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(54) **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PENETRATING TISSUE**

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(22) Filed: **Feb. 6, 2007**

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Division of application No. 10/335,082, filed on Dec. 31, 2002, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 10/127,395, filed on Apr. 19, 2002, now Pat. No. 7,025,774.
Continuation-in-part of application No. 10/237,261, filed on Sep. 5, 2002.

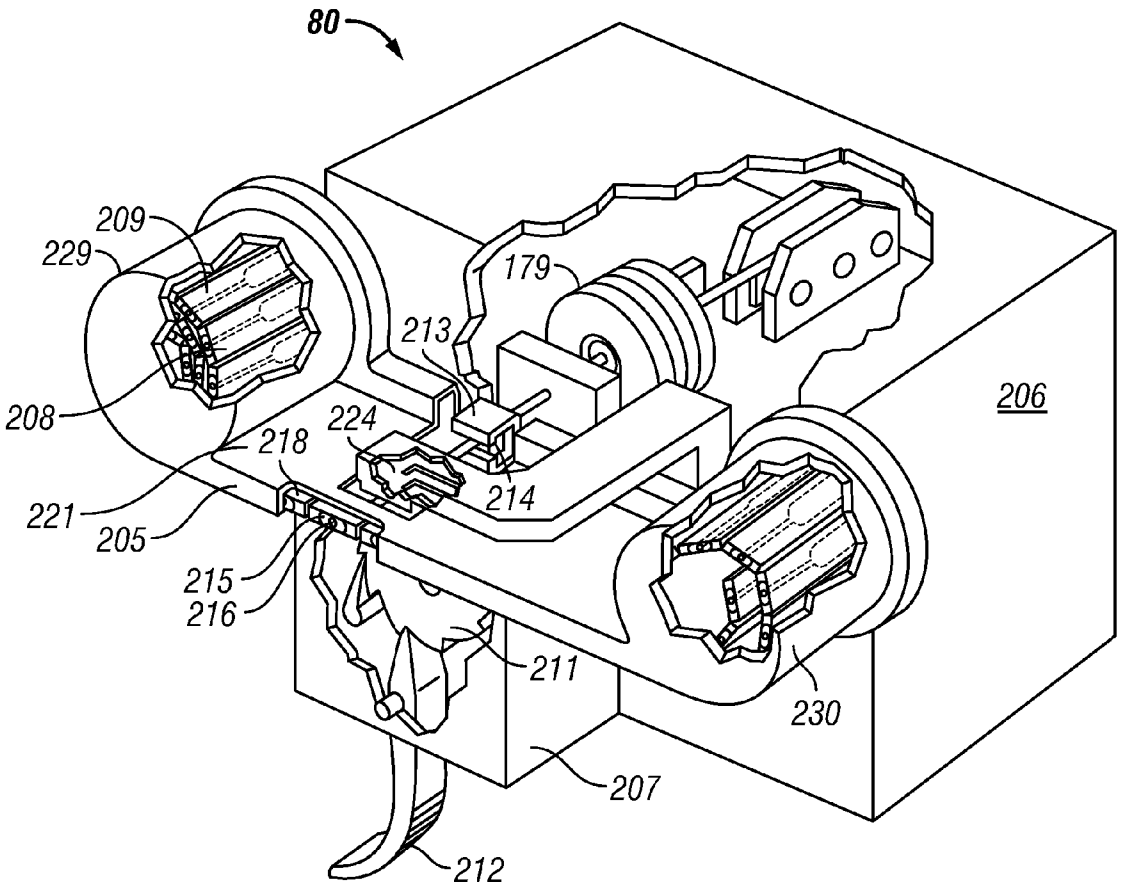
Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.**
A61B 5/00 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **600/583**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A tissue penetration device includes a penetrating member driver, a cartridge, and a plurality of penetrating members integrated with the cartridge. Each of a penetrating member is coupled to the penetrating member driver when advanced along a path into a tissue target. A user interface is configured to relay at least one of, skin penetrating performance or a skin penetrating setting.



