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(54) **DEVICE FOR THE DELIVERY OF A PROSTHETIC IMPLANT AND METHOD OF USE THEREOF**

(71) Applicant: **Proximate Concepts LLC**, Fort Lee, NJ (US)

(72) Inventor: **Paul Rosenberg**, Saddle River, NJ (US)

(73) Assignee: **PROXIMATE CONCEPTS LLC**, Fort Lee, NJ (US)

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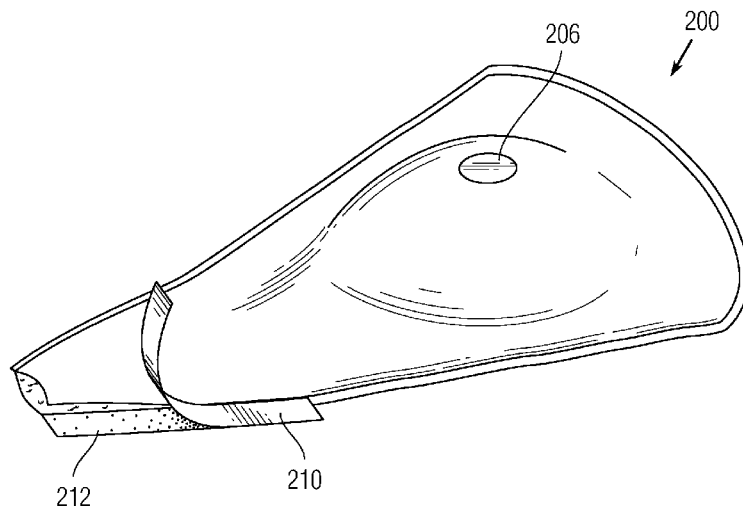
Primary Examiner — Suzette J Gherbi

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Leason Ellis LLP

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A surgical device for assisting in the placement of a prosthetic implant within a surgical pocket of a patient such that placement minimizes tissue stress along and inside the surgical pocket. The surgical device comprises a bag shaped as a conical frustum in which a proximal end of the conical frustum is sealed and a distal end of the conical frustum is open, with an elongated slit extending from the distal end towards the proximal end. An opening formed by the distal opening and the elongated slit is sufficiently large enough to accept the prosthetic implant into the bag. According to one embodiment, an adhesive is affixed along a portion of the elongated slit to seal the elongated slit such that the distal end remains open, thereby allowing for egress of the implant from the bag and placement into the surgical pocket.

20 Claims, 9 Drawing Sheets



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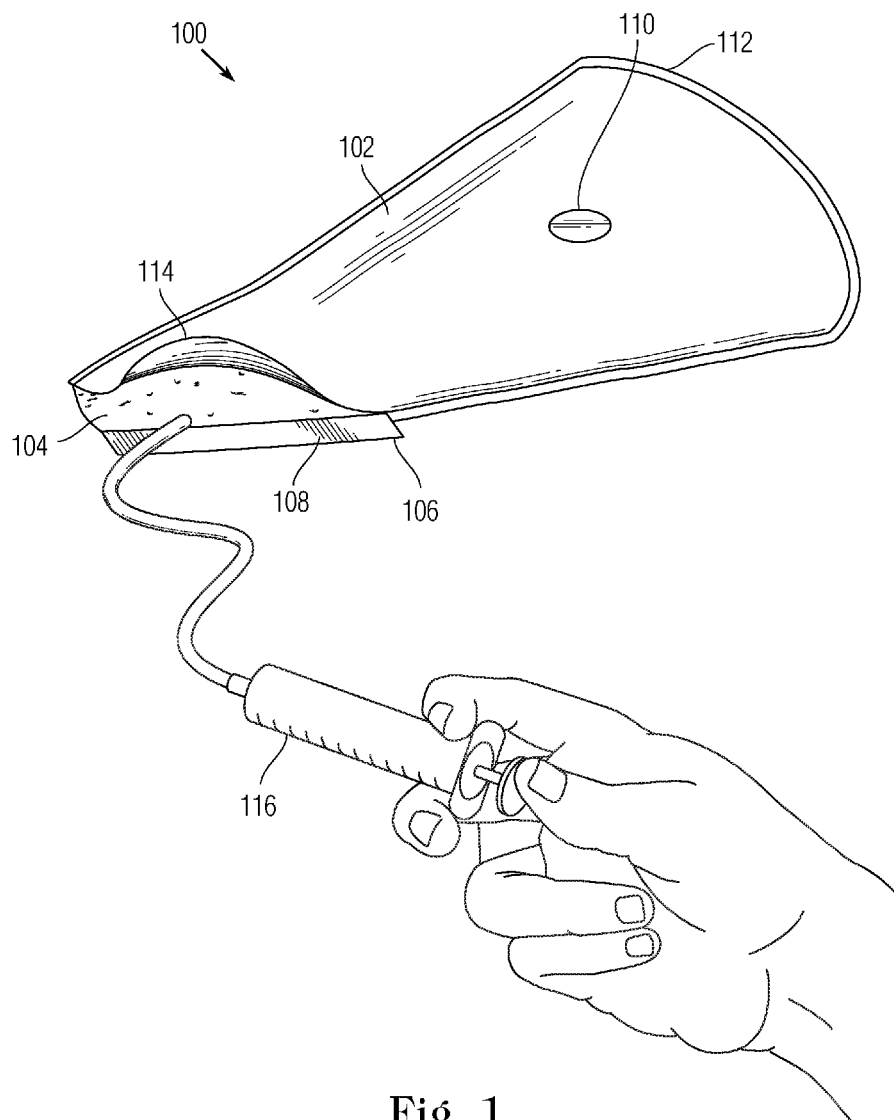
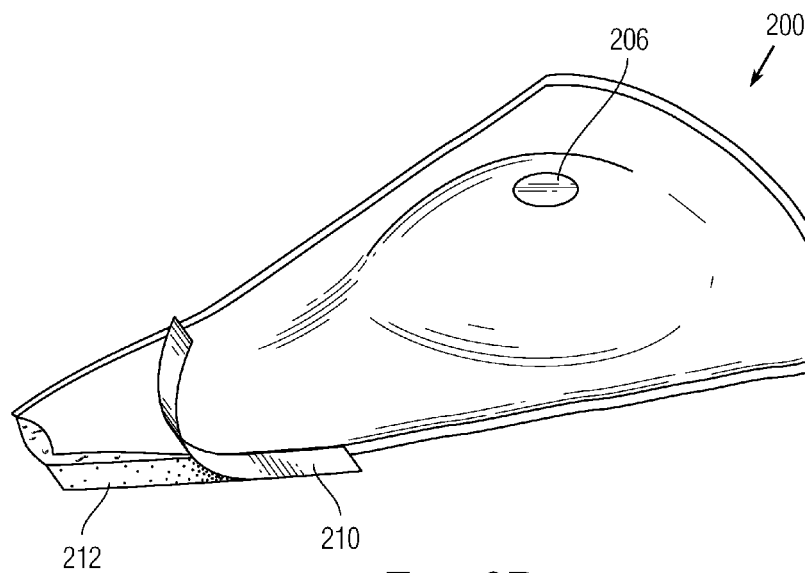
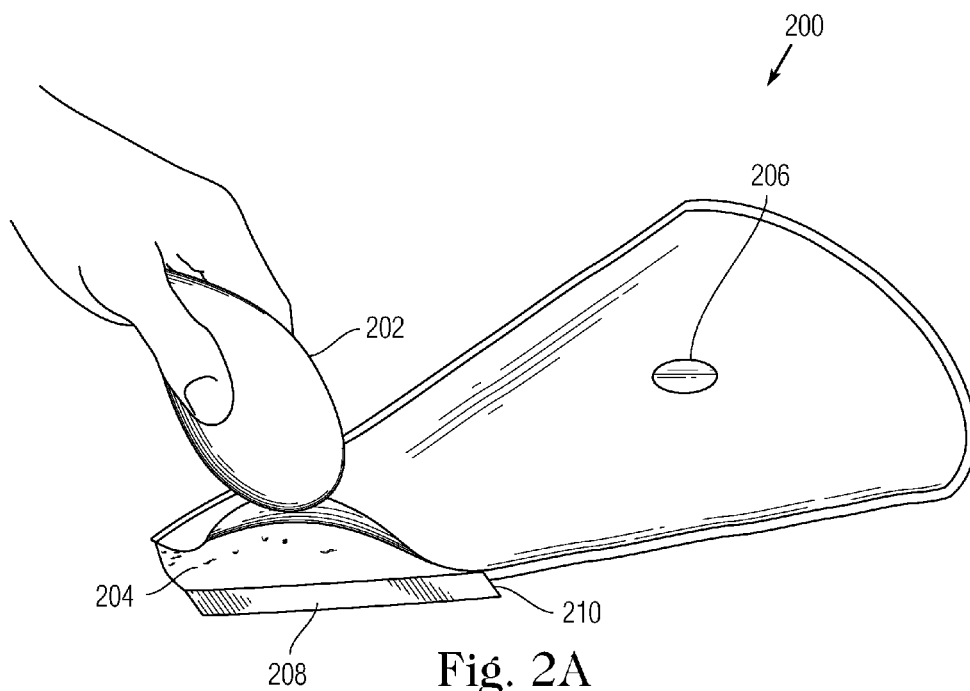


