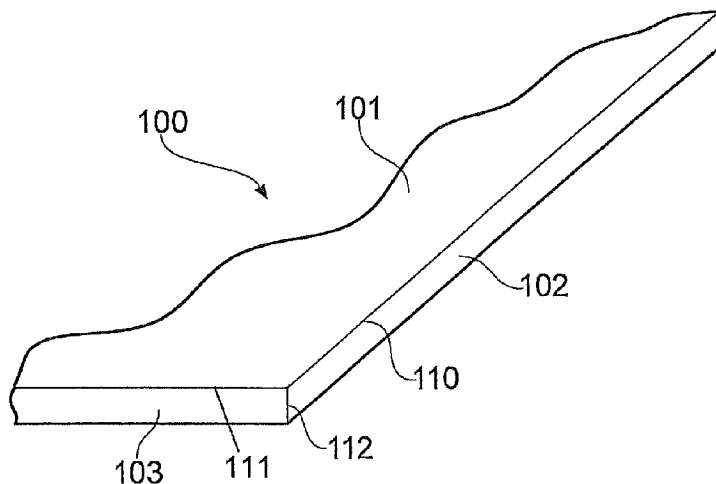




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(57) **Abrégé/Abstract:**

A vaporizer assembly comprising a vaporizer and a matrix suitable for retaining a vaporizable liquid, wherein the vaporizer comprises: first and second surfaces forming a common edge; the first surface having a greater surface area than the second surface; wherein the vaporizer is in contact with the matrix via the second surface.

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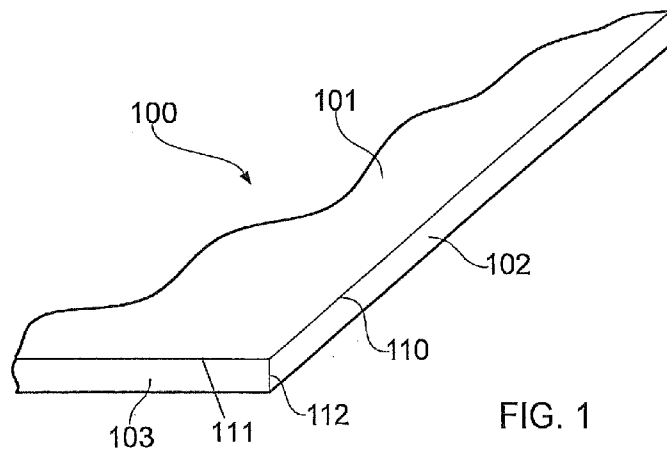


FIG. 1

(57) Abstract: A vaporizer assembly comprising a vaporizer and a matrix suitable for retaining a vaporizable liquid, wherein the vaporizer comprises: first and second surfaces forming a common edge; the first surface having a greater surface area than the second surface; wherein the vaporizer is in contact with the matrix via the second surface.

WO 2015/198049 A1

## VAPORIZER ASSEMBLY

### FIELD

- 5 The present disclosure relates to a vaporizer assembly and devices incorporating the vaporizer assembly.

### BACKGROUND

- 10 Devices such as e-cigarettes may include an assembly which is responsible for creating an aerosol which is subsequently inhaled by the user. The aerosol may be formed by vaporizing (evaporating) a suitable liquid. The vaporized liquid subsequently forms an aerosol which is then inhaled by the user. The aerosol may also be produced via mechanical means, for example by using a piezo-electric atomizer, or via a heater.

15

One example of a device including a vaporizer is provided in WO 2010/045671. In this device, the vaporizer may contact a liquid reservoir via the upper major surface of the vaporizer.

### 20 SUMMARY

According to a first aspect there is disclosed a vaporizer assembly comprising a vaporizer and a matrix suitable for retaining a vaporizable liquid, wherein the vaporizer comprises: first and second surfaces forming a common edge; the first surface having a greater surface area than the second surface; wherein the vaporizer is in contact with the matrix via the second surface, wherein the vaporizer is formed from a material comprising a capillary structure, wherein the longitudinal dimension of the vaporizer is substantially parallel with the longitudinal dimension of the vaporizer assembly.

- 30 According to a second aspect there is disclosed a device, such as an e-cigarette, comprising the vaporizer assembly according to the first aspect.

In a further general aspect there is disclosed a vaporizer assembly comprising a vaporizer configured to be fed with a vaporizable liquid in a direction substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the vaporizer.

- 5 In a further aspect, there is described a vaporizer assembly comprising a vaporizer configured to be fed with a vaporizable liquid in a direction substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the vaporizer, wherein the vaporizer comprises: first and second surfaces forming a common edge; the first surface having a greater surface area than the second surface; wherein the vaporizer is fed with a vaporizable liquid via the second surface,
- 10 wherein the vaporizer is formed from a material comprising a capillary structure and the capillary structure is exposed on the second surface of the vaporizer such that liquid is drawable from an external source into the vaporizer.

- The below description of the present disclosure may apply to any of the above aspects and
- 15 any disclosure should not be construed as being limited to the aspect or embodiment being discussed under that particular section.

### Vaporizer assembly

As disclosed herein, a vaporizer assembly comprises a vaporizer and a matrix suitable for retaining  
5 a vaporizable liquid.

The vaporizer produces a vapor by evaporating the liquid retained in the matrix. This evaporation  
is carried out via heating. Therefore, the vaporizer may also be referred interchangeably to as a  
heater or distiller. It will be understood that following the formation of a vapor an aerosol is  
10 subsequently formed as a result of the vapor condensing. As a result, the vaporizer may also be  
referred to as an aerosol forming component.

The vaporizer is typically a three dimensional structure having at least first and second surfaces.  
The first and second surfaces form a common edge. In other words, the first surface and the  
15 second surface are arranged so that they share a common edge. The first and second surfaces  
may be substantially perpendicular to each other, however, it may be that the angle formed  
between the two surfaces is greater than or less than 90°.

Reference in the present disclosure to a surface relates to an area of the vaporizer enclosed by  
20 one or more edges. For example, where the vaporizer is substantially rectangular in shape it has a  
first surface and a second surface forming a common edge, the first and second surfaces being  
perpendicular to each other. Where the vaporizer is substantially circular (disc like) it has a first  
surface enclosed by a circular edge, said edge being common to the second surface which  
extends at an angle away from the first surface (e.g. 90°) and around the disc.

25 With regard to the term "edge" it is pointed out that this term encompasses rounded or chamfered  
edges, as well as other profiles that transition two surfaces.

The first surface has a surface area which is greater than the surface area of the second surface.  
30 As a result, it will be understood that the first surface typically forms the upper face of the vaporizer  
(or lower face, depending on orientation) and the second surface may then form either a side face  
or an end face of the vaporizer. The particular shape of the vaporizer is not, however, particularly  
limited and various shapes are possible, provided that the first surface and the second surface  
form a common edge and the surface area of the first surface is greater than that of the second

surface. In one embodiment, the vaporizer is sheet-like. In one embodiment, the vaporizer is planar. Further examples of suitable vaporizer shapes and configurations are described later.

5 The vaporizer itself may be formed from a material having a capillary structure. In this regard, and as a result of being in contact with the matrix containing a vaporizable liquid, the capillary structure serves to distribute the liquid to be vaporized throughout the vaporizer. Accordingly, the capillary structure may extend throughout the entire vaporizer. Alternatively, it is possible that the capillary structure may be localized to specific areas of the vaporizer.

10 The capillary structure of the vaporizer may be exposed on at least one surface of the vaporizer. In other words, the capillary structure extends to the exterior of the vaporizer surface. Where the capillary structure is exposed on the surface of the vaporizer and is in contact with the matrix, the capillary structure serves to draw liquid from the matrix into the vaporizer. Therefore, in one  
15 embodiment, the capillary structure of the vaporizer is exposed on at least one surface of the vaporizer, such as the second surface, or any surface forming a common edge with the first surface. The capillary structure of the vaporizer may be exposed on all surfaces of the vaporizer. In one embodiment, the capillary structure of the vaporizer is exposed on at least the second surface of the vaporizer. In a preferred embodiment, the capillary structure of the vaporizer is exposed on at least the first and second surfaces of the vaporizer. In a further preferred  
20 embodiment, the capillary structure of the vaporizer is exposed on all surfaces of the vaporizer.

Where the capillary structure is exposed on multiple surfaces of the vaporizer, such as the first and second surfaces, liquid is drawn from the matrix via capillary action and vaporized by the vaporizer. In this regard, it will be understood that the dimensions of the capillary pores in the vaporizer will  
25 be such that they are able to draw liquid from the matrix. The vaporized liquid exits the vaporizer via the portion of the capillary structure that is exposed. In this regard, it will be understood that the capillary structure of the second surface, even though exposed, is in contact with the matrix. Accordingly, vaporized liquid exits the vaporizer through those areas where the capillary structure is exposed and open to the local environment, such as a chamber within a device in which the  
30 vaporizer assembly is incorporated. Thus, reference to "exposed" in the present context does not mean that the surface containing the exposed capillary structure cannot be in contact with a component other than the vaporizer, such as the matrix. Rather, "exposed" refers to the extension of the capillary structure to the perimeter of the vaporizer so that liquid can be drawn from an external source (e.g. a matrix) into the vaporizer through the capillary structure. If the capillary

structure is extending to the exterior of the vaporizer surface (considering the vaporizer only), the capillary structure can be considered to be exposed on that surface.

