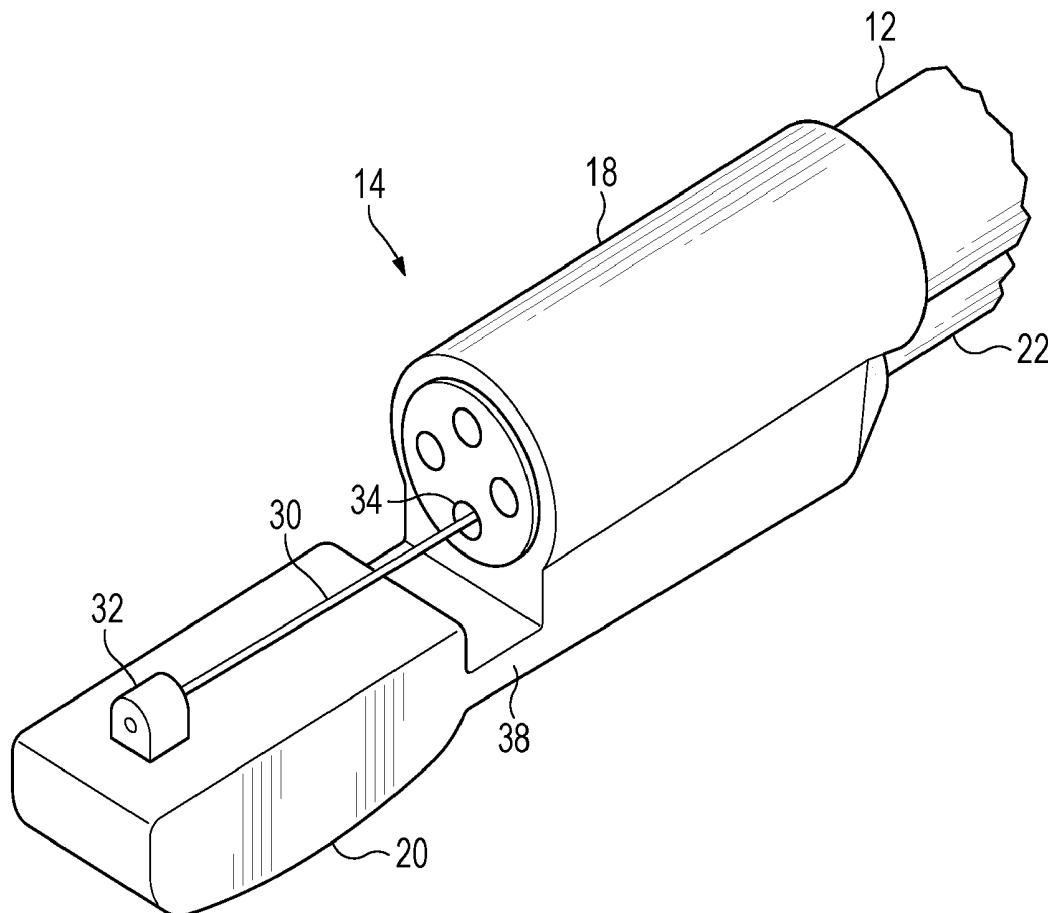




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(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Steinberg et al.(10) **Pub. No.: US 2019/0357883 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Nov. 28, 2019**(54) **STEERABLE ULTRASOUND ATTACHMENT
FOR ENDOSCOPE***A61B 1/00* (2006.01)*A61B 1/005* (2006.01)(71) Applicant: **ENDOSOUND, LLC**, Boca Raton, FL
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Portland, OR (US)(73) Assignee: **ENDOSOUND, LLC**, Boca Raton, FL
(US)(21) Appl. No.: **16/523,971**(22) Filed: **Jul. 26, 2019****Related U.S. Application Data**(63) Continuation-in-part of application No. PCT/US19/
27331, filed on Apr. 12, 2019, which is a continua-
tion-in-part of application No. 15/951,347, filed on
Apr. 12, 2018, now Pat. No. 10,363,014, Continua-
tion-in-part of application No. 15/951,347, filed on
Apr. 12, 2018, now Pat. No. 10,363,014.**Publication Classification**(51) **Int. Cl.***A61B 8/00* (2006.01)*A61B 10/04* (2006.01)(52) **U.S. Cl.**CPC *A61B 8/4422* (2013.01); *A61B 10/04*
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1/00135 (2013.01); *A61B 8/4411* (2013.01);
A61B 8/4466 (2013.01)(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method of providing and processing an ultrasound capable endoscope assembly that uses an endoscope having a proximal and a distal end, and that has been used previously. The endoscope is cleansed to a level appropriate for re-use within a human body. The method also uses an unused ultrasound assembly, sealed in antiseptic packaging, and which includes a multiple signal pathway connector; an ultrasound transducer head including an ultrasound transducer; and a set of signal pathways, extending from the ultrasound transducer to the multiconductor electrical connector. In the method, the ultrasound assembly is to the endoscope, so that the set of signal pathways extends along the elongate body of the endoscope and the ultrasound transducer head is attached at the distal end. After use, the ultrasound assembly is detached from the endoscope and permanently disposed.



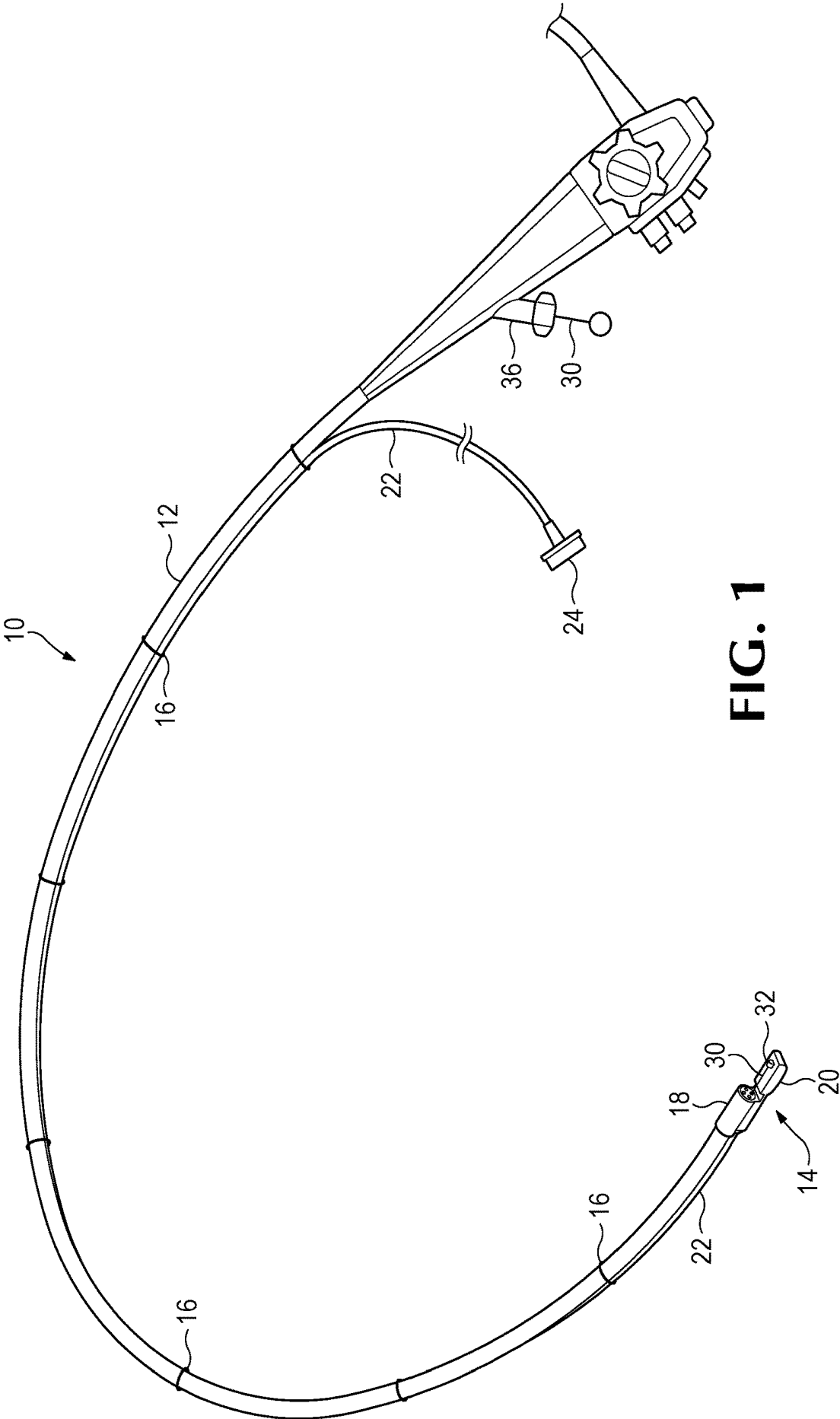
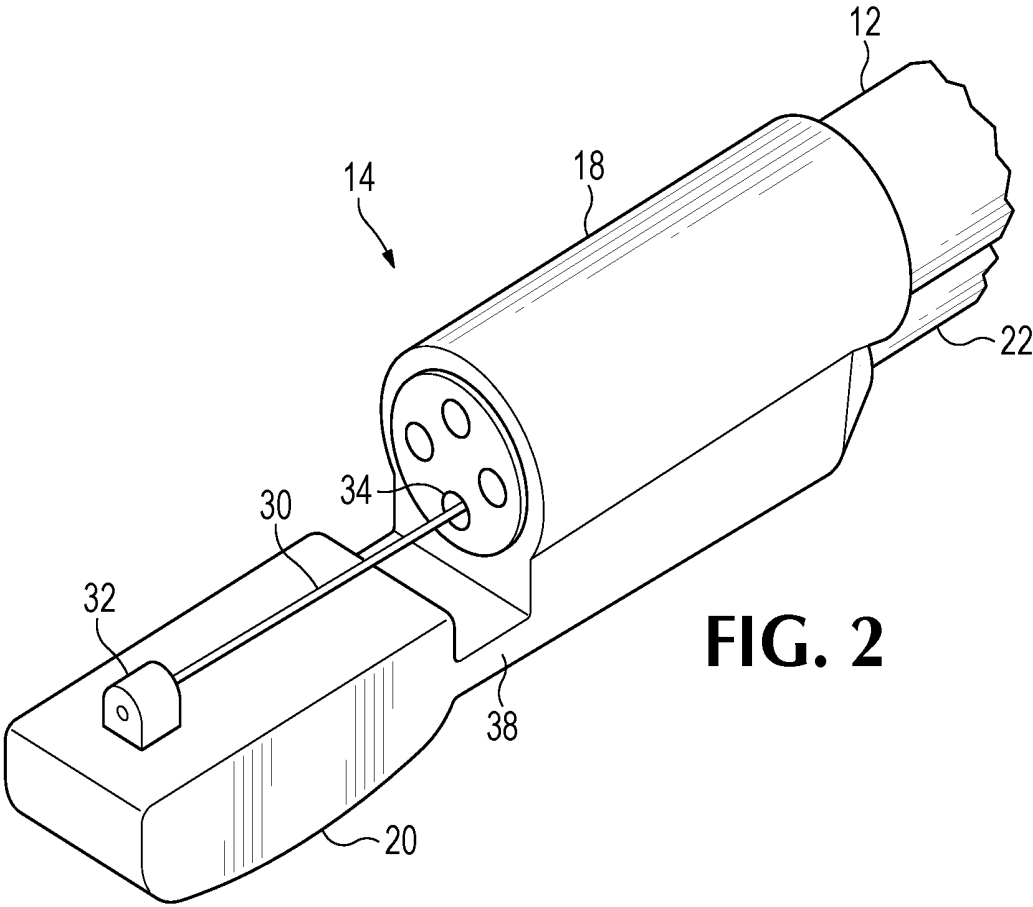


