cutter 200 includes a keel 264 that extends downward. The keel 264 may be formed into the cutter 200, or may be a separate component connected to the cutter 200. The keel 264 is substantially as wide as the adjacent portion of the cutter 200. However, the keel 264 may be wider or narrower than the adjacent portion of the cutter 200. The keel 264 is positioned at or near the distal end of the cutter 200. Alternately, the keel 264 may be positioned at a different location on the cutter 200.

[0091] As shown in FIG. 45, the keel 264 initially extends into the first lower opening 254, which is defined through a lower surface 256 of the anvil 10. The keel 264 may extend completely through the first lower opening 254, such that its lowest point extends outside the anvil 10. The keel 264 is biased downward into the first lower opening 254 as a result of the downward force exerted on the cutter 200 by the biasing element 260. While the keel 264 is biased into the first lower opening 254, the projection 208 remains below the contact surface 206 of the anvil arm 14. In this way, the projection 208 does not extend out of the anvil arm 14 while the anvil arm 14 is inserted into the wall of a target vessel. The first lower opening 254 extends along a fixed length of the lower surface 256 of the anvil 10. As the cutter 200 translates distally, the keel 264 continues to remain at least partially within the first lower opening 254, such that the projection 208 continues to remain below the contact surface 206 of the anvil arm 14. Initially, the keel 264 may be positioned proximal to the distal end of the first lower opening 254. The length of the first lower opening 254 is selected to cause the projection 208 to remain below the contact surface 206 of the anvil arm 14 across that distance. That is, this distance is selected such that the projection 208 on the cutter 200 does not engage the wall of the target vessel until the projection 208 is positioned within the circumference of the graft vessel. That is, the connection between the graft vessel and the target vessel substantially defines a closed area, and the projection 208 is configured to engage the wall of the target vessel within that closed area. In this way, the projection 208 makes an incision completely within the connection between the graft vessel and the target vessel, completing the anastomosis between the two vessels and minimizing or eliminating leakage at the anastomosis site. While the projection 208 on the cutter 200 remains

below the upper surface of the anvil arm 14, it neither engages nor cuts the wall of the target vessel.

[0092] Referring also to FIG. 46, the cutter 200 continues to advance distally as the receiver 218 continues to impel the engagement feature 216 distally. As described above, at least the distal end of the cutter 200 is biased downward. As the cutter 200 advances distally, the keel 264 encounters the distal end of the first lower opening 254. This encounter, and the continued proximal translation of the cutter 200, causes the keel 264 to move upward relative to the anvil arm 14. The keel 264 and/or the distal end of the first lower opening 254 may be constructed to provide a smooth, gradual upward motion of the keel 264, such as by providing a gradual slope on the keel 264 and/or the distal end of the first lower opening 254. Alternately, the keel 264 and/or the distal end of the first lower opening 254 may be constructed to allow or cause the keel 264 to move upward abruptly upon encountering the distal end of the first lower opening 254. The upward motion of the keel 264 causes the distal end of the cutter 200 and the projection 208 to move upward. Thus, the size and position of the first lower opening 254, including the position of the distal end of the first lower opening 254, control the motion of the cutter 200 and the projection 208 in the vertical direction.

[0093] As the distal end of the cutter 200 moves upward, the projection 208 moves upward through the upper opening 248 in the anvil arm 14. The contact surface 206 of the anvil arm 14 is substantially adjacent to the inner surface of the wall of the target vessel. Thus, upward motion of the projection 208 through the upper opening 248 and above the contact surface 206 of the anvil arm 14 causes the projection 208 to enter the wall of the target vessel. The cutter 200 continues to move distally, such that the keel 264 moves out of the first lower opening 254 completely and contacts the bottom surface 266 of the channel 246 of the anvil arm 14. The projection 208 is sized such that the projection 208 completely penetrates the wall of the target vessel when the keel 264 has moved proximally to the first lower opening 254 and is in contact with the bottom surface 266 of the channel 246. That is, at least a portion of the projection 208 passes through the wall of the target vessel and enters the lumen of the target vessel. This initial penetration of the wall of the target vessel defines the starting point of an arteriotomy performed on the target vessel by the projection 208. The starting point of the arteriotomy is spaced apart from the location on the target vessel at which the anvil arm 14 is inserted, because the cutter 200 and the projection 208 have moved proximally a selected distance before penetrating or incising the wall of the target vessel. The portion of the wall of the target vessel between the arteriotomy and the insertion point of the anvil arm 14 may be referred to as a tissue bridge. The incision is referred to as an arteriotomy for convenience, and this terminology does not limit the type of anastomosis that may be performed. For example, anastomosis may be performed between two tissue structures that are not blood vessels, such as bile ducts.

