



US 20020082551A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Yachia et al.

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2002/0082551 A1**

(43) **Pub. Date: Jun. 27, 2002**

(54) **INTRAVESICULAR BALLOON**

Related U.S. Application Data

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(63) Continuation of application No. 09/268,109, filed on
Mar. 15, 1999, now Pat. No. 6,293,923.

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Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.⁷** **A61M 29/00**

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **604/103.01; 606/195**

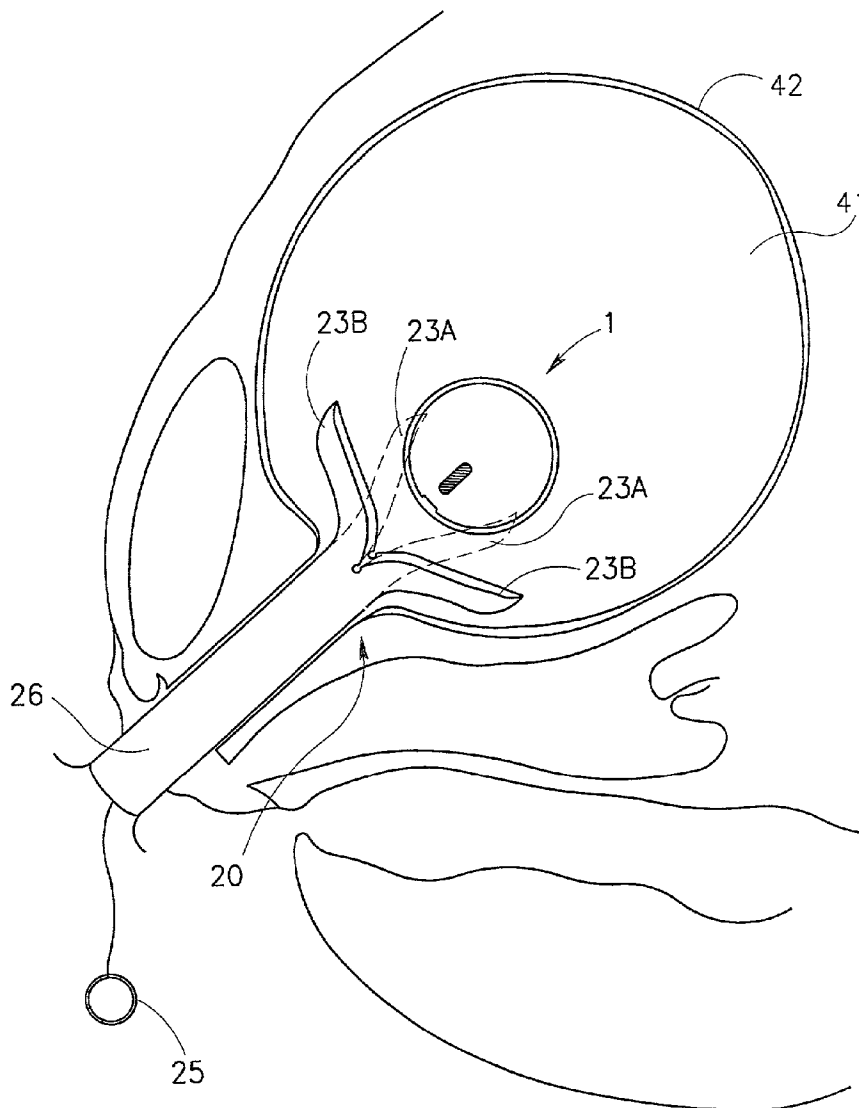
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

(21) Appl. No.: **09/952,310**

An expandable balloon for insertion into the urinary bladder of an individual. The balloon may be used in treating the urinary bladder, in monitoring the urinary bladder or in the treatment of urinary incontinence.

(22) Filed: **Sep. 13, 2001**



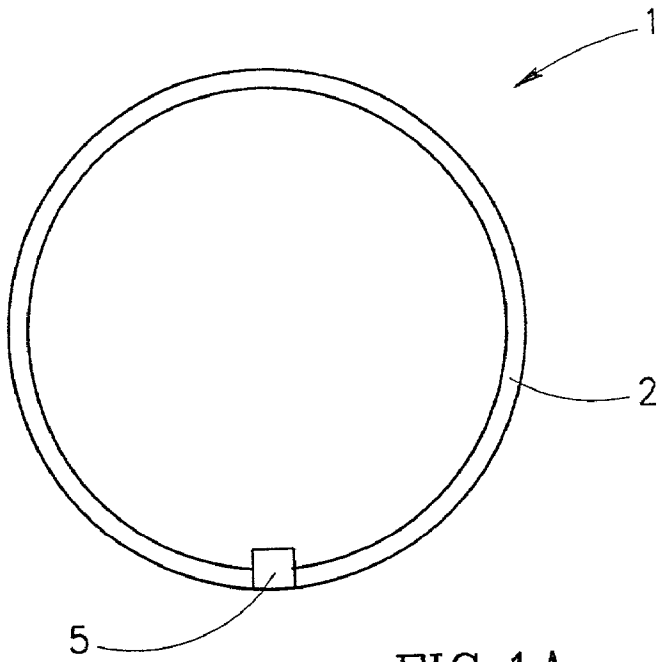


FIG. 1A

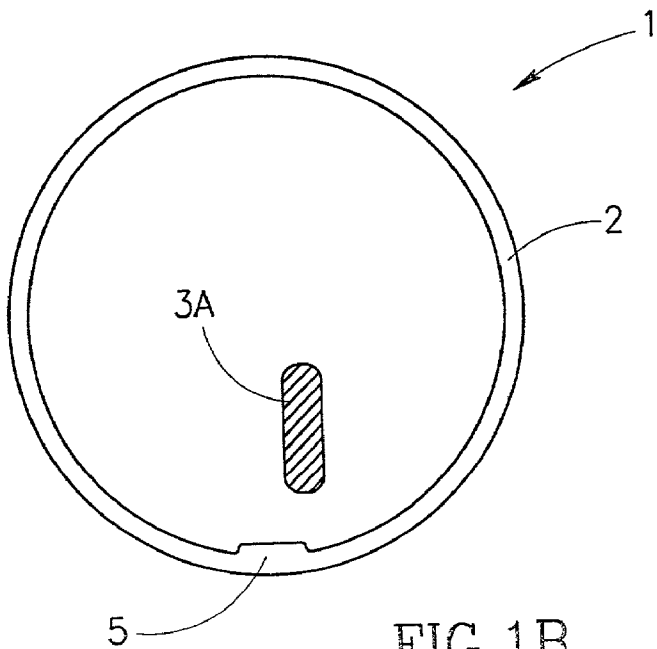


FIG. 1B

FIG.1C

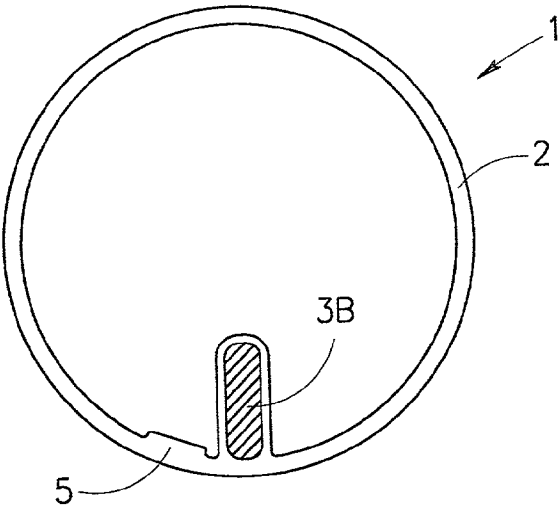


FIG.1D

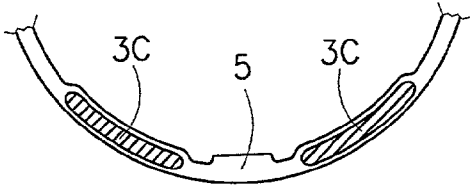
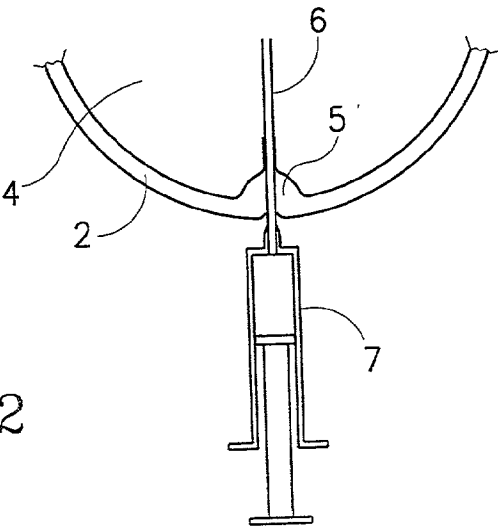