FIG. 1



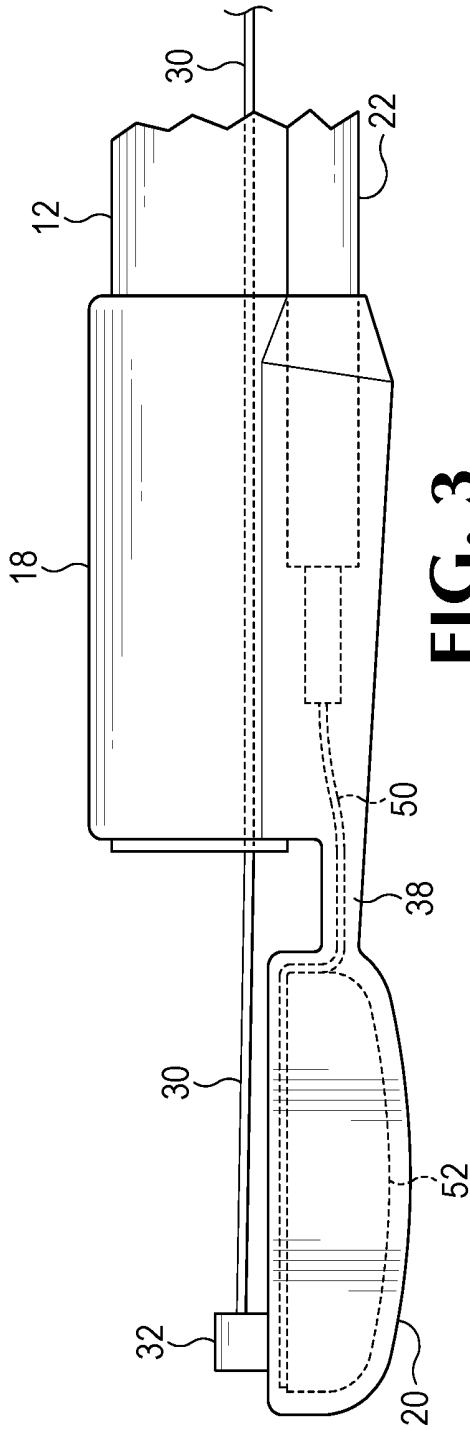


FIG. 3

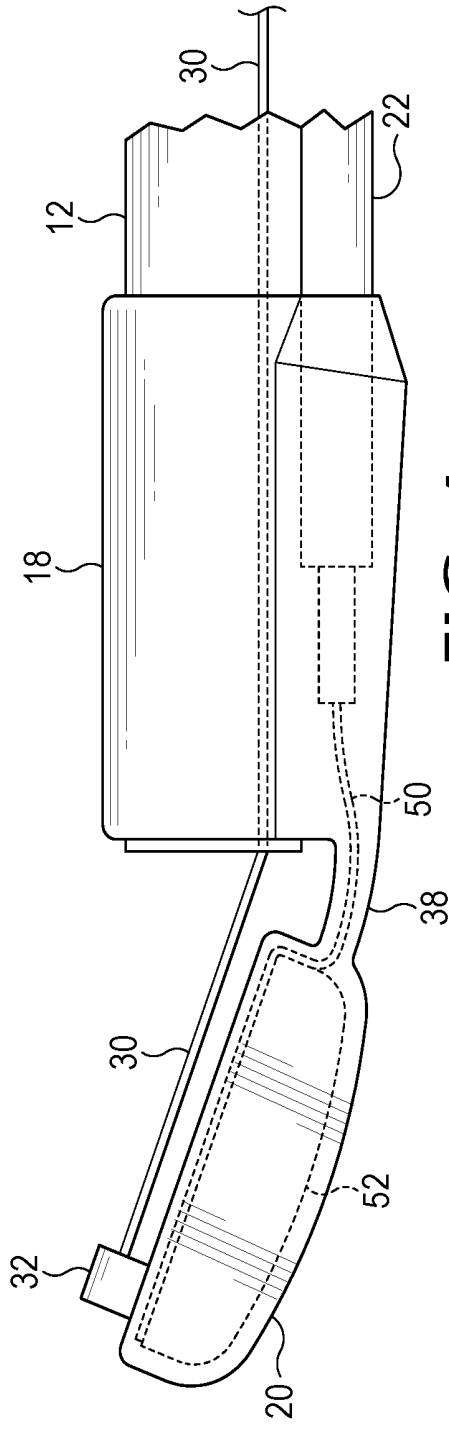
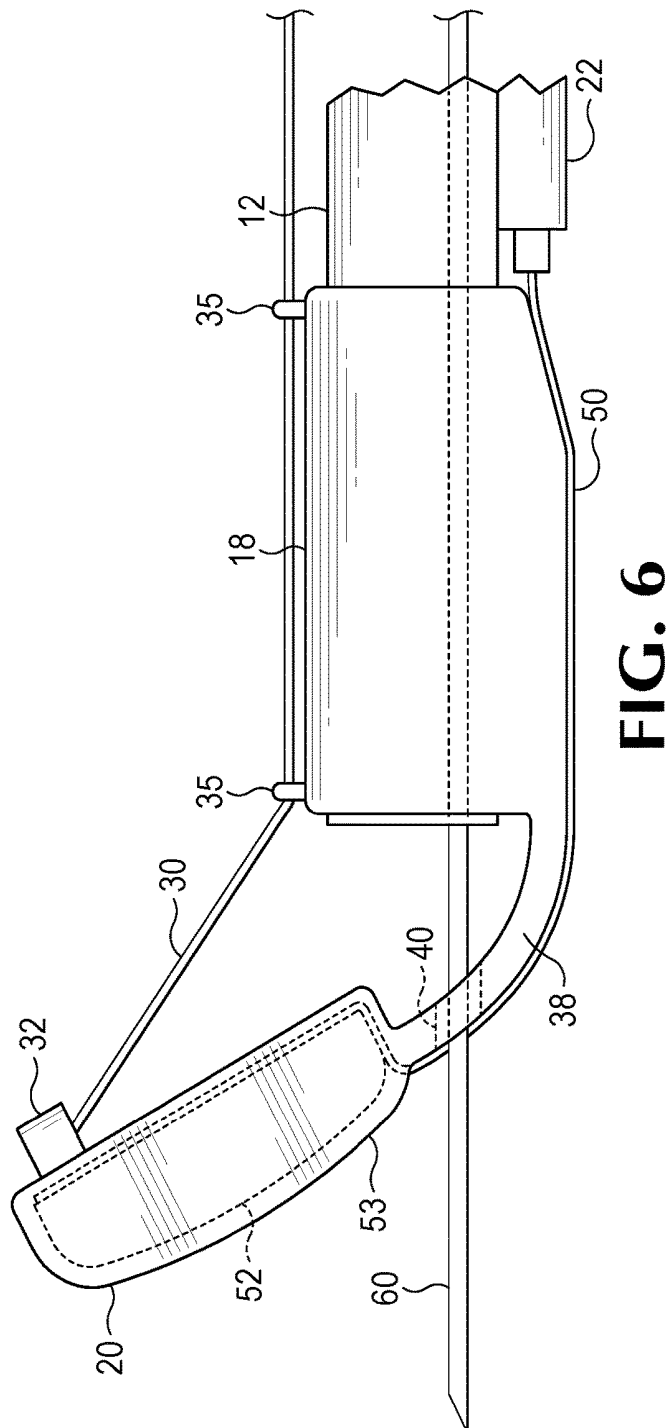