[0094] Referring also to FIG. 47, the cutter 200 continues to advance distally as the receiver 218 continues to impel the engagement feature 216 distally. The lower surface of the keel 264 contacts the bottom surface 266 of the channel 246 during this translation. The contact between the keel 264 and the bottom surface 266 of the channel 246 counteracts the downward bias of the distal end of the cutter 200. In this

way, the projection 208 is maintained above the contact surface 206 of the anvil arm 14. As the cutter 200 continues to translate distally, the projection 208 moves through the tissue of the wall of the target vessel in a direction substantially parallel to the longitudinal centerline of the anvil arm 14, and incises the tissue of the wall of the target vessel to create an arteriotomy. Because the projection 208 is connected to and translated by the cutter 200, which is within the target vessel, the arteriotomy is performed from within the target vessel. The tip of the projection 208 may maintain substantially the same height relative to the contact surface 206 of the anvil arm 14 during translation of the cutter 200, or may change its height relative to the contact surface 206 of the anvil arm, as long as the projection 208 continues to incise completely through the wall of the target vessel.

[0095] Referring also to FIG. 48, a second lower opening 268 is defined through the lower surface 256 of the anvil arm 14. The second lower opening 268 is distal to and substantially aligned with the first lower opening 254. The cutter 200 continues to advance distally as the receiver 218 continues to impel the engagement feature 216 distally. As a result of this translation, the keel 264 encounters the proximal end of the second lower opening 268. Because the distal end of the cutter 200 is biased downward, the keel 264 moves downward at least partially into the second lower opening 268. The downward motion of the keel 264 causes the distal end of the cutter 200 and the projection 208 to move downward. The keel 264 and/or the proximal end of the second lower opening 268 may be constructed to provide a smooth, gradual downward motion of the keel 264, such as by providing a gradual slope on the keel 264 and/or the proximal end of the second lower opening 268. Alternately, the keel 264 and/or the proximal end of the second lower opening 268 may be constructed to allow or cause the keel 264 to move downward abruptly upon encountering the proximal end of the second lower opening 268. The downward motion of the distal end of the cutter 200 causes the projection 208 to retract into or completely through the upper opening 248, such that the projection 208 no longer encounters the tissue of the wall of the target vessel. The projection 208 may be urged downward completely into the channel 246, depending on the depth of the channel 246 and the height of the projection 208. Alternately, the upper tip of the projection 208 may remain within the upper opening 248. The cutter 200 may stop its distal translation at substantially the same time that the projection 208 retracts completely into the upper opening 248, or may continue to translate distally within the channel 246 before coming to a stop. Alternately, the second lower opening 268 is not provided, and only the first lower opening 254 extends through the lower surface 156 of the anvil arm 14 into the channel 246. In such a configuration, the cutter 200 is retracted in the proximal direction after the arteriotomy is formed, until the keel 264 moves downward into the first lower opening 254 and the projection 208 consequently retracts completely into the upper opening 248.

[0096] When the projection 208 is retracted out of the tissue of the wall of the target vessel, the distal end of the arteriotomy is defined, and the arteriotomy is complete. The distal end of the first lower opening 254 and the proximal end of the second lower opening 268 control the motion of the projection 208 and thereby control the penetration of the wall of the target vessel. That is, the distance between the

distal end of the first lower opening 254 and the proximal end of the second lower opening 268 determines the length of the arteriotomy.

[0097] After performing the arteriotomy, the cutter 200 is in a distally-extended position. The cutter 200 remains in that position as the anvil arm 14 is removed from the target vessel. Thus, the projection 208 does not extend out of the upper opening 248 during removal of the anvil arm 14 from the target vessel. The anvil arm 14 is removed from the target vessel after the anastomosis between the graft vessel and the target vessel has been completed. Alternately, after performing the arteriotomy, the cutter 200 may be moved proximally within the channel 246 in the anvil arm 14 before removing the anvil arm 14 from the target vessel. The hole in the wall of the target vessel 30 through which the anvil arm 14 enters the target vessel is small enough to prevent significant bleeding through the puncture site. Alternately, the hole is closed by hand suturing. Alternately, the hole is closed with a biocompatible glue, adhesive or the like. Alternately, the hole is closed with a clip, clamp, or other implantable device that remains on the target vessel. Such a device may be positioned on the outer surface and/or inner surface of the target vessel, and may extend into the hole. A device for closing the hole may be constructed from nitinol or other superelastic or pseudoelastic material, or from stainless steel or other material, where that device moves between a first configuration and a second configuration during deployment, and where the second configuration holds the hole closed. The hole is less than substantially 2 mm wide, and advantageously less than 1 mm wide.