In certain circumstances, at least one of the surfaces of the vaporizer does not have an exposed  
5 capillary structure. This may be because the surface in question does not include a capillary  
structure, or it may be because the capillary structure of this surface has been completely or  
partially covered with another component of the vaporizer. By limiting the exposure of the capillary  
structure (or part thereof) to discrete areas of the vaporizer surfaces it may be possible to focus the  
distribution of evaporated liquid into certain areas, leading to areas of increased vapor density  
10 which may be advantageous.

The vaporizer may have any one of the following structures: a woven structure, mesh structure,  
fabric structure, open-pored fiber structure, open-pored sintered structure, open-pored foam or  
open-pored deposition structure. Said structures are suitable in particular for providing a vaporizer  
15 body with a high degree of porosity. A high degree of porosity may ensure that the heat produced  
by the vaporizer is predominately used for evaporating the liquid and high efficiency can be  
obtained. A porosity of greater than 50% may be envisaged with said structures. In one  
embodiment, the porosity of the vaporizer is 50% or greater, 60% or greater, 70% or greater. The  
open-pored fiber structure can consist, for example, of a non-woven fabric which can be arbitrarily  
20 compacted, and can additionally be sintered in order to improve the cohesion. The open-pored  
sintered structure can consist, for example, of a granular, fibrous or flocculent sintered composite  
produced by a film casting process. The open-pored deposition structure can be produced, for  
example, by a CVD process, PVD process or by flame spraying. Open-pored foams are in principle  
commercially available and are also obtainable in a thin, fine-pored design. An example of an  
25 open-pored foam is foamed ceramic.

In one embodiment, the vaporizer has at least two layers, wherein the layers contain at least one of  
the following structures: a plate, foil, paper, mesh, woven structure, fabric, open-pored fiber  
structure, open-pored sintered structure, open-pored foam or open-pored deposition structure. For  
30 example, the vaporizer can be formed by an electric heating resistor consisting of a metal foil  
combined with a structure comprising a capillary structure. Such a configuration might provide a  
vaporizer wherein one of the surfaces of vaporizer is not exposed (due to the presence of the  
metal foil). Where the vaporizer is considered to be formed from a single layer, such a layer may  
be formed from a non-woven metal fiber fabric which, firstly, because of the electric resistance  
35 thereof, makes a contribution to the heating, and, secondly, exerts a capillary effect on the liquid

material. Individual layers are advantageously but not necessarily connected to one another by a heat treatment, such as sintering or welding. For example, the vaporizer can be designed as a sintered composite consisting of a stainless steel foil and one or more layers of a stainless steel wire fabric (material, for example AISI 304 or AISI 316). Alternatively the vaporizer can be designed as a sintered composite consisting of at least two layers of a stainless steel wire fabric. Instead of sintering the layers may be connected to one another by spot welding or resistance welding. Individual layers may also be connected to one another mechanically. For instance, a double-layer wire fabric could be produced just by folding a single layer. Instead of stainless steel, use may also be made, by way of example, of heating conductor alloys-in particular NiCr alloys and CrFeAl alloys ("Kanthal") which have an even higher specific electric resistance than stainless steel. The material connection between the layers is obtained by the heat treatment, as a result of which the layers maintain contact with one another-even under adverse conditions, for example during heating by the vaporizer and resultantly induced thermal expansions.

The vaporizer may comprise, for example, an electrically conductive thin layer of platinum, nickel, molybdenum, tungsten or tantalum, said thin layer being applied to a surface of the vaporizer by a PVD or CVD process. In this case, the vaporizer may comprise an electrically non-conductive material-for example quartz glass. Alternatively, the vaporizer comprises an electric resistance material, for example carbon, or an electrically conductive or semi-conductive ceramic or a PTC material. It is particularly favorable if the electric resistance material is metallic. Metals have greater ductility than the previously mentioned materials. This property has proven advantageous in so far as the vaporizer is exposed during operation to a thermal alternating load, thus causing the induction of thermal expansions. Metals can better compensate for such thermal expansions. Furthermore, metals have a higher impact toughness by comparison. This property has proven an advantage whenever the inhalator component is exposed to impacts. Examples of suitable metallic resistance materials include: stainless steels, such as AISI 304 or AISI 316, and heating conductor alloys-in particular NiCr alloys and CrFeAl alloys ("Kanthal"), such as DIN material number 2,4658, 2,4867, 2,4869, 2,4872, 1,4843, 1,4860, 1,4725, 1,4765 and 1,4767. Suitable vaporizers are also referred to in WO 2010/045671 as composites.

The vaporizer may have a thickness of 1.0 mm or less, for example, 0.9 mm, 0.8 mm, 0.7 mm, 0.6 mm, or 0.5 mm. In one embodiment, the vaporizer may have a thickness of 50-300µm. The width of the vaporizer may be from about 1 mm to about 10mm. In one

embodiment, the width of the vaporizer is selected from 1 mm, 2 mm, 3 mm, 4 mm, 5 mm, 6 mm, 7 mm, 8 mm, 9 mm or 10 mm. This dimensioning has the result that the heat introduced in the interior of the vaporizer can flow efficiently by means of heat conduction, i.e. at a low temperature gradient-to the exposed vaporizer surface where it causes  
5 evaporation of the liquid material. In addition, vapor already formed in the interior of the vaporizer can more easily reach an exposed vaporizer surface. These conditions permit a further increase in the evaporative capacity. In some embodiments, the thickness of the vaporizer corresponds substantially to the thickness of the second surface. In one embodiment, the vaporizer has a substantially uniform thickness.

10 In one embodiment, the vaporizer may include one or more slot-shaped recesses extending from the second surface into the first surface. The slot(s) may extend halfway across the width of the first surface. Alternatively the slot(s) may extend even further.

In one embodiment, there are multiple slots disposed along the vaporizer. The slots may be formed as cuts in the vaporizer or may be stamped/punched. Suitable slotted vaporizers are  
15 also disclosed in WO 2011/109849. In this regard, the presence of one or more slot-shaped recesses has the effect of restricting the flow of current through the vaporizer. This restriction leads to areas of increased heat generation around the internal apex of the slot(s). This increase in localized heat generation contributes to the creation of temperature gradients across the vaporizer. A similar effect may also be achieved by employing recesses  
20 of different dimensions (not necessarily slot-shaped) provided that such recesses have the effect of restricting the flow of current through the vaporizer and promote the creation of localized temperature gradients. A similar effect may also be achieved by replacing the slot(s)/recess(s) with an insulative material.

The longitudinal and transverse dimensions of the vaporizer are not particularly limited. In  
25 particular, the longitudinal dimension of the vaporizer may be dictated by the size of the device which incorporates the assembly and/or the orientation of the vaporizer within said assembly. For the avoidance of doubt, the longitudinal dimension/axis of the vaporizer is that which has the greatest length and does not necessarily correspond to the orientation of the vaporizer within a device. For example, the vaporizer assembly may be oriented within a  
30 device such that the longitudinal dimension of the vaporizer is perpendicular to the longitudinal dimension of the device. Alternatively, the longitudinal dimension of the vaporizer may be substantially parallel with the longitudinal dimension of the device.

### **Matrix**

The matrix of the present disclosure is required to be suitable for retaining a vaporizable liquid. For example, the vaporizable liquid may contain substances such as nicotine, combined with one or more other components such as glycerol, water or other components as desired.

5

The configuration of the matrix is such that it retains the vaporizable liquid under normal environmental conditions, e.g. atmospheric pressure etc., but releases the vaporizable liquid in those areas in contact with the second surface of the vaporizer. In this regard, the matrix may have a capillary structure which, relative to the capillary structure of the vaporizer, allows for  
10 release of the vaporizable liquid when the capillary structure of the vaporizer is in contact with the capillary structure of the matrix.

Suitable materials for the matrix include non-woven fabrics (for example, Kuraflex®, Kuraray; Sontara®, DuPont), thermoplastic polyurethanes (for example, Tecophilic TPU, Lubrizol),  
15 thermoplastic copolyesters (for example Arnitel®, DSM), melamine foam, open cell polyether and polyester foams, polyolefin based open cell porous materials, printing foam, borosilicate microfiber glass filters, natural cotton wick, silica wick, viscose felt wicks, carbon felt, graphite felt, polyacrylonitrile fibres (for example, Pyron® , Zoltek), ceramic fibre (for example, Nextel®, 3M); hydrophilic polyether block amides (for example, Pebax®, Arkema), porous ceramics, and  
20 polyester cotton wick, or combinations thereof.

The matrix may be configured to have varying degrees of capillarity. For example, where the matrix is of tubular configuration, an outer portion of the matrix may have a capillary structure with larger capillary channels compared to an inner portion of the matrix. Such a configuration favours  
25 the inward progression of liquid through the capillary channels. Thus, in one embodiment, the matrix is tubular and has a capillary structure, the channels of which become progressively smaller in an inward direction. For example where the matrix is cylindrical, concentric portions of the matrix may have relatively larger and smaller capillary channels, the portion with smaller capillary channels being disposed inwardly of the portion with larger channels.

30

As described above, the matrix is in contact with the vaporizer via the second surface. However, the matrix may be in contact with the vaporizer at other additional surfaces. Also, more than one matrix may be present such that at least one matrix is in contact with the second surface of the vaporizer and one or more other matrixes contact other surfaces.