Fig. 1



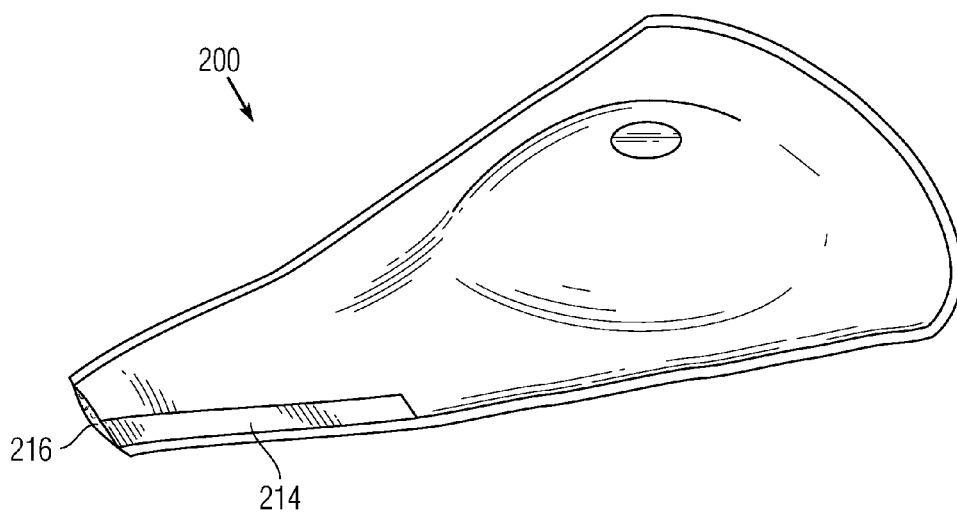


Fig. 2C

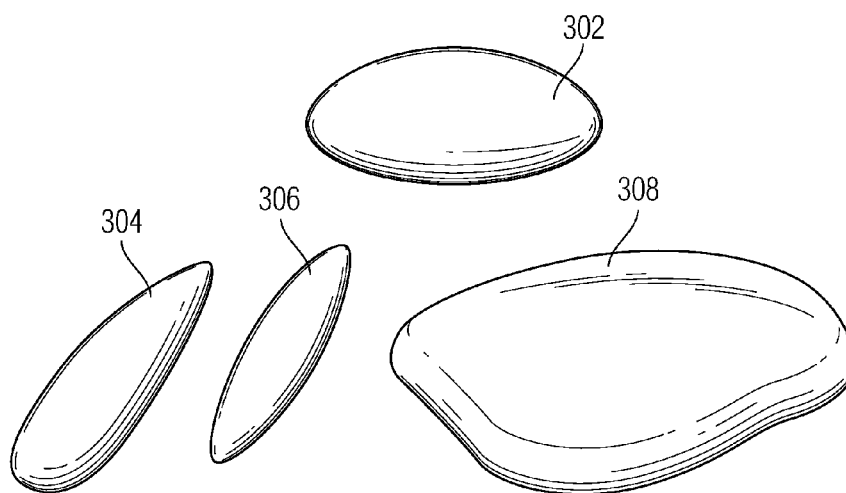


Fig. 3

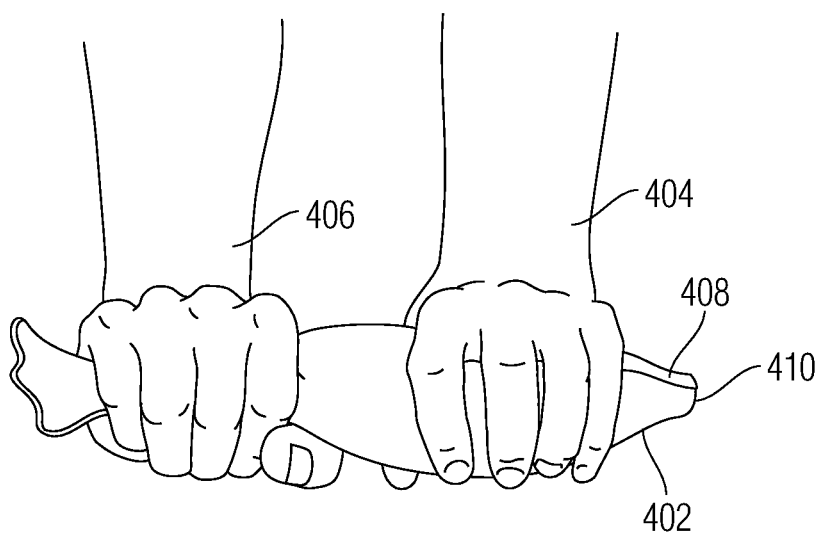


Fig. 4A

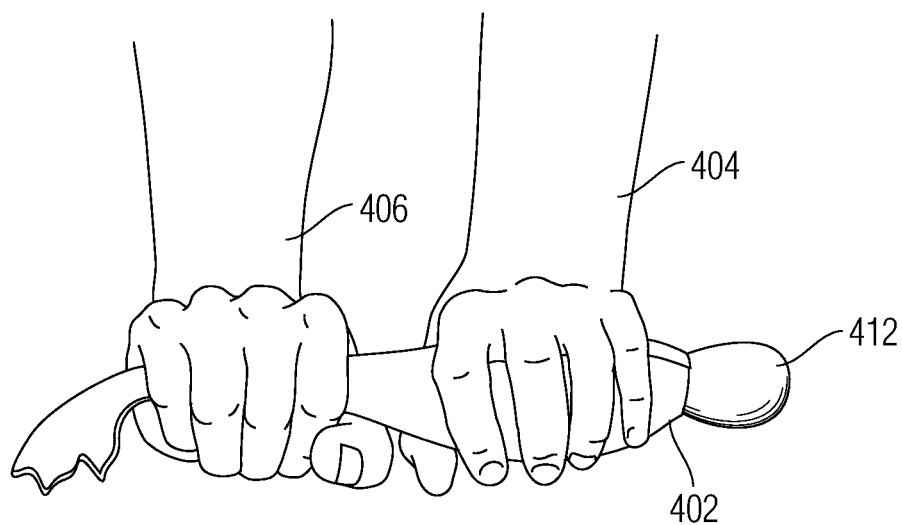


Fig. 4B

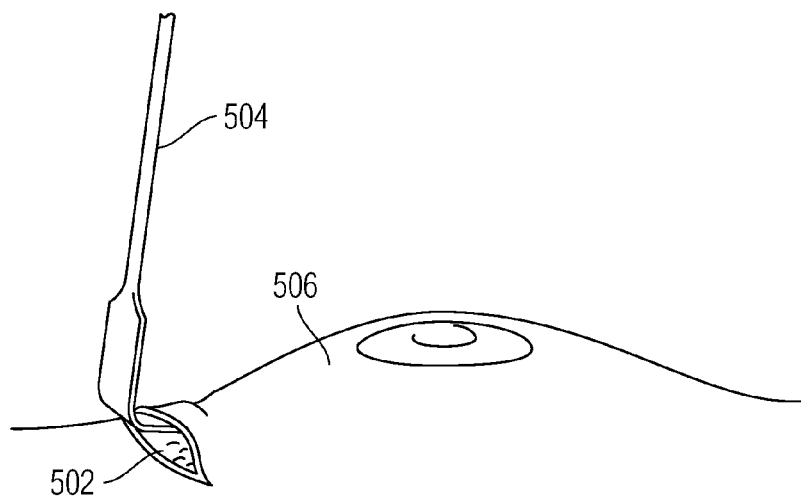


Fig. 5A

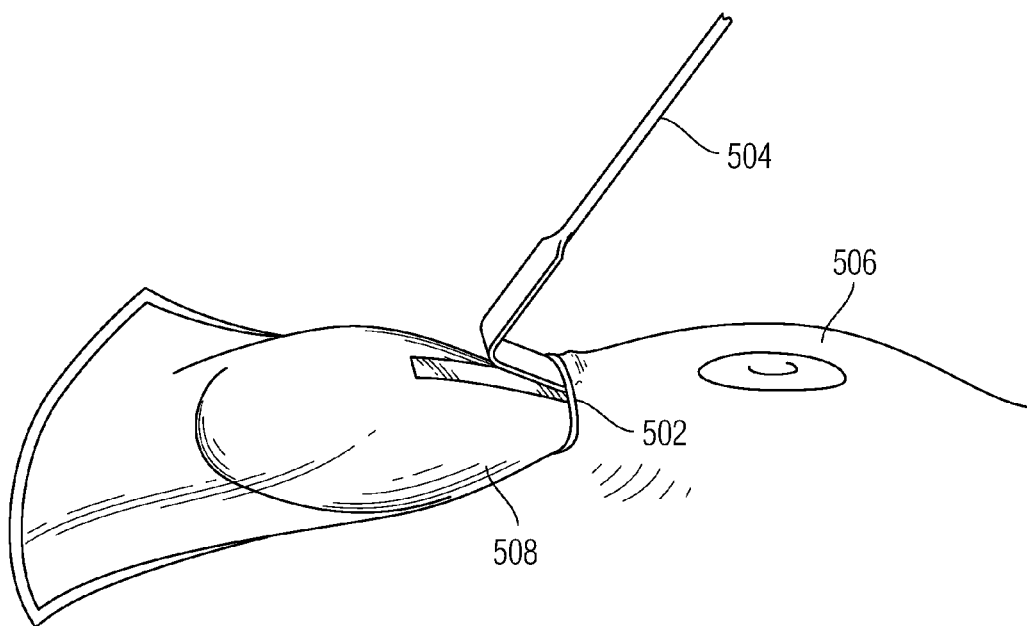


Fig. 5B

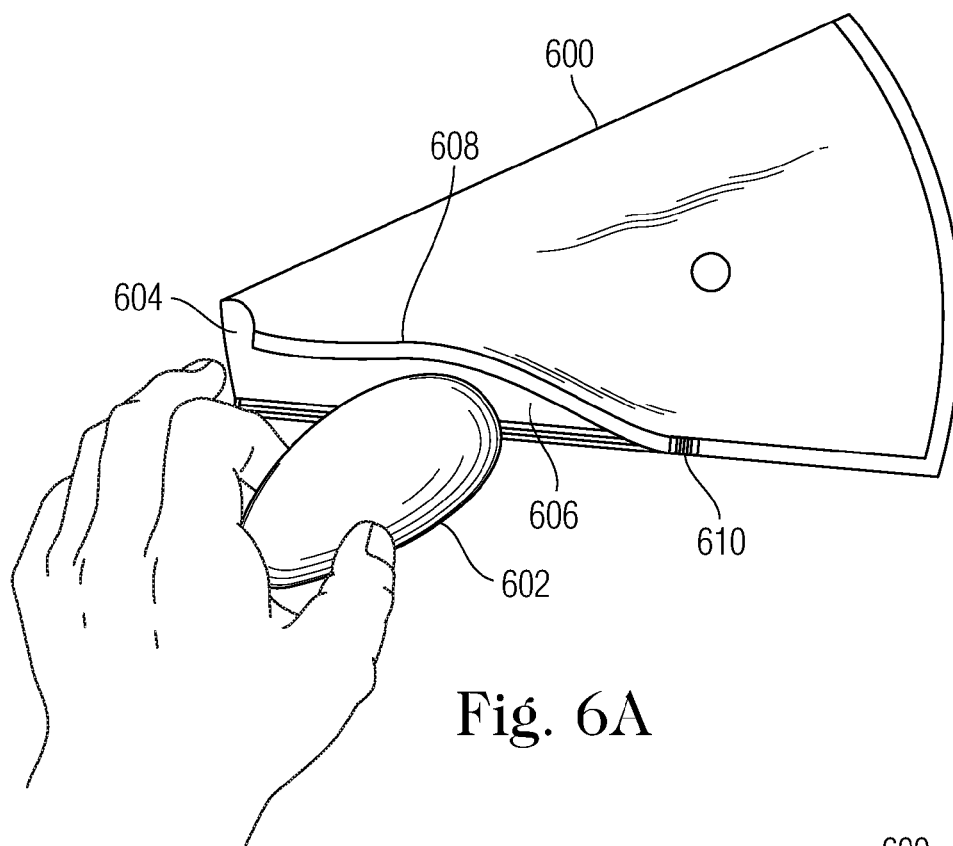


Fig. 6A

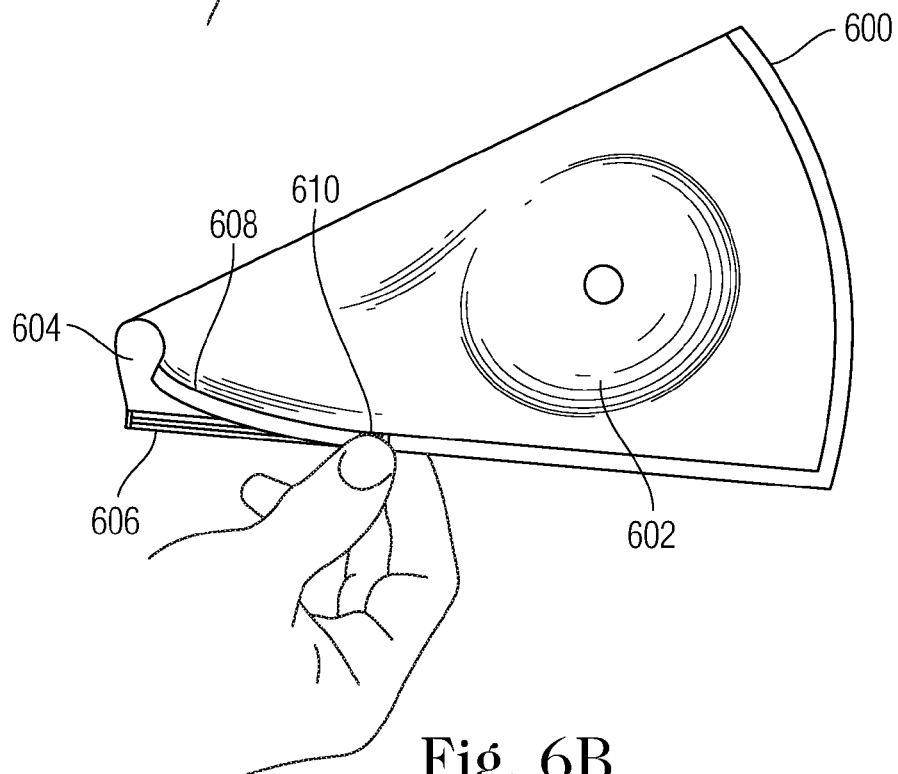


Fig. 6B

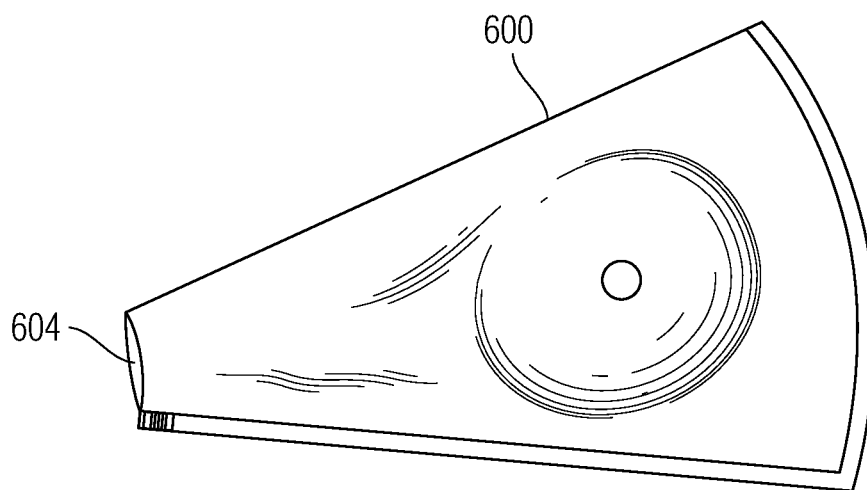


Fig. 6C

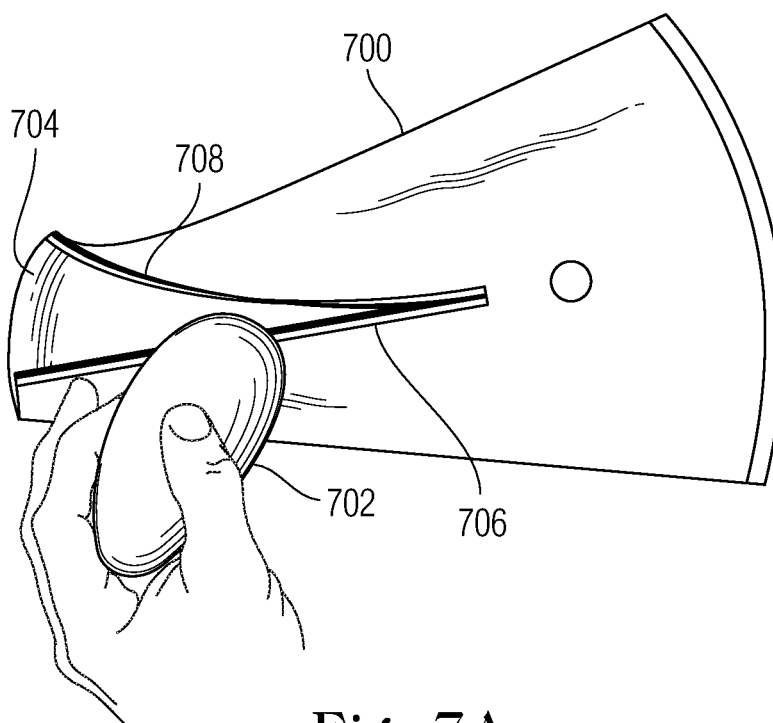


Fig. 7A

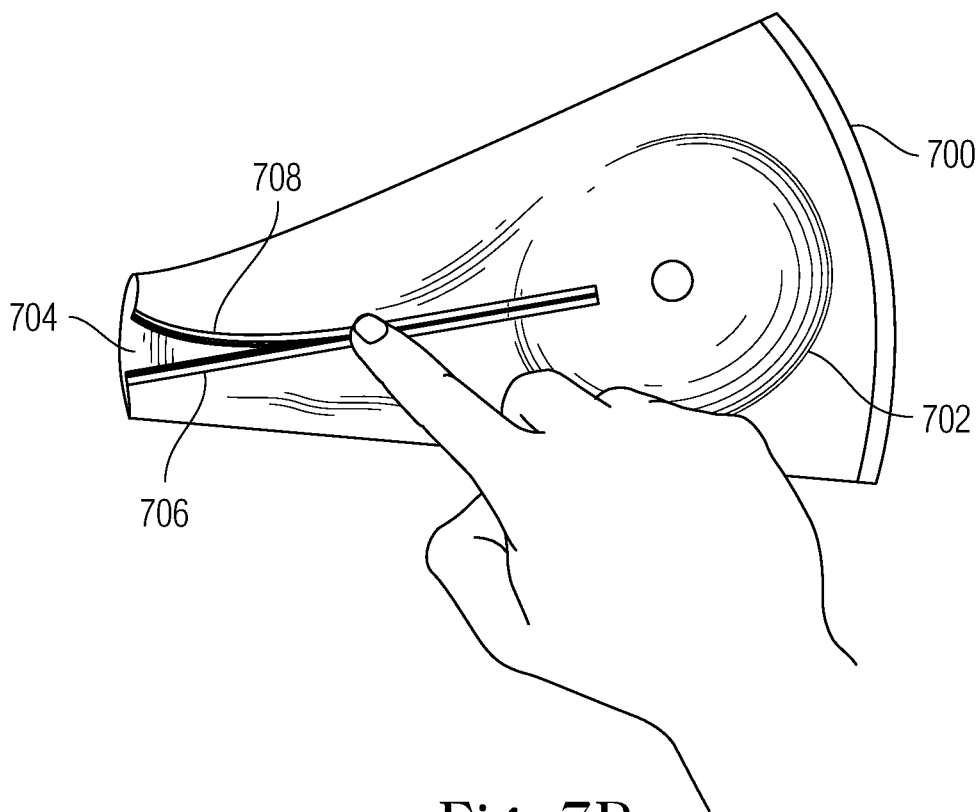


Fig. 7B

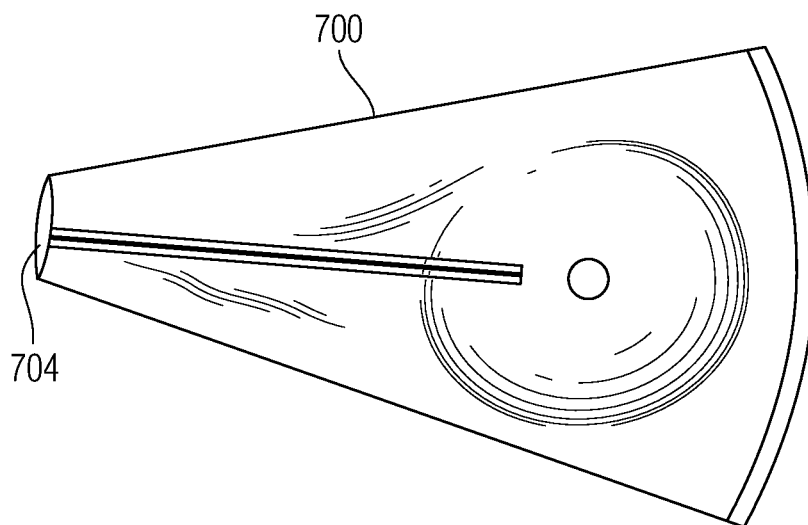


Fig. 7C

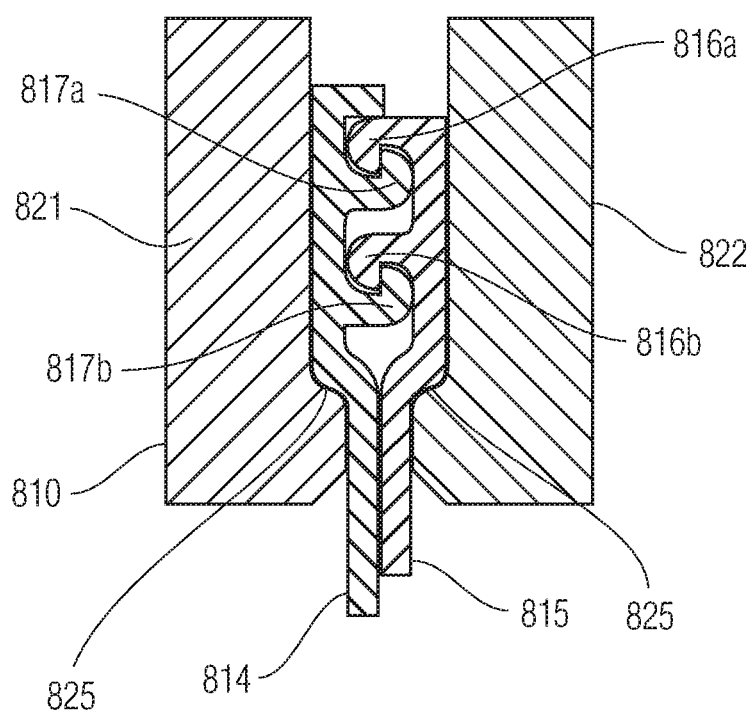


Fig. 8

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DEVICE FOR THE DELIVERY OF A PROSTHETIC IMPLANT AND METHOD OF USE THEREOF

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FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The invention described herein generally relates to devices to assist in the placement of prosthetic implants. The invention further relates to a device that hold a prosthetic implant within a structure that is (or is generally) in the shape of a conical frustum with an opening, the interior of which comprises a lubricious coating and is of suitable dimensions to hold the prosthetic implant. The application of pressure laterally along the length of the frustum ejects the prosthetic implant through the opening and into a surgical pocket that a surgeon opens in the body of a patient.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Prosthetic implants, in particular breast implants, have a substantial history dating back to the first recorded implant surgery done in 1895 at the University of Heidelberg, Germany. Instead of being for cosmetic purposes, the physician (Dr. Vincent Czerny) performed the procedure by taking fat from the hip of a female for implantation into her breast, which needed reconstruction after the removal of an adenoma. Accordingly, the purpose of this first "implant" was to reconstruct a breast after devastating surgery, rather than to achieve uniform enlargement.

The first real foreign substance injected into body to achieve enlargement is perhaps the injection of paraffin, which comes in a plurality of textures and is primarily composed of petroleum jelly. Dr. Robert Gesurny, an Austrian surgeon who used the material on the testicle of a soldier in an attempt to achieve a more desirable size, first discovered the use of paraffin for boosting the size of bodily objects. Inspired by the results, Dr. Gesurny went on to use the material for breast enlargement injections, universally resulting in severely compromised outcomes.