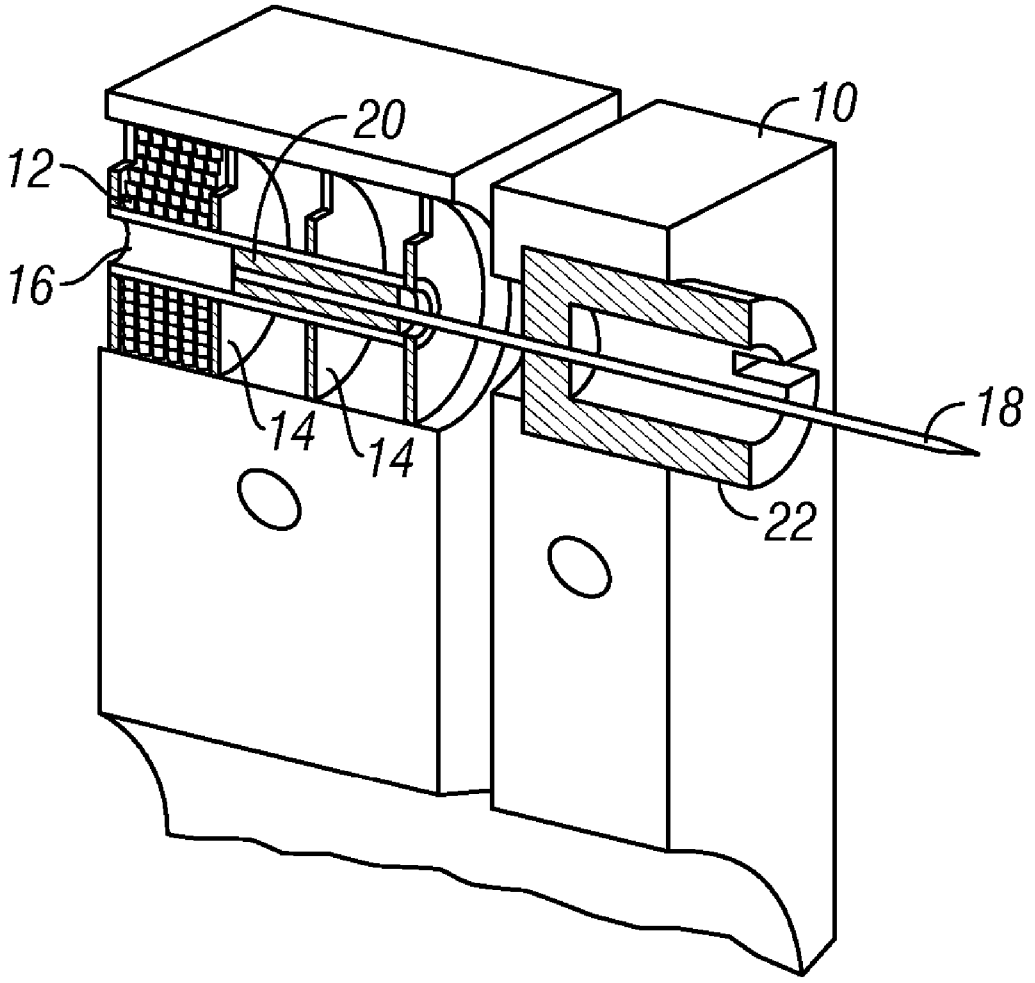


FIG. 1

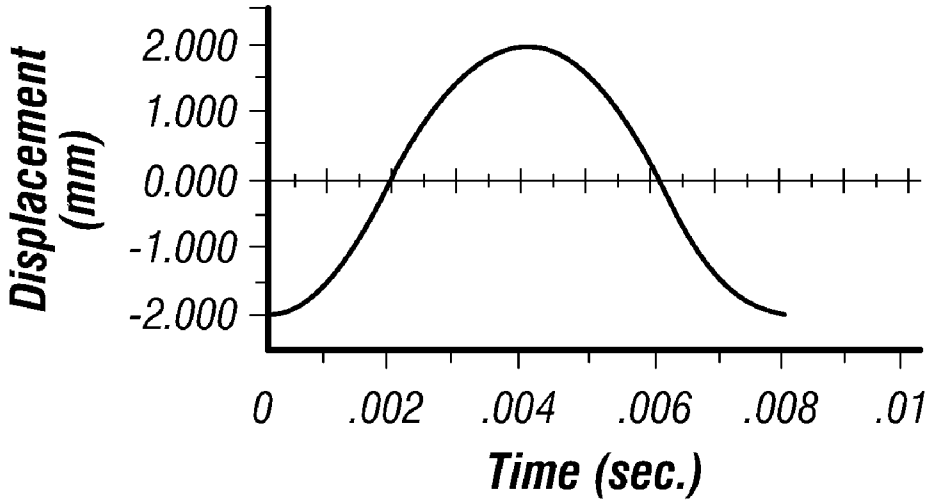

Displacement (mm)
2.000
1.000
0.000
-1.000
-2.000
0
.002
.004
.006
.008
.01
Time (sec.)

FIG. 2A

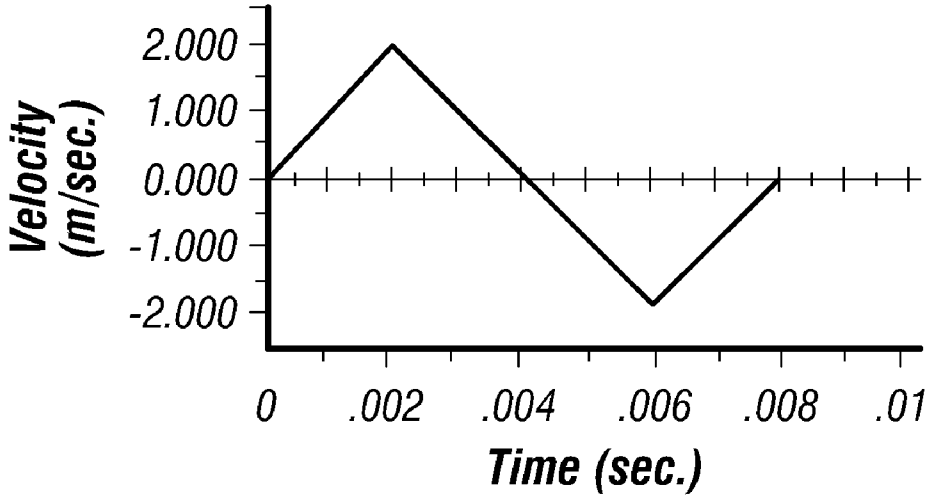

Velocity (m/sec.)
2.000
1.000
0.000
-1.000
-2.000
0
.002
.004
.006
.008
.01
Time (sec.)

FIG. 2B

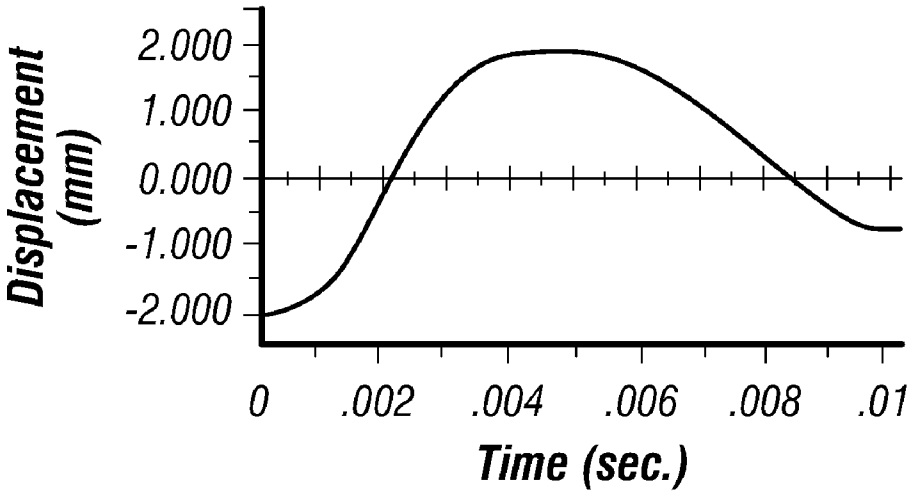

Displacement (mm)
2.000
1.000
0.000
-1.000
-2.000
0
.002
.004
.006
.008
.01
Time (sec.)

FIG. 2C

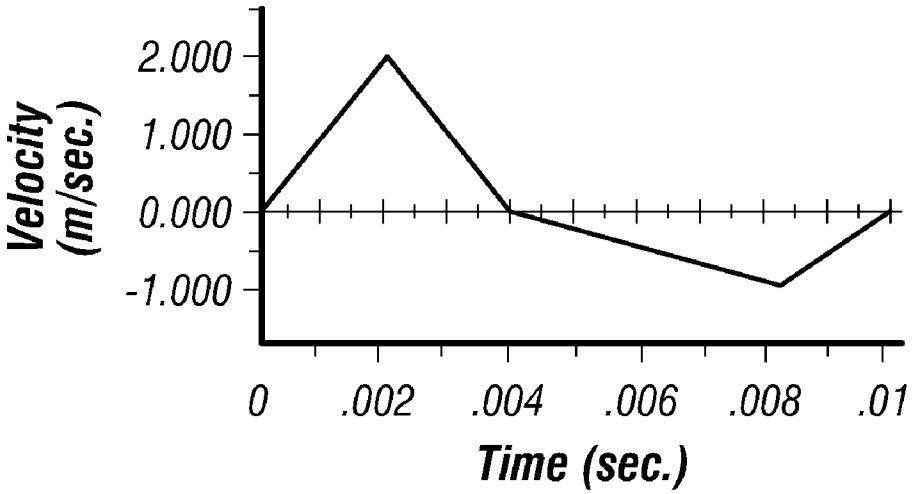

Velocity (m/sec.)
2.000
1.000
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-1.000
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.002
.004
.006
.008
.01
Time (sec.)