FIG.2



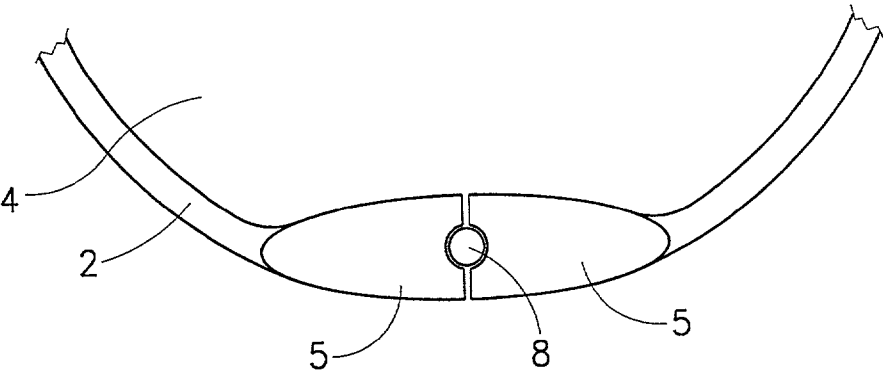


FIG.3A

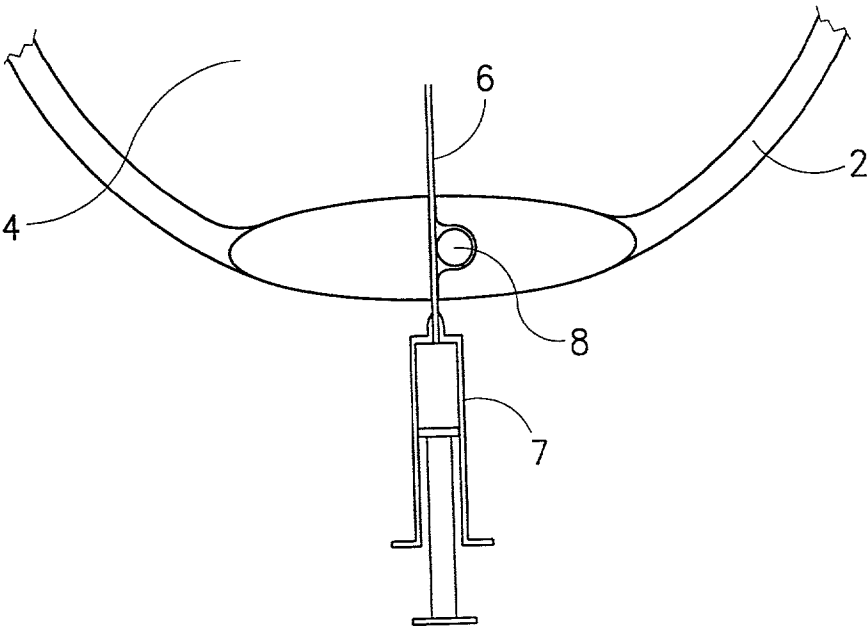


FIG.3B

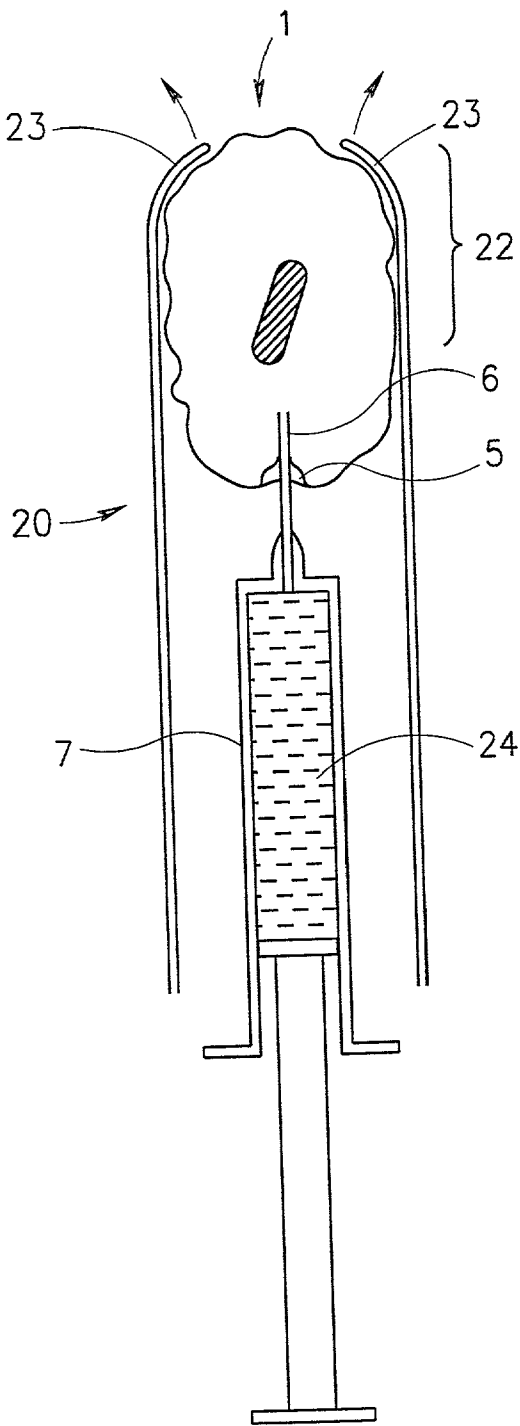


FIG. 4A

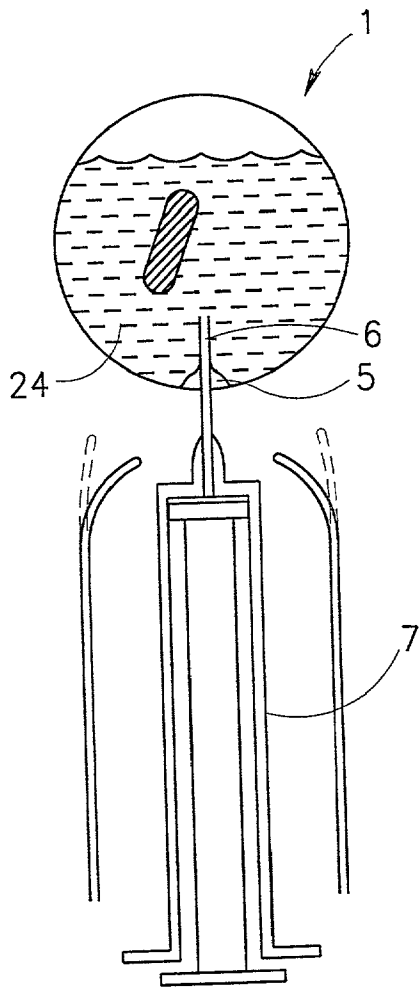