35

As described above, the matrix will typically comprise a capillary structure which retains the vaporizable liquid under the above mentioned circumstances. So that the vaporizable liquid can be transmitted to the vaporizer, the capillary structure of the matrix needs to be exposed at least in those areas which contact the second surface of the vaporizer. The portions of the matrix that do not contact the vaporizer need not all have an exposed surface. However, it will be understood that a second surface of the matrix is generally exposed for ventilation purposes to allow air entering the capillary structure of the matrix replacing the volume of liquid that has been supplied to the vaporizer. In one embodiment, the matrix has an exposed capillary surface in those areas in which it contacts the vaporizer. As described above, "exposed" in the present context does not mean that the exposed surfaces of the matrix cannot be in contact with another component which does not form part of the matrix, e.g. the vaporizer.

The particular shape of the matrix is not limited. However, it will be appreciated that where the vaporizer and matrix are incorporated into a device, such as an e-cigarette, the shape and dimensions of the matrix should be such as to provide a device which is compact. Thus, the matrix may be distributed around other components of the device and may be shaped to conform to the required external or internal profile of the device, the only requirement being that at least a portion of the matrix is in contact with the vaporizer via the second surface. It will also be understood that a single matrix can be in contact with multiple surfaces of the vaporizer, provided of course that it is at least in contact with the second surface as defined above. In one embodiment, a matrix contacts the vaporizer via all surfaces forming a common edge with the first surface. In one embodiment, the vaporizer is only in contact with the matrix via the side surfaces, i.e. those surfaces forming a common edge with the first surface.

In one embodiment, the matrix is tubular, for example cylindrical. In this regard, where the matrix is tubular its longitudinal axis may be parallel to the longitudinal axis of any device within which it is located. In one embodiment, the longitudinal axis of the tubular matrix and associated device are substantially aligned. Where the matrix is tubular, it will be appreciated that the vaporizer may extend across the matrix so as to be in contact with opposing surfaces of the matrix. Thus, the vaporizer may form a bridge across a tubular matrix.

As explained above, more than one matrix may be in contact with the vaporizer, or a single matrix may be in contact with more than one surface of the vaporizer. For instance, where multiple matrixes are present it may be that each matrix is in contact with a surface that forms a common edge with the first surface. For example, where the vaporizer is of a rectangular shape (3

dimensional) and thus comprises six surfaces (upper, lower, first side, second side, first end, second end) the first surface of the vaporizer would correspond to the upper or lower surface (depending on orientation) and the second surface may be any one of the first or second sides or first or second ends, then one or more matrix may be in contact with the second surface of the vaporizer, and one or more matrix may be in contact with any of the remaining five surfaces of the vaporizer. In other words, at least one matrix is in contact with at least the second surface, and one or more additional matrixes can be in contact with the remaining surfaces. Typically, however, it is envisaged that at least a portion, preferably the entire first surface, e.g. upper or lower surface (for a rectangular vaporizer) is not in contact with a matrix. In fact, it is preferred that said surfaces are substantially free from contact with any other component (other than electrical and fixing contacts) so as to allow for efficient evaporation and distribution of the liquid once vaporized. In one embodiment, the first surface is not in contact with a matrix. In one embodiment, any contact between the first surface of the vaporizer and the matrix is minimal. In this regard, where the matrix is formed of a resilient material it may be that the area which is in contact with the vaporizer is compressed to a small degree. This small degree of compression may cause a surface of the matrix to overhang the first surface to the extent that there is superficial contact. Such contact is considered to be insufficient to establish an efficient capillary link between the vaporizer and the matrix. Therefore in one embodiment, the first surface of the vaporizer is substantially free from contact by a matrix. Where there is an opposing surface substantially equivalent in surface area to the first surface (for example the lower face of a rectangular vaporizer where the upper surface corresponds to the first surface), the opposing surface may also not be in contact with a matrix (or be substantially free from contact as explained above). Where a matrix is in contact with the first surface, it is considered advantageous that a portion of the first surface is free from contact with the matrix, or indeed any other component of the vaporizer assembly. Such an arrangement allows for vaporized liquid to be expelled from the first surface via the capillary structure.

Accordingly, in one embodiment the vaporizer assembly comprises a first matrix in contact with the second surface of the vaporizer and a second matrix in contact with a further surface of the vaporizer, said further surface also forming a common edge with the first surface. In one embodiment, the vaporizer has a second surface and a third surface, each of which independently forms a common edge with the first surface. In one embodiment, the third surface is orientated opposite the second surface. In one embodiment, the vaporizer comprises second, third, fourth and fifth surfaces, all of which form independent common edges with the first surface. In one embodiment, the vaporizer comprises one or more surfaces which form independent common edges with the first surface. In one embodiment, the vaporizer comprises more than one surface

which each form an independent common edge with the first surface. In one embodiment, the vaporizer comprises more than two surfaces which each form an independent common edge with the first surface. In one embodiment, the vaporizer comprises more than three surfaces which each form an independent common edge with the first surface. In one embodiment, the vaporizer  
5 comprises more than four surfaces which each form an independent common edge with the first surface. In one embodiment, the vaporizer comprises two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine or ten surfaces, each of which form an independent common edge with the first surface.

In one embodiment, the multiple surfaces of the vaporizer which form common edges with the first  
10 surface form planes that are substantially parallel. In other words, the angles formed between the first surface and the multiple surfaces forming common edges with the first surface are the same, or substantially the same.

It will be appreciated that numerous vaporizer and matrix configurations are possible. Indeed,  
15 multiple vaporizers may be present in the assembly, either of the same or different shape/configuration.

In one embodiment, the vaporizer assembly comprises two, three, four or more vaporizers.

20 Where the assembly comprises multiple vaporizers, they may be in a stacked configuration (above and below each other/in different planes), or they may be oriented in substantially the same plane. Where there are multiple vaporizers, each vaporizer may be separated by one or more matrixes (e.g. vertically or horizontally sandwiched).

25 In one embodiment, the vaporizer assembly comprises one vaporizer. In one embodiment, the vaporizer assembly comprises two vaporizers. In one embodiment, the vaporizer assembly comprises three vaporizers. In one embodiment, the vaporizer assembly comprises four vaporizers. As described, each vaporizer comprises at least a first and second surface and is in contact with at least one matrix via at least said second surface.

30 The vaporizer(s) present in the assembly may act to support one or more matrix present in the assembly. This is particularly the case when the assembly is present in a device. For example, where the vaporizer assembly is present in a device the vaporizer may be configured to retain the matrix against a surface of the device. Where multiple vaporizers are present, the vaporizers may  
35 sandwich one or more matrixes between them, thus supporting the matrixes within the device.

Likewise, the matrixes can be considered to support the vaporizer(s). Thus in one embodiment, one or more vaporizers may be supported by one or more matrixes. In particular, where the matrix is tubular, it may be formed of a resilient material and have an inner diameter slightly smaller than the length/width of the vaporizer (depending on orientation) such that the vaporizer may bridge  
5 opposing surfaces of the matrix and yet be supported by the matrix (due to the resilient nature of the matrix). Alternatively, where the matrix is not particularly resilient, it may still act to support a bridging vaporizer as the vaporizer may be attached to the matrix in other suitable ways.

The vaporizer is responsible for evaporating the liquid present in the matrix. Accordingly, the  
10 vaporizer is made of/comprises an electrically resistive material which when connected to an electrical circuit will experience an increase in temperature and thus evaporate any vaporizable substance in contact with its surface. In this regard, opposing ends of the vaporizer may be attached to respective positive and negative terminals of a power source (battery). Where multiple vaporizers are present, each may be connected individually to a power source (battery) or one or  
15 more electrically conductive bridges may join each of the vaporizers and these bridges may be in electrical contact with the relevant terminals of a battery etc. Suitable batteries for use in devices such as e-cigarettes and the like are well known to the skilled person. For example, rechargeable batteries are envisaged.

20 It will be appreciated that in the context of the present disclosure, "contact" between the vaporizer and the matrix via the second surface of the vaporizer is to be understood as being sufficient contact so as to allow for a sufficient capillary link to be established between the matrix and the vaporizer. Thus, "contact" insufficient to establish such a link is not considered to be "contact" in the context of the present invention.

25 As described above, in a further aspect there is disclosed a device comprising the vaporizer assembly as described herein. In one embodiment, the device may be an e-cigarette and comprise a housing, a power source (battery), the vaporizer assembly, one or more LEDs and one or more sensors to detect when the device is in use and to activate the vaporizer of the vaporizer  
30 assembly. The housing typically encompasses the other components of the device and holds them in position.

The housing typically encompasses the other components of the device and may be designed so as to provide an air channel through the device and over at least one surface of one or more  
35 vaporizers present in the device. Alternatively, the other components encompassed by the

housing may be configured so as to provide an air channel through the device and over at least one surface of one or more vaporizers present in the device. Indeed, where the matrix is tubular, the inner walls of the tubular matrix may serve to form an air channel. Typically, the air channel will be arranged over at least the first surface of any vaporizer present in the device, but it may also  
5 be that the design of the housing/other components is such that air flow is directed over multiple surfaces of any vaporizers present in the device.