[0098] Referring to FIG. 49, another embodiment of the anvil 10 also includes a cutter 200 moveable relative to the anvil 10 for making an incision in the wall of a target vessel. The anvil 10, anvil arm 14, staple holder 38, and other components are substantially as described above with regard to FIGS. 34-38 and 44-49. Referring to FIGS. 35 and 49, the anvil insert 222 is connected to the anvil 10. An aperture 230 is defined through the distal end of the anvil insert 222 into the cavity 228 defined within the anvil insert 222, connecting the channel 246 to the cavity 228. The cutter 200 extends through the aperture 230 in the anvil insert 222, such that the distal end of the cutter 200 is positioned within the channel 246 and the proximal end of the cutter 200 is positioned within the cavity 228. A cam 232 is positioned within the cavity 228 above the aperture 230. Alternately, the cam 232 may be positioned differently relative to the aperture 230. The cam 232 is a structure used in controlling the motion of the cutter 200, as is described in greater detail below.

[0099] At least the distal end of the cutter 200 may be biased upward. This biasing may be performed by any appropriate structure or mechanism, such as by one or more springs (not shown). Such a spring or springs may act in compression to push the distal end of the cutter 200 upward, or may act in tension to pull the distal end of the cutter upward. As another example, the cutter 200 may be constructed from an elastic or superelastic material that is formed in such a way as to produce an upward bias. The entire cutter 200 may be biased upward, if desired. At least the distal end of the cutter 200 is biased upward during the translation of the cutter 200 along the anvil arm 14. Alternately, the cutter 200 is not biased, either upward or downward. Instead, the cutter 200 is urged upward and downward

at different locations during its translation by the interaction between at least one cam follower on the cutter 200 and at least the cam 232.

[0100] As shown in FIG. 49, the distal end of the anvil arm 14 is spaced apart from the staple holder 38. The anvil arm 14 is inserted through the wall of the target vessel, as described above, such that the contact surface 206 of the anvil arm 14 is in substantial contact with the inner wall of the target vessel. Next, referring to FIG. 50, the staple holder 38 and anvil 10 are moved relative to one another into the standby position, as described above. In the standby position, the cutter 200 is freed for translation along the channel 246, because the tip 212 of the safety feature 210 no longer engages the safety recess 214 of the cutter 200. At least the distal end of the cutter 200 is biased upward, and the cam 232 limits the upward motion of the cutter 200 by contacting at least a portion of the upper surface 252 of the cutter 200. The cam 232 controls the motion of the distal end of the cutter 200 in the vertical direction as the cutter 200 translates within the channel 246. Because the projection 208 is fixed to the cutter 200, the cam 232 also controls the motion of the projection 208 in the vertical direction, and thus controls the location at which the projection 208 encounters the wall of the target vessel.

[0101] Referring also to FIG. 51, after the cutter 200 has been freed for translation, it is urged distally by the receiver 218 as described above. A first cam follower 242 is defined on the upper surface 252 of the cutter 200. The first cam follower 242 is a raised structure formed into the upper surface 252 of the cutter 200. Alternately, the first cam follower 242 is a separate structure or mechanism constructed separately from the cutter 200 and later connected to the cutter 200. Alternately, the first cam follower 242 may be located on a surface of the cutter 200 in addition to or instead of its upper surface 252, depending on the position and configuration of the cam 232. The first cam follower 242 may be shaped as a trapezoid or similar shape, or may be shaped differently.

[0102] The cam 232 is fixed, and the first cam follower 242 is raised relative to the upper surface 252 of the cutter 200. At least the distal end of the cutter 200 is biased upward. Thus, as the cutter 200 translates distally, the cam 232 engages the first cam follower 242 and causes the cutter 200 to move downward. The cam 232 and the first cam follower 242 are shaped to smoothly engage each other. Alternately, the first cam follower 242 is shaped to induce the cutter 200 to abruptly move downward when the first cam follower 242 initially encounters the cam 232. The height of the first cam follower 242 relative to the contact surface 206 of the anvil arm 14 determines the distance that the distal end of the cutter 200 is moved downward. As described above, the cutter 200 may include a keel 264 or similar projection extending downward. As the distal end of the cutter 200 moves downward, the keel 264 or other projection moves into the first lower opening 254. In this embodiment, the first lower opening 254 does not control the motion of the cutter 200; instead, it provides a space for the keel 264 to move downward without interfering with the vertical motion of the distal end of the cutter 200. If the keel 264 is omitted, the first lower opening 254 and the second lower opening 268 may be omitted as well.