FIG. 2D

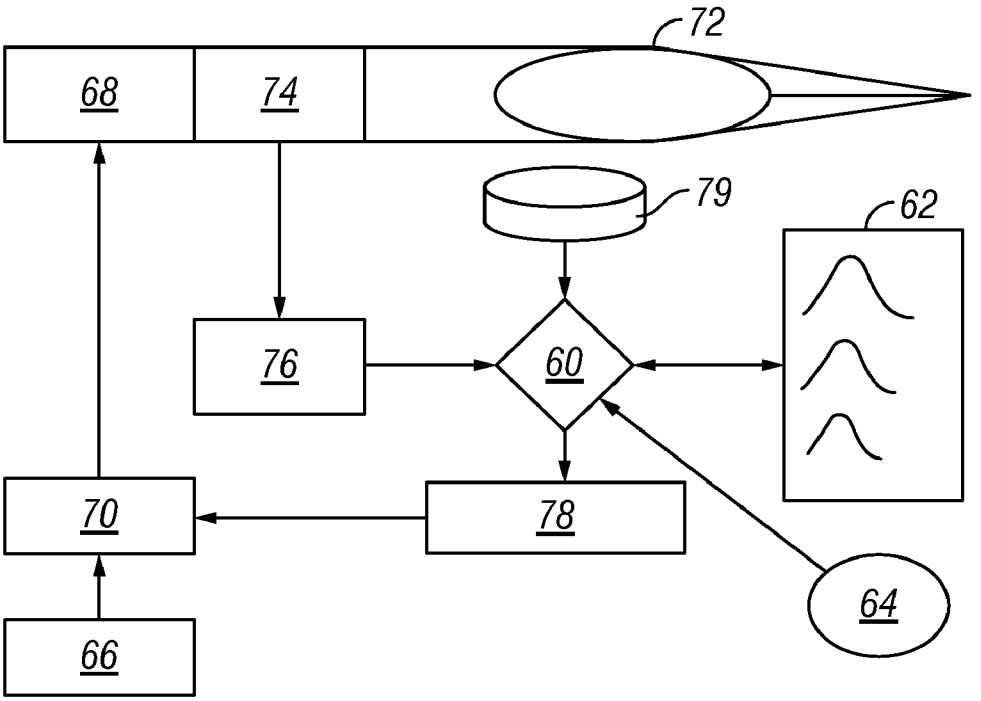


FIG. 3

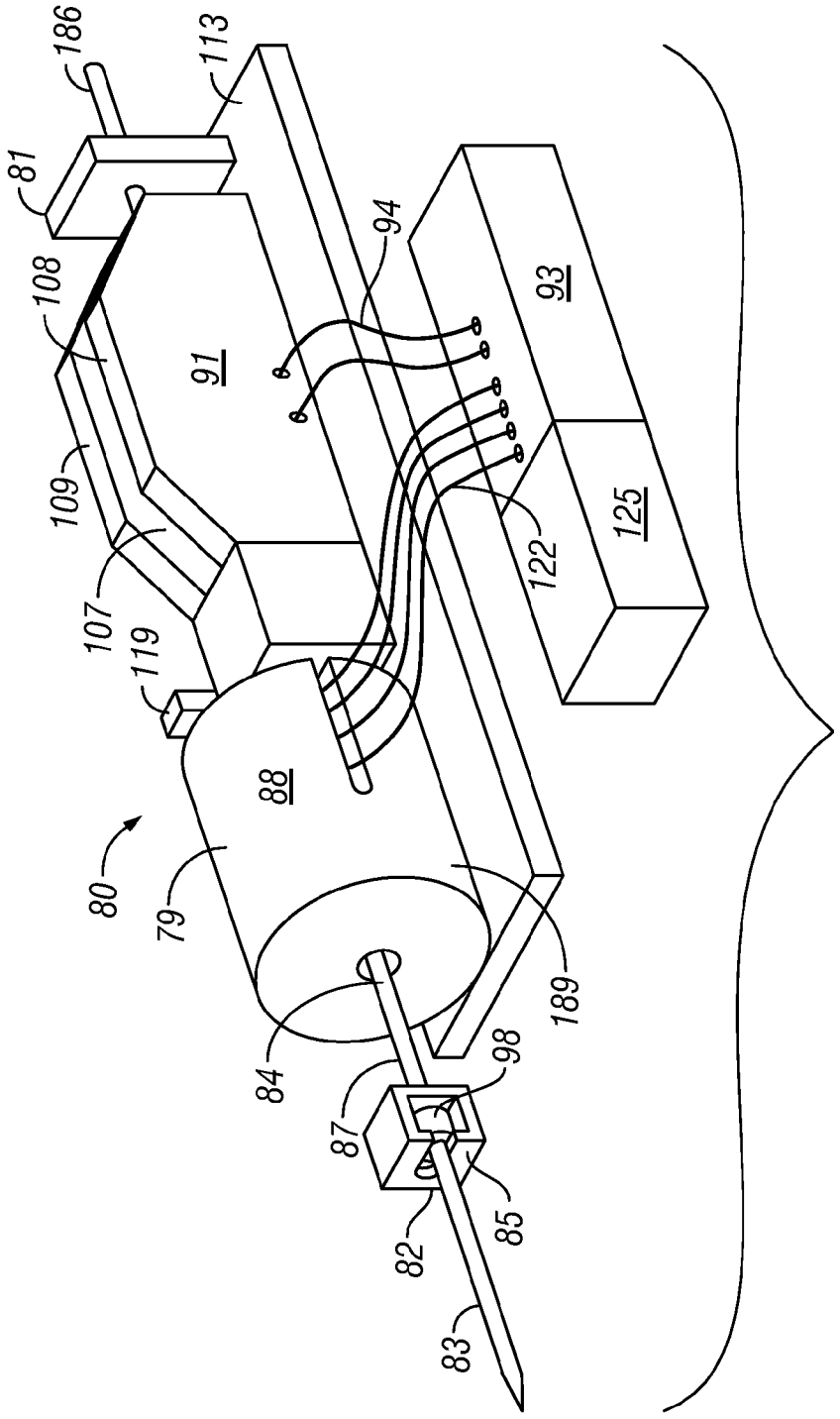

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FIG. 4

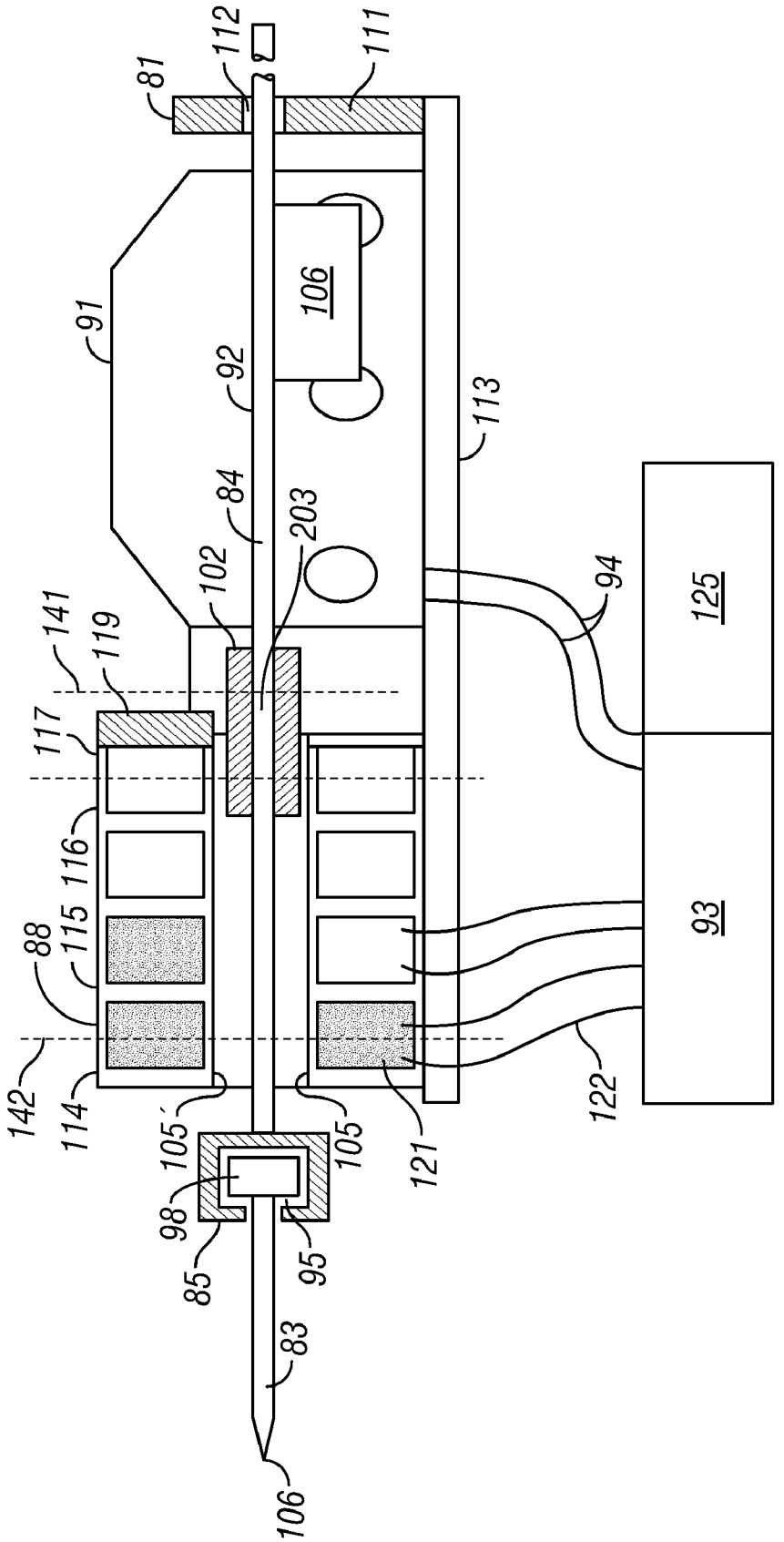