The housing may be separable into two or more parts. For example, where the housing is separable into two parts, the vaporizer assembly and mouthpiece may be contained in the first part  
10 and the power source, LED and sensor may be contained in the second part. Each of the parts of the housing may contain a suitable aperture to allow air flow through the device and out of the mouthpiece. Alternatively, the device may be configured such that only one of the parts of the housing, e.g. the first part, has suitable apertures. In one embodiment, the housing may be separable into three parts and in this case, the vaporizer assembly may be contained in two  
15 different parts of the housing that can be brought together to form the vaporizer assembly.

In one embodiment, the vaporizer assembly is part of a first housing and said housing includes a mouthpiece and a connector for establishing mechanical and electrical connection with a further housing part. For example, in this embodiment the first housing may form a cartomiser comprising  
20 the vaporizer assembly according to the present disclosure.

Various configurations of devices, and e-cigarettes in particular, comprising the vaporizer assembly of the present disclosure may be envisaged.

## 25 DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The various aspects of the present disclosure will now be described with reference to the following embodiments. However, it is to be understood that the present disclosure is not to be limited to each specific embodiment, and indeed, the features of each embodiment may be applied to other  
30 embodiments as appropriate.

Figure 1 – shows a perspective view of a portion 100 of a vaporizer according to the present disclosure.

Figure 2 – shows a perspective view of a vaporizer 100 according to the present disclosure.

Figures 3A, 3B and 3C – show plan and end views of a vaporizer 100 according to the present disclosure.

Figure 4 – shows an exemplary region of contact between a vaporizer 100 and a matrix 150.

Figure 5 – shows further exemplary regions of contact between a vaporizer 100 and a matrix 150.

5 Figure 6 – shows a vaporizer 200 according to the present disclosure.

Figure 7 – shows a graphical representation of the temperature gradient formed in the vaporizer 100.

Figure 8 – shows the distribution of the electric power released across vaporizers according to the present disclosure containing no slots (left), 7 slots (middle) and 4 slots (right).

10 Figure 9 – shows the relative temperature distribution and gradients of the vaporizers shown in Figure 8.

Figure 10 – shows a plan view of a device 7 incorporating a vaporizer assembly according to the present disclosure.

Figure 11 – shows a cross section view of the device 7 of Figure 10.

15 Figure 12 – shows a longitudinal cross section of a further vaporizer assembly according to the present disclosure.

Figure 1 shows a portion of a first vaporizer 100 according to the present disclosure. The vaporizer 100 has a first surface 101 and a second surface 102. The first and second surfaces  
20 form a common edge 110. Figure 1 also shows a further surface 103 which forms an independent common edge 111 with the first surface 101 and also forms a common edge 112 with the second surface 102. As will be appreciated from Figure 1, the surface area of the first surface 101 is greater than that of the second surface 102.

25 Figure 2 shows vaporizer 100 and in this instance vaporizer 100 has a rectangular profile. It will be appreciated that the vaporizer 100 shown in Figure 2 has four surfaces which each form independent common edges with the first surface 101. In this regard, second surface 102 and fourth and fifth surfaces 104, 105 are depicted in Figure 3A, 3B and 3C.

30 The interaction between the vaporizer 100 and the matrix 150 is shown in Figure 4. In particular, the matrix 150 is in contact with the vaporizer via second surface 102. More precisely, second surface 102 of vaporizer 100 contacts surface 151 of matrix 150.

35 As described above, in some instances the matrix 150 may be in contact with more than one surface of the vaporizer 100. Such an arrangement is depicted in Figure 5, where matrix 150 has

a surface 151 in contact with the vaporizer 100 via second surface 102 as well as surface 153 in contact with the vaporizer 100 via third surface 103.

Figure 6 shows a further vaporizer 200 which has a first surface 201, and multiple further surfaces  
5 202, 203, 204, 205, 206 each of which independently form a common edge 210, 211, 213, 214,  
215 with the first surface 201. It will be understood that any of the multiple further surfaces shown  
in Figure 6 can be considered to be the second surface. Consequently, one or more matrixes may  
be in contact with the vaporizer via any one of the surfaces 202, 203, 204, 205, 206. As described  
above, a single matrix may be in contact with more than one of said surfaces and/or more than one  
10 matrix may be present and each may be in contact with one or more of said surfaces. Although  
not depicted in Figure 6, the surfaces opposite to and parallel with surface 203 may also be in  
contact with a matrix.

It should also be noted that the matrix need not contact the entire second surface of the vaporizer  
15 assembly. However, this may be advantageous in order to establish a great degree of contact (and  
potentially flow of liquid) between the matrix and the vaporizer.

It will be appreciated from the above that the one or more matrixes contacts the vaporizer(s) along  
a "side" face, i.e. one or more of the surfaces forming a common edge with the first surface. This  
20 contact face is referred to as a "side" face owing to the configuration that results from the first  
surface having a surface area greater than that of the second surface. Such a configuration may  
be particularly advantageous as when the vaporizer is operational the liquid drawn from the matrix  
can be distributed substantially along the entire length of the vaporizer without compromising the  
evaporating efficiency of the vaporizer. Furthermore, by ensuring that contact between the  
25 vaporizer and the matrix occurs via the second surface as mentioned herein, the first surface can  
be left free of contact so that any liquid vaporized by the vaporizer can exit the vaporizer freely.  
This is typically advantageous where the vaporizer 100, 200 assembly is incorporated into devices,  
such as e-cigarettes, where the flow of air through the device will pass over the first surface  
101,201 of the vaporizer 100,200 and thus the vapor produced by the vaporizer 100, 201 is able to  
30 form an aerosol more effectively.

The specific orientation of the vaporizer and the matrix of the present assembly is also  
advantageous in that it provides for a graduated vaporization profile across the vaporizer. Due to  
liquid being delivered to the vaporizer via the "side" face of the vaporizer, a vaporization or  
35 temperature gradient is established across the width of the vaporizer 100,200. Without being

bound by theory, this gradient is formed at least in part because of the greater proximity of the second (side) surface of the vaporizer to the matrix compared to the centre of the vaporizer. The relative flow of liquid through this portion of the vaporizer is therefore greater than towards the centre of the vaporizer and therefore the temperature of the vaporizer in these areas is depressed  
5 to a greater extent. Furthermore the unheated and usually more voluminous matrix forms a heat sink for the heated vaporizer. This vaporization gradient is particularly advantageous if the liquid to be vaporized contains multiple substances having different boiling points. The natural action of the capillary structure formed in the vaporizer 100, 200 will draw the liquid inwards from the matrix 150  
10 via the side face (second surface as defined herein) and as a result of the vaporization gradient the vaporizer simultaneously evaporates multiple substances having different boiling points. For example, where the liquid to be vaporized contains nicotine, water and glycerol, each of which has a different boiling point, each substance can be vaporized substantially simultaneously leading to an aerosol with a more balanced profile. An example of the gradient established across the vaporizer 101 is shown in Figure 7. It will be appreciated that this gradient is generally established  
15 when the vaporizer is configured to be fed with a vaporizable liquid in a direction substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the vaporizer.

As described above, the vaporizer of the present disclosure may include one or more slots extending from the second surface of the vaporizer into the first surface. Vaporizers having such  
20 slots are shown in Figures 8 and 9, alongside a vaporizer having no such slots. As can be seen from Figures 8 and 9, the electrical power (power distribution) is influenced by the presence of the slots. When no slots are present, the electrical power generated and energy released across the device/ vaporizer surface 101 is substantially constant. Such a uniform generation of power/  
25 release of energy does not, however, lead to a constant temperature profile across the vaporizer as a result of the orientation of the vaporizer and matrixes, as explained above and shown in Figure 7. The temperature gradient induced in the vaporizer is shown again in Figure 9.

However, when one or more slots are included in the vaporizer, as for example shown in Figures 8  
30 and 9, the generation of electrical power/ release of energy is not constant across the vaporizer and instead peaks around the tips of the slots. These peaks in the generation of electrical power/ release of energy arise due to the disruption of the electrical current flowing longitudinally through the vaporizer and they lead to areas of increased temperature. This can be seen in Figure 9, where in addition to the temperature gradient induced by the arrangement of the vaporizer and the matrixes, a further re-inforcing temperature gradient is induced. The provision of slots helps  
35 keeping the generation of power/ release of energy away from the second surface, where the

energy would otherwise (no slots) be immediately absorbed by the matrix which - as explained above - can be considered as a heat sink. As a result the slots are increasing the evaporation efficiency.

5 As described above, the vaporizer assembly may contain more than one matrix. In particular, Figure 10 depicts a device 7, such as an e-cigarette, comprising a vaporizer assembly comprising first and second vaporizers 2A, 2B, each vaporizer being in contact with a respective matrix 3a, 3b, 3c via multiple surfaces of the vaporizer, each surface forming an independent edge with the  
10 respective first surface of each vaporizer. More precisely, matrix 2A is in contact with vaporizer 3a via a second surface of the vaporizer 2A, the second surface forming a common edge with the first surface of the vaporizer 2A. Further, matrix 3b is also in contact with vaporizer 2A via a further surface, the further surface forming an independent common edge with the first surface of the vaporizer 2A. Additionally, matrix 3b is in contact with vaporizer 2B via a second surface of the vaporizer 2B, the second surface forming a common edge with the first surface of the vaporizer 2B.  
15 Further, vaporizer 2B is also in contact with matrix 3c via a further surface, the further surface forming an independent common edge with the first surface of the vaporizer 2B. In this way, multiple vaporizers can cooperate with multiple matrixes in the vaporizer assembly so as to provide mutual support and efficient supply of liquid to the vaporizers.