FIG. 4B

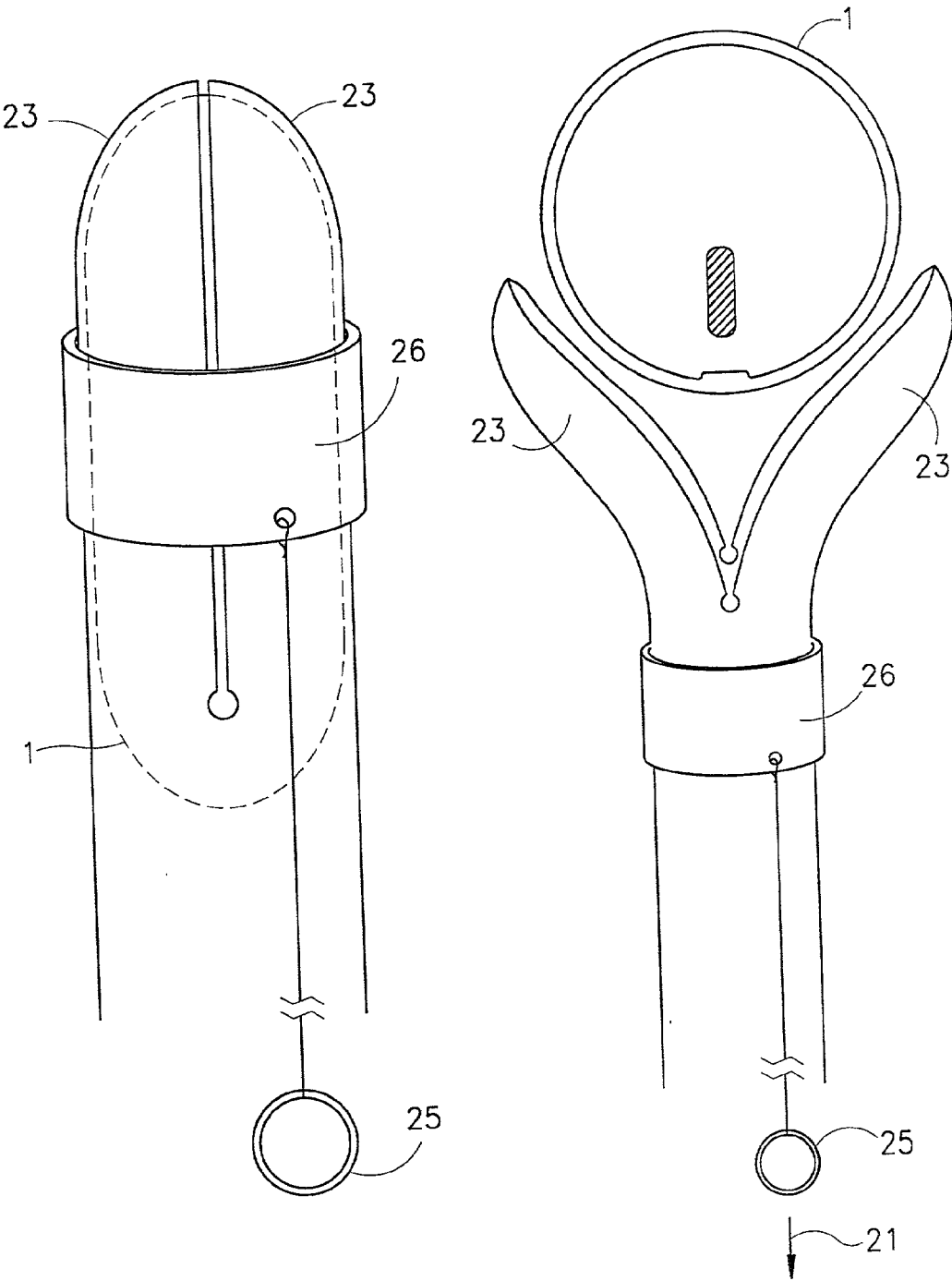


FIG. 5A

FIG. 5B

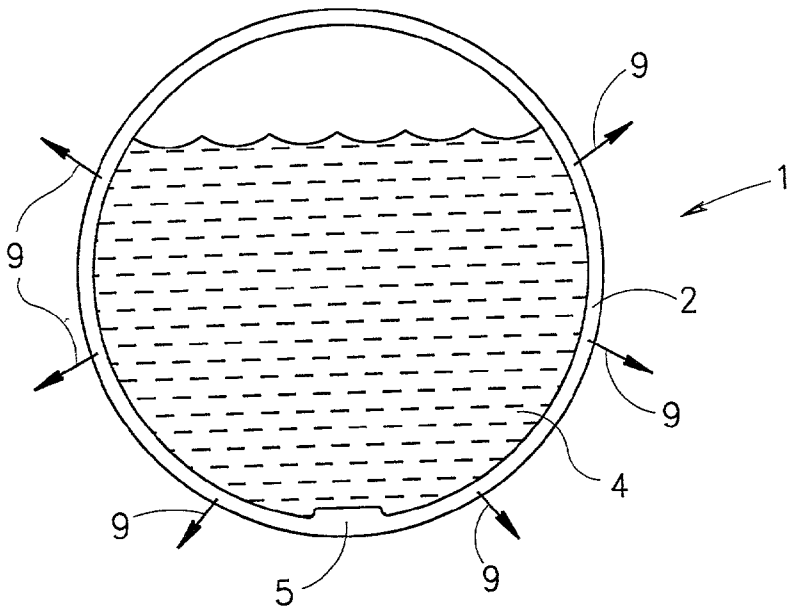


FIG. 6

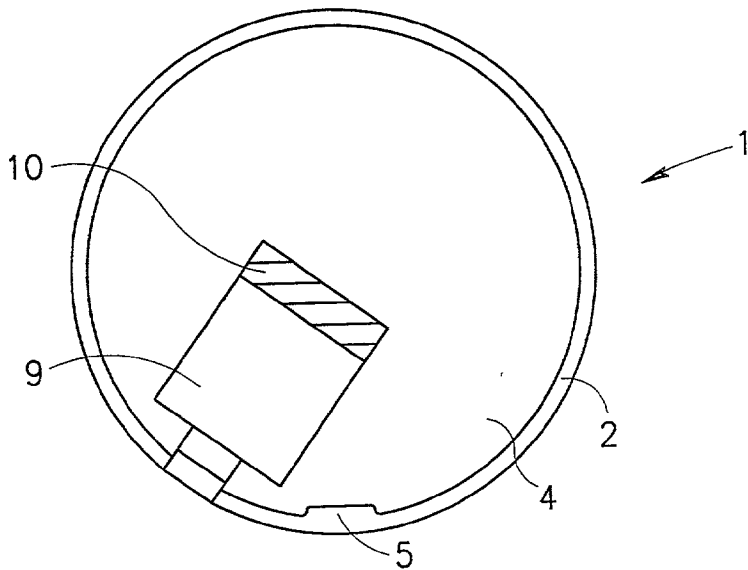
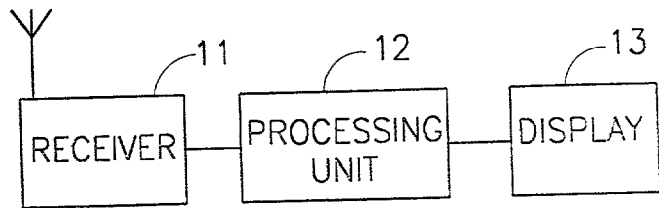


