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METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR ENCAPSULATING A RIGID INSERT IN A CONTACT LENS FOR CORRECTING VISION IN ASTIGMATIC PATIENTS

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ABSTRACT

The present invention, as described above and as further defined by the claims below, provides methods for forming an Ophthalmic Lens that encapsulates a Rigid Insert, wherein the Rigid Insert may be tailored to correct specific astigmatic characteristics of an eye and apparatus for implementing such methods, as well as Ophthalmic Lenses formed with the Rigid Inserts.

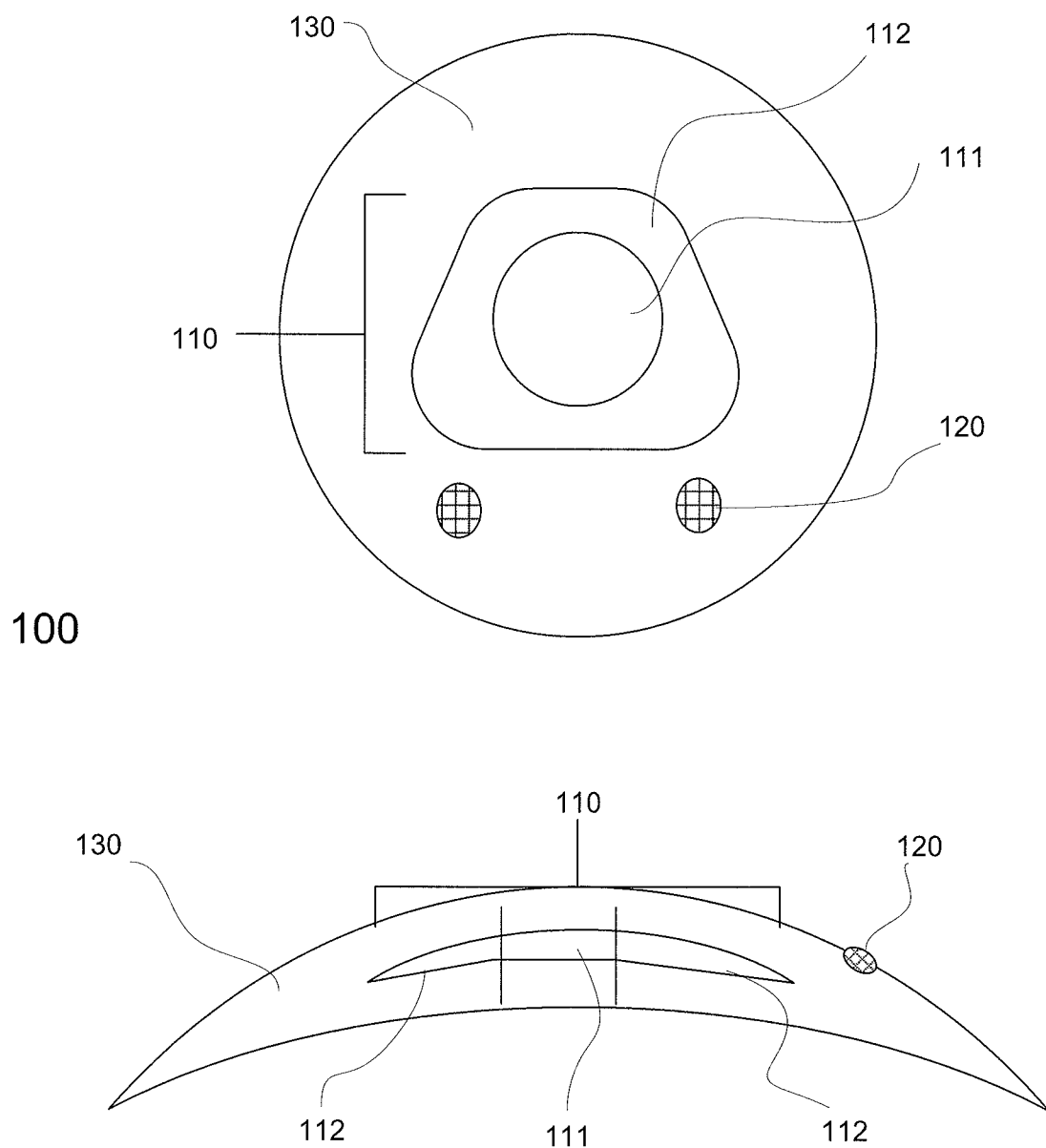


Figure 1

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR ENCAPSULATING A RIGID INSERT IN A CONTACT LENS FOR CORRECTING VISION IN ASTIGMATIC PATIENTS

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] This invention describes methods, apparatus, and devices related to encapsulation aspects related to ophthalmic devices and, more specifically, in some embodiments, the sealing and encapsulation aspects in the fabrication of a contact lens for astigmatism.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Traditionally, an ophthalmic device, such as a Contact Lens or an intraocular Lens, included a biocompatible device with a corrective, cosmetic, or therapeutic quality. A Contact Lens, for example, can provide one or more of vision-correcting functionality, cosmetic enhancement, and therapeutic effects. The physical characteristics of the Ophthalmic Lens provide each function. A design incorporating a refractive quality into an Ophthalmic Lens can provide a vision-corrective function. A pigment incorporated into the Ophthalmic Lens can provide a cosmetic enhancement. An active agent incorporated into an Ophthalmic Lens can provide a therapeutic functionality.

[0003] Astigmatism is a common optical defect that is often the result of irregular or toric curvature of the cornea or lens of the eye. As a result, correcting vision for patients with astigmatism requires a more complex solution than the typical Contact Lens. More recently, it is desirable therefore to have additional methods and apparatus conducive to the formation of Ophthalmic Lenses that may correct vision in astigmatic patients. Recently, Rigid Inserts have been included in Ophthalmic Lenses, wherein the Rigid Insert may add functionality to the Ophthalmic Lens. Novel methods, devices, and apparatus relating to the sealing and encapsulation of a Rigid Insert within an Ophthalmic Lens are therefore important.

SUMMARY

[0004] Accordingly, the present invention includes innovations relating to a method of forming an Ophthalmic Lens with a Rigid Insert. In some embodiments, the front curve mold part may be predosed with a Reactive Monomer Mixture, and the Rigid Insert may be placed on the Reactive Monomer Mixture. The Reactive Monomer Mixture may be precured to fixedly hold the Rigid Insert proximate to the front curve mold, wherein the precuring forms a front curve assembly. In some embodiments, the front curve assembly process may be performed by an automated device.

[0005] The front curve assembly may be postdosed with the Reactive Monomer Mixture, wherein the predosing and the postdosing encapsulates the Rigid Insert. The back curve mold part may be placed proximate to the front curve assembly, wherein the placing forms a front curve and back curve assembly. In some embodiments, the Reactive Monomer Mixture may be precured to fixedly hold the back curve mold proximate to the front curve assembly.

[0006] The Reactive Monomer Mixture may be cured to form the Ophthalmic Lens. The front curve and back curve assembly may then be demolded, and the Ophthalmic Lens may be removed. The Ophthalmic Lens may then be hydrated, for example, by soaking the Ophthalmic Lens in a solution comprising approximately .45% sodium borate for at least an hour at a temperature around 50°C. In some embodiments, the polymerized Reactive Monomer Mixture may comprise a hydrogel, such as, for example, a silicone hydrogel.

[0007] In some embodiments, the Rigid Insert may comprise an adhesion-promoting layer. The Rigid Insert, the Reactive Monomer Mixture, the front curve mold, and the back curve mold may be degassed prior to use in the process, wherein the degassing removes gasses capable of creating lens defects. In some embodiments, a plurality of Ophthalmic Lenses with Rigid Inserts may be formed simultaneously on a pallet.

[0008] The Rigid Insert, in some embodiments, may be capable of correcting astigmatic vision. In such embodiments, the Rigid Insert may comprise a thermoformed material. A Stabilizing Feature may be added to the Reactive Monomer Mixture, wherein the Stabilizing Feature is capable of orienting the Ophthalmic Lens on an eye. The Stabilizing Feature may be aligned with the Rigid Insert, wherein the aligning allows the correction of astigmatic vision when the Ophthalmic Lens orients on the eye. In some embodiments, the Rigid Insert may include the Stabilizing Feature, such as, for example, through thermoforming processes. In other embodiments, the Stabilizing Feature may be an injectable material comprising a different swellable index from the Reactive Monomer Mixture.

[0009] The Stabilizing Feature may alter a front curve surface of the Ophthalmic Lens, or may add mass to the Ophthalmic Lens, wherein the mass is sufficient to orient the Ophthalmic Lens on the eye. The Stabilizing Feature may comprise a visual orientation cue, wherein the visual orientation cue comprises a visible coloration or marking.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] FIG. 1 illustrates an exemplary embodiment of an Ophthalmic Lens with a fully encapsulated Rigid Insert, wherein the Ophthalmic Lens may correct vision in astigmatic patients.

[0011] FIG. 2 illustrates an alternate FIG. 1 illustrates exemplary Mold assembly apparatus components that may be useful in implementing some embodiments of the present invention.

[0012] FIG. 3 illustrates exemplary Mold assembly apparatus components that may be useful in implementing some embodiments of the present invention.

[0013] FIG. 4 illustrates method steps for forming a Contact Lens with an encapsulated Rigid Insert according to some embodiments of the present invention.

[0014] FIG. 5 illustrates an example of apparatus components for placing a Rigid Insert into an Ophthalmic Lens Mold part.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0015] The present invention includes methods and apparatus for manufacturing an Ophthalmic Lens with a Rigid Insert, wherein the Rigid Insert corrects vision in astigmatic patients. In addition, the present invention includes the resulting Ophthalmic Lens with the Rigid Insert. In general, according to some embodiments of the present invention, a Rigid Insert may be integrated into an Ophthalmic Lens via automation that places a Rigid Insert in a desired location relative to a Mold part used to fashion the Ophthalmic Lens.