20 As described above, the vaporizers 100, 2A, 2B, 200 may include portions at the distal and proximal ends which are adapted to provide electrical contacts. These portions of the vaporizers are depicted in Figure 10 as U+ and U-. Furthermore, in some embodiments, a bridge 6 is present which provides electrical communication between multiple vaporizers so as to simplify any electrical connections that may be required.

25 Figure 11 shows a cross-sectional profile of device 7 (transverse to the longitudinal dimension of the device). As explained above, device 7 includes vaporizers 2A and 2B, matrixes 3a, 3b, 3c, and channels 4', 4'' formed above and below vaporizer 2A and channels 5', 5'' formed above and below vaporizer 2B. Said channels are formed by the upper and lower major surfaces of the vaporizers, the side surfaces of the matrixes 3a, 3b, and 3c, as well as the inner walls of housing 1.  
30

As described above, such an arrangement allows the vaporizers to cooperate with multiple matrixes in the vaporizer assembly so as to provide mutual support, efficient supply of liquid to the vaporizers and also the ability to form vaporization gradients across each vaporizer whilst at the same time ensuring that the first surfaces (upper surfaces as depicted in Figure 11) remain  
35 substantially or completely contact free. This ensures efficient provision of vapor to any air

channel formed above the vaporizers. Of course, the same applies to the surfaces (lower surfaces as depicted in Figure 11).

5 The device 7 encloses the vaporizers and matrixes by a device wall 1. The device wall 1, also referred to as a housing, may encompass/defines other features/components typically found in e-cigarettes: a mouthpiece; an air inlet and air outlet interconnected by channels 4', 4'', 5', 5''; a battery; a PCB, various sensors and microprocessors used to operate the device in response to use of the device (e.g. inhalation through the mouthpiece); and one or more LEDs. The device 7 depicted in Figure 11 is not intended to be limiting and any combination of vaporizers and matrixes  
10 as described herein can be incorporated into a suitable device.

Device 7 is generally operated as follows. A user places the mouthpiece of the device to his/her mouth and inhales, thereby causing air to flow through the device. Said air flow (or reduced pressure) is detected by the sensor in the device, which then relays information to the  
15 microprocessor that the device is in use. Power is then delivered to the vaporizer and, owing to the electrical resistance of the vaporizer, the temperature of the vaporizer increases. Due to the capillary effect induced by the capillary structures of the vaporizer and matrix and due to the contact between the vaporizer and the matrix (which contains a liquid to be vaporized) liquid is drawn by capillary force from the matrix to the vaporizer. Accordingly, as the temperature of the  
20 vaporizer increases various substances contained within the vaporizable liquid are vaporized. As described above with regard to Figure 7, owing to the contact of the vaporizer with the matrix via the second surface, a temperature gradient is set-up across the vaporizer. In particular, the temperature of the vaporizer generally increases away from a surface in contact with the matrix. Therefore, with regard to device 7, each vaporizer 2A and 2B will display a greater temperature at  
25 its center compared to the temperature at the surface in contact with the respective matrixes 3a, 3b and 3c. During operation of the device, vapor is expelled from the vaporizers 2A and 2B into the channels 4', 4'', 5' and 5''. Air flowing through the device 7 also travels through channels 4', 4'', 5' and 5'' and as a result mixes with the expelled vapor. The vapor cools and condenses to form an aerosol which travels through the device 7 to the mouthpiece and is inhaled by the user. As  
30 vapor is expelled from the vaporizers 2A and 2B, further liquid is drawn from the matrixes 3a, 3b and 3c and the volume of liquid present inside the vaporizer is replenished. Once the user ceases inhalation, the sensor within the device detects the relative change in flow (or pressure) and communicates this to the microprocessor, following which the power to the vaporizer is terminated, the temperature of the vaporizer drops and liquid ceases to be vaporized (at least to  
35 the same extent as during operation). Alternatively, the power to the vaporizer may be terminated

after a certain period of time (e.g. 2 seconds after start of inhalation) has elapsed. Following the signal from the sensor that the device 7 is in use the microprocessor may also cause other functions to be activated, such as operation of one or more LEDs etc.

5 A further embodiment of a vaporizer assembly according to the present disclosure is shown in Figure 12. The vaporizer assembly depicted in Figure 12 comprises a matrix 250 which is tubular and a vaporizer 100 which is dimensioned as shown in Figure 2. In particular, vaporizer 100 has a first surface 101 and second surfaces 102 and 104. Second surfaces 102 and 104 are in contact with surfaces 251 and 252 of matrix 250. The orientation of  
10 vaporizer 100 within tubular matrix 250 is such that air channels 300 are formed above and below the vaporizer 100. Matrix 250 may be made of a resilient material. Further, the inner diameter of matrix 250 may be slightly smaller than the width of vaporizer 100 so that vaporizer 100 is supported by matrix 250 (via, for example, friction fit/the resilient nature of matrix 250).

15

Various modifications and variations of the described vaporizer assembly and device incorporating the same will be apparent to those skilled in the art without departing from the scope and spirit of the disclosure. Although the invention has been described in connection with specific embodiments, it should be understood that the invention as claimed should not  
20 be unduly limited to such specific embodiments. Indeed, various modifications of the described modes for carrying out the invention which are apparent to those skilled in the art or related fields are intended to be within the scope of the following claims.

**THE EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION IN WHICH AN EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OR PRIVILEGE IS CLAIMED ARE DEFINED AS FOLLOWS:**

1. A vaporizer assembly comprising a vaporizer and a matrix suitable for retaining a vaporizable liquid, wherein the vaporizer comprises:  
5 first and second surfaces forming a common edge;  
the first surface having a greater surface area than the second surface;  
wherein the vaporizer is in contact with the matrix via the second surface, wherein the vaporizer is formed from a material comprising a capillary structure,  
10 wherein the longitudinal dimension of the vaporizer is substantially parallel with the longitudinal dimension of the vaporizer assembly.
2. The vaporizer assembly according to claim 1, wherein the vaporizer is sheet-like in shape.  
15
3. The vaporizer assembly according to claim 2, wherein the vaporizer is substantially planar.
4. The vaporizer assembly according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the vaporizer  
20 has a substantially uniform thickness.
5. The vaporizer assembly according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the assembly comprises more than one vaporizer as defined in any one of claims 1 to 4.
- 25 6. The vaporizer assembly according to claim 5, wherein the multiple vaporizers are in a stacked configuration.
7. The vaporizer assembly according to claim 5, wherein the multiple vaporizers are oriented in substantially the same plane.  
30
8. The vaporizer assembly according to any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein the or each vaporizer has a third surface forming an independent common edge with the first surface, said third surface also being in contact with the matrix.

9. The vaporizer assembly according to claim 8, wherein the third surface is positioned opposite the second surface.
- 5 10. The vaporizer assembly according to claim 8, wherein the third surface is positioned perpendicularly relative to the second surface.
11. The vaporizer assembly according to claim 10, wherein the third surface and the second surface form a common edge.
- 10 12. The vaporizer assembly according to any one of claims 1 to 11, wherein the assembly comprises more than one matrix.
13. The vaporizer assembly according to any one of claims 8 to 12, wherein the second surface of the vaporizer is in contact with a first matrix and the third surface of the vaporizer is in contact with a second matrix.
- 15 14. The vaporizer assembly according to any one of claims 1 to 13, wherein the vaporizer is supported by one or more matrixes.
- 20 15. The vaporizer assembly according to any one of claims 1 to 14, wherein the capillary structure is exposed on all surfaces of the vaporizer.
16. The vaporizer assembly according to any one of claims 1 to 14, wherein the capillary structure is not exposed on at least one surface of the vaporizer.
- 25 17. The vaporizer assembly according to any one of claims 1 to 16, wherein the matrix does not contact the first surface.
- 30 18. The vaporizer assembly according to any one of claims 1 to 17, wherein the matrix is made of a resilient material.

19. The vaporizer assembly according to any one of claims 1 to 18, wherein the matrix contacts the vaporizer via multiple surfaces each forming a common independent edge with the first surface.
- 5 20. The vaporizer assembly according to any one of claims 1 to 19, wherein the matrix contacts the vaporizer via all surfaces forming a common vertex with the first surface.
21. The vaporizer assembly according to any one claims 1 to 20, wherein the matrix contains a vaporizable liquid.
- 10 22. The vaporizer assembly according to claim 21 wherein the vaporizable liquid comprises nicotine and at least one of water and glycerol.
23. A device comprising the vaporizer assembly of any one of claims 1 to 22.
- 15 24. The device according to claim 23, comprising:  
a housing;  
the vaporizer assembly according to any one of claims 1 to 22;  
a power source to supply power to the vaporizer; and  
20 one or more sensors adapted to sense operation of the device.
25. The device according to claim 24 further comprising one or more LEDs to indicate operation of the device.
- 25 26. The device according to claim 24 or 25, wherein the housing is comprised of a first part and a second part and the vaporizer assembly is contained in the first part.
27. The device according to claim 23, wherein the device comprises:  
a housing comprising a mouthpiece;  
30 the vaporizer assembly according to any one of claims 1 to 22; and  
a connector for establishing mechanical and electrical connection with a further component.