[0103] The connection between the graft vessel and the target vessel substantially defines a closed area, and the

projection 208 is configured to engage the wall of the target vessel within that closed area. That is, the end of the graft vessel has a perimeter that contacts the side of the target vessel, such that the perimeter of the end of the graft vessel defines a closed area on the wall of the target vessel. In this way, the projection 208 makes an incision completely within the connection between the graft vessel and the target vessel, completing the anastomosis between the two vessels and minimizing or eliminating leakage at the anastomosis site. While the projection 208 on the cutter 200 remains below the contact surface 206 of the anvil arm 14, it neither engages nor cuts the wall of the target vessel. Thus, the first cam follower 242 is sized to translate the tip of the projection 208 below the contact surface 206 of the anvil arm 14 for a selected distance such that the projection 208 does not engage the tissue of the target vessel until the projection 208 is positioned to enter the closed area on the wall of the target vessel defined by the perimeter of the end of the graft vessel.

[0104] Referring also to FIG. 52, the cutter 200 continues to advance distally as the receiver 218 continues to impel the engagement feature 216 distally. Thus, the first cam follower 242 of the cutter 200 advances distally relative to the cam 232. As described above, at least the distal end of the cutter 200 is biased upward. The first cam follower 242 decreases in height at its proximal end. Thus, as the upwardly-biased first cam follower 242 moves distally relative to the cam 232, the cam 232 and the first cam follower 242 gradually disengage, causing both the distal end of the cutter 200 and the projection 208 to move upward. The first cam follower 242 is constructed to provide a smooth, gradual upward motion of the distal end of the cutter 200 and the projection 208, such as by providing a gradual slope between an upper surface 250 of the first cam follower 242 and an upper surface 252 of the cutter 200. Alternately, the first cam follower 242 may be constructed to allow the distal end of the cutter 200 and the projection 208 to abruptly snap upward as the first cam follower 242 moves distal to the cam 232.

[0105] As the distal end of the cutter 200 moves upward, the projection 208 moves upward through the upper opening 248 in the anvil arm 14. The contact surface 206 of the anvil arm 14 is adjacent to the inner surface of the wall of the target vessel. Thus, upward motion of the projection 208 through the upper opening 248 causes the projection 208 to enter the wall of the target vessel. The projection 208 is sized, and the first cam follower 242 and cam 232 are shaped, such that the upward motion of the projection 208 after the first cam follower 242 has moved distal to the cam 232 causes the projection 208 to completely penetrate through the wall of the target vessel. That is, at least a portion of the projection 208 passes through the wall of the target vessel and enters the lumen. This initial penetration of the wall of the target vessel defines the starting point of an arteriotomy performed on the target vessel by the projection 208. The starting point of the arteriotomy is spaced apart from the location on the target vessel at which the anvil arm 14 is inserted, resulting in a tissue bridge therebetween.

[0106] Referring also to FIG. 53, the cutter 200 continues to advance distally as the receiver 218 continues to impel the engagement feature 216 distally. The upper surface 252 of the cutter 200 may contact the cam 232 during this motion, because the distal end of the cutter 200 continues to be biased upward. As the cutter 200 translates, the projection

208 moves through the tissue of the wall of the target vessel in a direction substantially parallel to the longitudinal centerline of the anvil arm 14. In this way, the projection 208 incises the tissue of the wall of the target vessel to create an arteriotomy. The tip of the projection 208 may maintain substantially the same height relative to the contact surface 206 of the anvil arm 14 during its distal translation, or may change its height relative to the contact surface 206 of the anvil arm 14, as long as the tip of the projection 208 remains in the lumen of the target vessel during that translation.

[0107] Referring also to FIG. 54, a second cam follower 244 is defined on the upper surface 252 of the cutter 200, proximal to and spaced apart from the first cam follower 242. Alternately, a single cam follower is defined on the upper surface 252 of the cutter 200, where that single cam follower includes a feature corresponding to the first cam follower 242, a feature corresponding to the second cam follower 244, and a section of reduced height between them corresponding to the upper surface 252 of the cutter 200. The cutter 200 continues to advance distally as the receiver 218 continues to impel the engagement feature 216 distally. As a result of this motion, the second cam follower 244 contacts the cam 232. Engagement between the second cam follower 244 and the cam 232 pushes the distal end of the cutter 200 downward. The shape and size of the second cam follower 244 and cam 232 are selected such that the distal end of the cutter 200 is pushed downward far enough to cause the projection 208 to retract into the upper opening 248. The projection 208 may be urged downward completely into the channel 246, depending on the depth of the channel 246 and the height of the projection 208. Alternately, the upper tip of the projection 208 may remain within the upper opening 248. The cutter 200 may stop its distal translation at substantially the same time that the projection 208 retracts completely into the upper opening 248, or may continue to translate distally within the channel 246 before coming to a stop.