Modern silicone gel implants, which are well known to those of ordinary skill in the art today, have a long history that dates back over the past seventy years. In fact, some evidence supports Japanese prostitutes after World War II injecting their breasts with various substances, including liquid silicone. The serious worry with silicone in liquid form was that it broke apart, forming granulomas that could then migrate basically anywhere in the body. Liquid silicone is still used, but very rarely, in microscopic amounts, and only using medical-grade silicone that is completely sterile; it remains highly controversial and is associated with serious complications. Breast implants as presently known in the art—silicone as a cohesive mass inside of a polymer "bag" structure—had their debut in the 1960s, developed by Doctor Thomas Cronin and his colleague Frank Gerow.

Although removed from the market for a number of years due to a variety of concerns and complications, silicone was allowed back into breast implants in 2006, albeit in a new

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form. The FDA, after years of study and experiments, finally allowed silicone gel-filled implants onto the U.S. market, which are the sole breast implant option outside of saline. Today's silicone gel is designed to feel a bit like human fat: very thick, very sticky, and classified as "semi-solid". Such technology actually represents the fifth generation of silicone implant: the first one developed by Cronin and Gerow, with various innovations, including more secure coatings, thicker gels and more natural shapes.

When any type of implant is inserted into a surgical pocket that a surgeon opens in the body of a patient, the body reacts by forming a protective lining around the prosthetic. This biological structure is referred to as the "capsule", "tissue capsule" or "scar capsule", though it should be noted that the structure it is not exactly the same as scar tissue. Although a capsule formation is normal and happens regardless of whether the implant is smooth or textured, silicone or saline, some theorize that problematic capsule growth is potentially attributed to manipulation of tissue during implant placement. In addition, trauma to tissue along or adjacent to the surgical pocket may suffer from the direct formation of scar tissue due to potentially over aggressive manipulation of tissue at the entry site for the implant along the edge of the surgical pocket.

Accordingly, what is needed in the art are new devices that allow for the placement of a prosthetic implant while avoiding the unnecessary manipulation of tissue adjacent to or inside a surgical pocket to minimize the development of scar tissue and the formation of any significant capsule around the prosthetic implant.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Embodiments of the invention are directed towards a surgical device for assisting in the placement of a prosthetic implant within a surgical pocket of a patient. According to one embodiment, the surgical device comprises a bag shaped as a conical frustum in which a proximal end of the conical frustum is sealed and a distal end of the conical frustum is open. An elongated slit extends from the distal end towards the proximal end with a single opening formed by the distal opening and the elongated slit being sufficiently large enough to accept the prosthetic implant into the bag.