[0016] Currently, Ophthalmic Lenses exist to correct astigmatism. For example, rigid gas permeable lenses may be placed over the cornea, and a tear layer will form between the lens and the eye. The rigid gas permeable lens essentially acts as the new cornea, which may be designed to mimic the curvature of a nonastigmatic eye. This technique is considered masking. However, the typical rigid gas permeable lens is uncomfortable and expensive.

[0017] Soft contact lenses provide a more comfortable and less expensive alternative. Unlike with an RGP, a tear layer may not form between the eye and the lens; so, a soft contact lens may be tailored to mirror the astigmatic characteristics of the eye. The lens may contain varied powers and angles of refraction to correct each portion of the eye. However, because the lens is soft, the lens naturally conforms, to some extent, to shape of the eye. This reduces the effectiveness of the lens, and users often complain of blurriness or double vision.

[0018] The issues with comfort and effectiveness of either solution are exacerbated in patients with severe astigmatism. Accordingly, the present invention provides a novel alternative to correcting vision in astigmatic patients. An Ophthalmic Lens that may include a Rigid Insert is described, and more specifically, where an encapsulated Rigid Insert may provide the correction to astigmatism.

[0019] In the following sections, detailed descriptions of embodiments of the invention will be given. The description of both preferred and alternative embodiments are exemplary embodiments only, and it is understood that to those skilled in the art that

variations, modifications, and alterations may be apparent. It is therefore to be understood that said exemplary embodiments do not limit the scope of the underlying invention.

GLOSSARY

[0020] In this description and claims directed to the presented invention, various terms may be used for which the following definitions will apply:

[0021] Adhesion Promotion: as used herein refers to a process that increases the adhesive tendencies between two surfaces, such as, for example, between a Rigid Insert and an encapsulant.

[0022] Back Curve Piece or Back Insert Piece: as used herein refers to a solid element of a Multi-piece Rigid Insert that, when assembled into the said insert, will occupy a location on the side of the Ophthalmic Lens that is on the back. In an ophthalmic device, such a piece would be located on the side of the insert that would be closer to the wearer's eye surface. In some embodiments, the Back Curve Piece may contain and include a region in the center of an Ophthalmic Device through which light may proceed into the wearer's eye. This region may be called an Optical Zone. In other embodiments, the piece may take an annular shape where it does not contain or include some or all of the regions in an Optical Zone. In some embodiments of an ophthalmic insert, there may be multiple Back Curve Pieces, and one of them may include the Optical Zone, while others may be annular or portions of an annulus.

[0023] Component: as used herein refers to a device capable of drawing electrical current from an Energy Source to perform one or more of a change of logical state or physical state.

[0024] Encapsulate: as used herein refers to creating a barrier to separate an entity, such as, for example, a Media Insert, from an environment adjacent to the entity.

[0025] Encapsulant: as used herein refers to a layer formed surrounding an entity, such as, for example, a Media Insert, that creates a barrier to separate the entity from an environment adjacent to the entity. For example, Encapsulants may be comprised of

silicone hydrogels, such as Etafilcon, Galyfilcon, Narafilcon, and Senofilcon, or other hydrogel contact lens material. In some embodiments, an Encapsulant may be semipermeable to contain specified substances within the entity and preventing specified substances, such as, for example, water, from entering the entity.

[0026] Energized: as used herein refers to the state of being able to supply electrical current to or to have electrical Energy stored within.

[0027] Energy: as used herein refers to the capacity of a physical system to do work. Many uses within this invention may relate to the said capacity being able to perform electrical actions in doing work.

[0028] Energy Source: as used herein refers to a device capable of supplying Energy or placing a biomedical device in an Energized state.

[0029] Energy Harvesters: as used herein refers to device capable of extracting Energy from the environment and convert it to electrical Energy.

[0030] Front Curve Piece or Front Insert Piece: as used herein refers to a solid element of a Multi-piece Rigid Insert that, when assembled into the said insert, will occupy a location on the side of the Ophthalmic Lens that is on the front. In an ophthalmic device, such a piece would be located on the side of the insert that would be further from the wearer's eye surface. In some embodiments, the piece may contain and include a region in the center of an Ophthalmic Device through which light may proceed into the wearer's eye. This region may be called an Optical Zone. In other embodiments, the piece may take an annular shape where it does not contain or include some or all of the regions in an Optical Zone. In some embodiments of an ophthalmic insert, there may be multiple Front Curve Pieces, and one of them may include the Optical Zone, while others may be annular or portions of an annulus.

[0031] Lens-Forming Mixture or Reactive Mixture or Reactive Monomer Mixture (RMM): as used herein refers to a monomer or prepolymer material that can be cured and crosslinked or crosslinked to form an Ophthalmic Lens. Various embodiments may include Lens-Forming Mixtures with one or more additives such as, for example, UV

blockers, tints, photoinitiators or catalysts, and other additives useful in Ophthalmic Lenses such as Contact or intraocular Lenses.

[0032] Lens-Forming Surface: as used herein refers to a surface that is used to mold an Ophthalmic Lens. In some embodiments, any such surface can have an optical quality surface finish, which indicates that it is sufficiently smooth and formed so that an Ophthalmic Lens surface fashioned by the polymerization of a Lens-Forming Mixture in contact with the molding surface is optically acceptable. Further, in some embodiments, the Lens-Forming Surface can have a geometry that is necessary to impart to the Ophthalmic Lens surface the desired optical characteristics, including without limitation, spherical, aspherical and cylinder power, wave front aberration correction, corneal topography correction, or combinations thereof.

[0033] Lithium Ion Cell: as used herein refers to an electrochemical cell where lithium ions move through the cell to generate electrical Energy. This electrochemical cell, typically called a battery, may be Reenergized or recharged in its typical forms.

[0034] Media Insert: as used herein refers to an encapsulated insert that will be included in an energized ophthalmic device. The energization elements and circuitry may be embedded in the Media Insert. The Media Insert defines the primary purpose of the energized ophthalmic device. For example, in embodiments where the energized Ophthalmic Device allows the user to adjust the optic power, the Media Insert may include energization elements that control a liquid meniscus portion in the Optical Zone. Alternatively, a Media Insert may be annular so that the Optical Zone is void of material. In such embodiments, the energized function of the Lens may not be optic quality but may be, for example, monitoring glucose or administering medicine.

[0035] Mold: as used herein refers to a rigid or semi-rigid object that may be used to form Ophthalmic Lenses from uncured formulations. Some preferred Molds include two Mold parts forming a front curve Mold and a back curve Mold.

[0036] Ophthalmic Lens or Ophthalmic Device or Lens: as used herein refers to any device that resides in or on the eye. The device may provide optical correction, may be

cosmetic, or provide some functionality unrelated to optic quality. For example, the term Lens may refer to a contact Lens, intraocular Lens, overlay Lens, ocular insert, optical insert, or other similar device through which vision is corrected or modified, or through which eye physiology is cosmetically enhanced (e.g. iris color) without impeding vision. Alternatively, Lens may refer to a device that may be placed on the eye with a function other than vision correction, such as, for example, monitoring of a constituent of tear fluid or means of administering an active agent. In some embodiments, the preferred Lenses of the invention may be soft contact Lenses that are made from silicone elastomers or hydrogels, which may include, for example, silicone hydrogels and fluorohydrogels.

[0037] Optic Zone: as used herein refers to an area of an Ophthalmic Lens through which a wearer of the Ophthalmic Lens sees.

[0038] Power: as used herein refers to work done or energy transferred per unit of time.

[0039] Precure: as used herein refers to a process that partially cures a mixture. In some embodiments, a precuring process may comprise a shortened period of the full curing process. Alternatively, the precuring process may comprise a unique process, for example, by exposing the mixture to different temperatures and wavelengths of light than may be used to fully cure the material.

[0040] Predose: as used herein refers to the initial deposition of material in a quantity that is less than the full amount that may be necessary for the completion of the process. For example, a predose may include a quarter of the necessary substance.

[0041] Postdose: as used herein refers to a deposition of material in the remaining quantity, after the predose, that may be necessary for the completion of the process. For example, where the predose includes a quarter of the necessary substance, a subsequent postdose may provide the remaining three quarters of the substance.

[0042] Rechargeable or Reenergizable: as used herein refers to a capability of being restored to a state with higher capacity to do work. Many uses within this invention may

relate to the capability of being restored to a state with the ability to flow electrical current at a certain rate for a certain, reestablished time period.

[0043] Recharge or Reenergize: as used herein refers to an act of restoring to a state with higher capacity to do work. Many uses within this invention may relate to restoring a device to a state with the capability to flow electrical current at a certain rate for a certain, reestablished time period.

[0044] Released from a Mold: as used herein refers to an act where an Ophthalmic Lens is either completely separated from the Mold or is only loosely attached so that it can be removed with mild agitation or pushed off with a swab.

[0045] Rigid Insert: as used herein refers to an insert that maintains a predefined topography. When included in a Contact Lens, the Rigid Insert may contribute to the functionality of the Lens. For example, varying topography of or densities within the Rigid Insert may define zones, which may correct vision in users with astigmatism.

[0046] Stabilizing Feature: as used herein refers to a physical characteristic that stabilizes an Ophthalmic Device to a specific orientation on the eye, when the Ophthalmic Device is placed on the eye. In some embodiments, the Stabilizing Feature may add sufficient mass to ballast the Ophthalmic Device. In some embodiments, the Stabilizing Feature may alter the front curve surface, wherein the eyelid may catch the Stabilizing Feature and the user may reorient the Lens by blinking. Such embodiments may be enhanced by including Stabilizing Features that may add mass. In some exemplary embodiments, Stabilizing Features may be a separate material from the encapsulating biocompatible material, may be an insert formed separately from the molding process, or may be included in the Rigid Insert or Media Insert.

[0047] Stacked Integrated Component Devices (SIC-Devices): as used herein refers to the product of packaging technologies that can assemble thin layers of substrates, which may contain electrical and electromechanical devices, into operative integrated devices by means of stacking at least a portion of each layer upon each other. The layers may comprise Component devices of various types, materials, shapes, and sizes. Furthermore,

the layers may be made of various device-production technologies to fit and assume various contours.

