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(54) **VALVE ANNULUS CONSTRICTION
APPARATUS AND METHOD**

Publication Classification

(76) Inventors: **Peter L. Callas**, Redwood City, CA
(US); **Richard J. Saunders**, Redwood
City, CA (US)

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Correspondence Address:

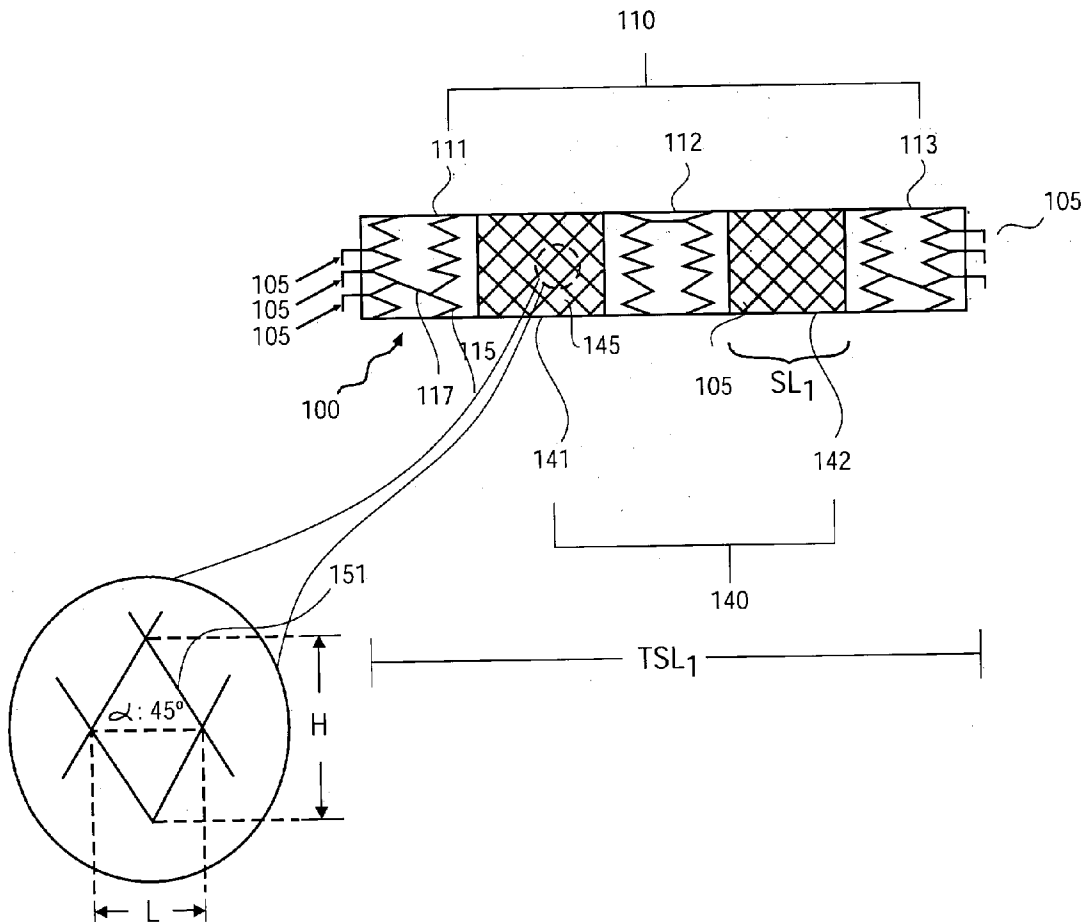
**BLAKELY SOKOLOFF TAYLOR & ZAFMAN
12400 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD, SEVENTH
FLOOR
LOS ANGELES, CA 90025 (US)**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

An apparatus is described for supporting and/or constricting a surface of a valve annulus. The apparatus includes a tubular member of dimensions suitable for insertion into a body vessel. The tubular member includes at least two first segments attachable to an interior wall of the body vessel. The tubular member further includes at least one second segment which is capable of decreasing its axial length to draw one of the first segments towards the other first segment.

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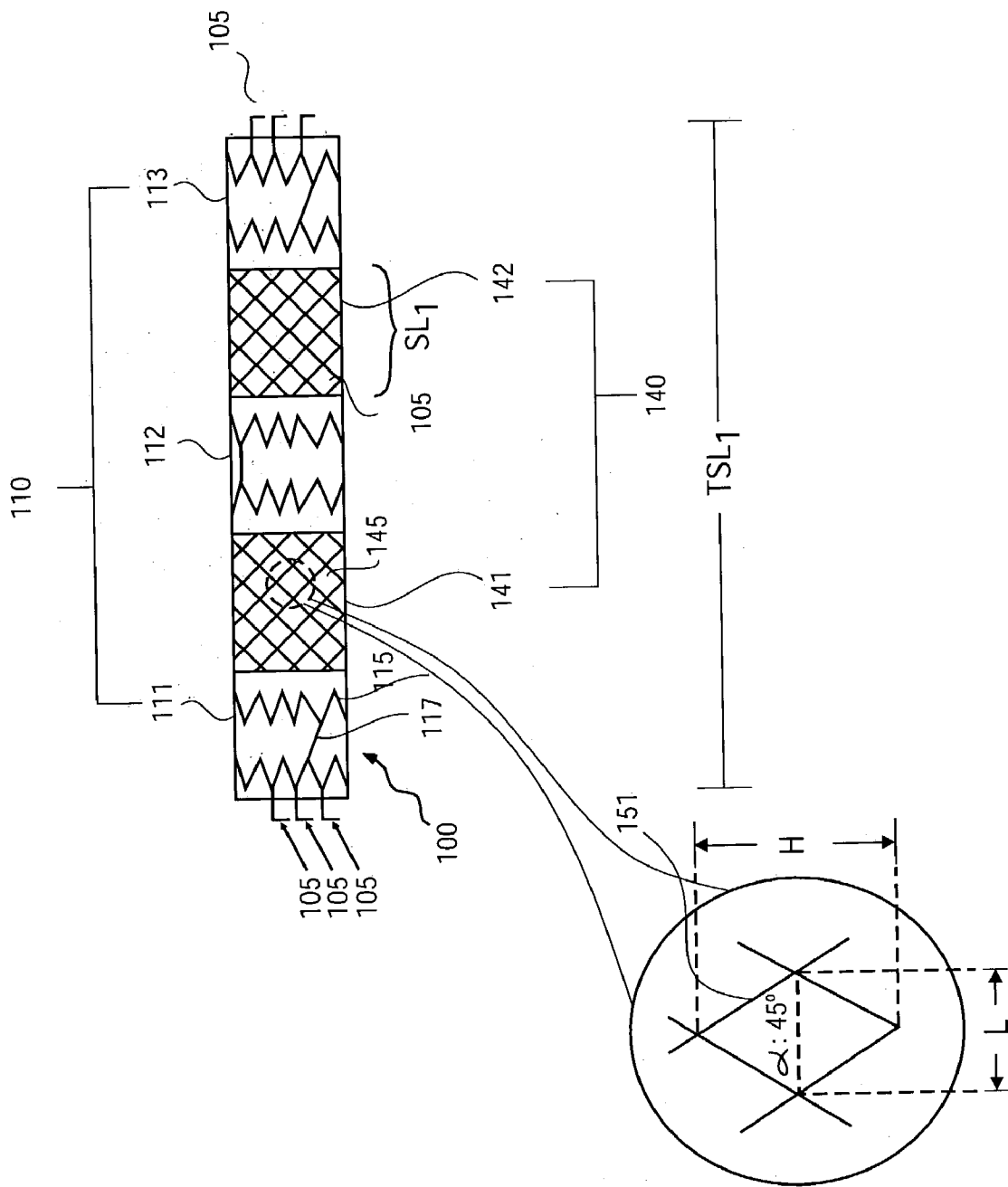