FIG. 7



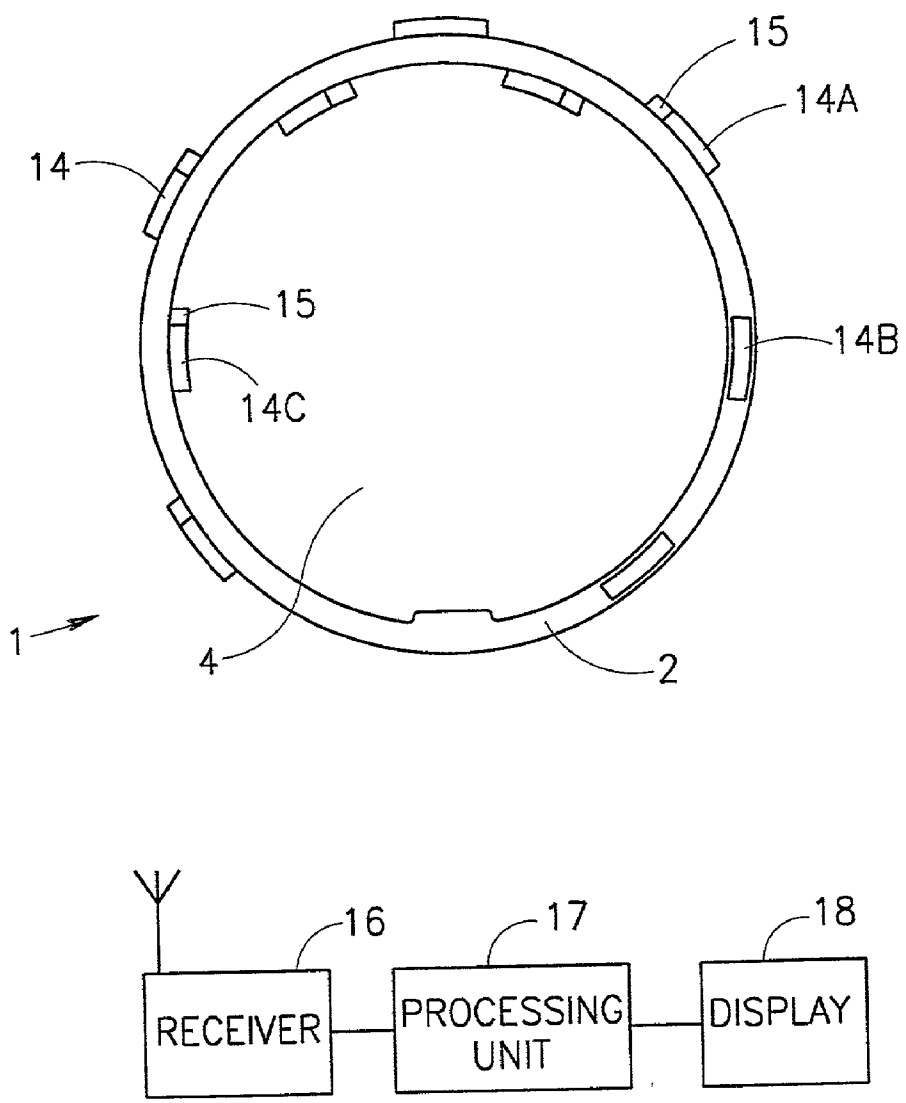


FIG.8

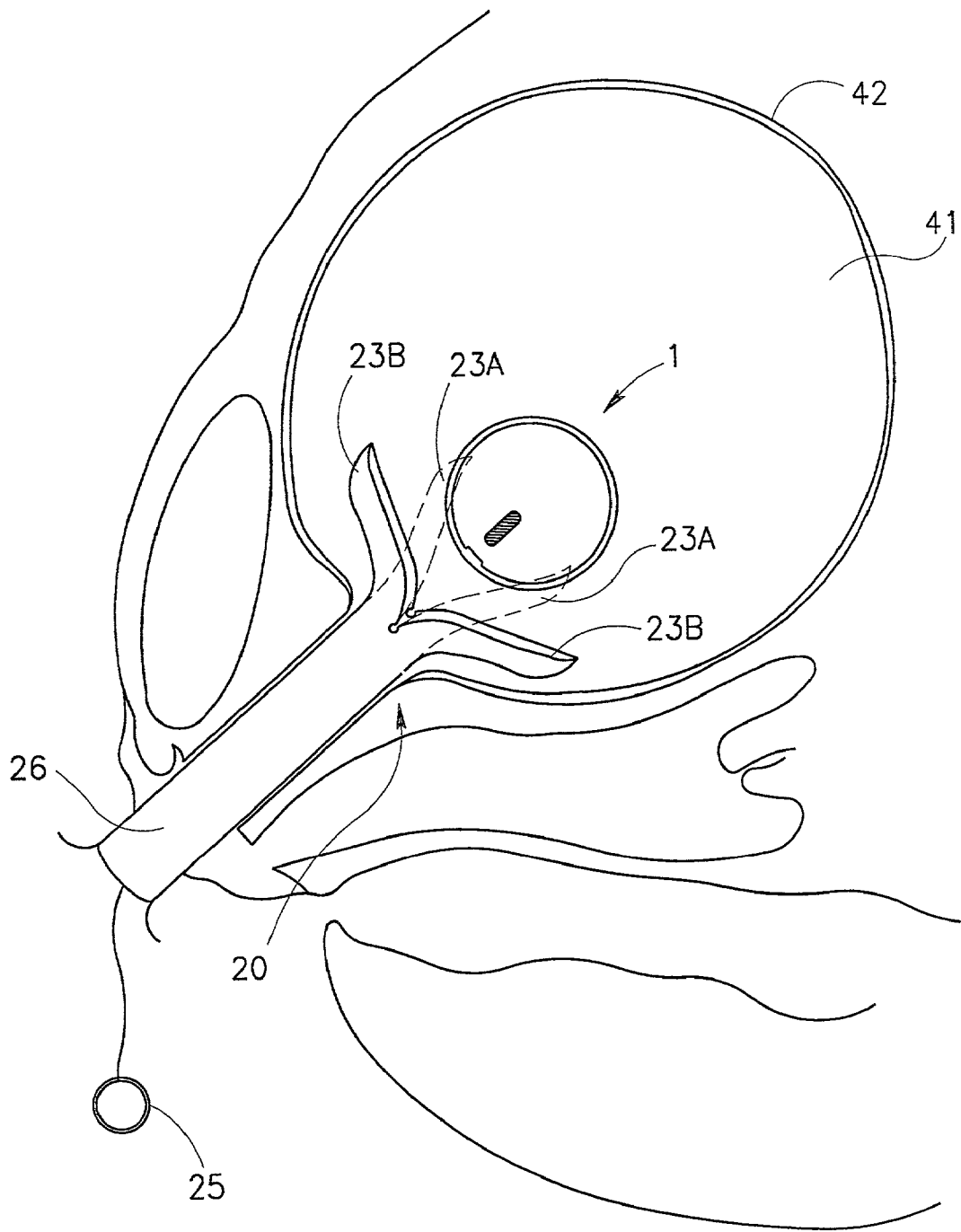
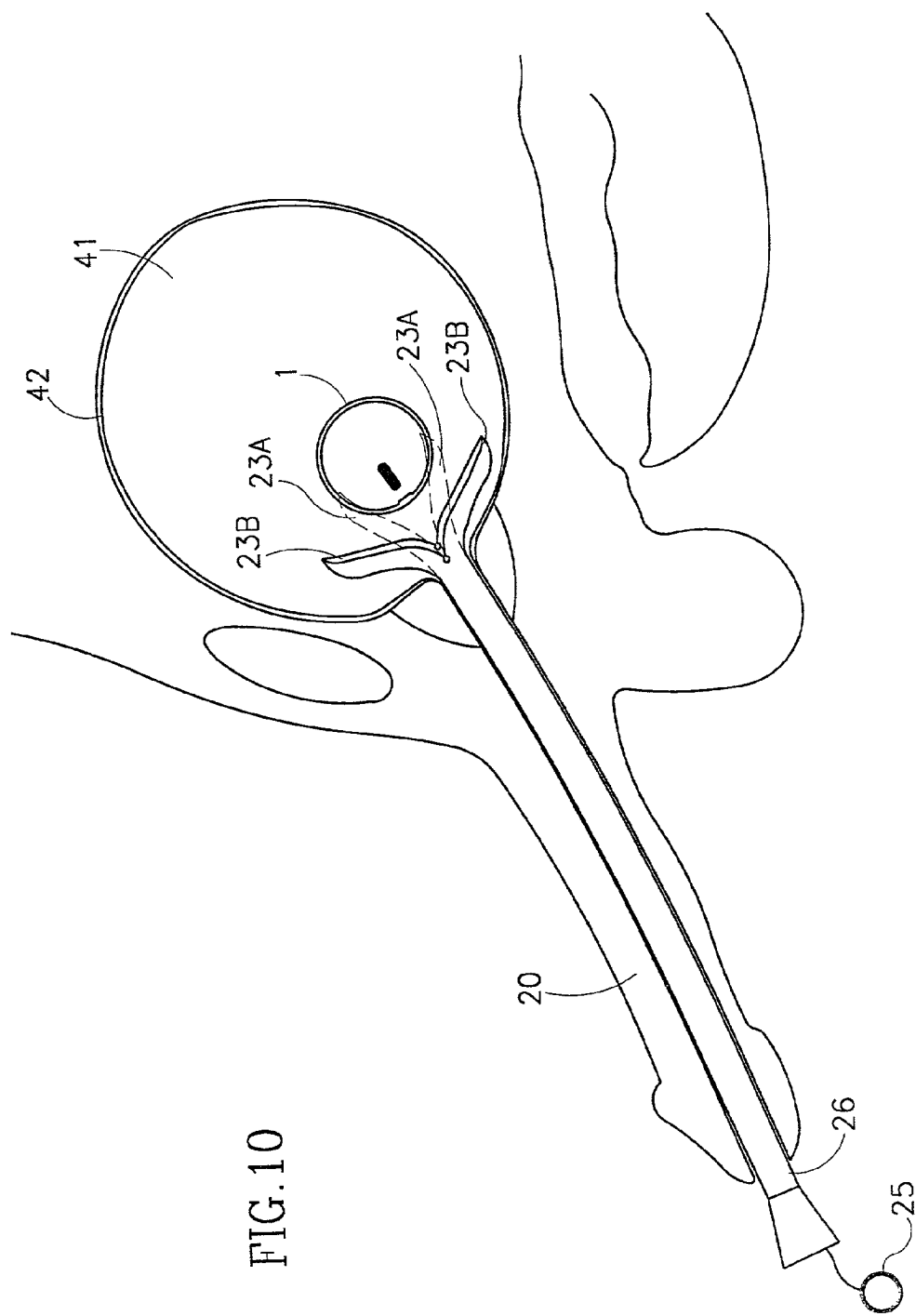


