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**(12) United States Patent
Forsell****(10) Patent No.: US 10,195,325 B2
(45) Date of Patent: Feb. 5, 2019****(54) METHOD FOR CONTROLLING FLOW OF
SPERMS IN A UTERINE TUBE**6/202 (2013.01); A61F 6/204 (2013.01); A61F
6/206 (2013.01); A61F 6/22 (2013.01); A61N
1/403 (2013.01)**(76) Inventor: Peter Forsell, Zug (CH)****(58) Field of Classification Search****(*) Notice:** Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this
patent is extended or adjusted under 35
U.S.C. 154(b) by 457 days.USPC 128/830-833, 898; 606/135; 607/39
See application file for complete search history.**(56) References Cited****(21) Appl. No.: 12/285,808****U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS****(22) Filed: Oct. 14, 2008**3,926,195 A * 12/1975 Bleier et al. 128/831
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(Continued)**(65) Prior Publication Data**

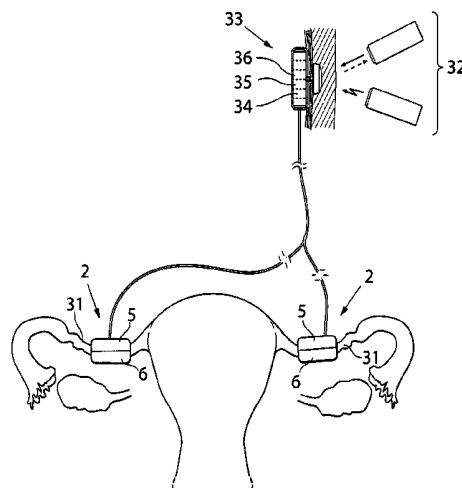
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A61M 1/10 (2006.01)
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A61N 1/05 (2006.01)
A61N 1/36 (2006.01)
A61B 17/12 (2006.01)

(Continued)

Primary Examiner — Andrew M Iwamaye**(52) U.S. Cl.**CPC **A61M 1/1068** (2013.01); **A61B 17/12009**
(2013.01); **A61B 17/1355** (2013.01); **A61F**
6/20 (2013.01); **A61M 1/122** (2014.02); **A61N**
1/0521 (2013.01); **A61N 1/36007** (2013.01);
A61B 2017/00163 (2013.01); **A61B**
2017/00212 (2013.01); **A61B 2017/00221**
(2013.01); **A61B 2017/00411** (2013.01); **A61B**
2017/00982 (2013.01); **A61B 2017/00991**
(2013.01); **A61F 2/0009** (2013.01); **A61F**
2/0031 (2013.01); **A61F 6/00** (2013.01); **A61F**
6/06 (2013.01); **A61F 6/14** (2013.01); **A61F****ABSTRACT**There is provided a method for controlling a flow of sperms
in a uterine tube formed by a uterine tube wall of a patient.
The method comprises gently constricting (i.e., without
substantially hampering the blood circulation in the uterine
tube wall) at least one portion of the uterine tube wall to
influence the flow of sperms in the uterine tube, and stimu-
lating the constricted wall portion to cause contraction of the
uterine tube wall portion to further influence the flow of
sperms in the uterine tube. The method can be used for
restricting or stopping the flow of sperms in the uterine tube,
or for actively moving the fluid in the uterine tube, with a
low risk of injuring the uterine tube.**32 Claims, 39 Drawing Sheets**

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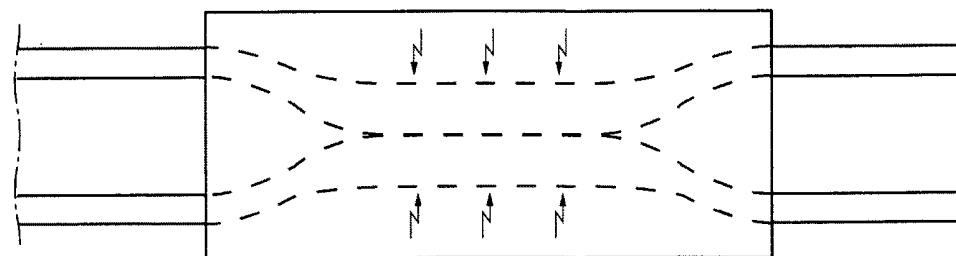
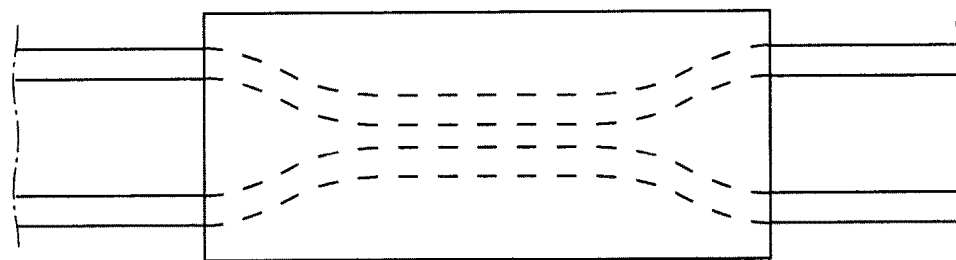
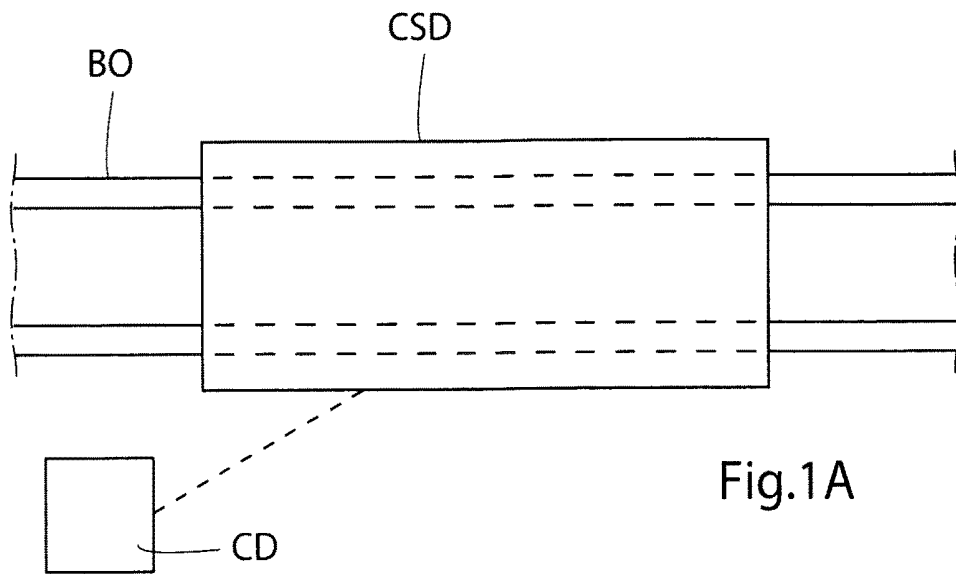
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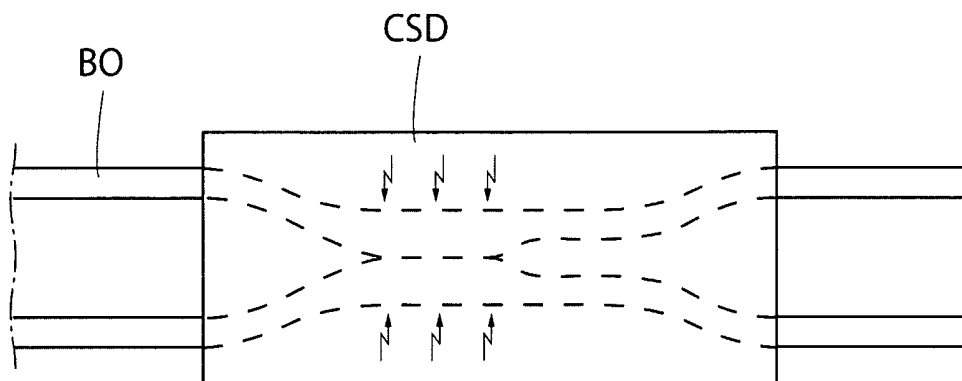


Fig.1D

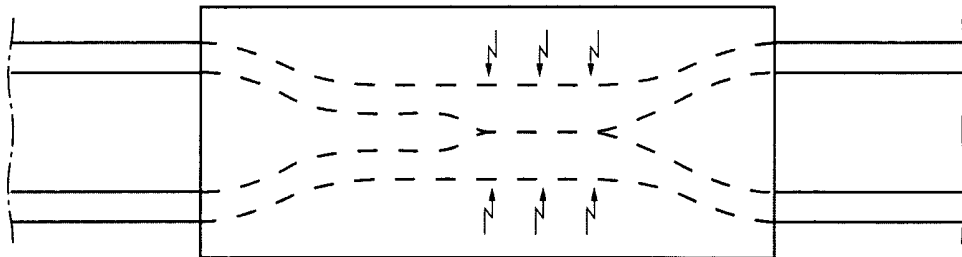
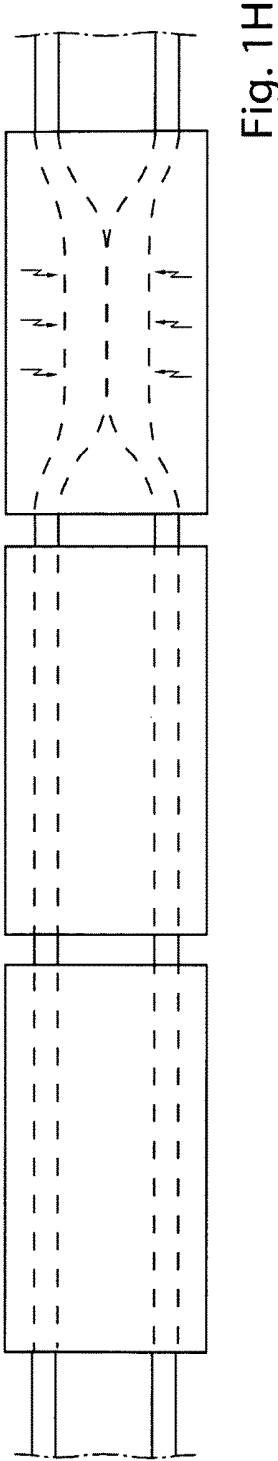
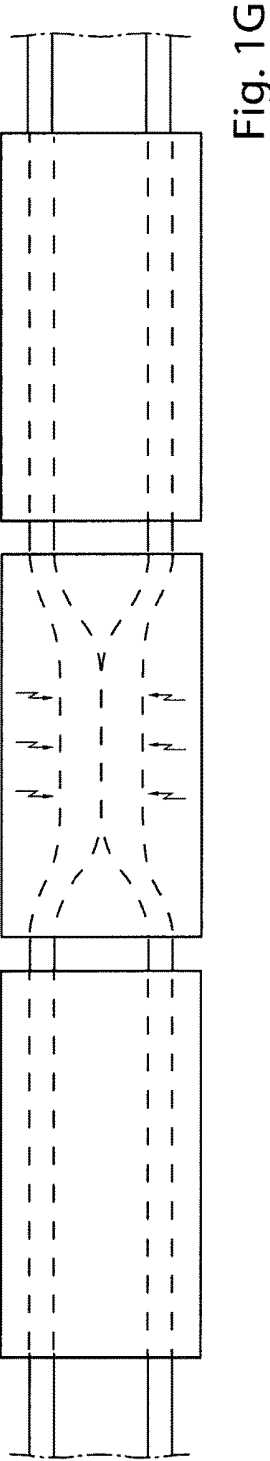
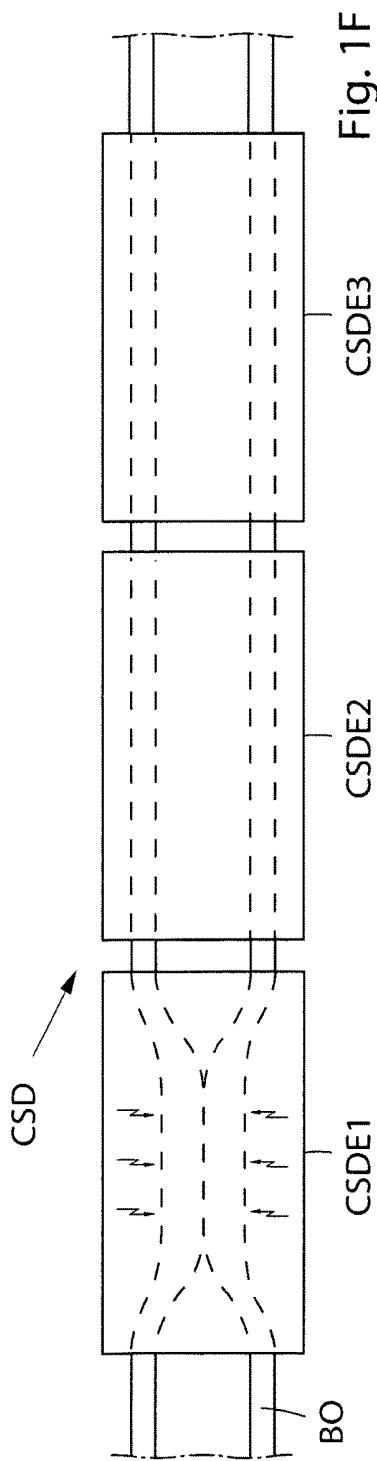
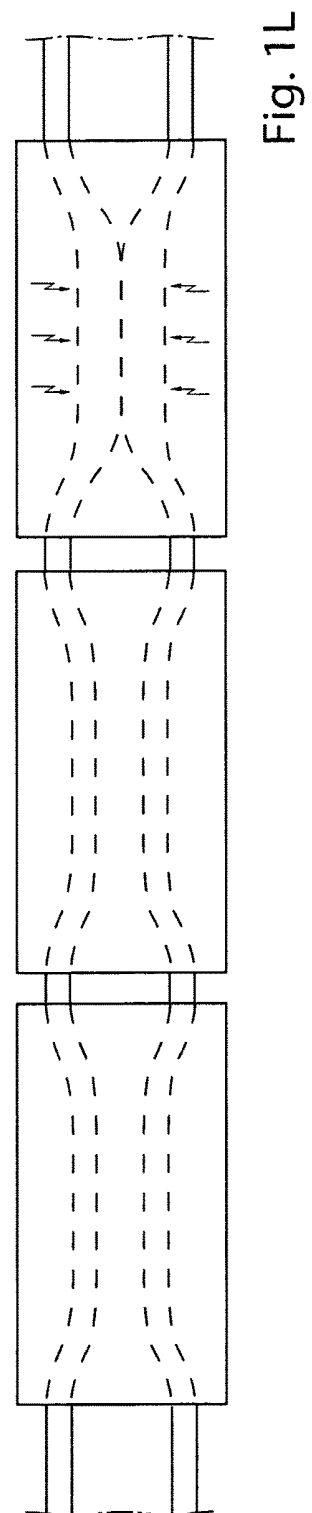
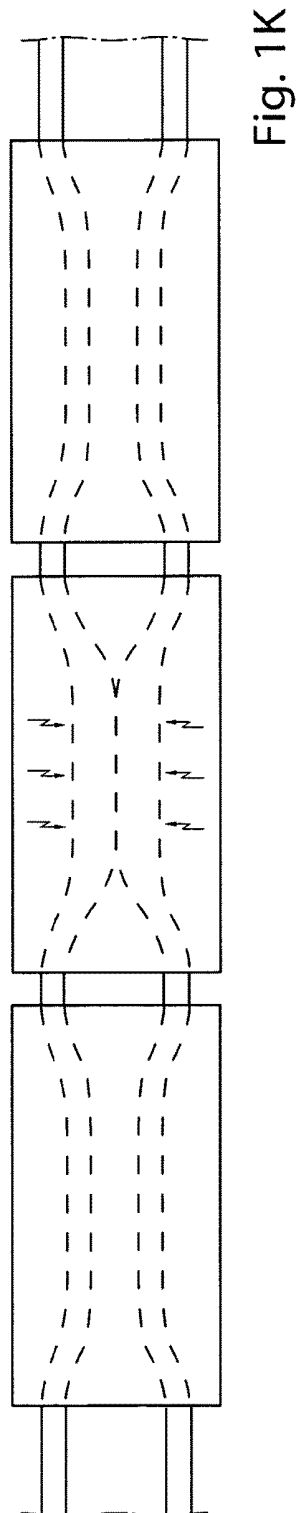
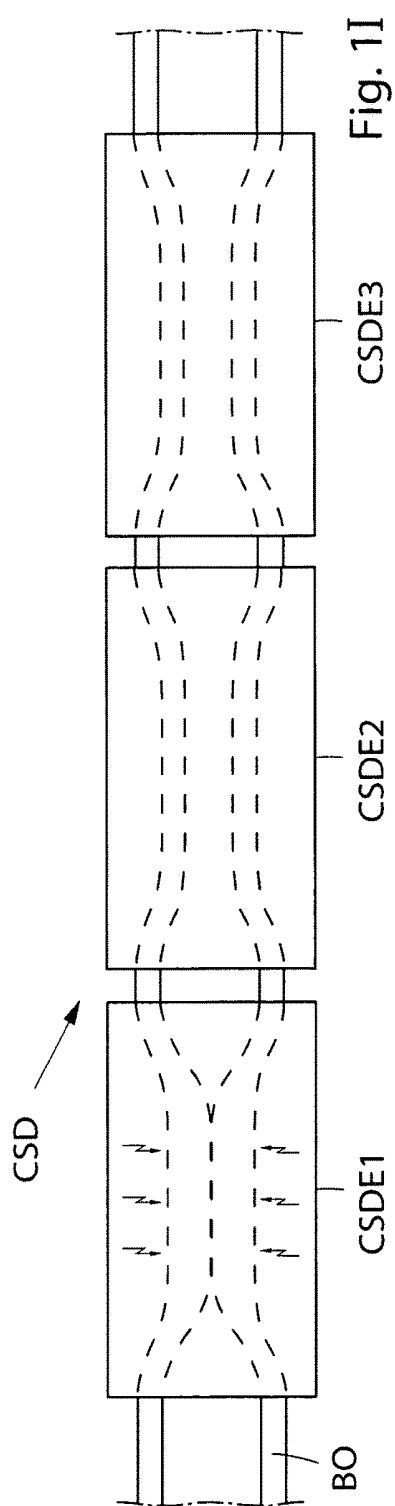


Fig.1E





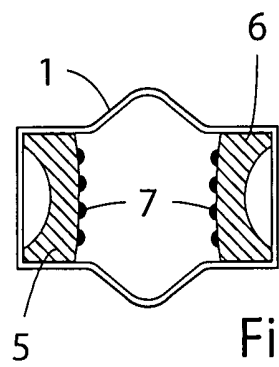


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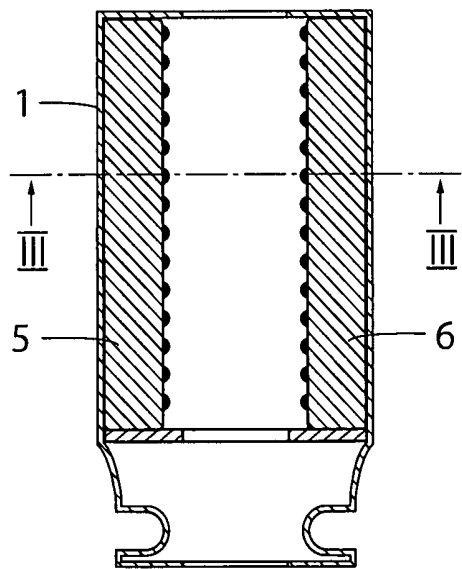


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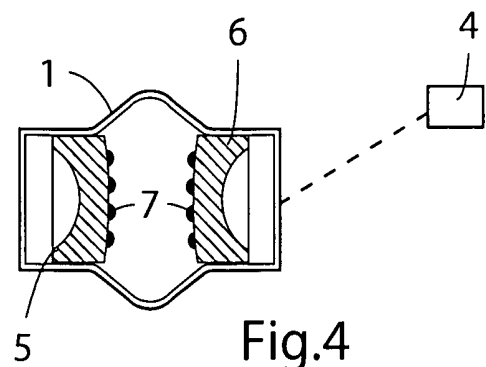


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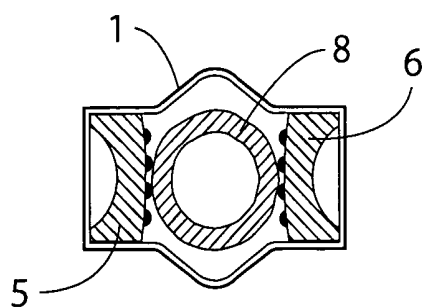


Fig. 5A

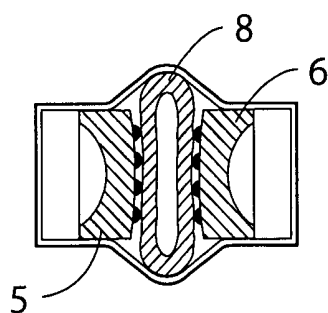


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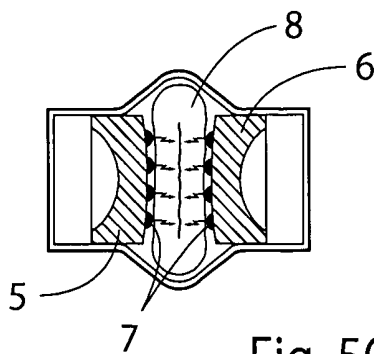


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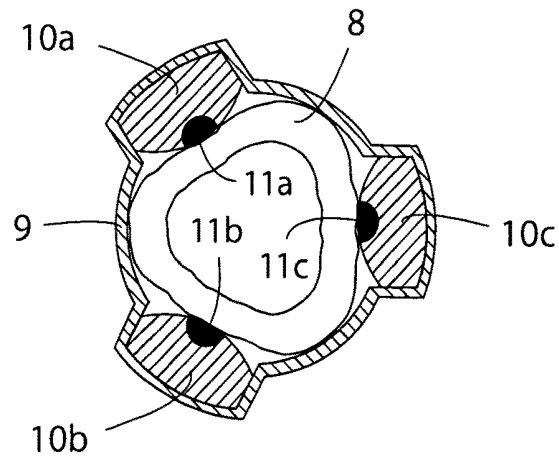


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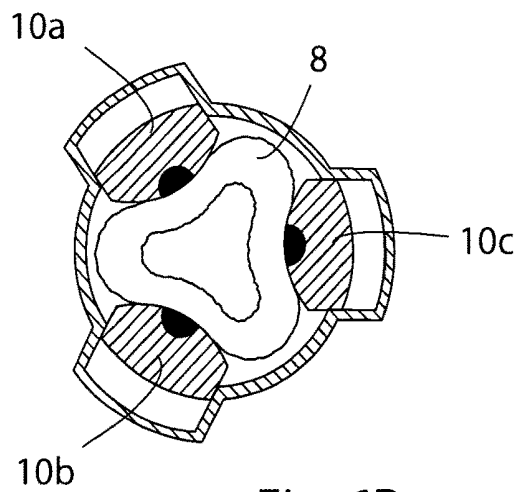


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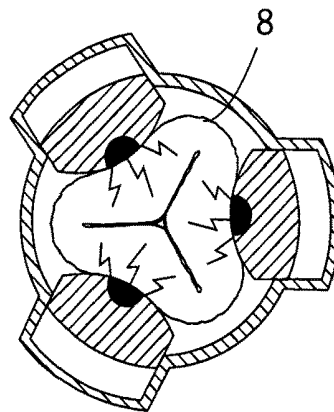


Fig. 6C

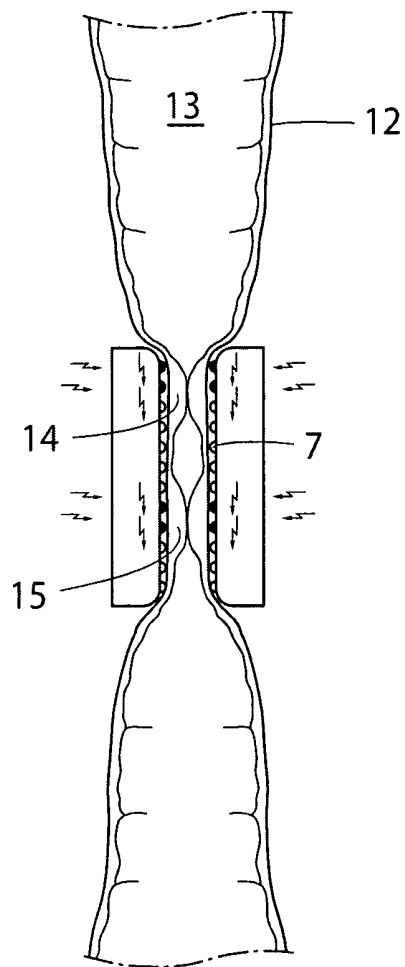


Fig. 7A

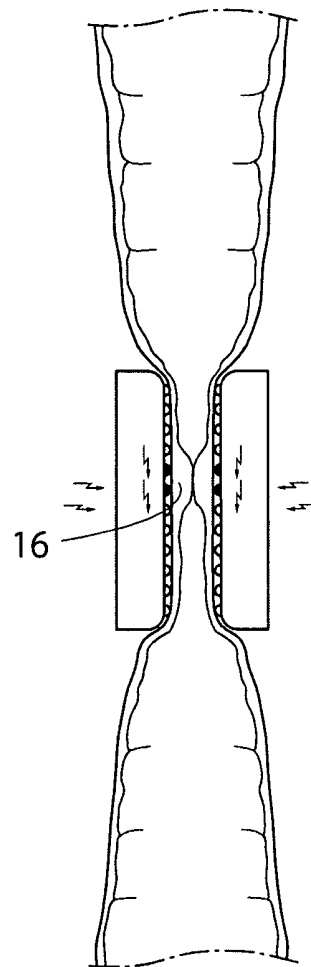


Fig. 7B

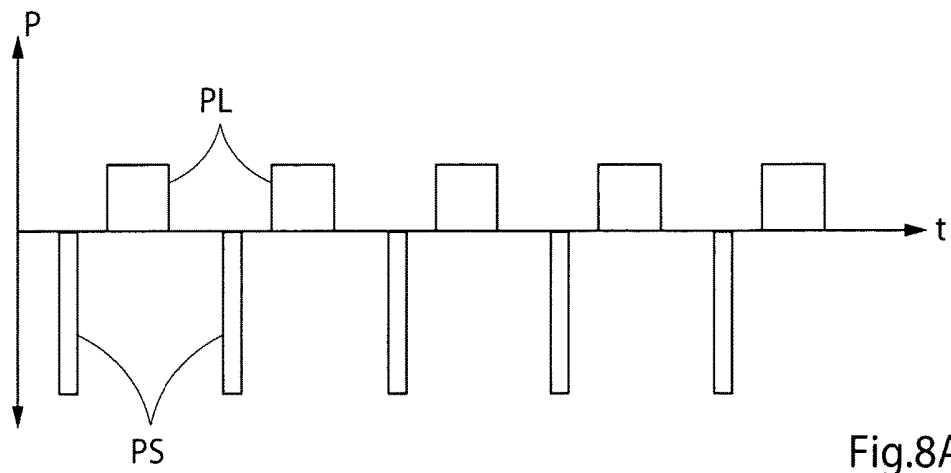


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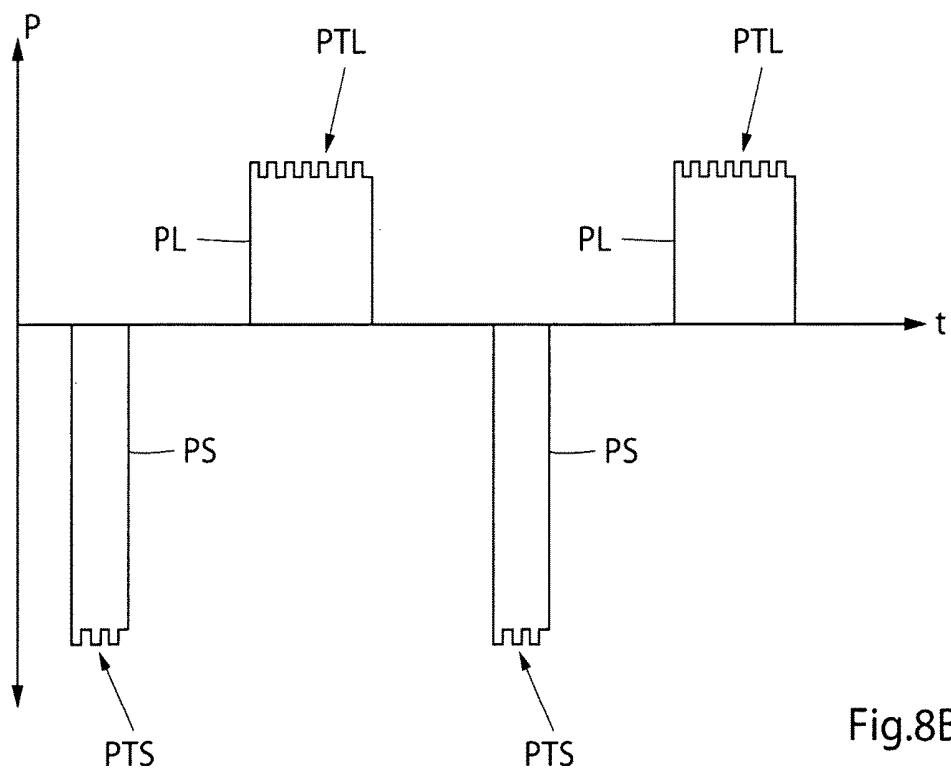


Fig. 8B

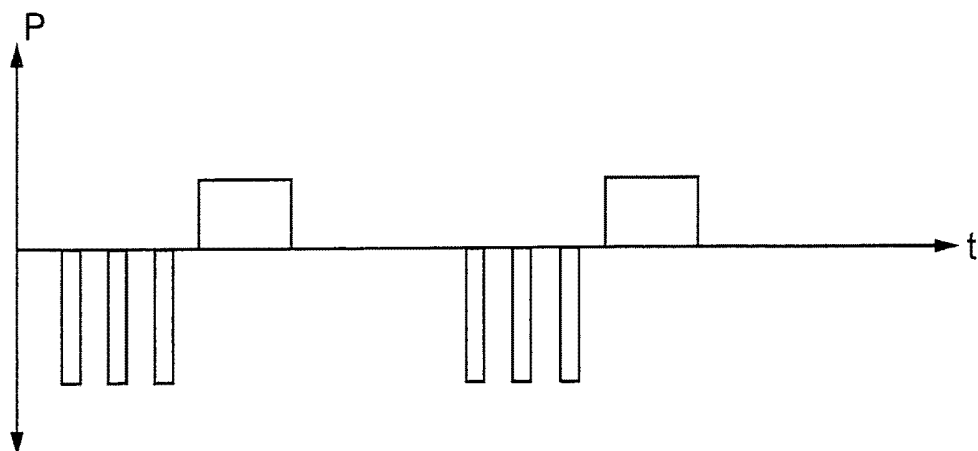


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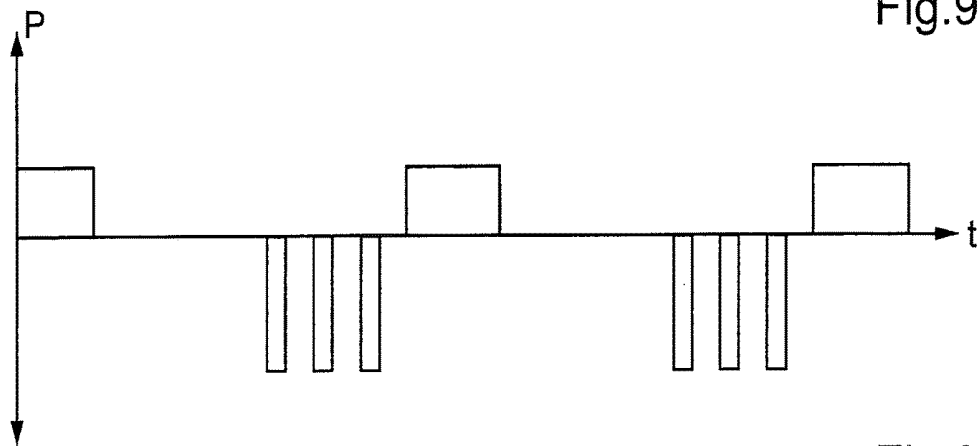
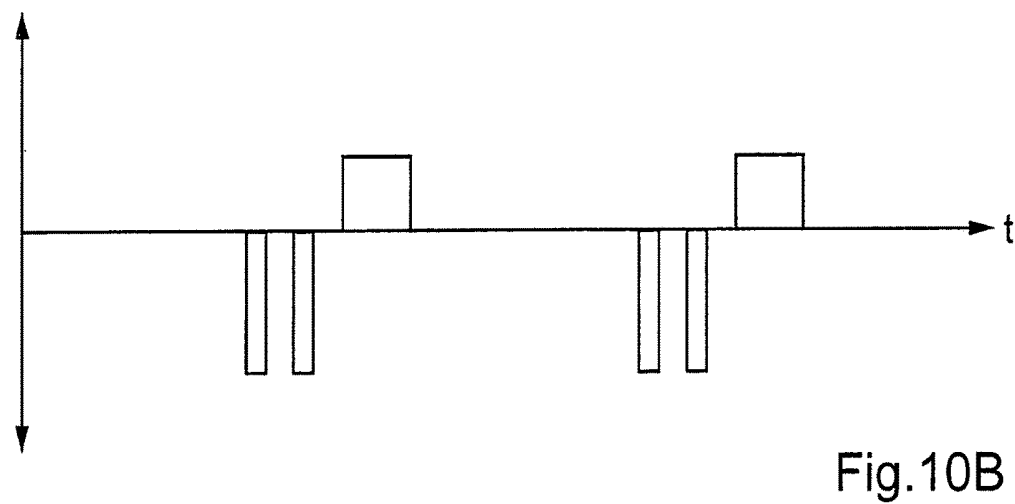
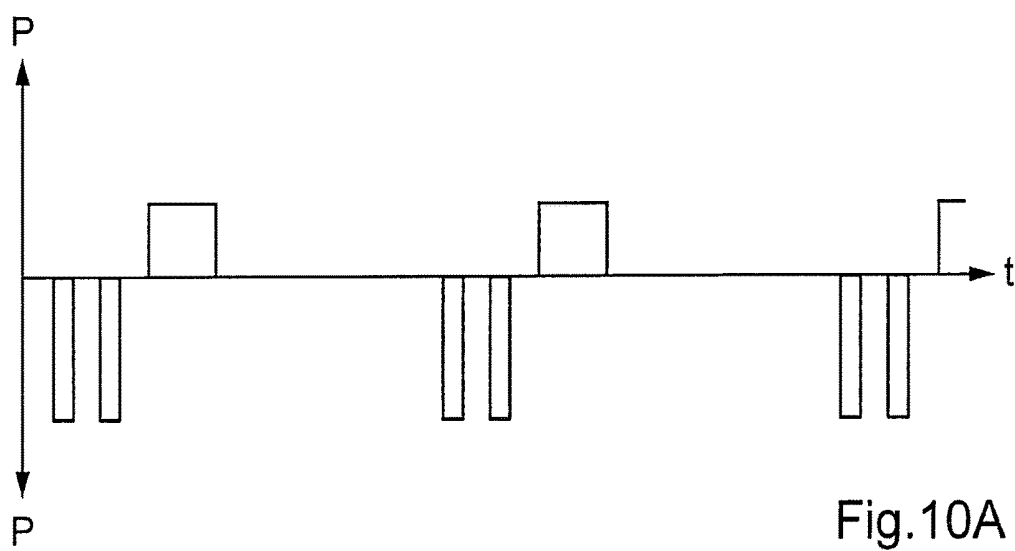