An adhesive is applied to or otherwise affixed along a portion of the elongated slit to seal the elongated slit such that the distal end remains open to allow for egress of the implant from the bag for placement into the surgical pocket. The elongated slit may further comprise a flap, with the adhesive affixed along the flap. While application of the adhesive may be along the entirety of the elongated slit, other embodiments apply or otherwise affix adhesive along one or more portions of the elongated slit. Sealing the elongated slit in certain embodiments allows for the formation a ridge that provides a support guide for the prosthetic implant during placement into the surgical pocket. The configuration of the surgical device of the present invention allows the device to accept and place of a variety of prosthetic implant types including, but not limited to, a breast implant, a pectoral implant, a calf implant and a gluteal implant.

The inside surface of the bag is treated or otherwise coated with a lubricious coating that, in addition to other benefits, allows the implant to freely exit the bag. While certain embodiments utilize a water activated lubricious coating on the interior of the bag, the lubricious coating is more generally any hydrophilic gel that decreases the coefficient of friction of the inside surface of the bag. According

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to one embodiment, the bag is composed of a polymer selected from the set of polymers consisting of medical grade vinyl, medical grade PVC, medical grade nylon and polyethylene. When utilizing medical grade vinyl in the construction of the bag, various embodiments utilize medical grade vinyl that is between 0.01 inches and 0.005 inches thick.

The outside of the bag may comprise a number of different markings or indicia that aid the surgeon in properly placing the prosthetic implant within the surgical pocket. For example, the bag may comprise a marker, such as a circular marker, which allows the surgeon to achieve proper alignment of the prosthetic implant during placement into the surgical pocket. Application of the marker may be in accordance with any number of processes that do not affect the integrity of the material forming the bag, such as a silkscreen process. The bag may also have a plurality of size guide lines set at varying distances from the opening in at the distal end of the bag. The surgeon can use the plurality of size guide lines to properly align a cutting device to excise excess material from the distal opening of the bag.