SWELLABLE INDEX:

OPHTHALMIC LENSES

[0048] Proceeding to Figure 1, an exemplary embodiment Ophthalmic Lens 100 with a Rigid Insert 110, wherein the Rigid Insert 110 includes physical attributes that correct vision for patients with astigmatism, is illustrated. In some embodiments, a Rigid Insert 110 may mirror the astigmatic characteristics of the eye. For example, the Rigid Insert 110 may include a first zone 111 with a first power and angle of refraction and a second zone 112 with a second power and angle of refraction. In some embodiments, the first zone 111 may not be located exactly in the center of the eye, and the second zone 112 may not be radially symmetrical.

[0049] In such embodiments, Stabilizing Features 120 may be necessary to properly orient the Ophthalmic Lens 100 on the eye. The Stabilizing Features 120 may comprise a material that is different from the encapsulating Reactive Monomer Mixture. In some embodiments, the material for the Stabilizing Features 120 may be placed on a Front Curve Mold Piece prior to placement of the Rigid Insert 110. Alternatively, the material may be injected into the Ophthalmic Lens 100 after the Rigid Insert 110 has been placed between the Front Curve Mold Piece and the Back Curve Mold Piece.

[0050] As shown in cross section, the Stabilizing Feature 120 may orient the Ophthalmic Lens 100 on the eye by adding sufficient mass to anchor the Ophthalmic Lens 100 to prevent rotation on the eye. In some alternative embodiments, the Stabilizing Feature 110 may comprise a material with a different swellable index than the encapsulating RMM. In such embodiments, the Stabilizing Feature 110 may swell during the process of forming the Ophthalmic Lens 100, wherein the swelling allows the Stabilizing Feature 110 to alter the front surface topography of the Ophthalmic Lens 100. When placed on the eye, the eyelid may catch the Stabilizing Feature 110, and the user may reorient the lens by blinking. To further facilitate placement on the eye, the

Stabilizing Feature 110 may contain a tint, wherein the user may see how the Ophthalmic Lens 100 may orient on the eye prior to placement.

[0051] In some embodiments a Rigid Insert may be formed by thermoforming an aligned and held sheet into a three-dimensional shape that may replicates the surface of a thermoforming mold piece. The resulting piece may be cut from the thin sheet of material. By positioning the Rigid Insert within a cavity defined by front and back curve mold pieces and surrounding the insert with Reactive Monomer Mixture an Ophthalmic Lens may be formed. During the process of cutting out insert pieces from thermoforming material, alignment features may be cut into the insert piece such as notches, grooves, or flats for example. These features may be used to align the insert piece or formed ophthalmic insert devices in subsequent processing.

[0052] Proceeding to Figure 2, an alternative embodiment of an Ophthalmic Lens 200 with a Rigid Insert 210, wherein the Rigid Insert 210 includes physical attributes to correct vision in astigmatic patients, is illustrated. In patients with severe astigmatism, the Rigid Insert 210 may include a complex configuration of zones 211-213, wherein each zone 211-213 corrects vision for a specific portion of the eye. The Rigid Insert 210 may be fully encapsulated in the Ophthalmic Lens 200 and may not have direct contact with the eye. Accordingly, in some embodiments, the Rigid Insert 210 may comprise a variety of material, wherein the materials may not be biocompatible. For example, a first zone 211 may include a different material from a second 212 or third 213 zone. The properties of each material may increase the effectiveness of vision correction for each zone 211-213 or the properties alone may be sufficient to correct the astigmatic characteristics. The properties may include, for example, density or refractive index.

[0053] In some embodiments, the Rigid Insert 210 may be formed through a thermoforming process. For example, in embodiments where each zone 211-213 comprises a unique material, a thin sheet may be regionally coated with each material. The thin sheet or a Rigid Insert cut from the thin sheet may be thermoformed to include a Three-dimensional Surface, wherein the topography of Three-dimensional Surface of the Rigid Insert contributes to the correction of the astigmatic characteristics of the eye. In

some embodiments, the Three-dimensional Surface may be sufficient to create the necessary zones 211-213.

[0054] In some embodiments of Ophthalmic Lenses 200 that include Rigid Inserts 210 with multiple zones, and particularly where the Rigid Insert 210 includes complex variation, Stabilizing Features 220 may be included with the Rigid Insert 210. This may allow for precise alignment between the Stabilizing Features 220 and the Rigid Insert 210. In some specific embodiments where the Rigid Insert 210 may be thermoformed, the Rigid Insert may be cut from the thin sheet to include the Stabilizing Features 220, as shown in cross section where the Stabilizing Feature 220 extends from the Rigid Insert 220.

[0055] Similar to Figure 1, the Stabilizing Feature 220 may alter the front surface topography so the user may reorient the Ophthalmic Lens 200 by blinking, or, in some embodiments, the Stabilizing Feature 220 may add sufficient mass to orient the Ophthalmic Lens 200 on the eye. Some other embodiments may include a combination of mass and altered front surface topography. The Stabilizing Features 220 may include further characteristics that may assist the user in properly orienting the Ophthalmic Lens 200. For example, the Stabilizing Feature 220 may include an inscription or tinting to indicate to the user how the Ophthalmic Lens 200 may be placed on the eye.

[0056] In some embodiments, other passive elements may be included with the Rigid Insert 210. In some embodiments, the Rigid Insert 210 may include polarizing elements that may reduce glare, which may increase vision sharpness. In some embodiments, the Rigid Insert 210 may include a printed pattern that may add cosmetic functionality, including a concealment of the zones 211-213 on the Rigid Insert 210. In some embodiments, the Rigid Insert 210 may include an active agent that may dissolve when the Ophthalmic Lens 200 is placed on the eye. Embodiments where the active agent is a medicament may be particularly significant where the astigmatism is caused by damage to the eye.

[0057] Proceeding to Figure 3, exemplary processing steps for forming an Ophthalmic Lens 309 with a Rigid Insert 304, wherein the Rigid Insert 304 is encapsulated and may be capable of correcting astigmatic vision, are illustrated. Exemplary materials

and curing specifications are included in Table 1, but other materials and polymerization techniques may be apparent and are within the scope of the described inventive art. At 310, a front curve Mold 301 may be predosed with Reactive Monomer Mixture 303. In some embodiments, Stabilizing Features 302 may be deposited on the front curve Mold 301 or on the predosed RMM 303.

[0058] At 320, a Rigid Insert 304 may be placed proximate to the front curve Mold 304 and in contact with the predosed RMM, wherein the placement forms a front curve assembly 301-304. In embodiments where the Stabilizing Feature 302 is separate from the Rigid Insert 304, the Rigid Insert 304 may be aligned with the Stabilizing Feature 302 and placed to allow proper orientation of the Ophthalmic Lens 309 when the Ophthalmic Lens 309 is placed on an eye.

[0059] At 330, the front curve assembly 301-304 may be postdosed with Reactive Monomer Mixture 305, wherein the predose amount 303 and the postdose amount 305 may fully encapsulate the Rigid Insert 304 and properly form an Ophthalmic Lens 308. At 340, a back curve Mold 306 may be placed proximate to the front curve Mold 301, wherein the front curve Mold 301 and the back curve Mold 306 may form a lens-forming cavity 308. The lens-forming cavity 308 may combine the postdosed RMM 305 and predosed RMM 303, which may allow the RMM 307 to fully encapsulate the Rigid Insert 304.

[0060] In some embodiments, the RMM 307 may adhere to or at least partially encapsulate the Stabilizing Features 303. The front curve and back curve assembly 301-307 may be polymerized, for example through a curing process, to form the Ophthalmic Lens 309. At 350, the Ophthalmic Lens 309 may be removed from the molding apparatus 301, 306.

Table 1 - Partial Listing of exemplary sealing materials, encapsulating materials and coating materials

Material	Exemplary aspects of utility
Epoxy Systems	One Component – high temp cure, excellent adhesive, biocompatible Two Component – fast cure at ambient, biocompatibility, gap filling
Silicone Systems	One Component – resistance to humidity, high flexibility, Insulation, Optical Clarity Two Component – Strength, Superior Flexibility, biocompatibility
UV Curable Systems	Fast Cure, grades with Flexibility, vapor free
LED Curable Systems	One Component, Low Temperature applications
Polyurethanes	Optical Clarity, Insulation, Flexibility
Polysulfides	Underwater cure, high Strength, high chem resistance
Cyanoacrylates	Biocompatibility, single compound, no outgassing
Elastomeric Systems	Excellent water resistance, Insulation, single compound
Film Adhesives	Preform-ability, excellent insulation characteristics
Hot Melt Systems	Food Contact Grades
Latex Systems	Pressure Sensitive Applications, Food Contact Grades
Polyimides	Photosensitive, Preform-ability, Flexibility
Parylenes (Vapor Phase Film Dep)	Surface Treatment, Insulation, Conformal Application

[0061] Elements may be formed from materials that may or may not be stable in the environments that ophthalmic devices occupy, including, for example, the tear fluid on an ocular surface that contacts the element. The use may include forming encapsulation layers from coatings, including, for example, a parylene family including, but not limited

to, the parylene C, N, and D family elements. In some embodiments, the encapsulation coating may occur before or after application of other adhesive or sealant layers.

METHODS AND MATERIALS FOR INSERT BASED OPHTHALMIC LENSES

[0062] Referring back to Figure 3, exemplary processing steps for forming an Ophthalmic Lens 309 with a Rigid Insert 304, wherein the Rigid Insert 304 is encapsulated and may be capable of correcting astigmatic vision, are illustrated. As used herein, a Mold apparatus 301, 306 may include a plastic formed to shape a lens-forming cavity 308 into which a Lens-Forming Mixture 307 may be dispensed, and, upon reaction or cure of the Lens-Forming Mixture 307, an Ophthalmic Lens 309 of a desired shape is produced. The combination of Mold parts 301, 306 is preferably temporary, wherein, upon formation of the Ophthalmic Lens 309, the Mold parts 301, 306 may be separated for removal, at 350, of the Ophthalmic Lens 309.