Fig.9B



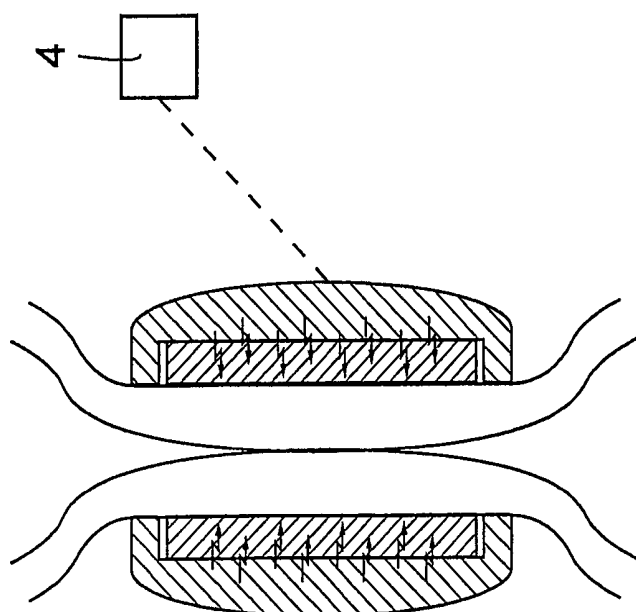


Fig. 11B

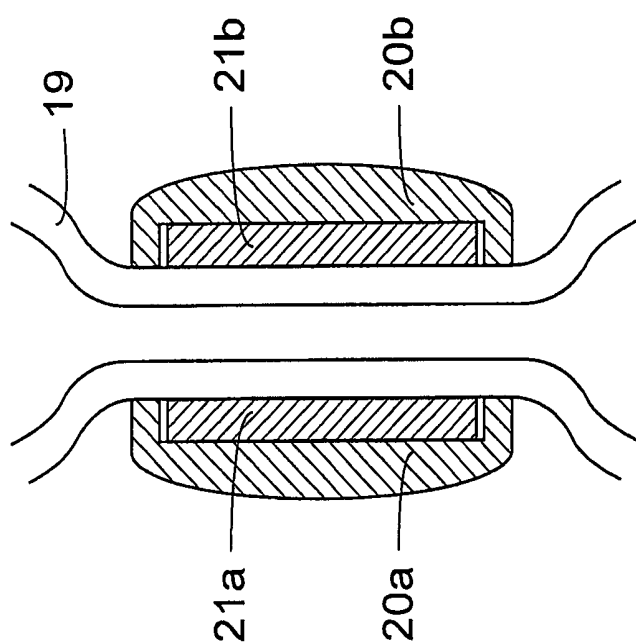
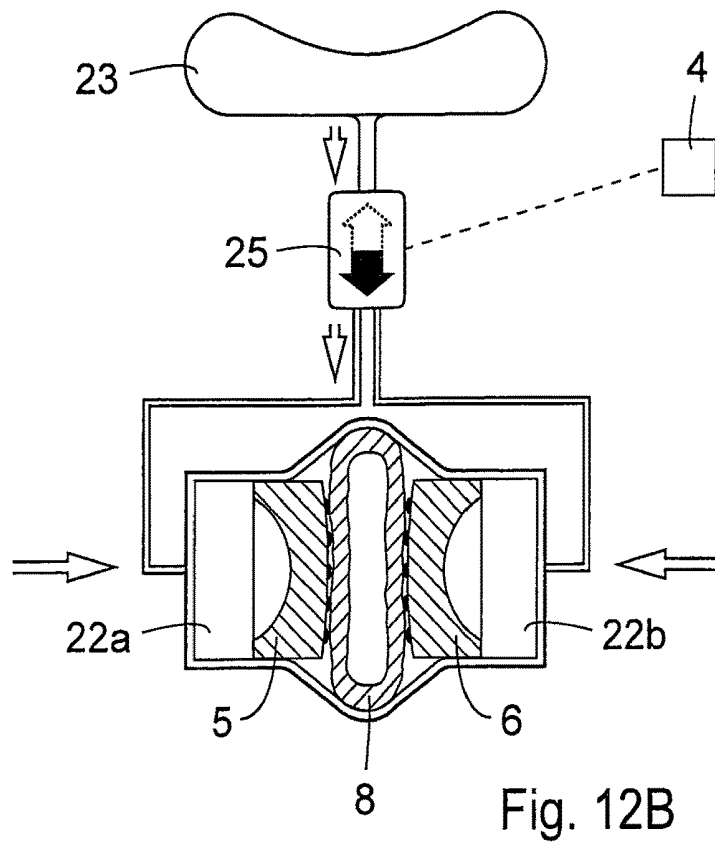
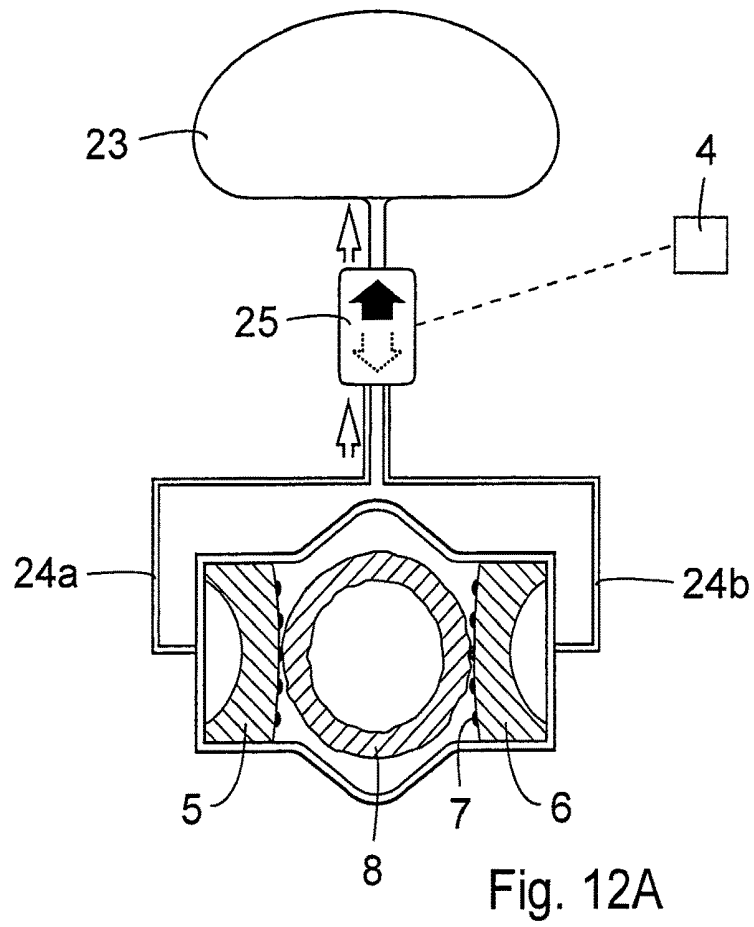


Fig. 11A



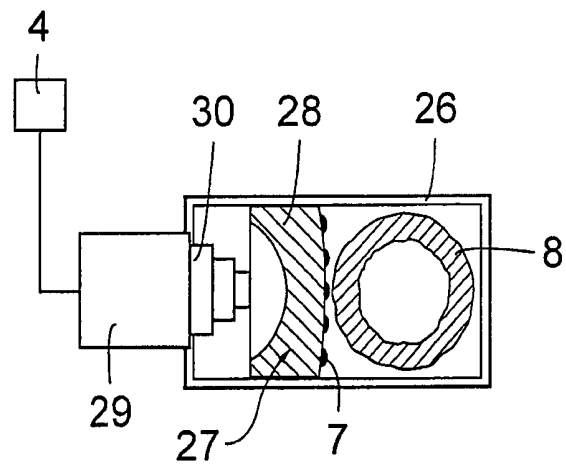


Fig. 13A

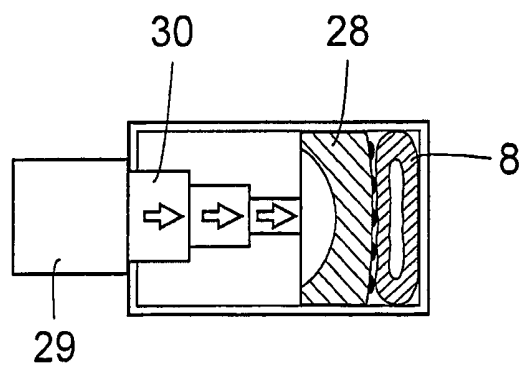


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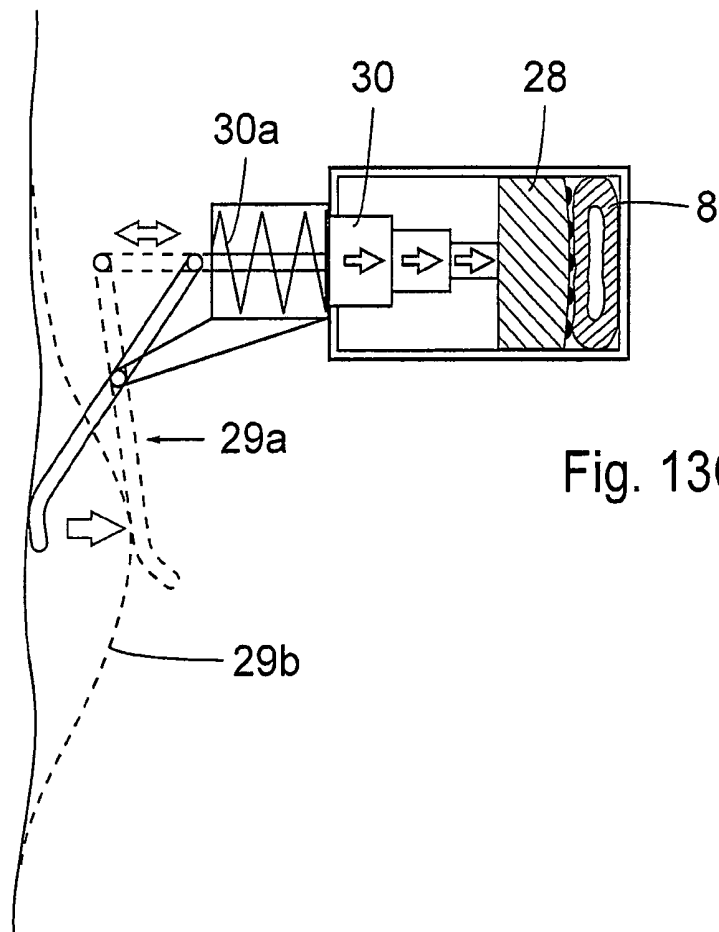
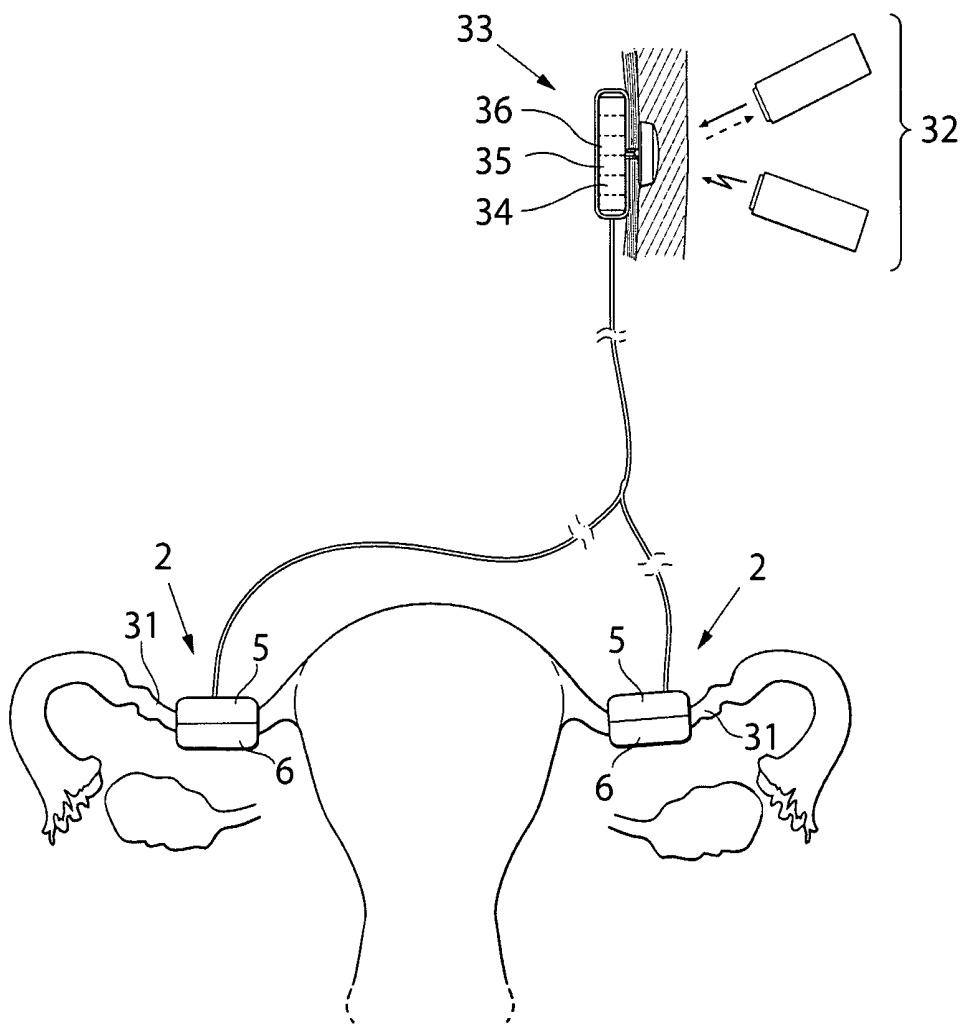
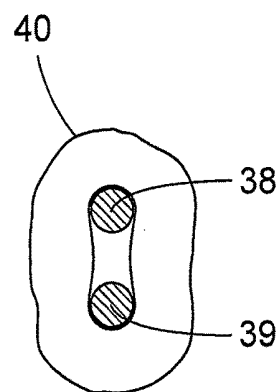
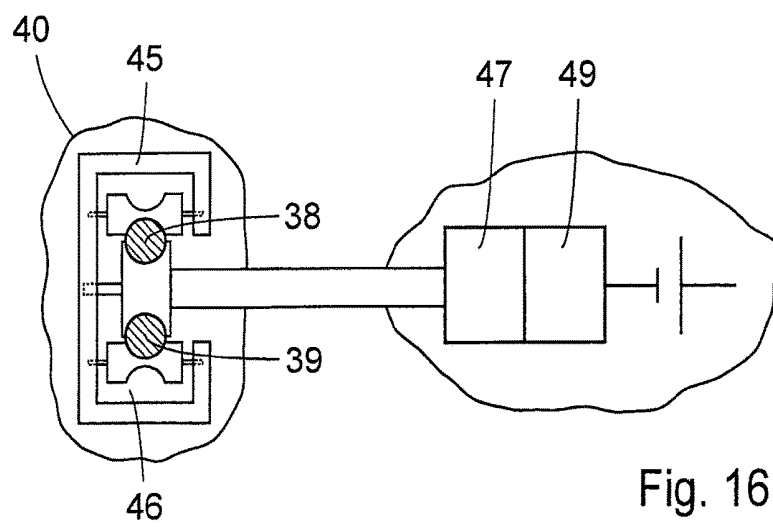
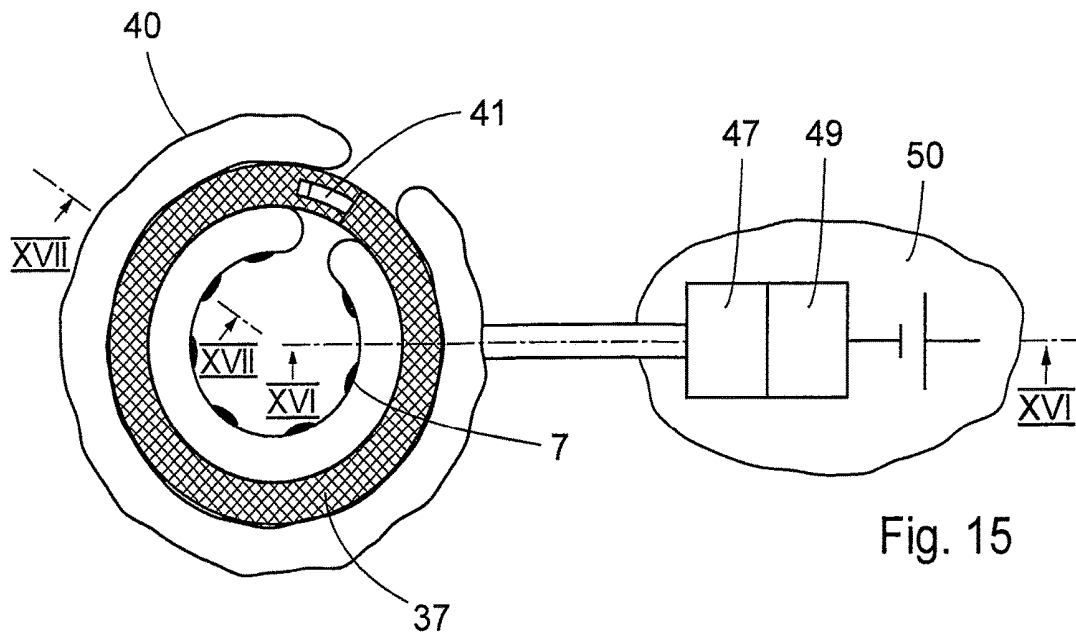


Fig. 13C

Fig. 14





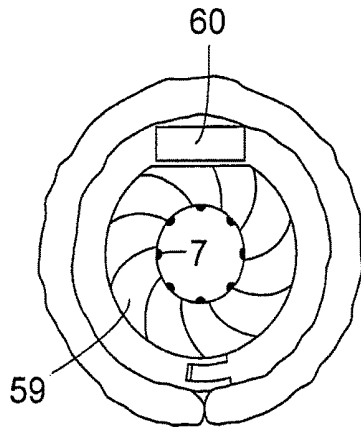


Fig. 20

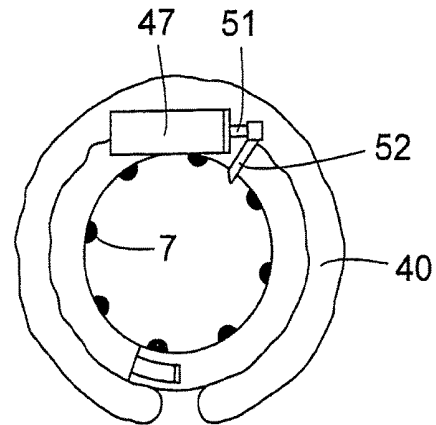


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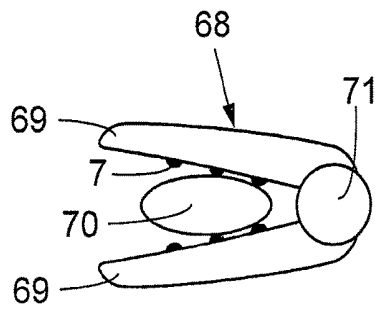


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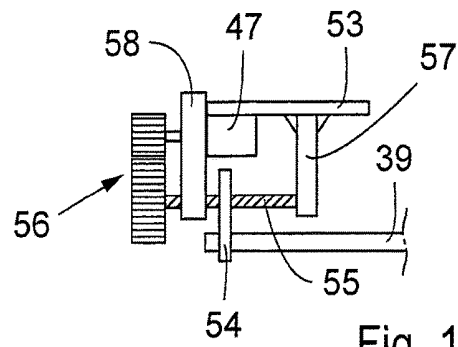


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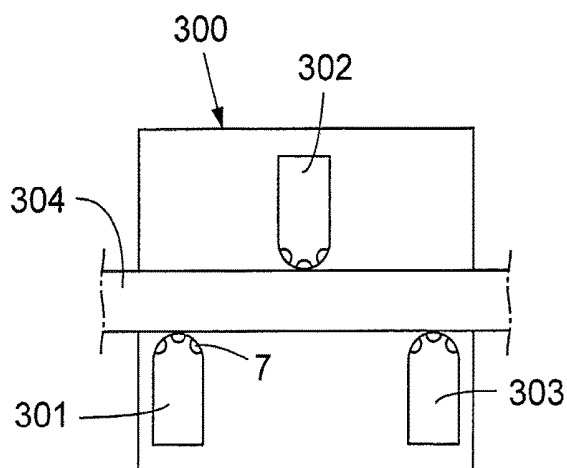


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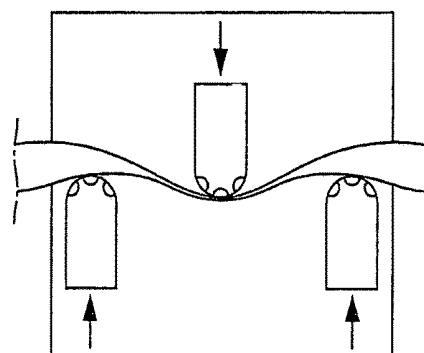


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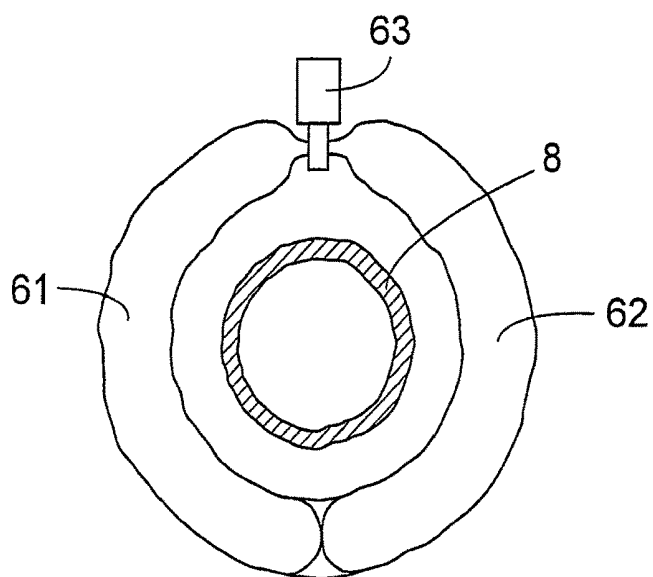


Fig. 21

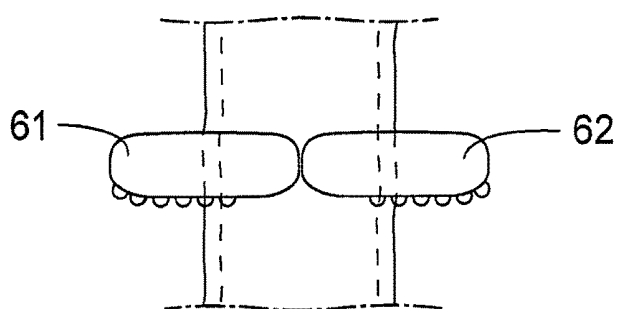


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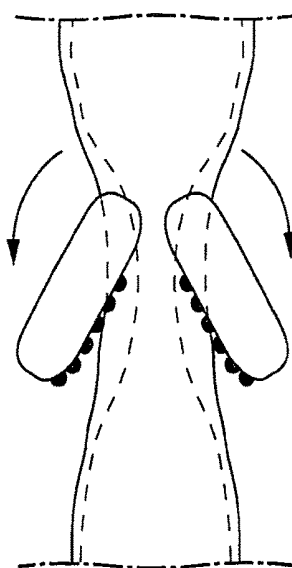


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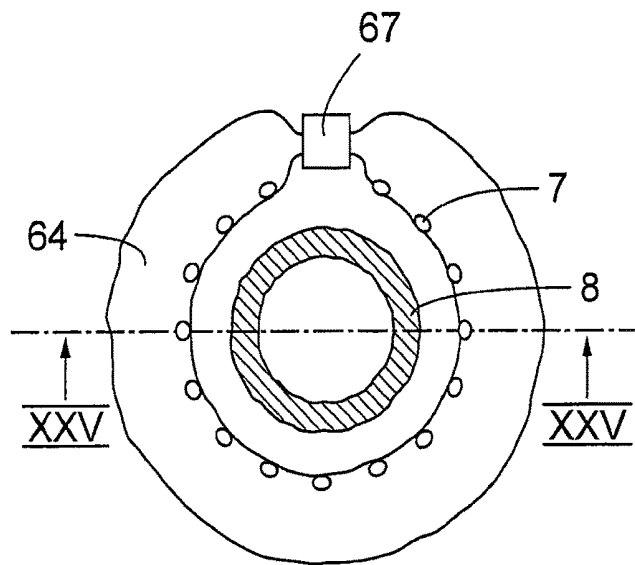


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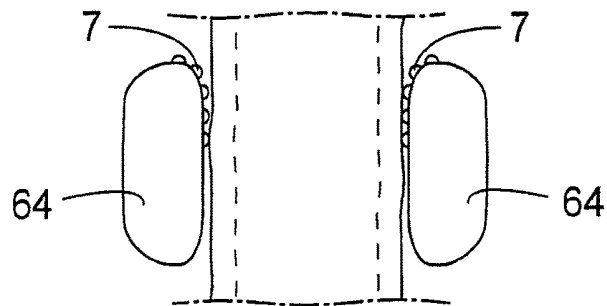


Fig. 25

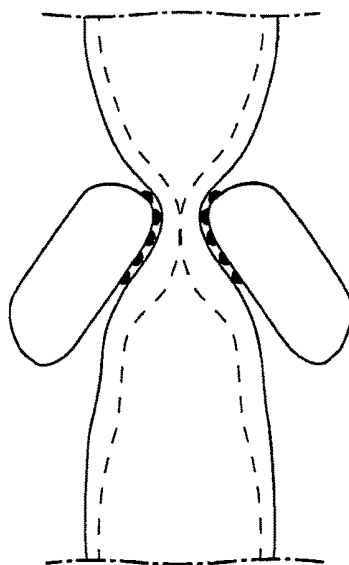


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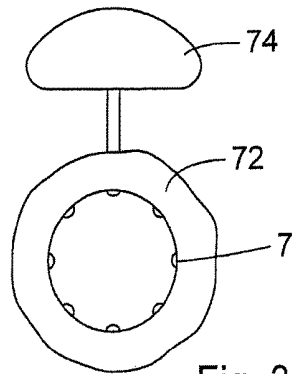


Fig. 30A

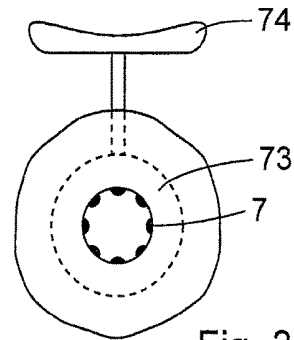


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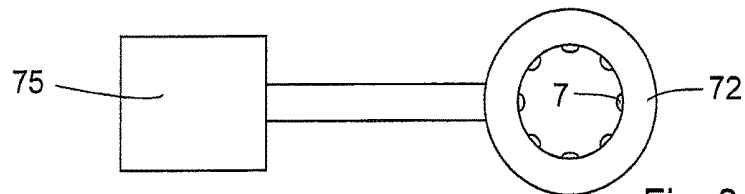


Fig. 31A

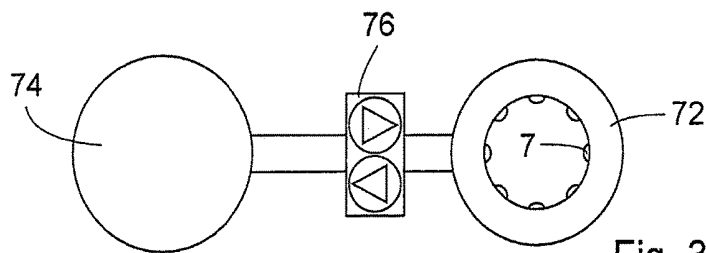


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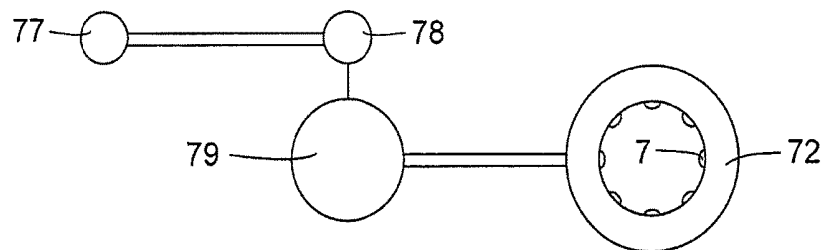


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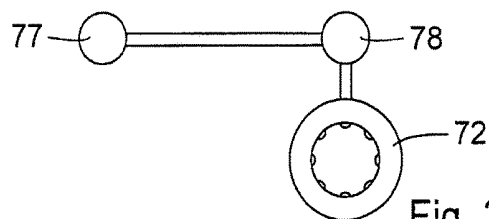
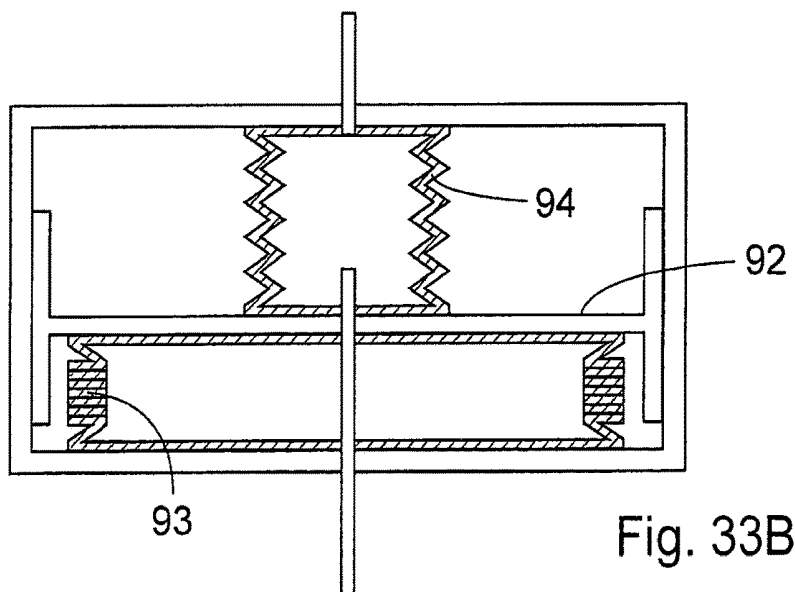
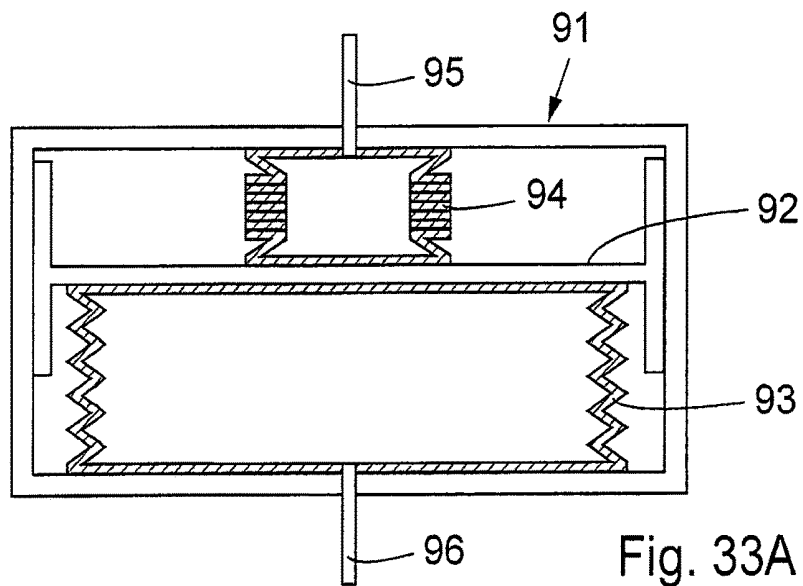
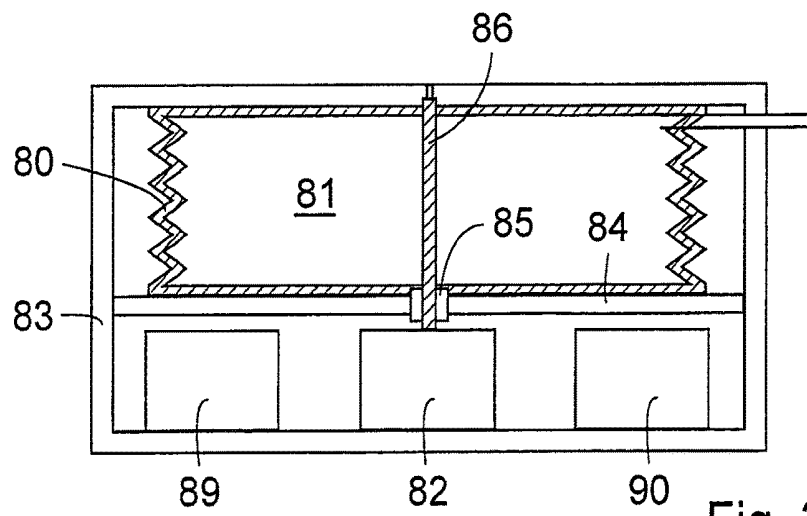
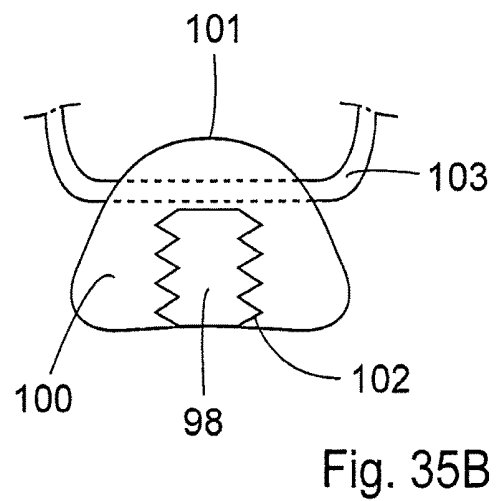
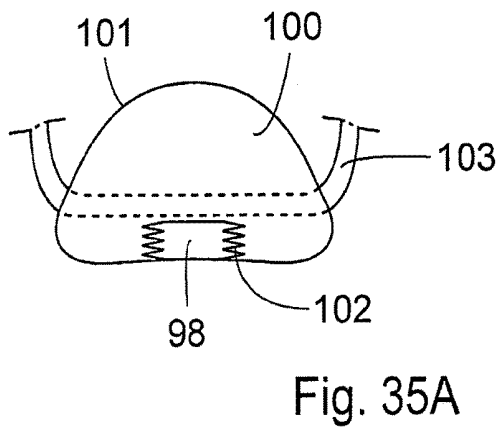
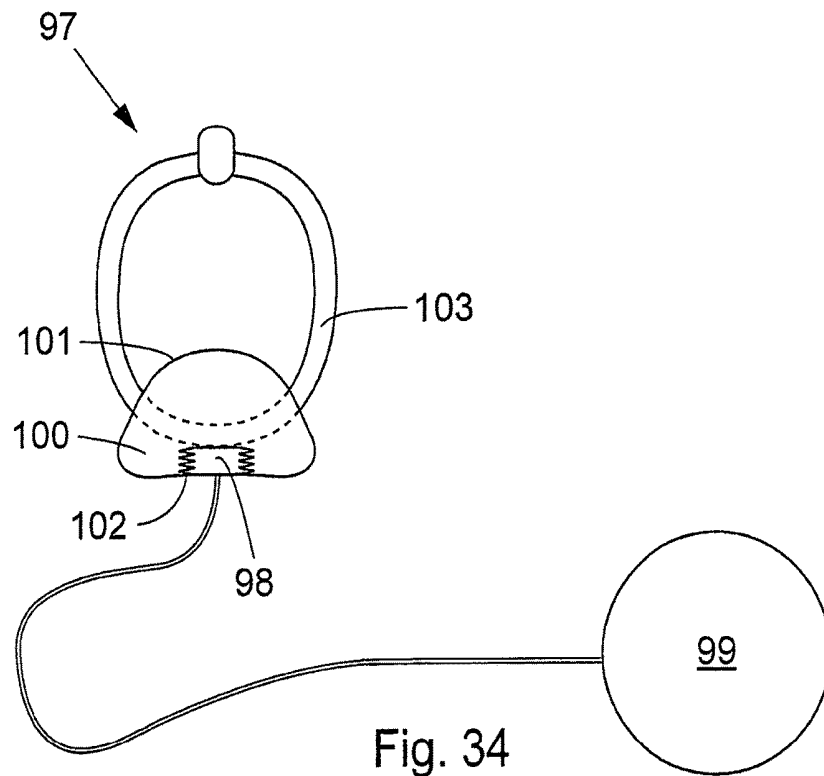
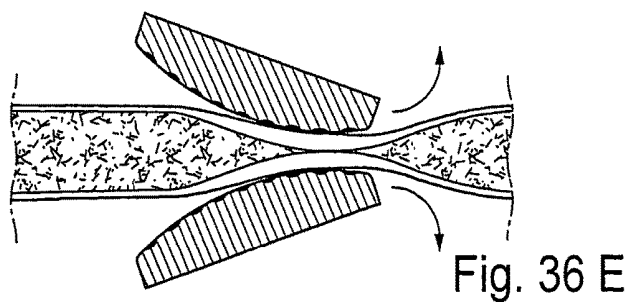
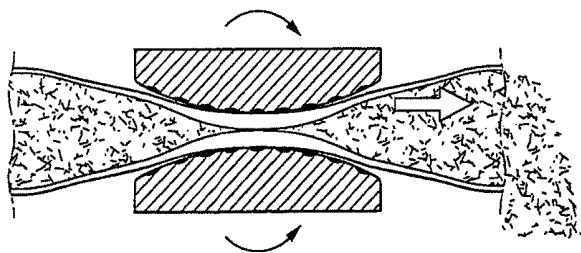
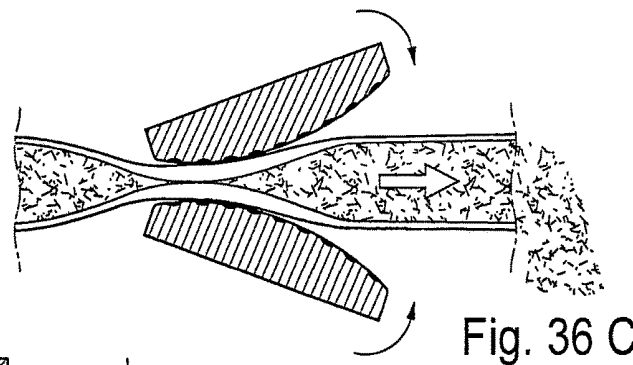
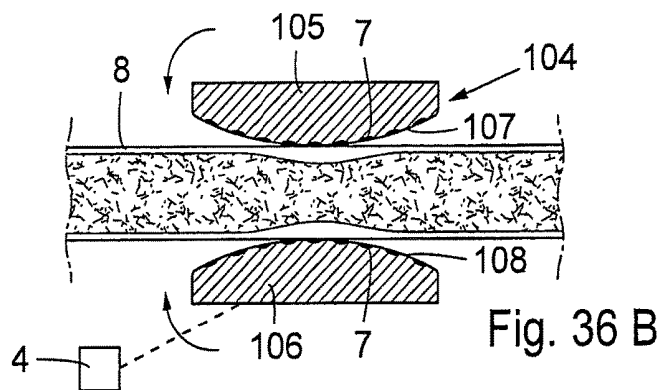
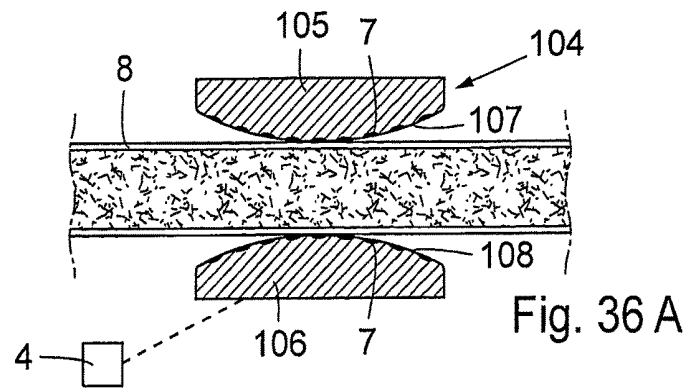


