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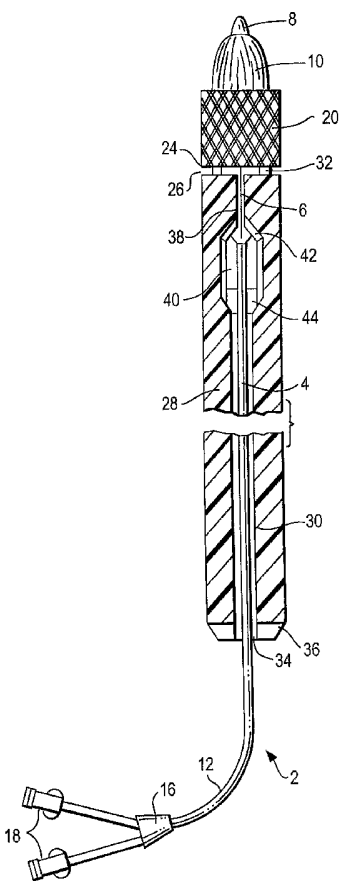
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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: DEVICE AND METHOD FOR ASSISTING IN THE IMPLANTATION OF PROSTHETIC VALVE



(57) Abstract: A system for percutaneously introducing a prosthetic valve into a patient's vasculature comprises a balloon dilatation catheter, a prosthetic valve mounted coaxial to the dilatation balloon, and a pusher member comprising a longitudinally extending tubular member encompassing the shaft of the catheter. The distal end of the pusher member preferably corresponds to the proximal end of the stent component of the prosthetic valve. The pusher member provides enhanced longitudinal pushability for facilitating advancement of the prosthetic valve to a treatment site. The system is well-suited for advancing a prosthetic valve or other medical device through an introducer sheath having a relatively small inner diameter. The introducer sheath may be formed with a tapered proximal end portion for receiving the prosthetic valve and for reducing a diameter of the prosthetic valve during advancement therethrough.

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No
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A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
A61F2/06 A61F2/24 A61F2/02

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

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
A61F A61M

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

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

EPO-Internal

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

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Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

- "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
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- "X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
- "Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.
- "&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

18 November 2005

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C(Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US2005/023071

Box II Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This International Search Report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. Claims Nos.: 13
because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely:
Rule 39.1(iv) PCT - Method for treatment of the human or animal body by surgery and therapy
2. Claims Nos.:
because they relate to parts of the International Application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful International Search can be carried out, specifically:
3. Claims Nos.:
because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a).

Box III Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

see additional sheet

1. As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers all searchable claims.
2. As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.
3. As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos.:
4. No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this International Search Report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos.:

1-7

Remark on Protest

The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.

No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees.

FURTHER INFORMATION CONTINUED FROM PCT/ISA/ 210

This International Searching Authority found multiple (groups of) inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. claims: 1-7

System for introducing a prosthetic valve into a patient's vasculature, comprising a balloon dilatation catheter, a prosthetic valve with a stent, and a pusher member

2. claims: 8-12

A system for assisting in introduction and implantation of a stent-mounted percutaneous valve assembly, comprising a pusher member and an introducer sheath.

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No

PCT/US2005/023071

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