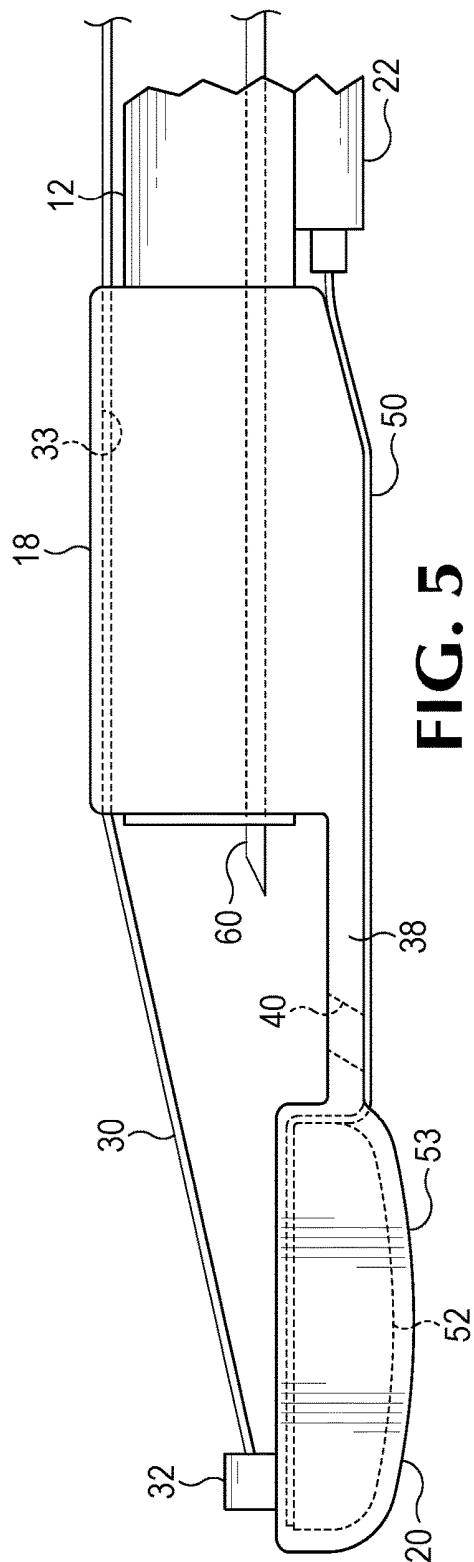
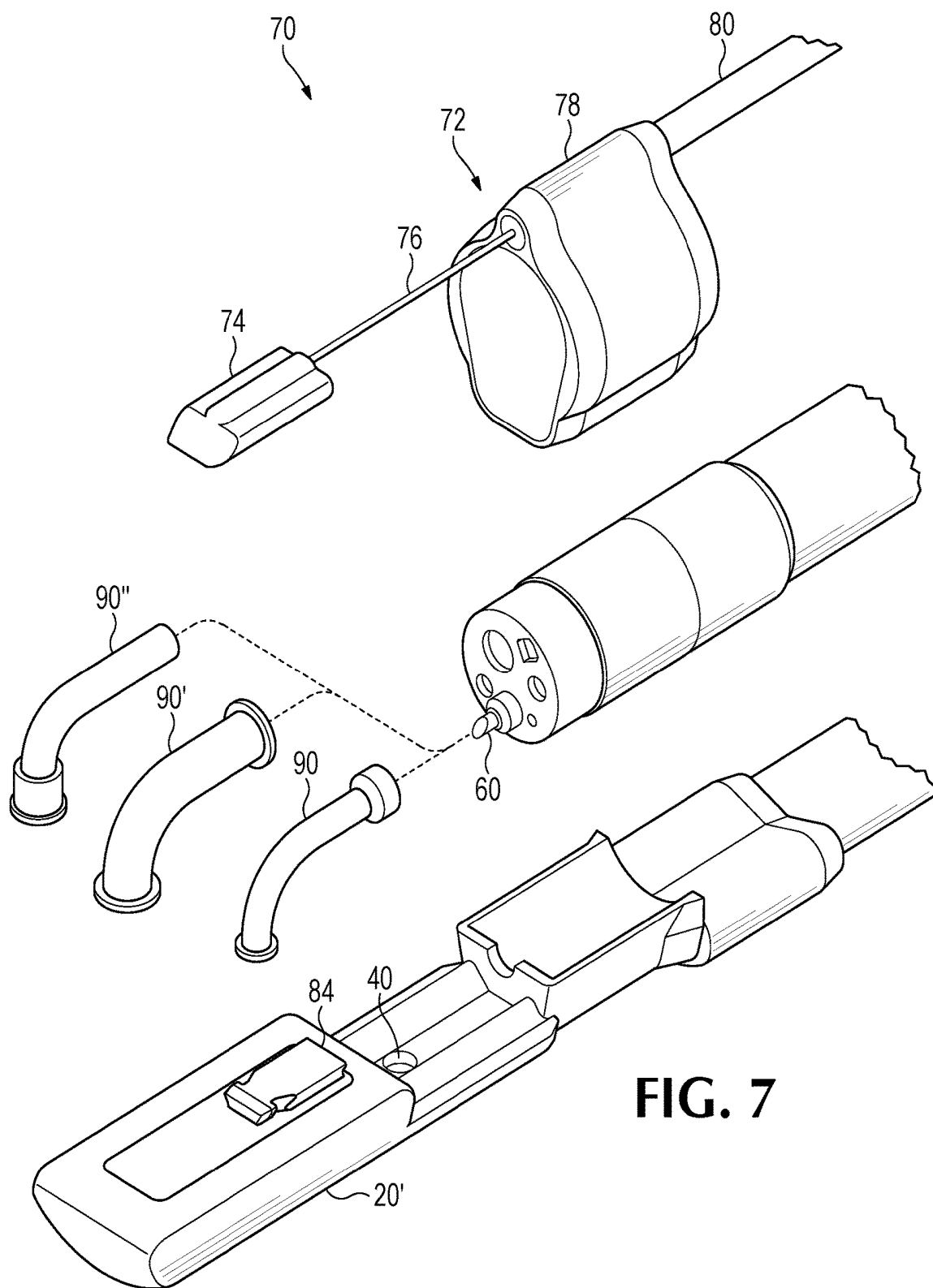
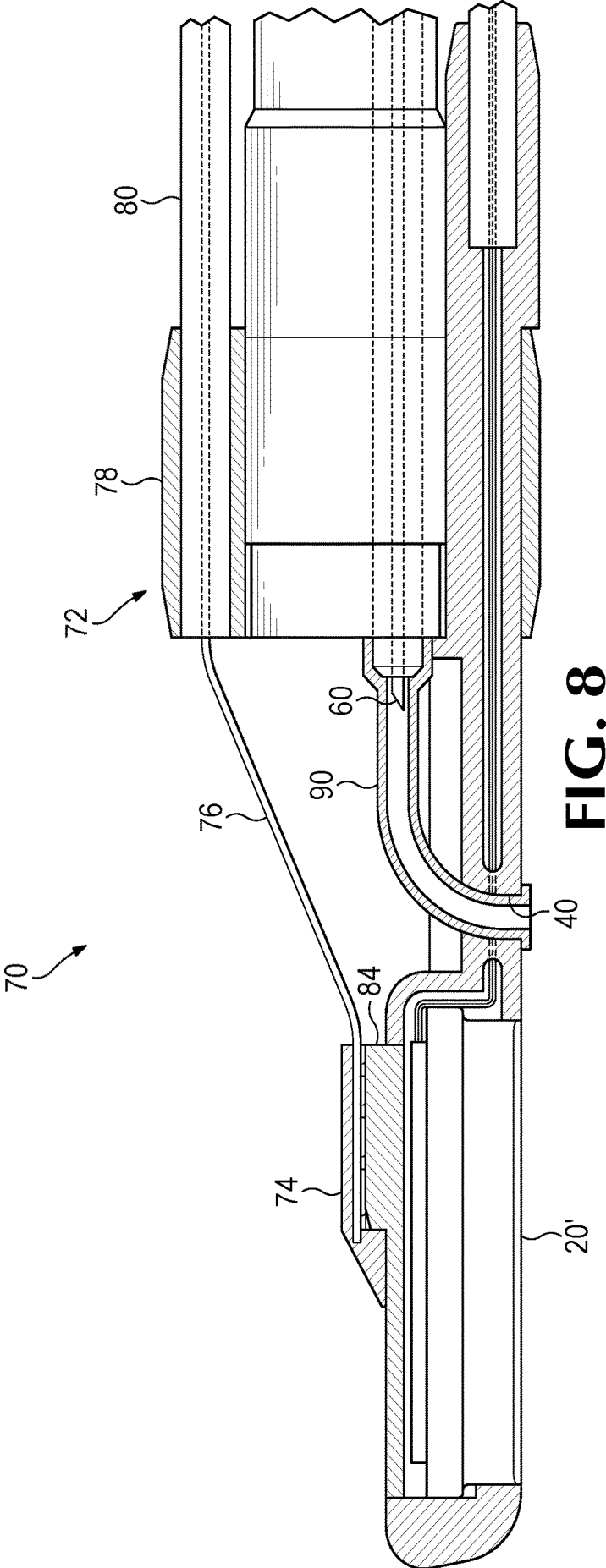