Fig. 31D







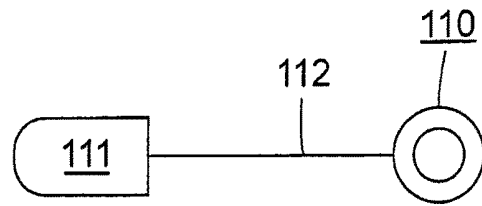


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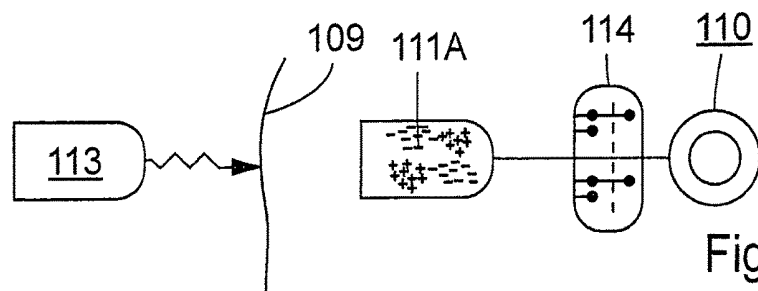


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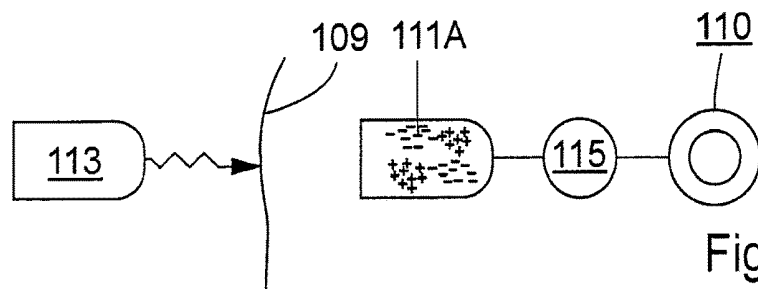


Fig. 39

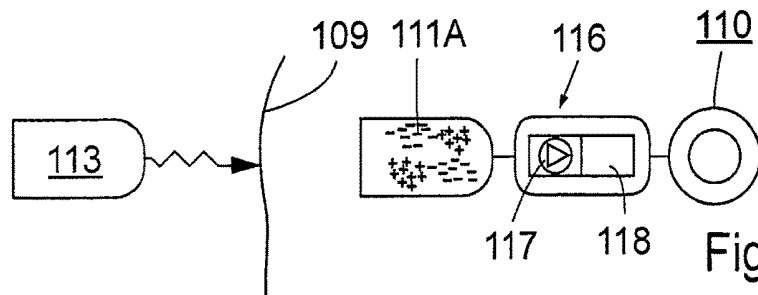


Fig. 40

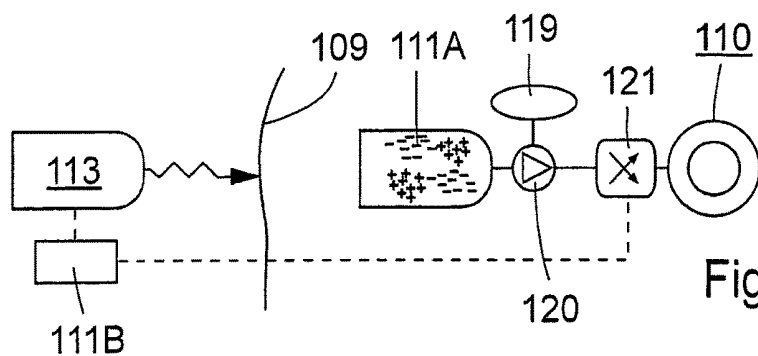
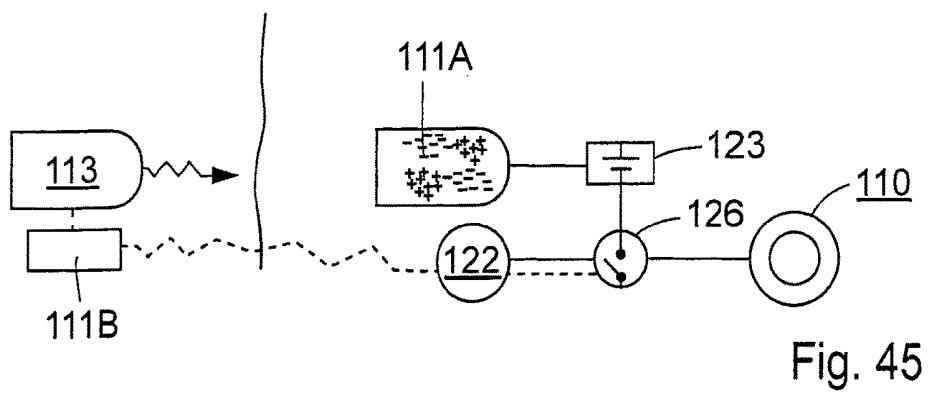
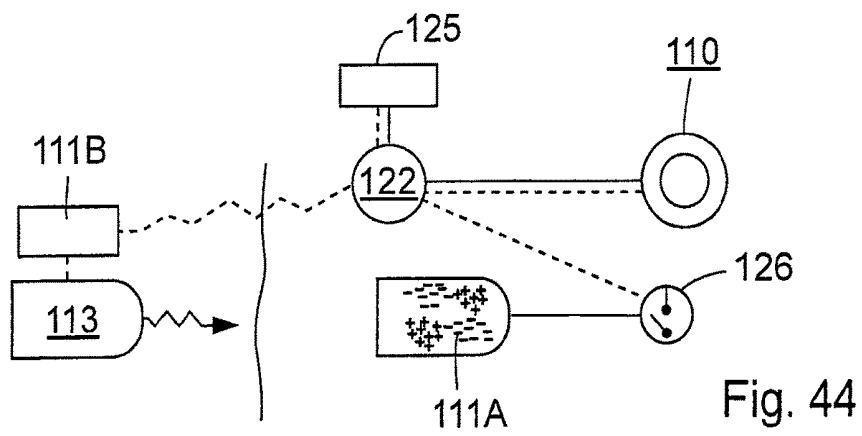
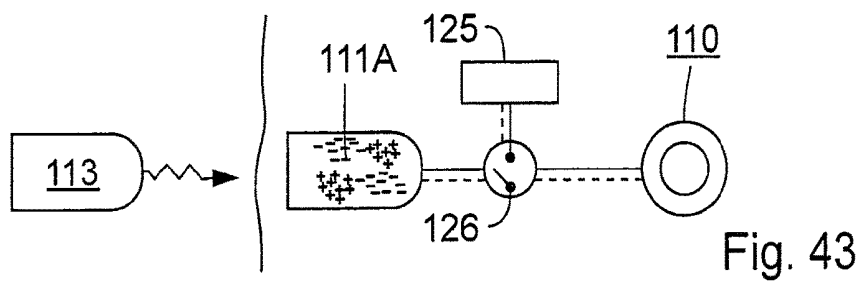
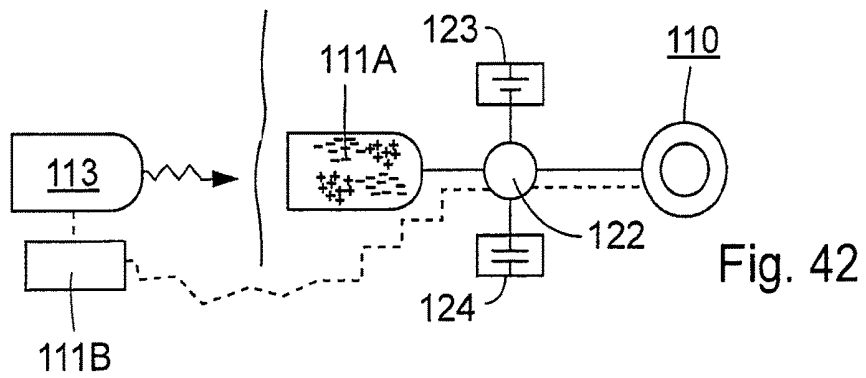
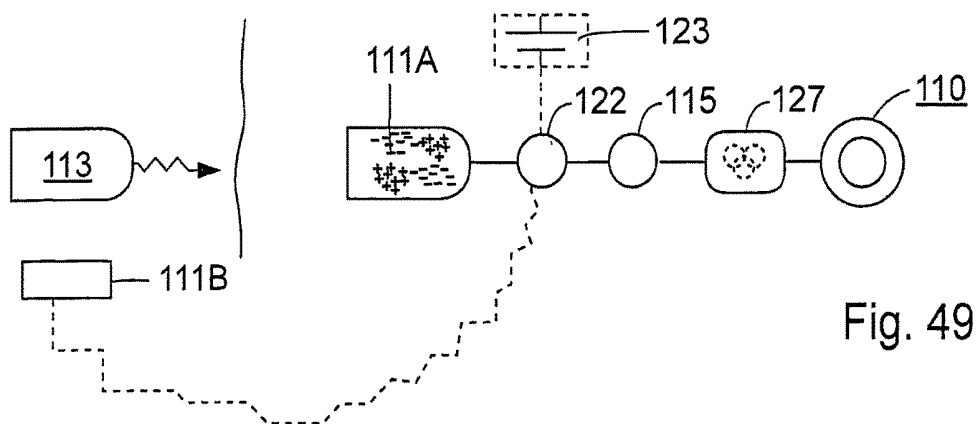
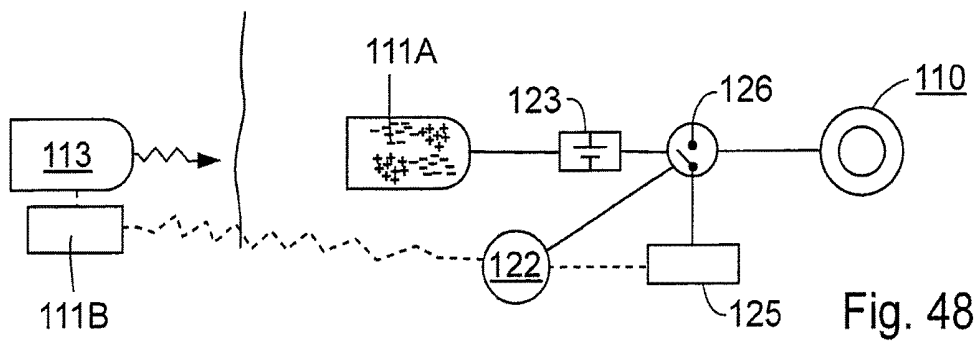
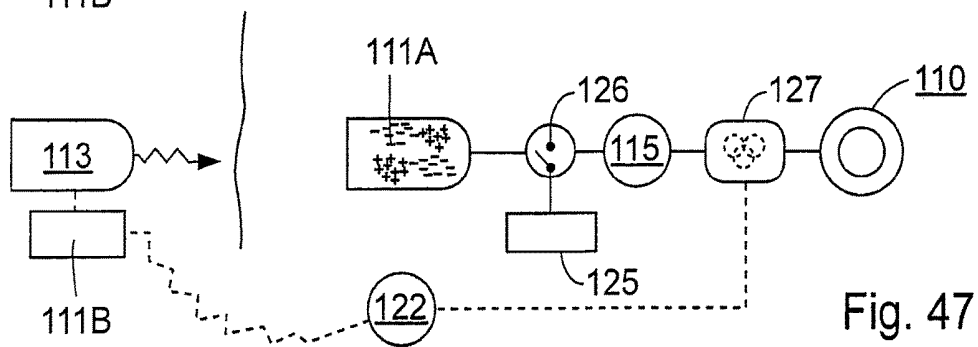
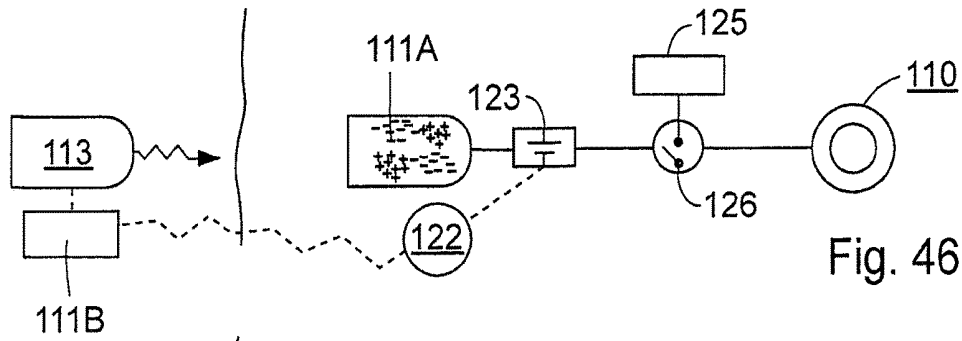


Fig. 41





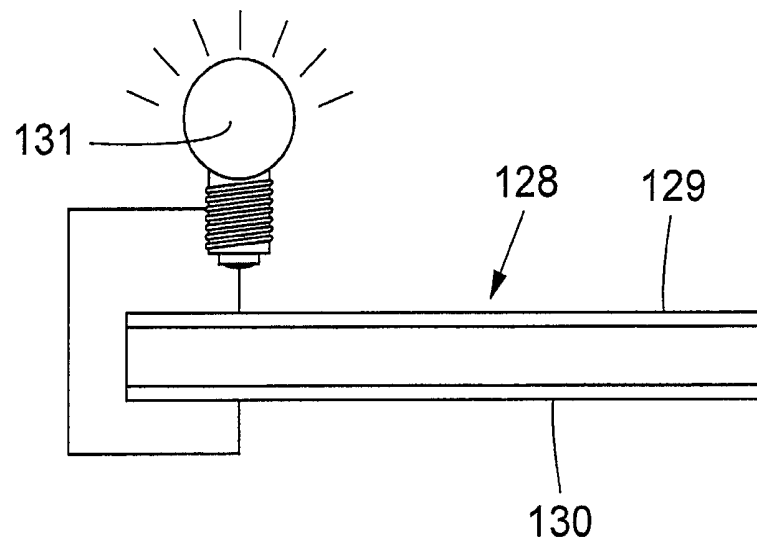


Fig. 50

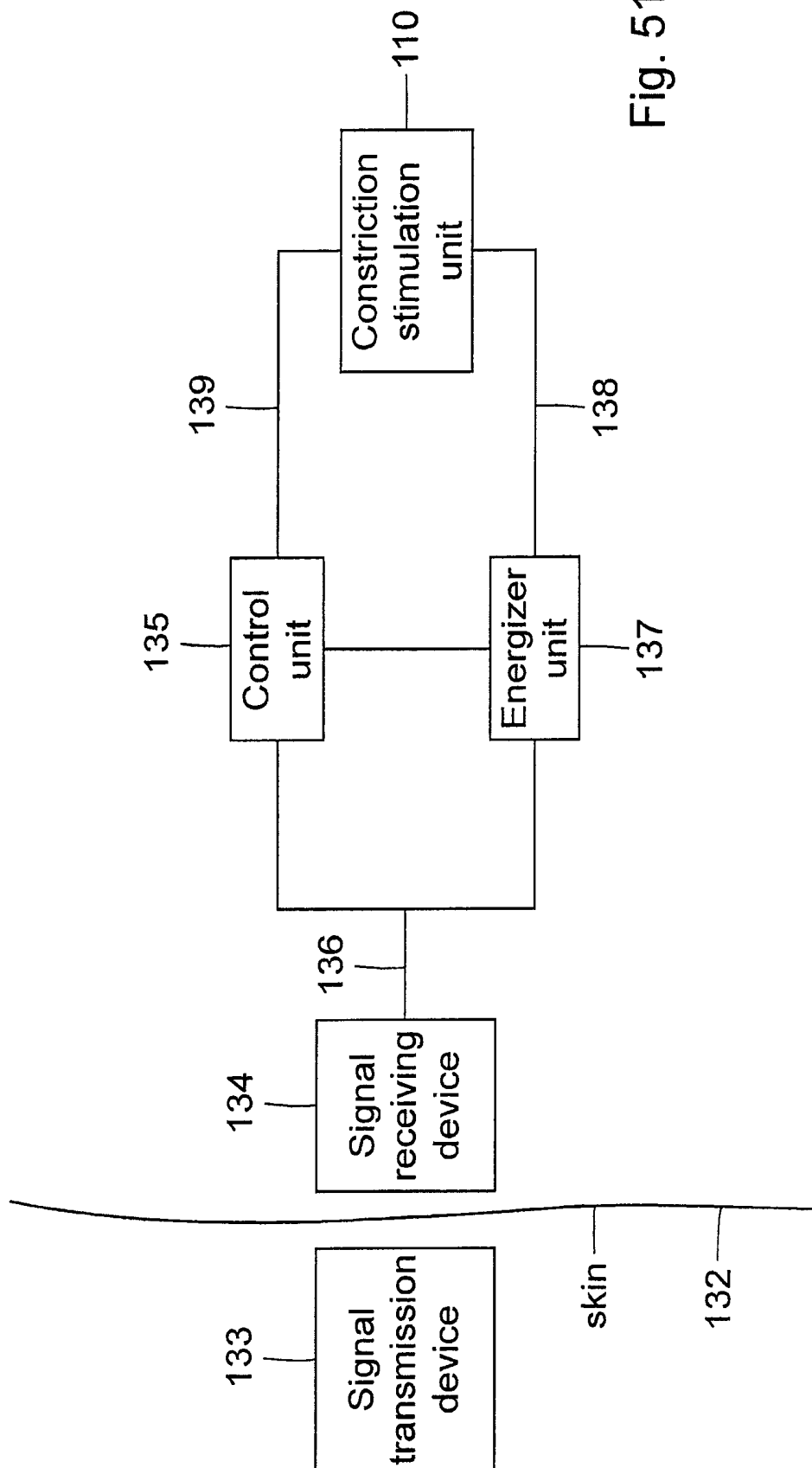
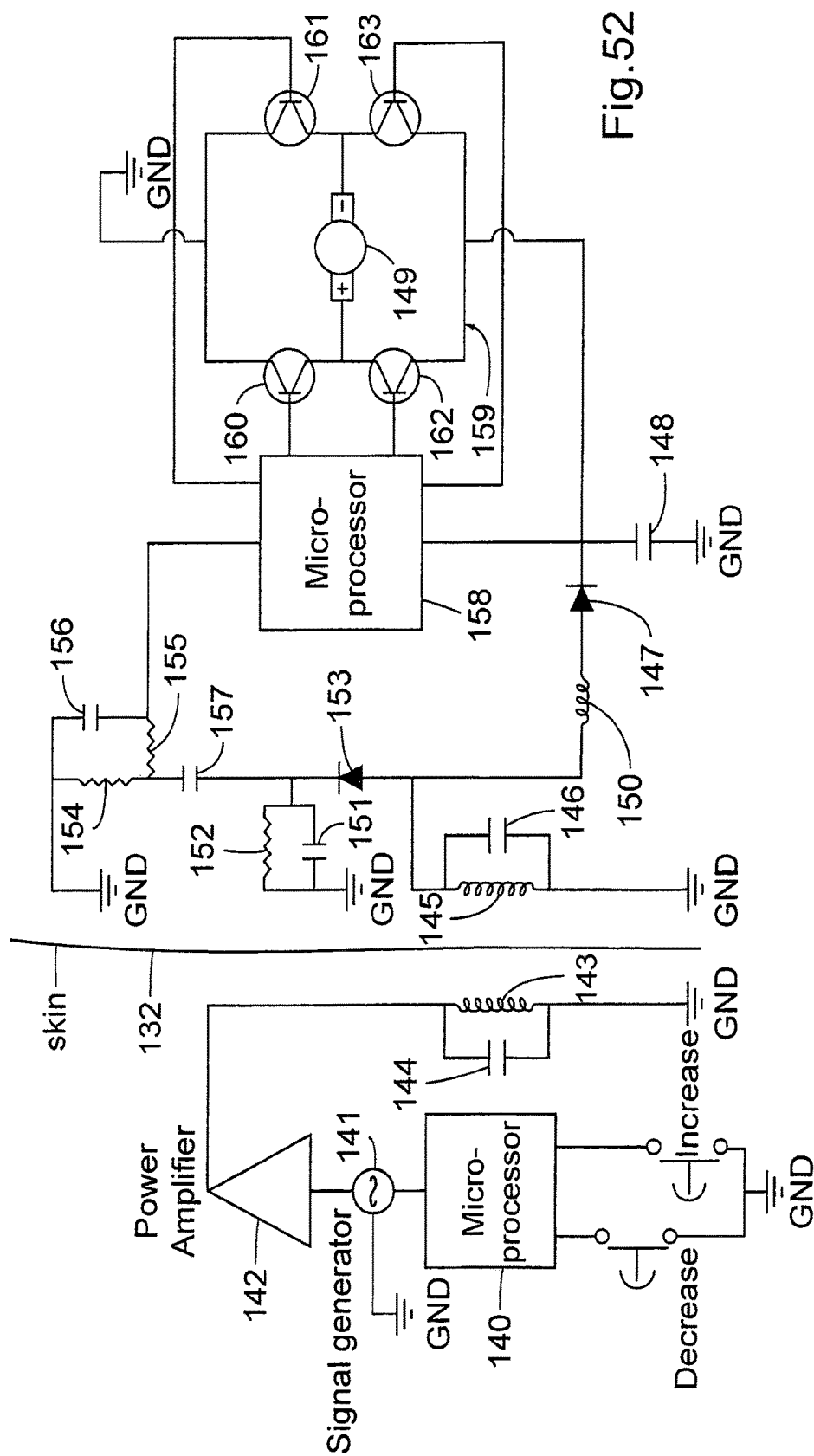