28. The device according to claim 27 wherein the further component is a housing comprising a power source.

29. A vaporizer assembly comprising a vaporizer configured to be fed with a vaporizable  
5 liquid in a direction substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the vaporizer,  
wherein the vaporizer comprises:

first and second surfaces forming a common edge;

the first surface having a greater surface area than the second surface;

wherein the vaporizer is fed with a vaporizable liquid via the second surface, wherein the  
10 vaporizer is formed from a material comprising a capillary structure and the capillary  
structure is exposed on the second surface of the vaporizer such that liquid is drawable from  
an external source into the vaporizer.

30. The vaporizer assembly according to claim 29, wherein the vaporizer is sheet-like in  
15 shape.

31. The vaporizer assembly according to claim 30, wherein the vaporizer is substantially  
planar.

20 32. The vaporizer assembly according to any one of claims 29 to 31, wherein the  
vaporizer has a substantially uniform thickness.

33. The vaporizer assembly according to any one of claims 29 to 32, wherein the  
assembly comprises more than one vaporizer as defined in any one of claims 29 to 32.

25 34. The vaporizer assembly according to claim 33, wherein the multiple vaporizers are in  
a stacked configuration.

35. The vaporizer assembly according to claim 33, wherein the multiple vaporizers are  
30 oriented in substantially the same plane.

36. The vaporizer assembly according to any one of claims 29 to 35, wherein the or each  
vaporizer has a third surface forming an independent common edge with the first surface,  
said third surface also being fed with vaporizable liquid.

37. The vaporizer assembly according to claim 36, wherein the third surface is positioned opposite the second surface.
- 5 38. The vaporizer assembly according to claim 36, wherein the third surface is positioned perpendicularly relative to the second surface.
39. The vaporizer assembly according to claim 38, wherein the third surface and the second surface form a common edge.
- 10 40. The vaporizer assembly according to any one of claims 29 to 39, wherein the capillary structure is exposed on all surfaces of the vaporizer.
41. The vaporizer assembly according to any one of claims 29 to 39, wherein the capillary structure is not exposed on at least one surface of the vaporizer.
- 15 42. The vaporizer assembly according to any one claims 29 to 41, wherein the vaporizable liquid comprises at least one of nicotine, water, and glycerol.
- 20 43. A device comprising the vaporizer assembly of any one of claims 29 to 42.
44. The device according to claim 43, comprising:  
a housing;  
the vaporizer assembly according to any one of claims 29 to 42;  
25 a power source to supply power to the vaporizer; and  
one or more sensors adapted to sense operation of the device.
45. The device according to claim 44 further comprising one or more LEDs to indicate operation of the device
- 30 46. The device according to claim 44 or 45, wherein the housing is comprised of a first part and a second part and the vaporizer assembly is contained in the first part.

47. The device according to claim 43, wherein the device comprises:  
a housing comprising a mouthpiece;  
the vaporizer assembly according to any one of claims 29 to 42; and  
a connector for establishing mechanical and electrical connection with a further  
5 component.

48. The device according to claim 47 wherein the further component is a housing  
comprising a power source

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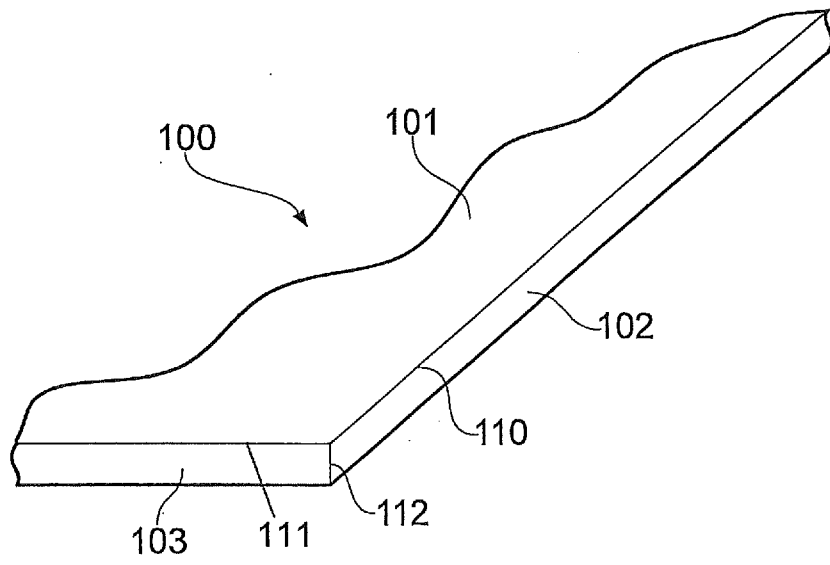


FIG. 1

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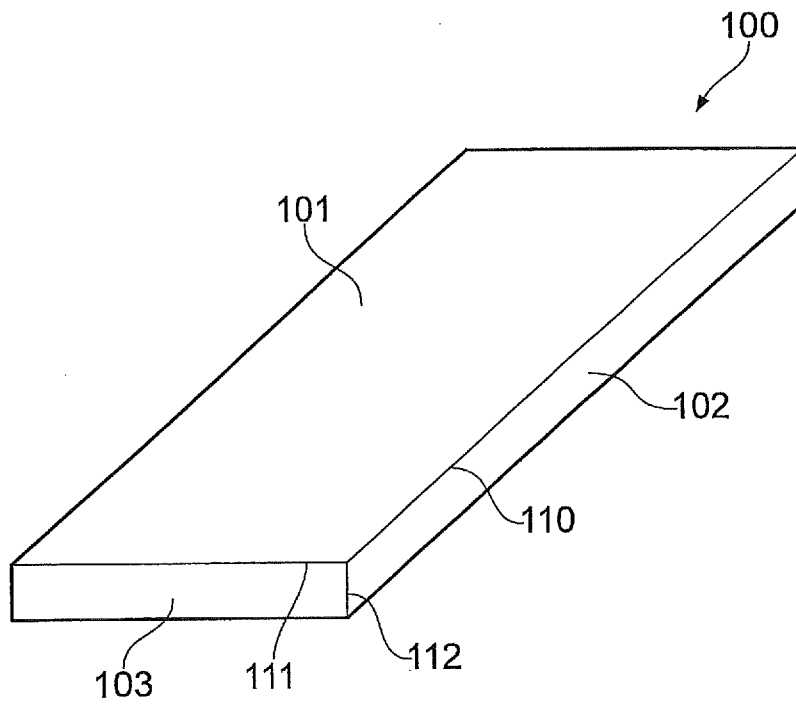


FIG. 2

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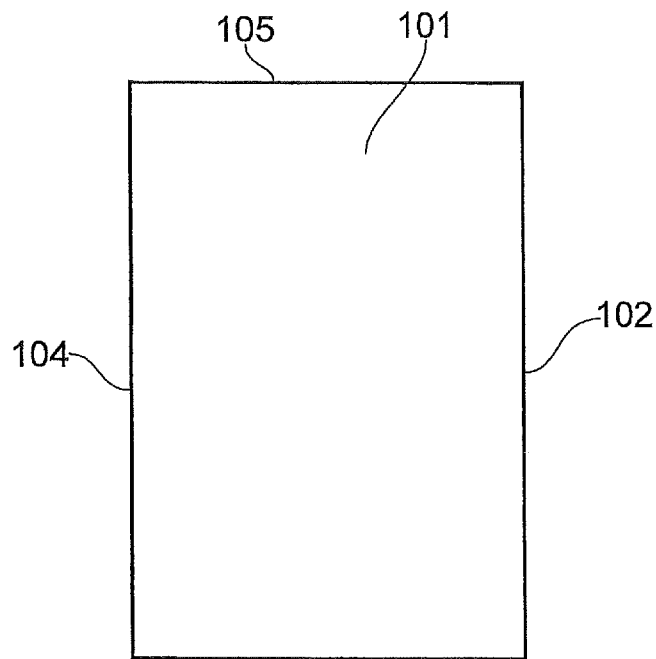