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FIG. 5

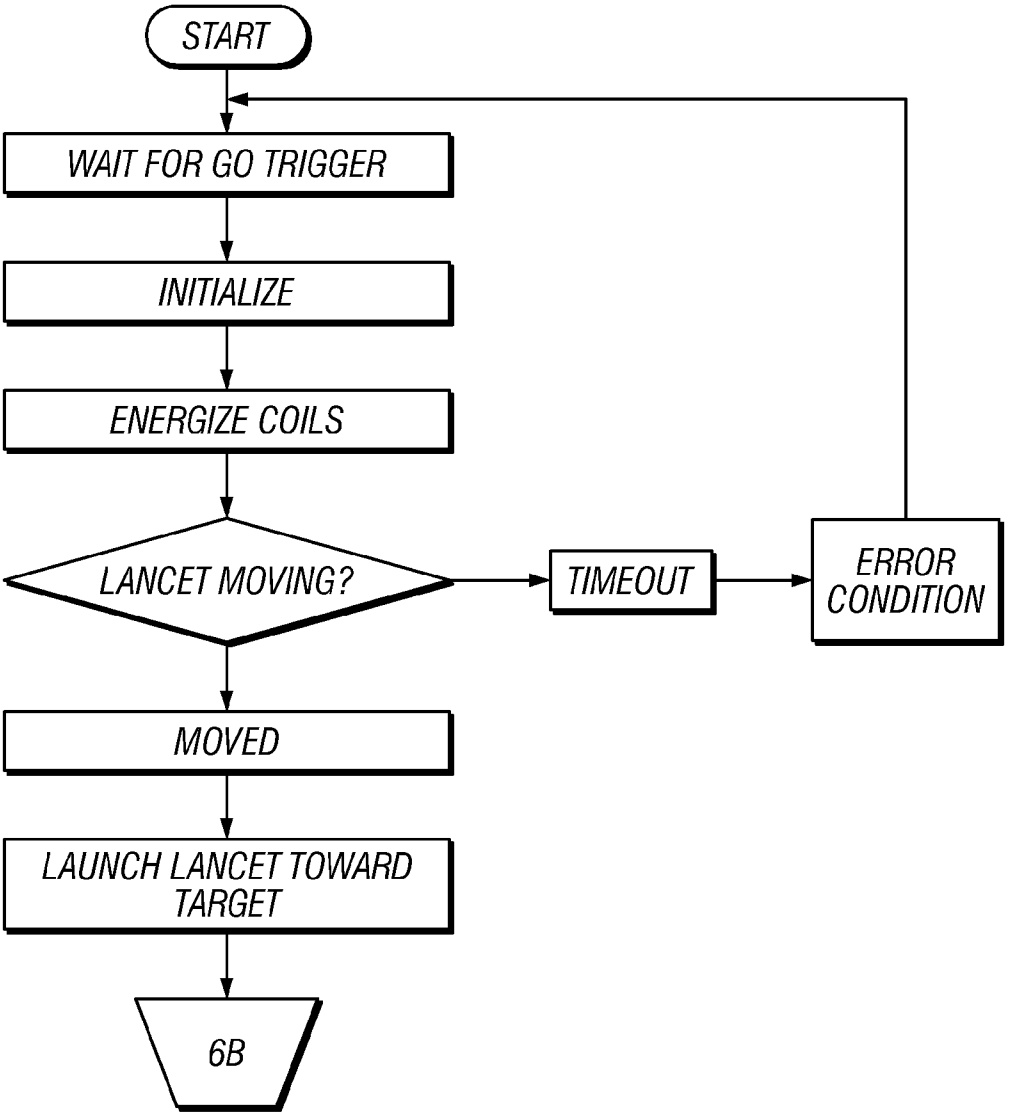

START
WAIT FOR GO TRIGGER
INITIALIZE
ENERGIZE COILS
LANCET MOVING?
TIMEOUT
ERROR CONDITION
MOVED
LAUNCH LANCET TOWARD TARGET
6B