[0063] At least one Mold part 301, 306 may have at least a portion of its surface in contact with the Lens-Forming Mixture 307 so that upon reaction or cure of the Lens-Forming Mixture 307 the surface provides a desired shape and form to the portion of the Ophthalmic Lens with which it is in contact. The same is true of at least one other Mold part 301, 306.

[0064] Thus, for example, in an exemplary embodiment a Mold apparatus 301, 306 is formed from two parts 301, 306, a female concave piece (front curve Mold) 301 and a male convex piece (back curve Mold) 306 with a cavity 308 formed between them. The portion of the concave surface that makes contact with a Lens-Forming Mixture 307 has the curvature of the front curve of an Ophthalmic Lens 309.

[0065] Said portion is sufficiently smooth and formed such that the surface of an Ophthalmic Lens 309, formed by polymerization of the Lens-Forming Mixture 307 that is in contact with the concave surface, is optically acceptable. In some embodiments, the front curve Mold 301 may also have an annular flange integral to and surrounding a circular circumferential edge that extends from the front curve Mold 301 in a plane normal to the axis and also extends from the flange (not shown).

[0066] A Lens-Forming Surface can include a surface with an optical-quality surface finish, which indicates that it is sufficiently smooth and formed so that an Ophthalmic Lens surface fashioned by the polymerization of a Lens-Forming Mixture 308 in contact with the molding surface is optically acceptable. Further, in some embodiments, the Lens-Forming Surfaces of the Mold pieces 301, 306 may have a geometry that is necessary to impart to the Ophthalmic Lens surface the desired optical characteristics, including, but not limited to, spherical, aspherical, and cylinder power; wave front aberration correction; corneal topography correction; and combinations thereof. One ordinarily skilled in the art will recognize that characteristics other than those discussed may also be included within the scope of the invention.

[0067] Some additional embodiments include a Rigid Insert 304 that may be fully encapsulated within a hydrogel matrix. A Rigid Insert 304 may be manufactured, for example, using microinjection molding technology. Embodiments can include, for example, a poly(4-methylpent-1-ene) copolymer resin with a diameter of between about 6 mm to 10 mm and a front surface radius of between about 6 mm and 10 mm and a rear surface radius of between about 6 mm and 10 mm and a center thickness of between about 0.050 mm and 0.5 mm. Some exemplary embodiments include an insert with diameter of about 8.9 mm and a front surface radius of about 7.9 mm and a rear surface radius of about 7.8 mm and a center thickness of about 0.100 mm and an edge profile of about 0.050 radius. One exemplary micromolding machine can include the Microsystem 50 five-ton system offered by Battenfield Inc. Some or all of the sealing features, including, but not limited to, grooves, slots, lips, and knife edges may be formed during the molding process or formed later by subsequent processing of the result of the molding process.

[0068] The Rigid Insert 304 may be placed in a Mold part 301, 306 utilized to form an Ophthalmic Lens 308. Mold part 301, 306 material can include, for example, a polyolefin of one or more of the following: polypropylene, polystyrene, polyethylene, polymethyl methacrylate, and modified polyolefins. Other Molds can include a ceramic or metallic material.

[0069] Other Mold materials that may be combined with one or more additives to form an Ophthalmic Lens Mold include, for example, Ziegler-Natta polypropylene resins

(sometimes referred to as znPP); a clarified random copolymer for clean molding as per FDA regulation 21 CFR (c) 3.2; a random copolymer (znPP) with ethylene group.

[0070] Still further, in some embodiments, the Molds of the invention may contain polymers such as polypropylene, polyethylene, polystyrene, polymethyl methacrylate, modified polyolefins containing an alicyclic moiety in the main chain, and cyclic polyolefins. This blend can be used on either or both Mold halves. Preferably, this blend is used on the back curve, and the front curve consists of the alicyclic co-polymers.

[0071] In some preferred methods of making Molds 300 according to the present invention, injection molding is utilized according to known techniques. Embodiments can also include Molds fashioned by other techniques including, for example, lathing, diamond turning, or laser cutting.

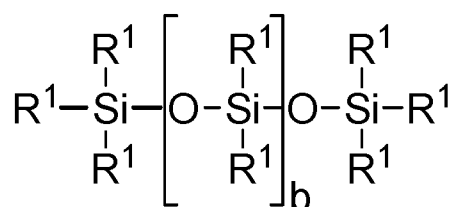
[0072] Typically, Ophthalmic Lenses are formed on at least one surface of both Mold parts 301 and 302. However, in some embodiments, one surface of an Ophthalmic Lens may be formed from a Mold part 301 and 302, and another surface of an Ophthalmic Lens can be formed, for example, using a lathing method.

[0073] In some embodiments, an Ophthalmic Lens type can include an Ophthalmic Lens that includes a silicone-containing Component. A silicone-containing Component is one that contains at least one [-Si-O-] unit in a monomer, macromer, or prepolymer. Preferably, the total silicone and attached oxygen are present in the silicone-containing Component in an amount greater than about 20 weight percent, and more preferably greater than 30 weight percent of the total molecular weight of the silicone-containing Component. Useful silicone-containing Components preferably comprise polymerizable functional groups such as acrylate, methacrylate, acrylamide, methacrylamide, vinyl, N-vinyl lactam, N-vinylamide, and styryl functional groups.

[0074] In some embodiments, the Ophthalmic Lens skirt, also called an insert encapsulating layer, that surrounds the insert may be comprised of standard hydrogel Ophthalmic Lens formulations. Exemplary materials with characteristics that may provide an acceptable match to numerous insert materials may include, but are not limited to, the

Narafilcon family(including Narafilcon A and Narafilcon B), and the Etafilcon family(including Etafilcon A). A more technically inclusive discussion follows on the nature of materials consistent with the art herein. One ordinarily skilled in the art may recognize that other material other than those discussed may also form an acceptable enclosure or partial enclosure of the sealed and encapsulated inserts and should be considered consistent and included within the scope of the claims.

[0075] Suitable silicone-containing Components include compounds of Formula I



wherein R^1 is independently selected from monovalent reactive groups, monovalent alkyl groups, or monovalent aryl groups, any of which may further comprise functionality selected from hydroxy, amino, oxa, carboxy, alkyl carboxy, alkoxy, amido, carbamate, carbonate, halogen or combinations thereof; monovalent siloxane chains comprising 1-100 Si-O repeat units that may further comprise functionality selected from alkyl, hydroxy, amino, oxa, carboxy, alkyl carboxy, alkoxy, amido, carbamate, halogen, or combinations thereof;

where b is 0 to 500, where it is understood that when b is other than 0, b is a distribution having a mode equal to a stated value;

wherein at least one R^1 comprises a monovalent reactive group and, in some embodiments, between one and three R^1 comprise monovalent reactive groups.

[0076] As used herein, monovalent reactive groups are groups that can undergo free radical and/or cationic polymerization. Non-limiting examples of free radical reactive groups include (meth)acrylates, styryls, vinyls, vinyl ethers, C_{1-6} alkyl(meth)acrylates, (meth)acrylamides, C_{1-6} alkyl(meth)acrylamides, N-vinyl lactams, N-vinyl amides, C_{2-12} alkenyls, C_{2-12} alkenylphenyls, C_{2-12} alkenyl naphthyls, C_{2-6} alkenylphenyl C_{1-6} alkyls, O-vinyl carbamates, and O-vinyl carbonates. Non-limiting examples of cationic reactive groups include vinyl ethers or epoxide groups and mixtures thereof. In one embodiment

the free radical reactive groups comprise (meth)acrylate, acryloxy, (meth)acrylamide, and mixtures thereof.

[0077] Suitable monovalent alkyl and aryl groups include unsubstituted monovalent C₁₋₁₆alkyl groups, C₆₋₁₄ aryl groups, such as substituted and unsubstituted methyl, ethyl, propyl, butyl, 2-hydroxypropyl, propoxypropyl, polyethyleneoxypropyl, combinations thereof, and the like.

[0078] In one embodiment b is 0, one R¹ is a monovalent reactive group, and at least three R¹ are selected from monovalent alkyl groups having 1 to 16 carbon atoms or, in another embodiment, from monovalent alkyl groups having 1 to 6 carbon atoms. Non-limiting examples of silicone Components of this embodiment include 2-methyl-, 2-hydroxy-3-[3-[1,3,3,3-tetramethyl-1-[(trimethylsilyl)oxy]disiloxanyl]propoxy]propyl ester ("SiGMA"),

2-hydroxy-3-methacryloxypropyloxypropyl-tris(trimethylsiloxy)silane,
3-methacryloxypropyltris(trimethylsiloxy)silane ("TRIS"),
3-methacryloxypropylbis(trimethylsiloxy)methylsilane, and
3-methacryloxypropylpentamethyl disiloxane.

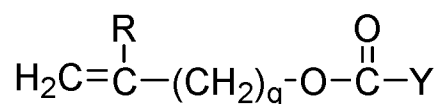
[0079] In another embodiment, b is 2 to 20, 3 to 15 or, in some embodiments, 3 to 10; at least one terminal R¹ comprises a monovalent reactive group and the remaining R¹ are selected from monovalent alkyl groups having 1 to 16 carbon atoms or, in another embodiment, from monovalent alkyl groups having 1 to 6 carbon atoms. In yet another embodiment, b is 3 to 15, one terminal R¹ comprises a monovalent reactive group, the other terminal R¹ comprises a monovalent alkyl group having 1 to 6 carbon atoms, and the remaining R¹ comprise monovalent alkyl group having 1 to 3 carbon atoms. Non-limiting examples of silicone Components of this embodiment include (mono-(2-hydroxy-3-methacryloxypropyl)-propyl ether terminated polydimethylsiloxane (400-1000 MW)) ("OH-mPDMS"), and monomethacryloxypropyl terminated mono-n-butyl terminated polydimethylsiloxanes (800-1000 MW) (mPDMS).