[0108] When the projection 208 is retracted out of the tissue of the wall of the target vessel, the distal end of the arteriotomy is defined, and the arteriotomy is complete. The distance between the first cam follower 242 and the second cam follower 244, and the shape of the cam followers 242, 244, determine the length of the arteriotomy. That is, each cam follower 242, 244 includes a location thereon having a height relative to the upper surface 252 of the cutter 200 sufficient to cause the projection 208 to be pushed out of contact with the wall of the target vessel. The distance between these locations defines the length of the arteriotomy. Thus, the cam followers 242, 244 control the motion of the projection 208 and control the penetration of the wall of the target vessel.

[0109] After performing the arteriotomy, the cutter 200 is in a distally-extended position. The cutter 200 remains in that position as the anvil arm 14 is removed from the target vessel. The anvil arm 14 is removed from the target vessel after the anastomosis between the graft vessel and the target vessel has been completed. Alternately, after performing the arteriotomy, the cutter 200 may be moved proximally within the channel 246 before removing the anvil arm 14 from the target vessel. The hole at the puncture site and its closure are substantially as described above.

[0110] Alternately, in the embodiment of FIGS. 34-35 and 44-49, or the embodiment of FIGS. 50-54, the cutter 200 is

initially in a distally-extended position, and retracted proximally in order to make an incision in the wall of the target vessel. The structures and mechanisms are as described above, but operated in substantially the reverse order as described above. Alternately, the cutter 200 and the projection 208 may be moved in a different way in order to incise the tissue of the wall of the target vessel.

[0111] Where multiple projections 208 are provided on the cutter 200 as shown in FIGS. 39-43, the cutter 200 need not be translated as far to make an incision in the wall of the target vessel as it would if only a single projection were used. Because the projections 208 are spaced apart from each other along the direction of translation of the cutter 200, each projection 208 is able to form a portion of the incision during translation of the cutter 200. Thus, by translating each projection 208 across a distance less than the intended length of the entire incision, the complete incision can be formed. The distance that the cutter 200 is translated to form the incision is related to the distance between the projections 208. That is, because each projection 208 forms a portion of the incision, no single projection 208 need be translated along the entire length of the incision.

[0112] Alternately, where multiple projections 208 are utilized, the projections 208 may be inserted into the wall of the target vessel, after which energy is applied to the projections 208 via the cutter 200 or directly in order to create an incision in the wall of the target vessel. In such an embodiment, an energy source (not shown) is connected to the cutter 200. For example, an ultrasound generator (not shown) may be connected to the cutter 200 and to the energy source. The ultrasound generator may be a piezoelectric crystal, as is standard, or a different structure or mechanism. Electrical energy may be applied to the ultrasound generator from the energy source, thereby causing the ultrasound generator to vibrate the projections 208. Thus, energy may be applied from the energy source to the ultrasound generator after the projections 208 have been inserted into the wall of the target vessel, causing the projections 208 to move and thereby create an incision. Advantageously, a plurality of projections 208 spaced relatively close to one another are utilized. Other methods may be used to vibrate, move or oscillate the projections 208. FIGS. 17-23 illustrate an alternate anvil 100 that is used with a clamp 102 for controlling an incision site during an anastomosis procedure. As shown in FIGS. 17 and 18, the anvil 100 includes an anvil arm 104 and a handle 106. The clamp 102 is slidable on the handle 106 to clamp the tissue of the target vessel 30 between the clamp 102 and the anvil arm 104. As with the anvil arm 104 described above, the anvil arm 104 includes two rows of staple bending features 108 in the form of recesses positioned in two parallel rows along a top surface of the anvil arm 104. The clamp 102 has a central opening 110. Once the tissue of the target vessel wall has been trapped between the clamp 102 and the anvil arm 104, an incision may be made through the target vessel wall and the edges of the incision are controlled by the combination of the anvil arm 104 and the clamp 102.