Fig. 51



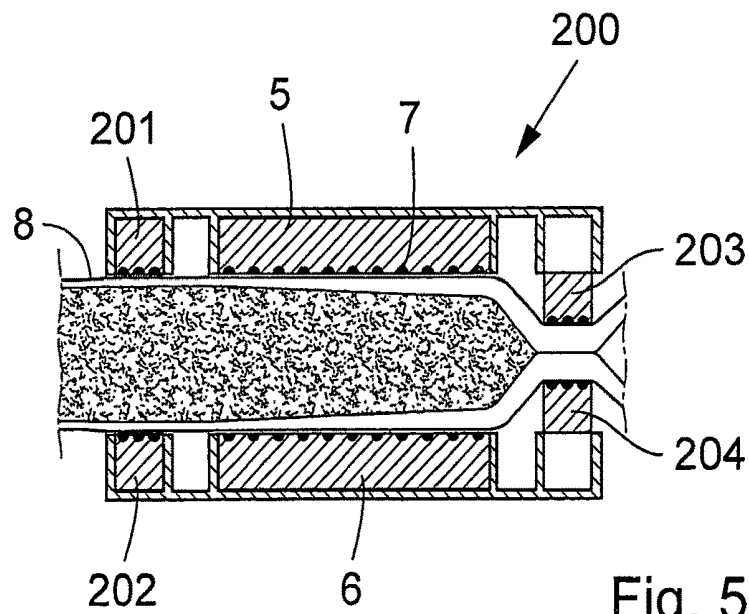


Fig. 53A

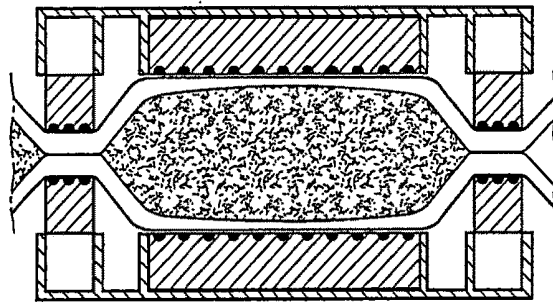


Fig. 53B

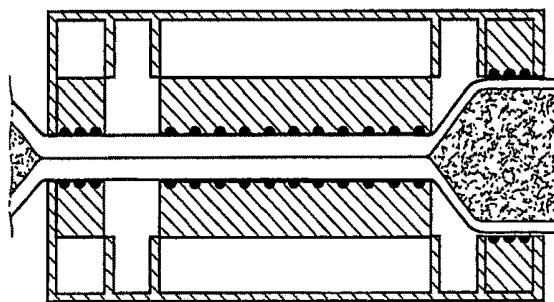


Fig. 53C

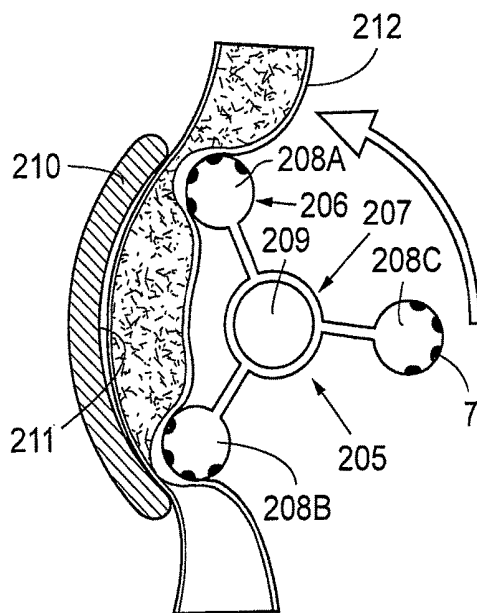


Fig. 54A

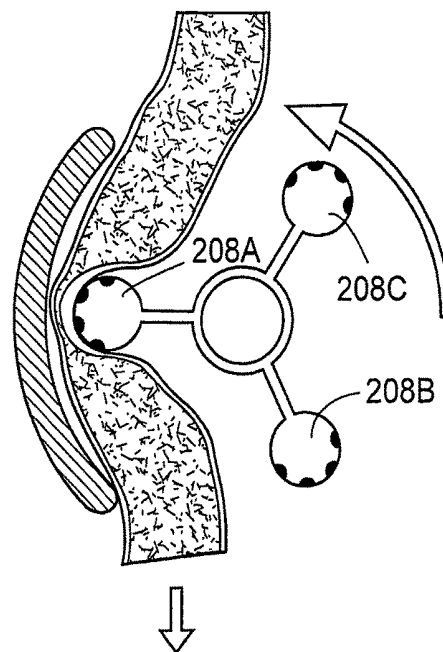


Fig. 54B

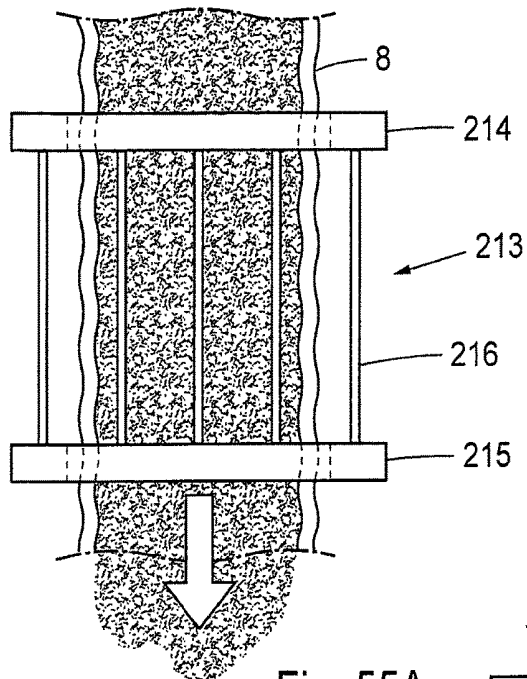


Fig. 55A

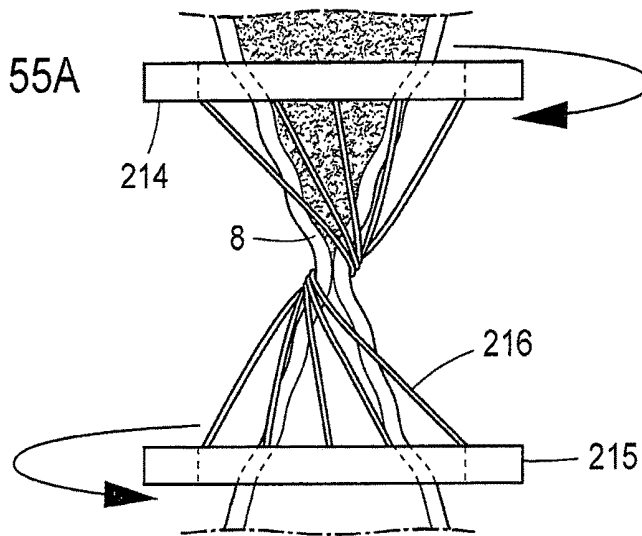


Fig. 55B

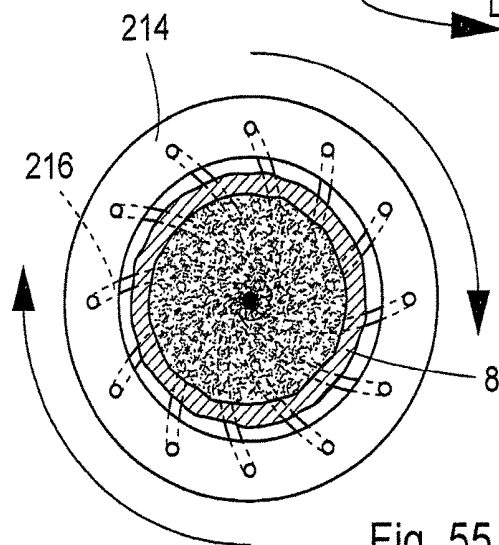


Fig. 55 C

Fig.56

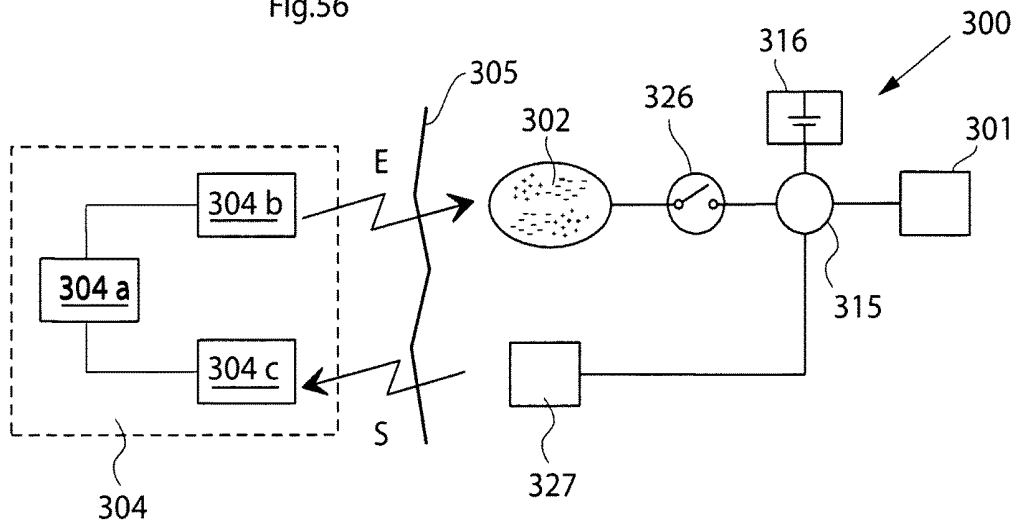


Fig.57

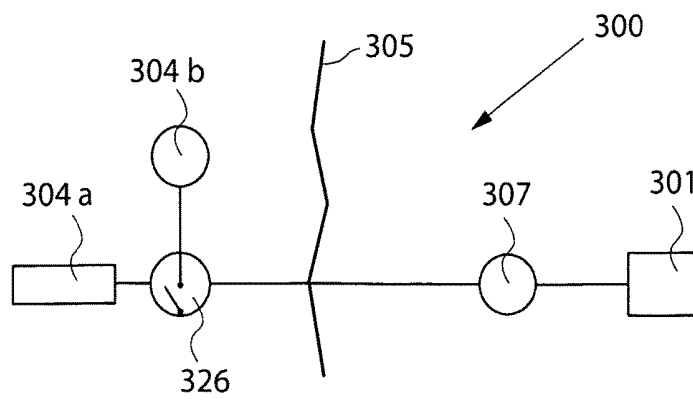
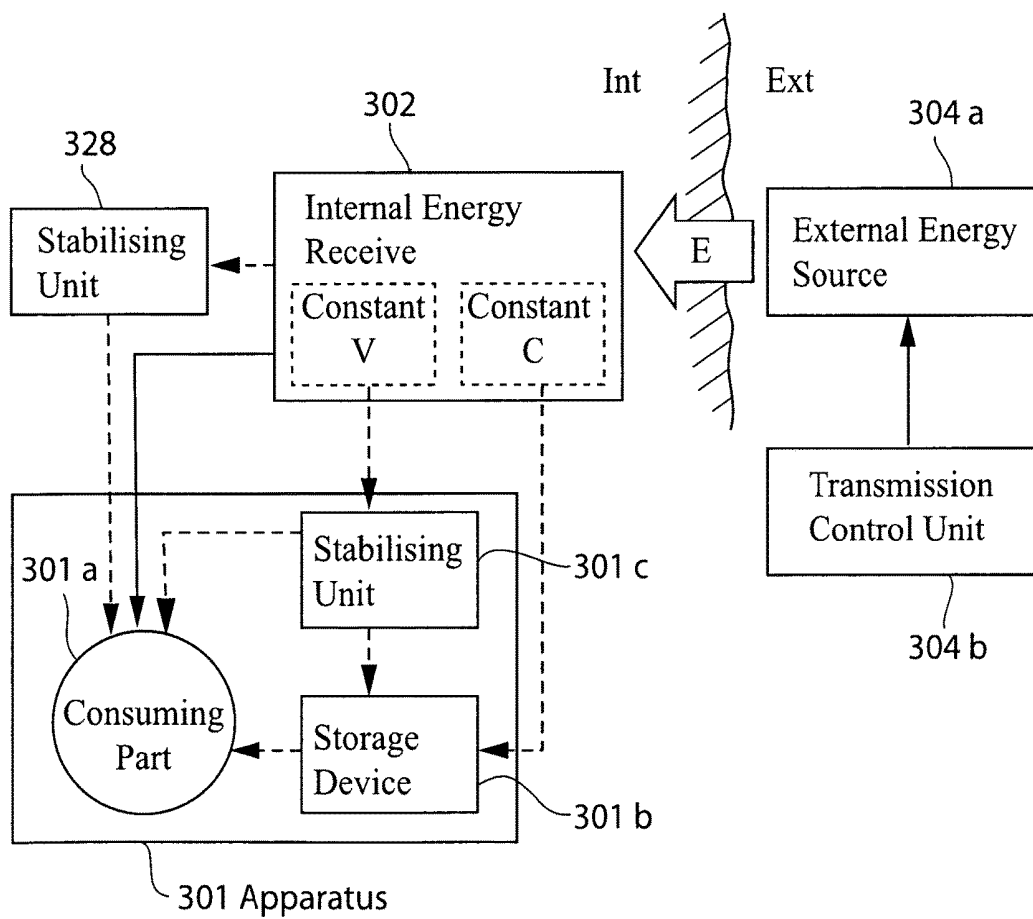
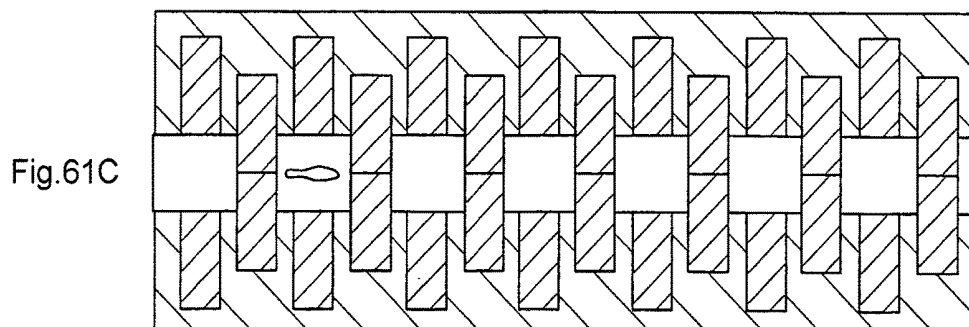
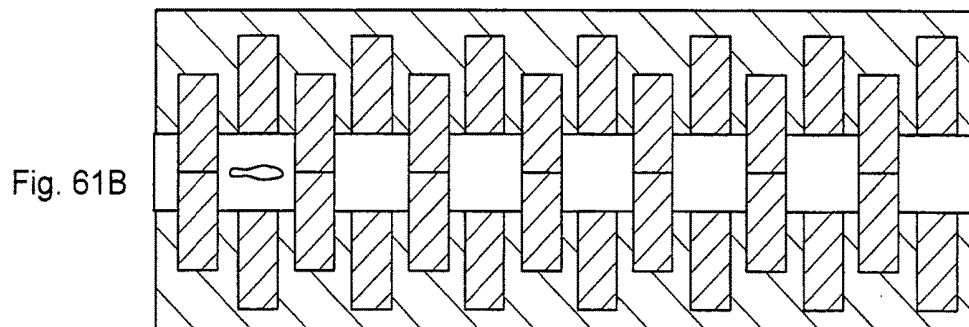
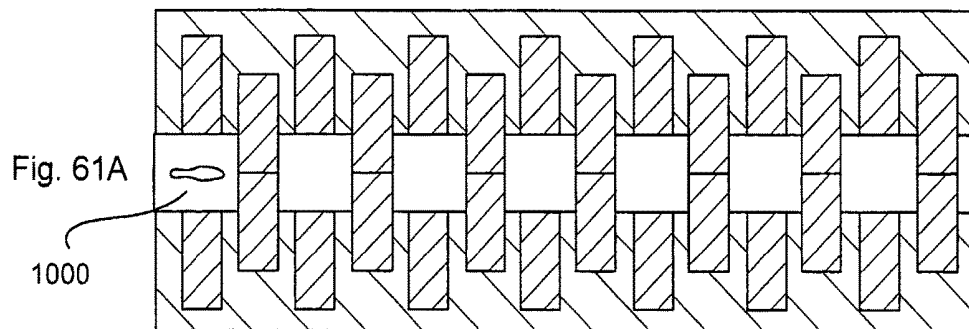
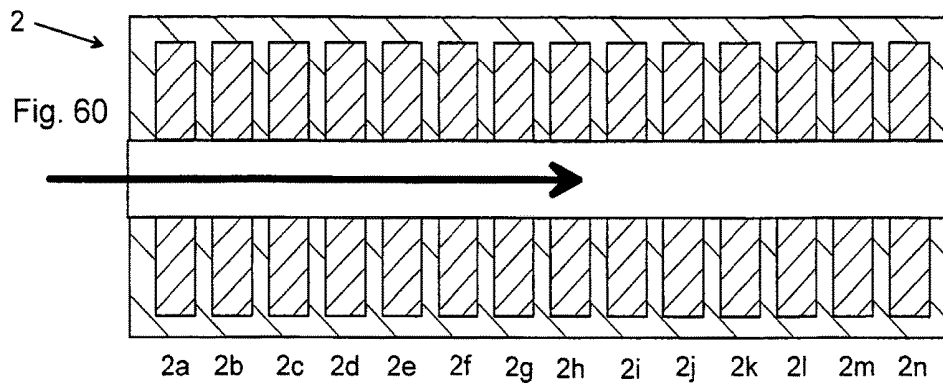
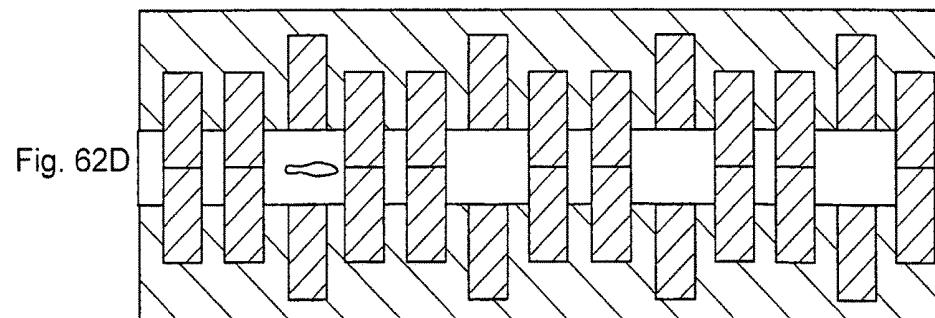
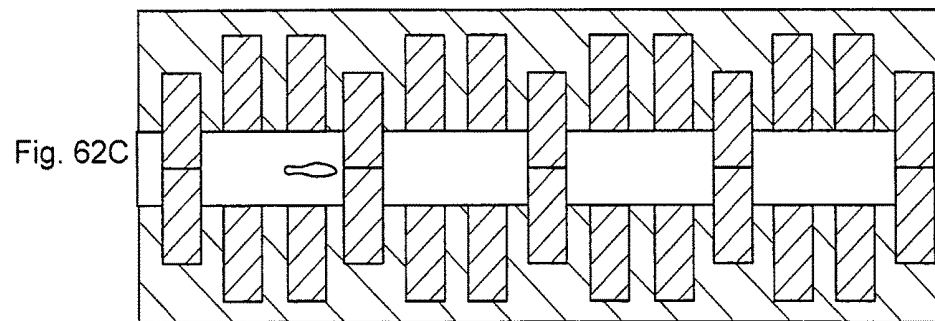
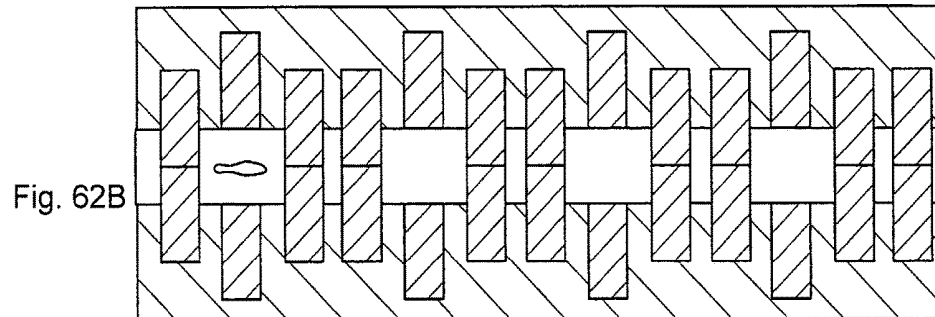
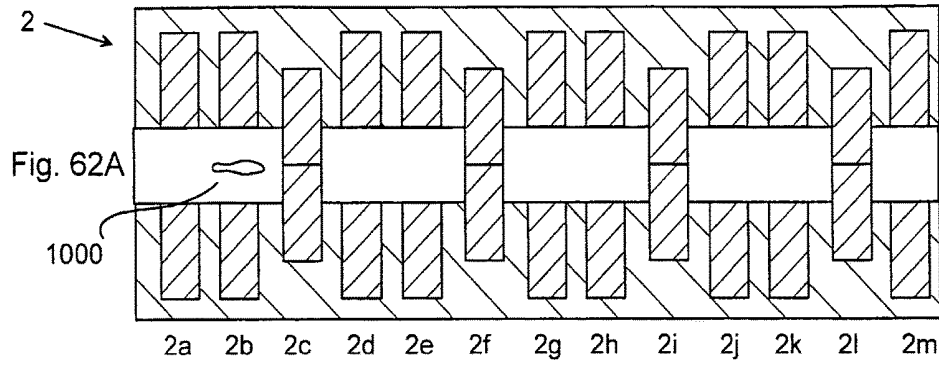
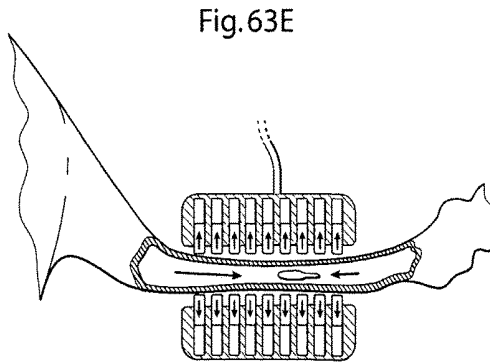
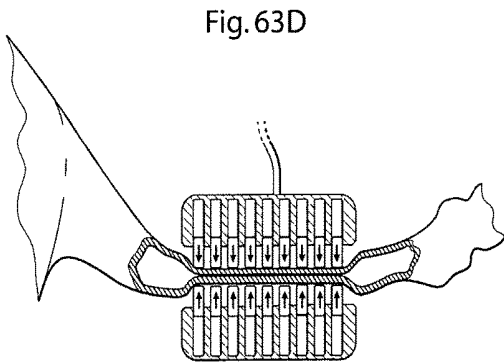
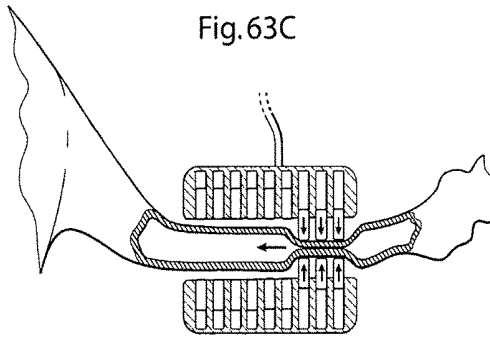
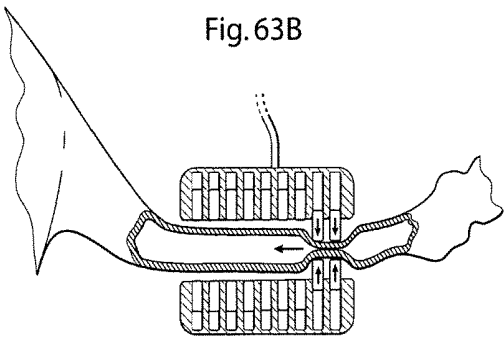
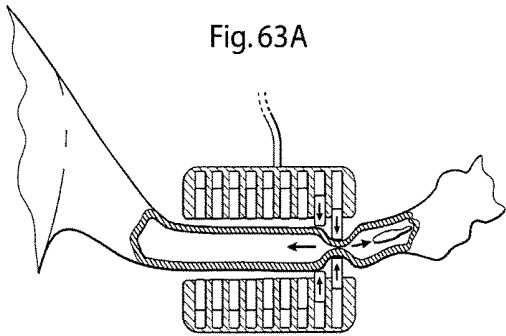


Fig.58









1

METHOD FOR CONTROLLING FLOW OF SPERMS IN A UTERINE TUBE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application claims the benefit of Provisional Application No. 60/960,716, filed Oct. 11, 2007, the entire content of which is hereby incorporated by reference in this application.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to controlling the flow of sperms in bodily organs, and in particular, to a method for controlling the flow of sperms in the uterine tubes of a female patient.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The invention adapted to affect the transportation of sperm in the uterine tube may help women to avoid pregnancy by preventing the sperm to reach the egg by preventing the sperm to reach the egg for a predetermined amount of time, thus affect the flow of the sperm. The lifetime of a sperm is normally 3-5 days. Furthermore the transportation of egg takes so long time in the uterine tube that any egg reaching the proximal part of the uterine tube is most likely not viable any more. The invention furthermore in an alternative object promotes sperms to reach the uterine tube and the egg increasing the likelihood for pregnancy.

Conceptive drugs may cause blood clots and other serious complications. A safer more permanent but still adjustable device has an important role to fill.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An object of the present invention is to provide a method for controlling the movement of sperms in the uterine tubes of a female patient. In accordance with this object of the present invention, there is provided a method for controlling a flow of sperms in an uterine tube of a female patient, the method comprising:

- a) gently constricting at least one portion of the uterine tube wall to influence the flow of sperms in the uterine tube, using a constriction device, or
- b) stimulating at least one portion of the uterine tube wall to cause contraction of the uterine tube wall portion to further influence the flow of sperms in the uterine tube, using a stimulation device.

In accordance with the preferred object of the present invention, there is provided method for controlling a flow of sperms in a uterine tube of a female patient, the method comprising:

- a) gently constricting at least one portion of the uterine tube wall to influence the flow of sperms in the uterine tube, using a constriction device, and
- b) stimulating at least one portion of the uterine tube wall to cause contraction of the uterine tube wall portion to further influence the flow of sperms in the uterine tube, using a stimulation device.

The present invention provides an advantageous combination of the method steps (a) and (b), which results in a two-stage influence on the flow of sperms in the uterine tube. Thus, applying a relatively weak force against the uterine tube wall portion gently constricts the uterine tube wall and the constricted wall portion is stimulated to achieve the

2

desired final influence on the flow of sperms in the uterine tube. The phrase "gently constricts a portion of the uterine tube wall" is to be understood as constricting the uterine tube wall portion without substantially hampering the blood circulation in the uterine tube wall.

Preferably, step (b) is performed by intermittently and individually stimulating different areas of the uterine tube wall portion. Such an intermittent and individual stimulation of different areas of the uterine tube wall portion of the uterine tube allows tissue of the uterine tube wall portion to maintain over time substantially normal blood circulation.

Preferably, the constriction step (a) and stimulation step (b) are performed independently of each other. Steps (a) and (b) may be performed simultaneously. Optionally, step (b) may or may not be performed while step (a) is performed.

Initially, the constriction of the uterine tube wall portion can be calibrated by stimulating the uterine tube wall portion while adjusting the constriction of the uterine tube wall portion until the desired restriction of the flow of sperms in the uterine tube is obtained.

The term uterine tube of course also includes the two uterine tubes. The term sperms of course include one sperm. Any embodiment or part of embodiment may be combined in several different casings. Preferable two constriction units, one power supply.

Flow Restriction

It should be understood that any embodiment or part of embodiment disclosed below in connection with flow restriction for the constriction and stimulation devices combined in the constriction/stimulation unit could be used for the separate constriction device and separate stimulation device, where applicable. The method of the present invention is well suited for restricting the flow of sperms in the uterine tube. Thus, in a principal embodiment of the invention, the uterine tube wall portion is constricted, so that the flow of sperms in the uterine tube at least is restricted and the constricted wall portion is stimulated to at least further restrict the flow of sperms in the uterine tube. Specifically, the uterine tube wall portion is constricted to a constricted state, in which the blood circulation in the constricted wall portion is substantially unrestricted and the flow of sperms in the uterine tube is at least restricted, and the constricted wall portion is stimulated when it is in the constricted state to at least further restrict the flow of sperms in the uterine tube.

The constriction step (a) and stimulation step (b) are suitably performed to constrict and stimulate the uterine tube wall portion to an extent that depends on the flow restriction that is desired to be achieved in a specific application of the method of the invention. Thus, in accordance with a first flow restriction option, step (a) is performed by constricting the uterine tube wall portion, so that the flow of sperms in the uterine tube is restricted but not stopped, and step (b) is performed by stimulating the constricted wall portion to cause contraction thereof, so that the flow of sperms in the uterine tube is further restricted but not stopped. The method may further comprise sensing a physical parameter of the patient and adjusting the intensity of the stimulation of the uterine tube wall portion in response to the sensed parameter.

In accordance with a second flow restriction option, step (a) is performed by constricting the uterine tube wall portion, so that the flow of sperms in the uterine tube is restricted but not stopped, and step (b) is performed by

stimulating the constricted wall portion to cause contraction thereof, so that the flow of sperms in the uterine tube is stopped.

When using the method of the invention in accordance with the first or second options, the method may further comprise (c) ceasing stimulating the uterine tube wall portion to increase or allow the flow of sperms in the uterine tube and (d) releasing the uterine tube wall portion to restore the flow of sperms in the uterine tube.

In accordance with a third flow restriction option, step (a) is performed by constricting the uterine tube wall portion, so that the flow of sperms in the uterine tube is substantially stopped, and step (b) is performed by stimulating the constricted wall portion to cause contraction thereof, so that the flow of sperms in the uterine tube is completely stopped. The method may further comprise (c) ceasing stimulating the uterine tube wall portion to allow the flow of sperms in the uterine tube and (d) releasing the uterine tube wall portion to restore the flow of sperms in the uterine tube.

Where the constricted wall portion is stimulated to contract, so that the flow of sperms in the uterine tube is stopped, a first length of the constricted wall portion and a second length of the constricted wall portion, which is located downstream of the first length, are suitably simultaneously and cyclically stimulated, wherein the first length is progressively stimulated in the upstream direction of the uterine tube and the second length is progressively stimulated in the downstream direction of the uterine tube.

Furthermore, when using the method of the invention in accordance with the second and third options, the method may further comprise sensing a physical parameter of the patient or functional parameter of implanted components and adjusting the stimulation of the uterine tube wall portion in response to the sensed parameter. For example, the intensity of the stimulation of the uterine tube wall portion may be increased in response to a sensed pressure increase in the uterine tube, so that the flow of sperms in the uterine tube remains stopped when a pressure increase occurs in the uterine tube. In particular, the method may comprise sensing a physical parameter of the patient's that relates to the pressure in the uterine tube, and controlling the stimulation of the uterine tube wall portion in response to the sensed parameter. Any sensor for sensing a physical parameter of the patient, such as a pressure in the patient's body that relates to the pressure in the uterine tube may be provided, wherein the stimulation is controlled in response to signals from the sensor. Such a sensor may for example sense the pressure in the patient's abdomen, the pressure against the implanted constriction device or the pressure on the uterine tube wall. For example, a pressure sensor may be applied where the present invention is used for controlling flow of sperms of a female patient.

In accordance with a fourth restriction option, step (a) is performed by constricting the uterine tube wall portion, so that the flow of sperms in the uterine tube is stopped. When needed, the uterine tube wall portion is released to restore the flow of sperms in the uterine tube. Step (b) is only performed by stimulating the constricted wall portion to cause contraction thereof, so that the flow of sperms in the uterine tube remains stopped when a pressure increase occurs in the uterine tube. The method may further comprise sensing a physical parameter of the patient's body, such as a pressure in the patient's body that relates to the pressure in the uterine tube, and controlling the stimulation of the uterine tube wall portion in response to the sensed parameter. Such a physical parameter may be a pressure in the patient's abdomen and the sensor may be a pressure sensor.

In some applications of the method of the invention, continuous stimulation may over time change the physical properties of the tissue so that the tissue might be injured. Also, the effect of a continuous stimulation of the uterine tube wall may decrease over time. Therefore, step (b) is preferably performed by intermittently and individually stimulating different areas of the uterine tube wall portion so that the flow of sperms in the uterine tube continues to be restricted as desired and each area of the uterine tube wall portion essentially maintains its natural physical properties over time to prevent the area from being injured. Advantageously, each area of the uterine tube wall portion is stimulated during successive time periods, each time period being short enough to maintain over time satisfactory blood circulation in the area. Thus, the areas are stimulated so that an area that currently is not stimulated will have time to restore substantially normal blood circulation before it is stimulated again.

To maintain satisfactory blood circulation in the uterine tube wall stimulation step (b) is suitably performed by stimulating one or more of different areas of the uterine tube wall portion at a time, preferably by sequentially stimulating the different areas of the uterine tube wall portion or by shifting the stimulation from one area to another over time. Preferably, stimulation step (b) is performed by cyclically propagating the stimulation of the areas along the uterine tube wall portion, for example in accordance with a determined stimulation pattern.

The method of the invention may further comprise controlling, preferably by the patient, the constriction and/or stimulation of the uterine tube wall portion from outside the patient's body.

Generally, the method of the invention comprises sensing a physical parameter of the patient and controlling, preferably automatically, the constriction and/or stimulation of the uterine tube wall portion in response to the sensed parameter.

The constriction step (a) may be performed by constricting any uterine tube wall portions of a series of wall portions of the uterine tube, respectively, either in random or in accordance with a predetermined sequence. The stimulation step (b) may be performed by stimulating any of the constricted uterine tube wall portions of the series of uterine tube wall portions. Specifically, step (a) may be performed by constricting all of the uterine tube wall portions of the series of wall portions, and step (b) may be performed by stimulating any constricted uterine tube wall portions in random or in accordance with a predetermined sequence to close the uterine tube.

Moving Sperms in the Uterine Tube or Preventing the Movement of Sperms in the Uterine Tube in a Similar Way

It should be understood that any embodiment or part of embodiment disclosed below in connection with moving sperms in the uterine tube, or preventing the movement of sperms in the uterine tube, for the constriction and stimulation devices combined in the constriction/stimulation unit could be used for the separate constriction device and separate stimulation device, where applicable. The method of the present invention can be practiced for actively moving the sperms in uterine tube. Thus, in the embodiments of the invention listed below, steps (a) and (b) are co-operated to move the sperms in the uterine tube.

1) Step (a) is performed by constricting the uterine tube wall portion to restrict the flow of sperms in the uterine tube,

and step (b) is performed by stimulating the constricted wall portion to close the uterine tube either at an upstream end or a downstream end of the constricted uterine tube wall portion. The method further comprises (c) increasing the constriction of the uterine tube wall portion to move the sperms in the uterine tube.

2) Step (a) is performed by constricting the uterine tube wall portion to restrict the flow of sperms in the uterine tube, and step (b) is performed by progressively stimulating the constricted uterine tube wall portion to cause progressive contraction of the uterine tube wall portion to move the sperms in the uterine tube. The constricted uterine tube wall portion is progressively stimulated in the downstream or upstream direction of the uterine tube.

3) Step (a) is performed by varyingly constricting the uterine tube wall portion to vary the flow of sperms in the uterine tube, and step (b) is performed by progressively stimulating the constricted uterine tube wall portion to cause progressive contraction of the uterine tube wall portion to move the sperms in the uterine tube. The constricted uterine tube wall portion is progressively stimulated in the downstream or upstream direction of the uterine tube.

4) Step (a) is performed by varyingly constricting different areas of the uterine tube wall portion to cause progressive constriction of the uterine tube wall portion in the downstream or upstream direction of the uterine tube, and the constricted uterine tube wall portion is progressively stimulated to cause progressive contraction thereof in harmony with the progressive constriction of the uterine tube wall portion. The method may further comprise providing at least one elongated constriction element extending along the uterine tube wall portion, and controlling the elongated constriction element to progressively constrict the uterine tube wall portion in the downstream or upstream direction of the uterine tube. The elongated constriction element suitably comprises contact surfaces dimensioned to contact a length of uterine tube wall portion, and the method may further comprise providing a plurality of stimulation elements distributed along the contact surfaces, and controlling the stimulation elements to stimulate the different areas of the uterine tube wall portion along the length of the uterine tube wall portion.

5) Step (a) is performed by constricting any one of a series of wall portions of the uterine tube wall to at least restrict the flow of sperms in the uterine tube, and step (b) is performed by stimulating the constricted uterine tube wall portion to close the uterine tube. The method further comprises successively constricting the uterine tube wall portions of the series of uterine tube wall portions to move the sperms in the uterine tube in a peristaltic manner.

5a) In accordance with an alternative, the method further comprises providing at least one constriction element and at least one stimulation element positioned on the constriction element, moving the constriction element along the flow direction in the uterine tube to successively constrict the uterine tube wall portions of the series of uterine tube wall portions, and using the stimulation element to stimulate the uterine tube wall portion constricted by the constriction element to close the uterine tube. Suitably, the method further comprises cyclically moving the constriction element along the uterine tube wall portions of the series of uterine tube wall portions.

5b) In accordance with another alternative, the method further comprises providing a plurality of constriction elements and stimulation elements positioned on the constriction elements, moving each constriction element along the uterine tube to successively constrict the uterine tube wall

portions of the series of uterine tube wall portions, and using the stimulation elements to stimulate the uterine tube wall portion constricted by any one of the constriction elements to close the uterine tube. Suitably, the method further comprises cyclically moving the constriction elements one after the other along the uterine tube wall portions of the series of uterine tube wall portions. Specifically, the method further comprises providing a rotor carrying the constriction elements, and rotating the rotor so that each constriction element cyclically constricts the uterine tube wall portions of the series of uterine tube wall portions. Each constriction element suitably comprises a roller that rolls on the uterine tube to constrict the latter.

6) Step (a) is performed by constricting any uterine tube wall portions of a series of uterine tube wall portions of the uterine tube wall, respectively, wherein the uterine tube wall portions of the series of uterine tube wall portions are successively constricted along the uterine tube to move the sperms in the uterine tube of the patient. The stimulation step (b) is performed by stimulating any constricted uterine tube wall portions of the series of uterine tube wall portions.

7) Step (a) is performed by constricting uterine tube wall portions of a series of uterine tube wall portions without completely closing the uterine tube, and step (b) is performed by stimulating the constricted uterine tube wall portions one after the other, so that the uterine tube wall portions of the series of uterine tube wall portions are successively contracted along the uterine tube to move the sperms in the uterine tube of the female patient.

8) Step (a) is performed by constricting the uterine tube wall portion at an upstream or downstream end thereof to close the uterine tube. The method further comprises (c) constricting the uterine tube wall portion between the upstream and downstream ends thereof, to move the sperms contained in the uterine tube wall portion between the upstream and downstream ends thereof downstream or upstream in the uterine tube. Optionally, the method further comprises stimulating the uterine tube wall portion between the upstream and downstream ends thereof, as (c) is performed.

8a) In accordance with an alternative, step (a) is performed by constricting the uterine tube wall portion at the upstream end thereof to restrict the flow of sperms in the uterine tube, and step (b) is performed by stimulating the constricted uterine tube wall portion at the upstream end to close the uterine tube, whereby the sperms contained in the uterine tube wall portion between the upstream and downstream ends thereof is moved downstream in the uterine tube, as step (c) is performed.

8b) In accordance with another alternative, step (a) is performed by constricting the uterine tube wall portion at the downstream end thereof to restrict the flow of sperms in the uterine tube, and step (b) is performed by stimulating the constricted uterine tube wall portion at the downstream end to close the uterine tube, whereby the sperms contained in the uterine tube wall portion between the upstream and downstream ends thereof is moved upstream in the uterine tube, as step (c) is performed.

To summarize a few preferred embodiments see below:

In accordance with an alternative, step (a) is performed by constricting any uterine tube wall portions of a series of uterine tube wall portions of the uterine tube wall, respectively. In accordance with an alternative, the uterine tube wall portions of the series of uterine tube wall portions are constricted in random or in accordance with a predetermined sequence. In accordance with an alternative, the uterine tube wall portions of the series of uterine tube wall portions are

successively constricted along the uterine tube to move the sperms in the uterine tube of the patient or to prevent the sperms from moving in the uterine tube of the female patient.

In accordance with an alternative, step (b) is performed by stimulating any constricted uterine tube wall portions of the series of uterine tube wall portions. In accordance with an alternative, the uterine tube wall portions of the series of uterine tube wall portions are constricted in random or in accordance with a predetermined sequence. In accordance with an alternative, wherein the uterine tube wall portions of the series of uterine tube wall portions are successively constricted along the uterine tube to move the sperms in the uterine tube of the patient or to prevent the sperms from moving in the uterine tube of the patient.

In accordance with an alternative, step (a) is performed by constricting any uterine tube wall portions of a series of uterine tube wall portions of the uterine tube wall, respectively, wherein the uterine tube wall portions of the series of uterine tube wall portions are successively constricted without completely closing the uterine tube, and step (b) is performed by stimulating the constricted uterine tube wall portions, so that the uterine tube wall portions of the series of uterine tube wall portions are further constricted. In accordance with an alternative, the uterine tube wall portions of the series of uterine tube wall portions are constricted in random or in accordance with a predetermined sequence.

In accordance with an alternative, wherein the uterine tube wall portions of the series of uterine tube wall portions are successively constricted along the uterine tube to move the sperms in the uterine tube of the patient or to prevent the sperms from moving in the uterine tube of the patient.

In accordance with an alternative, step (a) is performed by constricting all of the uterine tube wall portions of the series of uterine tube wall portions, and step (b) is performed by stimulating any constricted uterine tube wall portions so that the uterine tube wall portions of the series of uterine tube wall portions are further constricted.

In accordance with an alternative, the uterine tube wall portions of the series of uterine tube wall portions are further constricted by the stimulation device in random or in accordance with a predetermined sequence.

In accordance with an alternative, the uterine tube wall portions of the series of uterine tube wall portions are successively further constricted by the stimulation device along the uterine tube to move the sperms in the uterine tube of the patient or to prevent the sperms from moving in the uterine tube of the patient.

In accordance with an alternative for all applicable alternatives, step (a) and step (b) are performed independently of each other or in accordance with an alternative, step (a) and step (b) are performed simultaneously.

In any of the above noted embodiments (1) to (8b), step (b) may be performed by stimulating the uterine tube wall portion with electric pulses.

Stimulation Modes

When stimulating muscular tissue there is a risk of injuring or deteriorating the tissue over time I.e., the stimulation is not properly performed. The method of the present invention is performed to reduce or even eliminate that risk. Thus, step (b) is performed by intermittently stimulating different areas of the uterine tube wall portion so that at least two of the areas are stimulated at different points of time. I.e., the stimulation is shifted from one area to another area over time. In addition, step (b) is performed by intermit-

tently stimulating the areas of the uterine tube wall portion so that an area of the different areas that currently is not stimulated has time to restore substantially normal blood circulation before it is stimulated again. Furthermore, step (b) is performed by intermittently stimulating the areas during successive time periods, wherein each time period is short enough to maintain satisfactory blood circulation in the area until the laps of the time period. This gives the advantage that the method of the present invention provides continuous stimulation of the uterine tube wall portion of the uterine tube to achieve the desired flow control while essentially maintaining over time the natural physical properties of the uterine tube without risk of injuring the uterine tube.

Also, by physically changing the places of stimulation on the uterine tube over time as described above it is possible to create an advantageous changing stimulation pattern on the uterine tube, in order to achieve a desired flow control.

To achieve the desired reaction of the uterine tube wall during the stimulation thereof, step (b) may be performed by stimulating the uterine tube wall portion with, preferably cyclically, varying stimulation intensity.

In a main embodiment of the invention, step (b) is performed by intermittently stimulating the uterine tube wall portion with pulses, preferably in the form of pulse trains. The pulse trains can be configured in many different ways by varying pulse parameters. Thus, the pulse amplitudes of the pulses of the pulse trains, the off time periods between the individual pulses of each pulse train and the width and repetition frequency of each pulse may be varied. Also the off time periods between the pulse trains may be varied, wherein each off time period between the pulse trains is kept long enough to restore substantially normal blood circulation in each area of the uterine tube wall portion, when the area is not stimulated during the off time periods. Furthermore, the repetition frequency of the pulses of the pulse trains and the length and number of pulses of each pulse train may be varied.