FIG. 6A

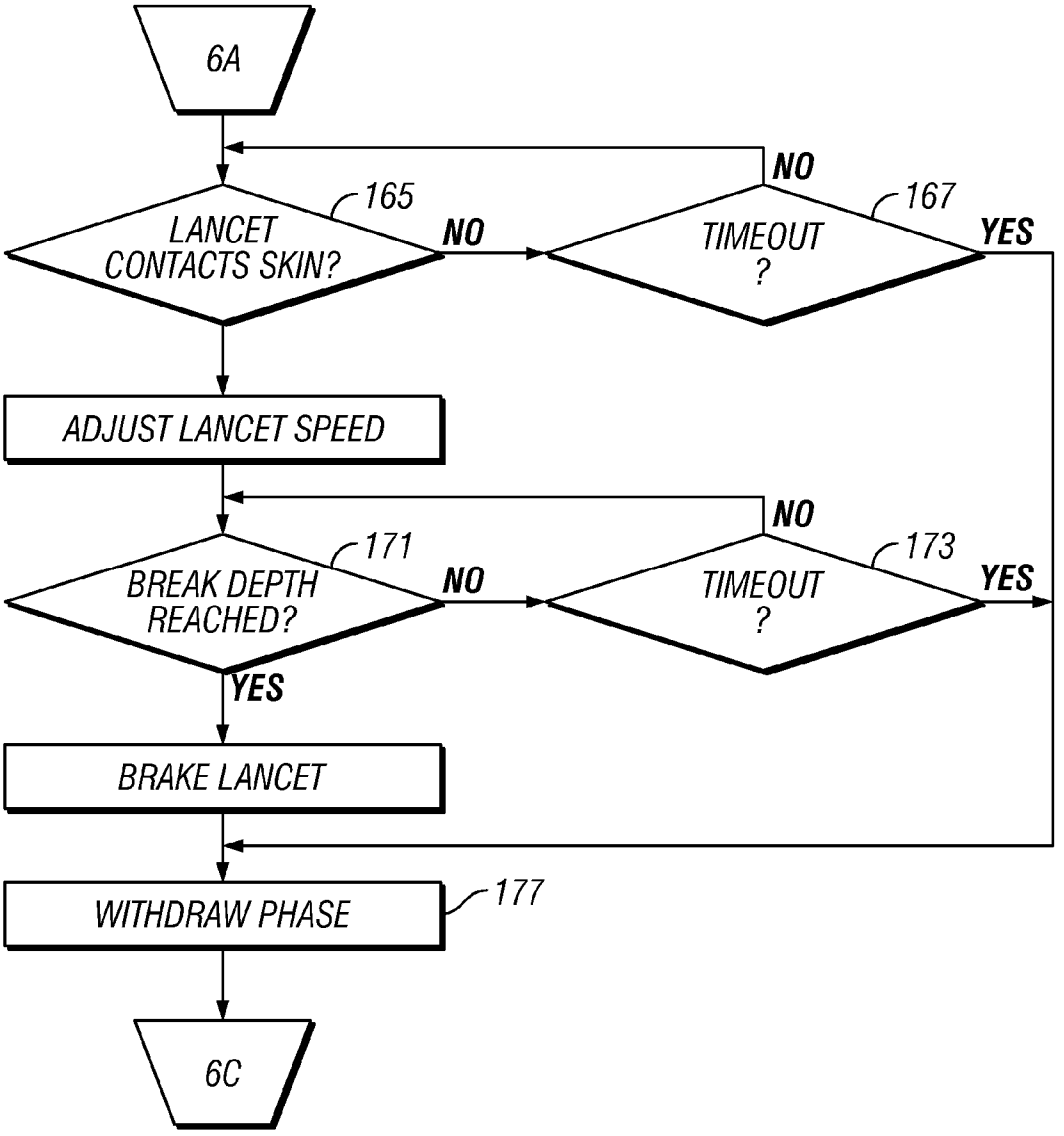

6A
NO
165
LANCET CONTACTS SKIN?
NO
167
TIMEOUT ?
YES
ADJUST LANCET SPEED
NO
171
BREAK DEPTH REACHED?
NO
173
TIMEOUT ?
YES
YES
BRAKE LANCET
WITHDRAW PHASE
177
6C