FIG. 4







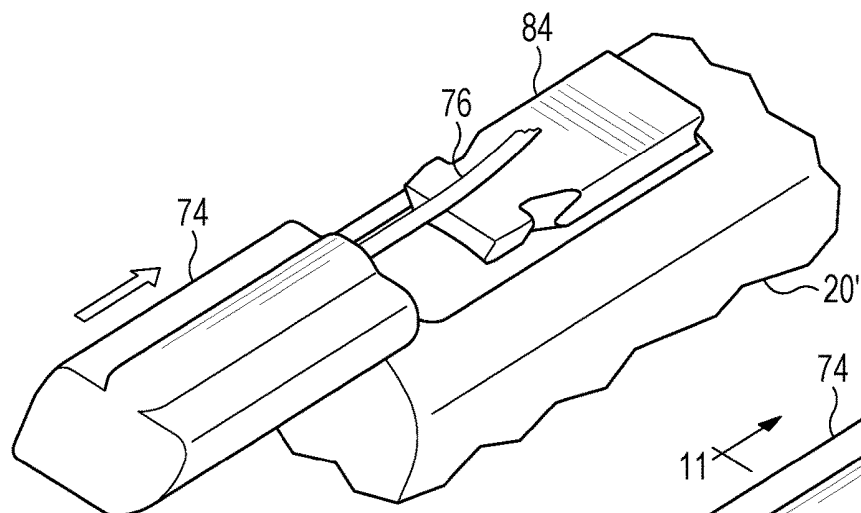


FIG. 9

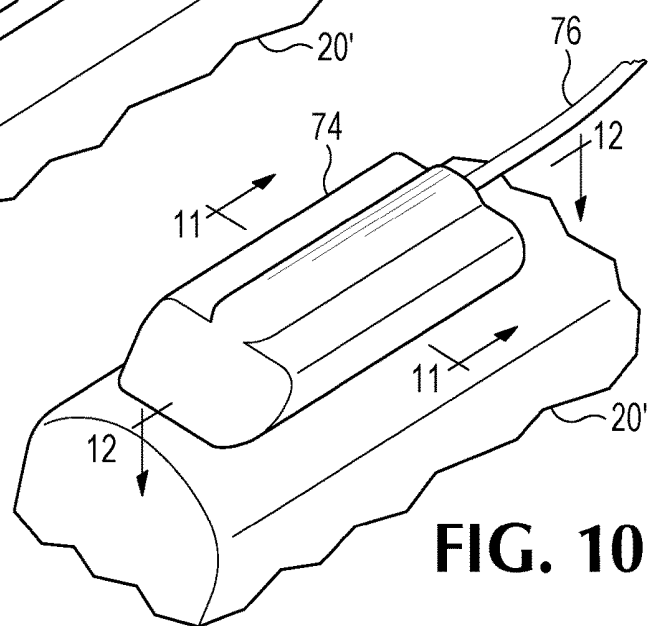


FIG. 10

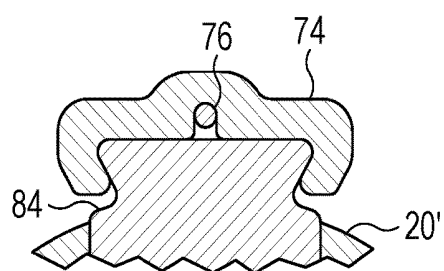


FIG. 11

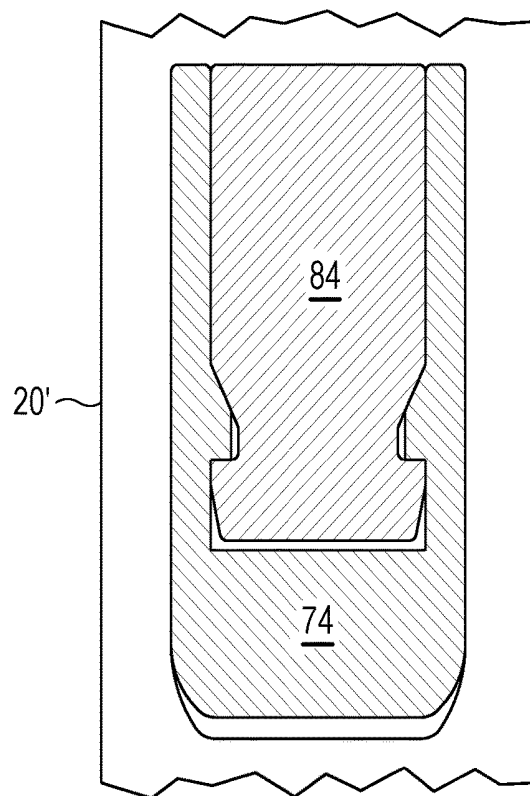