FIG. 3A

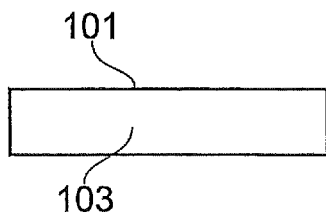


FIG. 3B

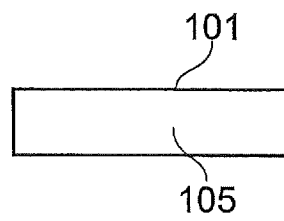


FIG. 3C

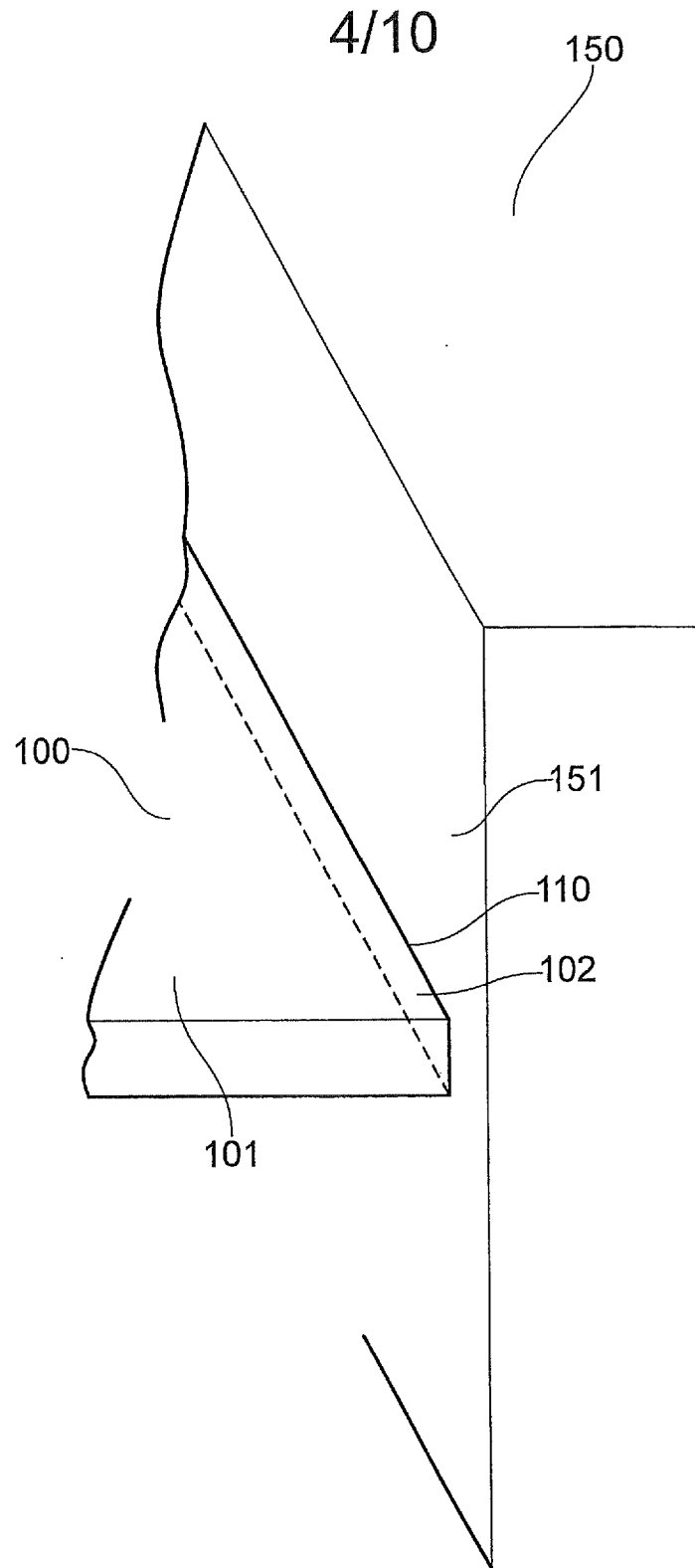


FIG. 4



6/10

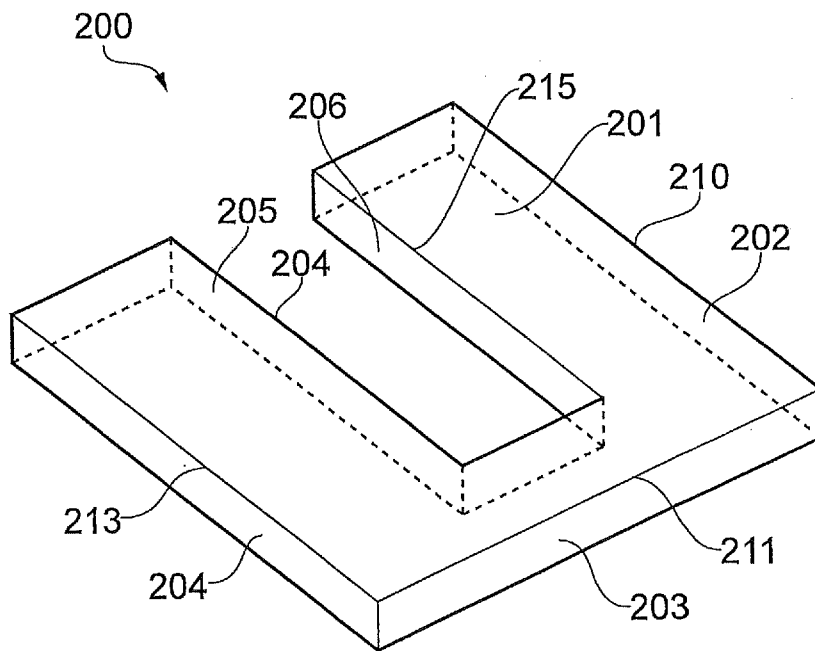


FIG. 6

7/10

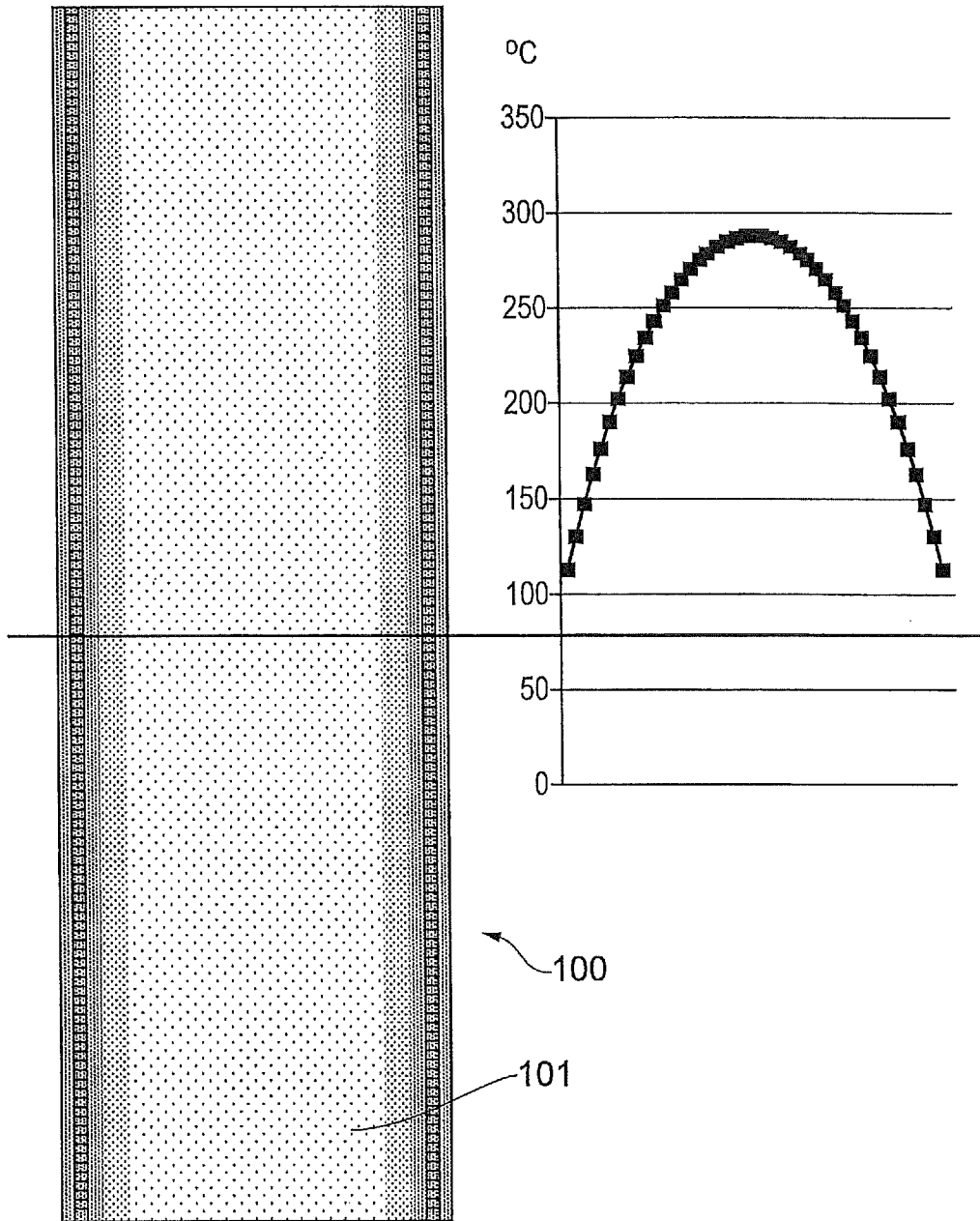


FIG. 7

8/10