[0113] As shown in FIG. 19, a continuous anastomosis staple device 114 may be used to connect the graft vessel 32 to the target vessel 30 at the anastomosis site. The staple device 114 as shown in FIG. 19 includes a plurality of linkages forming a tubular configuration and a plurality of staple ends extending from the linkages. FIGS. 20-22 illus-

trate how the staple ends 116 of the staple device 114 are positioned in the end of the graft vessel 32 and are inserted through the incision 118 in the target vessel and bent over by contact with the staple bending features 108 of the anvil. As shown in FIG. 22, the opposite ends 120 of the staple device 114 are folded over to complete the anastomosis. FIG. 23 illustrates a completed anastomosis performed according to the steps illustrated in FIGS. 19-22.

[0114] FIGS. 24-27 illustrate an alternate example of an anvil arm 14d having a cutting wire 124 for forming the incision in the wall of the target vessel 30. The cutting wire 124 may be used to form an incision before, during or after performing an end-to-side anastomosis procedure. Referring particularly to FIGS. 26-27, for forming the incision after the anastomosis procedure, a clamp 126 is used to trap the tissue at the anastomosis site between the clamp 126 and the anvil arm 14d prior to performing the incision. The incision is spaced apart from the entry point of the anvil arm 14d into the target vessel, creating a tissue bridge between the incision made in the wall of the target vessel and the entry point of the anvil arm 14d into the target vessel. A portion of the contact between the anastomosed graft vessel and target vessel extends across the tissue bridge, such that the incision is located within the closed area defined by the contact between the perimeter of the end of the graft vessel and the wall of the target vessel.

[0115] FIG. 28 shows a system 140 for controlling a tissue site and performing anastomosis. For purposes of clarity, the staple holder and staples have been omitted from FIG. 28. The system 140 includes an anvil arm 142, a cutter 144, and a graft vessel holder 146 all mounted on a handle 148. The anvil arm 142 is mounted on the handle 148 and connected to a first actuator 150 that allows the anvil to be moved downward against the bias of a spring inside the handle. The cutter 144 may be spring biased or fixed and is positioned on the handle 148 directly above the anvil arm 142. The graft vessel holder 146 includes two fixed arms 152 and two movable arms 154. The two movable arms 154 are connected to a second actuator 156 on the handle 148. Depression of the second actuator 156 against the bias of a spring within the handle causes the movable arms 154 to be moved downward away from the fixed arms to receive portions of a graft vessel between the movable and fixed arms.

[0116] The operation of the system 140 of FIG. 28 is shown in the cross sectional views of FIGS. 29-31. As shown in FIG. 29, an end of a graft vessel 32 is split so that each half of the graft vessel 32 can be held between a fixed arm 152 and a movable arm 154. In order to load the graft vessel 32 into the system 140, the first actuator 150 and the second actuator 156 are depressed to move the anvil arm 142 and the movable arms 154 downward. The split graft vessel 32 is then inserted between the fixed and movable arms 152, 154 and the second actuator 156 is released to trap the ends of the graft vessel 32, as shown in FIG. 30. The anvil arm 142 is then inserted into the target vessel 30 in the same or similar manner as described above.

[0117] Once the anvil has been inserted in the target vessel 30 as shown in FIG. 30, the first actuator 150 is released to allow the anvil to move upward to tent the wall of the target vessel. FIG. 31 illustrates the tented target vessel 30 positioned adjacent the split and trapped graft vessel 32 in a position for performing anastomosis. The staple holders 38

are then advanced in the direction of the arrows D toward opposite sides of the anvil to staple the graft vessel and target vessel together. The staple holders **38** may hold a staple strip with an expandable backbone as shown in FIGS. **10A** and **10B**, or may instead or additionally hold different types of staples not connected to a backbone. The staple holders **38** may be provided with movable pins which allow the spacing between the staples to be adjusted depending on a size of the graft vessel used. Once the staples have been placed, the anvil arm **142** is removed and the cutter **144** makes an incision in the target vessel before or during removal of the anvil.

[**0118**] As described above, staple bending features are provided on the anvil and staples are provided at an exterior of the tissue. Alternately, the staples and/or staple holding strips may be positioned on the anvil and an exterior member with staple bending features may be moved toward the anvil to bend the ends of the staples and secure the graft and target vessels together.