[0080] In another embodiment, b is 5 to 400 or from 10 to 300, both terminal R¹ comprise monovalent reactive groups, and the remaining R¹ are independently selected

from monovalent alkyl groups having 1 to 18 carbon atoms, which may have ether linkages between carbon atoms and may further comprise halogen.

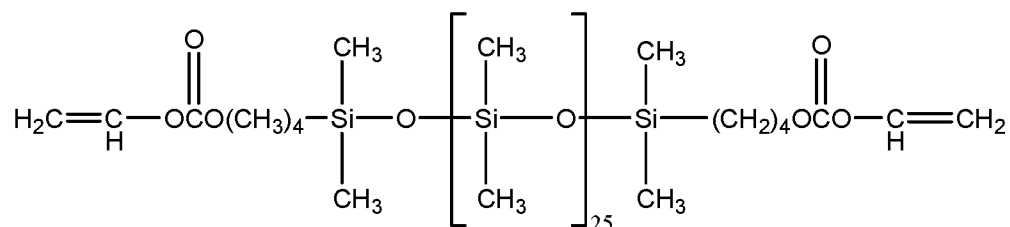
[0081] In one embodiment, where a silicone hydrogel Ophthalmic Lens is desired, the Ophthalmic Lens of the present invention will be made from a Reactive Mixture comprising at least approximately 20 and preferably between approximately 20 and 70 percent weight silicone-containing Components based on total weight of reactive monomer Components from which the polymer is made.

In another embodiment, one to four R^1 comprises a vinyl carbonate or carbamate of Formula II



wherein Y denotes O-, S- or NH-; and R denotes hydrogen or methyl; d is 1, 2, 3, or 4; and q is 0 or 1.

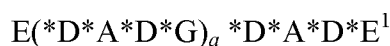
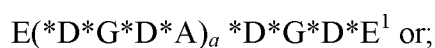
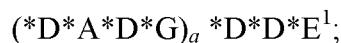
[0082] The silicone-containing vinyl carbonate or vinyl carbamate monomers specifically include 1,3-bis[4-(vinylloxycarbonyloxy)but-1-yl]tetramethyl-disiloxane; 3-(vinylloxycarbonylthio) propyl-[tris (trimethylsiloxy)silane]; 3-[tris(trimethylsiloxy)silyl] propyl allyl carbamate; 3-[tris(trimethylsiloxy)silyl] propyl vinyl carbamate; trimethylsilylethyl vinyl carbonate; trimethylsilylmethyl vinyl carbonate, and



[0083] Where biomedical devices with modulus below approximately 200 are desired, only one R^1 shall comprise a monovalent reactive group and no more than two of the remaining R^1 groups will comprise monovalent siloxane groups.

[0084] Another class of silicone-containing Components includes polyurethane macromers of the following formulae:

Formulae IV-VI



wherein D denotes an alkyl diradical, an alkyl cycloalkyl diradical, a cycloalkyl diradical, an aryl diradical, or an alkylaryl diradical having 6 to 30 carbon atoms;

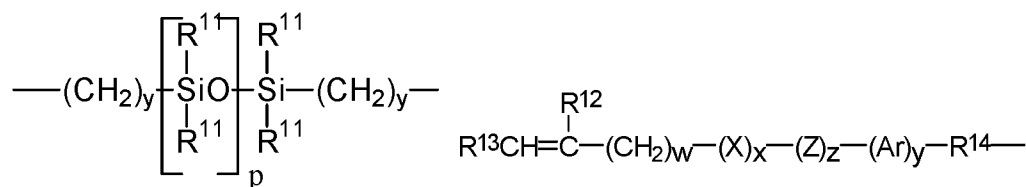
wherein G denotes an alkyl diradical, a cycloalkyl diradical, an alkyl cycloalkyl diradical, an aryl diradical or an alkylaryl diradical having 1 to 40 carbon atoms and which may contain ether, thio or amine linkages in the main chain;

* denotes a urethane or ureido linkage;

$_a$ is at least 1; and

A denotes a divalent polymeric radical of formula:

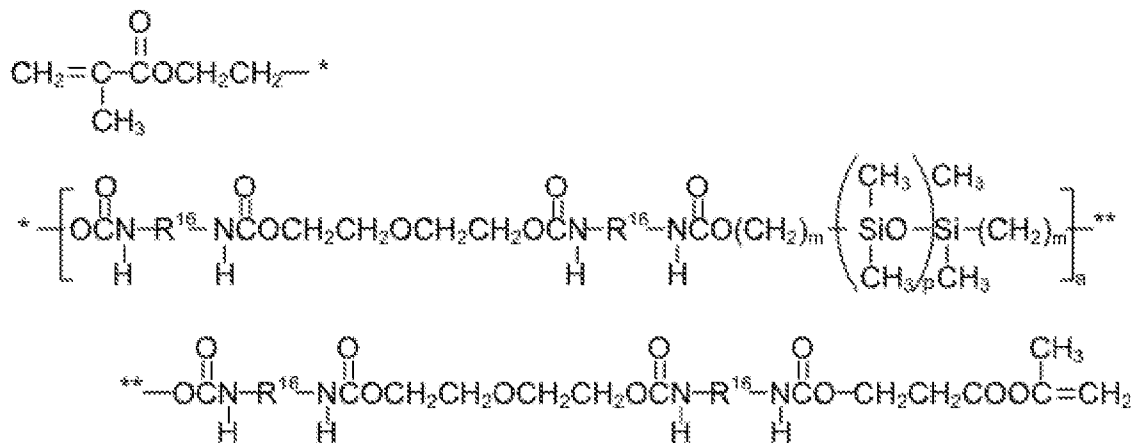
Formula VII



wherein R^{11} independently denotes an alkyl or fluoro-substituted alkyl group having 1 to 10 carbon atoms, which may contain ether linkages between carbon atoms; y is at least 1; and p provides a moiety weight of 400 to 10,000; each of E and E^1 independently denotes a polymerizable unsaturated organic radical represented by Formula VIII

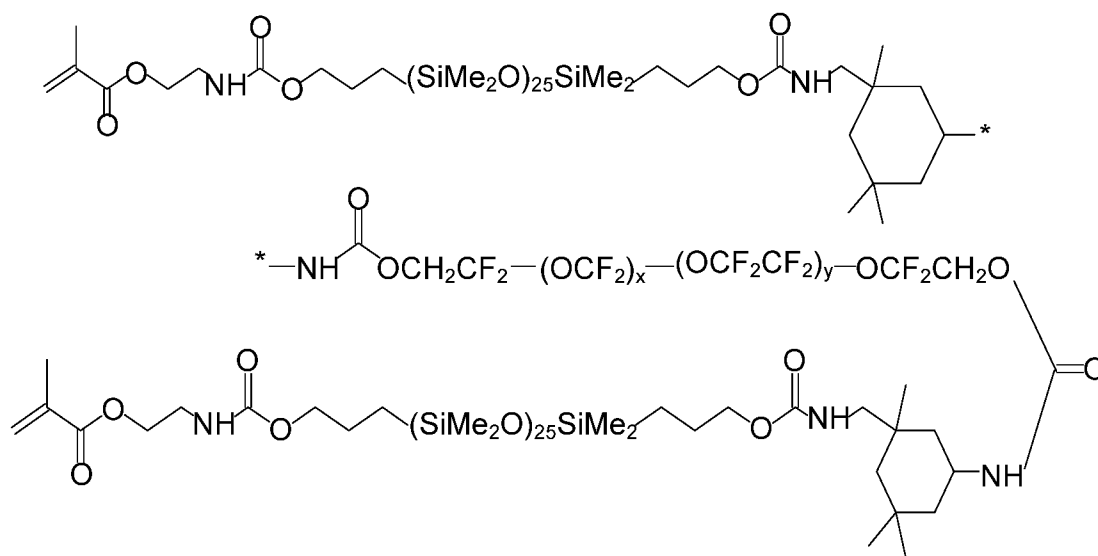
wherein R^{12} is hydrogen or methyl; R^{13} is hydrogen, an alkyl radical having 1 to 6 carbon atoms, or a $\text{---CO---Y---R}^{15}$ radical wherein Y is ---O--- , Y---S--- or ---NH--- ; R^{14} is a divalent radical having 1 to 12 carbon atoms; X denotes ---CO--- or ---OCO--- ; Z denotes ---O--- or ---NH--- ; Ar denotes an aromatic radical having 6 to 30 carbon atoms; w is 0 to 6; x is 0 or 1; y is 0 or 1; and z is 0 or 1.

[0085] A preferred silicone-containing Component is a polyurethane macromer represented by Formula IX (the full structure may be understood by joining corresponding asterisk regions, * to *, ** to **)



wherein R¹⁶ is a diradical of a diisocyanate after removal of the isocyanate group, such as the diradical of isophorone diisocyanate. Another suitable silicone-containing macromer is a compound of formula X (in which x + y is a number in the range of 10 to 30) formed by the reaction of fluoroether, hydroxy-terminated polydimethylsiloxane, isophorone diisocyanate and isocyanatoethylmethacrylate.

[0086] Formula X (the full structure may be understood by joining corresponding asterisk regions, * to *)



[0087] Other silicone-containing Components suitable for use in this invention include macromers containing polysiloxane, polyalkylene ether, diisocyanate, polyfluorinated hydrocarbon, polyfluorinated ether, and polysaccharide groups; polysiloxanes with a polar fluorinated graft or side group having a hydrogen atom attached to a terminal difluoro-substituted carbon atom; hydrophilic siloxanyl methacrylates containing ether and siloxanyl linkages and crosslinkable monomers containing polyether and polysiloxanyl groups. Any of the foregoing polysiloxanes can also be used as the silicone-containing Component in this invention.

PROCESSES

[0088] The following method steps are provided as examples of processes that may be implemented according to some aspects of the present invention. It should be understood that the order in which the method steps are presented is not meant to be limiting and other orders may be used to implement the invention. In addition, not all of the steps are required to implement the present invention and additional steps may be included in various embodiments of the present invention. It may be obvious to one skilled in the art that additional embodiments may be practical, and such methods are well within the scope of the claims.