FIG. 9



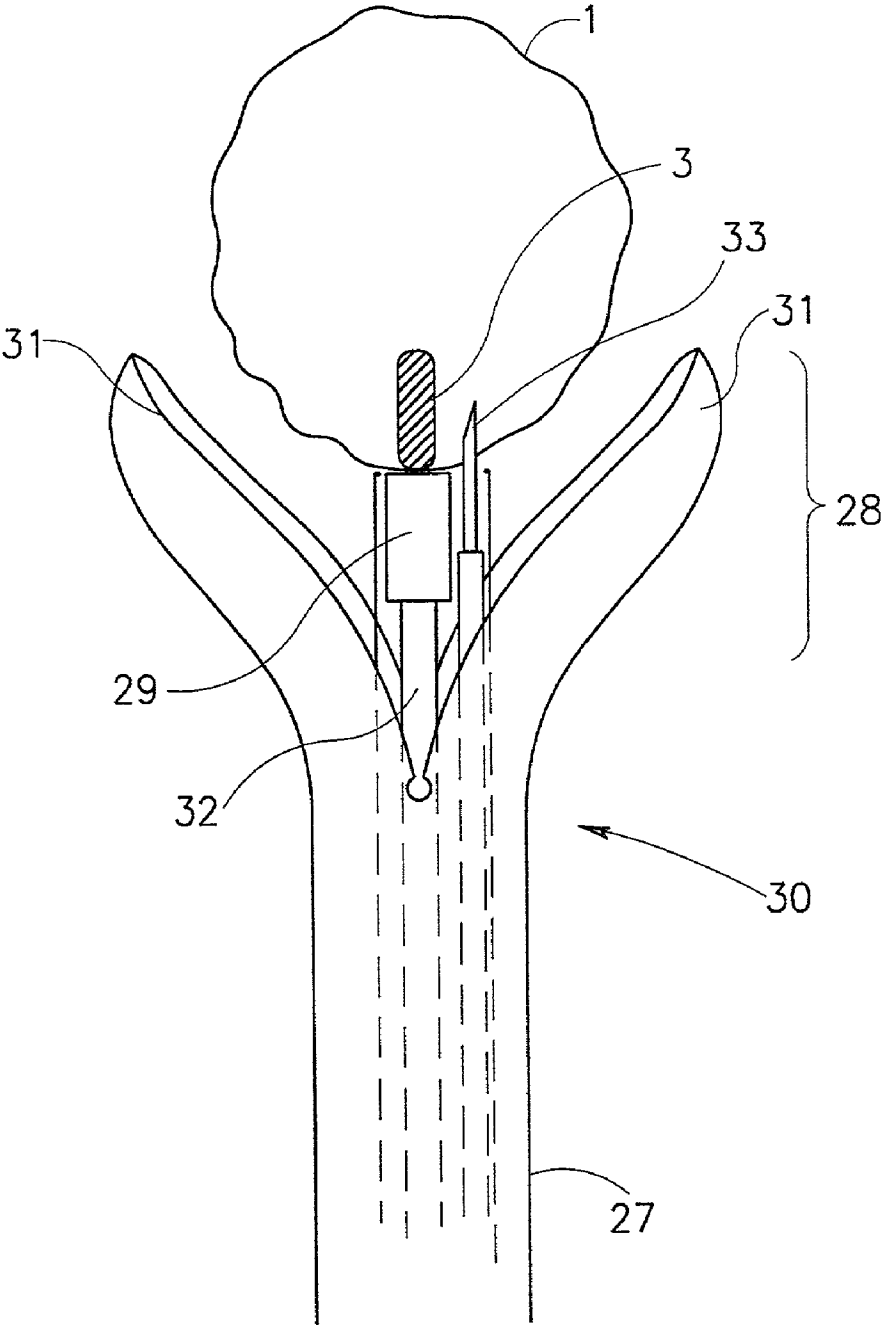


FIG.11

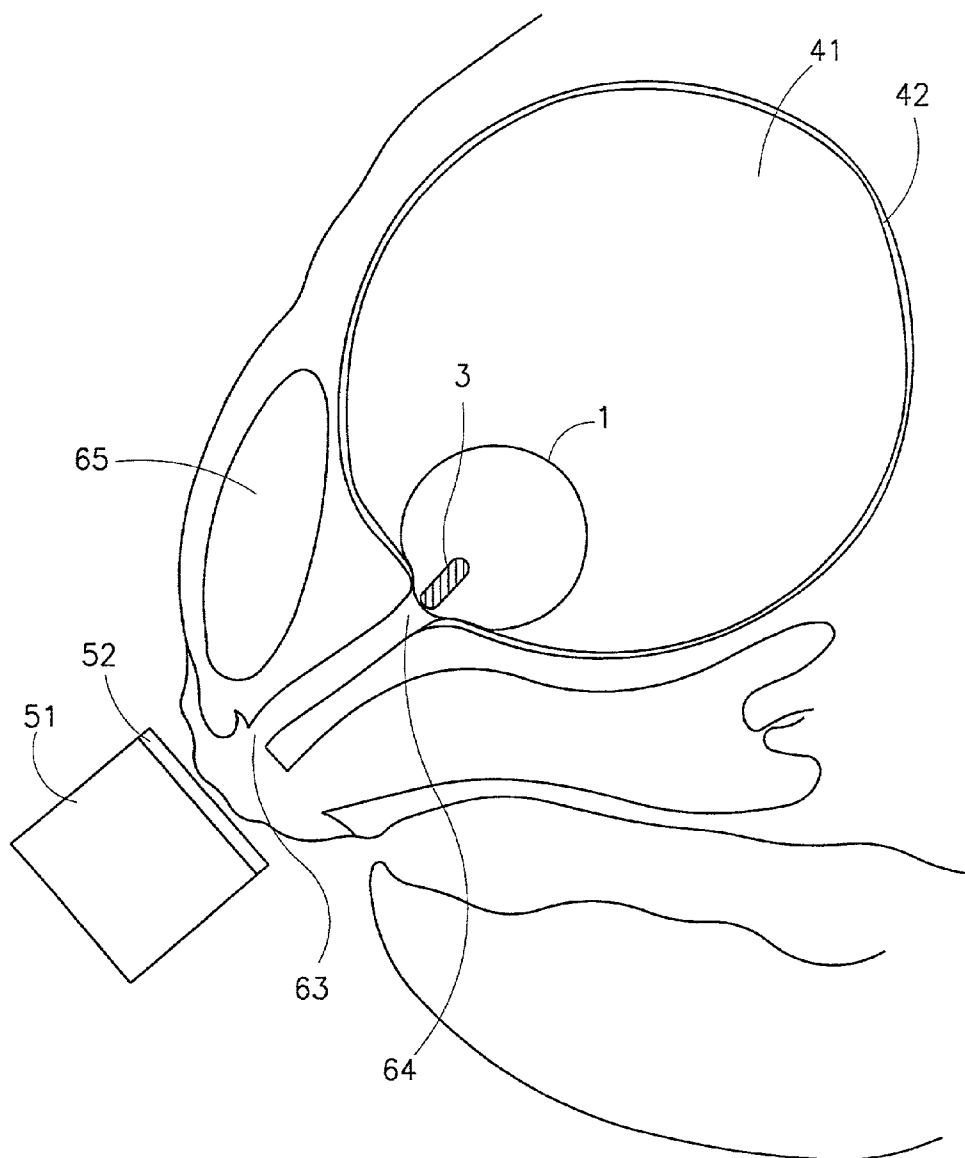


FIG.12

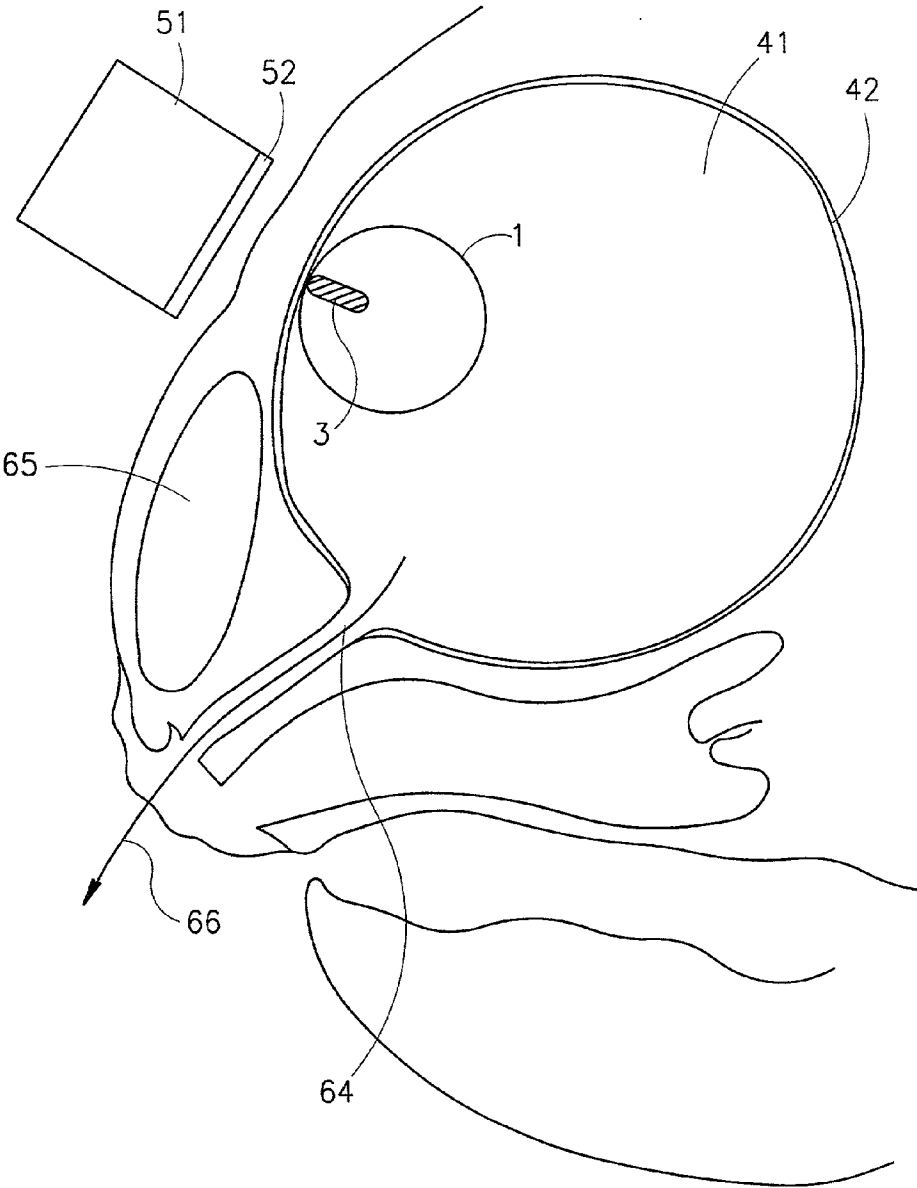


FIG.13

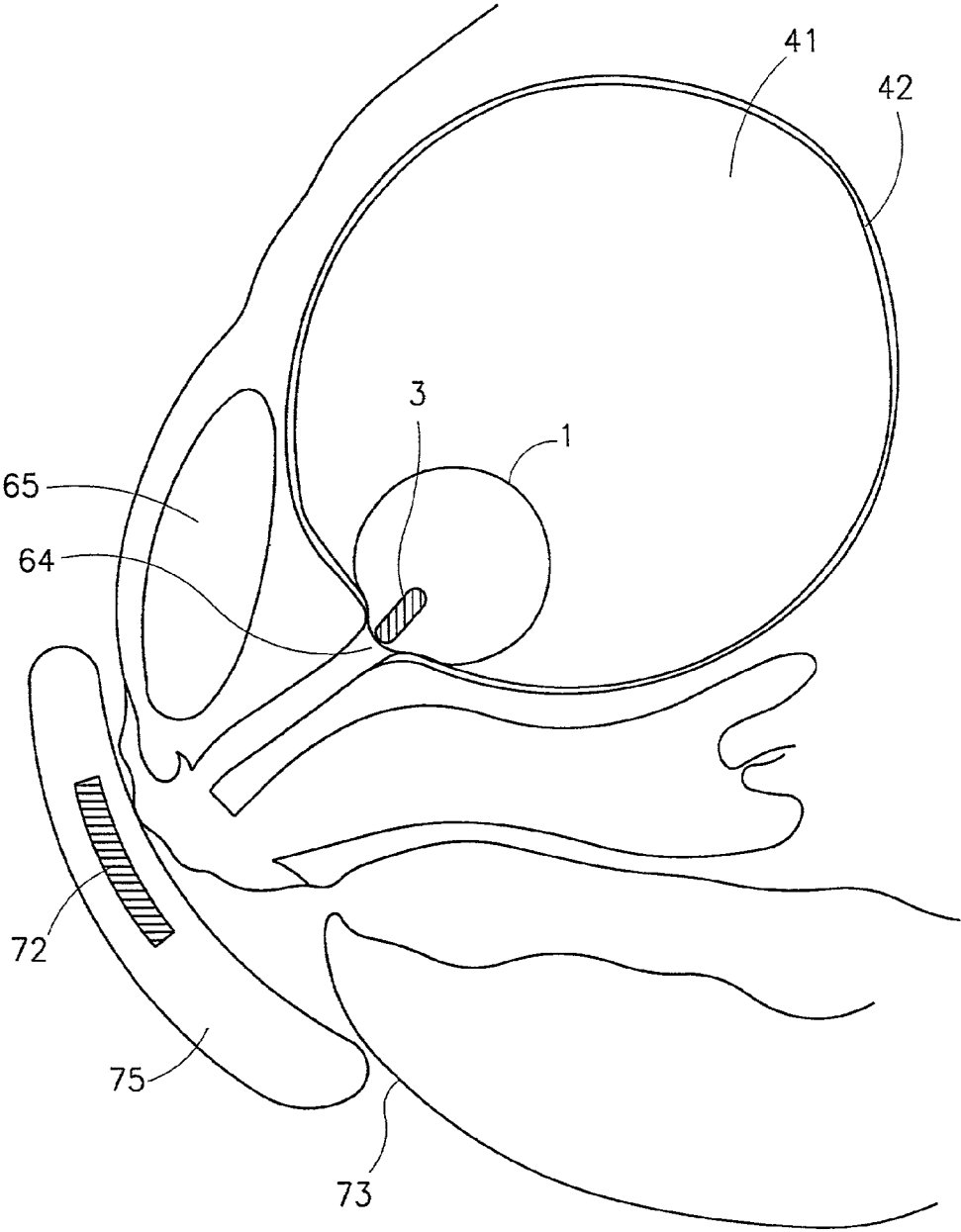


FIG.14

INTRAVESICULAR BALLOON

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The invention is in the field of medical devices. More specifically, the invention relates to devices for the treatment of urinary bladder disorders.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Several disorders of the urinary tract are known. Among these are urinary incontinence, chronic urinary tract infections, urinary bladder tumors.

[0003] Urinary Incontinence

[0004] Urinary incontinence mostly affects women (approximately 10 million in the U.S.A. alone) primarily after childbirth or due to old age. In men, urinary incontinence often occurs as a complication of surgery or old age (approximately 3 million in the U.S.A.).

[0005] Incontinence has serious economic, health, social and psychological consequences. Its estimated cost to the health system in the United States in 1993 was US \$16 billion. It leads to chronic and severe skin irritation in the genital area, an increase in urinary infections and urosepsis. Fear of incontinence and odors in public cause incontinent people to severely restrict their social activities. The impact on the mental health of the affected people may be even more devastating than the social and health consequences. They suffer severe embarrassment, loss of self-esteem, depression and anxiety.

[0006] Urinary incontinence can be divided into 4 groups:

[0007] Stress Incontinence—is the involuntary release of urine due to a sudden increase in the intraabdominal pressure caused by laughing, sneezing, coughing, running, etc. This is the most common type of incontinence and in women may be the result of childbirth, estrogen deficiency, unsuccessful surgical repairs for incontinence or pelvic irradiation. In men, it often happens after surgery for benign enlargement of the prostate gland or after radical removal of the prostate.

[0008] Total Incontinence—is the continuous leak of urine entering the bladder due to failure of the sphincteric muscles.

[0009] Urge Incontinence—is involuntary loss of urine due to involuntary bladder contractions. This type of incontinence mostly affects the elderly who leak until they reach a toilet.

[0010] Mixed Incontinence—is a combination of stress and urge incontinence. This condition is more common in elderly women than men.

[0011] Ideally, treatment of incontinence should provide permanent dryness and is easy to perform.

[0012] Pharmacological treatments of bladder dysfunctions are based either on estrogen replacement for treating post-menopausal vaginal and urethral atrophy or on agents affecting the tonus of the bladder muscle. Since affected elderly women suffer from both hormonal deficiency and urge incontinence, both types of agents are usually prescribed simultaneously.

[0013] Surgical treatments are based on restoring the anatomical changes causing the incontinence. Although in the short-term most surgical procedures restore continence, the long-term prognosis is usually unsatisfactory. Moreover, surgery entails morbidity and high expenses.

[0014] Conservative/behavioral treatments are based on pelvic floor muscle exercises, bladder training, biofeedback, vaginal cones, low-frequency electrostimulation of pelvic floor muscles, intravaginal bladder neck support pessaries, urethral meatus suction cups and intraurethral devices. Conservative treatments are time consuming and require the patients' understanding, cooperation and persistence.

[0015] Devices which have been used to obtain almost immediate dryness in incontinent people can be divided into two groups:

[0016] (1) Urethral Plugs/Inserts

[0017] These comprise a flexible rod having a 14 Ch. (approximately 4.5 mm) diameter and a length adjusted to fit the length of the patient's urethra. The rod has an inflatable balloon on its bladder end and a flange at other end. After insertion of the device, the balloon is inflated in the bladder. The balloon and the flange maintain the device in its proper position within the urethra. The balloon and rod form a mechanical barrier to retain the urine within the bladder. The balloon must be deflated and the device removed and discarded prior to voiding. Such inserts are known in the art, for example, the device known as RELANCE™ produced by UroMed Corp., U.S.A.

[0018] Since inserts are discarded after each voiding and replaced with a new one by the patient, manual dexterity of the patient is required. Insertion of an insert into a female has the risk of pushing vaginal and perineal bacteria into the bladder and insertion of an insert a few times a day increases this risk. The inconvenience of removing and inserting a new device and its costs, in addition to the infection risk, are the major disadvantages of these devices.

