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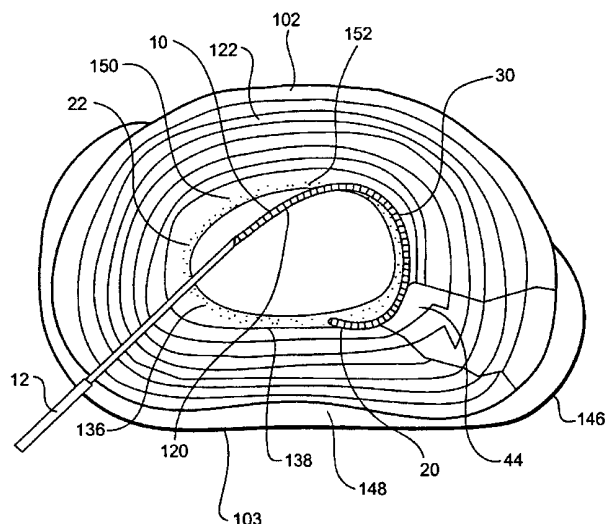
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(54) Title: APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR ACCESSING AND PERFORMING A FUNCTION WITHIN AN INTERVERTEBRAL DISC



(57) Abstract: Apparatus and methods are disclosed for accessing the interior of an intervertebral disc to perform a function within the disc. The apparatus comprises a catheter having a lumen; and a guide wire having a distal portion and a proximal portion, and configured to be positioned within and moved relative to the lumen of the catheter; wherein the guide wire is capable of navigating itself within an intradiscal section of the intervertebral to a selected section of the disc and the catheter is capable of being advanced relative to the guide wire such that the catheter follows a path of the guide wire within the intradiscal section of the disc to the selected section. These apparatus and methods may be used for the treatment of intervertebral disc disorders such as sealing fissures of the annulus fibrosus, which may or may not be accompanied with contained or escaped extrusions. These apparatus and methods may also be used for the removal or addition of material to the intervertebral disc.



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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

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A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

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According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

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Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	WO 98 17190 A (ASHLEY JOHN ;LE LE T (US); SALL JOEL (US); SAAL JEFFREY (US); SHAR) 30 April 1998 (1998-04-30) cited in the application page 16, line 6 - line 21; figures 3A,,4 ---	1-11, 15-38
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Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

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Patent family members are listed in annex.

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

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