FIG. 6B

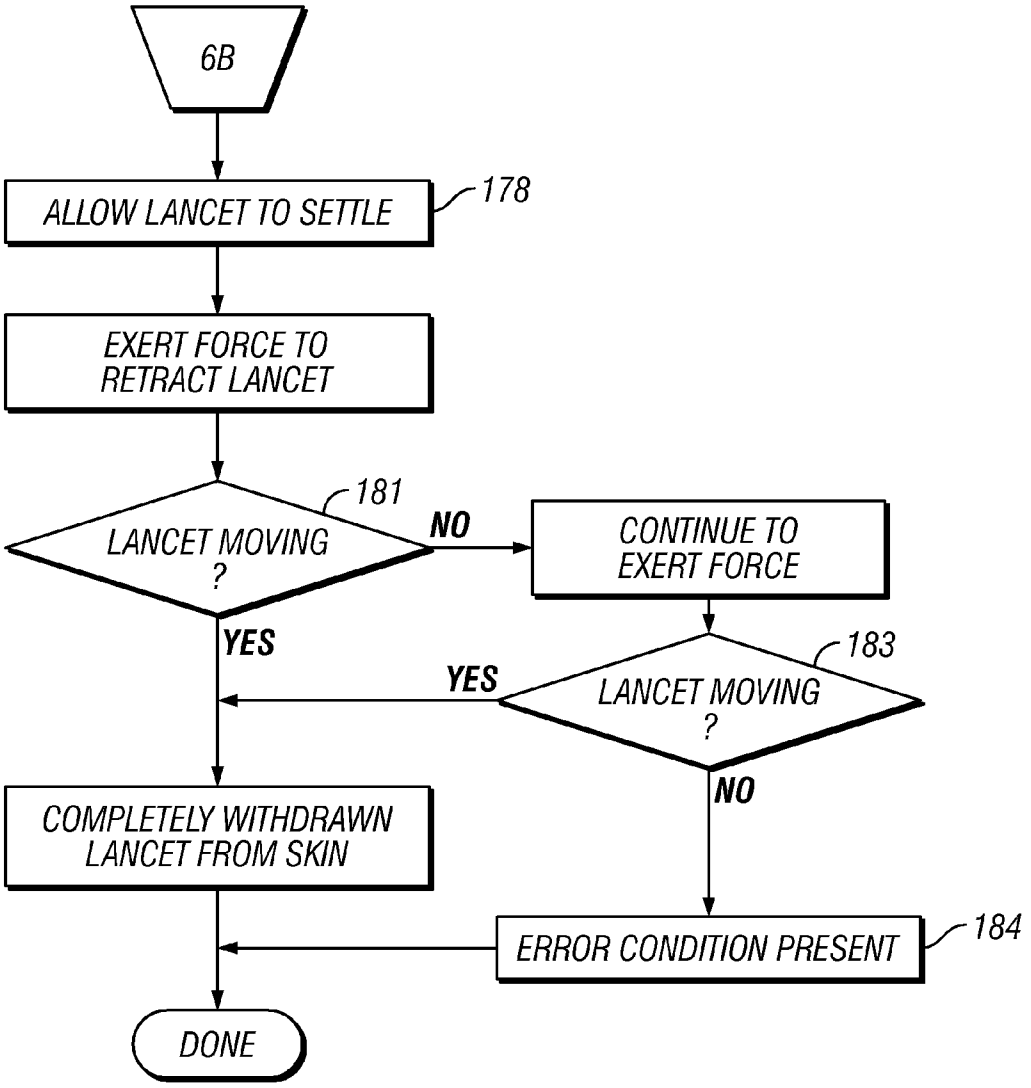

6B
ALLOW LANCET TO SETTLE
178
EXERT FORCE TO RETRACT LANCET
181
LANCET MOVING ?
NO
CONTINUE TO EXERT FORCE
YES
183
YES
LANCET MOVING ?
NO
COMPLETELY WITHDRAWN LANCET FROM SKIN
ERROR CONDITION PRESENT
184
DONE