FIG. 1

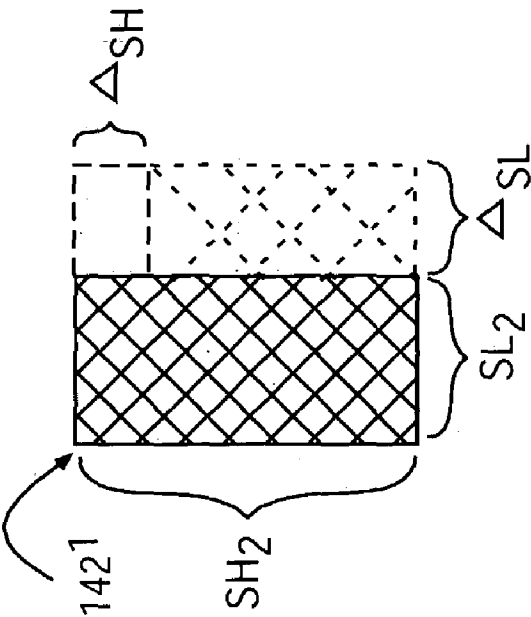


FIG. 3

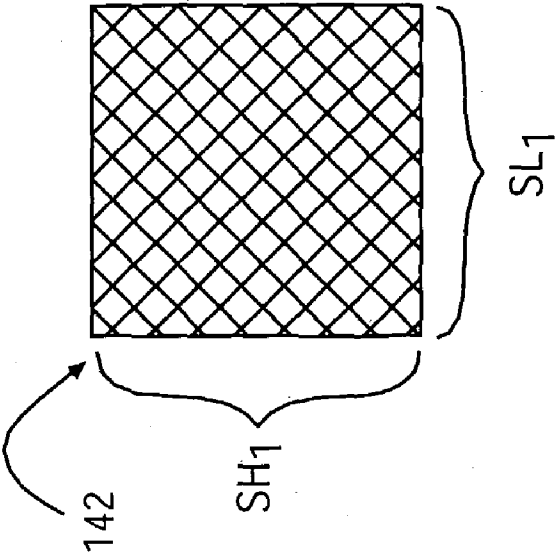


FIG. 2

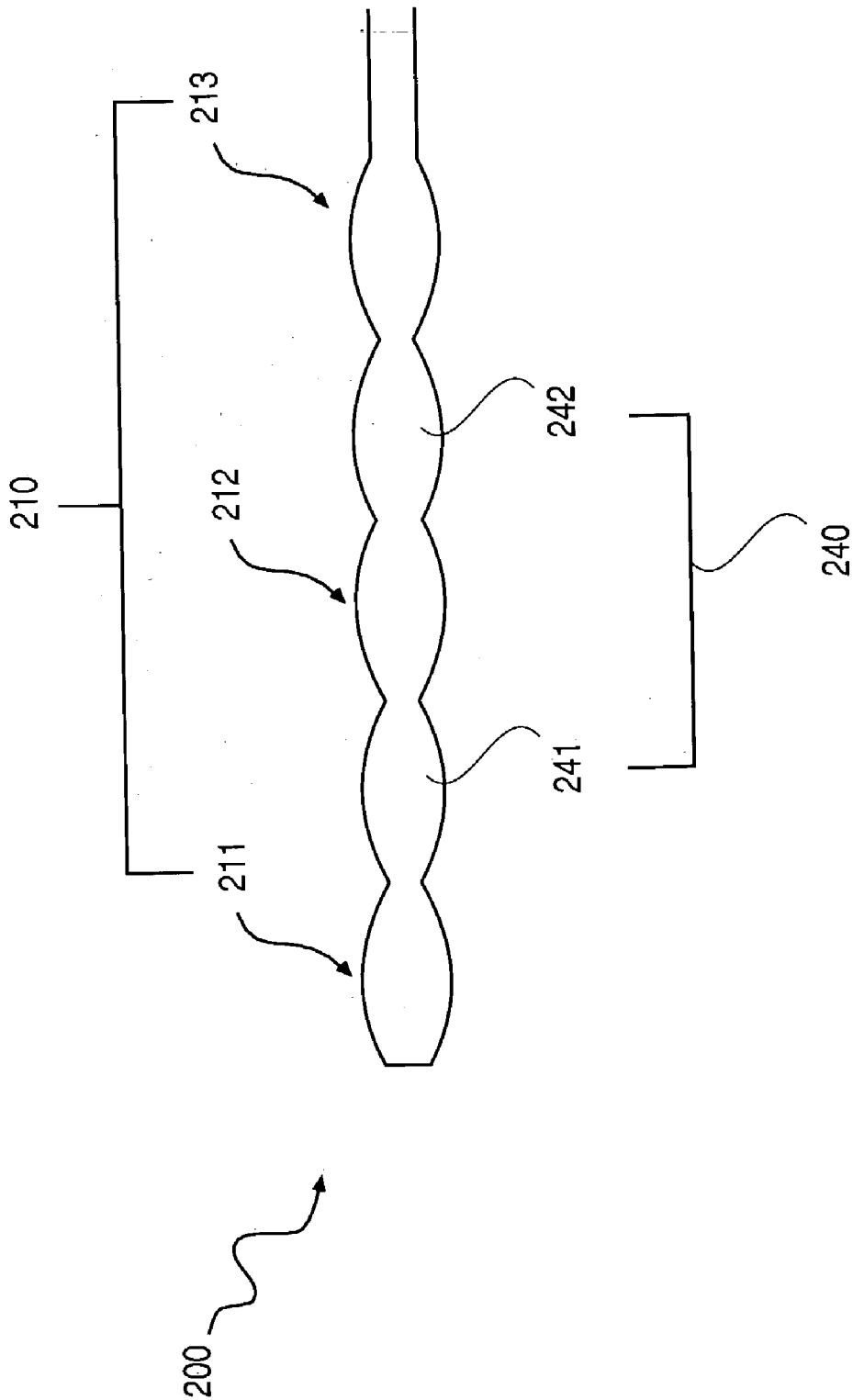


FIG. 4

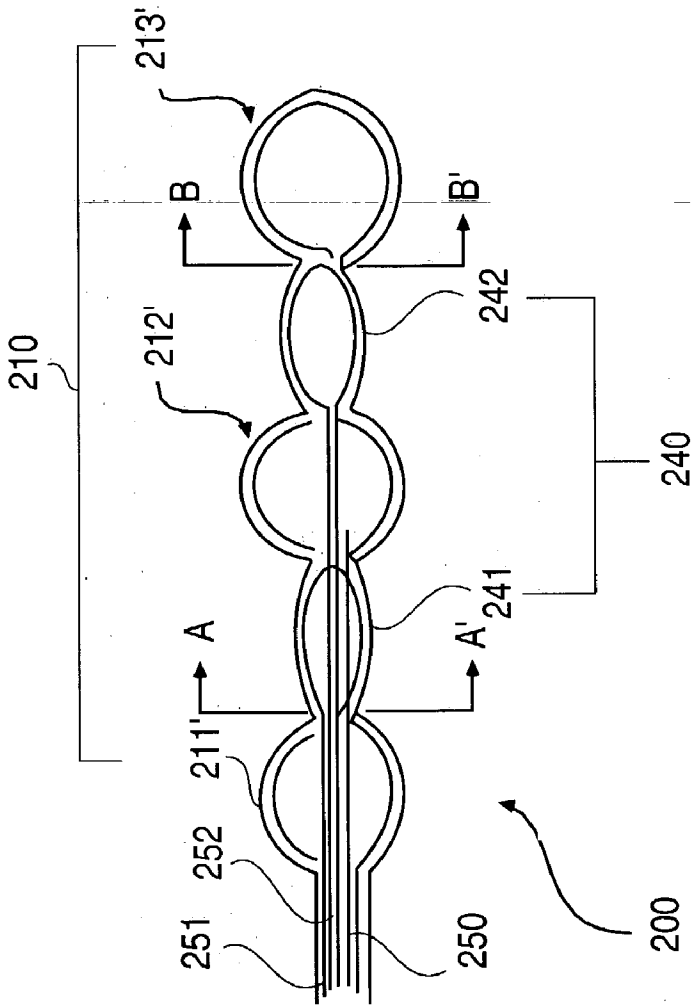


FIG. 5

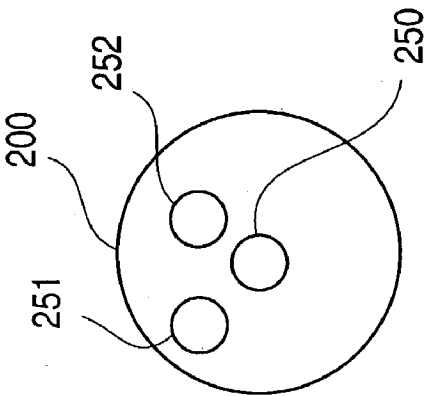


FIG. 5A

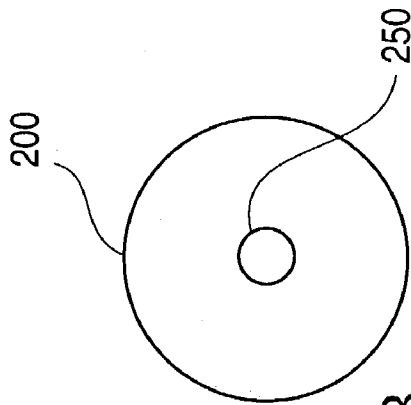


FIG. 5B

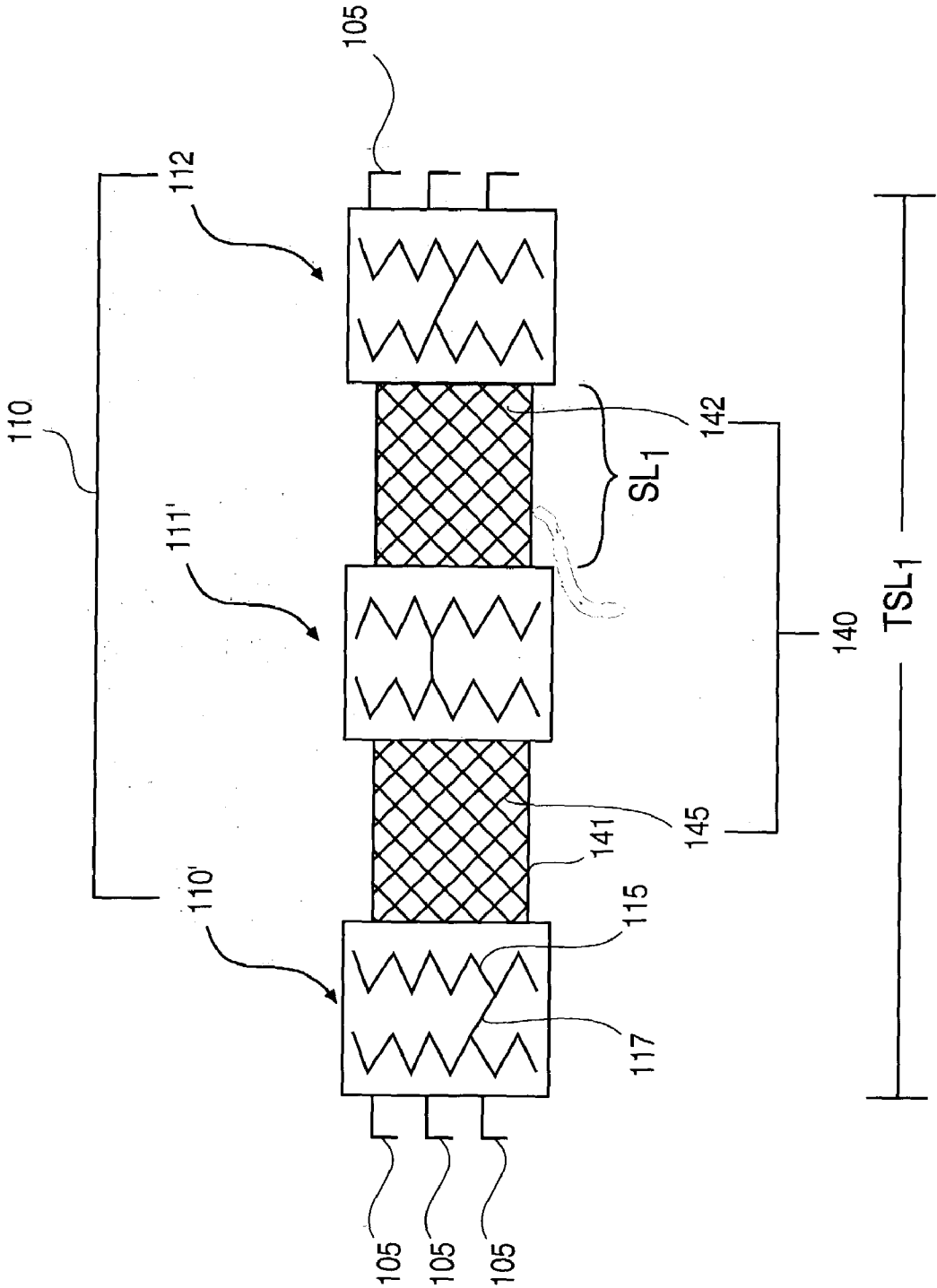


FIG. 6

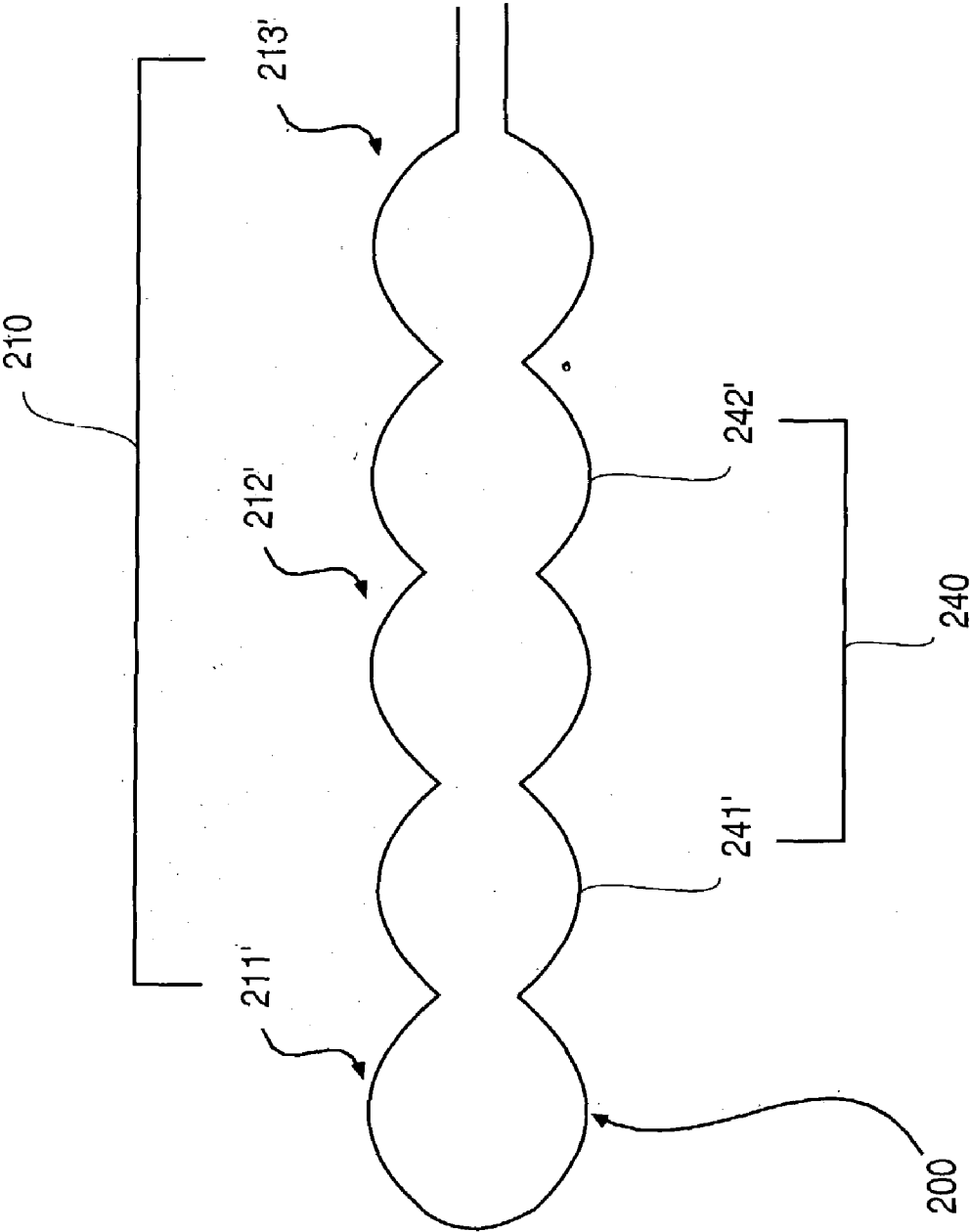


FIG. 7

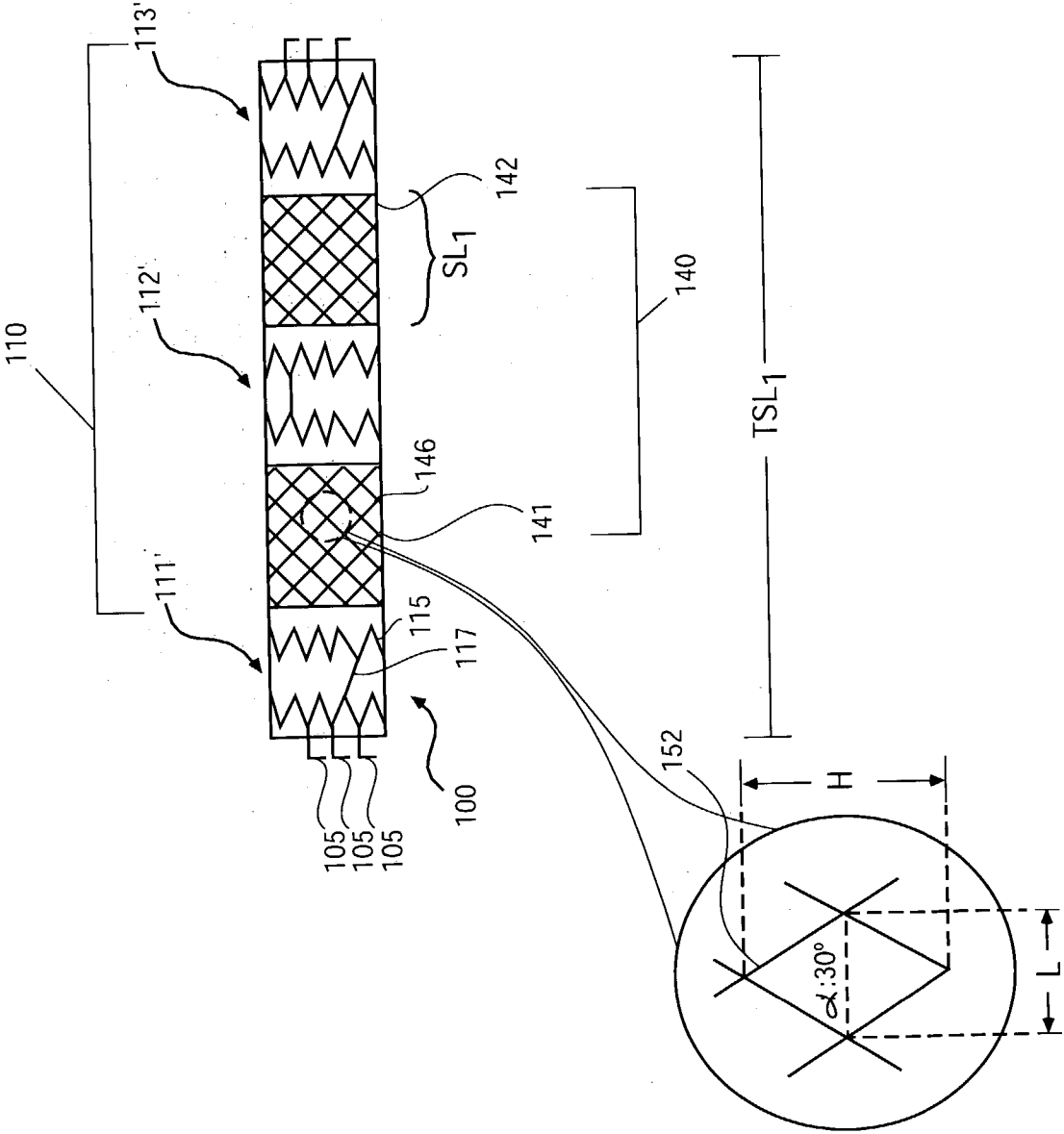
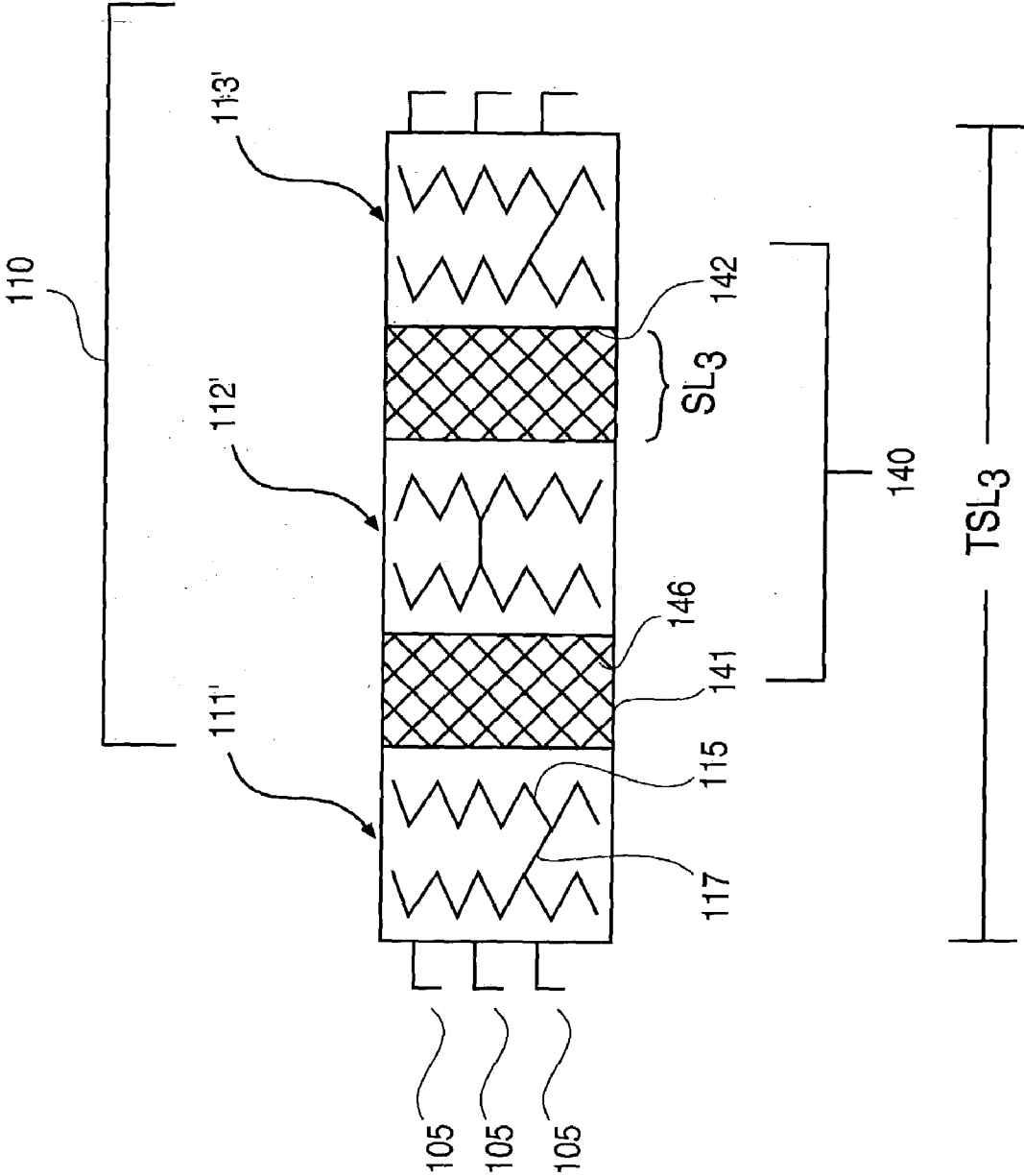