[0019] (2) Valve Catheters

[0020] These comprise a tube with a valve at one end. The bladder end of the device typically has a balloon or flanges for retaining the device in place and a flange at the other end to prevent migration into the bladder. The valve is opened for voiding through the lumen of the catheter with the help of an external magnet. The tube typically has a 18 Ch. (6 mm.) to 20 Ch. (approximately 7 mm) diameter and a length adjusted to fit the patient's urethra. For male incontinence, an active intraurethral Foley-type catheter is used. This device has a retaining balloon at its bladder end and another smaller balloon under the prostate for fixing the device in place. The magnet activated valve is situated at the end of the device near the distal end of the urethra. Active inserts are typically left indwelling up to 4 weeks and are then replaced. Examples of such catheters are disclosed in U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,030,199 and 5,234,409.

[0021] Valve catheters are more convenient for the patient than the inserts. However, in females they cause ascending infection because they connect the bladder with the vulva which is rich in pathogenic bacteria, especially *Escherichia Coli*. Even with continuous use of antibiotics, infection is unpreventable in the majority of cases.

[0022] During prolonged use of catheters or inserts in female patients, a relaxation of the urethra occurs and the patients may start to leak around the device. Unfortunately valve catheters and inserts are unavailable in increasing diameters.

[0023] A significant disadvantage of both the inserts and the valve catheters is the discomfort felt by the patient especially when sitting and during sexual intercourse (felt by the patient and the partner). The present invention therefore provides a device for the treatment of urinary incontinence in which the disadvantages of the prior art devices are substantially reduced or eliminated.

[0024] Urinary Tract Infections

[0025] Nearly half of all women experience urinary tract infection (UTI) at some point in their lifetime and most of these infections are confined to the bladder. Isolated UTIs can be treated by short and effective antibiotic treatment. However, recurrent UTIs often occur in women due to antibiotic resistant bacteria. In this case complicated infections often exhibit multidrug resistance and necessitate longer antimicrobial drug administrations.

[0026] Treatment of UTI often requires urinary levels of antimicrobial drugs that are several hundred times greater than those allowable in the blood. Many antibacterials cannot be used in UTI because, when taken orally or intravenously, they do not attain the required concentration in the urine, without exceeding the allowable limit in the blood. It would therefore be desirable to be able to continuously introduce antimicrobial drugs continuously and directly into the bladder.

[0027] Bladder Tumors

[0028] Even after resection, bladder tumors may not only recur but may also invade deeper in the bladder wall. Due to the heterogeneity of these tumors (from low-grade tumors showing a benign course to highly malignant high-grade tumors), there does not exist a single approach to the surveillance and treatment of these tumors. Intravesical drug therapies are often used for reducing tumor recurrence. In this approach, an immunotherapeutic or chemotherapeutic agent is inserted into the bladder through a catheter. This treatment is typically repeated once a week for 6 weeks and then once a month for a period of 6-12 months. However, periodic treatment has not been established as being effective in altering the progression of the tumor. Continuous local treatment with chemotherapeutic or radioactive materials may treat or prevent not only superficial tumors but also deep tumors as well. It would therefore be desirable to be able to introduce antitumoral drugs continuously and directly into the bladder.

[0029] Bladder Dysfunction

[0030] During filling, the bladder muscle relaxes for keeping the intravesical pressure low while it contracts for voiding. Certain diseases such as spinal cord injuries, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, or hormonal changes after menopause or old age in both sexes may cause a hypo contractility or, paradoxically, hyper contractility of the muscle. In atonic bladder, pharmacological treatment is not very effective. In hyperreflexic bladder, drugs for relaxing the bladder cause constipation and mouth dryness and are therefore not tolerated well by the patients.