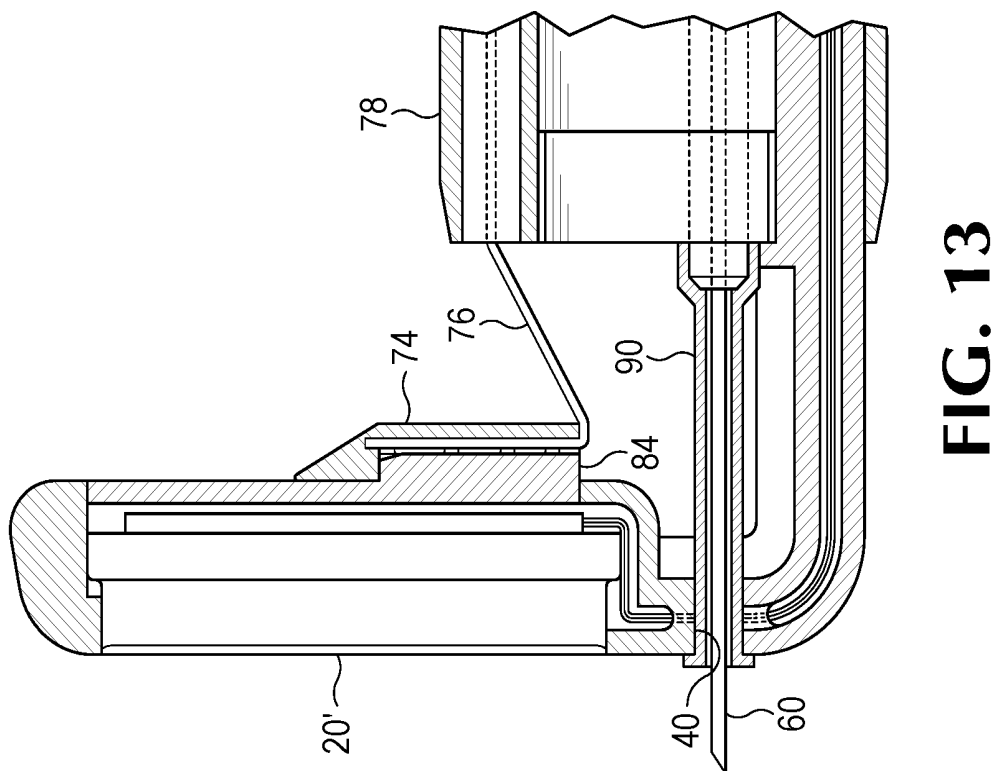
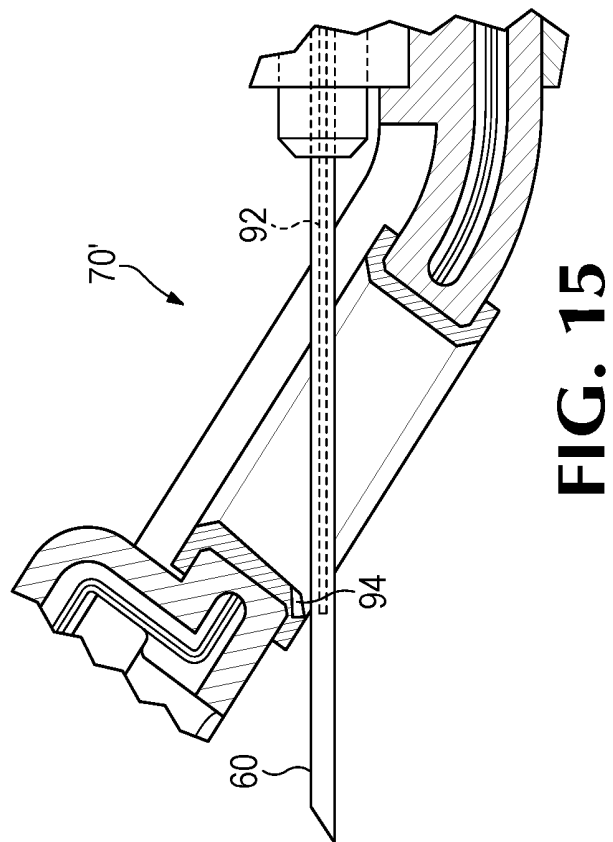
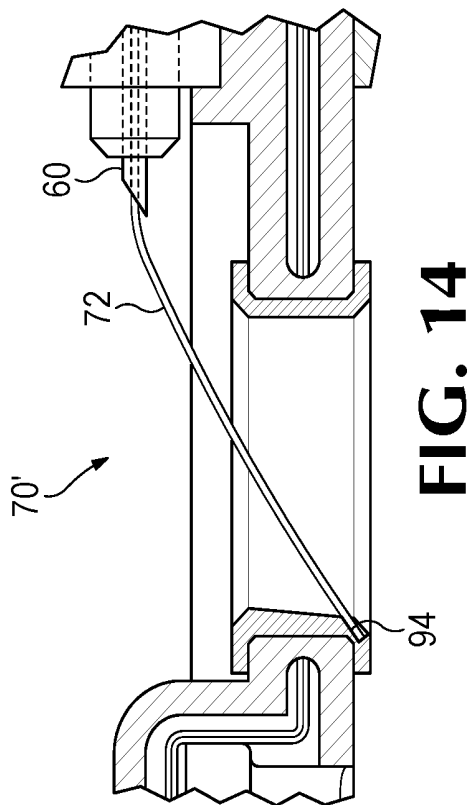
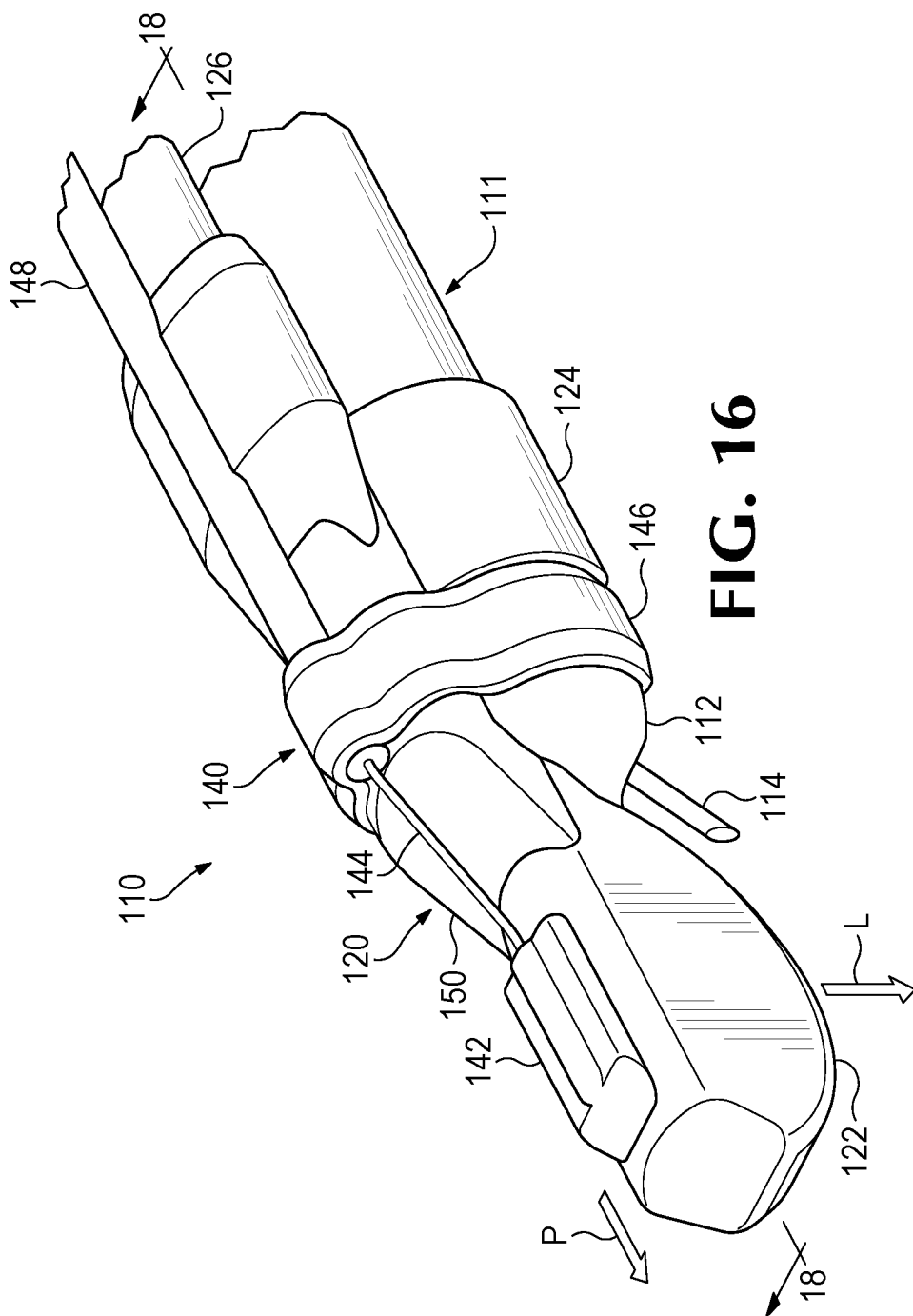
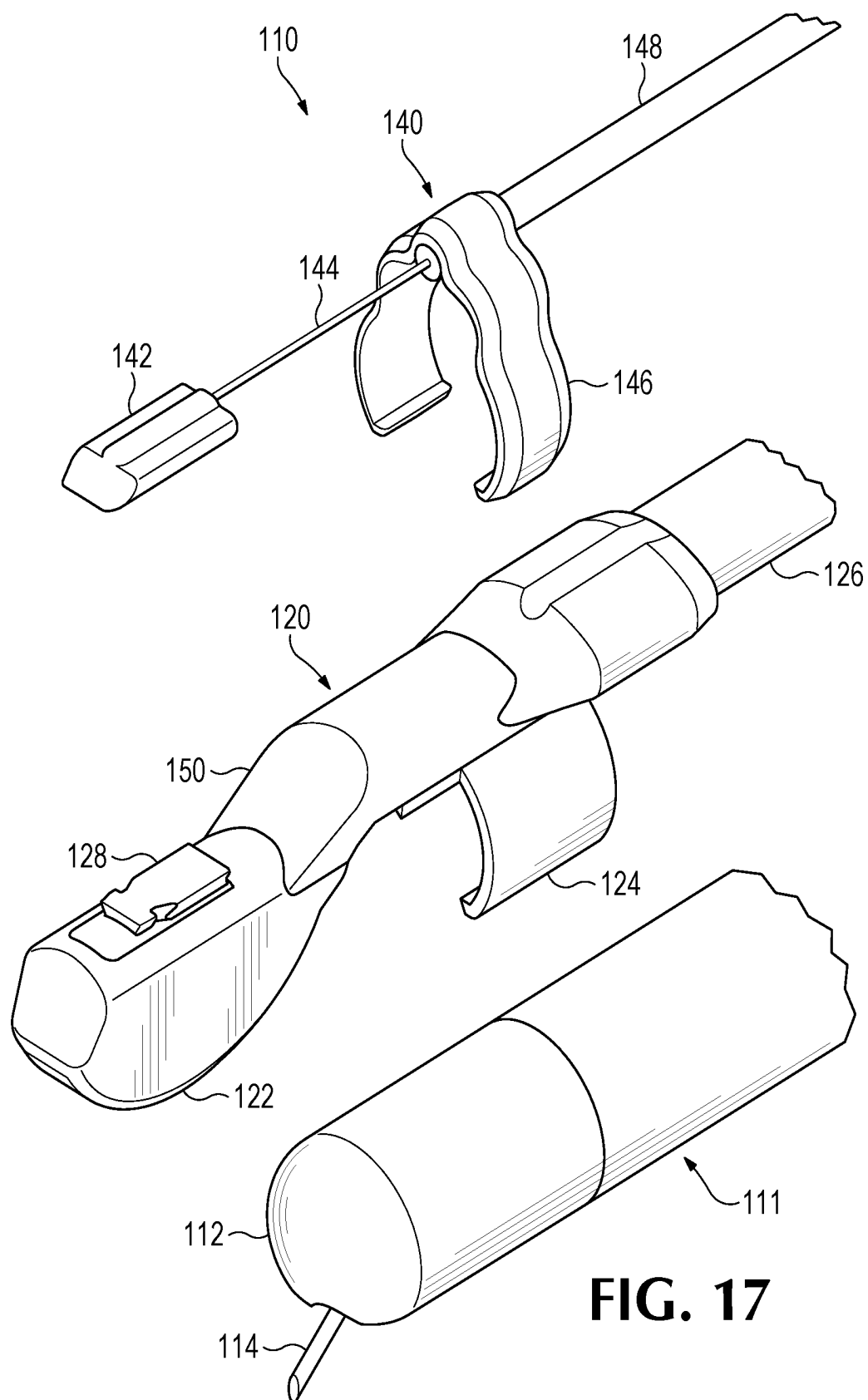
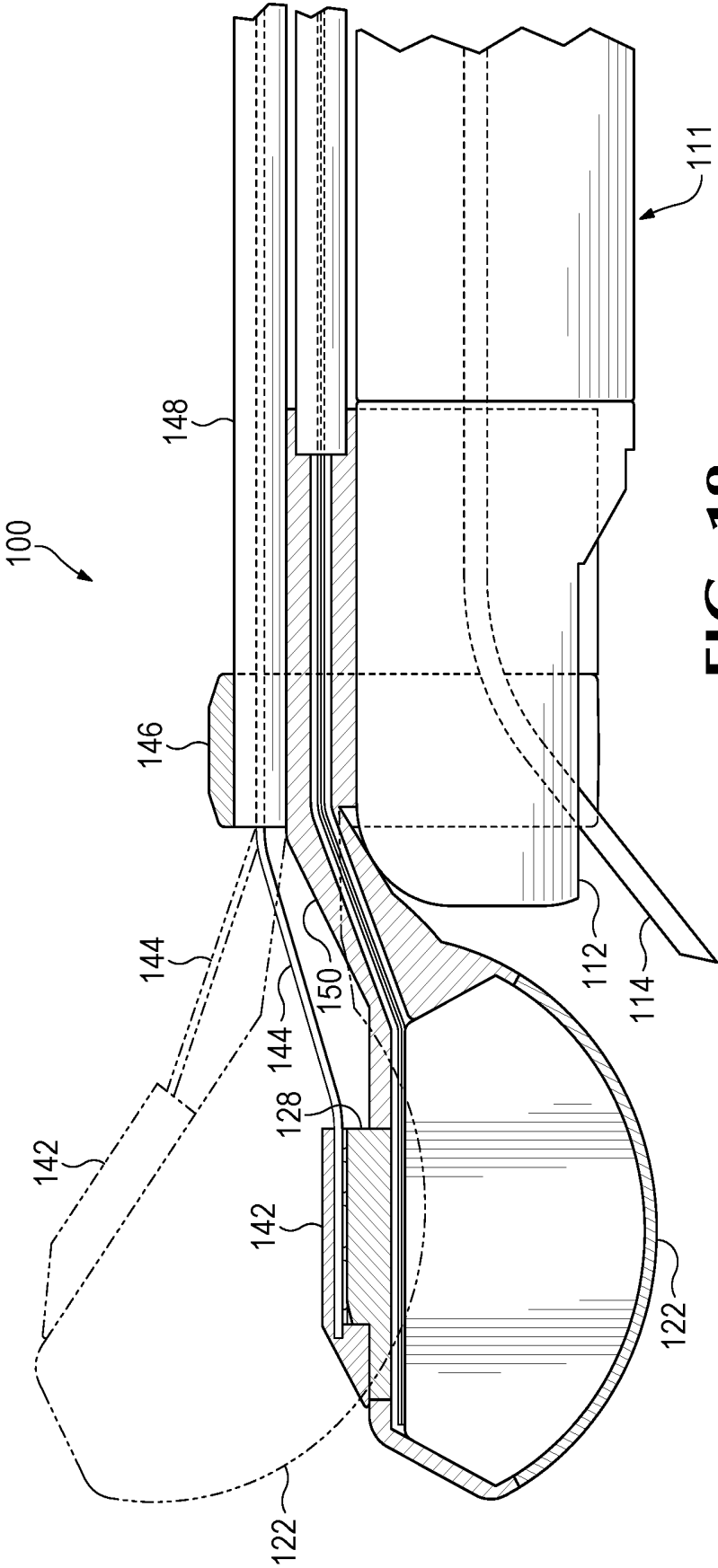