[**0119**] FIGS. **32-33** illustrate the use of an alternate anvil **130** for controlling the tissue at an anastomosis site. The anvil **130** includes a longitudinal opening **132** extending through the anvil **130** for application of a plurality of conventional sutures at the anastomosis site. According to this method, the anvil **130** is inserted into the target vessel **30** and pulled against the interior wall of the target vessel **30**, tenting the target vessel as shown in FIG. **33**. Sutures **134** are then passed through the opening **132** in the anvil **130** and through the tissue of the target vessel wall on opposite sides of the anvil **130**. Once the sutures **134** are placed as shown in FIG. **33**, an incision is made in the target vessel along a center of the anvil **130**. A center portion of each of the sutures **34** is then pulled out through the incision in the target vessel and cut so that an even row of sutures is provided along each of the sides of the incision. This system eliminates the tedious procedure of placing each individual suture very close to the edge of the incision in the very thin and flexible target vessel wall. Each of the sutures **134** is connected to a graft vessel in a conventional manner completing the anastomosis. The anvil as shown in FIGS. **32-33** allows quick and easy placement of a plurality of sutures in a very even manner close to the edge of the incision. For example, the sutures of a conventional anastomosis are generally within about one millimeter of the edge of the incision and are advantageously within 0.5 millimeters of the edge of the incision.

[**0120**] In an alternate embodiment, the cutter **200** does not include one or more projections **208**. Instead, the cutter **200** includes or is connected directly or indirectly to an energy source (not shown), which is used to create an opening in the wall of the target vessel. For example, an emitter of laser or RF energy, or another type of energy, may be connected to the cutter **200** and to the energy source. As the cutter **200** translates along the anvil arm **14**, it translates the emitter of laser or RF energy relative to the wall of the target vessel. The emitter of laser or RF energy is selectively actuated to transmit energy into the wall of the target vessel during translation of the cutter **200**, thereby creating an opening therein. The energy source may transmit a first type of energy to the emitter or other mechanism, which is converted by the emitter into a second type of energy delivered into the wall of the target vessel. Alternately, the cutter **200** may include a projection **208** and additionally be connected

to an energy source that is selectively actuated in order to assist in creating an opening in the wall of the target vessel.

[**0121**] In an alternate embodiment, the cutter **200** does not translate through the anvil arm **14**. Instead, the cutter **200** is spatially removed from the anvil arm **14**, and creates an opening in the wall of the target vessel before or after the anvil arm **14** is inserted into the target vessel. In one example of such an embodiment, the anvil arm **14** is inserted into a hole in the wall of the target vessel and the staple holder **38** deploys staples or other connectors to connect the graft vessel to the target vessel, as described above. The anvil arm **14** is removed, and an independent cutter **200** is then introduced through the hole in the wall of the target vessel. The cutter **200** may be configured as described above, including a projection **208** extending therefrom, or may be configured differently. The cutter **200** is manipulated relative to the connection between the target vessel and the graft vessel to create an opening at the junction therebetween. That is, registration is maintained between the cutter **200** and the junction between the end of the graft vessel and the wall of the target vessel. In order to position and manipulate the cutter **200** to create an opening at the location of the junction between the target vessel and the graft vessel, an imaging device (not shown) or other device may be connected to the cutter **200** or utilized in conjunction with the cutter **200**. For example, a standard intravascular ultrasound unit may be connected to or used in conjunction with the cutter **200**. The intravascular ultrasound unit is connected to a display device (not shown) visible to the operator. The operator controls the intravascular ultrasound unit to visualize the interior of the target vessel and the surrounding area, thereby locating the junction between the target vessel and the graft vessel and allowing the cutter **200** to be controlled to incise an opening in the wall of the target vessel within the closed area on the wall of the target vessel defined by the perimeter of the end of the graft vessel, thereby allowing blood to flow through the opening into the target vessel. A different visualization device or devices may be inserted into or positioned outside of the target vessel to locate the junction with the graft vessel. The cutter **200** and any visualization device present in the lumen of the target vessel are then removed from the lumen of the target vessel, and the opening in the wall of the target vessel through which they were removed is sealed.

[**0122**] In another example of such an embodiment, the anvil arm **14** is inserted into a hole in the wall of the target vessel and the staple holder **38** deploys staples or other connectors to connect the graft vessel to the target vessel, as described above. The anvil arm **14** is removed, and the hole in the wall of the target vessel is removed. A cannula (not shown) is inserted into the lumen of the graft vessel through the free end of the graft vessel, and a stylet (not shown) is inserted through the lumen of the cannula. The cannula and the stylet are surgical instruments that are well known in the art. The stylet has a distal end configured to penetrate the wall of the target vessel. Thus, a sharp point, blade, or other penetrating member may be formed into or connected to the distal end of the stylet. The cannula may be inserted into the lumen of the graft vessel such that its distal end contacts the outer wall of the target vessel. After the stylet has been inserted into the cannula, a force is exerted on the stylet to cause its distal end to penetrate the wall of the target vessel. Consequently, an opening is created between the graft vessel and the target vessel within the circumference of the end of

the graft vessel. The cannula and stylet are then removed from the lumen of the graft vessel through its free end.