[0031] Diagnosis of bladder dysfunction requires continuously monitoring various bladder parameters during filling and/or voiding. These measurements usually are made by inserting a catheter connected to a measuring device into the bladder. This is done, for example, in uroflowmetry (measurement of urinary flow rate) which is non-invasive, simple and inexpensive. However, its sensitivity and specificity are low. Cystometry is an invasive technique for measuring bladder capacity, compliance and muscle tonus. Pressure-flow study is an invasive and costly test for distinguishing patients with low urinary flow due to obstruction or bladder antonia, from those with high intravesical pressure and high urinary flow. It is therefore a need in the art for a simple and inexpensive technique for intravesicular monitoring.

[0032] In the diagnostic procedure known as "urodynamics", the bladder is filled through a catheter, and the response of the bladder is monitored. Available 24 hour urodynamics monitors have catheters or wires passing through the urethra, connecting sensors inserted into the bladder to a recorder. The connecting wires and catheters inadvertently introduce pathogenic bacteria from the genital areas into the bladder. It is therefore desirable to be able to monitor bladder function over several cycles of filling and voiding without the need for such wires or catheters.

[0033] Diagnosis of some intravesical pathological conditions often involves inserting an endoscope into the bladder and optically scanning the bladder walls. In cases of bleeding in the ureters or the kidneys, the observation of blood coming through the ureteral orifices allows determination of the origin of the bleeding. However, if the bleeding has temporarily stopped at the time of the examination, or if the blood concentration in the urine is insufficient to make the urine red or pink, endoscopy is of little value in reaching a diagnosis. In such cases more invasive procedures are performed in order to enter the upper urinary tract. It is therefore desirable to be able to monitor the bladder over long periods of time.

[0034] Bladder shape during filling and its contraction during voiding is important for the diagnosis of certain bladder pathologies. These functions can be followed in fluoroscopy and by sonography. These techniques however are not accurate and cannot be used for monitoring changes in bladder shape over long periods of time. It would therefore be desirable to be able to continuously image the bladder interior over long periods of time.

[0035] The present invention therefore provides a device for continuous monitoring of the bladder interior and for the treatment of bladder disorders in which the disadvantages of the prior art devices are substantially reduced or eliminated.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0036] The present invention provides a system comprising an expandable balloon to be inserted into the urinary bladder. The balloon may be filled and compressed prior to insertion and then allowed to expand after insertion in the bladder. Alternatively, the balloon may be filled after insertion so as to expand in the bladder.

[0037] The invention may be used for the intermittent sealing of the urinary bladder outlet and the prevention of involuntary urine leakage. Sealing the urinary bladder outlet involves lodging the balloon in the outlet so as to seal it.

Unsealing the outlet to allow voiding of the bladder involves dislodging the balloon from the outlet.

[0038] The invention may also be used for such purposes as for example, delivery of drugs, imaging the urinary bladder, and measuring intravesicular parameters such as pressure in the urinary bladder. When used for such purposes, the balloon may be, for example, lodged in the urinary bladder outlet, immobilized in some other desired location in the bladder, freely floating in the urine in the bladder, etc.

[0039] The invention is entirely confined to the urinary bladder and has no urethral parts. As will become apparent in the description below, the balloon is easily inserted and removed. It may be left in the bladder for prolonged periods of time without encrusting or causing infections and is displaced within the bladder at will using a hand held magnet. The invention is comfortable for the patient and does not interfere with the daily activities of the patient including sitting, jogging, riding, or sexual intercourse.

[0040] The invention thus provides an expandable balloon for insertion into the urinary bladder of an individual, the balloon having a wall and a lumen and formed with a magnetable portion.

[0041] The invention also provides a system comprising the balloon together with an applicator for inserting and retrieving the balloon, a displacing member for displacing the balloon within the bladder, and an immobilizing member for immobilizing the balloon at a desired location in the bladder.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0042] In order to understand the invention and to see how it may be carried out in practice, a preferred embodiment will now be described, by way of non-limiting example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

[0043] FIG. 1 shows various embodiments of the balloon according to the invention;

[0044] FIG. 2 shows a portion of a balloon according to the invention having a duck-bill valve;

[0045] FIG. 3 shows a portion of a balloon according to the invention having a ball valve;

[0046] FIG. 4 shows a balloon filled after have been inserted into the urinary bladder;

[0047] FIG. 5 shows a balloon filled before being inserted into the urinary bladder;

[0048] FIG. 6 shows a balloon comprising diffusible substances within its wall or lumen;

[0049] FIG. 7 shows a balloon comprising a microvideo camera;

[0050] FIG. 8 shows a balloon comprising devices for measuring urinary bladder parameters;

[0051] FIG. 9 shows use of an applicator for inserting a balloon into the urinary bladder of a female individual;

[0052] FIG. 10 shows use of an applicator for inserting a balloon into the urinary bladder of a male individual;

[0053] FIG. 11 shows a retrieval device for retrieving a balloon;

[0054] FIG. 12 shows use of a displacing member to displace a balloon into a sealing position within the urinary bladder;

[0055] FIG. 13 shows use of a displacing member to displace a balloon from a sealing position in the urinary bladder; and

[0056] FIG. 14 shows use of an immobilizing member.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF SPECIFIC EMBODIMENTS

[0057] Reference is now made to FIG. 1 which shows several embodiments of the invention. An expandable hollow balloon generally designated as 1 has a wall 2 made of an elastic biocompatible material enclosing a lumen 4. The balloon 1 may further comprise a magnetable portion which may consist for example, of one or more metal particles which may be free in the lumen 3a (as in FIG. 1b), attached to the inner surface 3b (as in FIG. 1c) or embedded in the wall 3c of the balloon (as in FIG. 1d). The lumen 4 of balloon 1 may be filled with a biocompatible fluid which may be presterilized such as air, water, saline or an oil such as liquid paraffin.

[0058] A self-sealing valve 5 in the wall of the balloon is used to fill the balloon. The valve 5 may be for example a duck-bill type valve as shown in FIG. 2 or a ball valve as shown in FIG. 3 in which a ball 8 may be in a sealing position (FIG. 3a) or an unsealing position (FIG. 3c). The canula 6 of a syringe 7 is inserted through the valve 5 into the lumen 4 of the balloon. The fluid injected into the lumen 4 causes the balloon to expand. After filling, the syringe needle 6 is withdrawn, and the valve 5 seals itself. After filling, the balloon may adopt a predetermined shape, for example, a sphere, ellipsoid, or an irregular shape. The filled inflated balloon may float or sink in urine.

[0059] As shown in FIG. 4, the balloon may first be inserted into the bladder by means of an applicator 20 to be described below in detail (FIG. 4a) and following its release from the applicator into the bladder, the balloon is then filled with fluid 24 from a syringe 7 (FIG. 4b). Alternatively, as shown in FIG. 5a, the balloon 1 may be filled and compressed before being inserted into the bladder by means of applicator 20. The prefilled balloon is clutched by the flanges 23 which are initially kept closed by constraining sleeve 26 (FIG. 5a). After insertion of the applicator 20 with the prefilled balloon 1 into the urinary bladder, ring 25 is pulled as indicated by arrow 21 in FIG. 5b to urge the constraining sleeve 26 away from the flanges 23, allowing flanges 23 to open and release the prefilled balloon 1 into the bladder.

[0060] FIG. 6 shows a balloon 1 constructed so as to have one or more diffusible substances contained within its wall 2 or lumen 4. Such substances could be, for example, drugs, antibiotics immunoglobulins, or radioactive substances, etc. After insertion of the balloon 1 into the lumen of the urinary bladder, the substances diffuse from the balloon 1 into the bladder (arrows 9) in order to achieve a desired effect.

[0061] FIG. 7 shows a balloon 1 constructed so as to comprise a microvideo camera 19 for imaging the interior of

the bladder. The video camera **19** may have associated with it a transmitter **10** for transmitting images to a remote receiver **11**. Such microvideo cameras and transmitters are known in the art, for example, as disclosed in U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,604,531, 5,579,781 and 5,188,109. The receiver **11** may be connected to a processing unit **12** for processing the images, or a display **13** for displaying images.

[0062] FIG. 8 shows a balloon **1** constructed so as to comprise one or more devices **14** for measuring one or more parameters associated with the urinary bladder, for example, bladder pressure, urine temperature, urine density, urine conductivity or urine composition. The devices **14** may be affixed to the outer surface of the balloon **14a**, embedded within the wall **2** of the balloon **14b** or affixed to the inner surface of the balloon **14c**. The measuring devices **14** may have associated with it a transmitter **15** for transmitting measurements to a remote receiver **16**. The receiver may be connected to a processing unit **17** for processing the measurements or to a display **18** for displaying results. Such measuring devices are known in the art, for example as disclosed in U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,579,781 and 5,188,109.

[0063] FIG. 9 shows use of an applicator **20** for inserting the balloon **1** into the lumen **41** of the urinary bladder **42** of a female individual, and FIG. 10 shows use of the applicator **20** inserting the balloon **1** into the lumen of the urinary bladder **42** of a male individual. In either case the balloon **1** is initially grasped by the closed flanges **23a** at the distal end of the applicator **20** (FIGS. 9a and 10a). The distal end of the applicator-balloon combination is inserted into the urethra until it reaches the lumen **41** of the bladder **42**. The balloon **1** is then released from the applicator by opening the flanges **23b** by pulling on ring **25** while holding the constraining sleeve **26**. The applicator **20** is then removed from the body, leaving the balloon **1** in the bladder lumen **41**.