As mentioned above, for reasons of maintaining over time the effect of stimulation, it is preferable that different areas of the uterine tube wall portion are intermittently and individually stimulated. In consequence, step (b) may be performed by stimulating one or more of the areas at a time with pulses, by cyclically propagating the stimulation of the areas with pulses along the uterine tube wall portion, and/or by propagating the stimulation of the areas with pulses in accordance with a determined stimulation pattern. In case the off time periods between pulse trains that stimulate the respective area of the uterine tube wall portion are varied, it is preferable that each off time period between the pulse trains is controlled to last long enough to restore substantially normal blood circulation in the area when the latter is not stimulated during the off time periods.

Electric Stimulation

In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the invention, step (b) is performed by electrically stimulating the uterine tube wall portion, preferably with electric pulses to cause contraction of the uterine tube wall portion. This embodiment is particularly suited for applications in which the patient's wall portion includes muscle fibers that react to electrical stimuli. Thus, the uterine tube wall portion that includes the muscle fibers is stimulated with such electric pulses, preferably in the form of electric pulse trains, when the uterine tube wall portion is in the constricted state, to cause contraction of the uterine tube wall portion. Of course,

the configuration of the electric pulse trains may be similar to the above described pulse trains and different areas of the uterine tube wall portion may be electrically stimulated in the same manner as described above.

In accordance with the preferred embodiment, the method of the invention comprises providing at least one, preferably a plurality of electrical elements, such as electrodes, engaging and stimulating the uterine tube wall portion with electric pulses. Optionally, the electrical elements may be placed in a fixed orientation relative to one another. The method comprises electrically energizing the electrical elements, preferably by cyclically energizing each element with electric pulses. The electrical elements may be energized so that the electrical elements are energized one at a time in sequence, or so that a number or groups of the electrical elements are energized at a time. Also, groups of electrical elements may be sequentially energized, either randomly or in accordance with a predetermined pattern.

The method may further comprise applying the electrical elements on the patient's uterine tube wall portion so that the electrical elements form any pattern of electrical elements, preferably an elongate pattern of electrical elements extending lengthwise along the uterine tube wall portion and the elements about the respective areas of the uterine tube wall portion. The electrical elements may be successively energized along the elongate pattern of electrical elements in a direction opposite to or in the same direction as that of the flow of sperms in the patient's uterine tube. Optionally, the electrical elements may be successively energized along the elongate pattern of electrical elements from a position substantially at the center of the constricted wall portion towards both ends of the elongate pattern of electrical elements. Where the uterine tube is to be kept closed for a relatively long time, the electrical elements may be energized so that energized electrical elements form two waves of energized electrical elements that simultaneously advance from the center of the constricted wall portion in two opposite directions towards both ends of the elongate pattern of electrical elements. Such waves of energized electrical elements can be repeated over and over again without harming the uterine tube and without moving fluid or gas in any direction in the uterine tube.

The elongate pattern of electrical elements may include one or more rows of electrical elements extending lengthwise along the uterine tube. Each row of electrical elements may form a straight, helical or zig-zag path of electrical elements, or any form of path. The electrical elements may be energized so that the electrical elements currently energized form at least one group of adjacent energized electrical elements, wherein the elements in the group of energized electrical elements form a path of energized electrical elements extending at least in part around the patient's uterine tube, preferably completely around the patient's uterine tube. Alternatively, the elements in the group of energized electrical elements form two paths of energized electrical elements extending on mutual sides of the patient's uterine tube or more than two paths of energized electrical elements extending on different sides of the patient's uterine tube, preferably at least substantially transverse to the flow direction in the uterine tube.

In an embodiment of the invention, the electrical elements form a plurality of groups of elements, wherein the groups form a series of groups extending along the patient's uterine tube in the flow direction in the patient's uterine tube. The electrical elements of each group of electrical elements may form a path of elements extending at least in part around the patient's uterine tube. In a first alternative, the electrical

elements of each group of electrical elements may form more than two paths of elements extending on different sides of the patient's uterine tube, preferably substantially transverse to the flow direction in the patient's uterine tube. The groups of electrical elements in the series of groups may be energized in random or in accordance with a predetermined pattern. Alternatively, the groups of electrical elements in the series of groups may be successively energized in a direction opposite to or in the same direction as that of the flow of sperms in the patient's uterine tube, or in both said directions starting from a position substantially at the center of the constricted wall portion. For example, groups of energized electrical elements may form advancing waves of energized electrical elements, as described above. I.e., the groups of electrical elements may be energized so that energized electrical elements form two waves of energized electrical elements that simultaneously advance from the center of the constricted uterine tube wall portion in two opposite directions towards both ends of the elongate pattern of electrical elements.

Thermal Stimulation

In accordance with an embodiment of the invention, stimulation step (b) is performed by thermally stimulating the uterine tube wall portion. Thus, the uterine tube wall portion may be cooled, when the uterine tube wall portion is constricted, to cause contraction of the uterine tube wall portion. For example, the uterine tube wall portion may be constricted to at least restrict the flow of sperms in the uterine tube, and the constricted wall portion may be cooled to cause contraction thereof, so that the flow of sperms in the uterine tube is at least further restricted, or further restricted but not stopped, or stopped. Alternatively, the uterine tube wall portion may be heated, when the uterine tube wall portion is constricted and contracted, to cause expansion of the uterine tube wall portion. Where applicable, thermal stimulation may be practiced in any of the embodiments of the present invention. Where applicable, thermal stimulation may be practiced in any of the embodiments of the present invention, and the thermal stimulation may be controlled in response to various sensors, for example strain, motion or pressure sensors.

Constriction and Stimulation Devices

It should be understood that any embodiment or part of embodiment for the combined stimulation device and constriction device, could be used, if applicable, for any one of the devices as a stand alone device. Generally, the method of the invention comprises providing a constriction device that constricts the uterine tube wall portion, a stimulation device that stimulates the constricted uterine tube wall portion and a control device that controls the constriction device and/or the stimulation device. The method comprises operating the control device from outside the patient's body, preferably by using the control device to wirelessly control the constriction device and/or stimulation device. The wireless control is preferably performed in a non-magnetic manner, whereby implanted magnetic devices can be avoided. Suitably, the control device comprises a hand-held wireless remote control operated by the patient.

Alternatively, the control device comprises a manually operable switch for switching on and off the constriction device and/or stimulation device. In this case, the method

comprises subcutaneously implanting the switch in the patient and manually operating the implanted switch from outside the patient's body.

In an embodiment of the invention, the control device comprises a programmable internal control unit, such as a microprocessor, and the method comprises implanting in the patient the internal control unit and controlling by the internal control unit the constriction device and/or stimulation device. The control device may also comprise an external control unit outside the patient's body. In this case, the method comprises controlling by the external control unit the constriction device and/or stimulation device and, optionally, using the external control unit to program the implanted internal control unit. The internal control unit may be programmable for controlling the constriction device and/or stimulation device over time, for example in accordance with an activity schedule program.

The constriction of the uterine tube wall portion can be calibrated by using the control device to control the stimulation device to stimulate the uterine tube wall portion while controlling the constriction device to adjust the constriction of the uterine tube wall portion until the desired restriction of the flow of sperms in the uterine tube is obtained.

Sensor Controlled Constriction and/or Stimulation

It should be understood that any embodiment or part of embodiment disclosed below in connection with sensor control of the constriction and stimulation devices combined in the constriction/stimulation unit could be used for the separate constriction device and separate stimulation device, where applicable. In an embodiment of the invention, the method comprises implanting at least one sensor and controlling by the control device the constriction device and/or the stimulation device in response to signals from the sensor. Generally, the sensor directly or indirectly senses at least one physical parameter of the patient, functional parameter of the apparatus, or functional parameter of a medical implant in the patient.

Many different kinds of sensor for sensing physical parameters may be used. For example motion sensors for sensing organ motion, i.e. natural contractions, such as stomach or intestinal contractions, pressure sensors for sensing pressure in the organ, strain sensors for sensing strain of the organ, flow sensors for sensing fluid flow in the uterine tube, spectro-photometrical sensors, Ph-sensors for acidity or alkalinity of the fluid in the uterine tube, oxygen-sensors for sensing the oxygen content of the fluid in the uterine tube or sensors for sensing the distribution of the stimulation on the stimulated uterine tube. Any conceivable sensors for sensing any other kind of useful physical parameter may be used.

Many different kinds of sensors that sense functional parameters of implanted components may also be used for the control of the constriction device and/or the stimulation device. For example sensors for sensing electric parameters of implanted electric components, or sensors for sensing the performance of implanted motors or the like.

The sensor may comprise a pressure sensor for sensing as the physical parameter a pressure in the patient's body that relates to the pressure in the uterine tube of the patient. In this case, the method suitably comprises operating the control device to control the constriction device to change the constriction of the patient's uterine tube wall portion in response to the pressure sensor sensing a predetermined value of measured pressure.

Alternatively, or in combination with the pressure sensor, a position sensor may be provided for sensing as the physical parameter the orientation of the patient with respect to the horizontal. The position sensor may be a biocompatible version of what is shown in U.S. Pat. Nos. 4,942,668 and 5,900,909, these documents being incorporated hereby by reference. For example, the control device may control the constriction device and/or stimulation device to change the constriction of the patient's wall portion in response to the position sensor sensing that the patient has assumed a substantially horizontal orientation, i.e. that the patient is lying down.

The above described sensors may be used in any of the embodiments of the invention, where applicable.

The control device may control the constriction device and/or stimulation device to change the constriction of the patient's uterine tube wall portion in response to the time of day. For that purpose the control device may include a clock mechanism for controlling the constriction device and/or stimulation device to change the constriction of the patient's uterine tube wall portion to increase or decrease the influence on the flow of sperms in the uterine tube during different time periods of the day. In case a sensor of any of the above-described types for sensing a physical or functional parameter is provided, either the clock mechanism is used for controlling the constriction device and/or stimulation device provided that the parameter sensed by the sensor does not override the clock mechanism, or the sensor is used for controlling the constriction device and/or stimulation device provided that the clock mechanism does not override the sensor. Suitably, the control device produces an indication, such as a sound signal or displayed information, in response to signals from the sensor.

The control device may comprise an implantable internal control unit that directly controls the constriction device and/or stimulation device in response to signals from the sensor. The control device may further comprise a wireless remote control adapted to set control parameters of the internal control unit from outside the patient without mechanically penetrating the patient. At least one of the control parameters, which is settable by the wireless remote control, is the physical or functional parameter. Suitably, the internal control unit includes the above mentioned clock mechanism, wherein the wireless remote control also is adapted to set the clock mechanism. Alternatively, the control device may comprise an external control unit outside the patient's body for controlling the constriction device and/or stimulation device in response to signals from the sensor.

Constriction of Patient's Uterine Tube

It should be understood that any embodiment or part of embodiment disclosed below in connection with constricting the patient's uterine tube could be used for the separate constriction device and separate stimulation device, where applicable. Method step (a) may be performed in many different ways. Thus, step (a) may be performed by:

(1)—constricting the uterine tube wall portion so that the through-flow area of the uterine tube assumes a size in the constricted state small enough to cause the constricted uterine tube wall portion to contract to stop the flow of sperms in the uterine tube when step (b) is performed;

(2)—bending the uterine tube wall portion;

(3)—clamping the uterine tube wall portion between at least two elements positioned on different sides of the uterine tube;

13

(4)—clamping the uterine tube between an element and the bone or tissue of the patient;

(5)—rotating at least two elements positioned on different sides of the uterine tube;

or

(6)—clamping the uterine tube between at least two articulated clamping elements positioned on different sides of the uterine tube.

In the above noted alternatives (1) to (6) of method step (a), the constriction of the uterine tube wall portion of the uterine tube may be changed either mechanically or hydraulically. For many applications of the present invention, step (a) is suitably performed so that the through-flow area of the uterine tube assumes a size in the constricted state that is small enough to enable the stimulation during step (b) to contract the uterine tube wall portion of the uterine tube to stop the flow of sperms in the uterine tube.

Where the constriction of the uterine tube wall portion is hydraulically changed, the method of the invention may further comprise implanting in the patient a reservoir containing a predetermined amount of hydraulic fluid, and a constriction device engaging the uterine tube wall portion and having an expandable/contractible cavity, wherein step (a) is performed by distributing hydraulic fluid from the reservoir to increase the volume of the cavity to constrict the uterine tube wall portion, and by distributing hydraulic fluid from the cavity to the reservoir to decrease the volume of the cavity to release the uterine tube wall portion. The cavity may be defined by a balloon of the constriction device that abuts the uterine tube wall portion of the patient's uterine tube, so that the patient's uterine tube wall portion is constricted upon expansion of the cavity and released upon contraction of the cavity.

Alternatively, the cavity may be defined by a bellows that displaces a relatively large contraction element of the constriction device, for example a large balloon that abuts the uterine tube wall portion, so that the patient's uterine tube wall portion is constricted upon contraction of the bellows and released upon expansion of the bellows. Thus, a relatively small addition of hydraulic fluid to the bellows causes a relatively large increase in the constriction of the uterine tube wall portion. Such a bellows may also be replaced by a suitably designed piston/cylinder mechanism.

Where the hydraulic means comprises a cavity in the constriction device, the following embodiments of the invention are conceivable.

1) The reservoir comprises first and second wall portions, and step (a) is performed by displacing the first and second wall portions relative to each other to change the volume of the reservoir, so that fluid is distributed from the reservoir to the cavity, or from the cavity to the reservoir.

1a) At least one of a magnetic device, a hydraulic device or an electric control device displaces the first and second wall portions of the reservoir.

2) A pump is provided for pumping fluid between the reservoir and the cavity.

2a) The pump comprises a first activation member for activating the pump to pump fluid from the reservoir to the cavity and a second activation member for activating the pump to pump fluid from the cavity to the reservoir.

2a1) The first and second activation members are operable by manual manipulation thereof.

2a2) At least one of the activation members operates when subjected to an external predetermined pressure.

2a3) At least one of the first and second activating members is operable by magnetic means, hydraulic means, or electric control means.

14

2b) A fluid conduit between the pump and the cavity is provided, wherein the reservoir forms part of the conduit. The conduit and pump are devoid of any non-return valve. The reservoir forms a fluid chamber with a variable volume, and the pump distributes fluid from the chamber to the cavity by a reduction in the volume of the chamber and withdraws fluid from the cavity by an expansion of the volume of the chamber. A motor is provided for driving the pump, wherein the pump comprises a movable wall of the reservoir for changing the volume of the chamber.

In all of the above noted embodiments 1 to 2b where the hydraulic means comprises an expandable cavity in the constriction device, the cavity can be exchanged by a cylinder/piston mechanism for adjusting the constriction device. In this case, hydraulic fluid is distributed between the reservoir and the cylinder/piston mechanism to adjust the constriction device.

3) The method further comprises implanting a reverse servo operatively connected to the hydraulic means. The term "reverse servo" is to be understood as a mechanism that transfers a strong force acting on a moving element having a short stroke into a weak force acting on another moving element having a long stroke; i.e., the reverse function of a normal servo mechanism. Thus, minor changes in the amount of fluid in a smaller reservoir could be transferred by the reverse servo into major changes in the amount of fluid in a larger reservoir.

Preferably, the reverse servo comprises an expandable servo reservoir containing servo fluid and a fluid supply reservoir hydraulically connected to the servo reservoir to form a closed conduit system for the servo fluid. The expandable servo reservoir has first and second wall portions, which are displaceable relative to each other in response to a change in the volume of the expandable servo reservoir.

In accordance with a first alternative, the first and second wall portions of the servo reservoir are operatively connected to the hydraulic means. The reverse servo distributes fluid between the fluid supply reservoir and the expandable servo reservoir to change the volume of the servo reservoir, whereby the hydraulic means is operated to adjust the constriction device.

In accordance with a second alternative, there is provided an implantable main reservoir containing a predetermined amount of hydraulic fluid, wherein the reverse servo is operated to distribute hydraulic fluid between the main reservoir and the hydraulic means to adjust the constriction device. More specifically, the main reservoir is provided with first and second wall portions operatively connected to the first and second wall portions of the expandable servo reservoir, so that the volume of the main reservoir is changed when the volume of the expandable servo reservoir is changed. Thus, when the reverse servo distributes servo fluid between the fluid supply reservoir and the expandable servo reservoir to change the volume of the main reservoir, hydraulic fluid is distributed from the main reservoir to the hydraulic means, or from the hydraulic means to the main reservoir. Advantageously, the method comprises dimensioning the servo and main reservoirs, so that when the volume of the servo reservoir is changed by a relatively small amount of servo fluid, the volume of the main reservoir is changed by a relatively large amount of hydraulic fluid.

In both of the above-described alternatives, the fluid supply reservoir may have first and second wall portions, which are displaceable relative to each other to change the volume of the fluid supply reservoir to distribute servo fluid

15

between the fluid supply reservoir and the expandable servo reservoir. The first and second wall portions of the fluid supply reservoir may be displaced relative to each other by manual manipulation, a magnetic device, a hydraulic device, or an electric control device to change the volume of the fluid supply reservoir to distribute servo fluid between the fluid supply reservoir and the expandable servo reservoir.

In all of the above noted embodiments 1 to 2b where the hydraulic means comprises an expandable cavity in the constriction device, or in embodiments where the hydraulic means includes a hydraulically operable mechanical construction, the reverse servo described above may be used. In a further embodiment of the invention, the hydraulic means include first and second hydraulically interconnected expandable/contractible reservoirs. The first reservoir is operatively connected to the constriction device, so that the constriction device changes the constriction of the patient's wall portion upon expansion or contraction of the first reservoir. By changing the volume of the second reservoir hydraulic fluid is distributed between the two reservoirs, so that the first reservoir is either expanded or contracted. This embodiment requires no non-return valve in the fluid communication conduits between the two reservoirs, which is beneficial to long-term operation of the hydraulic means.

Alternatively, the hydraulic means may include first and second hydraulically interconnected piston/cylinder mechanisms instead of the first and second reservoirs described above. The first piston/cylinder mechanism is operatively connected to the constriction device, so that the constriction device changes the constriction of the patient's wall portion upon operation of the first piston/cylinder mechanism. By operating the second piston/cylinder mechanism hydraulic fluid is distributed between the two piston/cylinder mechanisms, so that the first piston/cylinder mechanism adjusts the constriction device.

Where the constriction device does not include an expandable/contractible cavity, the constriction device may comprise at least two elongated clamping elements extending along the uterine tube wall portion on different sides of the uterine tube. The hydraulic means, which may include the reverse servo described above, hydraulically moves the elongated clamping elements towards the uterine tube to constrict the uterine tube wall portion. For example, the constriction device may have hydraulic chambers in which the clamping elements slide back and forth, and the hydraulic means may also include a pump and an implantable reservoir containing hydraulic fluid. The pump distributes hydraulic fluid from the reservoir to the chambers to move the clamping elements against the uterine tube wall portion, and distributes hydraulic fluid from the chambers to the reservoir to move the clamping elements away from the uterine tube wall portion.

Energy Supply

It should be understood that any embodiment or part of embodiment disclosed below in connection with the power of the constriction and stimulation devices combined in the constriction/stimulation unit could be used for the separate constriction device and separate stimulation device, where applicable. Generally, method step (a) is performed by using the constriction device and step (b) is performed by using the stimulation device, wherein the method further comprises forming the constriction and stimulation devices in an operable constriction/stimulation unit.

In a simple form of the invention, the method comprises implanting a source of energy, such as a battery, recharge-

16

able battery or accumulator, releasing energy from the source of energy and using the released energy in connection with the operation of the constriction/stimulation unit.

In a more sophisticated form of the invention, which is preferable, the method comprises transmitting wireless energy from outside the patient's body to inside the patient's body and using the transmitted wireless energy in connection with the operation of the constriction/stimulation unit.

Transmission of Wireless Energy

It should be understood that any embodiment or part of embodiment disclosed below in connection with wireless control or power of the constriction and stimulation devices combined in the constriction/stimulation unit could be used for the separate constriction device and separate stimulation device, where applicable. The wireless energy may be directly used in connection with the operation of the constriction/stimulation unit, as the wireless energy is being transmitted. For example, the wireless energy may be transmitted in the form of an electric, an electromagnetic or a magnetic field, or a combination thereof, or electromagnetic waves for direct power of the constriction/stimulation unit. For example, where an electric motor or pump operates the constriction device of the constriction/stimulation unit, wireless energy in the form of a magnetic or an electromagnetic field may be used for direct power of the motor or pump.

Thus, the motor or pump is running directly during transmission of the wireless energy. This may be achieved in two different ways: a) using a transforming device implanted in the patient to transform the wireless energy into energy of a different form, preferably electric energy, and powering the motor or pump with the transformed energy, or b) using the wirelessly transmitted energy to directly power the motor or pump. Preferably wireless energy in the form of an electromagnetic or magnetic field is used to directly influence specific components of the motor or pump to create kinetic energy. Such components may include coils integrated in the motor or pump.

The wireless energy is suitably transmitted in pulses or digital pulses, or a combination of pulses and digital pulses.

Preferably, the wireless energy is transmitted in at least one wireless signal, suitably a wave signal. The wave signal may comprise an electromagnetic wave signal including one of an infrared light signal, a visible light signal, an ultra violet light signal, a laser signal, a microwave signal, a radio wave signal, an x-ray radiation signal, and a gamma radiation signal. Alternatively, the wave signal may comprise a sound or an ultrasound wave signal. The wireless signal may be a digital or analogue signal, or a combination of a digital and analogue signal.

In accordance with a particular embodiment of the invention, the wireless energy is not for direct use in connection with the operation of the constriction/stimulation unit. In this embodiment the wireless energy comprises energy of a first form, which is transmitted into energy of a second form suited to operate the constriction/stimulation unit. Typically, the energy of the second form is different from the energy of the first form. For example, the wireless energy of the first form may comprise sound waves, whereas the energy of the second form may comprise electric energy. Optionally, one of the energy of the first form and the energy of the second form may comprise magnetic energy, kinetic energy, sound energy, chemical energy, radiant energy, electromagnetic energy, photo energy, nuclear energy or thermal energy. Preferably, one of the energy of the first form and the energy

of the second form is non-magnetic, non-kinetic, non-chemical, non-sonic, non-nuclear or non-thermal.

Transforming Wireless Energy

It should be understood that any embodiment or part of embodiment disclosed below in connection with the control or energizing of the constriction and stimulation devices combined in the constriction/stimulation unit could be used for the separate constriction device and separate stimulation device, where applicable. In accordance with a particular embodiment of the invention, an implantable energy-transforming device is provided for transforming wireless energy of a first form transmitted by the energy-transmission device into energy of a second form, which typically is different from the energy of the first form. The constriction/stimulation unit is operable in response to the energy of the second form. For example, the wireless energy of the first form may comprise sound waves, whereas the energy of the second form may comprise electric energy. Optionally, one of the energy of the first form and the energy of the second form may comprise magnetic energy, kinetic energy, sound energy, chemical energy, radiant energy, electromagnetic energy, photo energy, nuclear energy or thermal energy. Preferably, one of the energy of the first form and the energy of the second form is non-magnetic, non-kinetic, non-chemical, non-sonic, non-nuclear or non-thermal.

The energy-transforming device may function different from or similar to the energy-transmission device. Advantageously, the energy-transforming device comprises at least one element, such as at least one semiconductor, having a positive region and a negative region, when exposed to the energy of the first form transmitted by the energy-transmission device, wherein the element is capable of creating an energy field between the positive and negative regions, and the energy field produces the energy of the second form. More specifically, the element may comprise an electrical junction element, which is capable of inducing an electric field between the positive and negative regions when exposed to the energy of the first form transmitted by the energy-transmission device, whereby the energy of the second form comprises electric energy.

The energy of the first form may directly or indirectly be transformed into the energy of the second form. The method of the invention may comprise providing a motor for operating the constriction device and powering the motor with the energy of the second form. The constriction device may be operable to perform at least one reversible function and the method may comprise reversing the function by using the motor. For example, the method may comprise shifting the polarity of the energy of the second form to reverse the motor.

The motor may be directly powered with the transformed energy, as the energy of the second form is being transformed from the energy of the first form. Preferably, the constriction/stimulation unit is directly operated with the energy of the second form in a non-magnetic, non-thermal or non-mechanical manner.

Normally, the implanted constriction/stimulation unit comprises electric components that are energized with electrical energy. Therefore, the energy of the first form may be transformed into a direct current or pulsating direct current, or a combination of a direct current and pulsating direct current. Alternatively, the energy of the first form may be transformed into an alternating current or a combination of a direct and alternating current.

The method of the invention may comprise implanting in the patient an internal source of energy, and supplying energy from the internal source of energy for the operation of the constriction/stimulation unit. The method may further comprise implanting in the patient a switch operable to switch from an "off" mode, in which the internal source of energy is not in use, to an "on" mode, in which the internal source of energy supplies energy for the operation of the constriction/stimulation unit, and/or for energizing implanted electronic components of the constriction/stimulation unit. The switch may be operated by the energy of the first form or by the energy of the second form. The described switch arrangement reduces power consumption of the constriction/stimulation unit between operations.

The internal source of energy may store the energy of the second form. In this case, the internal source of energy suitably comprises an accumulator, such as at least one capacitor or at least one rechargeable battery, or a combination of at least one capacitor and at least one rechargeable battery. Where the internal source of energy is a rechargeable battery it may be charged only at times convenient for the patient, for example when the patient is sleeping. Alternatively, the internal source of energy may supply energy for the operation of the constriction/stimulation unit but not be used for storing the energy of the second form. In this alternative, the internal source of energy may be a battery and the switch described above may or may not be provided.

Suitably, the method of the invention may comprise implanting a stabilizer for stabilizing the energy of the second form. Where the energy of the second form comprises electric energy the stabilizer suitably comprises at least one capacitor.

The energy-transforming device may be designed for implantation subcutaneously in the abdomen, thorax or cephalic region of the patient. Alternatively, it may be designed for implantation in an orifice of the patient's body and under the mucosa or intramuscularly outside the mucosa of the orifice.

Control of Constriction/Stimulation Unit

It should be understood that any embodiment or part of embodiment disclosed below in connection with the control of the constriction and stimulation devices combined in the constriction/stimulation unit could be used for the separate constriction device and separate stimulation device, where applicable. Although the constriction device of the constriction/stimulation unit may normally keep the patient's wall portion in the constricted state, in most applications using the present invention there will be daily adjustments of the constriction device. Therefore, in a preferred embodiment of the invention, the constriction device is adjustable to enable changing the constriction of the patient's uterine tube wall portion as desired and the control device controls the constriction device to change the constriction of the uterine tube wall portion.

The method of the invention suitably comprises operating the control device by the patient. In a simple form the control device comprises a manually operable switch for switching on and off the constriction/stimulation unit, and the method further comprises subcutaneously implanting the switch in the patient. It is preferable, however, that the control device comprises a hand-held wireless remote control operable by the patient from outside the patient's body to control the constriction/stimulation unit to adjust the stimulation intensity and/or adjust the constriction of the uterine tube wall

portion. The wireless remote control is suitably designed for application on the patient's body like a wristwatch.

In some applications of the invention, the constriction device of the constriction/stimulation unit may be designed to normally keep the patient's uterine tube wall portion in the constricted state. I.e., after implantation the constriction device all the time keeps the uterine tube wall portion constricted. In this case, the control device may be used when needed, conveniently by the patient, to control the stimulation device of the constriction/stimulation unit to stimulate the constricted uterine tube wall portion, preferably while adjusting the stimulation intensity, to cause contraction of the uterine tube wall portion, so that the flow of sperms in the uterine tube is at least further restricted or stopped, and to control the stimulation device to cease the stimulation. More precisely, the method of the invention may comprise operating the control device by the patient to

a) control the stimulation device in a first mode to stimulate the constricted wall portion to further restrict the flow of sperms in the uterine tube and control the stimulation device in a second mode to cease the stimulation of the uterine tube wall portion to increase the flow of sperms in the uterine tube; or

b) control the stimulation device in a first mode to stimulate the constricted wall portion to stop the flow of sperms in the uterine tube and control the stimulation device in a second mode to cease the stimulation of the uterine tube wall portion to allow flow in the uterine tube.

Either the first mode or the second mode may be temporary.

The wireless remote control preferably transmits at least one wireless control signal for controlling the constriction/stimulation unit. The control signal may comprise a frequency, amplitude, phase modulated signal or a combination thereof, and may be an analogue or a digital signal, or a combination of an analogue and digital signal. The remote control may transmit an electromagnetic carrier wave signal for carrying the digital or analogue control signal. Also the carrier signal may comprise digital, analogue or a combination of digital and analogue signals.

Any of the above signals may comprise wave signals, such as a sound wave signal, an ultrasound wave signal, an electromagnetic wave signal, an infrared light signal, a visible light signal, an ultra violet light signal, a laser light signal, a micro wave signal, a radio wave signal, an x-ray radiation signal or a gamma radiation signal.

Alternatively, the control signal may comprise an electric or magnetic field, or a combined electric and magnetic field.

Operation of Constriction/Stimulation Unit

It should be understood that any embodiment or part of embodiment for operating the combined stimulation device and constriction device, could be used, if applicable, for any one of the devices as a stand alone device. The method of the invention may comprise implanting in the patient an operation device, and operating the constriction/stimulation unit with the operation device. A magnet may be provided, wherein the method comprises using the magnet to activate the operation device from outside the patient's body. The operation device suitably comprises a motor which is powered with energy released from a source of energy, such as a battery. Although the constriction/stimulation unit in embodiments described above suitably is designed as a single piece, which is most practical for implantation, it should be noted that as an alternative the constriction device

and stimulation device of the constriction/stimulation unit could be designed as separate pieces.

Laparoscopic Method

The present invention also provides a first method for controlling a flow of sperms in a uterine tube formed by a uterine tube wall of a patient. The method comprises the steps of:

inserting a needle like tube into the cavity of the patients body,

filling the cavity with gas thereby expanding the cavity, placing at least two laparoscopic trocars in the patient's body,

inserting a camera through one of the trocars into the cavity,

inserting a dissecting tool through any of the trocar and dissecting an area of at least one portion of the uterine tube wall,

placing a constriction device and a stimulation device in the dissected area in operative engagement with the uterine tube,

using the constriction device to gently constrict the uterine tube wall portion of the uterine tube to influence the flow of sperms in the uterine tube, and

using the stimulation device to stimulate the constricted wall portion to cause contraction of the uterine tube wall portion to further influence the flow of sperms in the uterine tube.

The present invention also provides a second method for controlling a flow of sperms in a uterine tube formed by a uterine tube wall of a patient. The method comprises the steps of:

inserting a needle like tube into a cavity of the patients body,

using the needle like tube to fill the cavity with gas thereby expanding the cavity,

placing at least two laparoscopic trocars in the patient's body,

inserting a camera through one of the trocars into the cavity,

inserting a dissecting tool through any of the trocar and dissecting an area of at least one portion of the uterine tube wall,

placing a stimulation device in the dissected area in operative engagement with the uterine tube, and

using the stimulation device to stimulate the uterine tube wall portion to cause contraction of the uterine tube wall portion to influence the flow of sperms in the uterine tube.

The present invention also provides a third method for controlling a flow of sperms in a uterine tube formed by a uterine tube wall of a patient. The method comprises the steps of:

inserting a needle like tube into a cavity of the patients body,

using the needle like tube to fill the cavity with gas thereby expanding the cavity,

placing at least two laparoscopic trocars in the patient's body,

inserting a camera through one of the trocars into the cavity,

inserting a dissecting tool through any of the trocar and dissecting an area of at least one portion of the uterine tube wall,

placing a constriction device in the dissected area in operative engagement with the uterine tube,

using the constriction device to constrict the uterine tube wall portion of the uterine tube to influence the flow of sperms in the uterine tube.

The present invention also provides a fourth method for controlling a flow of sperms in a uterine tube formed by a uterine tube wall of a patient. The method comprises the steps of:

cutting the skin of the patient,
inserting a dissecting tool and dissecting an area of at least one portion of the uterine tube wall,

placing a constriction device and a stimulation device in the dissected area in operative engagement with the uterine tube,

using the constriction device to gently constrict the uterine tube wall portion of the uterine tube to influence the flow of sperms in the uterine tube, and

using the stimulation device to stimulate the constricted wall portion to cause contraction of the uterine tube wall portion to further influence the flow of sperms in the uterine tube.

The present invention also provides a fifth method for controlling a flow of sperms in a uterine tube formed by a uterine tube wall of a patient. The method comprises the steps of:

cutting the skin of the patient,
inserting a dissecting tool and dissecting an area of at least one portion of the uterine tube wall,

placing a stimulation device in the dissected area in operative engagement with the uterine tube, and

using the stimulation device to stimulate the uterine tube wall portion to cause contraction of the uterine tube wall portion to influence the flow of sperms in the uterine tube.

The present invention also provides a sixth method for controlling a flow of sperms in a uterine tube formed by a uterine tube wall of a patient. The method comprises the steps of:

cutting the skin of the patient,
inserting a dissecting tool and dissecting an area of at least one portion of the uterine tube wall,

placing a constriction device in the dissected area in operative engagement with the uterine tube, and

using the constriction device to constrict the uterine tube wall portion to influence the flow of sperms in the uterine tube.

In all of the above presented methods 1-6 above the cavity may constitute at least one of an abdominal cavity, a cavity in the pelvic region, a retroperitoneal cavity, a cavity in human soft tissue such as muscle, fat and fibrotic tissue.

The method further comprises implanting a powered operation device for operating the constriction device. The operation device may comprise a powered hydraulic operation device or an electrically powered operation device, such as an electric motor.

The method further comprises transmitting wireless energy for powering the operation device, and when desired to influence the flow of sperms in the patient's uterine tube, powering the operation device with the transmitted energy to operate the constriction device.

The method further comprises implanting a source of energy in the patient, providing an external source of energy, controlling the external source of energy to release wireless energy, transforming the wireless energy into storable energy, such as electric energy, non-invasively charging the implanted source of energy with the transformed energy, and controlling the implanted source of energy from outside the patient's body to release energy for use in connection with the operation of the constriction device and/or stimulation

device. The wireless energy is transformed into a storable energy different from the wireless energy.

Alternatively, the method further comprises providing a source of energy outside the patient's body, controlling the external source of energy from outside the patient's body to release wireless energy, and using the released wireless energy for operating the constriction device and/or stimulation device. The wireless energy may be transformed into electrical energy inside the patient's body by an implanted energy-transforming device, wherein the electrical energy is used in connection with the operation of the constriction device and/or stimulation device. The electrical energy may be directly used in connection with the operation of the constriction device and/or stimulation device, as the transforming device transforms the wireless energy into the electrical energy. The external source of energy may be controlled from outside the patient's body to release non-magnetic wireless energy, wherein the released non-magnetic wireless energy is used for operating the constriction device and/or stimulation device. Alternatively, the external source of energy may be controlled from outside the patient's body to release electromagnetic wireless energy, wherein the released electromagnetic wireless energy is used for operating the constriction device and/or stimulation device.

Feed Back Related to the Wireless Energy

The following embodiments are related to feed back information related to an energy balance either comparing;

- the amount of energy received by the internal energy source compared to the energy used by the constriction device and/or stimulation device, or
- The amount of energy received by the internal energy source and the amount of energy transmitted by the external energy source.

Several alternatives of the method of the present invention are disclosed below and may except being correlated directly to the constriction device and/or stimulation device also be included in the operating method. These methods are valid for use both with the stimulation device and constriction device separate or in combination.

A method for controlling the transmission of wireless energy comprising an internal energy source, wherein said wireless energy is transmitted from an external energy source located outside the patient and is received by the internal energy source located inside the patient, the internal energy source being connected to the constriction device and/or stimulation device for directly or indirectly supplying received energy thereto, the method comprising the steps of:

determining an energy balance between the energy received by the internal energy source and the energy used for the constriction device and/or stimulation device, and

controlling the transmission of wireless energy from the external energy source, based on the determined energy balance.