FIG. 9

FIG. 10



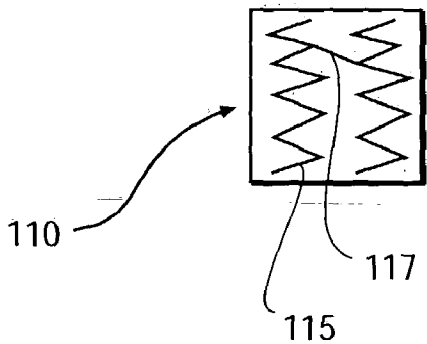


FIG. 11

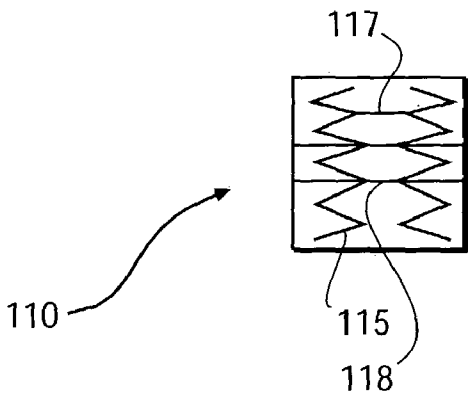


FIG. 12

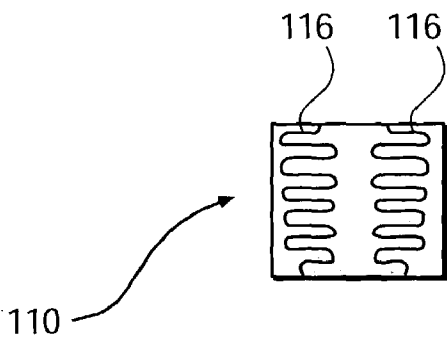


FIG. 13

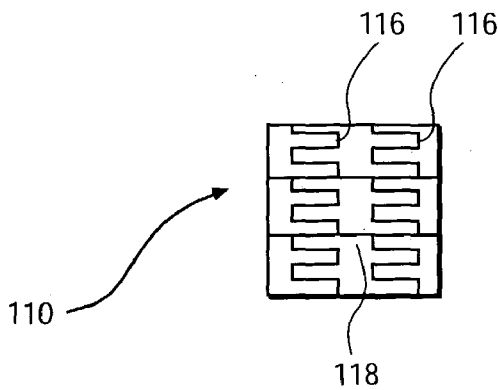


FIG. 14

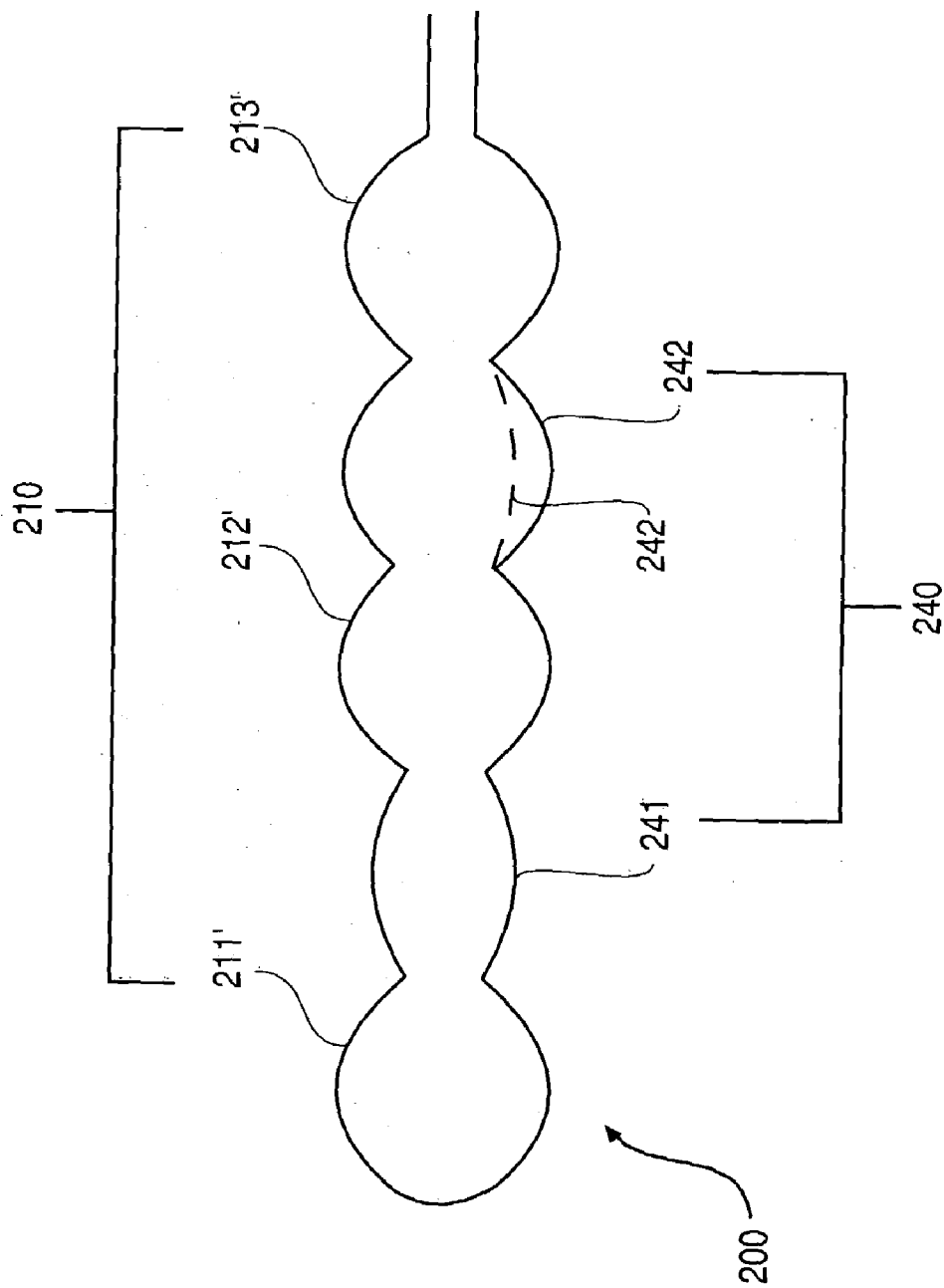
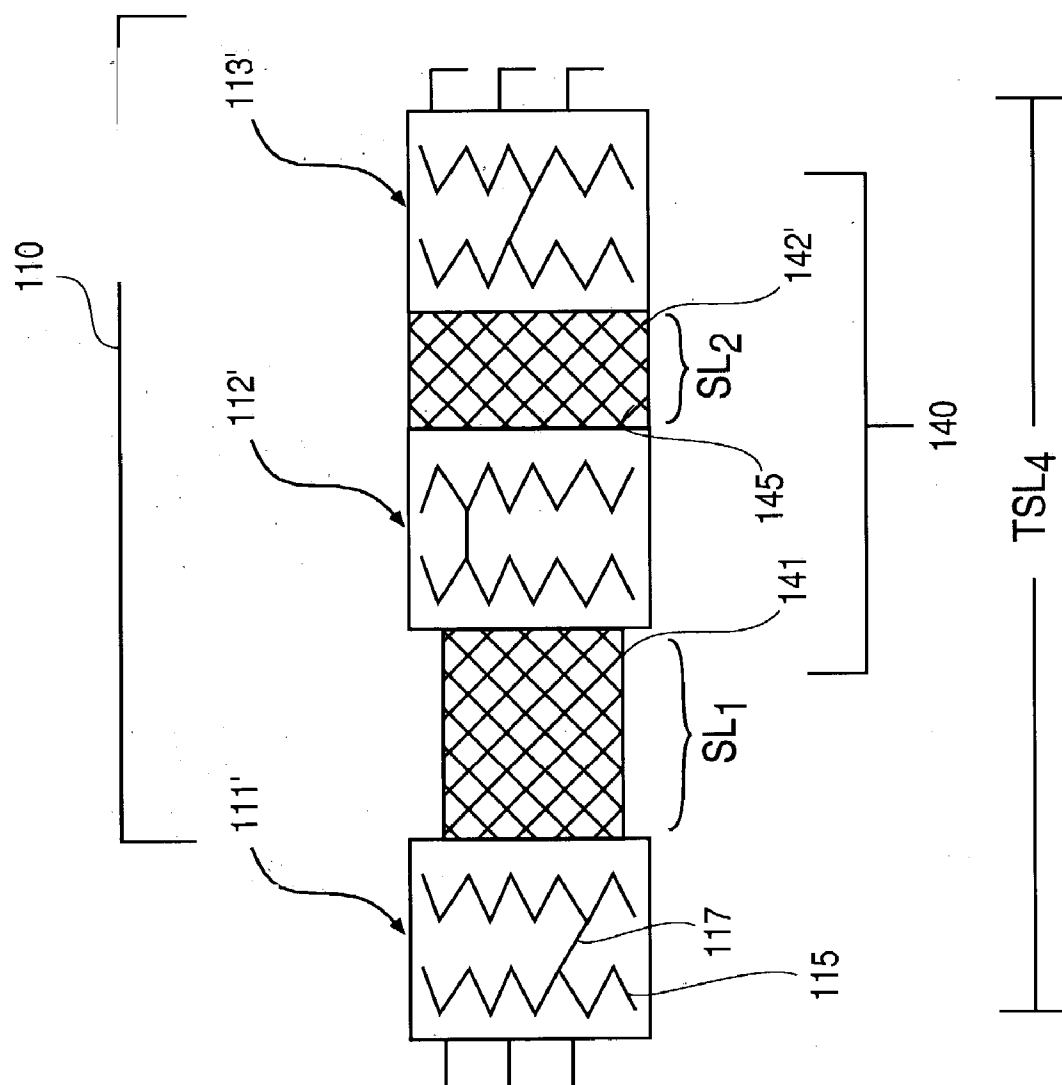