[0089] Referring now to Figure 4, a flowchart illustrates exemplary steps that may be used to implement the present invention. Throughout the process, plastic-containing components may be degassed prior to implementation of a step utilizing that plastic-containing component. Degassing may remove gas, such as oxygen, or dissolved gasses that may inhibit polymerization or create other lens defects, including gross defects, such as holes or puddles.

[0090] At 405, a Rigid Insert capable of correcting specific astigmatic characteristics of an eye may be formed. The Rigid Insert may include various zones, wherein each zone corrects vision for a specific portion of the astigmatic eye. Prior to inclusion in the molding process, the Rigid Insert may be plasma cleaned.

[0091] At 410, the Rigid Insert may be treated to increase the adhesive tendencies of the Rigid Insert to the encapsulating Reactive Monomer Mixture. In some embodiments, the formation of the Rigid Insert may include the adhesion promoting treatment. The adhesive tendencies between the RMM and the Rigid Insert may be promoted through a vapor deposition, wherein the Rigid Insert is exposed to an adhesion-promoting chemical while stored in a vacuum chamber.

[0092] At 412, the Front Curve Mold may be placed concave side up in a holding plate, including, for example, a pallet. At 415, the Front Curve Mold may be predosed with a Reactive Monomer Mixture. The predose amount and location may be optimized to ensure that the resulting Ophthalmic Lens properly encapsulates the Rigid Insert. For example, too little predose RMM may prevent a full encapsulation, and too much predose RMM may cause the formation of bubbles within the lens-forming cavity. In some preferable embodiments, the predose amount may be approximately 10uL of RMM. Similarly, the placement of the predose in relation to the Rigid Insert may reduce encapsulation issues. For example, placement of the predose on the Front Curve Mold may coincide with the steepest concave point on the Rigid Insert.

[0093] In some embodiments, the molding steps 415-445 may occur in a nitrogen-rich environment, preferably with oxygen content between 0.0% and 0.5%. Accordingly, the components utilized throughout the process may be equilibrated to the environment prior to use.

[0094] In some embodiments, at 417, the Stabilizing Features may be placed proximate to the Front Curve Mold. In some such embodiments, the Stabilizing Features may be placed or deposited directly on the Front Curve Mold. In other embodiments, the Stabilizing Features may be placed or deposited on the predosed RMM. The Stabilizing Features may be placed in a defined location to allow for precise alignment with the Rigid Insert. In other embodiments, the Stabilizing Features may be included in the Ophthalmic Lens after the Front Curve Mold has been fully dosed. In such embodiments, the Stabilizing Features may be injected to a specific position to properly align with the Rigid Insert.

[0095] At 420, the Rigid Insert may be placed proximate to the Front Curve Mold and in contact with the predosed RMM, wherein the placement forms a Front Curve assembly. In some embodiments, the Rigid Insert may be aligned proximate to the Front Curve Mold prior to the predose at 415. In such embodiments, the Rigid Insert may be nested into the Front Curve Mold after the predosing step at 415. In embodiments where the Stabilizing Features are included with the Rigid Insert, the placement Rigid Insert may not require specific alignment on the Front Curve Mold. Alternative embodiments where the Stabilizing Features and Rigid Insert are separately included in the Ophthalmic Lens may require specific alignment between the Rigid Insert and the Front Curve Mold or more specifically the Stabilizing Features.

[0096] In some preferred embodiments, at 420, the Rigid Insert may be placed via mechanical placement. Mechanical placement may include, for example, a robot or other automation, such as, for example, those known in the industry to place surface mount components or a pick and place automated apparatus. Human placement of a Rigid Insert is also within the scope of the present invention. Accordingly, mechanical placement may be effective where it places the Rigid Insert within a Mold part such that the polymerization of a Reactive Mixture contained by the Mold part may include the Rigid Insert in a resultant Ophthalmic Lens.

[0097] In some embodiments, at 425, the RMM may be precured to secure the Rigid Insert for the remaining encapsulation process. For example, the front curve assembly may be precured under a blue cure lamp at 5mW for 2 minutes at an ambient temperature, such as 22°C. Some alternative embodiments may simultaneously perform multiple encapsulation steps. In such embodiments, the precuring step at 425 may not be necessary.

[0098] At 430, the Front Curve assembly may be postdosed with the remaining RMM that may be necessary to fully encapsulate the Rigid Insert and create an Ophthalmic Lens. At 435, the Back Curve Mold may be placed proximate to the Front Curve assembly, wherein the placement forms a cavity between the Back Curve Mold and the Front Curve Mold. The lens-forming cavity may define the shape of the Ophthalmic Lens, and the RMM may fully encapsulate the Rigid Insert within the cavity.

[0099] In some embodiments, at 440, the Front and Back Curve assembly may be precured to an extent that may reinforce the assembly. The precure at 440 may prevent shifting or tilting of the components of the Front and Back Curve assembly during the full curing process. The precure may be a short process occurring immediately after the full construction of the Front and Back Curve assembly.

[0100] At 445, the Front and Back Curve assembly may be fully cured. The Reactive Monomer Mixture within the cavity may be polymerized. Polymerization may be accomplished, for example, via exposure to one or both of actinic radiation and heat. The parameters of the curing process may be defined by the specific chemistry of the RMM and the Rigid Insert. For example, exposure to radiation may cure the RMM, but the radiation may degrade or affect the integrity of the Rigid Insert. In some embodiments, the cure time may be extended to allow for tolerable curing conditions.

[0101] At 450, the Front and Back Curve assembly may be demolded. In some embodiments, at 450, the Front and Back Curve assembly may be demolded by separating the Front Curve Mold from the Back Curve Mold. Some embodiments may pull the Front Curve Mold from the assembly, others may pull the Back Curve Mold from the assembly, and still others may simultaneously pull the Front Curve Mold and the Back Curve Mold. The pulled mold may define how the Ophthalmic Lens may be removed from the demolded assembly.

[0102] At 455, the Ophthalmic Lens with the Rigid Lens may be removed from the demolded Front and Back Curve assembly. After demolding, the Ophthalmic Lens may remain attached to either the Front Curve Mold or the Back Curve Mold. In some embodiments, the Ophthalmic Lens may remain on the Mold part that is not pulled during the demolding process at 450.

[0103] In some embodiments, the Mold part that includes the Ophthalmic Lens may be manipulated to release the Ophthalmic Lens. The manipulation may include, for example, bending the Mold part, and may allow for easier removal of the Ophthalmic Lens. In some embodiments, the Mold part that includes the Ophthalmic Lens may be agitated. The removal process at 455 may occur while the Mold part and the Ophthalmic

Lens are submerged in a solution, for example, a temperature-controlled bath. Submerging the Ophthalmic Lens and Mold part in an aqueous solution may allow for partial swelling of the Ophthalmic Lens, which may facilitate removal from the Mold part.

[0104] In embodiments where the Ophthalmic Lens remains on the Front Curve Mold, removal of the Ophthalmic Lens may require additional steps. For example, solution may be injected at the edges of the Lens to lift the Ophthalmic Lens from the surface of the Front Curve Mold.

[0105] At 460, the Ophthalmic Lens may be hydrated. The hydration process at 460 may allow the Ophthalmic Lens to be compatible with an eye, wherein the functionality of the Ophthalmic Lens including the Rigid Insert may depend on said compatibility. In some embodiments, the hydration process may comprise multiple stages to ensure proper swelling of the Ophthalmic Lens. For example, the first stage may include soaking the Ophthalmic Lens in a solution with around .45% sodium borate at 50°C for one hour. The second stage may repeat the conditions of the first stage with fresh solution. The third and final stage may include soaking the Ophthalmic Lens in a solution at room temperature.

[0106] At 465, the Ophthalmic Lens may be packaged in a sealed container. The sealed container may prevent exposure to air and may include a solution to prevent drying of the Ophthalmic Lens before use.

[0107] Although the invention may be used to provide hard or soft Contact Lenses made of any known Ophthalmic Lens material, or material suitable for manufacturing such Ophthalmic Lenses, preferably, the Ophthalmic Lenses of the invention are soft Contact Lenses having water contents of approximately 0 to 90 percent. More preferably, the Ophthalmic Lenses are made of monomers containing either or both hydroxy groups and carboxyl groups, or be made from silicone-containing polymers, such as siloxanes, hydrogels, silicone hydrogels, and combinations thereof. Material useful for forming the Ophthalmic Lenses of the invention may be made by reacting blends of macromers, monomers, and combinations thereof along with additives such as polymerization

initiators. Suitable materials include, without limitation, silicone hydrogels made from silicone macromers and hydrophilic monomers.

APPARATUS

[0108] Referring now to Figure 5, an embodiment 500 of an automated apparatus 510 is illustrated with one or more insert 514 transfer interfaces 511. As illustrated, multiple Mold parts, each with an associated insert 514, are contained on a pallet 512 and presented to a media transfer interface 511. Embodiments can include a single interface individually placing Rigid Inserts 514 or multiple interfaces (not shown) simultaneously placing Rigid Inserts 514 in multiple Mold parts, and in some embodiments, in each Mold.

[0109] Another aspect of some embodiments includes apparatus to support the Rigid Insert 514 while the body of the Ophthalmic Lens is molded around these Components. The holding points may be affixed with polymerized material of the same type that will be formed into the Ophthalmic Lens body.

CONCLUSION

[0110] The present invention, as described above and as further defined by the claims below, provides methods for forming an Ophthalmic Lens that encapsulates a Rigid Insert, wherein the Rigid Insert may be tailored to correct specific astigmatic characteristics of an eye and apparatus for implementing such methods, as well as Ophthalmic Lenses formed with the Rigid Inserts.

[0111] Throughout this specification and the claims which follow, unless the context requires otherwise, the word "comprise", and variations such as "comprises" and "comprising", will be understood to imply the inclusion of a stated integer or step or group of integers or steps but not the exclusion of any other integer or step or group of integers or steps.

[0112] The reference to any prior art in this specification is not and should not be taken as an acknowledgement or any form of suggestion that the prior art forms part of the common general knowledge in Australia.