[0123] In another example of such an embodiment, the anvil arm 14 is inserted into a hole in the wall of the target vessel and the staple holder 38 deploys staples or other connectors to connect the graft vessel to the target vessel, as described above. The anvil arm 14 is removed, and the hole in the wall of the target vessel is closed. An independent cutter 200 is then introduced through the wall of the graft vessel. The cutter 200 itself may create an opening in the wall of the graft vessel through which it can enter, or a separate implement may be used to create an opening in the wall of the graft vessel. The cutter 200 may be configured as described above, including a projection 208 extending therefrom, or may be configured differently. For example, the cutter 200 may be J-shaped or L-shaped to facilitate creation of the opening between the graft vessel and the target vessel through the wall of the graft vessel. The cutter 200 is manipulated relative to the connection between the target vessel and the graft vessel to create an opening in the wall of the target vessel at the junction therebetween. That is, registration is maintained between the cutter 200 and the junction between the end of the graft vessel and the wall of the target vessel. The cutter 200 is then removed through the wall of the graft vessel, and the opening in the wall of the graft vessel is sealed.

[0124] While the invention has been described in detail, it will be apparent to one skilled in the art that various changes and modifications can be made and equivalents employed, without departing from the present invention. It is to be understood that the invention is not limited to the details of construction, the arrangements of components, and/or the steps of performing anastomosis set forth in the above description or illustrated in the drawings. Therefore, the invention is not to be restricted or limited except in accordance with the following claims and their legal equivalents.

What is claimed is:

1. A surgical tool for performing anastomosis between a graft vessel and a target vessel, comprising:
 - an anvil;
 - a cutting element connected to said anvil; and
 - an energy source connected to said cutting element, wherein said energy source is configured to deliver energy to said cutting element.
2. The surgical tool of claim 1, wherein said cutting element is configured to vibrate upon delivery of energy thereto.
3. The surgical tool of claim 1, wherein said cutting element further comprises an emitter connected to said energy source.
4. The surgical tool of claim 3, wherein said emitter is configured to emit laser energy upon delivery of energy thereto.
5. The surgical tool of claim 3, wherein said emitter is configured to emit radio frequency energy upon delivery of energy thereto.
6. The surgical tool of claim 1, wherein said cutting element is movably connected to said anvil.
7. The surgical tool of claim 6, wherein said anvil includes a channel defined therein, wherein said cutting element is movable within and along said channel.

8. The surgical tool of claim 7, wherein said cutting element includes at least one projection extending generally upward.

9. The surgical tool of claim 8, wherein at least one said projection is movable upward, then along, then downward relative to said channel.

10. A method for performing anastomosis between a graft vessel and a target vessel, each vessel having a lumen therein, comprising:

- placing an end of the graft vessel against a side of the target vessel;
- creating an opening in the wall of the target vessel at a first location;
- inserting an anvil through the opening from outside the wall of the target vessel into the lumen of the target vessel;
- creating an incision in the wall of the target vessel, the incision spaced apart from the first location; and
- connecting the graft vessel to the target vessel.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein said creating an incision is performed by translating a cutting element relative to said anvil.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein said placing an end of the graft vessel against a side of the target vessel defines a closed area on the side of the target vessel, and said incising is performed by controlling said cutting element to position said incision entirely within the closed area.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein said controlling is performed by biasing said cutting element upward and providing at least one control element on the upper surface of said cutting element.

14. The method of claim 12, wherein said controlling is performed by biasing said cutting element downward and providing at least one control element on the lower surface of said cutting element.

15. The method of claim 11, wherein said anvil includes a channel defined therein, and wherein at least part of said translating comprises translating at least part of said cutting element within and along said channel.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein said cutting element includes at least one projection extending generally upward; further comprises moving said projection to a position completely within said channel after said creating an incision.

17. The method of claim 10, wherein said creating an incision is performed outward from the lumen of the target vessel through the wall of the target vessel.

18. The method of claim 10, wherein said creating an incision is performed by delivering energy from said cutting element to the wall of the target vessel.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein said delivering energy comprises delivering ultrasonic energy.

20. The method of claim 18, wherein said delivering energy comprises delivering laser energy.

21. The method of claim 18, wherein said delivering energy comprises delivering radio frequency energy.