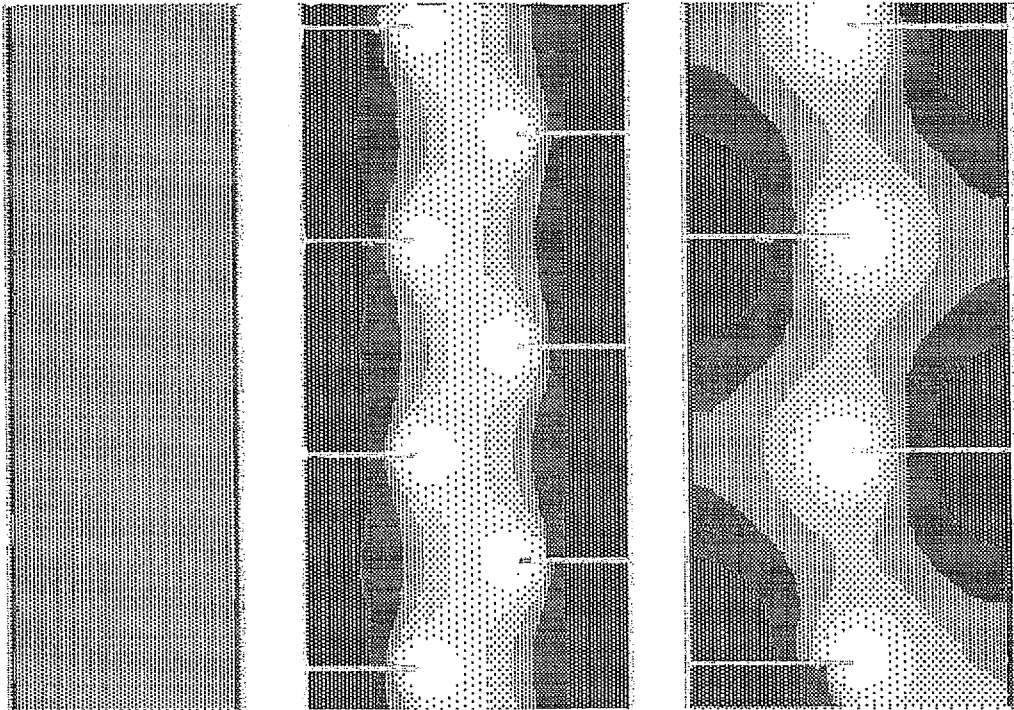


FIG. 8

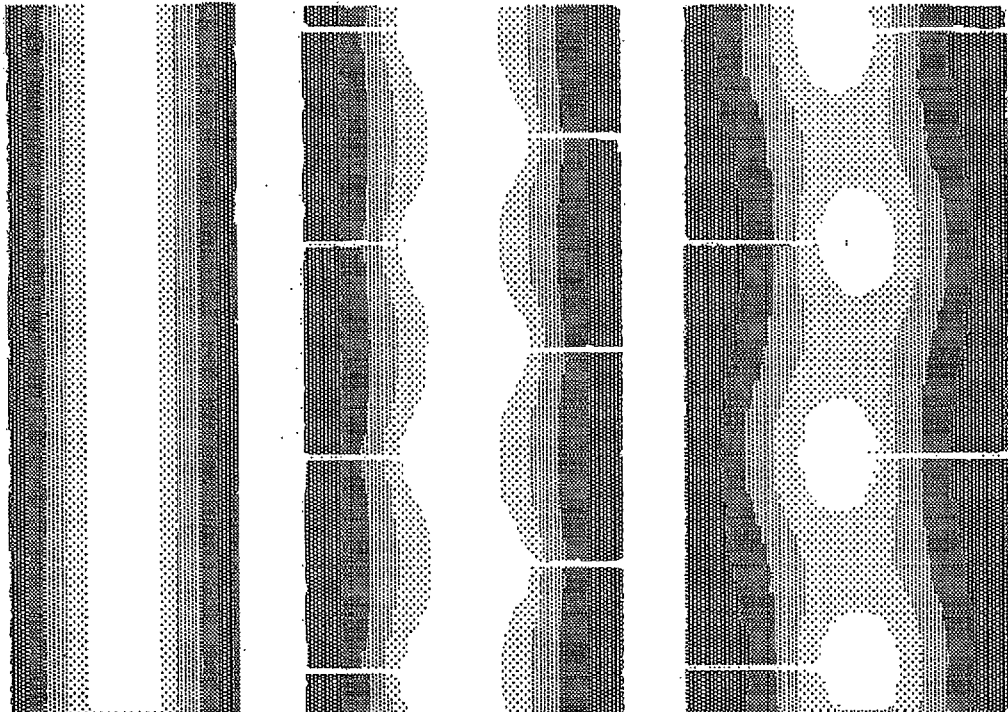


FIG. 9

9/10

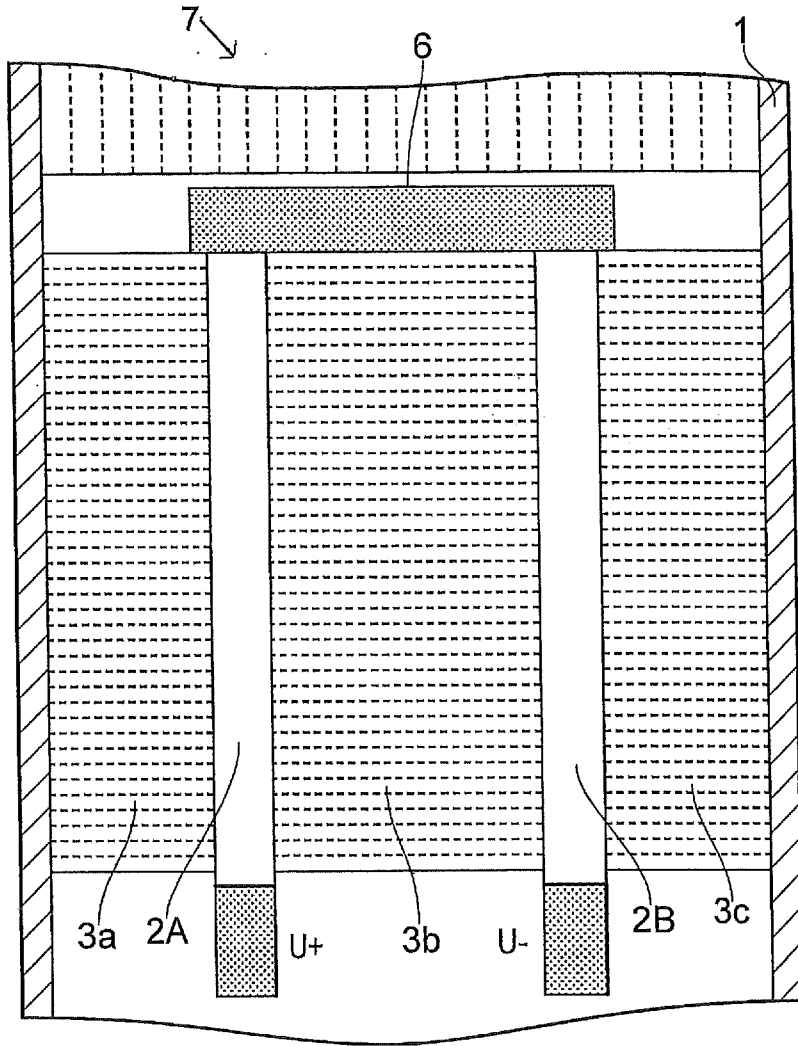


FIG. 10

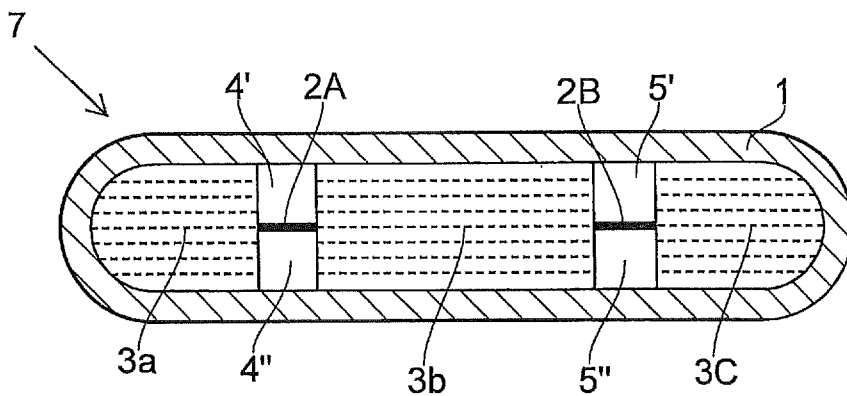


FIG. 11

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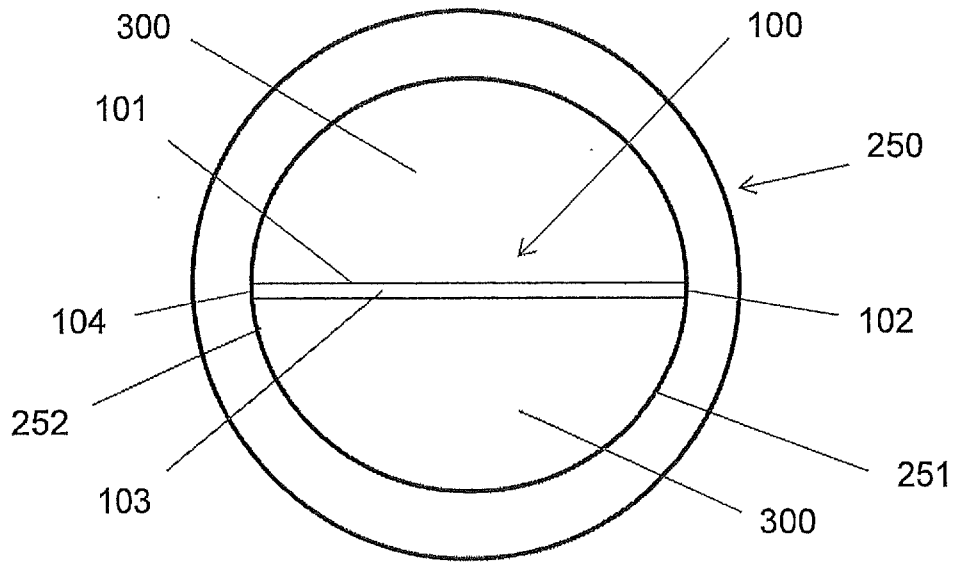


FIG. 12