FIG. 15

FIG. 16



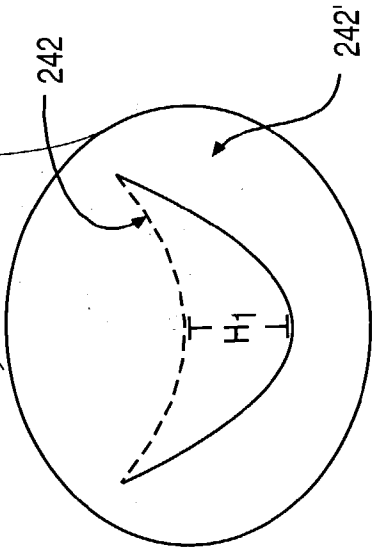
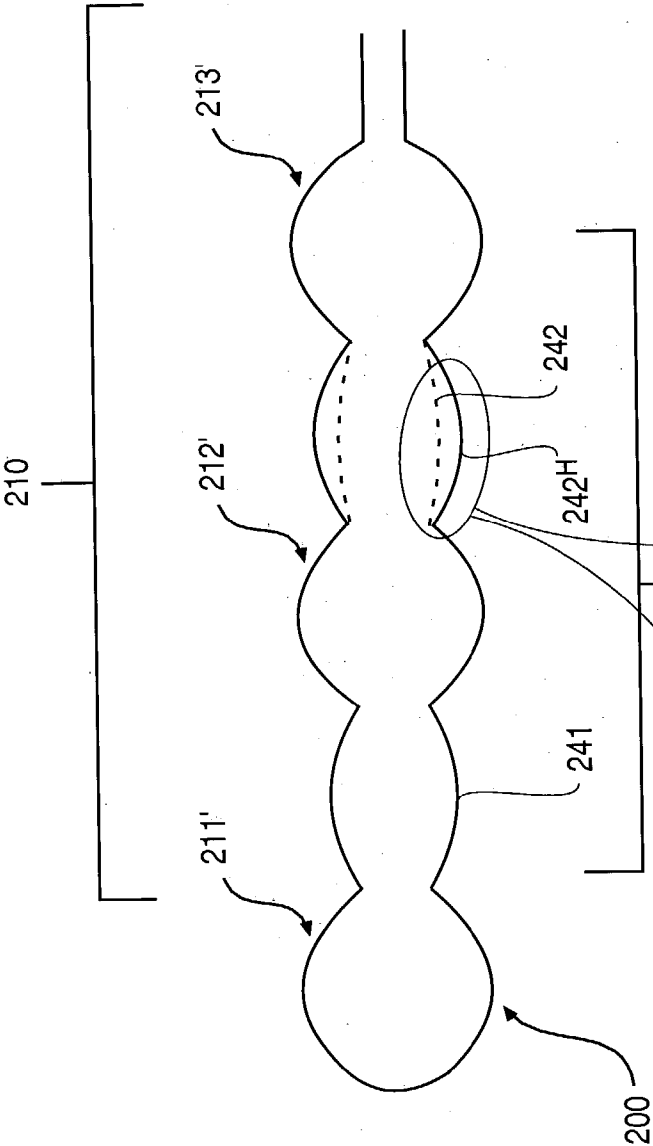
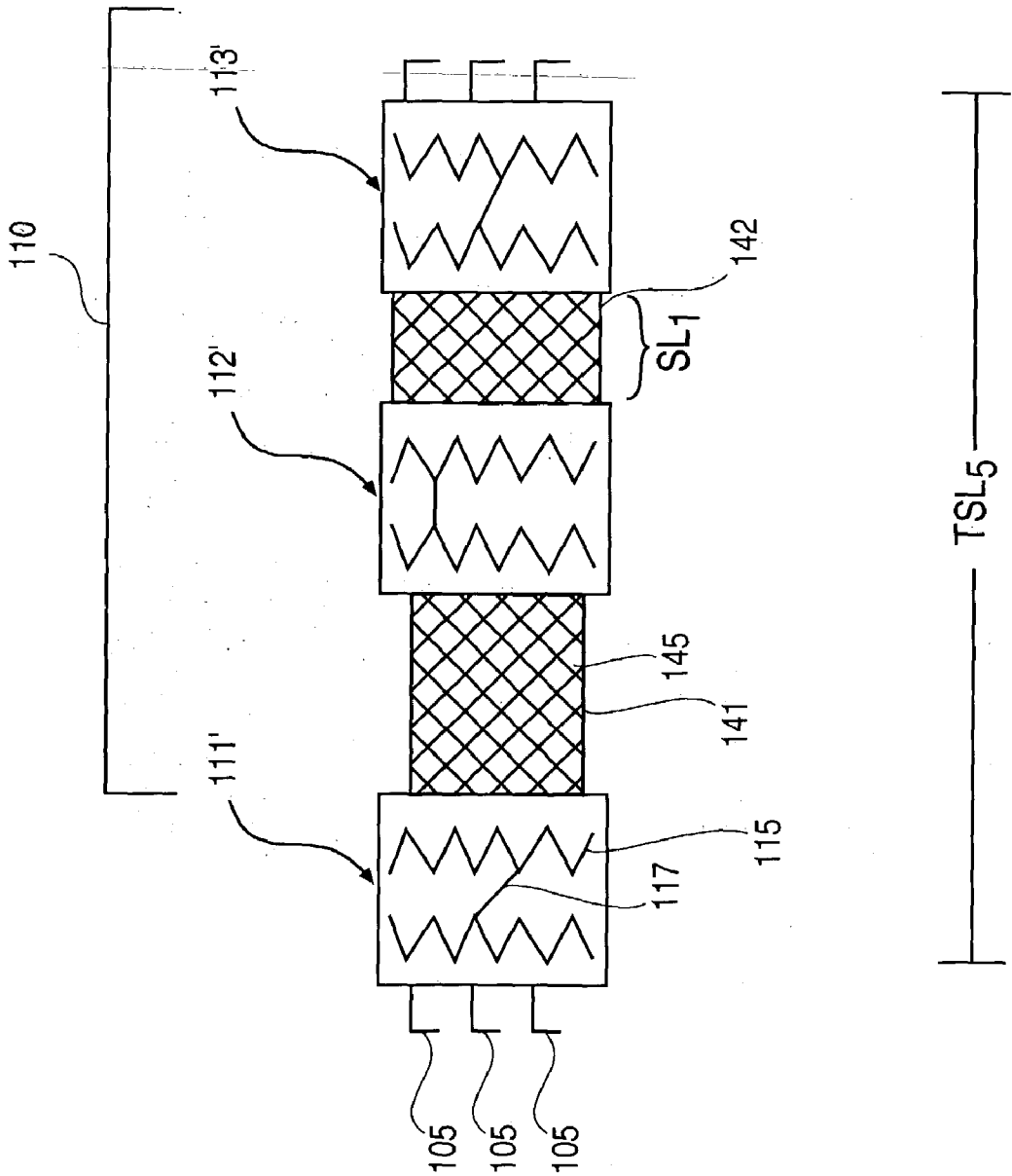
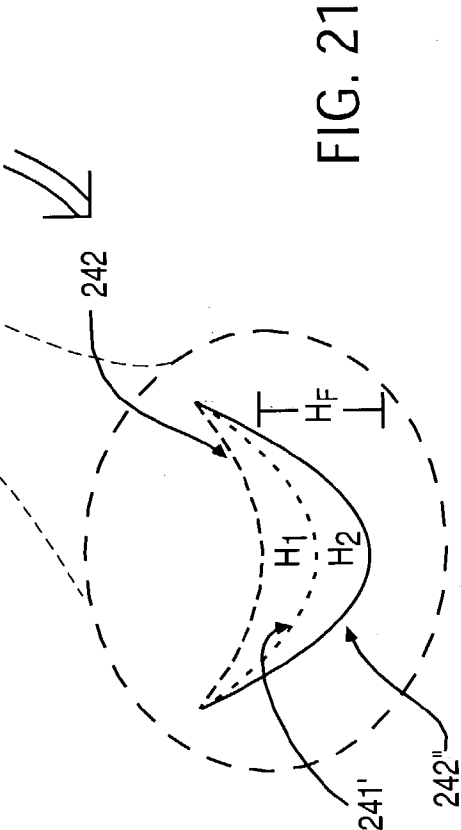
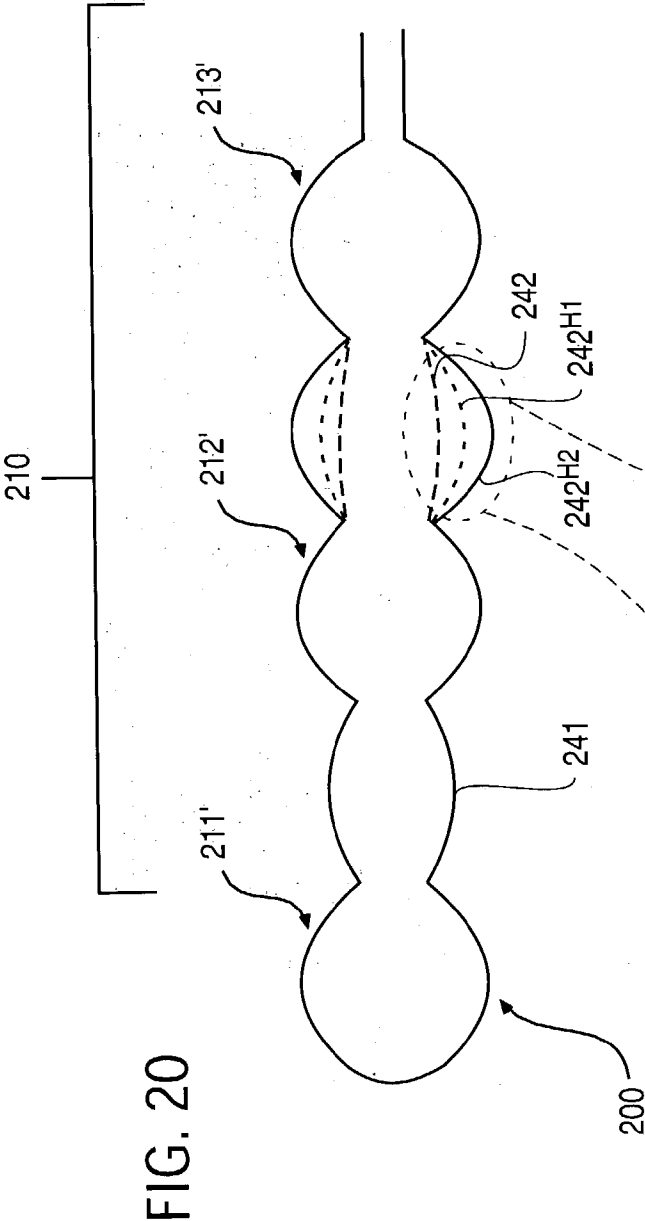