The lubricious coating on the inside surface of the bag is activated by exposure to water, thereby resulting in a decrease in the coefficient of friction of the inside surface of the bag. Activation of the lubricious coating may be through injection of water into the interior of the bag through the use of a syringe, or aqueous submersion of the bag. Alternatively, the surgeon or technician exposes a sheet of absorbable material placed within the bag to water, thereby allowing water to wick through the absorbable material and activate a lubricious coating on an inside surface of the bag. According to one embodiment, the sheet of absorbable material changes color when exposed to water.

Beyond the foregoing, embodiments of the present invention are directed towards a surgical device for assisting in the placement of a prosthetic implant within a surgical pocket of a patient. The surgical device according to the present embodiment comprises a bag shaped as a conical frustum in which a proximal end of the conical frustum is sealed and the distal end of the conical frustum is open with an elongated slit extending from the distal end towards the proximal end. As with other embodiments, an opening formed by the distal opening and the elongated slit is sufficiently large enough to accept the prosthetic implant into the bag. An adhesive along a portion of the elongated slit can seal the elongated slit such that the distal end remains open to allow for egress of the implant from the bag for placement into the surgical pocket. Finally, a sheet of absorbable material is disposed of within the bag that when exposed to water allows the water to wick through the absorbable material and activate a lubricious coating on an inside surface of the bag.

Still further, embodiments are directed towards a surgical device for assisting in the placement of a prosthetic implant within a surgical pocket of a patient. The device in accordance with the present embodiment comprises a bag shaped as a conical frustum in which a proximal end of the conical frustum is sealed and the distal end of the conical frustum is open with an elongated slit extending from the distal end towards the proximal end. The distal opening and the elongated slit form a single opening that is sufficiently large enough to accept the prosthetic implant into the bag. A set of inter-lockable fastener elements disposed along opposing portions of the elongated slit seal the elongated slit such that

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the distal end remains open to allow for egress of the implant from the bag for placement into the surgical pocket.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The invention is illustrated in the figures of the accompanying drawings which are meant to be exemplary and not limiting, in which like references are intended to refer to like or corresponding parts, and in which:

FIG. 1 illustrates a top perspective view of a surgical device for assisting in the placement of a prosthetic implant within a surgical pocket of a patient according to one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2A illustrates a top perspective view of a surgical device for assisting in the placement of a prosthetic implant within a surgical pocket of a patient in conjunction with a prosthetic implant according to one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2B illustrates the surgical device of FIG. 2A with an implant seated with the surgical device and a partially exposed adhesive strip according to one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2C illustrates the surgical device of FIG. 2A with the elongated slit sealed such that the distal end remains open to allow for egress of the implant from the bag for placement into the surgical pocket according to one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 3 illustrates several exemplary prior art prosthetic implants;

FIGS. 4A and 4B illustrate manipulation of a prosthetic implant through a surgical device for assisting in the placement of the prosthetic implant within a surgical pocket of a patient according to one embodiment of the present invention;

FIGS. 5A and 5B illustrate placement of a prosthetic implant through a surgical device for assisting in the placement of the prosthetic implant within a surgical pocket of a patient according to one embodiment of the present invention;

FIGS. 6A-6C illustrate a surgical device for assisting in the placement of the prosthetic implant within a surgical pocket that utilizes inter-lockable fastener elements in a first configuration on a pair fastener strips on each side of an elongated slit according to a one embodiment of the invention;

FIGS. 7A-7C illustrate a surgical device for assisting in the placement of the prosthetic implant within a surgical pocket that utilizes inter-lockable fastener elements in a second configuration on a pair fastener strips on each side of an elongated slit according to a one embodiment of the invention; and

FIG. 8 illustrates a cross-sectional view of inter-lockable fastener elements positioned along the edges of the elongated slit and a locking slider in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Subject matter will now be described more fully herein-after with reference to the accompanying drawings, which form a part hereof, and which show, by way of illustration, exemplary embodiments in which the invention may be practiced. Subject matter may, however, be embodied in a variety of different forms and, therefore, covered or claimed subject matter is intended to be construed as not being limited to any example embodiments set forth herein;

example embodiments are provided merely to be illustrative. Those of skill in the art understand that other embodiments may be utilized and structural changes may be made without departing from the scope of the present invention. Likewise, a reasonably broad scope for claimed or covered subject matter is intended. The following detailed description is, therefore, not intended to be taken in a limiting sense.

Throughout the specification and claims, terms may have nuanced meanings suggested or implied in context beyond an explicitly stated meaning. Likewise, the phrase “in one embodiment” as used herein does not necessarily refer to the same embodiment and the phrase “in another embodiment” as used herein does not necessarily refer to a different embodiment. It is intended, for example, that claimed subject matter include combinations of example embodiments in whole or in part.

FIG. 1 illustrates a top perspective view of a surgical device **100** for assisting in the placement of a prosthetic implant within a surgical pocket of a patient according to one embodiment of the present invention. The surgical device **100** comprises a bag shaped as a conical frustum in which a proximal end **112** of the conical frustum is sealed and a distal end of the conical frustum is open **104** with an elongated slit **114** extending from the distal end towards the proximal end **112**. According to one embodiment, the proximal end of the bag **100** is sealed with an RF weld. The bag **100** may be formed from a single sheet of material that is stamped or cut using a die or other suitable technique and folded around itself, or may be formed by multiple panels, e.g., front and back panels, that are joined together.

The opening **104** formed by the distal opening and the elongated slit **114** is of sufficiently large size to accept a prosthetic implant into the bag. Accordingly, manufacture of the surgical device **100** may comprise production of the surgical device in various sizes or volumes to accommodate prosthetic implants of various sizes. For example, the surgical device **100** may be sized differently to accommodate a gluteal implant as opposed to a breast or calf implant. According to one embodiment, the bag is of sufficient capacity to seat the prosthetic implant and activate the adhesive to allow the elongated slit to be sealed with the bag horizontal relative to a standing surgeon.

A technician preparing the surgical device **100** for use on a patient places the implant within the device and seals the elongated slit such that the distal end remains open to allow for egress of the implant from the bag and placement into the surgical pocket. According to the embodiment of FIG. 1, a flap **106** is formed along one side of the elongated slit **114** such that a technician can fold the flap **106** over the elongated slit **114** to form the seal. An adhesive **108** or other fastening member may be affixed along a portion of the elongated slit (which may be on the flap if present) to form a seal such that the distal end remains open to allow for egress of the implant from the bag for placement into the surgical pocket. Advantageously, a ridge formed by the sealed elongated slit provides a support guide for the prosthetic implant during placement into the surgical pocket.

The inside surface of the surgical device **100**, which is a bag in the form of a conical frustum, is treated with a lubricious coating. Lubricity is a property that describes how slippery a surface is, more specifically, the value of its coefficient of friction. Embodiments of the present invention benefit from this type of slippery surface treatment because it reduces the insertion force that the surgeon must apply to propel or eject the prosthetic implant through the distal opening in the bag, avoiding possible puncture damage to

the prosthetic implant and severe abrasion between the implant surface and the interior surface of the bag.

The lubricious coating can be applied to interior surface of the bag **100** in a number of ways. One application technique is dip coating, which entails suspending the bag from a support, lowering it into a liquid coating solution and then withdrawing. The coating sticks to the surface as the support draws the bag up and out of the solution. An alternative is spray coating, which is akin to airbrushing and involves spraying a nebulized mist over the interior surface of the bag. Film coating is another type of application process in which long rolls of material that form the bag are drawn from reel to reel through a tank of liquid coating. Other processes for the application of the lubricious coating include chemical vapor deposition and silk screening, which is primarily suitable when working with flat surfaces, such as the raw material that forms the bag.

Any of the above-described coating techniques involves a drying or curing process to permanently affix the lubricious coating to the interior surface of the bag. Two prevalent methods for curing hydrophilic coatings are heat and ultraviolet (“UV”) light. When utilizing heat-cured coatings, the bag is placed within an oven for a given period of time. Such controlled heating accelerates drying of the coating and any necessary chemical reactions taking place within the coating (or between the coating and the bag), such as crosslinking, which allow the coating to stick to the interior surface of the bag, as well as provide durability. For embodiments that utilize lubricious coatings that use UV light for the curing step, the interior surface of the bag is exposed to UV light for a given period of time, which has the effect of stimulating any necessary chemical reactions for curing. Completion of the curing process affixes the lubricious coating to the interior surface of the bag.

The lubricious coating is hydrophilic. Hydrophilic coatings exhibit so-called “water loving” characteristics. From a chemical perspective, these coatings participate in dynamic hydrogen bonding with surrounding water. In some cases, hydrophilic coatings are also ionic, and may further exhibit negative charge, which facilitates additional aqueous interactions. Physically, these chemical interactions with water give rise to hydrogel materials that may exhibit extremely low coefficients of friction. Taken together, these chemical and physical characteristics describe a class of materials that are wettable, lubricious, and suitable for tailored biological interactions.

A technician may hydrate the interior of the bag **100** to activate the lubricious coating by injecting water into the bag through the use of a syringe **116**. Alternatively, or in conjunction with the foregoing, the technician may hydrate a polymer insert (not pictured) placed within the interior of the bag **100**. When hydrating the polymer insert, the insert serves to wick the fluid throughout the interior of the bag, thereby activating the lubricious coating. The polymer insert is preferably sized to follow the contours of the interior of the bag **100** and may comprise any material that suitably wicks fluid throughout its surface including, but not limited to Lightweight Stabilizer (60% polyester/40% Rayon), Medium Weight Stabilizer (60% polyester/40% Rayon) and medium to heavyweight sew-in interfacing (100% Polyester).