CLAIMS

1. A method of forming an ophthalmic lens with a rigid insert, the method comprising the steps of:

depositing an initial amount of reactive monomer mixture into a front curve mold part, wherein the initial amount of reactive monomer mixture is less than an amount necessary for formation of the ophthalmic lens;

placing the rigid insert on the initial amount of reactive monomer mixture;

precuring the initial amount of reactive monomer mixture to fixedly hold the rigid insert proximate to the front curve mold part, wherein the precuring forms a front curve assembly;

depositing an additional amount of reactive monomer mixture necessary for formation of the ophthalmic lens into the front curve assembly, wherein the initial and additional amounts of reactive monomer mixture encapsulate the rigid insert;

placing a back curve mold part proximate to the front curve assembly;

curing the initial and additional amounts of reactive monomer mixture to form the ophthalmic lens;

demolding the front curve and back curve mold parts;

removing the ophthalmic lens from the demolded front curve and back curve mold parts; and

hydrating the ophthalmic lens.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the surface of the rigid insert comprises an adhesion promoting layer.

3. The method of claim 1 additionally comprising the step of:

degassing at least one of the rigid insert, the initial amount of reactive monomer mixture, the additional amount of reactive monomer mixture, the front curve mold part and the back curve mold part, wherein the degassing removes gasses capable of creating lens defects.

4. The method of claim 1 additionally comprising the step of:

partially curing the additional amount of reactive monomer mixture to prevent shifting of the components within the front curve assembly and the back curve mold part.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein a plurality of ophthalmic lenses with rigid inserts are formed simultaneously on a pallet.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the front curve assembly is formed by an automated device.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the polymerized reactive monomer mixture comprises a hydrogel.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the hydrogel comprises a silicone hydrogel.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the rigid insert is capable of correcting astigmatic vision.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the rigid insert comprises a thermoformed material.

11. The method of claim 9 additionally comprising the steps of:

adding a stabilizing feature to the initial amount of reactive monomer mixture, wherein the stabilizing feature is capable of orienting the ophthalmic lens on an eye; and

aligning the stabilizing feature with the rigid insert, wherein the aligning allows the correction of astigmatic vision when the ophthalmic lens orients on the eye.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the rigid insert includes the stabilizing feature.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein the stabilizing feature is an injectable material comprising a different swellable index from the initial and additional amounts of reactive monomer mixture.

14. The method of claim 11, wherein the adding of the stabilizing feature alters a front curve surface of the ophthalmic lens.
15. The method of claim 11, wherein the adding of the stabilizing feature adds mass to the ophthalmic lens, wherein the mass is sufficient to orient the ophthalmic lens on the eye.
16. The method of claim 11, wherein the stabilizing feature comprises a visual orientation cue, wherein the visual orientation cue comprises a visible coloration or marking.
17. The method of claim 1, wherein the hydrating of the ophthalmic lens comprises soaking the ophthalmic lens in a solution comprising approximately 0.45% sodium borate for at least an hour at a temperature around 50° C.
18. An ophthalmic lens formed by the method of any one of the preceding claims.

