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Hunter

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[54] **PATIENT IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM**

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **116/114 R,** 40/330, 340/147

[51] **Int. Cl.** **G01d 21/00**

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 116/114 R; 40/21 R, 330, 40/21 C, 136; 63/35 R, 6, 11; 35/2; 264/239; 340/147

[56] **References Cited**

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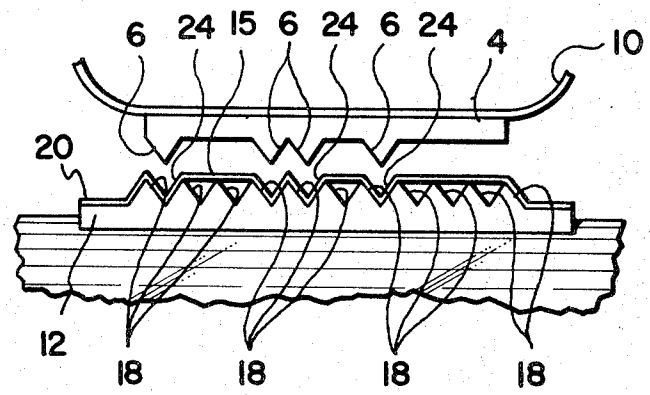
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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A patient identification system comprising a master identification device including a master identification tab formed with a plurality of selectively removable projections disposed in a row protruding from one surface thereof, attaching means for securing said master tab to a patient to be identified thereby, a subordinate identification tab formed with a plurality of recesses in one surface thereof preferably greater in number than the number of said projections on an unencoded master tab, and a strip of pressure-adhesive material secured to said subordinate tab and extending tautly over said recesses.

7 Claims, 4 Drawing Figures



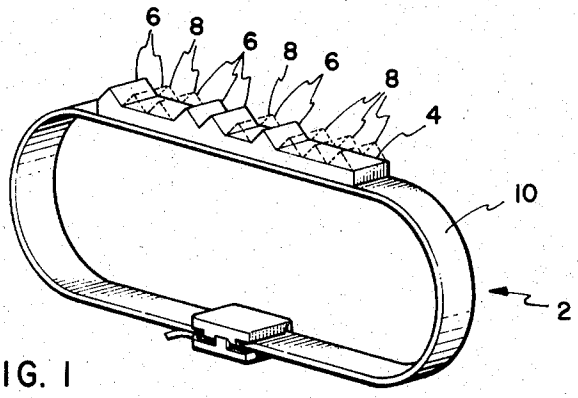


FIG. 1

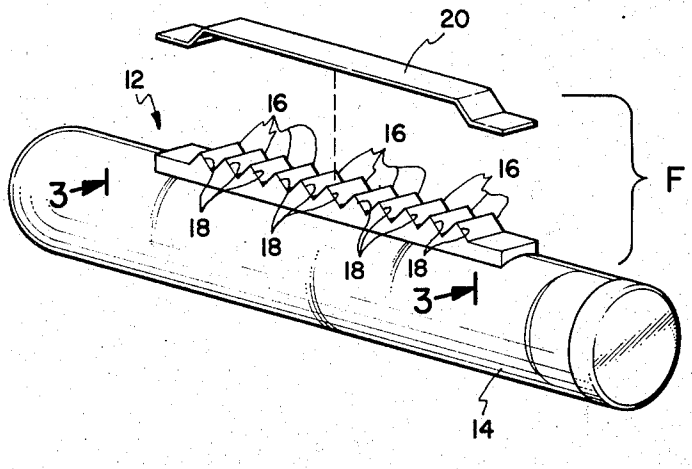


FIG. 2

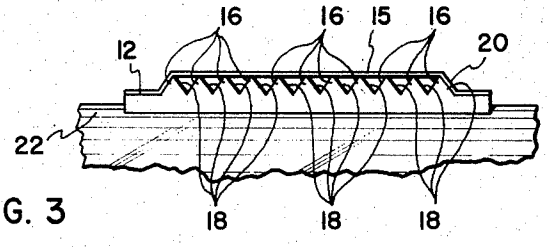


FIG. 3

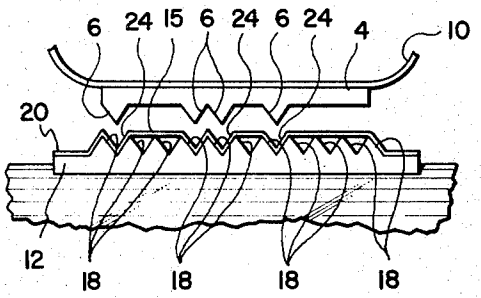


FIG. 4

PATIENT IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM

BACKGROUND

1. Field of Invention

This invention relates to identification systems and is particularly directed to systems for identifying hospital patients and the like and correlating the patient with biological specimens, medical reports, and the like relating to the patient.