FIG. 12









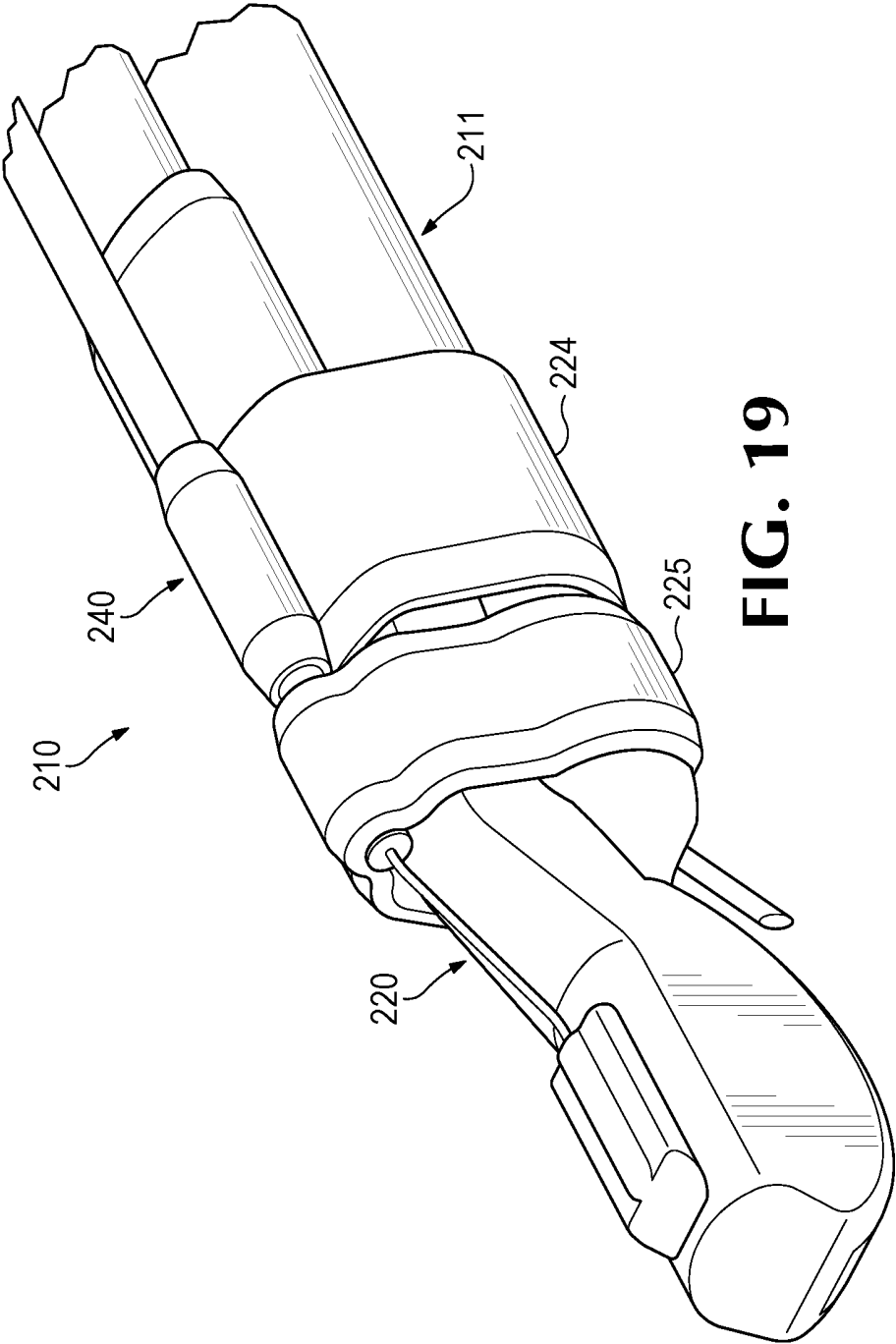
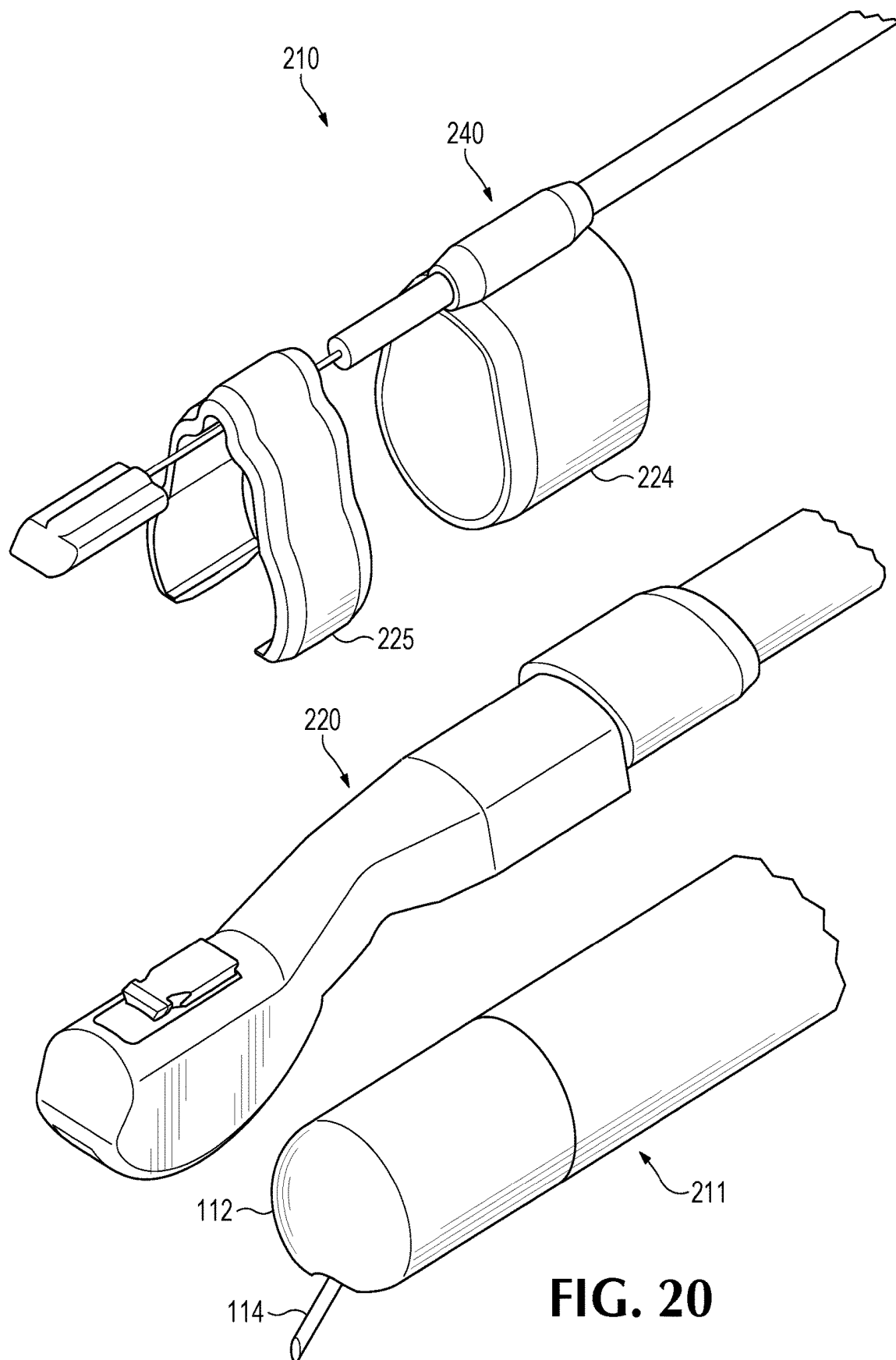


FIG. 19



STEERABLE ULTRASOUND ATTACHMENT FOR ENDOSCOPE

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a continuation-in-part of PCT international application PCT/US19/27331, filed Apr. 12, 2019 which itself is a continuation of application U.S. Ser. No. 15/951,347 filed Apr. 12, 2018, which are both incorporated by reference as if fully set forth herein.

BACKGROUND

1. Field of the Invention

[0002] The Invention is in the field of ultrasound imaging add-on equipment for endoscopes.

2. Background Art

[0003] Endoscopic ultrasound has undergone a rapid pace of development, now being used for the diagnosis and treatment of a wide variety of medical problems. As an endoscope can reach a location in the intestinal tract, closer than any skin surface, there is an opportunity to image from a closer location, and to obtain a tissue sample, using a biopsy needle and implement a variety of treatments. But due to an expense of greater than \$300,000 for a complete system, endoscopic ultrasound systems are generally restricted to major hospitals. Endoscopes, however, are used in physicians' offices, most outpatient surgery centers and virtually all hospitals.

[0004] One type of endoscope is an upper endoscope, used to image and take tissue specimens from the upper GI tract. In this type of endoscope, if a needle is used to collect a specimen, it is typically advanced straight out of an endoscope lumen in a distal direction. Other types of endoscopes are bronchoscopes for viewing air passageways in the lungs and colonoscopes for viewing the colon.

[0005] Yet another type of endoscope is a duodenoscope, designed to be introduced into the duodenum (the upper part of the small intestines), and typically used to perform endoscope retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP), in which the ducts of the pancreas and liver are imaged. Duodenoscopes are also used to gather tissue biopsies from sites in the duodenum, including the bile ducts. Duodenoscopes typically have a tip that houses a light, a video camera, and an instrument guide that can be tilted by an operator to control the angle at which the instrument (needle or other type of instrument) advances. Although the video camera and light can produce imagery that may help the endoscopist visualize potential targets directly, ultrasound imagery, when available, provides a different, dramatically expanded view of the regional anatomy. An ultrasound add-on for endoscopes has been described, but its capabilities are limited in that the viewing angle of the imaging head cannot be adjusted, and it does not provide for tissue sampling.

[0006] A problem faced by practitioners in the field of endoscopy is the thorough disinfection of the endoscope, between uses. As many endoscopes, in particular duodenoscopes, have some mechanical complexity, introducing a sterilizing material into the small spaces defined by these mechanisms, creates a huge challenge. Recently, an endoscope mechanism, having an instrument angle adjustment

mechanism that is removable and disposable has been introduced, addressing many of these issues.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0007] Exemplary embodiments are illustrated in referenced drawings. It is intended that the embodiments and figures disclosed herein are to be considered illustrative rather than restrictive.

[0008] FIG. 1 is an isometric view of an imaging assembly having an endoscope and an ultrasound imaging assembly added on, according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

[0009] FIG. 2 is an isometric view of the distal end of the assembly of FIG. 1.

[0010] FIG. 3 is a side view of the distal end of the assembly of FIG. 1, in a first position.

[0011] FIG. 4 is a side view of the distal end of the assembly of FIG. 1, in a second position.

[0012] FIG. 5 is a side view of the distal end of an alternative embodiment of an imaging assembly.

[0013] FIG. 6 is a side view of another alternative embodiment of an imaging assembly.

[0014] FIG. 7 is an alternative embodiment of an imaging assembly, having an ultrasound imaging sub-assembly that includes an ultrasound head movement assembly that is detachable, and showing three alternative needle guides.

[0015] FIG. 8 is a sectional view of a of the assembly of FIG. 7, showing a needle guide in a deployed state.

[0016] FIG. 9 is a detail view of a portion of the assembly of FIG. 7, showing two of the parts disassembled from each other.

[0017] FIG. 10 is the detail view of FIG. 9 but showing the two parts joined.

[0018] FIG. 11 is a sectional view taken along line 11-11, of FIG. 10.

[0019] FIG. 12 is a sectional view taken along line 12-12 of FIG. 10.

[0020] FIG. 13 is a sectional view of the tip of the assembly of FIG. 7, showing the needle guide used to guide a needle.

[0021] FIG. 14 is a sectional partial view of the assembly of FIG. 7 having a different style of needle guide.

[0022] FIG. 15 is a view of the assembly of FIG. 14, showing the needle guide in use.

[0023] FIG. 16 is an isometric view of a duodenoscope assembly, having an ultrasound imaging sub-assembly.

[0024] FIG. 17 is an isometric view of the assembly of FIG. 16, in a disassembled state.

[0025] FIG. 18 is a sectional view of the assembly of FIG. 16, showing a different position for a portion of the assembly, in dashed line.

[0026] FIG. 19 is an isometric view of an alternative embodiment of a duodenoscope assembly.

[0027] FIG. 20 is an isometric of the assembly of FIG. 19, in a disassembled state.