FIG. 6C

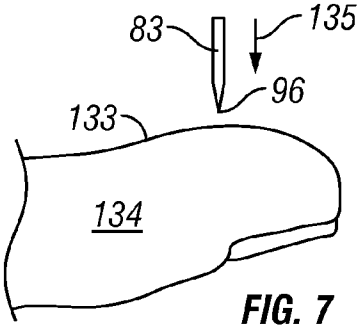


FIG. 7

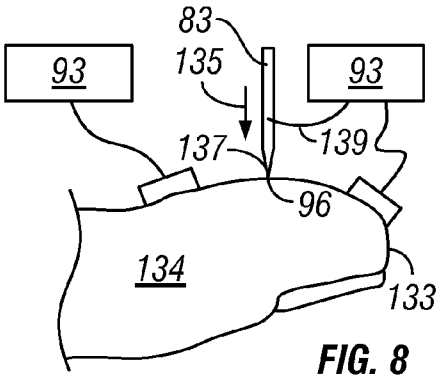


FIG. 8

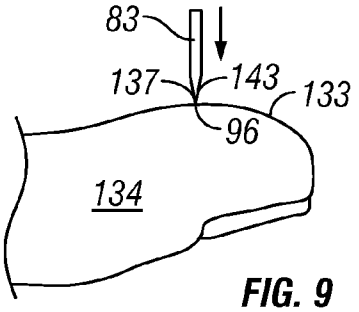


FIG. 9

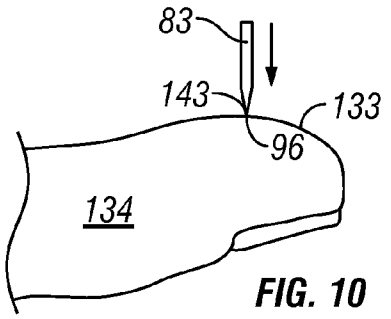


FIG. 10

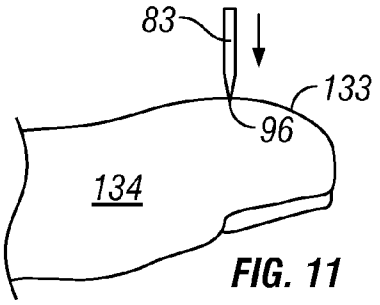


FIG. 11

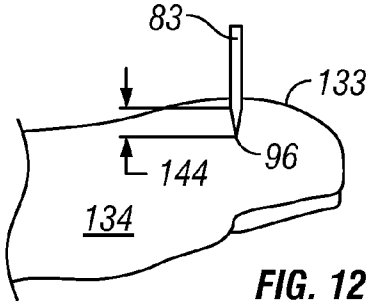


FIG. 12

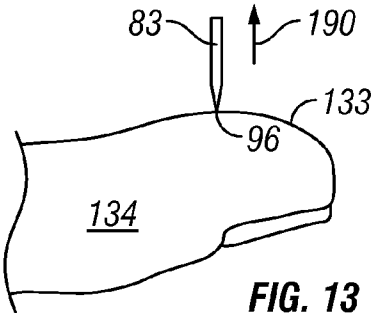


FIG. 13

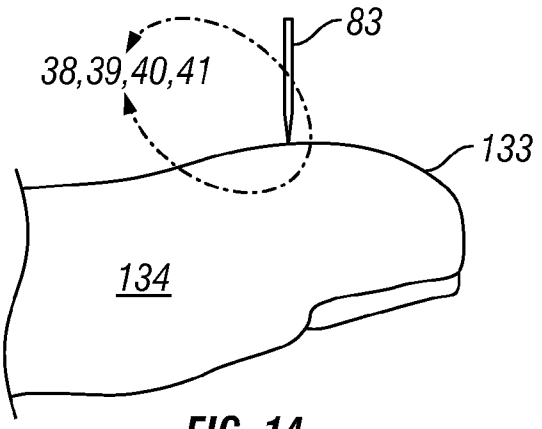


FIG. 14

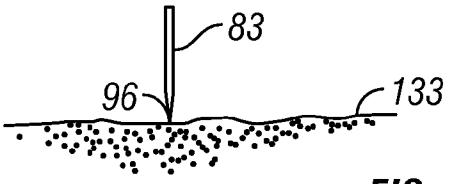