FIG. 19





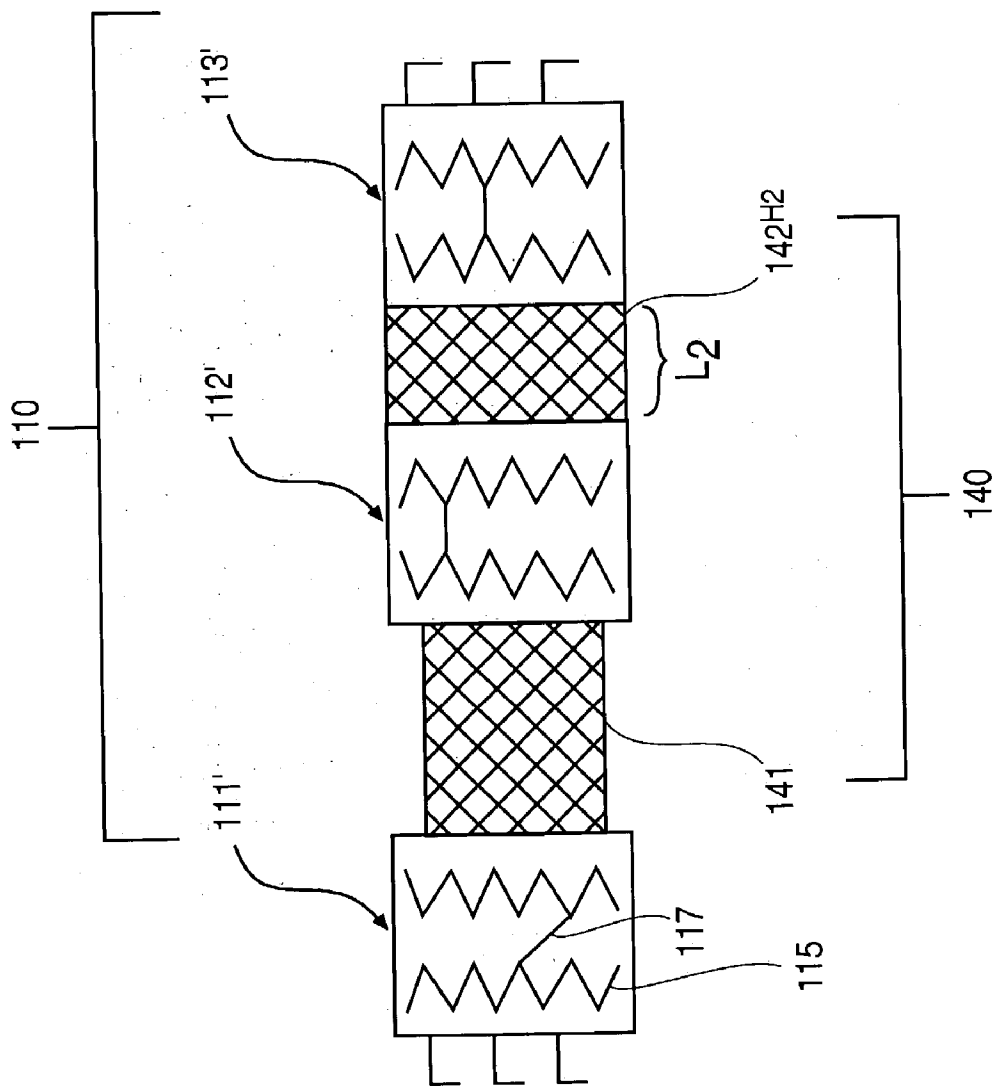


FIG. 22

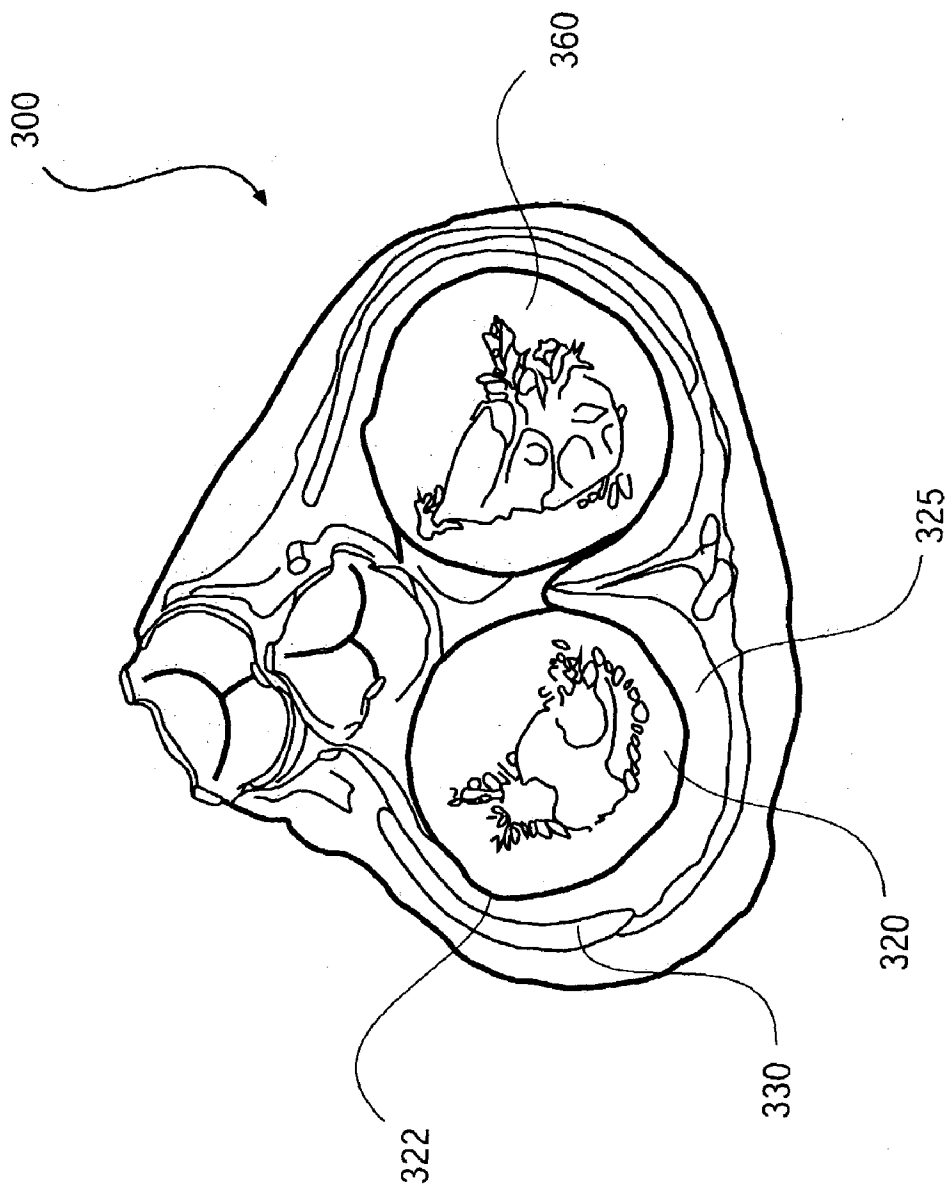


FIG. 23

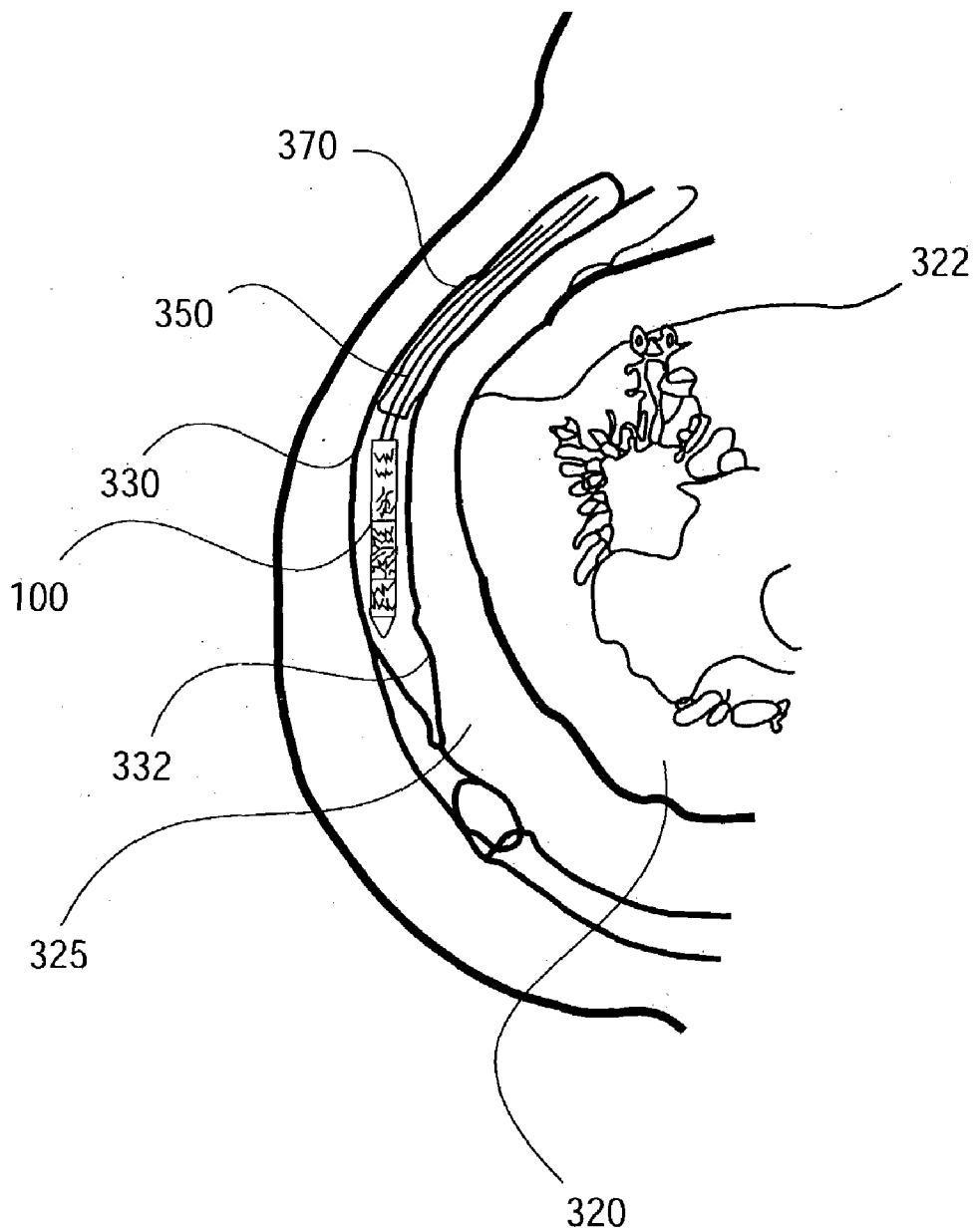


FIG. 24

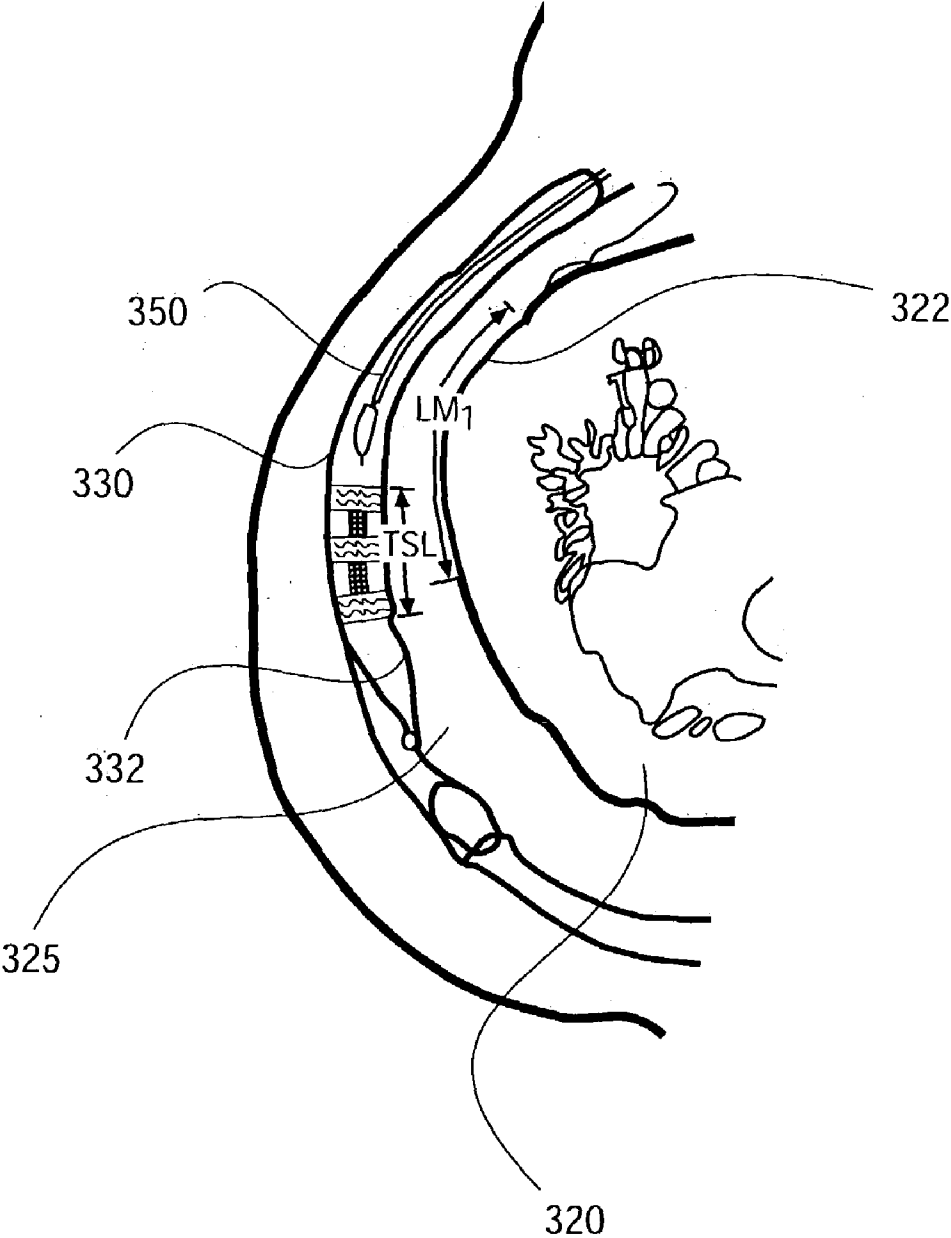


FIG. 25

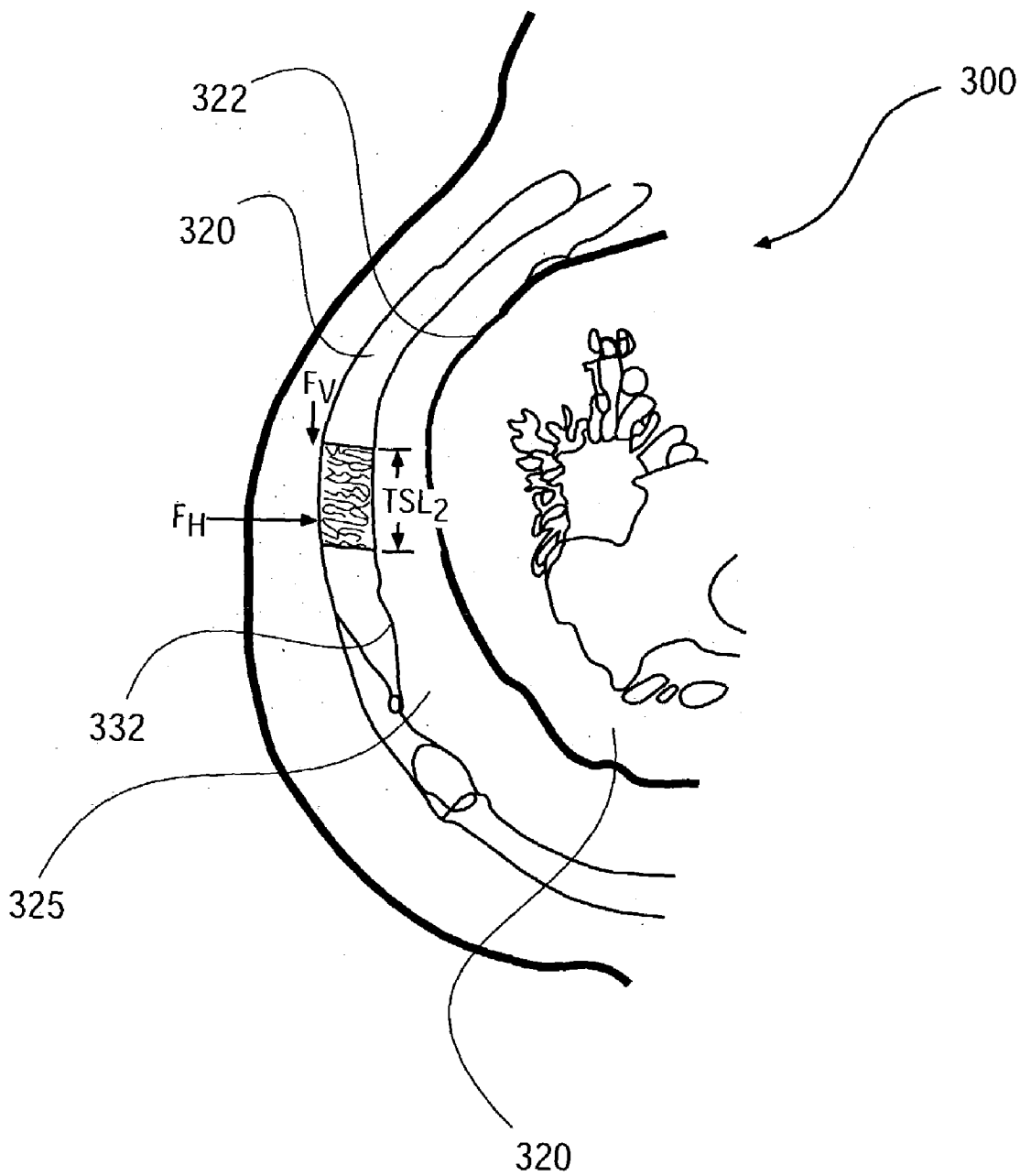


FIG. 26

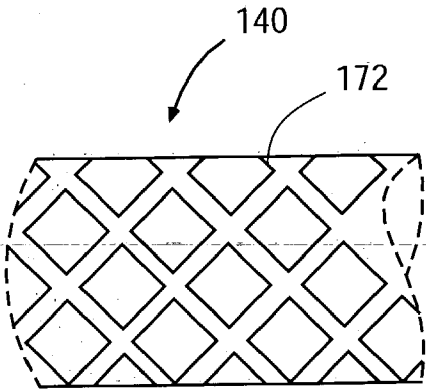


FIG. 27A

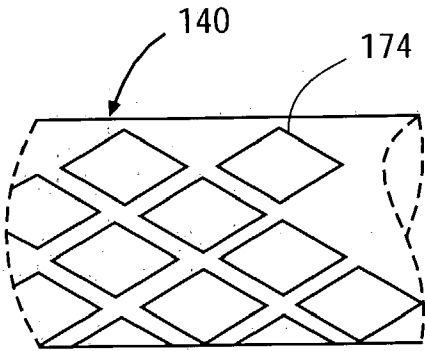


FIG. 27B

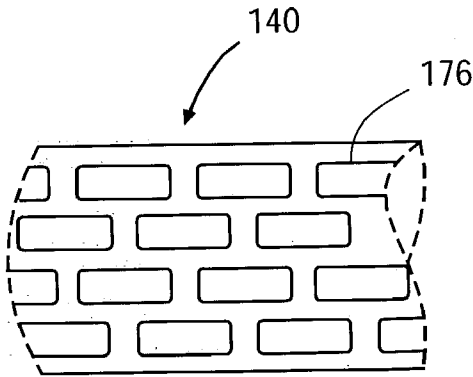


FIG. 27C

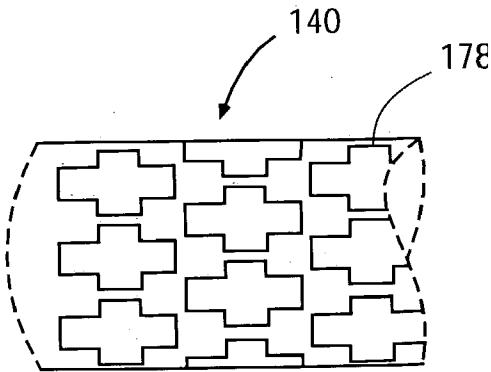


FIG. 27D

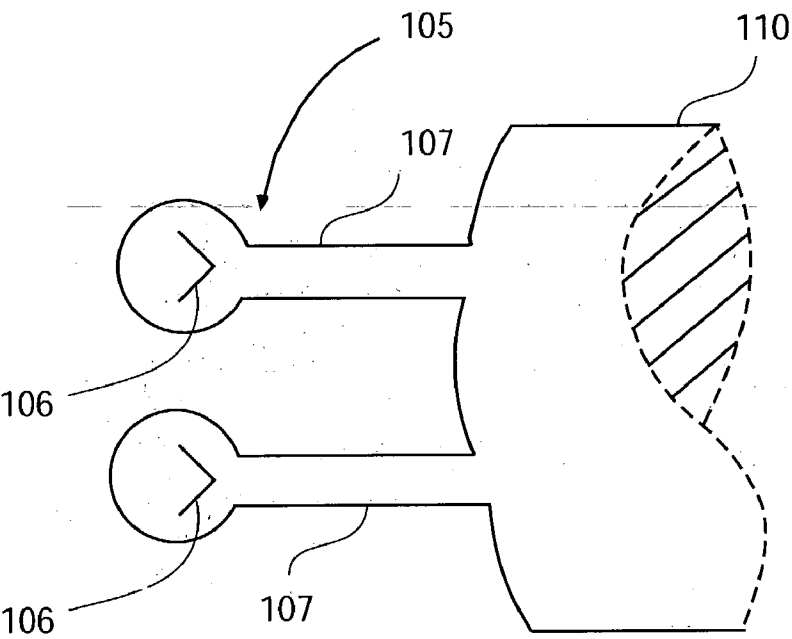


FIG. 28A

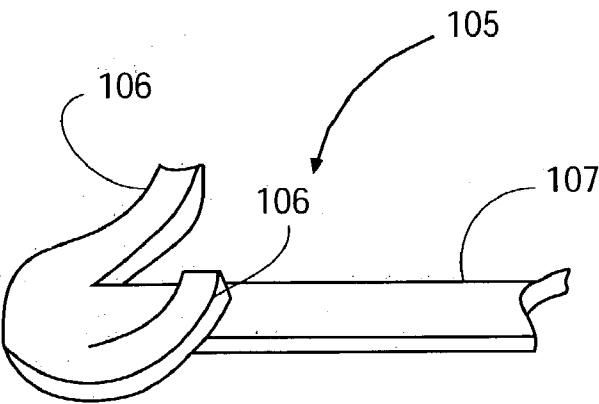


FIG. 28B

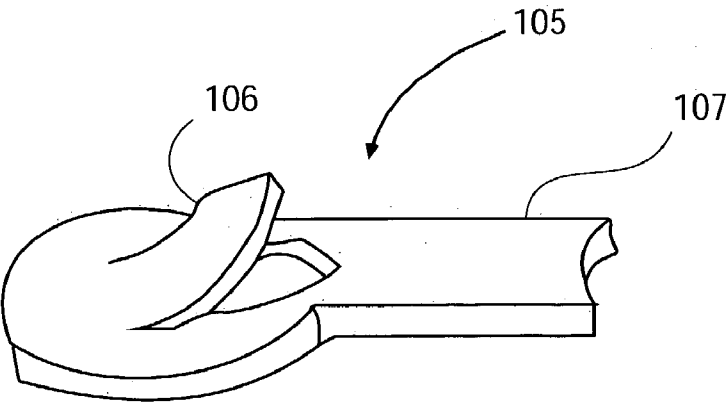


FIG. 28C

VALVE ANNULUS CONSTRICTION APPARATUS AND METHOD

BACKGROUND

[0001] 1. Field

[0002] Stent like structures for insertion into body vessels, and the treatment of valve insufficiency.

[0003] 2. Background

[0004] Generally speaking, oxygenated blood travels from the lungs to the left atrium by way of the pulmonary veins. The veins from the systemic circuit, the venae cavae and coronary sinus carry blood deficient in oxygen into the right atrium. The right ventricle takes blood received from the right atrium and sends it to the lungs, while the left ventricle takes blood received from the left atrium and sends it to the aorta.

[0005] The atrioventricular valves between respective ones of the atria and ventricles play important roles in the transport of blood through the body. The atrioventricular valves open during diastole, when the heart muscle relaxes, to allow blood to flow from the atria into the ventricles. The atrioventricular valves close during systole, when the heart muscle contracts, preventing the back flow of blood into the atria and allowing blood from the ventricles to be efficiently pumped into the lungs via the pulmonary tract and to the rest of the body via the aorta.

[0006] The mitral valve is the atrioventricular valve that controls blood flow from the left atrium into the left ventricle. The mitral valve is a bicuspid valve, describing the two cusps or leaflets that open and close the valve. The cusps or leaflets are attached to a muscular and fibrous ring around the orifice (mitral valve annulus) and their apices hang down into the left ventricle. When the ventricle fills with blood and begins to contract, the valve cusps or leaflets flow into position in the atrioventricular opening and are forced shut (coaptate) by the increasing pressure. To prevent the valve cusps or leaflets from turning into the left atrium and regurgitating blood, tendinous cords, the chordae tendineae, are attached to the free margins and ventricular surfaces of the cusps or leaflets. At the other ends, these cords attached to one of a respective pair of papillary muscles projecting from the ventricular wall. By contracting, these muscles maintain the integrity of the valve during ventricular contraction or systole.

[0007] When the two cusps or leaflets of the mitral valve do not completely close, there is backflow, or regurgitation of blood. The backflow increases the pressure in the left atrium which leads to pulmonary hypertension and dilation of the heart which are common symptoms of congestive heart failure. A heart then has to work harder pumping blood for the body which can lead to heart damage. Incomplete closing of the mitral valve cusps or leaflets is common, occurring generally in about seven percent of the population. Conditions contributing to incomplete closure of the mitral valve cusps or leaflets include genetic defects, infections, coronary artery disease, myocardial infarction, or congestive heart failure. These conditions contribute to mitral valve regurgitation resulting from enlargement of the mitral valve annulus and/or movement of the papillary muscles away from the valve as a result of ventricular enlargement. When the annulus enlarges, the cusps or leaflets of the valve are no

longer able to close (coaptate), because the distance between the two cusps or leaflets has increased too much for the cusps or leaflets to touch each other and thus close off blood flow to the left atrium during, for example, systole. Mitral valve regurgitation can also result as a secondary etiology due to the remodeling of a distorted left ventricle in ischemic heart disease. It is known that as the ventricle is remodeled, the papillary muscles can be displaced away from their natural position. This displacement alters the natural tethering of the cusps or leaflets and restricts the ability of the cusps or leaflets to close properly at the level of the annulus.

[0008] In general, most cases of mitral valve regurgitation are mild and the symptoms may be controlled with drugs. In more serious cases, the mitral valve can be repaired through a procedure known as annuloplasty, a surgical procedure in which a synthetic ring is placed around the valve annulus. Annuloplasty encourages aptation of the mitral valve cusps or leaflets by shrinking the size of the valve opening. In other instances, a faulty mitral valve must be surgically replaced with a new valve. These surgical repairs require the opening of the chest by sternotomy or at best through small incisions in the chest wall, heart lung bypass and stopping the heart beat. In general, annuloplasty is an extremely invasive procedure, and, as such, a less invasive treatment for annular dilation is desirable.

SUMMARY

[0009] In one embodiment, an apparatus is provided for supporting and/or constricting a surface of a valve annulus. The apparatus includes a tubular member of dimensions suitable for insertion into a body vessel. The tubular member includes at least two first segments attachable to an interior wall of the body vessel. The tubular member further includes at least one second segment which is capable of decreasing its axial length to draw one of the first segments towards the other first segment.

[0010] In one embodiment, the tubular member may be used to stabilize or modify a length of a blood vessel. Representatively, when placed, for example, in coronary arteries and/or veins, the tubular member may be used to constrict a surface of an atrioventricular valve annulus, such as the mitral valve annulus that is in close proximity to the coronary arteries and/or veins. The apparatus may also be used to constrict the tricuspid valve annulus. The apparatus and method are useful for treating mitral valve dilation and regurgitation, among other problems. The apparatus may also be used to support and/or constrict other valves or structures in a human or animal body.

[0011] In a further embodiment, a method is described. The method includes inserting a tubular member into a body vessel and securing attachable portions of the tubular member to an interior wall of the body vessel. In one implementation, the tubular member secured to the body vessel serves to prevent a portion of the body vessel from increasing in length. In another implementation, the tubular member secured to the body vessel serves to constrict a portion of the body vessel by causing a length of the tubular member between the attachable portions to be reduced.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] The features, aspects, and advantages of the disclosed subject matter will become more fully apparent from

the following detailed description and appended claims when taken in conjunction with accompanying illustrations in which:

[0013] **FIG. 1** is an illustration of an embodiment of a segmented stent;

[0014] **FIG. 2** is a close up illustration of an embodiment of unexpanded shrink segment;

[0015] **FIG. 3** is a close up illustration of expanded shrink segment;

[0016] **FIG. 4** is an illustration of an embodiment of a segmented balloon;

[0017] **FIG. 5** is an illustration of an embodiment of a segmented balloon having segments inflated to correspond with a first group of segments of a stent;

[0018] **FIG. 5A** is an illustration of a cross-sectional view of the segmented balloon taken along line A-A' of **FIG. 5**.

[0019] **FIG. 5B** is an illustration of a cross-sectional view of the segmented balloon taken along line B-B' of **FIG. 5**.

[0020] **FIG. 6** is an illustration of an embodiment of a segmented stent having a first group of segments expanded and a second group of unexpanded segments;