Different markings on the exterior of the bag **100** assist the technician in preparing the bag for implant delivery and the surgeon in the delivery process. For example, a marker **110** on the outside of the bag allows the technician to align the prosthetic implant properly in the bag **100**, such as by aligning the marker with a physical marker on the bottom of

the implant. In this manner, the surgeon is aware of the bottom position of the implant upon delivery and can ensure that the implant is not delivered into the surgical pocket bottom side up. Application of the marker to the bag is in accordance with any process that permanently deposits the marker on the outer surface of the bag without harming or otherwise causing any degradation to the bag itself, e.g., through a silkscreen process, inkjet printing or hand application with suitable pens or markers. The exterior of the bag 100 may further comprise a plurality of size guide lines to properly align a cutting device when excising material from the distal opening of the bag. Excising material from the distal opening of the bag allows the technician to increase the aperture diameter of the distal opening, thereby allowing the device to accommodate larger implant sizes without causing damage to the opening 104 at the distal end of the bag 100.

FIGS. 2A-2C illustrate placement of an implant into and the sealing of a surgical device for assisting in the placement of the prosthetic implant within a surgical pocket of a patient. Turning to FIG. 2A, the bag 200 is set out to allow for loading of the prosthetic implant 202 into the interior of the bag 200. The distal opening 204 and elongated slit are sized to accommodate placement of the prosthetic implant 202 into the bag 200 and further align a marker on the implant with the marker on the bag 200, thereby providing the surgeon with an indication as to the orientation of the implant within the bag. According to the embodiment that FIGS. 2A-2C illustrate, a flap 208 is formed along one side of the elongated slit and covered by an adhesive backing 210 that covers an underlying adhesive until such a time as when the technician is ready to seal the elongated slit.

Continuing with FIG. 2B, the implant 202 is seated within the interior of the bag 200. Advantageously, the technician aligns a physical marker on the implant with the marker on the outside of the bag. Accordingly, the surgeon has an indication as to the orientation of the implant 202 within the bag and can maintain such orientation for the duration of the implant's movement through the bag and into a surgical pocket that the surgeon prepares to accept the implant. The technician seals the elongated slit, thereby maintaining the opening in the distal end of the bag, which the technician may further trim to increase the aperture of the opening when placing implants of various sizes. According to the present embodiment, an adhesive is applied to a flap that runs along one edge of the elongated slit.

The technician removes an adhesive backing 210 to expose an underlying adhesive 212 that seals the elongated slit by adhering the flap to the exterior surface of the bag. FIG. 2C illustrates the surgical device with the elongated slit sealed such that the distal end 216 remains open to allow for egress of the implant 202 from the bag 200 for placement into the surgical pocket. As can be seen, the flap 214 is folded over and adhered to the outside surface of the bag 200, leaving the distal opening 216 for placement in the surgical pocket during delivery of the implant 202.

FIG. 3 presents a number of prior art implants that are suitable for use with embodiments of the present invention. For example, breast 302, gluteal 308 and various calf implants 304 and 306, may be set or otherwise placed through use of various embodiments. Those of skill in the art recognize that certain aspects of the bag geometry might require slight modification from the illustrations presented in conjunction with the embodiments depicted herein. By way of example and not limitation, when placing a gluteal implant 308, which is typically of a larger volume than a

breast implant 302, the length of the bag, as well as possibly the angle at which the distal opening forms, may require commensurate increases.

As FIGS. 4A and 4B illustrate, the implant is set within the bag 402 and the elongated slit 408 sealed such that sequential application of pressure by the hands 404 and 406 of the physician serve to manipulate the implant 412 out through the opening 410 in the distal end of the bag 402. As described above and further herein in connection with various embodiments of the invention, the implant is set and can further be aligned with a marker on the bag to understand alignment of the implant as the surgeon manipulates the implant along the length of the bag 402. FIGS. 4A and 4B illustrate the application of a twisting motion or the sequential application of pressure laterally along the bag by the hands of the surgeon 404 and 406, typically with the proximate hand 406 applying pressure while the distal hand 404 provides support, although other hand and pressure application configurations fall within the scope of the invention. The application of pressure as such serves to drive the implant out the distal opening 410 and into a surgical pocket that the surgeon has prepared to accept the implant.

FIGS. 5A and 5B continue the process illustrated by FIGS. 4A and 4B in which the implant is set into a surgical pocket 502 in the body 506 of a patient. The surgeon or a technician can utilize a surgical retractor 504 to manipulate the surgical pocket 502 and properly position the surgical pocket to receive the implant. For example, a technician utilizes the surgical retractor 504 to hold open the surgical pocket 502 that the surgeon incises in the body 506 of the patient, such as under the breast. The surgeon, using the implant set in the bag with the elongated slit sealed 508, introduces the distal end of the bag into the open surgical pocket 502. Because activated lubricious coating on the interior of the bag greatly reduces the coefficient of friction on the interior surface of the bag, manipulation by the surgeon allows the implant to be easily driven into the surgical pocket 502 with little disruption or unnecessary trauma to the surgical pocket 502 or surrounding tissues. Once the surgeon sets the implant into the surgical pocket, he or she removes the bag 508 and the wound is closed through the application of sutures, staples, glue or other techniques known to those of skill in the art suitable to close the surgical pocket.

As described above, embodiments of the invention may utilize various techniques for affixing the edges of the elongated slit to seal the elongated slit such that the distal end of the bag remains open to allow for egress of the implant from the bag. Although above-described embodiments illustrate the use of adhesives, other structures such re-closable fasteners or other adhesion or fastening techniques known to those of skill in the art may readily be utilized with the device.

FIGS. 6A-6C illustrate a surgical device for assisting in the placement of the prosthetic implant within a surgical pocket that utilizes inter-lockable fastener elements in a first configuration on a pair fastener strips on each side of an elongated slit according to a one embodiment of the invention. More specifically, FIGS. 6A-6C present the progression of setting a breast implant into the delivery bag, which comprises a set of inter-lockable re-closable fasteners and a slider along the edges of the elongated slit such that the elongated slit seals through fastening of the inter-lockable re-closable fasteners. The inter-lockable re-closable fasteners can also be closed by hand through alignment and application of pressure along the same.

Starting with FIG. 6A, the bag **600** is in an “open” configuration in which the elongated slit, which comprises a set of inter-lockable re-closable fasteners **606** and **608**, and distal opening allow for insertion of a prosthetic implant **602** into the bag. In the embodiment that FIG. 6A illustrates, the prosthetic implant **602** is a breast implant. A slider **610**, located at the end of the elongated slit closest to the proximal end of the bag, allows for roll-off closure of the set of inter-lockable re-closable fasteners. Turning to FIG. 6B, the technician places the implant **602** into the interior of the bag **600** and begins to roll off the slider **610** along the set of inter-lockable re-closable fasteners **606** and **608** in the direction of the distal opening **604**. Finally, transitioning to FIG. 6C, the set of inter-lockable re-closable fasteners are locked, thereby sealing the elongated flap such that the distal end remains open to allow for egress of the implant from the bag for placement into the surgical pocket. Although FIG. 6C illustrates the slider **610** remaining in place at the distal opening of the bag **600**, the slider can also be run off the end of the bag **600** and discarded as the elongated slit is sealed with the implant **602** in place and ready for delivery.

FIGS. 7A-7C illustrate a surgical device for assisting in the placement of the prosthetic implant within a surgical pocket that utilizes inter-lockable fastener elements in a second configuration on a pair fastener strips on each side of an elongated slit according to a one embodiment of the invention. More specifically, FIGS. 7A-7C present the progression of setting a breast implant into the delivery bag, which comprises a set of inter-lockable re-closable fasteners and a slider along the edges of the elongated slit such that the elongated slit seals through fastening of the inter-lockable re-closable fasteners and lie flat in relation to the surface of the bag.

Starting with FIG. 7A, the bag **700** is in an “open” configuration in which the elongated slit and distal opening allow for insertion of a prosthetic implant **702** into the bag. The elongated slit comprises a set of inter-lockable re-closable fasteners **706** and **708** that lie flat in relation to the surface of the bag. In the embodiment that FIG. 7A illustrates, the prosthetic implant **702** is a breast implant. Turning to FIG. 7B, the technician places the implant **702** into the interior of the bag **700** and begins to apply pressure to the set of inter-lockable re-closable fasteners **706** and **708** in the direction of the distal opening **704**. Transitioning to FIG. 6C, the technician locks the set of inter-lockable re-closable fasteners, thereby sealing the elongated flap such that the distal end remains open to allow for egress of the implant from the bag for placement into the surgical pocket. According to the embodiment of FIG. 7A-7C, the set of inter-lockable re-closable fasteners are arranged such that the fasteners lie flat in relation to the surface of the bag, although those of skill in the art recognize that other configurations are suitable.

FIG. 8 presents a detailed cross-sectional view of one embodiment of the invention in which inter-lockable re-closable fasteners and a slider provide a mechanism for sealing the elongated slit. The elongated slit in the bag comprises a pair of opposing flexible sides **812** and **813**. The side **812** has a top edge having a first fastener strip **814** attached thereto. According to one embodiment, the first fastener strip **814** has an inner surface on the inside of the bag and an outer surface on the outside of the bag. The side **813** has a top edge having a second fastener strip **815** attached thereto. The second fastener strip **815** in certain embodiments has an inner surface on the inside of the bag and an outer surface on the outside of the bag. The strips **814** and **815** may be extruded separately for attaching to the

respective sides of the bag. Alternatively, the strips **814** and **815** may be extruded integrally with the sides of the bag, e.g., along the sides forming the elongated slit.