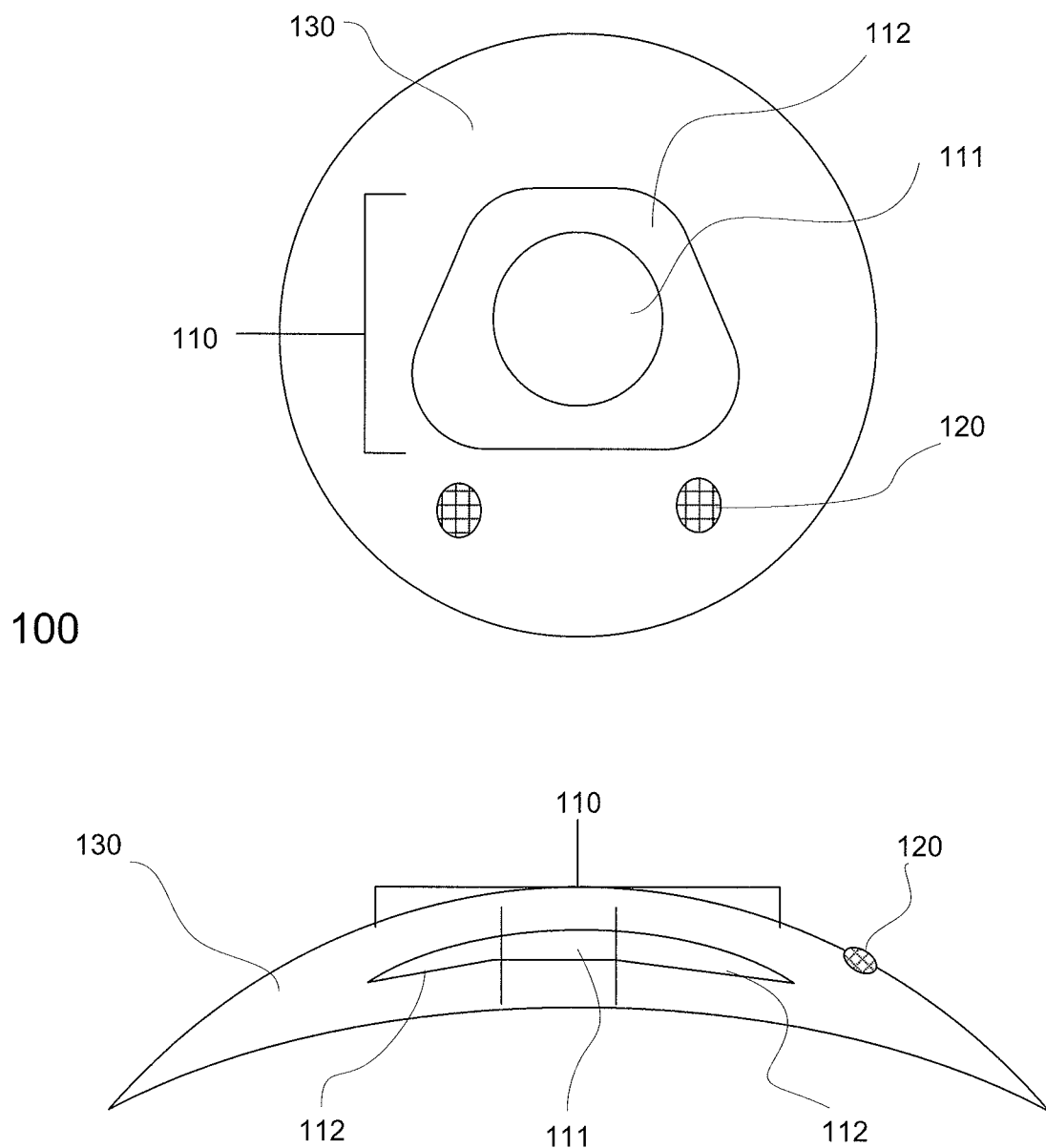


Figure 1

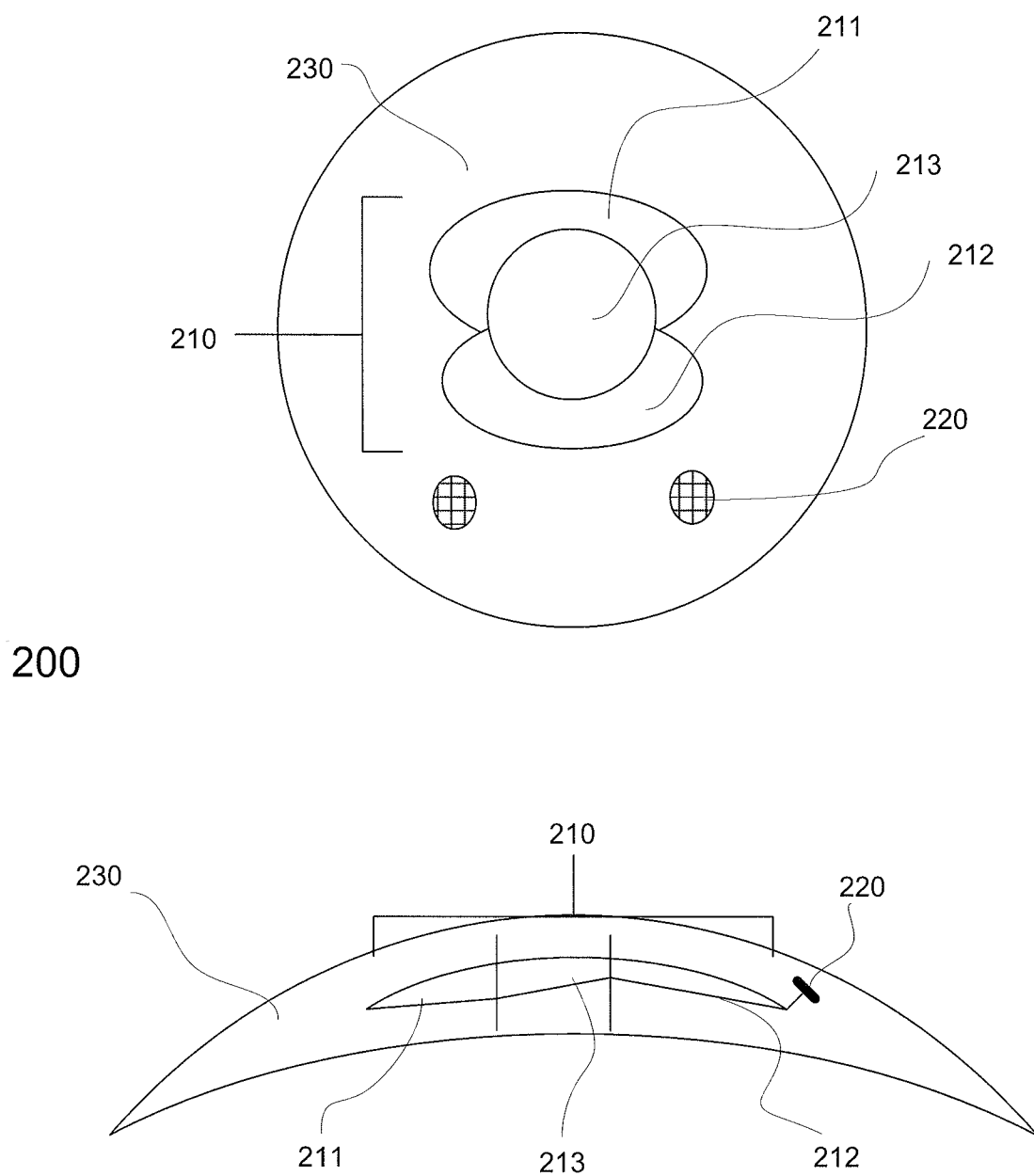


Figure 2

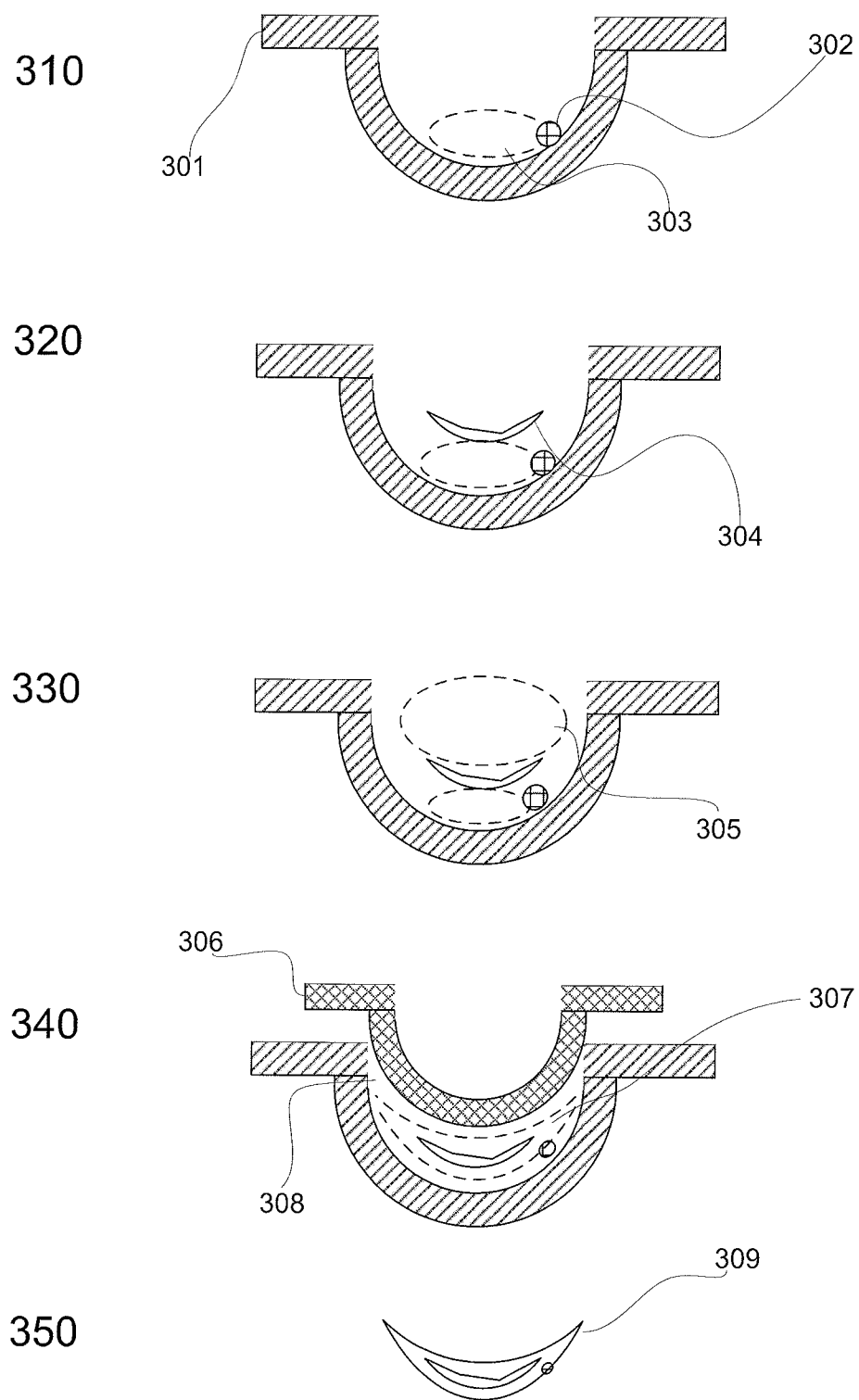


Figure 3

FORM RIGID INSERT CAPABLE OF CORRECTING SPECIFIC ASTIGMATIC CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EYE	405
TREAT RIGID INSERT TO PROMOTE ADHESION TO THE REACTIVE MONOMER MIXTURE	410
PLACE FRONT CURVE MOLD CONCAVE SIDE UP IN A HOLDING PLATE	412
PREDOSE THE FRONT CURVE MOLD WITH REACTIVE MONOMER MIXTURE	415
ADD STABILIZING FEATURE TO A LOCATION THAT WILL BE BETWEEN THE FRONT CURVE MOLD AND THE BACK CURVE MOLD	417
PLACE RIGID INSERT PROXIMATE TO THE FRONT CURVE MOLD, WHEREIN THE REACTIVE MONOMER MIXTURE IS LOCATED BETWEEN THE RIGID INSERT AND THE FRONT CURVE MOLD, FORMING THE FRONT CURVE ASSEMBLY	420
PRECURE THE REACTIVE MONOMER MIXTURE TO SECURE THE RIGID INSERT DURING ENCAPSULATION PROCESS	425
POSTDOSE FRONT CURVE ASSEMBLY WITH REACTIVE MONOMER MIXTURE	430
PLACE BACK CURVE MOLD PIECE PROXIMATE TO FRONT CURVE ASSEMBLY TO FULLY ENCAPSULATE RIGID INSERT	435
OPTIONALLY PRECURE THE ENCAPSULANT TO STABLIZE ASSEMBLY FOR CURING PROCESS	440
CURE THE MOLD ASSEMBLY	445
DEMOLD THE MOLD ASSEMBLY BY SEPARATING THE FRONT CURVE MOLD PIECE FROM THE BACK CURVE MOLD PIECE	450
REMOVE CONTACT LENS WITH THE FULLY ENCAPSULATED RIGID INSERT	455
HYDRATE LENS	460
OPTIONALLY PACKAGE OPHTHALMIC LENS IN A SEALED CONTAINER	465

Figure 4

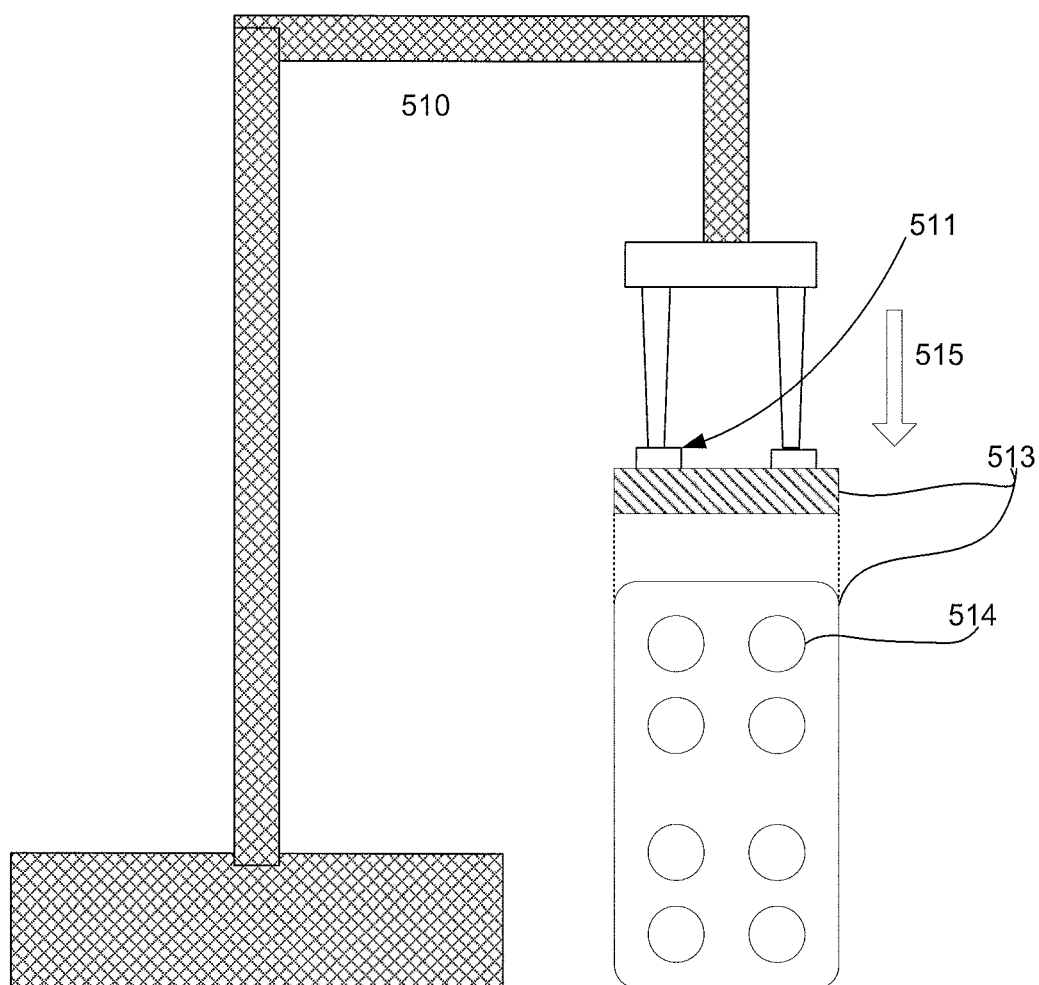


Figure 5