A method, wherein the wireless energy is transmitted inductively from a primary coil in the external energy source to a secondary coil in the internal energy receiver.

A method, wherein a change in said energy balance is detected, and the transmission of wireless energy is controlled based on said detected energy balance change.

A method, wherein a difference is detected between energy received by said internal energy receiver and energy used for a medical device, and the transmission of wireless energy is controlled based on said detected energy difference.

A method, wherein the amount of transmitted wireless energy is decreased if the detected energy balance change implies that the energy balance is increasing, or vice versa.

A method, wherein the decrease/increase of energy transmission corresponds to a detected change rate.

A method, wherein the amount of transmitted wireless energy is decreased if the detected energy difference implies that the received energy is greater than the used energy, or vice versa.

A method, wherein the decrease/increase of energy transmission corresponds to the magnitude of said detected energy difference.

A method, wherein the energy used for the constriction device and/or stimulation device is stored in at least one energy storage device of the device.

A method, wherein substantially all the energy used for the constriction device and/or stimulation device is consumed to operate the device.

A method, wherein the energy is consumed after being stabilised in at least one energy stabilizing unit of the device.

A method, wherein the energy used for the constriction device and/or stimulation device is stored in at least one energy storage device of the device.

A method, wherein substantially all the energy used for the constriction device and/or stimulation device is consumed to operate the device.

A method, wherein the energy is consumed after being stabilized in at least one energy stabilizing unit of the device.

A method of controlling transmission of wireless energy supplied to at least one of the constriction and stimulation devices, comprising an internal energy source located inside the patient, connected to the constriction device and/or stimulation device for directly or indirectly supplying received energy thereto, the method comprising the steps of:

determining an energy balance between the energy sent by the external energy source and the energy received by the internal energy source, and

controlling the transmission of wireless energy from the external energy source, based on the determined energy balance.

A method, wherein the wireless energy is transmitted inductively from a primary coil in the external energy source to a secondary coil in the internal energy receiver.

A method, wherein a change in said energy balance is detected, and the transmission of wireless energy is controlled based on said detected energy balance change.

A method, wherein a difference is detected between the energy sent by the external energy source and the energy received by said internal energy receiver, and the transmission of wireless energy is controlled based on said detected energy difference.

A method, wherein the amount of transmitted wireless energy is decreased if the detected energy balance change implies that the energy balance is increasing, or vice versa.

A method, wherein the decrease/increase of energy transmission corresponds to a detected change rate.

A method, wherein the amount of transmitted wireless energy is decreased if the detected energy difference implies that the received energy is greater than the used energy, or vice versa.

A method, wherein the decrease/increase of energy transmission corresponds to the magnitude of said detected energy difference.

A method of controlling transmission of wireless energy, wherein said wireless energy being transmitted by means of a primary coil in the external energy source and received inductively by means of a secondary coil in an internal

energy source, the internal energy source being connected to the medical device for directly or indirectly supplying received energy thereto, wherein feedback control information (S) is transferred from the secondary coil to the primary coil by switching the secondary coil on and off to induce a detectable impedance load variation in the primary coil encoding the feedback control information, wherein the feedback control information relates to the energy received by the internal energy source and is used for controlling the transmission of wireless energy from the external energy source.

The method, wherein the electronic circuit comprises an analyzer analyzing the amount of energy being transmitted and receiving the feedback information related to the amount of energy received in the receiver, and determining the energy balance by comparing the amount of transmitted energy and the feedback information related to the amount of received energy.

The method, wherein the external energy source is adapted to use said feedback information adjusting the level of said transmitted energy.

A method of controlling transmission of wireless energy, wherein said wireless energy being transmitted by means of a primary coil in an external energy source and received inductively by means of a secondary coil in an internal energy source, the internal energy receiver being connected to the medical device for directly or indirectly supplying received energy thereto, wherein feedback control information (S) is transferred from the secondary coil to the primary coil by switching the secondary coil on and off to induce a detectable impedance load variation in the primary coil encoding the feedback control information, where the feedback control information relates to said energy balance.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIGS. 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D and 1E schematically illustrate different states of operation of a general embodiment of an apparatus used for practicing the method according to the present invention.

FIGS. 1F, 1G and 1H illustrate different states of operation of a modification of the general embodiment.

FIGS. 1I, 1K and 1L illustrate an alternative mode of operation of the modification of the general embodiment.

FIG. 2 is a longitudinal cross-section of an embodiment of the apparatus of FIG. 1 including a constriction device and an electric stimulation device

FIG. 3 is a cross-section along line II-II in FIG. 2.

FIG. 4 is the same cross-section shown in FIG. 3 but with the apparatus in a different state of operation.

FIGS. 5A, 5B and 5C are cross-sections of the embodiment of FIG. 2 showing different states of operations with the apparatus applied on a uterine tube wall of a patient.

FIGS. 6A, 6B and 6C are cross-sections of a modification of the embodiment of FIG. 2 showing different states of operations with the apparatus applied on a uterine tube wall of a patient.

FIGS. 7A and 7B show different steps of an electric stimulation mode performed by the apparatus of FIG. 2 while the apparatus is constricting a uterine tube wall of a patient.

FIG. 8A is a pulse/time diagram showing electric stimulation pulses generated by the apparatus used for practicing the method of the invention, wherein the electric pulses are for stimulating a uterine tube wall of a patient.

25

FIG. 8B is pulse/time diagram showing a modification of the electric stimulation shown in FIG. 8A, in which pulses of mixed frequencies and/or amplitudes are employed.

FIGS. 9A and 9B show two pulse/time diagrams, respectively, representing electric stimulation of two different areas of the uterine tube wall with pulses forming pulse trains.

FIGS. 10A and 10B show the pulse/time diagrams of FIGS. 9A and 9B with modified pulse trains.

FIG. 11A is a longitudinal cross-section of an embodiment of an apparatus used for practicing the method of the invention, where the apparatus includes a thermal stimulation device and the apparatus is constricting a uterine tube wall of a patient.

FIG. 11B is the same embodiment of FIG. 11A with the thermal stimulation device activated.

FIG. 12A is a schematic view of hydraulic operation means suited for operating the constriction device of the embodiments of FIGS. 2-11.

FIG. 12B shows the embodiment of FIG. 12A with the constriction device constricting a uterine tube wall of a patient's uterine tube.

FIG. 13A is a schematic view of mechanical operation means suited for operating the constriction device of the embodiments of FIGS. 2-11.

FIG. 13B shows the embodiment of FIG. 13A with the constriction device constricting a uterine tube wall of a patient's uterine tube.

FIG. 13C shows a modification of the embodiment of FIG. 13B.

FIG. 14 illustrates a female uterus and the connecting uterine tubes, with the apparatus and energy supply unit in place.

FIG. 15 is a schematic sectional view of a mechanically operable non-inflatable constriction device used for practicing the method of the invention.

FIGS. 16 and 17 are cross-sectional views taken along the lines XVI-XVI and XVII-XVII, respectively, of FIG. 15.

FIG. 18 schematically shows an alternative design of the embodiment of FIG. 15;

FIG. 19 schematically illustrates a motor arrangement for the embodiment according to FIG. 18;

FIGS. 20 and 21 are schematic sectional views of two alternative designs of non-inflatable constriction devices used for practicing the method of the invention.

FIGS. 22 and 23 illustrate a fully open and a reduced constriction opening, respectively, of the embodiment of FIG. 21;

FIG. 24 is a schematic view of a further alternative design of a non-inflatable constriction device used for practicing the method of the invention.

FIGS. 25 and 26 illustrate a fully open and a reduced constriction opening, respectively, of the embodiment of FIG. 24;

FIG. 27 is a schematic view of another alternative design of a non-inflatable constriction device used for practicing the method of the invention.

FIGS. 28 and 29 are schematic sectional views, respectively, of yet another alternative design of a non-inflatable constriction device used for practicing the method of the invention.

FIG. 30A is a schematic view of a hydraulically operable inflatable constriction device for used for practicing the method of the invention.

FIG. 30B is the same embodiment shown in FIG. 30A with the constriction device inflated.

26

FIGS. 31A, 31B, 31C and 31D are block diagrams illustrating four different principles for hydraulic operation of the constriction device shown in FIG. 30A.

FIG. 32 is a cross-sectional view of a reservoir having a variable volume controlled by a remote control motor.

FIGS. 33A and 33B are perspective views of a reverse servo in accordance with a particular embodiment of the hydraulic operation principle shown in FIG. 31C.

FIG. 34 is a schematic view of another hydraulically operable constriction device for practicing the method according to the present invention.

FIG. 35A illustrates the constriction device of FIG. 34 in a constricted state.

FIG. 35B illustrates the constriction device of FIG. 34 in a released state.

FIGS. 36A-36E schematically illustrate different operation stages of an embodiment of the invention, in which a constriction device and a stimulation device used for practicing the method of the invention co-operate to move the sperms in the uterine tube of a patient.

FIGS. 37 to 49 are schematic block diagrams illustrating twelve embodiments, respectively, of an apparatus used for practicing the method of the invention, wherein wireless energy is transmitted from outside a patient's body to energy consuming components of an apparatus implanted in the patient.

FIG. 50 illustrates an energy-transforming device in the form of an electrical junction element used for practicing the method of the invention.

FIG. 51 is a block diagram illustrating control components used for practicing the method of the invention.

FIG. 52 is a schematic view of exemplary circuitry of an embodiment of the invention, in which wireless energy is transformed into a current.

FIGS. 53A-53C schematically illustrate different operation stages of another embodiment of the invention of the type shown in FIG. 2 used for practicing the method of the invention, wherein a constriction device and a stimulation device co-operate to move the sperms in the uterine tube of a patient.

FIGS. 54A-54B schematically illustrate different operation stages of another apparatus of the type shown in FIGS. 36A-36E used for practicing the method of the invention, wherein a constriction device and a stimulation device co-operate to move the sperms in the uterine tube of a patient.

FIG. 55A is a schematic view of another mechanically operable non-inflatable constriction device used for practicing the method of the invention.

FIG. 55B shows the constriction device of FIG. 55A in a constricted state.

FIG. 55C is an end view of the embodiment of FIG. 55B.

FIG. 56 is a schematic block diagram illustrating an arrangement for supplying an accurate amount of wireless energy used for the operation of the constriction/stimulation unit as described above.

FIG. 57 schematically shows an embodiment of the invention, in which the apparatus is operated with wire bound energy.

FIG. 58 is a more detailed block diagram of an arrangement for controlling the transmission of wireless energy used for the operation of the constriction/stimulation unit as described above.

FIG. 59 is a circuit for the arrangement shown in FIG. 19, according to a possible implementation example.

FIG. 60 is a sectional view through a constriction device.

27

FIG. 61 A-C illustrates the constriction device of FIG. 60 in different interrupting stages.

FIG. 62 A-D show a second embodiment of a constriction device.

FIG. 63 A-E disclose one particular embodiment of the invention which uses a pump to sperms in the uterine tube.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Referring to the drawing figures, like reference numerals designate identical or corresponding elements throughout the several figures.

FIGS. 1A, 1B and 1C schematically illustrate different states of operation of a generally designed apparatus used for practicing the method of the present invention, when the apparatus is applied on a wall portion of a bodily organ designated BO, the bodily organ being a uterine tube of a female patient. The apparatus includes a constriction device and a stimulation device, which are designated CSD, and a control device designated CD for controlling the constriction and stimulation devices CSD. FIG. 1A shows the apparatus in an inactivation state, in which the constriction device does not constrict the uterine tube BO and the stimulation device does not stimulate the uterine tube BO. FIG. 1B shows the apparatus in a constriction state, in which the control device CD controls the constriction device to gently constrict the uterine tube wall portion of the uterine tube BO to a constricted state, in which the blood circulation in the constricted uterine tube wall portion is substantially unrestricted and the flow of sperms in the uterine tube of the uterine tube wall portion is restricted. FIG. 1C shows the apparatus in a stimulation state, in which the control device CD controls the stimulation device to stimulate different areas of the constricted wall portion, so that the uterine tube wall portion of the uterine tube BO contracts (thickens) and closes the uterine tube.

FIGS. 1D and 1E show how the stimulation of the constricted wall portion can be cyclically varied between a first stimulation mode, in which the left area of the uterine tube wall portion (see FIG. 1D) is stimulated while the right area of the uterine tube wall portion is not stimulated, and a second stimulation mode, in which the right area of the uterine tube wall portion (see FIG. 1E) is stimulated while the left area of the uterine tube wall portion is not stimulated, in order to maintain over time satisfactory blood circulation in the constricted wall portion.

It should be noted that the stimulation modes shown in FIGS. 1D and 1E only constitute a principle example of how the constricted wall portion of the uterine tube BO may be stimulated. Thus, more than two different areas of the constricted wall portion may be simultaneously stimulated in cycles or successively stimulated. Also, groups of different areas of the constricted wall portion may be successively stimulated.

FIGS. 1F, 1G and 1H illustrate different states of operation of a modification of the general embodiment shown in FIGS. 1A-1E, wherein the constriction and stimulation devices CSD include several separate constriction/stimulation elements, here three elements CSDE1, CSDE2 and CSDE3. FIG. 1F shows how the element CSDE1 in a first state of operation is activated to both constrict and stimulate the uterine tube BO, so that the uterine tube BO is closed, whereas the other two elements CSDE2 and CSDE3 are inactivated. FIG. 1G shows how the element CSDE2 in a second following state of operation is activated, so that the uterine tube BO is closed, whereas the other two elements

28

CSDE1 and CSDE3 are inactivated. FIG. 1H shows how the element CSDE3 in a following third state of operation is activated, so that the uterine tube BO is closed, whereas the other two elements CSDE1 and CSDE2 are inactivated. By shifting between the first, second and third states of operation, either randomly or in accordance with a predetermined sequence, different portions of the uterine tube can be temporarily constricted and stimulated while maintaining the uterine tube closed, whereby the risk of injuring the uterine tube is minimized. It is also possible to activate the elements CSDE1-CSDE3 successively along the uterine tube to move sperms in the uterine tube.

FIGS. 1I, 1K and 1L illustrate an alternative mode of operation of the modification of the general embodiment. Thus,

FIG. 1I shows how the element CSDE1 in a first state of operation is activated to both constrict and stimulate the uterine tube BO, so that the uterine tube BO is closed, whereas the other two elements CSDE2 and CSDE3 are activated to constrict but not stimulate the uterine tube BO, so that the uterine tube BO is not completely closed where the elements CSDE2 and CSDE3 engage the uterine tube BO. FIG. 1K shows how the element CSDE2 in a second following state of operation is activated to both constrict and stimulate the uterine tube BO, so that the uterine tube of the uterine tube BO is closed, whereas the other two elements CSDE1 and CSDE3 are activated to constrict but not stimulate the uterine tube BO, so that the uterine tube BO is not completely closed where the elements CSDE1 and CSDE3 engage the uterine tube BO. FIG. 1L shows how the element CSDE3 in a following third state of operation is activated to both constrict and stimulate the uterine tube BO, so that the uterine tube BO is closed, whereas the other two elements CSDE1 and CSDE2 are activated to constrict but not stimulate the uterine tube BO, so that the uterine tube BO is not completely closed where the elements CSDE1 and CSDE2 engage the uterine tube BO. By shifting between the first, second and third states of operation, either randomly or in accordance with a predetermined sequence, different portions of the uterine tube can be temporarily stimulated while maintaining the uterine tube closed, whereby the risk of injuring the uterine tube is reduced. It is also possible to activate the stimulation of the elements CSDE1-CSDE3 successively along the uterine tube BO to move sperms in the uterine tube.

FIGS. 2-4 show basic components of an embodiment of the apparatus according to FIGS. 1A-1C for controlling a flow of sperms in a uterine tube formed by a uterine tube wall of a patient. The apparatus includes a tubular housing 1 with open ends, a constriction device 2 arranged in the housing 1, a stimulation device 3 integrated in the constriction device 2, and a control device 4 (indicated in FIG. 4) for controlling the constriction and stimulation devices 2 and 3. The constriction device 2 has two elongate clamping elements 5, 6, which are radially movable in the tubular housing 1 towards and away from each other between retracted positions, see FIG. 3, and clamping positions, see FIG. 4. The stimulation device 3 includes a multiplicity of electrical elements 7 positioned on the clamping elements 5, 6, so that the electrical elements 7 on one of the clamping elements 5, 6 face the electrical elements 7 on the other clamping element. Thus, in this embodiment the constriction and stimulation devices form a constriction/stimulation unit, in which the constriction and stimulation devices are integrated in a single piece.

The constriction and stimulation devices may also be separate from each other. In this case, a structure may be

provided for holding the electrical elements 7 in a fixed orientation relative to one another. Alternatively, the electrical elements 7 may include electrodes that are separately attached to the uterine tube wall portion of the patient.

FIGS. 5A-5C illustrate in principle the function of the apparatus of FIG. 2 when the apparatus is applied on a portion 8 of a tubular uterine tube wall of a patient. Thus, FIG. 5A shows the apparatus in a non-clamping state, in which the clamping elements 5, 6 are in their retracted positions and the uterine tube wall portion 8 extends through the open ends of the housing 1 without being constricted by the clamping elements 5, 6. FIG. 5B shows the apparatus in a clamping state, in which the clamping elements 5, 6 have been moved from their retracted positions to their clamping positions, in which the clamping elements 5, 6 gently constrict the uterine tube wall portion 8 to a constricted state, in which the blood circulation in the constricted wall portion 8 is substantially unrestricted and the flow of sperms in the uterine tube of the uterine tube wall portion 8 is restricted. FIG. 5C shows the apparatus in a stimulation state, in which the clamping elements 5, 6 constrict the uterine tube wall portion 8 and the electrical elements 7 of the stimulation device 3 electrically stimulate different areas of the uterine tube wall portion 8, so that the uterine tube wall portion 8 contracts (thickens) and closes the uterine tube.

When the apparatus is in its stimulation state, it is important to stimulate the different areas of the uterine tube wall portion 8 in a manner so that they essentially maintains their natural physical properties over time to prevent the areas from being injured. Consequently, the control device 4 controls the stimulation device 3 to intermittently stimulate each area of the uterine tube wall portion 8 during successive time periods, wherein each time period is short enough to maintain over time satisfactory blood circulation in the area. Furthermore, the control device 4 controls the stimulation of the areas of the uterine tube wall portion 8, so that each area that currently is not stimulated restores substantially normal blood circulation before it is stimulated again. To maintain over time the effect of stimulation, i.e., to keep the uterine tube closed by maintaining the uterine tube wall portion 8 contracted, the control device 4 controls the stimulation device 3 to stimulate one or more of the areas at a time and to shift the stimulation from one area to another over time. The control device 4 may control the stimulation device 3 to cyclically propagate the stimulation of the areas along the tubular wall portion 8, for example in accordance with a determined stimulation pattern. To achieve the desired reaction of the uterine tube wall during the stimulation thereof, the control device may control the stimulation device to, preferably cyclically, vary the intensity of the stimulation of the uterine tube wall portion 8.

In the embodiment of FIGS. 2-4, the electrical elements 7 form a series of fourteen groups of electrical elements 7 extending longitudinally along each elongate clamping element 5 and 6, respectively, see FIG. 2. The electrical elements 7 of each group of electrical elements 7 form a first path of four electrical elements 7 positioned in a row on clamping element 5 and extending transverse thereto and a second path of four electrical elements 7 positioned in a row on clamping element 6 and extending transverse thereto. Thus, the two paths of electrical elements 7 extend on mutual sides of the patient's uterine tube. The control device 4 controls the stimulation device 3 to successively energize the groups of electrical elements 7 in the series of groups in a direction opposite to or, alternatively, in the same direction as that of the flow of sperms in the patient's uterine tube. Of course, the number of electrical elements 7 of each path of

electrical elements 7 can be greater or smaller than four, and several parallel rows electrical elements 7 can form each path of electrical elements 7.

FIGS. 6A-6C show another embodiment of an apparatus used for practicing the method of the invention including a tubular housing 9 and three elongate clamping elements 10a, 10b, 10c, which are radially movable in the tubular housing 9 towards and away from a central axis thereof between retracted positions, see FIG. 6A, and clamping positions, see FIG. 6B. The three clamping elements 10a-10c are symmetrically disposed around the central axis of the housing 9. The stimulation device of this embodiment includes electrical elements 11a, 11b, 11c that form a series of groups of elements extending longitudinally along the elongate clamping elements 10a-10c, wherein the electrical elements 11a-11c of each group of electrical elements form a path of three electrical elements 11a, 11b and 11c extending circumferentially around the central axis of the housing 9. The three electrical elements 11a-11c of each group are positioned on the three clamping elements 10a-10c, respectively. Thus, the path of three electrical elements 11a-11c extends around the patient's uterine tube. Of course, the number of electrical elements 11a-11c of each path of electrical elements can be greater than three, and several parallel rows electrical elements 11a-11c can form each path of electrical elements.

FIGS. 7A and 7B show different steps of an electric stimulation mode performed by the apparatus of FIG. 2 while the clamping elements 5, 6 of the apparatus are constricting a portion of a tubular uterine tube wall of a patient to restrict the flow of sperms in the uterine tube 13. For the sake of clarity only the clamping elements 5, 6 of the constriction device 2 are shown in FIGS. 7A, 7B. Thus, FIG. 7A illustrates how energized electrical elements 7 of groups of electrical elements electrically stimulate a first portion 14 and a second portion 15 of the tubular wall to contract and close the uterine tube 13. FIG. 7B illustrates how energized electrical elements 7 of other groups of electrical elements electrically stimulate a third portion 16 of the tubular wall different from the first and second portions to contract and close the uterine tube 13, while the electrical stimulation of the first and second portions 14, 15 of the tubular wall has been ceased, so that substantially normal blood circulation in the first and second portions is restored. In this manner, the electric stimulation of the constricted tubular uterine tube wall is shifted over time from one portion of the tubular uterine tube wall to another to insure recurrent restoration of blood circulation in the constricted tubular uterine tube wall.

The control device 4 controls the stimulation device 3 to energize the electrical elements 7 with electric biphasic pulses, i.e., combined positive and negative pulses. The desired stimulation effect is achieved by varying different pulse parameters. Thus, the control device 4 controls the stimulation device 3 to vary the pulse amplitude (voltage), the off time period between successive pulses, the pulse duration and the pulse repetition frequency. The pulse current should be between 1 to 30 mA. For neural stimulation, a pulse current of about 5 mA and a pulse duration of about 300 μ s are suitable, whereas a pulse current of about 20 mA and a pulse duration of about 30 μ s are suitable for muscular stimulation. The pulse repetition frequency suitably is about 10 Hz. For example, as illustrated in the Pulse/time diagram P/t of FIG. 8A, a pulse combination including a negative pulse PS of short duration and high amplitude (voltage), and a positive pulse PL of long duration and low amplitude following the negative pulse may be cyclically repeated to form a pulse train of such pulse combinations. The energy

content of the negative pulse PS should be substantially equal to the energy content of the positive pulse PL.

FIG. 8B is a pulse/time diagram showing a modification of the electric stimulation shown in FIG. 8A. Thus, the pulse combination of FIG. 8A is mixed with a pulse train combination having a first relatively long pulse train PTL of high frequency/low amplitude pulses, appearing simultaneously with the positive pulse PL of the pulse combination of FIG. 8A, and a second relatively short pulse train PTS of high frequency/low amplitude appearing simultaneously with the negative pulse PS of the pulse combination shown in FIG. 8A. As a result, the high frequency/low amplitudes pulse trains PTL and PTS are superimposed on the positive and negative pulses PL and PS of FIG. 8A, as illustrated in FIG. 8B. The pulse configuration of FIG. 8B, and variations thereof, is beneficial to use in connection with the stimulation of particular human uterine tubes, in order to achieve the desired stimulation effect.

Preferably, the electric pulses form pulse trains, as illustrated in the Pulse/time diagrams P/t of FIGS. 9A, 9B, 9C and 9D. The Pulse/time diagram P/t of FIG. 9A represents an individual area of the uterine tube wall portion of the patient which is stimulated with a pulse train 18A. The pulse train 18A includes three initial negative pulses, each of which is of short duration and high amplitude (voltage), and one positive pulse of long duration and low amplitude following the negative pulses. After a delay to enable the area of the uterine tube to restore substantially normal blood circulation the pulse train 18A is repeated.

The Pulse/time diagram P/t of FIG. 9B represents another individual area of the uterine tube wall portion, which is stimulated with a pulse train 18B having the same configuration as the pulse train 18A. The pulse trains 18A and 18B are shifted relative to each other, so that they partially overlap one another to ensure that the constricted wall portion always is stimulated to contract as desired.

The pulse/time diagrams P/t of FIGS. 10A and 10B represent two different areas of the uterine tube wall portion, which are stimulated with cyclically repeated pulse trains 18C and 18D, respectively, having the same configuration. Each pulse train 18C, 18D includes two initial negative pulses, each of which is of short duration and high amplitude (voltage), and one positive pulse of long duration and low amplitude following the two negative pulses. In this case, the pulse trains 18C and 18D are shifted relative to each other, so that they do not overlap each other. Thus, the off time period between adjacent pulse trains 18C is longer than the duration of pulse train 18D and the off time period between adjacent pulse trains 18D is longer than the duration of pulse train 18C.

The pulse trains 18A, 18B, 18C and 18D can be configured in many different ways. Thus, the control device 4 can control the stimulation device 2 to vary the length of each pulse train, the repetition frequency of the pulse trains, the number of pulses of each pulse train, and/or the off time periods between the pulse trains. Typically, the control device 4 controls each off time period between the pulse trains to last long enough to restore substantially normal blood circulation in the area that just has been stimulated before that area again is stimulated with electric pulses. FIGS. 11A and 11B show another embodiment of the invention that controls sperm flow in a uterine tube 19, comprising a constriction device with two clamping elements 20a and 20b, a stimulation device in the form of two thermal stimulation elements 21a and 21b integrated in the clamping elements 20a, 20b, respectively, and a control device 4 for controlling the clamping elements 20a, 20b and

stimulation elements 21a, 21b. The clamping elements 20a and 20b are movable towards and away from each other in the same manner as described above in connection with the embodiment according to FIGS. 5A-5C. The thermal stimulation elements 21a and 21b, which may include Peltier elements, are positioned on the clamping elements 20a, 20b, so that the thermal elements 21a are facing the thermal elements 21b. FIG. 11A shows how the clamping elements 20a, 20b constrict the uterine tube 19, so that the sperm flow is restricted. FIG. 11B shows how the control device 4 controls the thermal stimulation elements 21a, 21b to cool the wall of the uterine tube 19, so that the wall contracts and closes the uterine tube 19. To release the uterine tube 19, the control device 4 controls the thermal stimulation elements 21a, 21b to heat the wall of the uterine tube 19, so that the wall expands.

FIGS. 12A and 12B show hydraulic operation means suited for operating the constriction device of the embodiments described above. Specifically, FIGS. 12A and 12B show the apparatus of FIG. 2 provided with such means for hydraulic operation of the constriction device 2. (The stimulation device is not shown.) Thus, the housing 1 forms two hydraulic chambers 22a and 22b, in which the two clamping elements 5, 6 are slidable back and forth relative to the tubular uterine tube wall portion 8 of a patient. The hydraulic operation means include an expandable reservoir 23, such as an elastic balloon, containing hydraulic fluid, conduits 24a and 24b between the reservoir 23 and the hydraulic chambers 22a, 22b, and a two-way pump 25 for pumping the hydraulic fluid in the conduits 24a, 24b. The control device 4 controls the pump 25 to pump hydraulic fluid from the reservoir 23 to the chambers 22a, 22b to move the clamping elements 5, 6 against the uterine tube wall portion 8, whereby the tubular uterine tube wall portion 8 is constricted, see FIG. 12B, and to pump hydraulic fluid from the chambers 22a, 22b to the reservoir 23 to move the clamping elements 5, 6 away from the uterine tube wall portion 8, whereby the tubular uterine tube wall 8 is released, see FIG. 12A.

Alternatively, the embodiment of FIGS. 12A and 12B may be manually operated by applying suitable manually operable hydraulic means for distributing the hydraulic fluid between the expandable reservoir 23 and the hydraulic chambers 22a, 22b. In this case the pump 25 is omitted.

FIGS. 13A and 13B schematically show another embodiment of an apparatus used for practicing the method of the invention. The apparatus of FIGS. 13A and 13B comprises an open ended tubular housing 26 applied on the tubular uterine tube wall portion 8 of a patient, a constriction device 27 arranged in the housing 26 and a control device 4 for controlling the constriction device 27. A stimulation device (not shown) as described above is also provided in the housing 26. The constriction device 27 includes a clamping element 28, which is radially movable in the tubular housing 26 towards and away from the tubular wall portion 8 between a retracted position, see FIG. 13A, and a clamping position, see FIG. 13B, in which the clamping element 28 gently constricts the tubular wall portion 8. Mechanical operation means for mechanically operating the clamping element 28 includes an electric motor 29 attached to the housing 26 and a telescopic device 30, which is driven by the motor 29 and operatively connected to the clamping element 28. The control device 4 controls the electric motor 29 to expand the telescopic device 30 to move the clamping element 28 against the uterine tube wall portion 8, whereby the tubular uterine tube wall portion 8 is constricted, see FIG. 13B, and controls the motor 29 to retract the telescopic

33

device 30 to move the clamping element 28 away from the uterine tube wall portion 8, whereby the uterine tube wall portion 8 is released, see FIG. 13A.

Alternatively, the motor 29 may be omitted and the telescopic device 30 be modified for manual operation, as shown in FIG. 13C. Thus, a spring 30a may be provided acting to keep the telescopic device 30 expanded to force the clamping element 28 against the uterine tube wall portion 8. The mechanical operation means may include a subcutaneously implanted lever mechanism 29a that is operatively connected to the telescopic device 30. The patient may push the lever mechanism 29a through the skin to pull the telescopic device 30 against the action of the spring 30a to the retracted position of the telescopic device 30, as indicated in phantom lines. When the patient releases the lever mechanism 29a, the spring 30a expands the telescopic device 30, whereby clamping element 28 is forced against the uterine tube wall portion 8.

The mechanical operation means as described above in connection with FIGS. 13A, 13B and 13C may also be implemented in the embodiments according to FIGS. 1-11. FIG. 14 illustrates the embodiment of FIG. 2 applied on the uterine tube of a patient. The clamping elements 5, 6 of the constriction device 2 constrict the uterine tubes 31 and the stimulation device 3 is energized to close the uterine tube. (For the sake of clarity, the housing is not shown and the clamping elements 5, 6 are exaggerated.) In this embodiment, a control device includes an external control unit in the form of a hand-held wireless remote control 32, and an implanted internal control unit 33, which may include a microprocessor, for controlling the constriction and stimulation devices. The remote control 32 is operable by the patient to control the internal control unit 33 to switch on and off the constriction device and/or the stimulation device. Alternatively, however, the remote control 32 may be replaced by a subcutaneously implanted push button that is manually switched by the patient between "on" and "off". Such a manually operable push button may also be provided in combination with the remote control 32 as an emergency button to allow the patient to stop the operation of the apparatus in case of emergency or malfunction.

The internal control unit 33 controls an implanted operation device 34 to move the clamping elements 5, 6. An implanted source of energy 35, such as a rechargeable battery, powers the operation device 34. The internal control unit 33, which may be implanted subcutaneously or in the abdomen, also works as an energy receiver, i.e., for transforming wireless energy into electric energy and charging the implanted source of energy 35 (rechargeable battery) with the electric energy.

An implanted sensor 36 senses a physical parameter of the patient, such as the pressure in the uterine tubes, or a parameter that relates to the pressure in the uterine tubes, wherein the internal control unit 33 controls the constriction device 2 and/or the stimulation device 3 in response to signals from the sensor 36. In this embodiment the sensor 36 is a pressure sensor, wherein the internal control unit 33 controls the constriction device and/or stimulation device to change the constriction of the patient's intestines 31 in response to the pressure sensor 36 sensing a predetermined value of measured pressure. For example, the control unit 33 may control the constriction device and/or stimulation device to increase the constriction of the patient's uterine tubes 31 in response to the pressure sensor sensing an increased pressure. Alternatively or in combination, the remote control 32 controls the constriction device and/or

34

stimulation device in response to signals from the sensor 36, in the same manner as the internal control unit 33.

The remote control 32 may be equipped with means for producing an indication, such as a sound signal or displayed information, in response to signals from the sensor 36. When the patient's attention is taken by such an indication indicating an increased pressure exceeding a threshold value, he or she may use the remote control to control the constriction device and stimulation device to pump sperms through the patient's uterine tubes. Of course, the constriction device 2 shown in FIG. 14 may be replaced by any one of the constriction devices described in the various embodiments of the present invention, where applicable.

FIGS. 15-17 show another embodiment of an apparatus used for practicing the method of the invention. The apparatus of FIGS. 15-17 includes a mechanically operable constriction device having an elongated constriction member in the form of a circular resilient core 37 with two overlapping end portions 38,39. The core 37 defines a substantially circular restriction opening and is enclosed in an elastic soft hose 40 except at a releasable and lockable joint 41 of the core 37, which when released enables application of the core 37 with its hose 40 around a portion of a tubular uterine tube wall of a patient. The materials of all of these elements are bio-compatible so that the patient's body will not reject them. An operation device 42 for mechanically operating the longitudinal extension of the core 37 to change the size of the restriction opening comprises a drive wheel 43 in frictional engagement with the overlapping end portions 38,39 of the core 37. The drive wheel 43 is journaled on a holder 44 placed in the hose 40 and provided with two counter pressure rollers 45,46 pressing the respective end portions 38, 39 of the core 37 against the drive wheel 43 to increase the frictional engagement there between. An electric motor 47 of the operation device is connected to the drive wheel 43 via a long flexible drive shaft 48 and is moulded together with a remote controlled power supply unit 49 in a body 50 of silicone rubber. The length of the flexible drive shaft 48 is selected so that the body 50 can be placed in a desired position in the patient's body, suitably in the abdomen.

The power supply unit 49 can be controlled to power the electric motor 47 to turn the drive wheel 43 in one direction to reduce the diameter of the core 37, so that the uterine tube wall portion is constricted, or to turn the drive wheel 43 in the opposite direction to increase the diameter of the core 37, so that the uterine tube wall portion is released.

In accordance with a first alternative, a rack gear may be formed on one of the end portions 38,39 of the core 37 and the drive wheel 43 may be replaced by a drive gear wheel connected to the other end portion of the core 37 and in mesh with the rack gear.

In accordance with a second alternative, the operation device 42 may be designed as a worm-driven hose clamp, i.e., one of the end portions 38, 39 of the core 37 may be provided with threads and the other end portion of the core 37 may be provided with a worm, the threads of which interacts with the threads of said one end portion of the core 37. The threads of such a worm may also interact with threads provided on both end portions 38, 39 of the core 37. In this alternative, the electric motor 47 turns the worm in one direction to reduce the diameter of the core 37, so that the uterine tube wall portion is constricted, or turn the worm in the opposite direction to increase the diameter of the core 37, so that the uterine tube wall portion is released in one direction to reduce the diameter of the core 37, so that the uterine tube wall portion is constricted, or turns the clamping

35

screw in the opposite direction to increase the diameter of the core 37, so that the uterine tube wall portion is released.

FIG. 18 shows a constriction device which is identical to the constriction device shown in FIGS. 15-17, except that the motor 47 is encapsulated in the hose 40 so that it is fixed to the core 37 and has a short drive shaft 51, and that the motor 47 is positioned relative to the core 37 such that the drive shaft 51 extends substantially tangentially to the circular core 37. There is an angular gearing 52 connecting the drive shaft 51 to the drive wheel 43.