[0064] FIG. 11 shows a retrieval device generally designated as **30** for removing the balloon from the bladder. A catheter **27** has at its distal end **28** a magnetable portion **29** so as to hold the balloon **1** at the distal tip **28** by means of the magnetable particles **3** associated with the balloon **1**.

[0065] The retrieval device is inserted into a full bladder. After opening the flanges **31** of the retrieval device, the engaging probe **32** with magnetable portion **29** in its tip is inserted into the lumen of the full bladder so as to engage the magnet **3** of the balloon and push the balloon into the lumen of the bladder. The probe **32** is then pulled so as to bring the balloon **1** into the grip of flanges **31** of the retrieval device. A piercer **33** is inserted into the balloon to drain the fluid contained in its lumen **4** into an attached syringe (not shown) or into the bladder lumen. The applicator **20** is then withdrawn from the patient together with the deflated balloon **1**.

[0066] FIGS. 12 and 13 show use of a displacing member **51** to position the balloon **1** at a desired location within the lumen **41** of an individual's urinary bladder **42**. The displacing member **51** is located outside the individual's body and comprises a magnetable portion **52**. The displacing member **51** is placed at a location on the surface of the individual's body so as to draw the balloon **1** from its initial location to the desired location.

[0067] FIG. 12 shows use of the balloon **1** for sealing the urinary bladder outlet in a female subject. Displacing member **51** is placed over the urethral meatus **63** such that, due

to the magnetable portion **52** associated with the displacing member **51** and the magnetable portion **3** associated with balloon **1**, the balloon is drawn into the bladder outlet **64**. The balloon thus becomes lodged in the outlet and seals it. As the amount of urine in the bladder increases, a hydrostatic pressure is exerted on the balloon further lodging it in to the outlet and reinforcing the seal. The invention is used similarly for sealing the urinary bladder outlet in male subjects.

[0068] As seen in FIG. 13, in order to open the urinary bladder for voiding, the magnetic displacing member **51** is placed over the upper edge of the pubic bone **65**. Due to the magnetable portion **3** of the balloon **1**, the balloon **1** is raised and dislodged from the bladder outlet **64** so as to allow voiding of urine as indicated by arrow **66**. After voiding the balloon is redrawn into the bladder outlet **64** by the displacing member **51** so as to seal the outlet again as shown in FIG. 12.

[0069] FIG. 14 shows use of an immobilizing member **71** comprising a magnetable portion **72** affixed to the surface **73** of the individual's body so as to maintain the balloon **1** at the desired location in the lumen **41** of the urinary bladder **42**. The magnetable portion **72** of immobilizing member **71** may be enclosed in a coating **75** so as to form, for example, a hygienic pad. The immobilizing member **71** may be affixed to the surface **73** by means of tape, or by pressure applied to it by the individual's underwear.

[0070] The invention has been described with a certain degree of particularity only for the sake of clarity. However, several variations and modifications in the invention are possible without exceeding the scope and spirit of the invention as defined in the following set of claims.

1. An expandable balloon for insertion into the urinary bladder of an individual, the balloon having a wall and a lumen.
2. The balloon according to claim 1, being formed with a magnetable portion.
3. The balloon according to claim 2, wherein the magnetable portion of the balloon comprises one or more magnetable particles in the lumen of the balloon.
4. The balloon according to claim 2, wherein the magnetable portion of the balloon comprises one or more magnetable particles attached to the wall of the balloon.
5. The balloon according to claim 2, wherein the magnetable portion of the balloon comprises one or more magnetable particles embedded in the wall of the balloon.
6. The balloon according to any one of the preceding claims in which the balloon further comprises a self-sealing valve.
7. The balloon according to any one of the previous claims, wherein the balloon upon expansion floats in the bladder.
8. The balloon according to any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the balloon sinks in the bladder.
9. The balloon according to any one of the previous claims, wherein the balloon is capable of storing one or more compounds and releasing them into the urinary bladder.
10. The balloon according to claim 9, wherein the one or more substances are stored in the lumen of the balloon.
11. The balloon according to claim 9, wherein the one or more substances are stored in the wall of the balloon.

12. The balloon according to any one of claims 9 to 11, wherein one or more of the one or more substances are drugs or antibiotics.

13. The balloon according to any one of claims 9 to 11, wherein one or more of the one or more substances are radioactive substances.

14. The balloon according to any one of the previous claims, further comprising a device for imaging the urinary bladder.

15. The balloon according to any one of the previous claims, further comprising one or more devices for monitoring urinary bladder parameters and its contents.

16. The balloon according to claim 15, wherein one or more of the one or more devices monitors a parameter of the urinary bladder selected from the list comprising:

- (a) bladder pressure;
- (b) urine temperature;
- (c) urine density;
- (d) urine composition.

17. The balloon according to claim 14, further comprising a transmitter imaging for transmitting signals from the imaging device to a receiver.

18. The balloon according to claim 15 or 16, further comprising a transmitter for transmitting signals from the monitoring device to a receiver.

19. A system for treating the urinary bladder of an individual, the system comprising:

- (a) a balloon according to any one of the previous claims;
- (b) an applicator for inserting the balloon into the urinary bladder of an individual or for removing the balloon from the individual's urinary bladder, the applicator fitted at an end thereof with a gripping device for releasably gripping the balloon;
- (c) an expanding device for expanding the balloon in the individual's urinary bladder; and
- (d) a magnetable displacing member for displacing the balloon within the urinary bladder.

20. The system according to claim 19, further comprising an immobilizing member comprising a magnetable portion, said immobilizing member being secured onto the individual's body for immobilizing the balloon at a desired location in the individual's urinary bladder.

21. The system according to claim 20, wherein the immobilizing member is in the form of a hygienic pad to be placed in the individual's underwear.

22. The system of any one of claims 19 to 21, wherein the gripping device comprises flanges.

23. The system of any one of claims 19 to 21, wherein the gripping device comprises a magnetable portion.

24. The system of any one of claims 14 to 23, wherein the expanding device comprises an injector for injecting a fluid into the balloon so as to expand the balloon.

25. The system of any one of claims 19 to 23, wherein the expanding device comprises a decompressor for decompressing a previously compressed balloon so as to expand the balloon.

26. The system according to any one of claims 19 to 25, for use in the treatment of a disorder selected from the list comprising:

- (a) urinary incontinence;
- (b) urinary bladder infections;
- (c) urinary bladder tumors;
- (d) bladder dysfunction.

27. The system according to any one of claims 19 to 25 comprising a balloon according to claim 18, further comprising a receiver receiving signals from said transmitter.

28. The system according to claim 27, further comprising one or more components selected from the list comprising:

- (a) a processing unit processing signals received from the receiver;
- (b) a display for displaying signals received by the receiver;
- (c) a display for displaying an output produced by a processing unit.

29. The system according to any one of claims 27 or 28, for use in monitoring one or more urinary bladder parameters selected from the list comprising:

- (a) urine temperature;
- (b) bladder pressure;
- (c) urine density;
- (d) urine conductivity;
- (e) urine composition.

30. The system according to any one of claims 19 to 25, comprising a balloon according to claim 17, further comprising a receiver receiving signals from said transmitter.

31. The system according to claim 30, further comprising one or more components selected from the list comprising:

- (a) a processing unit processing signals received from the receiver;
- (b) a display for displaying signals received by the receiver;
- (c) a display for displaying an output produced by a processing unit.

32. The system according to any one of claims 30 or 31, for use in imaging the urinary bladder of an individual.

33. A method for treating urinary incontinence in an individual comprising the steps of:

- (a) inserting a balloon of any one of claims 2 to 18 into the individual's urinary bladder;
- (b) expanding the balloon in the urinary bladder;
- (c) displacing the balloon into a sealing position for sealing the urinary bladder; and
- (d) displacing the balloon within the urinary bladder into an unsealing position for voiding the urinary bladder.

34. A method for releasing one or more substances into the urinary bladder of an individual comprising the steps of:

- (a) loading the one or more substances into a balloon according to any one of claims 9 to 13;
- (b) inserting the balloon into the individual's urinary bladder;

- (c) expanding the balloon in the urinary bladder; and
- (d) displacing the balloon within the urinary bladder to a desired location.

35. The method of claim 34, wherein one or more of the one or more substances are selected from the list comprising:

- (a) drugs;
- (b) antibiotics; and
- (c) radioactive substances.

36. A method for monitoring the interior of an individual's urinary bladder comprising the steps of:

- (a) inserting a balloon according to claim 17 into the individual's urinary bladder;
- (b) expanding the balloon in the urinary bladder;
- (c) displacing the balloon within the urinary bladder to a desired location within the urinary bladder; and
- (d) transmitting signals from one or more of the one or more monitoring devices to a receiver.

37. A method for imagining the interior of an individual's urinary bladder comprising the steps of:

- (a) inserting a balloon according to claim 17 into the individual's urinary bladder;
- (b) expanding the balloon in the urinary bladder;
- (c) displacing the balloon within the urinary bladder to a desired location within the urinary bladder; and
- (d) transmitting signals from the imaging device to a receiver.

38. The method of claims **36** or **37**, further comprising one or more steps selected from the list comprising:

- (a) storing the signals in a computer memory;
- (b) displaying the signals on a display;
- (c) processing the signals in a computer processing unit;
- (d) storing results of the processing in a computer memory; and
- (e) displaying results of the processing on a display.

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