SUMMARY

[0028] In a first separate aspect, the present invention may take the form of a method of adjusting the viewing angle of an imaging assembly having an endoscope and an added ultrasound imaging array, attached to the endoscope. The endoscope has a distal end and an elongate body defining multiple lumens. The ultrasound assembly includes a mul-

multiple signal pathway connector; a deformable neck, having a proximal end and a distal end; an ultrasound transducer head supported by the distal end of the neck, and including an ultrasound transducer; a tension member, connected to the ultrasound transducer head, and extending to a proximal end at the proximal end of the endoscope; and a set of signal pathways, extending from the ultrasound transducer to the multiconductor electrical connector. Further, the multiple signal pathway connector is connected to an ultrasound imaging station and the ultrasound transducer head has been introduced into a cavity of a patient, with the endoscope. The method includes manipulating the transducer head by pulling on the proximal end of the tension member to cause the ultrasound transducer head to move from a position that is aligned to the distal end of the endoscope to a position that is bent relative to the distal end of the endoscope. Then, permitting the proximal end of the tension member to retract toward the lumen, thereby permitting the ultrasound transducer head to move back toward the position aligned to the distal end of the endoscope, and thereby allowing the operator to find a good view of a target region.

[0029] In a second separate aspect, the present invention may take the form of a method of providing and processing an ultrasound capable endoscope assembly that uses an endoscope having a proximal and a distal end, and that has been used previously. The endoscope is cleansed to a level appropriate for re-use within a human body. The method also uses an unused ultrasound assembly, sealed in antiseptic packaging, and which includes a multiple signal pathway connector; an ultrasound transducer head including an ultrasound transducer; and a set of signal pathways, extending from the ultrasound transducer to the multiconductor electrical connector. In the method, the ultrasound assembly is attached to the endoscope, so that the set of signal pathways extends along the elongate body of the endoscope and the ultrasound transducer head is attached at the distal end. After use, the ultrasound assembly is detached from the endoscope and permanently disposed.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Definition

[0030] As used in this application, the term “endoscope” refers to an illuminated optical, typically a slender and tubular instrument used to look deep into the body and used in procedures referred to as “endoscopy”. This term encompasses, but is not limited to upper endoscopes, duodenoscopes, colonoscopes and bronchoscopes, as well as devices referenced simply as “endoscopes”.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0031] In a first preferred embodiment, an imaging assembly 10 includes an upper endoscope 12 and an ultrasound assembly 14 that has been attached to endoscope 12 by means of retaining element 18, integral to ultrasound assembly 14. In an alternative preferred embodiment, a retaining element is provided that is separate from ultrasound assembly 14 but works cooperatively to retain assembly 14 on endoscope 12. Assembly 14 also includes an ultrasound imaging (also referred to as “transducer”) head 20 that is electrically connected to a multiple signal pathway cable 22

by way of a flex circuit 50 (which is also a form of a signal pathway cable), that includes a set of parallel electrical leads, which may be traces. Cable 22, which has a multiplicity of signal pathways extending therethrough terminates in a connector 24, adapted to connect to an imaging station. Elements 16, which may be rubber bands, or some other form of elastic bands or clips, help to retain cable 22, to the side of endoscope 12. A tension member 30, such as a wire (which may also have some compressive strength) is attached to a fixation point 32 on ultrasound imaging head 20 and extends through a lumen 34 (FIG. 2) to emerge outside of a port 36 on the proximal end of endoscope 12, to be manipulated. In embodiments, tension member 30, does not extend through lumen 34, but extends along the side of endoscope 12, and in some embodiments is retained by elements 16, which are modified from the simple shapes shown in FIG. 1, to include eyelets, to create a guide path for tension member 30. In one embodiment, tension member 30 is connected to controls on the proximal end of endoscope 12, to facilitate manipulation. In embodiments, these controls may take the form of a spool, that can be easily let out, or drawn in. Endoscope 12 also is equipped with intrinsic controls for deflecting the tip of the insertion tube, to facilitate introduction to a site of interest.

[0032] In an alternative embodiment, tension member 30 is replaced by a tension member extending along the exterior of the endoscope, to a fixation point on the end of the endoscope. A physician may exert traction or pulsion on tension member 30 in any one of a variety of ways, to cause ultrasound imaging head 20 to bend forward or back toward retaining element 18, as permitted by a resiliently flexible neck 38 (FIG. 2). In one method a rotatable element is used to draw in tension member 30 or push it out.

[0033] In preferred embodiment endoscope 12 includes an element at its distal end to guide the alignment of the retaining element 18. For example, endoscope 12 may include a groove at its distal end, into which a key element on retaining element 18 engages. In another embodiment, an orientation guide includes a peg that fits into the lumen 34 and is used to guide the correct orientation of retaining element 18. In one embodiment, assembly 14 is made for intended disposal, after a single use, and is used in this manner. In another embodiment, assembly 14 is constructed so as to be prepared and/or cleaned appropriately for reuse, after use, and then reused. Although until recently generally disinfection procedures were deemed adequate, the detection of instances of the spread of infection through endoscope has given rise to the use of high-end disinfection techniques for endoscopes. These disinfection techniques make use of chemicals to kill any pathogens left on the scope after use. Other disinfection or sterilization techniques may be used, including processing using of UV light and/or a gas, such as ozone. In the context of this application, the term “cleaning” encompasses all disinfection and sterilization techniques. Generally, the materials used in endoscopes are such that autoclaving an endoscope, or an attachment thereto is not feasible.

[0034] Referring to FIGS. 3 and 4, a flex circuit 50, which passes through the flexible neck 38, electrically connects imaging head 20 to cable 22. Flex circuit 50 has an electrical lead for each transducer element in an ultrasound element array 52, resident in the ultrasound imaging head 20, to drive ultrasound element array 52 and relay signals from it. Array 52 is covered with a protective coating 53 (FIGS. 5 and 6).

In an alternative preferred embodiment, flex circuit 50 extends from imaging head 20 to (or through) connector 24, may define a plurality of coax cables and may directly contact the elements of the ultrasound array 52. In another alternative embodiment, cable 22 comprises a set of coax cable bound together with an adherent and protective substance, such as a polymer, and extends from connector 24 to imaging head 20. In yet another embodiment, a fiber optic cable is used in place of cable 22, with light to electric converters at its distal end. In any one of these arrangements elements 22 and 50 could be termed separately or in combination as a multiple signal pathway cable.

[0035] In a preferred embodiment, a biopsy needle 60 (FIGS. 5 and 6), which forms the sharpened, distal portion of a long, flexible, hollow-core wire, is provided. This wire is sheathed in a flexible conduit (not shown), thin enough to extend through the lumen 34 and protecting endoscope 12 from being damaged by needle 60. Once the conduit reaches the distal end of endoscope 12, it may be pushed out to extend from lumen 34, and provide further guidance for needle 60, which is pushed out of the conduit at a point distal to the end of endoscope 12. Alternatively, the conduit may be pushed roughly to the end of lumen 34, with the needle 60 pushed out of the conduit at that point.

[0036] Referring to FIG. 5, in an alternative preferred embodiment tension member 30 extends through a channel 33 in retaining element 18 to reach fixation point 32. This figure also shows a needle 60 that has been pushed through a lumen of the endoscope 12 and is emerging from the distal end of the lumen. An aperture 40 is defined in neck 38, corresponding to an aperture in flex circuit 50, aligned with aperture 40. FIG. 6 shows an embodiment that is similar to that of FIG. 5, but instead with tension member 30 extending through a pair of eyelets 35, supported on the retaining element 18. As well as showing a slightly different embodiment, FIG. 6 also shows imaging head 20 retracted and needle 60 extending through aperture 40, as it would be in order to take a biopsy. Notably, in this position the needle would be within the field of view of ultrasound array 52. In embodiments, tension member 30 can pull head 20 into an obtuse angle, relative to the distal end of the endoscope 12. Generally, aperture 40 is in the shape of a long oval, so that the needle 60 can pass through it over a long range of degree of bending of neck 38. In another preferred embodiment, the flexible conduit is extended distally from lumen 34 into a v-shaped indentation (not shown) on surface of flexible neck 38, aligning the conduit so that the needle 60 is aligned to pass through aperture 40.

[0037] To use imaging assembly 10, ultrasound assembly 14 is attached to endoscope 12 by means of retaining element 18. In an alternative embodiment, rubber bands or clips 16 (FIG. 1) retain cable 22 to the side of endoscope 12. Imaging head 20 is then delivered to an area of interest, by means of standard endoscope introduction techniques. Imaging head 20 may then be moved to gain imagery of the area of interest by dedicated controls which control the ultrasound imaging head 20 deflection. If there appears to be a finding to be sampled, needle 60 may be introduced through an endoscope lumen and through aperture 40 and used to take a biopsy, inject a drug, or otherwise effect a medical procedure. Finally, needle 60 is retracted through the lumen of endoscope 12 and the endoscope is retrieved from the patient's body. In other embodiments, needle 60 is not included and an assembly that is similar to imaging assem-

bly 10 but without needle 60 and related elements, is used for imaging alone, or for introduction of some other device.

[0038] FIGS. 7-13 show an alternative embodiment 70 of the assembly 10, with the further innovation of a disposable head-movement sub-assembly 72, which includes a head clip 74, a movement cable 76, a cable clip 78 and a conduit 80, holding the major portion of movement cable 76. A clip-hold 84 is defined on the back of imaging head 20'. Further, the cable clip 78 holds imaging head and other portions of the ultrasound assembly 14', including communicative cable 22', to the endoscope 12. FIGS. 9-12 show engagement of head clip 74 to clip-hold 84. FIG. 9 shows head clip 74 distal to and being pulled back onto clip-hold 84, with FIG. 10 showing head clip 74 engaged to clip-hold 84 and FIGS. 11 and 12 showing different sectional views of head clip 74 and clip-hold 84 engaged together.

[0039] Another difference between assembly 70 and assembly 10 is the optional presence of a needle guide 90. FIG. 7 shows two additional variant needle guides 90' and 90". In assembly 10 it is possible that a needle 60 pushed out of a lumen of endoscope 12 could miss the aperture 40 in neck 38 and be blocked by neck 38 from further advancement. This might happen if a user attempted to push needle 60 into use when the neck 38 was not sufficiently pulled back, to bring aperture 40 into the correct position to let needle 60 pass through. The result could be damage caused to imaging head 20', cause by needle 60. A needle guide 90 engages with aperture 40, so that needle 60 will be guided to aperture 40 with certainty, or will be blocked by guide 90, when head 20' is not positioned correctly to align aperture 40 with the path of needle 60. FIG. 13 shows a needle guide 90 in use as head 20' is pulled fully back, to a forward-looking position as needle 60 is advanced through aperture 40, with the assistance of guide 90. It is a further advantage of assembly 70 (and assembly 10) that the head 20' can be moved to a forward-looking position as shown in FIG. 13, which is helpful to surgeons for some types of procedures. Referring to FIGS. 14 and 15, in a variant 70' to assembly 70, a needle guide 92 is provided in the form of a wire that needle 60 advances over. When not in use, needle guide 92 is retained in a needle-guide notch 94 (FIG. 15).