FIG. 19 shows a suitable alternative arrangement for the motor 47 in the embodiment of FIG. 17, comprising a first clamping member 53 secured to one end portion of the core 37 and a second clamping member 54 secured to the other end portion 39 of the core 37. The motor 47 is secured to the first clamping member 53 and is operatively connected to a worm 55 via a gear transmission 56. The worm 55 is journaled at its opposite ends on holders 57 and 58, which are rigidly secured to the clamping member 53 and the motor 47, respectively. The second clamping member 54 has a pinion in mesh with the worm 55. When the motor 47 is powered the worm 55 rotates and will thereby pull the end portion 39 of the core 37 in one or the opposite longitudinal direction, so that the diameter of the substantially circular core 37 is either increased or decreased. The motor 47, worm gear 55, gear transmission 56 and second clamping member 54 constitute a servo system of the type that transfers a weak force acting on a moving element having a long stroke into a strong force acting on another moving element having a short stroke.

FIG. 20 shows another embodiment of an apparatus used for practicing the method of the invention. The apparatus of FIG. 20 includes a constriction device having a plurality of arcuate lamellae 59 arranged like the conventional adjustable aperture mechanism of a camera. A motor 60 operates the lamellae 59 to change the size of a restriction opening defined by the lamellae 59.

FIGS. 21-23 show another embodiment of an apparatus used for practicing the method of the invention. The apparatus of FIGS. 21-23 includes a constriction device having two semi-circular elements 61 and 62, which are hinged together. The semi-circular elements 61, 62 are swingable relative to each other between a fully open state in which they substantially form a circle, illustrated in FIG. 23 and an angular state, in which the size of the restriction opening defined by the semi-circular elements 61, 62 is reduced, illustrated in FIG. 24. A motor 63 operates the semi-circular elements 61, 62 to swing them relative to each other.

FIGS. 24-28 show another embodiment of an apparatus used for practicing the method of the invention. The apparatus of FIGS. 24-28 includes a constriction device having an elastic belt 64, which forms a circle and has a substantially oval cross-section. A motor 67 operates the belt 64 to turn around the longitudinal extension thereof between a fully open state, in which the inner broader side of the belt 64 forms a substantially cylindrical surface, illustrated in FIG. 25, and a reduced open state, in which the inner broader side of the belt 64 forms a substantially conical surface, illustrated in FIG. 26.

FIG. 27 shows another embodiment of an apparatus used for practicing the method of the invention. The apparatus of FIG. 27 includes a constriction device 68 having two rigid articulated clamping elements 69 positioned on opposite sides of a portion of a tubular uterine tube wall 70 of a patient. An operation device 71 turns the clamping elements 69 toward each other to clamp the uterine tube wall portion 70 between the clamping elements 69 to thereby contract the

36

uterine tube wall portion, and turns the clamping elements 69 away from each other to release the uterine tube wall portion from the clamping elements 69.

FIGS. 28 and 29 show another embodiment of an apparatus used for practicing the method of the invention. The apparatus of FIGS. 28 and 29 include a constriction device 300 having three bending members 301, 302 and 303 displaced relative to one another in a row along a portion of a tubular uterine tube wall 304 of a patient and positioned alternately on opposite sides of the tubular wall 304. (Alternatively, each member 301, 302 and 303 may take the shape of an hour-glass.) An operation device (not shown) moves the two outer members 301, 303 laterally against the tubular wall 304 in one direction and the intermediate member 302 against the tubular wall 304 in the opposite direction to bend the tubular wall 304 to thereby constrict the tubular wall portion 304, see FIG. 29. To release the uterine tube wall portion 304 the operation device moves the members 301-303 away from the tubular wall portion 304 to the position shown in FIG. 28.

FIGS. 30A and 30B show another embodiment of an apparatus used for practicing the method of the invention. The apparatus of FIGS. 30A and 30B include a hydraulically operable elongated constriction device in the form of a band 72 having an expandable/contractible cavity 73, which is in fluid communication with an adjustable reservoir 74 containing hydraulic fluid. FIG. 30A illustrates when the band is in a non-constriction state, whereas FIG. 30B illustrates when the band is in a constriction state, in which the cavity 73 is expanded by hydraulic fluid supplied by the reservoir 74.

FIGS. 31A, 31B, 31C and 31D are block diagrams of three differently operated hydraulic constriction devices used for practicing the method of the invention. FIG. 31A shows the band 72 of FIG. 30A, the cavity 73 of which is in fluid communication with a reservoir 75. FIG. 31B shows the embodiment of FIG. 30A, in which the cavity 73 of the band 72 is in fluid communication with the reservoir 74 via an operation device in the form of a two-way pump 76. FIG. 31C shows an operation device in the form of a reverse servo system with a first closed system controlling a second system. The reverse servo system comprises an adjustable fluid supply reservoir 77 and an adjustable servo reservoir 78. The servo reservoir 78 controls a larger adjustable reservoir 79 which in connection with the band 72 applied around a portion of tubular uterine tube wall of a patient varies the volume of the cavity 73 of the band 72, which in turn varies the constriction of the uterine tube wall portion. FIG. 31D shows an embodiment identical to the embodiment of FIG. 31C, except that the larger reservoir 79 is omitted. Instead, the servo reservoir 78 is in fluid communication with the cavity of the band 72.

In all of the above embodiments according to FIGS. 12A through 30B, stimulation devices may be provided to form constriction/stimulation units, in which the stimulation devices include a multiplicity of electrical elements 7 (indicated in FIGS. 12A-15, 18, 20-23, 26-31B) positioned on the constriction devices.

FIG. 32 is a cross-sectional view of a fluid supply device including a bellows reservoir 80 defining a chamber 81, the size of which is variable by an operation device comprising a remote controlled electric motor 82. The reservoir 80 and the motor 82 are placed in a housing 83. Moving a large wall 84 varies the chamber 81. The wall 84 is secured to a nut 85, which is threaded on a rotatable spindle 86. The spindle 86 is rotated by the motor 82. A battery 89 placed in the housing 83 powers the motor 82. A signal receiver 90 for controlling

the motor **82** is also placed in the housing **83**. Alternatively, the battery **89** and the signal receiver **90** may be mounted in a separate place. The motor **82** may also be powered with energy transferred from transmitted signals.

Where applicable, the fluid supply device of FIG. **32** may be used for supplying hydraulic fluid for the operation of the constriction devices described in this specification. For example, the fluid supply device of FIG. **32** may be substituted for the reservoir **74** in the embodiment according to FIG. **30A**.

FIGS. **33A** and **33B** show a reverse servo used for practicing the method of the invention. The reverse servo includes a rectangular housing **91** and an intermediate wall **92**, which is movable in the housing **91**. A relatively large, substantially cylindrical bellows reservoir **93** is arranged in the housing **91** and is joined to the movable intermediate wall **92**. Another cylindrical bellows reservoir **94**, which is substantially smaller than reservoir **93**, is arranged in the housing **91** at the other side of the intermediate wall **92** and is also joined to the wall **92**. The small bellows reservoir **94** has a fluid supply pipe **95** and the large bellows reservoir **93** has a fluid supply pipe **96**.

Referring to FIG. **33A**, when a small amount of hydraulic fluid is conducted through the supply pipe **95** into the small bellows reservoir **94**, the small bellows reservoir **94** expands and pushes the movable intermediate wall **92** towards the large bellows reservoir **93**. As a result, the large bellows reservoir **93** is contracted by the intermediate wall **92**, whereby a large amount of hydraulic fluid is forced out of the large bellows reservoir **93** through the supply pipe **96**, see FIG. **33B**.

For example, the reverse servo of FIGS. **33A** and **33B** may be used in the embodiment of FIG. **31c**, wherein the small bellows reservoir **94** corresponds to the small servo reservoir **78** and the large bellows reservoir **93** corresponds to the large reservoir **79**. Also, the reverse servo of FIGS. **33A** and **33B** may be used in the embodiment of FIGS. **30A** and **30B**, wherein the small bellows reservoir **94** is connected to the adjustable reservoir **74** and the large bellows reservoir **93** is connected to the cavity **73** of the band **72**.

FIG. **34** schematically shows a hydraulically operable constriction device **97**, which is similar to the embodiment shown in FIG. **30A**, except that the hydraulic system is designed differently. Thus, the constriction device **97** includes a relatively small inflatable cavity **98**, which is in fluid communication with a reservoir **99** containing hydraulic fluid, and a relatively large cavity **100**, which is displaceable by small cavity **98**. Small cavity **98** is adapted to displace large cavity **100** to constrict the patient's tubular wall portion when small cavity **98** is inflated and to displace large cavity **100** to release the uterine tube wall portion when small cavity **98** is deflated. Thus, a relatively small addition of hydraulic fluid from reservoir **99** to small cavity **98** causes a relatively large increase in the constriction of the uterine tube wall portion.

Large cavity **100** is defined by a contraction element in the form of a big balloon **101**, which may be connected to an injection port (not shown) for calibration of the volume of large cavity **100**. Adding fluid to or withdrawing fluid from the injection port with the aid of a syringe calibrates the volume of balloon **101**. Small cavity **98** is defined by a small bellows **102** attached to an annular frame **103** of constriction device **97** and at the opposite end is attached to balloon **101**.

FIGS. **35A** and **35B** schematically illustrate the operation of constriction device **97**, when annular frame **103** is applied around the tubular wall portion of the patient's uterine tube. Referring to FIG. **35A**, when small cavity **98** is deflated

bellows **102** pulls balloon **101** inwardly into annular frame **103**, so that constriction device **97** constricts the uterine tube wall portion. Referring to FIG. **34B**, when small cavity **98** is inflated bellows **102** pulls balloon **101** out of annular frame **103**, so that constriction device **97** releases the uterine tube wall portion.

As mentioned above, the constriction device and stimulation device can co-operate to actively move the sperms in the uterine tube of a patient. This can be practiced by use of the constriction/stimulation unit according to FIG. **2**. Thus, in accordance with a first cooperation option, the clamping elements **5**, **6** of the constriction device constricts the uterine tube wall portion **8** without completely closing the uterine tube, and the control device **4** controls the electrical elements **7** to progressively stimulate the constricted wall portion in the downstream or upstream direction of the uterine tube to cause progressive contraction of the uterine tube wall portion **8** to move the sperms in the uterine tube.

In accordance with a second cooperation option, the constriction device constricts the uterine tube wall portion so that the flow of sperms in the uterine tube is restricted, and the control device **4** controls a few electrical elements **7** at one end of the elongate clamping elements **5**, **6** to stimulate the constricted wall portion **8** to close the uterine tube either at an upstream end or a downstream end of the uterine tube wall portion **8**. With the uterine tube closed in this manner, the control device **4** controls the constriction device to increase the constriction of the uterine tube wall portion, whereby the sperms in the uterine tube are moved downstream or upstream of the uterine tube wall portion **8**.

Alternatively, the control device **4** controls the stimulation device to stimulate the constricted wall portion **8** while the constriction device varies the constriction of the different areas of the uterine tube wall portion, so that the uterine tube wall portion **8** is progressively constricted in the downstream or upstream direction of the uterine tube. FIGS. **36A-36E** show different operation stages of such an alternative embodiment. Thus, a constriction device **104** used for practicing the method of the invention includes two elongate constriction elements **105**, **106** having convex surfaces **107**, **108** that abut a length of the uterine tube wall portion **8** on mutual sides thereof. A multiplicity of electrical elements **7** (such as electrodes) is positioned on the convex surfaces **107**, **108**. The control device **4** controls the electrical elements **7** during operation of the constriction device **104** to stimulate the uterine tube wall portion **8** and controls the elongate constriction elements **105**, **106** to move relative to the tubular wall portion **8** so that the constriction elements **105**, **106** progressively constrict the uterine tube wall portion **8**, as appears from FIGS. **36A** to **36D**.

Thus, in an initial position of the constriction elements **105**, **106** shown in FIG. **36A**, the uterine tube wall portion is not constricted by the constriction elements **105**, **106** and the electrical elements **7** are not energized. Starting from this initial position, the control device **4** controls the constriction elements **105**, **106** to swing the left ends of the constriction elements **105**, **106** toward the uterine tube wall portion (indicated by arrows) to constrict the tubular wall portion **8**, see FIG. **36B**, while energizing the electrical elements **7**, so that the electrical elements **7** that contact the uterine tube wall portion **8** contract the latter. FIG. **36C** shows how the uterine tube of the tubular wall portion **8** is completely closed by the thickened wall portion **8**. Then, as shown in FIG. **36C**, the control device **4** controls the constriction elements **105**, **106** to move so that their right ends are moving towards each other (indicated by arrows), while the convex surfaces **107**, **108** of the constriction elements **105**,

106 are rolling on each other with the contracted wall portion 8 between them, see FIG. 36D. As a result, the sperms in the uterine tube are forced to the right (indicated by a white arrow). When the constriction elements 105, 106 have rolled on each other to the position shown in FIG. 36E, the control device 4 controls the right ends of the constriction elements 105, 106 to move away from each other (indicated by arrows in FIG. 36E) to the initial position shown in FIG. 36A. The operation stages described according to FIGS. 36A to 36E can be cyclically repeated a number of times until the desired amount of sperms has been moved in the uterine tube in a peristaltic manner.

Alternatively, only one of the constriction elements 105, 106 can be provided with a convex surface, whereas the other constriction element has a plane surface that abuts the uterine tube wall portion. It is also possible to use a single constriction element with a convex surface that presses the tubular portion 8 of the uterine tube against a bone of the patient.

In the embodiment according to FIGS. 36A to 36E, the control device 4 may control the electrical elements 7 to progressively stimulate the constricted wall portion 8 to cause progressive contraction thereof in harmony with the movement of the elongate constriction elements 105, 106, as the convex surfaces 107, 108 of the constriction elements 105, 106 are rolling on each other.

FIG. 37 schematically shows a general embodiment of the apparatus of the invention, in which energy is transferred to energy consuming components of the apparatus implanted in the patient. The apparatus of FIG. 37 comprises an implanted constriction/stimulation unit 109, which is operable to gently constrict a portion of a tubular uterine tube wall of a patient and to stimulate different areas of the constricted portion to cause contraction of the uterine tube wall portion. The constriction device of the constriction/stimulation unit 110 is capable of performing a reversible function, i.e., to constrict and release the uterine tube wall portion. A source of energy 111 is adapted to supply energy consuming components of the constriction/stimulation unit 110 with energy via a power supply line 112. A wireless remote control or a subcutaneously implanted switch operable by the patient to switch on or off the supply of energy from the source of energy may be provided. The source of energy may be an implantable permanent or rechargeable battery, or be included in an external energy-transmission device, which may be operable directly by the patient or be controlled by a remote control operable by the patient to transmit wireless energy to the energy consuming components of the constriction/stimulation unit. Alternatively, the source of energy may comprise a combination of an implantable rechargeable battery, an external energy-transmission device and an implantable energy-transforming device for transforming wireless energy transmitted by the external energy-transmission device into electric energy for the charge of the implantable rechargeable battery.

FIG. 38 shows a special embodiment of the general embodiment of FIG. 37 having some parts implanted in a patient and other parts located outside the patient's body. Thus, in FIG. 38 all parts placed to the right of the patient's skin 109 are implanted and all parts placed to the left of the skin 109 are located outside the patient's body. An implanted energy-transforming device 111A of the apparatus is adapted to supply energy consuming components of the constriction/stimulation unit 110 with energy via the power supply line 112. An external energy-transmission device 113 of the apparatus includes a wireless remote control transmitting a wireless signal, which is received by a signal receiver

incorporated in the implanted energy-transforming device 111A. The implanted energy-transforming device 111A transforms energy from the signal into electric energy which is supplied via the power supply line 112 to the constriction/stimulation unit 110.

The apparatus of FIG. 3 (may also include an implanted rechargeable battery for energizing energy consuming implanted components of the apparatus. In this case, the implanted energy-transforming device 111A also charges the battery with electric energy, as the energy-transforming device transforms energy from the signal into the electric energy.

A reversing device in the form of an electric switch 114, such as a microprocessor, is implanted in the patient for reversing the constriction device of the constriction/stimulation unit 110. The wireless remote control of the external energy-transmission device 113 transmits a wireless signal that carries energy and the implanted energy-transforming device 111A transforms the wireless energy into a current for operating the switch 114. When the polarity of the current is shifted by the energy-transforming device 111A the switch 114 reverses the function performed by the constriction device of the constriction/stimulation unit 110.

FIG. 39 shows another embodiment of the invention including the energy-transforming device 111A, the constriction/stimulation unit 110 and an operation device in the form of a motor 115 for operating the constriction device of the constriction/stimulation unit 110. The motor 115 is powered with energy from the energy-transforming device 111A, as the remote control of the external energy-transmission device 113 transmits a wireless signal to the receiver of the energy-transforming device 111A.

FIG. 40 shows yet another embodiment of the invention including the energy-transforming device 111A, the constriction/stimulation unit 110 and an assembly 116 including a motor/pump unit 117 and a fluid reservoir 118. In this case the constriction device of the constriction/stimulation unit 110 is hydraulically operated, i.e., hydraulic fluid is pumped by the motor/pump unit 117 from the reservoir 118 to the constriction/stimulation unit 110 to constrict the uterine tube wall portion, and hydraulic fluid is pumped by the motor/pump unit 117 back from the constriction/stimulation unit 110 to the reservoir 118 to release the uterine tube wall portion. The implanted energy-transforming device 111A transforms wireless energy into a current, for powering the motor/pump unit 117.

FIG. 41 shows another embodiment of an apparatus used for practicing the method of the invention. The apparatus of FIG. 41 comprises the external energy-transmission device 113 that controls the control unit 122 to reverse the motor 115 when needed, the constriction/stimulation unit 110, the constriction device of which is hydraulically operated, and the implanted energy-transforming device 111A, and further comprises an implanted hydraulic fluid reservoir 119, an implanted motor/pump unit 120, an implanted reversing device in the form of a hydraulic valve shifting device 121 and a separate external wireless remote control 111B. The motor of the motor/pump unit 120 is an electric motor. In response to a control signal from the wireless remote control of the external energy-transmission device 113, the implanted energy-transforming device 111A powers the motor/pump unit 120 with energy from the energy carried by the control signal, whereby the motor/pump unit 120 distributes hydraulic fluid between the reservoir 119 and the constriction device of the constriction/stimulation unit 110. The remote control 111B controls the shifting device 121 to shift the hydraulic fluid flow direction between one direction

41

in which the fluid is pumped by the motor/pump unit 120 from the reservoir 119 to the constriction device of the constriction/stimulation unit 110 to constrict the uterine tube wall portion, and another opposite direction in which the fluid is pumped by the motor/pump unit 120 back from the constriction device of the constriction/stimulation unit 110 to the reservoir 119 to release the uterine tube wall portion.

FIG. 42 shows an embodiment of the invention including the energy-transforming device 111A and the constriction/stimulation unit 110. A control unit 122, an accumulator 123 and a capacitor 124 are also implanted in the patient. A separate external wireless remote control 111B controls the control unit 122. The control unit 122 controls the energy-transforming device 111A to store electric energy in the accumulator 123, which supplies energy to the constriction/stimulation unit 110. In response to a control signal from the wireless remote control 111B, the control unit 122 either releases electric energy from the accumulator 123 and transfers the released energy via power lines, or directly transfers electric energy from the energy-transforming device 111A via the capacitor 124, which stabilizes the electric current, for the operation of the constriction/stimulation unit 110.

In accordance with one alternative, the capacitor 124 in the apparatus of FIG. 42 may be omitted. In accordance with another alternative, the accumulator 123 in this apparatus may be omitted.

FIG. 43 shows an embodiment of the invention including the energy-transforming device 111A, the constriction/stimulation unit 110. A battery 125 for supplying energy for the operation of the constriction/stimulation unit 110 and an electric switch 126 for switching the operation of the constriction/stimulation unit 110 are also implanted in the patient. The switch 126 is operated by the energy supplied by the energy-transforming device 111A to switch from an off mode, in which the battery 125 is not in use, to an on mode, in which the battery 125 supplies energy for the operation of the constriction/stimulation unit 110.

FIG. 44 shows an apparatus identical to that of FIG. 43, except that a control unit 122 also is implanted in the patient. A separate external wireless remote control 111B controls the control unit 122. In this case, the switch 126 is operated by the energy supplied by the energy-transforming device 111A to switch from an off mode, in which the wireless remote control 111B is prevented from controlling the control unit 122 and the battery 125 is not in use, to a standby mode, in which the remote control 111B is permitted to control the control unit 122 to release electric energy from the battery 125 for the operation of the constriction/stimulation unit 110.

FIG. 45 shows an apparatus identical to that of FIG. 44, except that the accumulator 123 is substituted for the battery 125 and the implanted components are interconnected differently. In this case, the accumulator 123 stores energy from the energy-transforming device 111A. In response to a control signal from the wireless remote control 111B, the implanted control unit 122 controls the switch 126 to switch from an off mode, in which the accumulator 123 is not in use, to an on mode, in which the accumulator 123 supplies energy for the operation of the constriction/stimulation unit 110.

FIG. 46 shows an apparatus identical to that of FIG. 45, except that the battery 125 also is implanted in the patient and the implanted components are interconnected differently. In response to a control signal from the wireless remote control 111B, the implanted control unit 122 controls the accumulator 123, which may be a capacitor, to deliver

42

energy for operating the switch 126 to switch from an off mode, in which the battery 125 is not in use, to an on mode, in which the battery 125 supplies electric energy for the operation of the constriction/stimulation unit 110.

Alternatively, the switch 126 may be operated by energy supplied by the accumulator 123 to switch from an off mode, in which the wireless remote control 111B is prevented from controlling the battery 125 to supply electric energy and the battery 125 is not in use, to a standby mode, in which the wireless remote control 111B is permitted to control the battery 125 to supply electric energy for the operation of the constriction/stimulation unit 110.

FIG. 47 shows an apparatus identical to that of FIG. 43, except that a motor 115, a mechanical reversing device in the form of a gearbox 127 and a control unit 122 for controlling the gearbox 127 also are implanted in the patient. A separate external wireless remote control 111B controls the implanted control unit 122 to control the gearbox 127 to reverse the function performed by the constriction device (mechanically operated) of the constriction/stimulation unit 110.

FIG. 48 shows an apparatus identical to that of FIG. 46 except that the implanted components are interconnected differently. Thus, in this case the battery 125 powers the control unit 122 when the accumulator 123, suitably a capacitor, activates the switch 126 to switch to an on mode. When the switch 126 is in its on mode the control unit 122 is permitted to control the battery 125 to supply, or not supply, energy for the operation of the constriction/stimulation unit 110.

FIG. 49 shows an embodiment of the invention identical to that of FIG. 39, except that a gearbox 127 that connects the motor 115 to the constriction/stimulation unit 110, and a control unit 122 that controls the energy-transforming device 111A to power the motor 115 also are implanted in the patient. There is a separate external wireless remote control 111B that controls the control unit 122 to reverse the motor 115 when needed.

Optionally, the accumulator 123 shown in FIG. 42 may be provided in the embodiment of FIG. 49, wherein the implanted control unit 122 controls the energy-transforming device 111A to store the transformed energy in the accumulator 123. In response to a control signal from the wireless remote control 111B, the control unit 122 controls the accumulator 123 to supply energy for the operation of the constriction/stimulation unit 110.

Any of the apparatuses of FIGS. 36-49 can be used for practicing the method of the invention.

Those skilled in the art will realize that the above various embodiments according to FIGS. 38-49 could be combined in many different ways. For example, the energy operated switch 114 could be incorporated in any of the embodiments of FIGS. 39, 42-49, the hydraulic shifting device 121 could be incorporated in the embodiment of FIG. 40, and the gearbox 127 could be incorporated in the embodiment of FIG. 39. The switch 114 may be of a type that includes electronic components, for example a microprocessor, or a FPGA (Field Programmable Gate Array) designed for switching. Alternatively, however, the energy operated switch 114 may be replaced by a subcutaneously implanted push button that is manually switched by the patient between "on" and "off".

Alternatively, a permanent or rechargeable battery may be substituted for the energy-transforming devices 111A of the embodiments shown in FIGS. 38-49.

FIG. 50 shows the energy-transforming device in the form of an electrical junction element 128 for use in any of the above embodiments according to FIGS. 37-49. The element

128 is a flat p-n junction element comprising a p-type semiconductor layer **129** and an n-type semiconductor layer **130** sandwiched together. A light bulb **131** is electrically connected to opposite sides of the element **128** to illustrate how the generated current is obtained. The output of current from such a p-n junction element **128** is correlated to the temperature. See the formula below.

$$I=10(\exp(qV/kT)-1)$$

where

I is the external current flow,

I₀ is the reverse saturation current,

q is the fundamental electronic charge of 1.602×10⁻¹⁹ coulombs,

V is the applied voltage,

k is the Boltzmann constant, and

T is the absolute temperature.

Under large negative applied voltage (reverse bias), the exponential term becomes negligible compared to 1.0, and I is approximately -I₀. I₀ is strongly dependent on the temperature of the junction and hence on the intrinsic-carrier concentration. I₀ is larger for materials with smaller band gaps than for those with larger band gaps. The rectifier action of the diode, that is, its restriction of current flow to only one direction, is in this particular embodiment the key to the operation of the p-n junction element **128**.

The alternative way to design a p-n junction element is to deposit a thin layer of semiconductor onto a supporting material which does not absorb the kind of energy utilized in the respective embodiments. For use with wirelessly transmitted energy in terms of light waves, glass could be a suitable material. Various materials may be used in the semiconductor layers such as but not limited to cadmium telluride, copper-indium-diselenide and silicon. It is also possible to use a multilayer structure with several layers of p and n-type materials to improve efficiency.

The electric energy generated by the p-n junction element **128** could be of the same type as generated by solar cells, in which the negative and positive fields create a direct current. Alternatively, the negative and positive semiconductor layers may change polarity following the transmitted waves, thereby generating the alternating current.

The p-n junction element **128** is designed to make it suited for implantation. Thus, all the external surfaces of the element **128** in contact with the human body are made of a biocompatible material. The p-n junction semiconductors are designed to operate optimally at a body temperature of 37° C. because the current output, which should be more than 1 μA, is significantly depending on temperature as shown above. Since both the skin and subcutis absorb energy, the relation between the sensitivity or working area of the element **128** and the intensity or strength of the wireless energy-transmission is considered. The p-n junction element **128** preferably is designed flat and small. Alternatively, if the element **128** is made in larger sizes it should be flexible, in order to adapt to the patient's body movements. The volume of the element **128** should be kept less than 2000 cm³.

FIG. **51** shows basic parts of a remote control used for practicing the method of the invention. The remote control controls the constriction/stimulation unit **110**. In this case, the stimulation device of the constriction/stimulation unit stimulates the uterine tube wall portion of the patient's uterine tube with electric pulses. The remote control is based on wireless transmission of electromagnetic wave signals, often of high frequencies in the order of 100 kHz-1 GHz, through the skin **132** of the patient. In FIG. **51**, all parts

placed to the left of the skin **132** are located outside the patient's body and all parts placed to the right of the skin **132** are implanted.

An external signal-transmission device **133** is to be positioned close to a signal-receiving device **134** implanted close to the skin **132**. As an alternative, the signal-receiving device **134** may be placed for example inside the abdomen of the patient. The signal-receiving device **134** comprises a coil, approximately 1-100 mm, preferably 25 mm in diameter, wound with a very thin wire and tuned with a capacitor to a specific high frequency. A small coil is chosen if it is to be implanted under the skin of the patient and a large coil is chosen if it is to be implanted in the abdomen of the patient. The signal transmission device **133** comprises a coil having about the same size as the coil of the signal-receiving device **134** but wound with a thick wire that can handle the larger currents that is necessary. The coil of the signal transmission device **133** is tuned to the same specific high frequency as the coil of the signal-receiving device **134**.

The signal-transmission device **133** is adapted to send digital information via the power amplifier and signal-receiving device **134** to an implanted control unit **135**. To avoid that accidental random high frequency fields trigger control commands, digital signal codes are used. A conventional keypad placed on the signal transmission device **133** is used to order the signal transmission device **133** to send digital signals for the control of the constriction/stimulation unit. The signal transmission device **133** starts a command by generating a high frequency signal. After a short time, when the signal has energized the implanted parts of the control system, commands are sent to operate the constriction device of the constriction/stimulation unit **110** in pre-defined steps. The commands are sent as digital packets in the form illustrated below.

Start pattern, 8 bits	Command, 8 bits	Count, 8 bits	Checksum, 8 bits
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The commands are sent continuously during a rather long time period (e.g. about 30 seconds or more). When a new constriction or release step is desired the Count byte is increased by one to allow the implanted control unit **135** to decode and understand that another step is demanded by the signal transmission device **133**. If any part of the digital packet is erroneous, its content is simply ignored.

Through a line **136**, an implanted energizer unit **137** draws energy from the high frequency electromagnetic wave signals received by the signal-receiving device **134**. The energizer unit **137** stores the energy in a source of energy, such as a large capacitor, powers the control unit **135** and powers the constriction/stimulation unit **110** via a line **138**.

The control unit **135** comprises a demodulator and a microprocessor. The demodulator demodulates digital signals sent from the signal transmission device **133**. The microprocessor receives the digital packet, decodes it and sends a control signal via a signal line **139** to control the constriction device of the constriction/stimulation unit **110** to either constrict or release the uterine tube wall portion of the patient depending on the received command code.

FIG. **52** shows a circuitry of an embodiment of the invention, in which wireless energy is transformed into a current. External components of the circuitry include a microprocessor **140**, a signal generator **141** and a power amplifier **142** connected thereto. The microprocessor **140** is adapted to switch the signal generator **141** on/off and to modulate signals generated by the signal generator **141** with

digital commands. The power amplifier **142** amplifies the signals and sends them to an external signal-transmitting antenna **143**. The antenna **143** is connected in parallel with a capacitor **144** to form a resonant circuit tuned to the frequency generated by the signal generator **141**.

Implanted components of the circuitry include a signal receiving antenna coil **145** and a capacitor **146** forming together a resonant circuit that is tuned to the same frequency as the transmitting antenna **143**. The signal receiving antenna coil **145** induces a current from the received high frequency electromagnetic waves and a rectifying diode **147** rectifies the induced current, which charges a storage capacitor **148**. The storage capacitor **148** powers a motor **149** for driving the constriction device of the constriction/stimulation unit **110**. A coil **150** connected between the antenna coil **145** and the diode **147** prevents the capacitor **148** and the diode **147** from loading the circuit of the signal-receiving antenna **145** at higher frequencies. Thus, the coil **150** makes it possible to charge the capacitor **148** and to transmit digital information using amplitude modulation.

A capacitor **151** and a resistor **152** connected in parallel and a diode **153** forms a detector used to detect amplitude modulated digital information. A filter circuit is formed by a resistor **154** connected in series with a resistor **155** connected in series with a capacitor **156** connected in series with the resistor **154** via ground, and a capacitor **157**, one terminal of which is connected between the resistors **154**, **155** and the other terminal of which is connected between the diode **153** and the circuit formed by the capacitor **151** and resistor **152**. The filter circuit is used to filter out undesired low and high frequencies. The detected and filtered signals are fed to an implanted microprocessor **158** that decodes the digital information and controls the motor **149** via an H-bridge **159** comprising transistors **160, 161, 162** and **163**. The motor **149** can be driven in two opposite directions by the H-bridge **159**.

The microprocessor **158** also monitors the amount of stored energy in the storage capacitor **148**. Before sending signals to activate the motor **149**, the microprocessor **158** checks whether the energy stored in the storage capacitor **148** is enough. If the stored energy is not enough to perform the requested operation, the microprocessor **158** waits for the received signals to charge the storage capacitor **148** before activating the motor **149**.

Alternatively, the energy stored in the storage capacitor **148** may only be used for powering a switch, and the energy for powering the motor **149** may be obtained from another implanted energy source of relatively high capacity, for example a battery. In this case the switch is adapted to connect the battery to the motor **149** in an on mode when the switch is powered by the storage capacitor **148** and to keep the battery disconnected from the motor **149** in a standby mode when the switch is not powered.

FIGS. **53A-53C** show an apparatus used for practicing the method of the invention which is similar to the apparatus of FIG. **2**, except that the constriction/stimulation unit, here denoted by reference numeral **200**, is provided with additional clamping elements. The apparatus of FIGS. **53A-53C** is suited for actively moving the sperms in the uterine tube of a patient. Thus, the constriction/stimulation unit **200** also includes a first pair of short clamping elements **201** and **202**, and a second pair of short clamping elements **203** and **204**, wherein the first and second pairs of clamping elements are positioned at mutual sides of the elongate clamping elements **5, 6**. The two short clamping elements **201, 202** of the first pair are radially movable towards and away from each other between retracted positions (FIG. **53A**) and clamping posi-

tions (FIGS. **53B** and **53C**), and the two short clamping elements **203, 204** of the second pair are radially movable towards and away from each other between retracted positions (FIG. **53C**) and clamping positions (FIGS. **53A** and **53B**). The stimulation device **3** also includes electrical elements **7** positioned on the short clamping elements **201-204**, so that the electrical elements **7** on one of the short clamping elements **201** and **203**, respectively, of each pair of short elements face the electrical elements **7** on the other short clamping element **202** and **204**, respectively, of each pair of short elements.

The constriction/stimulation unit **200** is applied on a wall portion **8** of a tubular uterine tube wall of a patient, so that the short clamping elements **201, 202** are positioned at an upstream end of the uterine tube wall portion **8**, whereas the short clamping elements **203, 204** are positioned at a downstream end of the uterine tube wall portion **8**. In FIGS. **53A** to **53C** the upstream end of the uterine tube wall portion **8** is to the left and the downstream end of the uterine tube wall portion **8** is to the right.

The control device **4** controls the pair of short clamping elements **201, 202**, the pair of elongate clamping elements **5, 6** and the pair of short elements **203, 204** to constrict and release the uterine tube wall portion **8** independently of one another. The control device also controls the electrical elements **7** on a clamping element that is constricting the uterine tube wall portion to stimulate the constricted wall portion **8** with electric pulses to cause contraction of the uterine tube wall portion **8**, so that the uterine tube of the uterine tube wall portion **8** is closed.

FIGS. **53A-53C** illustrate how the control device **4** controls the operation of the constriction/stimulation unit **200** to cyclically move sperms downstream in the uterine tube of the uterine tube wall portion **8**. Thus, in FIG. **53A** the short clamping elements **201, 202** and the elongate clamping elements **5, 6** are in their retracted positions, whereas the short clamping elements **203, 204** are in their clamping positions while the electrical elements **7** on elements **203, 204** electrically stimulate the uterine tube wall portion **8**. The electrical stimulation causes the uterine tube wall portion **8** at the elements **203, 204** to thicken, whereby the uterine tube is closed. FIG. **53B** illustrates how also the short clamping elements **201, 202** have been moved radially inwardly to their clamping positions while the electrical elements **7** on elements **201, 202** electrically stimulate the uterine tube wall portion **8**, whereby a number of sperms is trapped in the uterine tube between the upstream and downstream ends of the uterine tube wall portion **8**. FIG. **53C** illustrates how initially the short clamping elements **203, 204** have been moved radially outwardly to their retracted positions, and then the elongate clamping elements **5, 6** have been moved radially inwardly to their clamping positions while the electrical elements **7** on elements **5, 6** electrically stimulate the uterine tube wall portion **8**. As a result, the sperms in the uterine tube between the upstream and downstream ends of the uterine tube wall portion **8** has been moved downstream in the uterine tube as indicated by an arrow. Then, the control device **4** controls the constriction/stimulation unit **200** to assume the state shown in FIG. **53A**, whereby sperms may flow into and fill the uterine tube between the upstream and downstream ends of the uterine tube wall portion **8**, so that the cycle of the operation is completed.