Each fastener strip may utilize one or more closure elements, but the number of closure elements on opposing strips must be equal or otherwise balanced. In accordance with the embodiment of FIG. 8, the first fastener strip has an uppermost closure element **816a** and a bottommost closure element **816b**. The closure elements **816a** and **816b** project laterally from the inner surface of fastener strip **814**. Likewise, the second fastener strip **817** has at least an uppermost closure element **817a** and a bottommost closure element **817b**. The closure elements **817a** and **817b** project laterally from the inner surface of fastener strip **815**. When the bag is closed, the closure elements of the first fastener strip interlock with the corresponding closure elements of the second fastener strip.

When the bag is open, the first and second fastener strips **814** and **815** are separated from each other on the respective sides. Closure elements **816a**, **817a**, **816b**, and **817b** have a complimentary cross-sectional shape that achieves closure by pressing the fastener strips together. The slider **810** accomplishes the pressing action through actuation, which straddles the fastener strips **814** and **815** and is adapted to close or open the closure elements **816** and **817** of the re-closable fastener. The slider **810** moves between a closed position and an open position. Thus, when the slider **810** reaches the closed position at distal end of the bag, the bag is closed and the closure elements interlock throughout a portion of the length of the elongated slit. When the slider reaches the open position at the end of the elongated slit closest to the proximal end of the bag, the bag is open and the closure elements are disengaged throughout substantially the entire length of the elongated slit. Those of skill in the art recognize that it is sufficient for at least the bottommost closure elements to interlock with each other throughout substantially their entire length in order for the elongated slit to be closed. Preferably, although not necessarily, the uppermost closure elements also interlock with each other.

As indicated, the slider is operative to interlock the closure elements of the fastener strip on each side of the elongated slit. As FIG. 8 illustrates, the slider **810** comprises an inverted U-shaped member having a top **820** for moving along the top edges of the fastener strips **814** and **815**. The slider **810** has sidewalls **821** and **822** depending from the top **820**. Sidewalls **821** and **822** extend downward along the outer surface of the fastener strips **814** and **815**, to a point at or below the closure elements **816** and **817**, so that at least a portion of the closure elements **816** and **817** are held between the side walls **821** and **822**. Sidewalls **821** and **822** cooperate with the fastener strips **814** and **815** so that the fastener strips **814** and **815** are received between the side walls **821** and **822** as the slider moves between the open and closed position.

According to one embodiment, sidewalls **821** and **822** extend from a separating end of the slider to a pinching end of the slider, such that the sidewalls **821** and **822** are spaced farther apart at the separating end than at the pinching end. The closer spacing at the pinching end acts to pinch, or squeeze the fastening strips together, thereby forcing the closure element **816** and **817** into an interlocking relationship. A user can squeeze fastener strips together all at once, e.g., uppermost closure elements **816a** and **817a** are pressed together at approximately the same time that bottommost closure elements **816b** and **817b** are pressed together. Alternatively, the fastener strips can interlock by application of force in a rolling action along the length of the elongated slit.

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A given fastener strip optionally comprises an additional structure for maintaining the slider in straddling relation with the fastener strips. In the embodiment of FIG. 8, the structure comprises a ridge 825 on the outer surface of a given fastener strips 814 and 815, and shoulders on the sidewalls of the slider. The shoulders project inwardly at a point at or below the closure elements 816 and 817. The shoulders act as structure that provides for maintaining the slider in a straddling relation with the fastener strips by grasping the lower surfaces of the ridges 825. The ridges 825 thus act as handles for the slider to hold onto, such that the slider 810 maintains the straddling relation with the fastener strips along the entire length of the elongated slit. Ridges 825 extend along the length of the outer surface of fastener strips 814 and 815 at a point at or below the closure elements and can be attached to the fastener strips by any desired means, such as, for example, by extruding with the fastener strips, heating, gluing, or snapping in place. The ridges can also result from the difference in thicknesses between a given fastener strip and the bag.

The slider 810 may be made in multiple parts and welded together or the parts may be constructed to be snapped together; the slider 810 may also comprise one-piece construction. Fabrication of the slider can be in accordance with any desired method, such as, for example, injection-molding, extrusion, material deposit fabrication (3D printing) or any other suitable method known to those of ordinary skill in the art. The slider 810 can be molded from any suitable plastic such, for example, as nylon, polypropylene, polystyrene, polyketone, polybutylene terephthalate, high-density polyethylene, polycarbonate, or ABS. The slider can be clear, opaque, or colored. It should be noted by those of skill in the art.

FIGS. 1 through 8 are conceptual illustrations allowing for an explanation of the present invention. Those of skill in the art should understand that various aspects of the embodiments of the present invention could be implemented using different materials, fasteners and minor design modifications. Notably, the figures and examples above are not meant to limit the scope of the present invention to a single embodiment, as other embodiments are possible by way of interchange of some or all of the described or illustrated elements. Moreover, where certain elements of the present invention can be partially or fully implemented using known components, only those portions of such known components that are necessary for an understanding of the present invention are described, and detailed descriptions of other portions of such known components are omitted so as not to obscure the invention.

In the present specification, an embodiment showing a singular component should not necessarily be limited to other embodiments including a plurality of the same component, and vice-versa, unless explicitly stated otherwise herein. Moreover, applicants do not intend for any term in the specification or claims to be ascribed an uncommon or special meaning unless explicitly set forth as such. Further, the present invention encompasses present and future known equivalents to the known components referred to herein by way of illustration.

The foregoing description of the specific embodiments will so fully reveal the general nature of the invention that others can, by applying knowledge within the skill of the relevant art(s) (including the contents of the documents cited and incorporated by reference herein), readily modify and/or adapt for various applications such specific embodiments, without undue experimentation, without departing from the general concept of the present invention. Such adaptations

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and modifications are therefore intended to be within the meaning and range of equivalents of the disclosed embodiments, based on the teaching and guidance presented herein. It is to be understood that the phraseology or terminology herein is for the purpose of description and not of limitation, such that the terminology or phraseology of the present specification is to be interpreted by the skilled artisan in light of the teachings and guidance presented herein, in combination with the knowledge of one skilled in the relevant art(s).

While various embodiments of the present invention have been described above, it should be understood that they have been presented by way of example, and not limitation. It would be apparent to one skilled in the relevant art(s) that various changes in form and detail could be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Thus, the present invention should not be limited by any of the above-described exemplary embodiments, but should be defined only in accordance with the following claims and their equivalents.

What is claimed is:

1. A surgical device for assisting in the placement of a prosthetic implant within a surgical pocket of a patient, the surgical device comprising:

a bag shaped as a conical frustum in which a proximal end of the bag is sealed and a distal end of the bag is open with the bag having an elongated slit extending from the distal end towards the proximal end, the bag further having a single opening formed by the distal opening and the elongated slit, the single opening configured to accept the prosthetic implant into the bag; and an adhesive affixed along a portion of the elongated slit to seal the elongated slit such that the distal end remains open to allow for egress of the implant from the bag for placement into the surgical pocket.

2. The surgical device of claim 1, wherein the prosthetic implant is selected from the set of prosthetic implants consisting of a breast implant, a pectoral implant, a calf implant and a gluteal implant.

3. The surgical device of claim 1, wherein an inside surface of the bag is treated with a lubricious coating.

4. The surgical device of claim 3, wherein the lubricious coating is water activated.

5. The surgical device of claim 3, wherein the lubricious coating comprises a hydrophilic gel that decreases a coefficient of friction of the inside surface of the bag.

6. The surgical device of claim 1, wherein the bag is composed of a polymer selected from the set of polymers consisting of medical grade vinyl, medical grade PVC, medical grade nylon and polyethylene.

7. The surgical device of claim 6, wherein the medical grade vinyl is between 0.01 inches and 0.005 inches thick.

8. The surgical device of claim 1, wherein the adhesive is affixed entirely along the elongated slit.

9. The surgical device of claim 1, wherein a ridge formed by the sealed elongated slit provides a support guide for the prosthetic implant during placement into the surgical pocket.

10. The surgical device of claim 1, wherein the elongated slit comprises a flap with the adhesive affixed along the flap.

11. The surgical device of claim 1, comprising a marker on the bag to properly align the prosthetic implant for placement into the surgical pocket.

12. The surgical device of claim 11, wherein the marker is printed on the bag.

13. The surgical device of claim 1, wherein the proximal end of the bag is sealed with an RF weld.

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14. The surgical device of claim 1, comprising a plurality of size guide lines to properly align a cutting device for excision of excess material from the distal opening of the bag.

15. The surgical device of claim 14, wherein the plurality of size guide lines are printed on the bag. 5

16. The surgical device of claim 1, wherein the bag is of sufficient capacity to seat the prosthetic implant and activate the adhesive to allow the elongated slit to be sealed with the bag horizontal relative to a standing surgeon.

17. The surgical device of claim 1, comprising a sheet of absorbable material placed within the bag that when exposed to water allows the water to wick through the absorbable material and activate a lubricious coating on an inside surface of the bag. 10

18. The surgical device of claim 17 wherein the sheet of absorbable material changes color when exposed to water. 15

19. A surgical device for assisting in the placement of a prosthetic implant within a surgical pocket of a patient, the surgical device comprising:

a bag shaped as a conical frustum in which a proximal end of the bag is sealed and the distal end of the bag is open with, the bag having an elongated slit extending from the distal end towards the proximal end, the bag further having a single opening formed by the distal opening and the elongated slit, the opening configured to accept the prosthetic implant into the bag; 20 25

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a sheet of absorbable material placed within the bag that when exposed to water allows the water to wick through the absorbable material and activate a lubricious coating on an inside surface of the bag; and an adhesive affixed along a portion of the elongated slit to seal the elongated slit such that the distal end remains open to allow for egress of the implant from the bag for placement into the surgical pocket.