[0040] Referring now to FIGS. 16-18, a duodenoscope assembly 110 includes a duodenoscope 111 having a single-use instrument guidance head 112 (shown most clearly in FIG. 18), having an instrument guide 114 extending outwardly at an angle between a first lateral direction L and the distal direction P. Guidance head 112 can change the direction of guide 114, in response to varying user input via a tension member and an instrument variable guide member (not shown). Referring to FIG. 16, a cable/head sub-assembly 120 includes an ultrasound imaging head 122, a scope clip 124, a multiple signal pathway cable 126, delivering signals to imaging head 122 and relaying signals from imaging head 122. The signal pathways of cable 126 may be electrical conductors, and more specifically may each be a coax cable or a trace on a flex circuit. Other forms of signal pathways are possible. Imaging head 122 is shown having a signal emission surface facing the first lateral direction L, and a clip-hold 128 (FIG. 17) is present on head 122 on a side displaced from said signal emission surface in a second lateral direction, opposed to said first lateral direction L. An imaging head movement sub-assembly 140 includes a head clip 142, shaped to engage to clip-hold 128, a movement cable 144 a cable clip 146 and a conduit 148, holding the

major portion of movement cable **144**. Referring to FIG. **18** when cable **144** is pulled it pulls back imaging head **122** as indicated by the dotted line. In some embodiments sub-assembly **140** further includes an actuator (not shown) at the proximal end, to permit an operator to draw in cable **144**, thereby pulling on imaging head **122** or let out cable **144**, either pushing on imaging head **122** or permitting the resiliency of the material of cable **126** to place head **122** into a position more aligned with the longitudinal dimension of the duodenoscope **111**, at its distal end. The actuator of cable **144** may take the form of a wheel, a lever or any other arrangement convenient to the user.

[0041] Because disinfection techniques typically require the application of chemicals in liquid form, thin crevices, into which liquid might not easily flow are generally undesirable. Accordingly, clip-hold **128** is designed so as not to define thin crevices with the imaging head **122**. In alternative preferred embodiments, clip-hold **128** may have a shape that is similar to a knob, to further avoid defining any narrow crevices.

[0042] As noted in the background, the disinfection of devices such as assembly **110** is a matter of great concern, as there have been cases of the spread of strains of bacteria that are resistant to multiple antibiotics, by way of duodenoscope reuse. One area which may prove particularly difficult to sterilize is conduit **148**, as movement cable **144** will tend to introduce body fluids into conduit **148** as cable **144** is pulled back into conduit **148**, as imaging head **122** is moved back. To address this issue head movement sub-assembly is releasable and removable from the remainder of assembly **110** and is made to be inexpensive enough to use a single time and then be disposed. This eliminates the possibility of infection being spread from patient to patient by way of sub-assembly **140**. Cable/head sub-assembly **120** does not have a similar structure that would provide a hard-to-reach place that would make disinfection difficult and will tend to be more expensive as it must contain a multiplicity of fine wires or other forms of signal pathways. Accordingly, cable/head sub-assembly **120** is designed to be cleaned and reused.

[0043] Before performing an endoscopic (duodenoscopic) procedure the endoscopist would obtain an unused head movement sub-assembly **140** and attach it to the remainder of assembly **110**. After use, the user detaches and disposes sub-assembly **140**.

[0044] Referring to FIG. **16**, movement cable **144** may be pulled back to cause head **122** to face in a more distal facing direction. Pushing cable **144** forward causes head **122** to adopt a lateral viewing angle as shown, in one embodiment due to resilience of neck **150**, but in another due to stiffness and compressive strength in cable **144**.

[0045] Referring to FIGS. **19** and **20**, in an alternative preferred embodiment of a duodenoscope assembly **210**, a holder **224** encompasses together both the duodenoscope **211**, the cable/head sub-assembly **220** and the imaging head movement sub-assembly **240**. A clip **225** also helps to hold the elements together.

[0046] In an additional set of embodiments and methods of use, any one of assembly **14** (combined with tension member **30**), and assembly **70** and the combination of assemblies **120** and **140**, can be made so that the resultant assembly **14/30**, **70** or **120/140** (henceforth collectively designated as assembly **14'**) is produced and sold with a recommended method of use to dispose the entire assembly after a single use. This may greatly simplify health facility

operations. In a preferred embodiment, the ultrasound array **52** (or the array in imaging head **20'** or **122**) is a capacitive micromachined ultrasonic transducer (CMUT), which is generally less expensive than a piezoelectric transducer. Because cleansing an ultrasound assembly **14'** can be so cumbersome and expensive, and because of the great value of the surgeries being performed, even an assembly **14'** selling for upwards of \$2,000 in 2019, could be more economical to dispose of, than to be cleansed and reused. In one embodiment of an assembly **14'**, the number of array elements is reduced, from for example 256, to for example 128, or even to 64, to reduce the cost of the array, and the signal pathways leading to and from the array.

[0047] While a number of exemplary aspects and embodiments have been discussed above, those possessed of skill in the art will recognize certain modifications, permutations, additions and sub-combinations thereof. It is therefore intended that the following appended claims and claims hereafter introduced are interpreted to include all such modifications, permutations, additions and sub-combinations as are within their true spirit and scope.

1. A method of adjusting the viewing angle of an imaging assembly having an endoscope and an added ultrasound imaging array, attached to said endoscope, said method comprising:

- a. providing an imaging assembly, including:
 - i. an endoscope, having a distal end and an elongate body defining multiple lumens; and
 - ii. an ultrasound assembly that includes a multiple signal pathway connector, a deformable neck, having a proximal end and a distal end; an ultrasound transducer head supported by said distal end of said neck, and including an ultrasound transducer; a tension member, connected to said ultrasound transducer head, and extending to a proximal end at said proximal end of said endoscope; and a set of signal pathways, extending from said ultrasound transducer to said multiconductor electrical connector;
- b. wherein said multiple signal pathway connector has been connected to an ultrasound imaging station and said ultrasound transducer head has been introduced into a cavity of a patient, with said endoscope; and
- c. manipulating said transducer head by applying a force on said proximal end of said tension member to cause said ultrasound transducer head to move and be repositioned, thereby changing the direction of scan of said patient's internal organs.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said force is a pulling force, pulling a portion of said head in a proximal direction.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein said tension member also has some compressive strength and wherein said force is a pushing force, pushing a portion of said head in a distal direction.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein said neck defines an aperture that said needle passes through when deployed.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein said tension member is connected to controls at said proximal end of said endoscope, said controls facilitating manipulation of said tension member.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein said method further includes taking a biopsy and includes advancing a needle out of one of said lumens of said endoscope into patient tissue and retracting said needle, bearing some patient tissue.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein said neck defines an aperture and wherein said needle passes through said aperture in said neck as said needle is advanced to said patient tissue.

8. A method of providing and processing an ultrasound capable endoscope assembly, comprising:

- a. providing an endoscope having a proximal and a distal end, and that has been used previously;
- b. cleansing said endoscope, to a level appropriate for re-use within a human body;
- c. providing a sealed package, containing an unused, clean ultrasound assembly, said ultrasound assembly including:
 - i. a multiple signal pathway connector;
 - ii. an ultrasound transducer head including an ultrasound transducer; and
 - iii. a set of signal pathways, extending from said ultrasound transducer head to said multiconductor electrical connector;
- d. removing said ultrasound assembly from said package and attaching said ultrasound assembly to said endoscope, so that said set of signal pathways extends along said elongate body of said endoscope from said proximal end of said endoscope and said ultrasound transducer head is attached at said distal end of said endoscope; and
- e. after use, detaching said ultrasound assembly from said endoscope and permanently disposing of said ultrasound assembly.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein said unused ultrasound assembly, further comprises a flexible neck, to which said ultrasound transducer head is physically attached, and a tension member extending from said ultrasound transducer head to a proximal end at said proximal end of said endoscope, and wherein applying force to said tension member causes said transducer head to change position, permitting an adjustment to the direction of scanning.

10. The method of claim 8, wherein said signal pathways are electrical conductors.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein said electrical conductors are coax cables.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein said electrical conductors are flex circuit traces.

13. The method of claim 8, wherein said ultrasound assembly further includes an attachment element, and said ultrasound assembly is attached to said endoscope, at least in part, by attaching said attachment element to said distal end of said endoscope.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein said attachment element is a clip sized and shaped to engage to said distal end of said endoscope.

15. The method of claim 8, wherein said endoscope further hosts a needle and a mechanism for pushing said needle out of said endoscope, for taking a biopsy.

16. The method of claim 15, further wherein said neck defines an aperture that can be aligned for passage of said needle through said neck.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein said aperture is an elongate oval, and wherein said needle can pass through said aperture when said neck is bent in any degree selected from a long range of degree of bending.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein when said neck is flexed by said tension member and said needle is passed through said aperture, said needle is visible in a field of view of said ultrasound transducer, thereby permitting a user to more accurately guide said needle.

19. The method of claim 8, wherein said ultrasound transducer is a capacitive micromachined ultrasonic transducer.

20. The method of claim 8, wherein said endoscope is cleansed and used again.

21. The method of claim 8, wherein said endoscope is a duodenoscope.

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专利名称(译)	内窥镜转向超声附件		
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外部链接	Espacenet USPTO		

摘要(译)

提供和处理具有超声波能力的内窥镜组件的方法，该方法使用具有近端和远端的内窥镜，并且之前已经使用过。内窥镜被清洗至适合在人体内部重复使用的水平。该方法还使用密封在防腐剂包装中的未使用超声组件，该超声组件包括多信号路径连接器；超声换能器头，包括超声换能器；一组信号路径，从超声换能器延伸到多导体电连接器。在该方法中，超声组件位于内窥镜上，从而信号路径组沿着内窥镜的细长主体延伸，并且超声换能器头连接在远端。使用后，将超声组件与内窥镜分离并永久放置。