[0021] **FIG. 7** is an illustration of an embodiment of a segmented balloon having segments inflated to correspond with a first group and a second group of segments of a stent;

[0022] **FIG. 8** is an illustration of an embodiment of a segmented stent having segments of a first group and segments of a second group expanded;

[0023] **FIG. 9** is an illustration of an embodiment of a segmented stent having a group of segments with struts angled at a 30-degree angle;

[0024] **FIG. 10** is an illustration of an embodiment of a segmented stent having a first group of segments with struts angled at a 30 degree angle, wherein the segments are expanded;

[0025] **FIGS. 11-14** are illustrations of various embodiments of a radial traction segment;

[0026] **FIG. 15** is an illustration of an embodiment of a segmented balloon having a first group of segments inflated, and one segment from a second group inflated;

[0027] **FIG. 16** is an illustration of an embodiment of a segmented stent having a first group of segments expanded, and one segment from a second group expanded;

[0028] **FIG. 17** is an illustration of an embodiment of a segmented balloon having a first group of segments inflated, and one segment from a second group partially inflated;

[0029] **FIG. 18** is an illustration of an embodiment of a segmented stent having a first group of segments expanded, and one segment from a second group partially expanded;

[0030] **FIG. 19** is an illustration of an embodiment of a segmented balloon having a first group of segments inflated, and one segment from a second group fully inflated after being partially inflated;

[0031] **FIGS. 20 and 21** are illustrations of balloon segments having a range of expandability;

[0032] **FIG. 22** is an illustration of an embodiment of a segmented stent having a first group of segments expanded, and one segment from a second group fully expanded after being partially expanded;

[0033] **FIG. 23** is an illustration of an embodiment of a human heart;

[0034] **FIG. 24** is an illustration of an embodiment of an unexpanded segmented stent placed in the circumflex branch of the heart;

[0035] **FIG. 25** is an illustration of an embodiment of a segmented stent placed in the circumflex branch of the heart with a first group of segments expanded;

[0036] **FIG. 26** is an illustration of an embodiment of the stent illustrated in **FIG. 25** after shrink segments have been radially expanded;

[0037] **FIGS. 27A-27D** are illustrations of various embodiments of a shrink segment; and

[0038] **FIGS. 28A-28C** are illustrations of various embodiments of a hooks connected to a traction segment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0039] In the following description, for purposes of explanation and not limitation, specific details are set forth in order to provide an understanding of the disclosed subject matter. However, it will be apparent to one skilled in the art that the disclosed subject matter may be practiced in other embodiments that depart from these specific details. In some instances, detailed descriptions of well-known methods and devices are omitted so as not to obscure the description of the disclosed subject matter with unnecessary detail.

[0040] In an embodiment, the apparatus and method relate to stent **100**, which is illustrated in **FIG. 1**. In an embodiment, stent **100** includes a cylindrical body made up of a number of radial traction segments **110** (e.g., radial traction segments **111**, **112** and **113**), and one or more shrink segments **140** (e.g., shrink segments **141** and **142**). Each radial traction segment contains a pattern of struts **115**. In an embodiment, struts **115** may connect directly to one another, or may be connected by links **117**. Struts **115** may be configured in a number of strut patterns, such as multi-link, duet, pentagonal, or others. **FIG. 1** shows an embodiment with zig-zag patterned struts **115** and link **117**. Stent **100** may be made of a material suitable for residence within a blood vessel. Suitable materials include, but are not limited to, a shaped-memory alloy, nickel titanium, stainless steel alloys, cobalt chrome alloys, nickel alloys and platinum alloys. Stent **100** may include one or more therapeutic or medicinal coatings to improve its compatibility with a blood vessel. Individual segments of stent **100** may also include visualization markers coated thereon or embedded therein (e.g., radiographic, magnetic resonance, etc.).

[0041] In one embodiment, stent **100** placed near a mitral valve region may be used to deliver or release a drug or therapeutic agent to treat mitral valve regurgitation. Various drugs are known in the art for treating mitral valve regurgitation. For example, administering nitroprusside (a vascular smooth muscle relaxant) may effectively diminish the amount of mitral regurgitation, thereby increasing forward output by the left ventricle and reducing pulmonary congestion. Inotropic agents such as dobutamine may also be

administered to increase the force of contraction of the myocardium. In one embodiment, the stent **100** may be coated with these exemplary drugs for delivery near the mitral valve region. The drugs may have timed-release features to be released slowly over a certain period of time. The drug eluting support annulus or other devices may also have the drug or agent dispersed on the surface of the support annulus or other devices, or co-dissolved in a matrix solution to be dispersed on the support annulus. Methods to coat the support annulus with a therapeutic drug include dip coating, spin coating, spray coating, or other coating methods commonly practiced in the art.

[0042] In some cases, patients with defective heart valves may have concomitant coronary artery disease (CAD). As such, it may be advantageous for stent **100** to deliver a drug to treat occlusions in the artery or other related CAD such as vulnerable plaque. The drug to treat CAD may be delivered alone or in combination with drugs to treat mitral valve regurgitation. Drugs to treat CAD include, but are not limited to, statins, lipid lowering agents, antioxidants, extracellular matrix synthesis promoters, inhibitors of plaque inflammation and extracellular degradation, estradiol drug classes and its derivatives.

[0043] In one embodiment, the drugs to treat CAD may be coated on a stent **100** using methods such as dip coating, spin coating, spray coating or other coating methods known in the art. The drug may alternatively be encapsulated in microparticles or nanoparticles and dispersed in a coating on the support annulus or other device. A diffusion limiting top-coat may optionally be applied to the above coatings. The active agents may optionally be loaded on a support annulus or other device together either by adding them together to the solution of the matrix polymer before coating, or by coating different layers, each containing a different agent or combination of agents. The drug eluting the stent may alternatively have an active agent or a combination of agents dispersed in a bioerodable annulus forming polymer.

[0044] Stent **100** is of dimensions suitable to be inserted into a body lumen, such as the coronary arteries or coronary veins. In one implementation, the stent **100** is of dimensions suitable to be inserted into a right coronary artery or the circumflex branch. After insertion, each radial traction segment **110** may be expanded by a balloon or other known method. Upon expansion, struts **115** may make radial contact with the inner surfaces of the body lumen so as to maintain stent **100** in a fixed position in the body lumen.

[0045] In an embodiment, stent **100** may also include hooks **105**, which may be coupled to radial traction segments **110**. The hooks **105** may be embodied in various shapes and forms. FIGS. 28A-28C represent various hook members **105** that may be used with the stent **100**. In the illustrated embodiments, the hook members **105** include one or more sharp sections **106** provided at one end thereof. The sharp sections **106** formed on the hook members permit the stent to firmly attach to an interior wall of a body vessel, as the radial traction segments are radially expanded. As shown in FIG. 28A, the hook member **105** may also include an arm section **107** extending between traction segment **110** and the sharp sections **106**.