Alternatively, the operation cycle of the constriction/stimulation unit **200** described above may be reversed, in order to move sperms upstream in the uterine tube. In this case the control device **4** controls the short clamping ele-

ments **203**, **204** to constrict the uterine tube wall portion **8** at the downstream end thereof to restrict the flow of sperms in the uterine tube and controls the electric elements **7** to stimulate the constricted wall portion **8** with electric pulses at the downstream end to close the uterine tube. With the uterine tube closed at the downstream end of the constricted wall portion **8** and the short clamping elements **201**, **202** in their retracted positions, as shown in FIG. **53A**, the control device **4** controls the elongate clamping elements **5**, **6** to constrict the uterine tube wall portion **8** between the upstream and downstream ends thereof. As a result, the sperms contained in the uterine tube wall portion **8** between the upstream and downstream ends thereof is moved upstream in the uterine tube.

Although FIGS. **53A-53C** disclose pairs of clamping elements, it should be noted that it is conceivable to design the constriction/stimulation unit **200** with only a single short clamping element **201**, a single elongate clamping element **5** and a single short clamping element **203**. In this case the bottom of the tubular wall portion **8** is supported by stationary elements of the constriction/stimulation unit **200** opposite to the clamping elements **201**, **5**, **203**.

FIGS. **54A** and **54B** schematically show another apparatus used for practicing the method of the invention, in particular for actively moving the sperms in the uterine tube of a patient's tubular uterine tube. The apparatus of FIGS. **54A** and **54B** includes a constriction/stimulation unit **205**, the constriction device **206** of which has a rotor **207**, which carries three cylindrical constriction elements **208A**, **208B** and **208C** positioned equidistantly from the axis **209** of the rotor **207**. The constriction elements **208A-208C** may be designed as rollers. Each cylindrical element **208A-208C** is provided with electrical elements **7**. A stationary elongate support element **210** is positioned spaced from but close to the rotor **207** and has a part cylindrical surface **211** concentric with the axis **209** of the rotor **207**. The constriction/stimulation unit **205** is applied on a patient's tubular uterine tube **212**, so that the uterine tube **212** extends between the support element **210** and the rotor **207**.

The control device **4** controls the rotor **207** of the constriction device to rotate so that the constriction elements **208A-208C** successively constrict wall portions of a series of wall portions of the tubular uterine tube **212** against the elongate support element **210**. The electrical elements **7** of the constriction elements **208A-208C** stimulate the constricted wall portions with electric pulses so that the uterine tube wall portions thicken and close the uterine tube of the uterine tube **212**. FIG. **54A** illustrates how the constriction element **208A** has started to constrict the uterine tube wall of the uterine tube **212** and how the uterine tube of the uterine tube **212** is closed with the aid of the electrical elements **7** on the constriction element **208A**, whereas the constriction element **208B** is about to release the uterine tube **212**. FIG. **54B** illustrates how the constriction element **208A** has advanced about halfway along the elongate support element **210** and moved the sperms in the uterine tube in a direction indicated by an arrow. The constriction element **208B** has released the uterine tube **212**, whereas the constriction element **208C** is about to engage the uterine tube **212**. Thus, the control device **4** controls the rotor **207** to cyclically move the constriction elements **208A-208C** one after the other along the elongate support element **210** while constricting the uterine tube wall portions of the uterine tube **212**, so that the sperms in the uterine tube **212** is moved in a peristaltic manner.

FIGS. **55A**, **55B** and **55C** show another mechanically operable constriction device **213** used for practicing the

method of the invention. Referring to FIG. **55A**, the constriction device **213** includes a first ring-shaped holder **214** applied on a tubular uterine tube **8** of a patient and a second ring-shaped holder **215** also applied on the uterine tube **8** spaced apart from holder **214**. There are elastic strings **216** (here twelve strings) that extend in parallel along the tubular uterine tube **8** and interconnect the two holders **213**, **214** without contacting the uterine tube **8**. FIG. **55A** illustrate an inactivated state of the constriction device **213** in which the uterine tube **8** is not constricted.

Referring to FIGS. **55B** and **55C**, when the uterine tube **8** is to be constricted the ring-shaped holders **213** and **214** are rotated by an operation means (not shown) in opposite directions, whereby the elastic strings **216** constrict the uterine tube **8** in a manner that appears from FIGS. **55B** and **55C**. For the sake of clarity, only five strings **216** are shown in FIG. **55B**.

In accordance with the present invention, electrodes for electrically stimulating the uterine tube **8** to cause contraction of the uterine tube wall of the uterine tube **8** are attached to the strings **216** (not shown in FIGS. **55A-55C**).

FIG. **56** schematically illustrates an arrangement capable of sending information from inside the patient's body to the outside thereof to give information related to at least one functional parameter of the apparatus, and/or related to a physical parameter of the patient, in order to supply an accurate amount of energy to an implanted internal energy receiver **302** connected to energy consuming components of an implanted constriction/stimulation unit **301** of the apparatus. Such an energy receiver **302** may include a source of energy and/or an energy-transforming device. Briefly described, wireless energy is transmitted from an external source of energy **304a** located outside the patient and is received by the internal energy receiver **302** located inside the patient. The internal energy receiver is adapted to directly or indirectly supply received energy to the energy consuming components of the constriction/stimulation unit **301** via a switch **326**. An energy balance is determined between the energy received by the internal energy receiver **302** and the energy used for the constriction/stimulation unit **301**, and the transmission of wireless energy is then controlled based on the determined energy balance. The energy balance thus provides an accurate indication of the correct amount of energy needed, which is sufficient to operate the constriction/stimulation unit **301** properly, but without causing undue temperature rise.

In FIG. **56** the patient's skin is indicated by a vertical line **305**. Here, the energy receiver comprises an energy-transforming device **302** located inside the patient, preferably just beneath the patient's skin **305**. Generally speaking, the implanted energy-transforming device **302** may be placed in the abdomen, thorax, muscle fascia (e.g. in the abdominal wall), subcutaneously, or at any other suitable location. The implanted energy-transforming device **302** is adapted to receive wireless energy **E** transmitted from the external source of energy **304a** provided in an external energy-transmission device **304** located outside the patient's skin **305** in the vicinity of the implanted energy-transforming device **302**.

As is well known in the art, the wireless energy **E** may generally be transferred by means of any suitable Transcutaneous Energy Transfer (TET) device, such as a device including a primary coil arranged in the external source of energy **304a** and an adjacent secondary coil arranged in the implanted energy-transforming device **302**. When an electric current is fed through the primary coil, energy in the form of a voltage is induced in the secondary coil which can

be used to power the implanted energy consuming components, e.g. after storing the incoming energy in an implanted source of energy, such as a rechargeable battery or a capacitor. However, the present invention is generally not limited to any particular energy transfer technique, TET devices or energy sources, and any kind of wireless energy may be used.

The amount of energy received by the implanted energy receiver may be compared with the energy used by the implanted components of the apparatus. The term "energy used" is then understood to include also energy stored by implanted components of the apparatus. A control device includes an external control unit **304b** that controls the external source of energy **304a** based on the determined energy balance to regulate the amount of transferred energy. In order to transfer the correct amount of energy, the energy balance and the required amount of energy is determined by means of a determination device including an implanted internal control unit **315** connected between the switch **326** and the constriction/stimulation unit **301**. The internal control unit **315** may thus be arranged to receive various measurements obtained by suitable sensors or the like, not shown, measuring certain characteristics of the constriction/stimulation unit **301**, somehow reflecting the required amount of energy needed for proper operation of the constriction/stimulation unit **301**. Moreover, the current condition of the patient may also be detected by means of suitable measuring devices or sensors, in order to provide parameters reflecting the patient's condition. Hence, such characteristics and/or parameters may be related to the current state of the constriction/stimulation unit **301**, such as power consumption, operational mode and temperature, as well as the patient's condition reflected by parameters such as: body temperature, blood pressure, heartbeats and breathing. Other kinds of physical parameters of the patient and functional parameters of the device are described elsewhere.

Furthermore, a source of energy in the form of an accumulator **316** may optionally be connected to the implanted energy-transforming device **302** via the control unit **315** for accumulating received energy for later use by the constriction/stimulation unit **301**. Alternatively or additionally, characteristics of such an accumulator, also reflecting the required amount of energy, may be measured as well. The accumulator may be replaced by a rechargeable battery, and the measured characteristics may be related to the current state of the battery, any electrical parameter such as energy consumption voltage, temperature, etc. In order to provide sufficient voltage and current to the constriction/stimulation unit **301**, and also to avoid excessive heating, it is clearly understood that the battery should be charged optimally by receiving a correct amount of energy from the implanted energy-transforming device **302**, i.e. not too little or too much. The accumulator may also be a capacitor with corresponding characteristics.

For example, battery characteristics may be measured on a regular basis to determine the current state of the battery, which then may be stored as state information in a suitable storage means in the internal control unit **315**. Thus, whenever new measurements are made, the stored battery state information can be updated accordingly. In this way, the state of the battery can be "calibrated" by transferring a correct amount of energy, so as to maintain the battery in an optimal condition.

Thus, the internal control unit **315** of the determination device is adapted to determine the energy balance and/or the currently required amount of energy, (either energy per time unit or accumulated energy) based on measurements made

by the above-mentioned sensors or measuring devices of the apparatus, or the patient, or an implanted source of energy if used, or any combination thereof. The internal control unit **315** is further connected to an internal signal transmitter **327**, arranged to transmit a control signal reflecting the determined required amount of energy, to an external signal receiver **304c** connected to the external control unit **304b**. The amount of energy transmitted from the external source of energy **304a** may then be regulated in response to the received control signal.

Alternatively, the determination device may include the external control unit **304b**. In this alternative, sensor measurements can be transmitted directly to the external control unit **304b** wherein the energy balance and/or the currently required amount of energy can be determined by the external control unit **304b**, thus integrating the above-described function of the internal control unit **315** in the external control unit **304b**. In that case, the internal control unit **315** can be omitted and the sensor measurements are supplied directly to the internal signal transmitter **327** which sends the measurements over to the external signal receiver **304c** and the external control unit **304b**. The energy balance and the currently required amount of energy can then be determined by the external control unit **304b** based on those sensor measurements.

Hence, the present solution according to the arrangement of FIG. 56 employs the feed back of information indicating the required energy, which is more efficient than previous solutions because it is based on the actual use of energy that is compared to the received energy, e.g. with respect to the amount of energy, the energy difference, or the energy receiving rate as compared to the energy rate used by implanted energy consuming components. The apparatus may use the received energy either for consuming or for storing the energy in an implanted source of energy or the like. The different parameters discussed above would thus be used if relevant and needed and then as a tool for determining the actual energy balance. However, such parameters may also be needed per se for any actions taken internally to specifically operate the apparatus.

The internal signal transmitter **327** and the external signal receiver **304c** may be implemented as separate units using suitable signal transfer means, such as radio, IR (Infrared) or ultrasonic signals. Alternatively, the internal signal transmitter **327** and the external signal receiver **304c** may be integrated in the implanted energy-transforming device **302** and the external source of energy **304a**, respectively, so as to convey control signals in a reverse direction relative to the energy transfer, basically using the same transmission technique. The control signals may be modulated with respect to frequency, phase or amplitude.

Thus, the feedback information may be transferred either by a separate communication system including receivers and transmitters or may be integrated in the energy system. Such an integrated information feedback and energy system comprises an implantable internal energy receiver for receiving wireless energy, the energy receiver having an internal first coil and a first electronic circuit connected to the first coil, and an external energy transmitter for transmitting wireless energy, the energy transmitter having an external second coil and a second electronic circuit connected to the second coil. The external second coil of the energy transmitter transmits wireless energy which is received by the first coil of the energy receiver. This system further comprises a power switch for switching the connection of the internal first coil to the first electronic circuit on and off, such that feedback information related to the charging of the first coil is

received by the external energy transmitter in the form of an impedance variation in the load of the external second coil, when the power switch switches the connection of the internal first coil to the first electronic circuit on and off. In implementing this system in the arrangement of FIG. 17, the switch 326 is either separate and controlled by the internal control unit 315, or integrated in the internal control unit 315. It should be understood that the switch 326 should be interpreted in its broadest embodiment. This means a transistor, MCU, MCP, ASIC FPGA or a DA converter or any other electronic component or circuit that may switch the power on and off.

To conclude, the energy supply arrangement illustrated in FIG. 56 may operate basically in the following manner. The energy balance is first determined by the internal control unit 315 of the determination device. A control signal reflecting the required amount of energy is also created by the internal control unit 315, and the control signal is transmitted from the internal signal transmitter 327 to the external signal receiver 304c. Alternatively, the energy balance can be determined by the external control unit 304b instead depending on the implementation, as mentioned above. In that case, the control signal may carry measurement results from various sensors. The amount of energy emitted from the external source of energy 304a can then be regulated by the external control unit 304b, based on the determined energy balance, e.g. in response to the received control signal. This process may be repeated intermittently at certain intervals during ongoing energy transfer, or may be executed on a more or less continuous basis during the energy transfer.

The amount of transferred energy can generally be regulated by adjusting various transmission parameters in the external source of energy 304a, such as voltage, current, amplitude, wave frequency and pulse characteristics. This system may also be used to obtain information about the coupling factors between the coils in a TET system even to calibrate the system both to find an optimal place for the external coil in relation to the internal coil and to optimize energy transfer. Simply comparing in this case the amount of energy transferred with the amount of energy received. For example if the external coil is moved the coupling factor may vary and correctly displayed movements could cause the external coil to find the optimal place for energy transfer. Preferably, the external coil is adapted to calibrate the amount of transferred energy to achieve the feedback information in the determination device, before the coupling factor is maximized.

This coupling factor information may also be used as a feedback during energy transfer. In such a case, the energy system of the present invention comprises an implantable internal energy receiver for receiving wireless energy, the energy receiver having an internal first coil and a first electronic circuit connected to the first coil, and an external energy transmitter for transmitting wireless energy, the energy transmitter having an external second coil and a second electronic circuit connected to the second coil. The external second coil of the energy transmitter transmits wireless energy which is received by the first coil of the energy receiver. This system further comprises a feedback device for communicating out the amount of energy received in the first coil as a feedback information, and wherein the second electronic circuit includes a determination device for receiving the feedback information and for comparing the amount of transferred energy by the second coil with the feedback information related to the amount of energy received in the first coil to obtain the coupling factor

between the first and second coils. The energy transmitter may regulate the transmitted energy in response to the obtained coupling factor.

With reference to FIG. 57, although wireless transfer of energy for operating the apparatus has been described above to enable non-invasive operation, it will be appreciated that the apparatus can be operated with wire bound energy as well. Such an example is shown in FIG. 57, wherein an external switch 326 is interconnected between the external source of energy 304a and an operation device, such as an electric motor 307 operating the constriction/stimulation unit 301. An external control unit 304b controls the operation of the external switch 326 to effect proper operation of the constriction/stimulation unit 301.

FIG. 58 illustrates different embodiments for how received energy can be supplied to and used by the constriction/stimulation unit 301. Similar to the example of FIG. 56, an internal energy receiver 302 receives wireless energy E from an external source of energy 304a which is controlled by a transmission control unit 304b. The internal energy receiver 302 may comprise a constant voltage circuit, indicated as a dashed box "constant V" in FIG. 58, for supplying energy at constant voltage to the constriction/stimulation unit 301. The internal energy receiver 302 may further comprise a constant current circuit, indicated as a dashed box "constant C" in the figure, for supplying energy at constant current to the constriction/stimulation unit 301.

The constriction/stimulation unit 301 comprises an energy consuming part 301a, which may be a motor, pump, restriction device, or any other medical appliance that requires energy for its electrical operation. The constriction/stimulation unit 301 may further comprise an energy storage device 301b for storing energy supplied from the internal energy receiver 302. Thus, the supplied energy may be directly consumed by the energy consuming part 301a, or stored by the energy storage device 301b, or the supplied energy may be partly consumed and partly stored. The constriction/stimulation unit 301 may further comprise an energy stabilizing unit 301c for stabilizing the energy supplied from the internal energy receiver 302. Thus, the energy may be supplied in a fluctuating manner such that it may be necessary to stabilize the energy before consumed or stored.

The energy supplied from the internal energy receiver 302 may further be accumulated and/or stabilized by a separate energy stabilizing unit 328 located outside the constriction/stimulation unit 301, before being consumed and/or stored by the constriction/stimulation unit 301. Alternatively, the energy stabilizing unit 328 may be integrated in the internal energy receiver 302. In either case, the energy stabilizing unit 328 may comprise a constant voltage circuit and/or a constant current circuit.

It should be noted that FIG. 56 and FIG. 58 illustrate some possible but non-limiting implementation options regarding how the various shown functional components and elements can be arranged and connected to each other. However, the skilled person will readily appreciate that many variations and modifications can be made within the scope of the present invention.

FIG. 59 schematically shows an energy balance measuring circuit of one of the proposed designs of the apparatus for controlling transmission of wireless energy, or energy balance. The circuit has an output signal centered on 2.5V and proportionally related to the energy imbalance. The derivative of this signal shows if the value goes up and down and how fast such a change takes place. If the amount of received energy is lower than the energy used by implanted components of the apparatus, more energy is transferred and

thus charged into the source of energy. The output signal from the circuit is typically fed to an A/D converter and converted into a digital format. The digital information can then be sent to the external energy-transmission device allowing it to adjust the level of the transmitted energy. Another possibility is to have a completely analog system that uses comparators comparing the energy balance level with certain maximum and minimum thresholds sending information to external energy-transmission device if the balance drifts out of the max/min window.

The schematic FIG. 59 shows a circuit implementation for a system that transfers energy to the implanted energy components of the apparatus from outside of the patient's body using inductive energy transfer. An inductive energy transfer system typically uses an external transmitting coil and an internal receiving coil. The receiving coil, L1, is included in the schematic FIG. 59; the transmitting parts of the system are excluded.

The implementation of the general concept of energy balance and the way the information is transmitted to the external energy transmitter can of course be implemented in numerous different ways. The schematic FIG. 20 and the above described method of evaluating and transmitting the information should only be regarded as examples of how to implement the control system.

Circuit Details

In FIG. 59 the symbols Y1, Y2, Y3 and so on symbolize test points within the circuit. The components in the diagram and their respective values are values that work in this particular implementation which of course is only one of an infinite number of possible design solutions.

Energy to power the circuit is received by the energy receiving coil L1. Energy to implanted components is transmitted in this particular case at a frequency of 25 kHz. The energy balance output signal is present at test point Y1.

The embodiments described in connection with FIGS. 56, 58 and 59 identify a general method of the present invention for controlling transmission of wireless energy to implanted energy consuming components of the apparatus. Such a method will be defined in general terms in the following.

A method is thus provided for controlling transmission of wireless energy supplied to implanted energy consuming components of an apparatus as described above. The wireless energy E is transmitted from an external source of energy located outside the patient and is received by an internal energy receiver located inside the patient, the internal energy receiver being connected to the implanted energy consuming components of the apparatus for directly or indirectly supplying received energy thereto. An energy balance is determined between the energy received by the internal energy receiver and the energy used for the operation of the implanted parts of the apparatus. The transmission of wireless energy E from the external source of energy is then controlled based on the determined energy balance.

The wireless energy may be transmitted inductively from a primary coil in the external source of energy to a secondary coil in the internal energy receiver. A change in the energy balance may be detected to control the transmission of wireless energy based on the detected energy balance change. A difference may also be detected between energy received by the internal energy receiver and energy used for the operation of the implanted parts of the apparatus, to control the transmission of wireless energy based on the detected energy difference.

When controlling the energy transmission, the amount of transmitted wireless energy may be decreased if the detected energy balance change implies that the energy balance is increasing, or vice versa. The decrease/increase of energy transmission may further correspond to a detected change rate.

The amount of transmitted wireless energy may further be decreased if the detected energy difference implies that the received energy is greater than the used energy, or vice versa. The decrease/increase of energy transmission may then correspond to the magnitude of the detected energy difference.

As mentioned above, the energy used for the operation of the implanted parts of the apparatus be consumed to operate the implanted parts of the apparatus and/or stored in at least one implanted energy storage device of the apparatus.

When electrical and/or physical parameters of the implanted parts of the apparatus and/or physical parameters of the patient are determined, the energy may be transmitted for consumption and storage according to a transmission rate per time unit which is determined based on said parameters. The total amount of transmitted energy may also be determined based on said parameters.

When a difference is detected between the total amount of energy received by the internal energy receiver and the total amount of consumed and/or stored energy, and the detected difference is related to the integral over time of at least one measured electrical parameter related to said energy balance, the integral may be determined for a monitored voltage and/or current related to the energy balance.

When the derivative is determined over time of a measured electrical parameter related to the amount of consumed and/or stored energy, the derivative may be determined for a monitored voltage and/or current related to the energy balance.

The transmission of wireless energy from the external source of energy may be controlled by applying to the external source of energy electrical pulses from a first electric circuit to transmit the wireless energy, the electrical pulses having leading and trailing edges, varying the lengths of first time intervals between successive leading and trailing edges of the electrical pulses and/or the lengths of second time intervals between successive trailing and leading edges of the electrical pulses, and transmitting wireless energy, the transmitted energy generated from the electrical pulses having a varied power, the varying of the power depending on the lengths of the first and/or second time intervals.

In that case, the frequency of the electrical pulses may be substantially constant when varying the first and/or second time intervals. When applying electrical pulses, the electrical pulses may remain unchanged, except for varying the first and/or second time intervals. The amplitude of the electrical pulses may be substantially constant when varying the first and/or second time intervals. Further, the electrical pulses may be varied by only varying the lengths of first time intervals between successive leading and trailing edges of the electrical pulses.

A train of two or more electrical pulses may be supplied in a row, wherein when applying the train of pulses, the train having a first electrical pulse at the start of the pulse train and having a second electrical pulse at the end of the pulse train, two or more pulse trains may be supplied in a row, wherein the lengths of the second time intervals between successive trailing edge of the second electrical pulse in a first pulse train and leading edge of the first electrical pulse of a second pulse train are varied.

55

When applying the electrical pulses, the electrical pulses may have a substantially constant current and a substantially constant voltage. The electrical pulses may also have a substantially constant current and a substantially constant voltage. Further, the electrical pulses may also have a substantially constant frequency. The electrical pulses within a pulse train may likewise have a substantially constant frequency.

The circuit formed by the first electric circuit and the external source of energy may have a first characteristic time period or first time constant, and when effectively varying the transmitted energy, such frequency time period may be in the range of the first characteristic time period or time constant or shorter.

A constriction device can be arranged to delay the movement of the sperms in a uterine tube for a predetermined amount of time. This can be achieved in many different ways, of which two will be described below.

FIG. 60 is a sectional view through a constriction device 2 adapted to restrict or stop the flow through a uterine tube. The general flow direction is illustrated by an arrow. The constriction device comprises an array of constriction elements 2a-2m, each arranged to restrict or close a part of the uterine tube. The constriction device illustrated in FIG. 56 is in an open or non-operative position wherein the flow is uninterrupted.

FIG. 61A illustrates the constriction device of FIG. 60 in a first interrupting stage, wherein every other constriction element is in a closed position. An sperm, generally designated 1000, is allowed to enter the space formed by the first, non-closed constriction element. It is stopped there by the second constriction element, which is in a closed position. This operative state can remain for a desired period of time, such as one day.

FIG. 61B illustrates the constriction device of FIG. 60 in a second interrupting stage, wherein every constriction element that was closed in the first interrupting stage is in an open position and vice versa. The sperm is then allowed to enter the space formed by the second, non-closed constriction element. It is stopped there by the third constriction element, which is in a closed position. This operative state can remain for a desired period of time, such as one day.

FIG. 61A illustrates the constriction device of FIG. 60 in a third interrupting stage, wherein every other constriction element is in a closed position, exactly as in the first interrupting stage. The sperm shown in FIGS. 61A and 61B, is allowed to enter the space formed by the third, non-closed constriction element. It is stopped there by the fourth constriction element, which is in a closed position. This operative state can remain for a desired period of time, such as one day.

Repeating this process, the movement of an sperm can be delayed for a desired period of time until it reaches the other end of the constriction device. Since the life of an sperm is less than about five days, delaying an sperm in this way will ensure that it does not reach an sperm in the uterine tube and thereby the constriction device functions to prevent any flow of sperms. By altering the constricted area of the uterine tube, this will not be harmed like if the same area were constricted for a longer period of time.

FIGS. 62A-D show a second embodiment of a constriction device. This operates in a way similar to the first embodiment of a constriction device shown in FIGS. 61A-C. However, in this embodiment, two consecutive constriction elements are in an open position at a time when allowing progress of the sperms.

56

FIGS. 63 A-E disclose one particular embodiment of the invention using a pump for a uterine tube to such sperms in the uterine tube. The principle is simple; more than one restriction device is supplied on the outside of the uterine tube to restrict the same from the outside thereof. The restriction device may comprise any one of or a combination of; a stimulation device, a mechanical or hydraulic restriction device. One first restriction is applied and restricted. At least one further restriction is then applied. Preferably the restriction applies slowly to not cause any unnecessary movement of any sperms backwards. The further restrictions preferably have a longer restricted area. Thereafter all the restrictions are rapidly released causing suction both from the proximal and distal side. As long as the restriction is applied slowly and released fast any way to apply the restriction may alternatively work.

FIG. 63A discloses an applied restriction on the uterine tube with a restriction device 2. FIGS. 63 B-D disclose further applied restrictions. FIG. 63E discloses a rapid release of all the restriction areas at the same time thus creating a suction from both sides or if one restriction most distal or most proximal is not released sucking from only one side.

While the invention has been described in connection with what is presently considered to be the most practical and preferred embodiment, it is to be understood that the invention is not to be limited to the disclosed embodiment, but on the contrary, is intended to cover various modifications and equivalent arrangements included within the spirit and scope of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. Electrically stimulating a uterine tube wall portion by controlling an implanted stimulation device from at least one of:

an external control unit from outside the patient's body; and

an internal control unit from inside the patient's body; wherein the electrically stimulating causes progressive contraction of the uterine tube wall portion along a length of the uterine tube wall portion to restrict the flow of sperms in the uterine tube; and ceasing electrically stimulating the uterine tube wall portion to restore the flow of sperms in the uterine tube.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the stimulating step is performed by stimulating the uterine tube wall portion with cyclically varying stimulation intensity.

3. The method according to claim 1, wherein the stimulating step is performed by intermittently and individually stimulating different areas of the uterine tube wall portion with pulses.

4. The method according to claim 3, wherein the pulses form pulse trains and at least one of the following steps is performed:

varying the pulse amplitudes of the pulses of the pulse trains;

varying the frequency of the pulses of the pulse trains;

varying the frequency of the pulse trains; and

varying the number of: pulses of each pulse train.

5. The method according to claim 3, wherein the pulses form pulse trains and each off time period between the pulse trains is kept long enough to restore substantially normal blood circulation in each area when the area is not stimulated during the off time periods.

6. The method according to claim 1, wherein the stimulating step is performed by electrically stimulating different areas of the uterine tube wall portion with electric pulses.

7. The method according to claim 6, wherein the uterine tube wall portion it muscle fibers, and the stimulating step is performed by stimulating the uterine tube wall portion including the muscle fibers with the electric pulses.

8. The method according to claim 6, further comprising providing at least one electrical element engaging the uterine tube wall portion.

9. The method according to claim 8, further comprising providing a plurality of electrical elements engaging the uterine tube wall portion.

10. The method according to claim 9, further comprising placing the electrical elements in a fixed orientation relative to one another and providing a structure holding the electrical elements in the fixed orientation, wherein the electrical elements form an elongate pattern of electrical elements with two opposite short ends, further comprising applying the structure on the patients uterine tube so that the elongate pattern of electrical elements extends along the uterine tube wall portion of the uterine tube in the direction of the flow of sperms in the patients uterine tube and the elements abut the respective areas of the uterine tube wall portion.

11. The method according to claim 9, thither comprising electrically energizing the electrical elements, wherein each electrical element is cyclically energized with electric pulses.

12. The method according to claim 11, wherein the electrical elements are energized so that a number or groups of the electrical elements are energized at the same time.

13. The method according to claim 11, wherein the electrical elements are energized one at a time in sequence or groups of the electrical elements are sequentially energized, either randomly or in accordance with a predetermined pattern.

14. The method according to claim 11, further comprising applying the electrical elements on the patient's uterine tube so that the electrical elements form an elongate pattern of electrical elements extending along the uterine tube wall portion of the uterine tube in the direction of the flow of sperms in the patient's uterine tube and the elements abut the respective areas of the uterine tube wall portion.

15. The method according to claim 14, wherein the electrical elements are successively energized along the elongate pattern of electrical elements.

16. The method according to claim 14, wherein the electrical elements are applied on the patient's uterine tube in a series of groups of elements extending along the patient's uterine tube in the direction of flow in the patient's uterine tube.

17. The method according tip claim 15, wherein the electrical elements are successively energized along the elongate pattern of electrical elements in the same or opposite direction of the flow of sperms in the patient's uterine tube.

18. The method according to claim 15, wherein the electrical elements are successively energized along a elongate pattern of electrical elements from a position substantially at a center of the constricted wall portion towards both ends of the elongate pattern of electrical elements.

19. The method according to claim 15, wherein the electrical elements are energized so that the energized electrical elements form at least, one group of adjacent energized electrical elements.

20. The method according to claim 19, wherein the elements in the at least one group of energized electrical elements form a path of energized electrical elements, and wherein the path of energized electrical elements extends at least in part or completely around the patient's uterine tube.

21. The method according to claim 19, wherein the electrical elements are applied on the patient's uterine tube in a series of groups of elements extending along the patient's uterine tube in the direction of flow in the patient's uterine tube, and wherein the groups of electrical elements in the series of groups are successively energized in the same or opposite direction of the flow in the patient's uterine tube.

22. The method according to claim 19, wherein the at least one group of adjacent energized electrical elements comprises two electrical elements provided mutually on opposite sides of the patient's uterine tube.

23. The method according to claim 19, wherein the at least one group of adjacent energized electrical elements comprises three electrical elements extending around the patient's uterine tube.

24. The method according to claim 16, wherein the groups of electrical elements in the series of groups are successively energized in the same or opposite direction of the flow of sperms in the patient's uterine tube.

25. The method according to claim 16, wherein the electrical elements of each group of electrical elements form a path of elements extending at least in part or completely around the patient's uterine tube.

26. The method according to claim 16, wherein the electrical elements of each group of electrical elements form two paths of elements extending on mutual sides of the patient's uterine tube, and wherein the two paths of electrical elements of each group of elements extend at least substantially transverse to the direction of flow in the patient's uterine tube.

27. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of electrically stimulating includes stopping the flow of sperms in the uterine tube.

28. A method for reversibly controlling a flow of sperm in a uterine tube of a female patient, the method comprising the steps of:

stimulating electrically and noninvasively at least a portion of the uterine tube's wall to cause contraction of a portion of the uterine tube wall, to affect the flow of sperm in the uterine tube, the stimulating step being performed by stimulating one or more of different areas of the uterine tube wall portion at a time using an already implanted electrical stimulation device controlled from outside the patient's body;

stimulating the different areas to cause progressive contraction of the uterine tube wall portion to move the sperms in the uterine tube, and,

stimulating progressively a constricted wall portion in the downstream or upstream direction of the uterine tube to move sperms in the uterine tube, thus allowing sperms to move upstream through the uterine wall portion when progressively stimulating in the upstream direction, and preventing passage of sperms in the upstream direction through the uterine tube wall portion when stimulating progressively in the downstream direction, wherein the method further comprising ceasing stimulating the uterine tube wall portion to allow free flow of sperms in the uterine tube.

29. The method according to claim 28, wherein the stimulating step is performed by sequentially stimulating the different areas of the uterine tube wall portion, or by shifting the stimulation from one area to another over time, or by cyclically propagating the stimulation of the areas along the wall portion in the same or opposite direction of the flow in the patient's uterine tube passageway in accordance with a determined stimulation pattern.

59

30. A method for reversibly controlling a flow of sperms in a uterine tube of a patient, the method comprising the steps of:

inserting a needle like tube into a cavity of the patient's body,

using the needle like tube to fill the cavity with gas thereby expanding the cavity, placing at least two laparoscopic trocars in the patient's body,

inserting a camera through one of the trocars into the cavity,

inserting a dissecting tool through any of the trocars and dissecting an area of at least one portion of the uterine tube wall of the uterine tube to allow placement of a stimulation device onto the uterine tube,

fully implanting a stimulation device in the dissected area in operative engagement with the uterine tube, and wherein the method postoperatively further comprises the ability to:

stimulate, using the stimulation device, the uterine tube wall portion to cause progressive contractions of the uterine tube wall portion,

noninvasively stimulate, using the already implanted stimulation device, one or more of different areas of the uterine tube wall portion at a time,

stimulate the different areas to cause progressive contraction of the uterine tube wall portion to move the sperms in the uterine tube, and

stimulate progressively the wall portion in the downstream or upstream direction of the uterine tube to move sperms in the uterine wall portion, thus allowing sperms to move upstream through the uterine wall portion when progressively stimulating in the upstream direction, and preventing passage of sperms in the upstream direction through the uterine tube wall portion when stimulating progressively in the downstream direction,

and wherein the method further comprises the ability to: cease stimulating the uterine tube wall portion to allow free flow of sperms in the uterine tube.

60

31. The method according to claim 30, wherein the cavity constitutes at least of an abdominal cavity, a cavity in the pelvic region, a cavity in human soft tissue, muscle, fat or fibrotic tissue.

32. A method for reversibly controlling a flow of sperms in a uterine tube of a patient, the method comprising the steps of:

cutting the skin of the patient,

inserting a dissecting tool and dissecting an area of at least one portion of the uterine tube wall of the uterine tube, fully implanting a stimulation device in the dissected area in operative engagement with the uterine tube, and

using the stimulation device to stimulate the uterine tube wall portion to cause progressive contractions of the uterine tube wall portion,

wherein the method postoperatively further comprising the ability to:

stimulate one or more of different areas of the uterine tube wall portion at a time by controlling the already implanted stimulation device from outside of the patient's body;

stimulate the different areas to cause progressive contraction of the uterine tube wall portion to move the sperms in the uterine tube, and,

stimulate progressively the wall portion in the downstream or upstream direction of the uterine tube to move sperms in the uterine wall portion, thus allowing sperms to move upstream through the uterine wall portion when progressively stimulating in the upstream direction, and preventing passage of sperms in the upstream direction through the uterine tube wall portion when stimulating progressively in the downstream direction,

and wherein the method further comprising the ability to: cease stimulating the uterine tube wall portion to allow free flow of sperms in the uterine tube.

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专利名称(译)	控制子宫管中精子流动的方法		
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申请号	US12/285808	申请日	2008-10-14
[标]申请(专利权)人(译)	米卢克斯控股股份有限公司		
申请(专利权)人(译)	MILUX HOLDING SA		
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IPC分类号	A61F6/20 A61M1/10 A61M1/12 A61N1/05 A61N1/36 A61B17/12 A61B17/135 A61F6/00 A61F2/00 A61F6/14 A61B17/00 A61N1/40 A61F6/06 A61F6/22		
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摘要(译)

提供了一种用于控制由患者的子宫管壁形成的子宫管中的精子流动的方法。该方法包括轻轻收缩（即，基本上不妨碍子宫管壁中的血液循环）子宫管壁的至少一部分以影响子宫管中精子的流动，并刺激收缩的壁部分引起收缩。子宫管壁部分进一步影响子宫管内精子的流动。该方法可用于限制或停止子宫管中的精子流动，或用于主动移动子宫管中的流体，具有损伤子宫管的低风险。