In hospitals, nursing homes, and the like, a serious problem is presented in accurately identifying biological specimens, medical reports, diets, billings, and similar matters with the appropriate patient. At the same time, it is imperative that such identification be completely accurate, since an error could result in one patient receiving medicine or treatment intended for another patient, which could be serious or even fatal to both patients.

2. Prior Art

Numerous identification systems have been proposed heretofore to overcome these problems. However, none of the prior art systems have been entirely satisfactory. Many of the prior art identification systems have required special, complex and expensive equipment to encode the master identification device, which is normally attached to the patient, and to transfer encoded data from the master identification device to one or more subordinate identification devices attached to specimen tubes, laboratory reports, etc. Other systems have provided for encoding only the master identification device and have relied upon humans to transfer the data to subordinate devices. However, this introduces an obvious possibility of error. Still other prior art systems have employed encoding systems which were readable by either humans or machines, but not by both.

BRIEF SUMMARY AND OBJECTS OF INVENTION

These disadvantages of the prior art are overcome with the present invention and an identification system is provided which is simple and inexpensive, yet provides accurate identification of a patient and permits rapid, easy and accurate correlation between the patient and biological specimens, laboratory reports, and the like, relating to the patient.

The advantages of the present invention are preferably attained by providing a master identification device comprising a bracelet, or the like, which may be permanently attached to the patient and carries a rigid identification tab formed with a plurality of projections disposed in a row on one side thereof which may be selectively removed to encode the master identification device, together with a plurality of subordinate identification tabs having a rigid portion formed with a plurality of recesses corresponding to the number of projections on the unencoded master identification tab and having a strip of pressure sensitive material stretched tautly over the surface of said recesses.

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide an improved identification system.

An additional object of the present invention is to provide a system for identifying health care patients and the like and accurately correlating the patient with biological specimens, laboratory reports, diets, and the like, relating to the particular patient.

A further object of the present invention is to provide an identification system which is simple, inexpensive, and accurate.

A specific object of the present invention is to provide an identification system comprising a master identification device including a rigid identification tab formed with a plurality of selectively removable projections disposed in a row, and means for attaching the master identification tab to a patient; together with a plurality of subordinate identification tabs each formed with a plurality of recesses corresponding to the number of projections on the unencoded master identification tab, and having a strip of pressure sensitive material stretched tautly over the surface of said recesses.

These and other objects and features of the present invention will be apparent from the following detailed description, taken with reference to the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is an isometric view of a master identification device embodying the present invention;

FIG. 2 is an isometric view of an unencoded subordinate identification tab embodying the present invention, attached to a test tube;

FIG. 3 is a side elevation of the subordinate identification tab of FIG. 2; and

FIG. 4 is a side elevation illustrating the manner of employing the master identification device of FIG. 1 to encode the subordinate identification tab of FIG. 2.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF ILLUSTRATED EMBODIMENT

In that form of the present invention chosen for purposes of illustration in the drawings, FIG. 1 shows a master identification device, indicated generally at **2**, including an identification tab **4** formed of rigid or semi-rigid material and having a plurality of projections **6** disposed in a row and protruding from the outer surface thereof. To encode the tab **4**, one or more of the projections **6** are selectively removed, as by cutting or filing, as indicated in dotted lines at **8**. The tab **4** is provided with a bracelet **10**, or the like, to permit attachment of the master identification device **2** to the patient.

FIGS. **2** and **3** illustrate a subordinate identification tab, indicated generally at **12**, which may be attached to or formed integral with a device to be identified thereby, such as test tube **14**. The subordinate identification tab **12** is composed of rigid or semi-rigid material and has a plurality of projections **16** protruding from one surface thereof. The number of the projections **16** on the subordinate tab **12** is equal to one more than the number of projections **6** on the unencoded master tab **4**. Thus, the subordinate tab **12** has a number of recesses **18**, located between the projections **16**, which may be exactly equal to the number of projections **6** on the master tab **4**, but preferably, in order to make the opposition of the tabs less critical, the number of recesses **18** should be greater than the number of projections **16**. In addition, a strip **20** of pressure-adhesive material is stretched tautly over the tops of the recesses **18** and is secured to the tab **12**, providing a smooth surface **15**. Where the subordinate tab **12** is not formed integral with the device **14** to be identified thereby, a strip **22** of pressure-adhesive material may

be secured to the reverse surface of the tab **12** to facilitate attachment of the tab **12** to the device to be identified thereby.