[0046] In an embodiment, hooks **105** are only connected to radial traction segments **110** located at either horizontal ends of stent **100** (e.g., radial traction segment **111** and **113**,

respectively, in the embodiment shown in FIG. 1). In other embodiments, hooks **105** may also be coupled to radial traction segments **110** that lie in the interior of stent **100**. Upon expansion of radial traction segments **110**, hooks **105** will be seated in an inner surface(s) of the body lumen to provide further radial traction. It is appreciated that hooks **105** may also be coupled to segments **140** in other embodiments, or may be attached to any structures placed at either horizontal end of stent **100** or any structures placed between radial traction segments **110** and/or **140**.

[0047] As stated above, in an embodiment, stent **100** also includes one or more shrink segments **140** (e.g., linear shrink segments). Shrink segments **140** may include struts **145**. Struts **145** are biased at angles so that as shrink segment **140** is expanded, shrink segment **140** decreases in longitudinal length. When one or more shrink segments decrease in length, the overall length of stent **100** decreases, thus constituting an inner surface of the body lumen in which stent **100** is seated.

[0048] Various patterns may be used to construct a shrink segment. FIGS. 27A-27D represent a number of patterns that may be used in shrink segments **140**. The shrink segments shown in FIGS. 27A-27D include a number of radially expandable cells. In one embodiment, each radially expandable cell is configured such that, as the cell is expanded in a radial direction, its axial length will decrease. FIG. 27A is an illustration of an embodiment of the shrink segment **140**, in which each radially expandable cell **172** has a square configuration with struts disposed in slanted orientation with respect to a longitudinal axis of the shrink segment. FIG. 27B is an illustration of an embodiment of the shrink segment **140**, in which each radially expandable cell **174** has a diamond configuration. FIG. 27C is an illustration of an embodiment of the shrink segment **140** having an alternating slots pattern **176**. It is to be appreciated that the slot pattern **176** formed in the shrink segment shown in FIG. 27C will deform as the shrink segment is radially expanded, causing its longitudinal length to decrease. FIG. 27D is an illustration of an embodiment of the shrink segment **140** having an alternating axial/radial slots pattern **178**.

[0049] FIG. 2 is a close up illustration of an embodiment of unexpanded shrink segment **142**. FIG. 3 is a close up illustration of shrink segment **142** following expansion (designated expanded shrink segment **142'**). Shrink segment **142** may be expanded in a radial direction by various means, including with a balloon. In an unexpanded state, shrink segment **142** has a longitudinal length of SL_1 and a radial height SH_1 . Following expansion from SH_1 to SH_2 (FIG. 3), shrink segment **142'** has a longitudinal length SL_2 , which is less than SL_1 . Accordingly, when hooks **105** have been seated, and shrink segments **140**, including shrink segment **141** and shrink segment **142**, are expanded, the length of shrink segments **140** will each decrease from SL_1 to SL_2 . The reduction in the length of segments **140** will cause radial traction segments **110** to be pulled toward one another, thereby reducing an overall length of stent **100**. Referring again to FIG. 2 and FIG. 3, when the radial height of shrink segment **142** is increased by Δ_{SH} (i.e., SH_2 to SH_1), the longitudinal length of shrink segment **142** is decreased by Δ_{SL} (i.e., SL_1 to SL_2). In embodiments, the ratio of $\Delta_{SL}:\Delta_{SH}$ may be varied by modifying the pattern of struts **115**. As

described below, struts **115** may be designed such that the $\Delta_{SL}:\Delta_{SH}$ ratio is 2:1, 1:1, 1:2 or other ratios.

[0050] Referring again to **FIG. 1**, in an unexpanded state, stent **100** has a total length defined as TSL_1 . Stent **100** can be manufactured with a length that is suitable for insertion into a coronary sinus or circumflex branch of the left coronary artery. The coronary sinus and circumflex branch are positioned, in a typical heart, exterior to the left atrium and left ventricle approximate portions of the mitral valve annulus. Stent **100** can be placed in one or both of the coronary sinus and circumflex branch to inhibit the mitral valve annulus from lengthening (e.g., getting larger in diameter). By constricting a portion of the coronary sinus and/or circumflex branch in this area, an atrioventricular valve annulus (e.g., mitral valve annulus) can also be constricted to an appropriate degree. Representatively, in terms of the mitral valve, by constricting the mitral valve annulus, cusps or leaflets can be brought closer together to improve aptation (coaptation) and reduce regurgitation. Additionally, the height and length of the various segments **110** and **140** may vary so as to construct stent **100** in a shape that is tapered to conform with the particular blood vessel or body lumen into which it is inserted.

[0051] Stent **100** may include various combinations of radial traction segments **110** (segment **111**, segment **112**, and segment **113**) and shrink segments **140** (segment **141** and segment **142**). For example, in the embodiment illustrated in **FIG. 1**, stent **100** includes alternating radial traction segments **110** with one shrink segment **140** disposed between each of radial traction segments **110**. In other embodiments, stent **100** could include a number of radial traction segments **110** placed adjacent to one another, or a number of shrink segments **140** placed adjacent to one another. It is also appreciated that stent **100** may include various quantities of shrink segments **140**. The embodiment of stent **100** illustrated in **FIG. 1** includes three radial traction segments **110** and two shrink segments **140**. However, in other embodiments, stent **100** may include only one shrink segment **140**, or more than two shrink segments **140**. Stent **100** may include any number of radial traction segments **110**. Additionally, the quantity of radial traction segments **110** may be even or odd, and the quantity of shrink segments **140** may also be even or odd.

[0052] **FIG. 4** is an illustration of an embodiment of segmented balloon **200**. In an embodiment, balloon **200** includes a number of segments that correspond to segments of stent **100** (**FIG. 1**). Representatively, in **FIG. 2**, balloon segments **211**, **212** and **213** correspond to radial traction stent segments **111**, **112** and **113** of stent **100**. Balloon segment **241** corresponds to shrink stent segment **141** and balloon segment **242** corresponds to shrink stent segment **142** of stent **100**. Balloon segments **211**, **212**, **213**, **241** and **242** may be inflated individually, in groups, or all at once. Additionally, balloon segments **211**, **212**, **213**, **241** and **242** may be either partially inflated to varying degrees or may be completely inflated. If balloon segments **211**, **212**, **213**, **241** and **242** are fully inflated, the corresponding stent segments will be expanded to a first degree. In an embodiment, if balloon segments **211**, **212**, **213**, **241** and **242** are partially inflated, they will exert a force on the corresponding stent segments that will cause the corresponding stent segments to expand to a degree that is less than the first degree.

[0053] **FIG. 5** is an illustration of an embodiment of segmented balloon **200** in which only a group of balloon segments corresponding to radial traction segments **110** have been inflated. A suitable balloon material is similar to dilation catheter balloons or stent placing balloons. Balloons **200** may be inflated according to conventional techniques, for example, suitable liquid delivered at a proximal end of a catheter. Segments **211**, **212** and **213**, which correspond to radial traction segments **110** of stent **100**, may be expanded individually, all at once, or in groups. Upon expansion, balloon segments **211**, **212** and **213** will exert force on the respective corresponding stent segments (i.e., stent segments **111**, **112** and **113**), therefore causing these stent segments to expand. The embodiment of segmented balloon **200** illustrated in **FIG. 5** includes five inflatable segments corresponding to radial traction segments and shrink segments of the stent **100**. However, in other embodiments, segmented balloon may include any number of inflatable segments (e.g., **1**, **2**, **3**, **4**, etc). For example, the same inflatable segment of the balloon may be used to expand more than one segment of the stent by deflating the inflated segment, realigning the inflatable segment to align with another segment of the stent and reinflating the balloon segment.

[0054] In one embodiment, the segmented balloon **200** includes a number of lumens with separate lumens for inflating separate balloon segments (e.g., by delivering liquid to separate segments of the balloon). For example, as seen by referring to **FIG. 5A**, a cross-sectional view of the segmented balloon taken along line A-A' of **FIG. 5** shows multiple-lumens. In the embodiment illustrated in **FIG. 5A**, there are three lumens **250-252**. One lumen **250** is provided in the segmented balloon to inflated all segments **211**, **212** and **213**, which correspond to radial traction segments **110** of stent **100**. The other lumens **251** and **252** are provided to inflate individual segments **241** and **242**, which correspond to shrink segments **140** of stent **100**. By providing individual lumens **251** and **252** for the segments **241** and **242**, one segment of the segmented balloon **200** may be inflated independent of other segments of the balloon **200**. **FIG. 5B** shows cross-sectional view of a distal end of the segmented balloon taken along line B-B' of **FIG. 5**. As shown in **FIG. 5B**, only one lumen **250** corresponding to the last remaining segment **213** is provided at the distal end of the segmented balloon. In the illustrated embodiment, three lumens **250-252** are shown; however any number of lumens may be provided in a segmented balloon to allow one or more segments to be inflated independent of other inflatable segments.

[0055] **FIG. 6** is an illustration of an embodiment of stent **100** after balloon **200** has been inflated in the manner illustrated in **FIG. 5**. As shown in **FIG. 6**, upon inflation of balloon **200** in this manner, segments **111**, **112** and **113** of stent **100** will be expanded, but segments **141** and **142** of stent **100** will not be significantly expanded. In an embodiment, the expansion of stent segments **110** will seat hooks **105** into an inner surface of a body lumen such as the interior wall of the coronary sinus surrounding the mitral valve annulus to provide radial traction between stent **100** and an inner surface of a body lumen.

[0056] **FIG. 7** is an illustration of an embodiment of segmented balloon **200** having balloon segments **241** and **242**, which correspond to linear shrink segments **141** and **142**, respectively, inflated, in addition to segments **211**, **212**

and 213 (See FIG. 3). As balloon segments 241 and 242 are inflated, force is applied to linear shrink segments 141 and 142, thus causing expansion of segments 141 and 142. FIG. 8 is an illustration of an embodiment of stent 100 after expansion of linear shrink segments 141 and 142. As discussed above, the longitudinal length of linear shrink segments 140 reduces from a length SL_1 (prior to expansion) to a length of SL_2 upon expansion. As such, upon expansion, the total length of stent 100 is reduced by a length of $R \times (SL_1 - SL_2)$, where R is the total number of segments 140 that are expanded. The total length of stent 100 following expansion of segments 140 is defined as TSL_2 .

[0057] In one embodiment, the linear shrink segments 141 and 142 are radially expanded one at a time. For example, after one segment of the balloon has been inflated to radially expand one of the linear shrink segments 141 and 142, the inflated segment of the balloon may be deflated prior to adjustment of a different shrink segment. It should be noted that once the catheter balloon has been used to reduce a length of one of the linear shrink segments, realignment of the balloon with respect to the stent (e.g., by using visualization markers such as radiopaque markers) may be necessary prior to adjustment of different shrink segment.

[0058] In another embodiment, two or more linear shrink segments (e.g., segments 141 and 142) may be radially expanded at the same time. In this embodiment, the segmented balloon may be configured so that, as each linear shrink segment reduces in its longitudinal length, the individual inflatable segments of the balloon will maintain proper alignment with the individual segments of the stent.

[0059] Referring to FIGS. 1 and 27A-27D, a shrink segment may include a number of radially expandable cells, in which each cell is configured such that, as the cell is expanded in a radial direction, its axial length will decrease. In embodiments shown in FIGS. 1, 27A and 27B, each radially expandable cell is formed with a number of slanted struts configured such that, as each cell is expanded in a radial direction, a bias angle between the slanted struts and a longitudinal axis increases to cause its axial length to decrease. It is to be appreciated that, the angles between struts 145 in linear shrink segments 140 may be biased at different angle so as to control the degree of reduction in length of each linear shrink segment 140 upon expansion.

[0060] Representatively, FIG. 1 illustrates an embodiment in which the struts of each unit cell 151 are biased at 45° angles (angled α). As each unit cell 151 is expanded in the radial direction, the bias angle between the diagonally disposed elements and the longitudinal axis will increase, causing the longitudinal length (L) of each unit cell 151 to decrease. Upon expansion, at a 45° strut bias, the longitudinal length shrinkage: vertical height expansion ratio for each unit cell 151 is 1:1. Specifically, upon expansion, the reduction in longitudinal length (L) of the individual unit cell 151 is substantially equal to the increase in vertical height (H) of the cell 151. It should be understood that the amount of linear shrinkage of a shrink segment is function of the number of unit cells around the circumference of the shrink segment and the number of unit cells in the longitudinal direction.

[0061] In one embodiment, a shrink segment is capable of shrinking greater than 10% in the longitudinal direction. In another embodiment, a shrink segment is capable of shrink-

ing greater than 25% in the longitudinal direction. For example, in one implementation, for a shrink segment having struts biased at 45° angles, a longitudinal length of 6.8 mm and a diameter of 2 mm, an increase in the diameter of 0.5 mm will cause a 2.66 mm reduction in the longitudinal length.

[0062] In another embodiment, illustrated by FIG. 9, struts 145 are biased at a 30° angle (angled α). Upon expansion, at a 30° strut bias, the longitudinal length shrinkage: vertical height expansion ratio for each unit cell 152 is 2:1. As such, upon expansion, the reduction in longitudinal length (L) of the individual cell 152 may be approximately twice the increase in vertical height (H) of the cell 152. Accordingly, when a 30° strut bias is employed, the total length of stent 100 will be reduced to length TSL_3 that is shorter than the total length TSL_2 of stent 100 when it is shrunk with struts 140 at a 45° strut bias. The bias angle is measured relative to a longitudinal axis of the stent. It is appreciated that struts 145 may be biased at various different angles as one means of regulating the degree of longitudinal shrinkage of stent 100.

[0063] As discussed above, in regard to radial traction segments 110, various strut designs are adequate and can be used to practice the disclosed subject matter. In one embodiment, the traction segments 110 are configured to maintain its axial length substantially constant as the traction segments 110 are expanded in a radial direction. FIGS. 11-14 represent a number of strut designs that may be used in radial traction segments 110. FIG. 11 is an illustration of an embodiment of radial traction segment having struts 115 in a zig-zag pattern. In an embodiment, a radial traction segment 100 also includes link 117. One or more struts may be connected by link 117. FIG. 12 is an illustration of an embodiment of radial traction segment 110 having struts in a zig-zag pattern, and having an additional cross strut. The cross struts tend to add to the tensile strength of the segment. FIG. 13 is an illustration of an embodiment of radial traction segment 110 having a loop pattern of struts. FIG. 14 is an illustration of an embodiment of a stent segment having a loop pattern with an additional cross strut. The cross struts tend to add to the tensile strength of the segment.