20. A surgical device for assisting in the placement of a prosthetic implant within a surgical pocket of a patient, the surgical device comprising:

a bag shaped as a conical frustum in which a proximal end of the bag is sealed and the distal end of the bag is open with, the bag having an elongated slit extending from the distal end towards the proximal end, the bag further having a single opening formed by the distal opening and the elongated slit, the opening configured to accept the prosthetic implant into the bag; and

a set of inter-lockable fastener elements disposed along opposing portions of the elongated slit, the set of inter-lockable fastener elements configured to seal the elongated slit such that the distal end remains open to allow for egress of the implant from the bag for placement into the surgical pocket.

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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
15/352,079	11/15/2016	Paul Rosenberg	10401/005484-US0	4173
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Leason Ellis LLP One Barker Avenue Fifth Floor White Plains, NY 10601-1526			EXAMINER GHERBI, SUZETTE JAIME J	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3738	
			NOTIFICATION DATE	DELIVERY MODE
			05/04/2017	ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

uspto@leasonellis.com

Office Action Summary	Application No. 15/352,079	Applicant(s) ROSENBERG, PAUL	
	Examiner SUZETTE J-J GHERBI	Art Unit 3738	AIA (First Inventor to File) Status Yes

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTHS FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on the IDS filed 4/14/17.
☐ A declaration(s)/affidavit(s) under **37 CFR 1.130(b)** was/were filed on _____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ An election was made by the applicant in response to a restriction requirement set forth during the interview on _____; the restriction requirement and election have been incorporated into this action.
- 4) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims*

- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
5a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 19 and 20 is/are allowed.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8, 13 and 16 is/are rejected.
- 8) ☒ Claim(s) 9-12, 14-15, 17-18 is/are objected to.
- 9) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

* If any claims have been determined allowable, you may be eligible to benefit from the **Patent Prosecution Highway** program at a participating intellectual property office for the corresponding application. For more information, please see http://www.uspto.gov/patents/init_events/pph/index.jsp or send an inquiry to PPHfeedback@uspto.gov.

Application Papers

- 10) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 11) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 11/15/16 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

Certified copies:

- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some** c) ☐ None of the:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

** See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 3) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08a and/or PTO/SB/08b)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>4/14/17</u> . | 4) ☐ Other: _____ |

The present application, filed on or after March 16, 2013, is being examined under the first inventor to file provisions of the AIA.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103 which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

A patent for a claimed invention may not be obtained, notwithstanding that the claimed invention is not identically disclosed as set forth in section 102, if the differences between the claimed invention and the prior art are such that the claimed invention as a whole would have been obvious before the effective filing date of the claimed invention to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which the claimed invention pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims **1-4, 6-8, 13, 16** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Priessman WO 2010/126462 (as submitted with the IDS filed 4/14/17).

Priessman discloses the invention as claimed comprising surgical device (10) for assisting in the placement of a prosthetic implant (2) within a surgical pocket of a patient, the surgical device comprising:

a bag shaped as a conical frustum (10) in which a proximal end of the bag is sealed (14) and a distal end of the bag is open (24) with the bag having an elongated slit (20) extending from the distal end towards the proximal end, the bag further having a single opening formed by the distal opening and the elongated slit, the single opening configured to accept the prosthetic implant into the bag;



Art Unit: 3738

wherein the prosthetic implant is selected from the set of prosthetic implants consisting of a breast implant, a pectoral implant, a calf implant and a gluteal implant;

wherein an inside surface of the bag is treated with a lubricious coating (24, see page 5).

However Priessmann does not specify the term adhesive which is affixed along the portion of the elongated slit. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art modify the invention of Priessman to utilize an adhesive because the disclosure states the seam 18 if formed using a double-sided tape and tape is synonymous with adhesive and Priessman further states that other joining method may be utilized.

Claims **5 is** rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Priessman WO 2010/126462 in view of Lesh 2009/0024228.

Priessman has been disclosed supra however does not disclose the lubricious coating is a hydrophilic gel.

Lesh teaches that hydrophilic gels such as hydrogel are used as coatings which can be applied to sleeves for use with tissue implants.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to modify the invention of Priessman and utilize a hydrophilic gel such as taught by Lesh in order to provide a slippery/lubricous coating which can be manipulated through the tapered device during placement of the prosthesis.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims **9-12, 14-15, 17-18** are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims **19-20** are allowed.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Suzette Gherbi whose telephone number is (571)272-4751. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 7:00am-3:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, ***please contact the examiner's supervisor SPE, Thomas Sweet, at (571) 272-4761***. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 3738

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/SUZETTE J-J GHERBI/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3738
April 27, 2017

Unidad del arte: 3738

La presente solicitud, presentada el 16 de marzo de 2013 o después, está siendo examinada bajo el primer inventor para presentar las disposiciones de la AIA.

Objeciones a las Reivindicaciones – 35 USC § 103

La siguiente es una cita del artículo 35 del Código de los Estados Unidos sección el cual es la base de todas las objeciones de obviedad como sigue en la presente acción oficial:

Patente para una invención reclamada puede no ser obtenida, a pesar de que la invención no sea divulgada idénticamente como se presenta en la sección 102, si las diferencias entre la invención reclamada y el arte previo son tales que la invención reclamada como un todo sería obvia antes de la fecha efectiva de presentación de la invención reclamada para una persona que tenga una habilidad ordinaria en el arte al cual pertenece la invención. La patentabilidad no será negada por la forma en que se realizó la invención.

Las reivindicaciones **1 – 4, 6 – 8, 13, 16** se rechazan bajo el artículo 35 U.S.C. 103 como siendo no patentable debido a Priessman WO2010/126462 (como se presentó en el IDS radicado el 14 de abril de 2017).

Priessman muestra la invención como se reclama que comprende un dispositivo quirúrgico (10) para la asistencia en el posicionamiento de un implante prostético (2) dentro de un bolsillo quirúrgico de un paciente, el dispositivo quirúrgico que comprende:

Una bolsa con forma de un frustum cónico (10) en el cual el extremo proximal de la bolsa está sellado (14) y el extremo distal de la bolsa está abierto (24) con la bolsa que tienen una hendedura elongada que se extiende desde el extremo distal hacia el extremo proximal, la bolsa además tiene una única abertura formada en la abertura distal y la hendedura elongada, la única abertura está configurada para aceptar el implante prostético dentro de la bolsa;



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en donde el implante de prótesis se selecciona del conjunto de implantes de prótesis que consiste en un implante de mama, un implante pectoral, un implante de pantorrilla y un implante de glúteo;

en donde una superficie interna de la bolsa es tratada con un revestimiento lubrico (24, ver página 5).

Sin embargo Priessmann no especifica el término adhesivo el cual se fija a lo largo de la porción de la abertura elongada. Habría sido obvio para una persona normalmente versada en la materia modificar la invención de Priessman para utilizar un adhesivo puesto que la publicación afirma que la costura 18 se forma usando cinta de doble faz y cinta es sinónimo de adhesivo y Priessman además afirma que puede utilizarse otro medio de unión.

La reivindicación **5** se rechaza bajo el artículo 35 U.S.C 103, al ser no patentable debido Priessman WO 2010/126462 en vista de Lesh 2009/0024228.

Priessman se ha descrito previamente sin embargo no divulga que el revestimiento lubrico es un gel hidrofílico.

Lesh enseña que los geles hidrofílicos como el hidrogel son utilizados como revestimientos que pueden ser aplicados a mangas para su uso con implantes de tejido.

Habría resultado obvio para una persona normalmente versada en la materia modificar la invención de Priessman y utilizar un gel hidrofílico tal y como enseña Lesh con el fin de proporcionar un revestimiento resbaladizo/lubrico que puede ser manipulado a través del dispositivo ahusado durante la colocación de la prótesis.

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Materia admisible

Las reivindicaciones **9 -12, 14 -15, 17 -18** fueron objetadas por ser dependientes de una base reivindicada que fue rechazada, pero serían admisibles si se reescribieran de forma independiente incluyendo todas las limitaciones de la reivindicación base y todas aquellas reivindicaciones que intervienen.

Las reivindicaciones **19-20** son admisibles.

Conclusión

Cualquier inquietud con respecto a esta o anteriores comunicaciones del examinador, debe dirigirse a Suzette Gherbi, cuyo número telefónico es (571) 272-4751. El examinador se encuentra disponible normalmente de lunes a viernes de 7:00 am a 3:00 pm.

Si no se puede contactar con él telefónicamente, **por favor contacte a Thomas Sweet, el supervisor SPE del examinador, al (571) 272-4761**. El número de fax de la organización donde esta solicitud o procedimiento está asignado es 571-273-8300.

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/SUZETTE J-J GHERBI/

Examinador principal, Unidad de arte 3738

27 de abril de 2017



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Leason Ellis LLP
One Barker Avenue
Fifth Floor
White Plains, NY 10601-1526

ISSUE NOTIFICATION

The projected patent number and issue date are specified above.

Determination of Patent Term Adjustment under 35 U.S.C. 154 (b) (application filed on or after May 29, 2000)

The Patent Term Adjustment is 0 day(s). Any patent to issue from the above-identified application will include an indication of the adjustment on the front page.

If a Continued Prosecution Application (CPA) was filed in the above-identified application, the filing date that determines Patent Term Adjustment is the filing date of the most recent CPA.

Applicant will be able to obtain more detailed information by accessing the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) WEB site (<http://pair.uspto.gov>).

Any questions regarding the Patent Term Extension or Adjustment determination should be directed to the Office of Patent Legal Administration at (571)-272-7702. Questions relating to issue and publication fee payments should be directed to the Application Assistance Unit (AAU) of the Office of Data Management (ODM) at (571)-272-4200.

APPLICANT(s) (Please see PAIR WEB site <http://pair.uspto.gov> for additional applicants):

Paul Rosenberg, Saddle River, NJ;
Proximate Concepts LLC, Fort Lee, NJ;

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