FIG. **4** illustrates the manner of employing the master identification device **2** to encode the subordinate tab **12.** As described above, the master identification tab **4** is encoded by cutting, filing, or otherwise selectively removing one or more of the projections, as indicated at **8,** so that the remaining projections **6** represent the encoded identification of a particular patient, for example, by a binary number. To correlate a subordinate device, such as test tube **14,** with the particular patient, a subordinate identification tab **12** is attached to the subordinate device **14** and the projections **6** of the master identification tab **4** are impressed into the recesses **18** of the subordinate identification tab **12,** causing the pressure-adhesive strip **20** to be pressed into and to adhere to the surfaces of the corresponding ones of the recesses **18,** as indicated at **24.** Thus, when the master identification device **2** is removed, the surface **15** will carry an indication, in reverse relief, of the identification number represented by the projections **6** of the master identification device **2.** Moreover, the reverse relief indication carried by the subordinate tab **12** will be readily readable by both humans and machines.

Obviously, numerous variations and modifications may be made without departing from the present invention. Accordingly, it should be clearly understood that the form of the present invention described above and shown in the accompanying drawings is illustrative only and is not intended to limit the scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. An identification system comprising in combination:

a master identification tab formed with a plurality of code projections disposed in a row projecting from one surface thereof, said projections together comprising a code identification,

attaching means for attaching said master tab to a primary object to be identified by said encoded projections,

a subordinate object to also be identified by said code,

a subordinate identification tab carried by the subordinate object and formed with a plurality of recesses in one surface thereof greater in number than the number of said code projections on said encoded master tab, and

an exposed strip of pressure-sensitive material without memory capability secured to said subordinate tab and extending in superimposed relation tautly over said recesses whereby displacement of the code projection against the strip into selected ones of the recesses encodes the subordinate tab with the code of the master tab.

2. The system of claim **1** wherein:

the distance between some of said projections comprises a space formed by blanking out at least one projection from said master tab during encoding of said master tab to obtain the arrangement of code projections.

3. A master identification device comprising:

a master identification tab comprising means for manually encoding a deformable part of secondary identification means, said master tab being formed with a plurality of exposed projections each of substantial width comprising a code identification disposed in a row protruding from one surface thereof, and

attaching means for securing said master tab to a primary object to be identified thereby.

4. A subordinate identification combination comprising:

a subordinate object to be identified,

a subordinate identification tab carried by the object and formed with a plurality of recesses disposed in a row on one surface thereof, and

an exposed strip of pressure-sensitive material secured to said subordinate tab and extending in superimposed relation tautly over said recesses, said strip material being yieldable without memory to accommodate permanent deformation into selected ones of the recesses to encode the combination.

5. The system of claim **1** wherein:

said exposed strip of pressure-sensitive material has an adhering substance on the surface of the strip adjacent the recesses of the subordinate tab, so that when the strip is pressed into selected ones of the said recesses it adheres to the surfaces of the recesses making the deformation of the strip permanent, thereby encoding the subordinate tab equivalent to the code of the master tab.

6. A master identification device comprising:

a master identification tab comprising means to be encoded and thereafter used to manually encode deformable means comprising part of secondary identification means, said encodable means to be encoded comprising a row uniformly shaped, dimensioned and spaced exposed projections each of substantial width such that blanking out of selected ones of the projections encodes the master identification tab for subsequent secondary encoding use, and

attaching means for securing said master identification tab to a primary object to be identified by the master tab when encoded.

7. A method of substantially identically encoding master and subordinate identification devices comprising the steps of:

providing a master identification device having a plurality of male projections in a row projecting from one surface thereof;

encoding said master identification device by blanking out selected ones of said projections;

providing a secondary identification device having a plurality of female grooves in a row at least equal in number to the number of said projections before encoding, said grooves being sized and shaped to mate with the projections;

causing a deformable material to be superimposed over said grooves,

forcing the encoded projection against the deformable material into corresponding ones of said grooves leaving indentations corresponding to the code projections;

whereby code representations of the secondary identification device are substantially the same as code representations of the master identification device.

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