[0064] In an embodiment, stent 100 and balloon 200 may be configured to expand each linear segment 140 of stent 100 individually, in groups, or all at once. One way this may be accomplished is through a multi-lumen balloon 200 (e.g., with separate lumens corresponding to separate balloon segments). As stated above, in an embodiment, segments 211, 212 and 213 corresponding to radial traction segments 110 (e.g., radial traction segments 111, 112 and 113, respectively) are typically first inflated to seat hooks 105. After hooks 105 have been seated, in an embodiment, linear shrink segments 141 and 142 may be expanded one at a time by expanding individual balloons corresponding to each particular segment. In this regard, FIG. 15 is an illustration of an embodiment of balloon 200 in which, among the balloon segments corresponding to linear shrink segments, only segment 242 corresponding to a shrink segment 142 is inflated (inflation illustrated by reference numeral 242'). Segment 241 is not inflated and, as such, shrink segment 141 that corresponds to balloon segment 241 will not expand. FIG. 16 is an illustration of stent 100 following inflation of balloon 200 as illustrated in FIG. 15. Upon expansion of stent segment 142, the total length of stent 100 will be

reduced from length TSL_1 to length TSL_4 . In an embodiment, length TSL_4 will be greater than length TSL_2 , which as described above, was obtained when all shrink segments **140** were expanded at the same time, as illustrated in **FIG. 8**. As such, by inflating balloon segments **240** one at a time, or in a group that does not include all balloon segments **240**, the degree of reduction in length of stent **100** will be reduced. Additionally, in an embodiment, by inflating balloon segments **210** one at a time, or in groups, stent **100** may be gradually reduced to size TSL_1 , which is a length of stent **100** after all linear shrink segments **140** have been expanded. Balloon segments **240** may be expanded over varying periods of time, as required by the person administering stent **100**. For example, one linear shrink segment **140** could be expanded to introduce a first degree of reduction in the length of stent **100**. Then, a few months later (or whatever time frame is determined to be appropriate), another balloon segment **240** may be inflated to expand a different linear shrink **140**, thereby further reducing the total length of stent **100**.

[0065] In an embodiment, balloon segments **240** may be partially inflated so as to partially expand stent segments **140**. **FIGS. 17-18** are embodiments of balloon segment **242** partially inflated to a height H_1 (illustrated by reference numeral **242'**). By partially expanding stent segments **140**, the degree of reduction in the length of linear shrink segments **140** will be less than the degree of reduction in length that is obtained when shrink segments **140** are completely expanded. In this regard, **FIG. 19** illustrates stent **100** following inflation of balloon **200** in the manner illustrated in **FIGS. 17-18**. Shrink segment **142** is partially expanded to reduce the length of shrink segment **142** to length SL_1 . SL_1 is greater than SL_2 , which is the length of shrink segment **142** upon full expansion. As a result of this reduction in the length of linear shrink stent segment **142**, the total length of stent **110** is reduced to TSL_5 , which is greater than the length of stent **110** if linear shrink stent segment **142** is fully expanded.

[0066] As shown in **FIGS. 20-21**, in an embodiment, balloon segments **240** may be further inflated so as to further expand partially expanded shrink segments **140**. For example, balloon segment **242**, which, as shown in **FIGS. 17-18**, may be expanded to intermediate height H_1 , may be further expanded to H_2 . Upon this further expansion of segment **242**, the corresponding linear shrink segment will be further expanded and shrink longitudinally as shown in **FIG. 22** (illustrated by reference numeral **242''**). In this manner, the length of stent **110** may be gradually reduced. In such embodiments, balloon segments **140** may be partially inflated, and then further inflated any number of times so as to gradually reduce the length of a shrink segment **140**, and to gradually reduce the overall length of stent **110**. In an embodiment, balloon segments **240** may be further inflated until full expansion, thereby fully expanding corresponding stent segments **110**.

[0067] **FIG. 23** is a diagram showing a top cross-section of human heart **300** taken through the right and left atrium. Human heart **300** includes mitral valve **320** and tricuspid valve **360**. Mitral valve **320** is substantially surrounded by mitral annulus **325**. A portion of circumflex branch **330** runs close (externally adjacent) to a portion of mitral valve **320**,

exterior to the left atrium and left ventricle. A portion of coronary sinus also extends close (externally adjacent) to a portion of mitral valve **320**.

[0068] **FIG. 24** is an illustration of an embodiment of unexpanded stent **100** disposed in a body lumen near a valve annulus (e.g., circumflex branch **330**, coronary sinus, coronary artery). Unexpanded stent **100** may be delivered to the body vessel by various delivery methods. For example, the stent may be delivered to a desired location within the patient's body by mounting the stent on an expandable member, such as a balloon catheter, provided on a distal end of an intravascular catheter and a sheath extending, for example, from a proximal end of the catheter over the stent. A guide catheter may be routed through a femoral artery into the aorta and into, for example, the circumflex branch of the left main coronary artery, possibly with the aid of a guide wire. The intravascular catheter including the stent may then be advanced through the guide catheter and positioned at a desired location with, for example, a suitable visualization technique. The exterior sheath may be retracted to expose the stent. **FIG. 24** shows stent **100** mounted on intravascular catheter **350** and positioned within circumflex branch **330**.

[0069] To place a stent (such as stent **100**) in the coronary sinus from a femoral artery, a guide catheter and possibly a guide wire may first be introduced through the inferior vena cava and into the right atrium. One exemplary guide catheter for delivering a stent to a desired location within, for example, a coronary sinus, is described in a commonly-assigned U.S. patent application Ser. No. XX/XXX,XXX, Attorney Docket No. 005618.P3546, filed Nov. 12, 2002 to Eric T. Johnson and Cindy Sherman, entitled "Guide Catheter," which is hereby incorporated by reference.

[0070] According to one aspect, the stent inserted into a body lumen near a mitral valve annulus or tricuspid valve annulus serves to support and/or constrict a surface of a valve annulus of an atrioventricular valve. In one embodiment, the stent may be inserted in the coronary sinus or the circumflex artery or both to inhibit an annulus surrounding the mitral valve from lengthening. In another embodiment, certain segments of the inserted stent are capable of shrinking in length as they are radially expanded so that the stent can be used to constrict a surface of a body lumen near an atrioventricular valve annulus so as to reshape the valve annulus. When an atrioventricular valve such as a mitral or tricuspid valve fails to close completely, the segmented stent may be used to constrict a surface of a body lumen near the valve annulus so as to cause the heart valve to close properly and to reduce the severity of regurgitation during ventricular contraction.

[0071] **FIG. 25** is an illustration of an embodiment of stent **100** after portions of the segmented stent are securely attached to an interior wall of circumflex branch **330**. In one embodiment, this is accomplished by inflating certain segments of a catheter balloon once the stent has been inserted into a desired location so as to expand radial traction segments against the interior wall (see, e.g., **FIGS. 5-6** and the accompanying text). Alternatively, the segments are secured one at a time with a balloon catheter having a single balloon (e.g., by positioning the balloon within a radial segment, inflating, deploying, then repositioning). When the radial traction segments are expanded against the interior wall, hooks **105** on the radial traction segments will become

securely seated to the body lumen surface. As described above, when segments **140** are unexpanded, stent **100** has a length TSL_1 . A second length LM_1 is defined as a length of a segment of surface **322** of mitral valve **320** that is generally parallel to the portion of inner surface **332** of circumflex branch **330** which defines TSL_1 . **FIG. 25** shows catheter **35** retracted proximal to stent **100**.

[0072] Once the stent has been securely implanted, certain segments of the catheter balloon may be inflated so as to radially expand one or more of the shrink segments (see, e.g., **FIGS. 7-22** and the accompanying text). By doing so, the shrink segments, which shrink in length as they are radially expanded, will pull radial traction segments toward one another. Certain ones of the radial traction segments that are connected to the inner wall of the circumflex branch **330** (for example, through seated hooks **105**) will tend to cause a length of circumflex branch **330** to constrict. The stent **100** illustrated in **FIG. 25** after shrink segments **140** have been radially expanded is shown in **FIG. 26**. Upon expansion of shrink segments **140**, the length of shrink segments **140** collectively decrease the length of stent **100** from TSL_1 to TSL_2 . Seated hooks **105** constrict inner surface **332** of circumflex branch **330**, as traction segments **110** are pulled together by shrink segments **140**. The constriction of inner surface **322** of circumflex branch **320** causes vertical force, F_V , and horizontal force, F_H , to be applied to surface **322** of mitral valve **330**. Forces F_V and F_H result in reinforcement of, and/or indirect constriction of surface **322** of mitral valve annulus **325**. According to one aspect, the constriction of the surface of an atrioventricular valve annulus reshapes the valve annulus so that the valve (e.g., mitral valve) closes properly and reduces regurgitation. As such, regurgitation may be reduced without annuloplasty.

[0073] In one embodiment, each shrink segment of the segmented stent is configured to be reduced in length over a range of longitudinal length, as it is radially expanded. This allows the overall stent length to be selectively adjusted over a defined range of longitudinal length. Accordingly, an operator (e.g., physician) may readjust the longitudinal length of the stent, after the initial insertion, if additional constricting of an annulus surrounding a heart valve is required. For example, a balloon catheter (e.g., a multi-lumen balloon catheter) may be reinserted into a patient and positioned within stent **100**. Visualization techniques may be used to properly position the balloon. Representatively, visualization markers (e.g., radiopaque markers) may be present on stent **100** or the balloon segments of a balloon catheter or both. Once positioned, selected shrink segments may be modified to constrict/expand a blood vessel (e.g., circumflex branch **330**) to reshape an atrioventricular valve annulus.

[0074] **FIGS. 24 to 26** illustrate a stent structure (stent **100**) placed in a circumflex branch of the left coronary artery. It is appreciated that a similar structure may alternatively or additionally be placed in the coronary sinus adjacent a portion of the mitral valve annulus. It is also appreciated that the stent or method described may be used in a variety of body lumens or vessels, not just those adjacent atrioventricular valve annulus, to support or constrict the body lumen or structures adjacent the body lumen.

[0075] While the foregoing embodiments have been described and shown, it is understood that variations and

modifications, such as those suggested and others within the spirit and scope of the following claims, may occur to those skilled in the art to which the invention pertains.

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus comprising:

a tubular member of dimensions suitable for insertion into a body vessel, the tubular member having at least two first segments attachable to an interior wall of the body vessel, and at least one second segment disposed between the first segments,

wherein said at least one second segment is capable of decreasing its axial length to draw one of the first segments towards the other first segment, wherein the tubular member is capable of reducing a longitudinal length of a portion of the body vessel by drawing one of the first segments attached to a first portion of the body vessel towards the other first segment attached to a second portion of the body vessel.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the tubular member serves to inhibit a portion of the body vessel from lengthening.

3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the second segment decreases its axial length as the second segment is expanded in a radial direction.

4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein each of the first segments is configured to maintain its axial length substantially constant as the corresponding first segment is expanded in a radial direction.

5. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the second segment is configured such that an amount of reduction in the axial length of the second segment is greater than an amount of increase in the diameter of the second segment.

6. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the first segments comprises a plurality of radially expandable cells, each of said radially expandable cells configured such that, as the respective cell is expanded in a radial direction, its axial length remains substantially constant.

7. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the second segment comprises a plurality of radially expandable cells, each of said radially expandable cells configured such that, as the respective cell is expanded in a radial direction, its axial length decreases.

8. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the second segment comprises a plurality of radially expandable cells, each of said radially expandable cells comprises a plurality of slanted struts configured such that, as each cell is expanded in a radial direction, a bias angle between the slanted struts and a longitudinal axis increases to cause a longitudinal length of each cell to decrease.

9. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the longitudinal length of the second segment is selectively adjustable over a range of longitudinal length by controlling the amount of expansion in the radial direction.

10. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the second segment is capable of shrinking greater than 10% in the longitudinal direction.

11. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the second segment is capable of shrinking greater than 25% in the longitudinal direction.

12. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the second segment is capable of shrinking greater than 2 mm in the longitudinal direction.

13. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the second segment is configured to provide radial support so as to prevent the tubular member from buckling inward.

14. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said first segments includes a plurality of hooks capable of attaching to the interior wall of the body vessel as the corresponding first segment is expanded in a radial direction.

15. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein each segment of the tubular member is expandable independent of other segments.

16. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the tubular member is coated with a drug to treat valve regurgitation.

17. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the tubular member is provided with a medicinal coating to increase compatibility with a blood vessel.

18. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the tubular member is of dimensions suitable to be inserted into at least one of coronary arteries and coronary veins.

19. The apparatus of claim 18, wherein the tubular member is of dimensions suitable to be inserted into to one of a coronary sinus, a right coronary artery and circumflex coronary arteries.

20. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the tubular member is a stent.

21. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the tubular member is self-expanding.

22. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the tubular member comprises one of a shaped-memory alloy, nickel titanium, stainless steel alloys, cobalt chrome alloys, nickel alloys and platinum alloys.

23. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the tubular member is provided with visualization markers.

24. A catheter balloon comprising:

a plurality of inflatable segments, wherein a set of inflatable segments is capable of being inflated independent of other set of inflatable segments.

25. The catheter balloon of claim 24, further comprising a plurality of lumens, each lumen configured to inflate one or more inflatable segments.

26. The catheter balloon of claim 24, further comprising at least one segment capable of being partially inflated to varying degrees, wherein when the segment is partially inflated, the segment exerts a force on a corresponding stent segment to cause the corresponding stent segment to partially expand.

27. A method comprising:

inserting a tubular member into a body vessel, said tubular member having at least two attachable portions; and

attaching the attachable portions of the tubular member to an interior wall of the body vessel.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein the tubular member attached to the body vessel prevents a portion of the body vessel from increasing in length.

29. The method of claim 27, further comprising drawing one of the attachable portions towards the other attachable portions to reduce the length of a portion of the body vessel.

30. The method of claim 27, further comprising coating the tubular member with a drug to treat valve regurgitation.

31. The method of claim 27, wherein the tubular member is placed in a coronary sinus.

32. The method of claim 27, wherein the tubular member is placed in a circumflex artery.

33. The method of claim 27, wherein the tubular member is placed in a right coronary artery.

34. The method of claim 27, further comprising tightening an annulus surrounding a mitral heart valve by reducing a longitudinal length of the attached tubular member.

35. The method of claim 27, further comprising tightening an annulus surrounding a tricuspid heart valve by reducing a longitudinal length of the attached tubular member.

36. The method of claim 27, wherein the tubular member comprises at least two traction segments having a plurality of hooks, said traction segments expandable to seat the plurality of hooks in the body vessel.

37. The method of claim 36, wherein the tubular member further comprises at least one shrink segment coupled between the traction segments, said at least one shrink segment capable of decreasing in longitudinal length to draw one of the traction segments towards the other traction segment.

38. The method of claim 36, wherein the drawing one of the traction segment towards the other traction segment comprises expanding the shrink segment in a radial direction.

39. The method of claim 27, wherein the tubular member comprises a plurality of expandable segments.

40. The method of claim 39, further comprising selectively expanding at least one segment of the tubular member without expanding other segments of the tubular member.

41. The method of claim 40, further comprising adjusting a longitudinal length of the tubular member by selectively expanding the shrink segment in a radial direction

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