FIG. 15

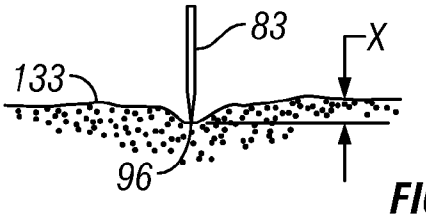


FIG. 16

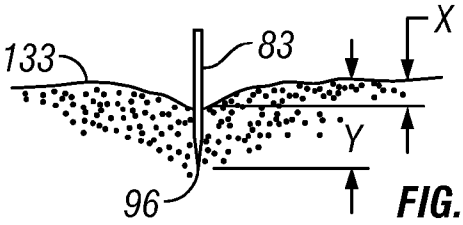


FIG. 17

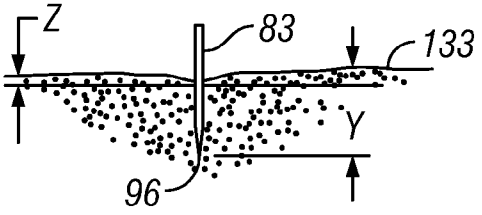


FIG. 18

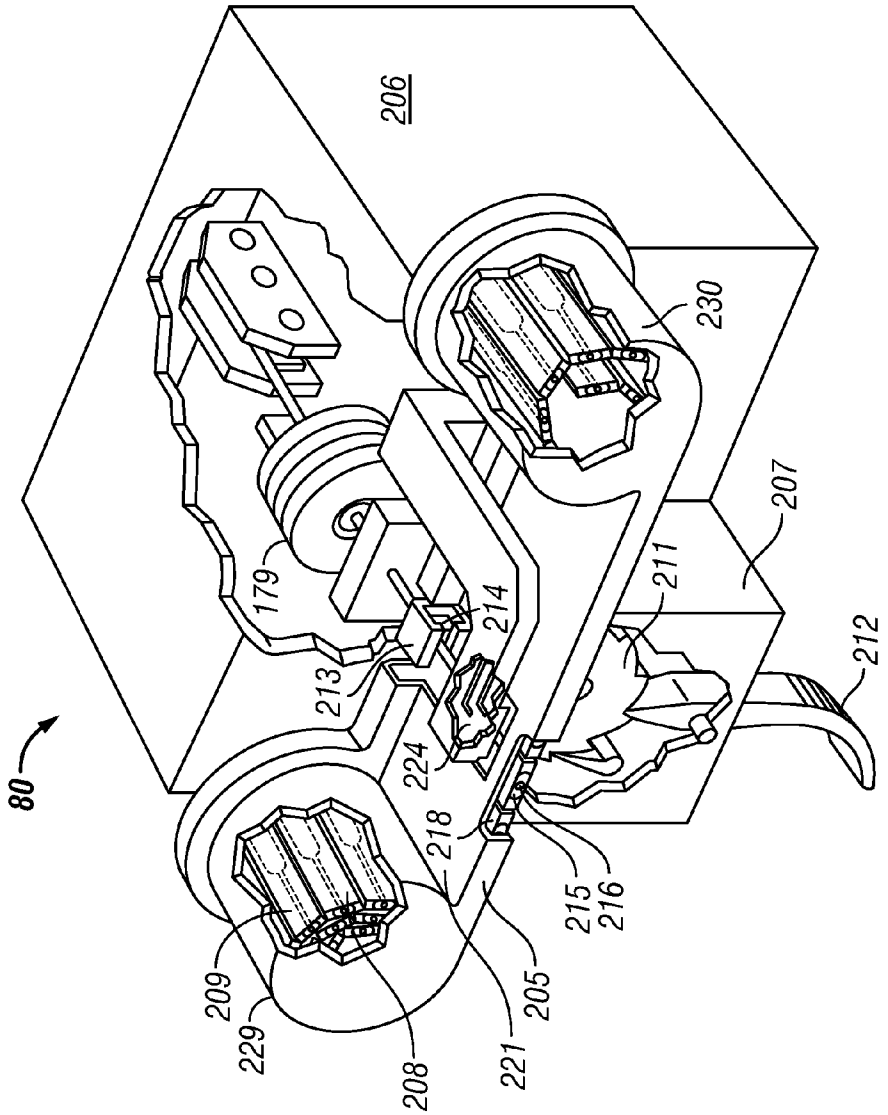

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FIG. 19

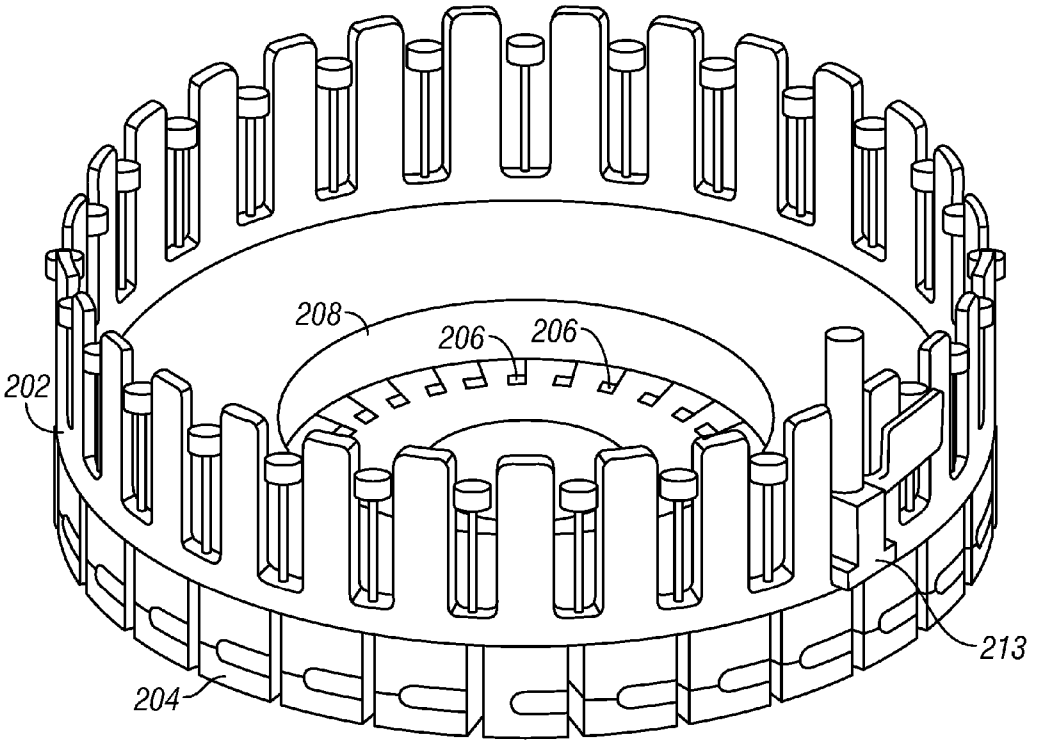


FIG. 20

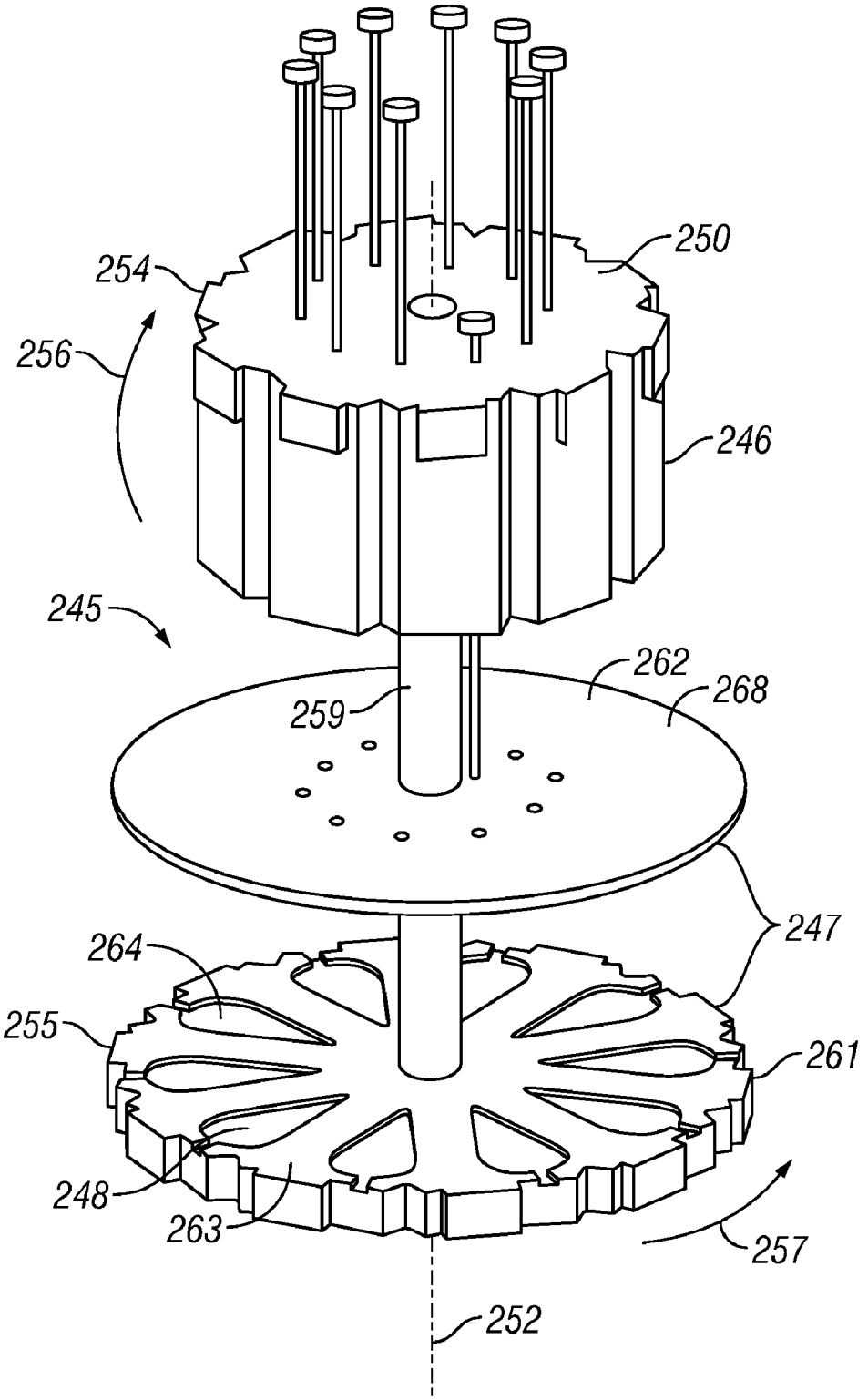


FIG. 21

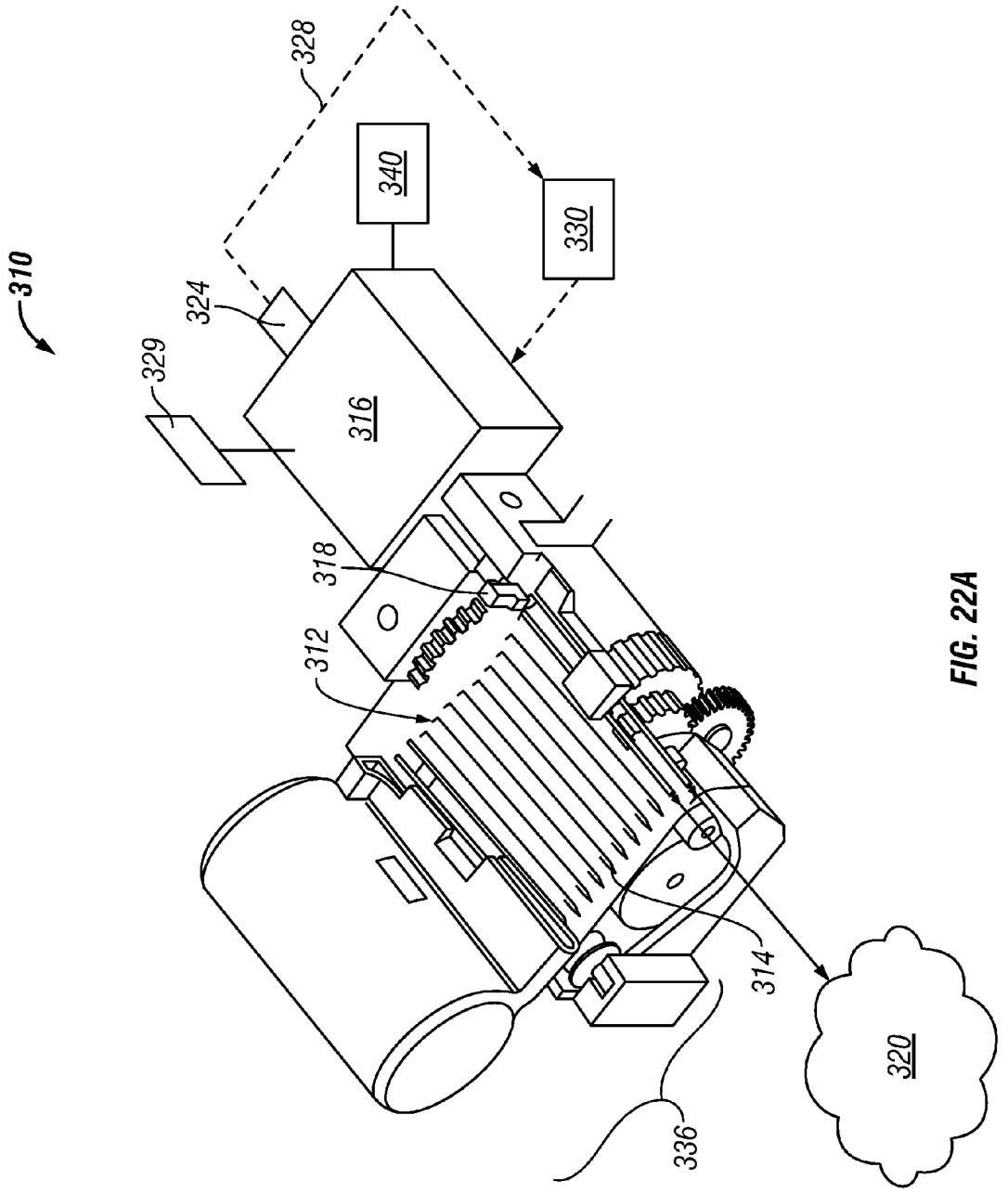


FIG. 22A

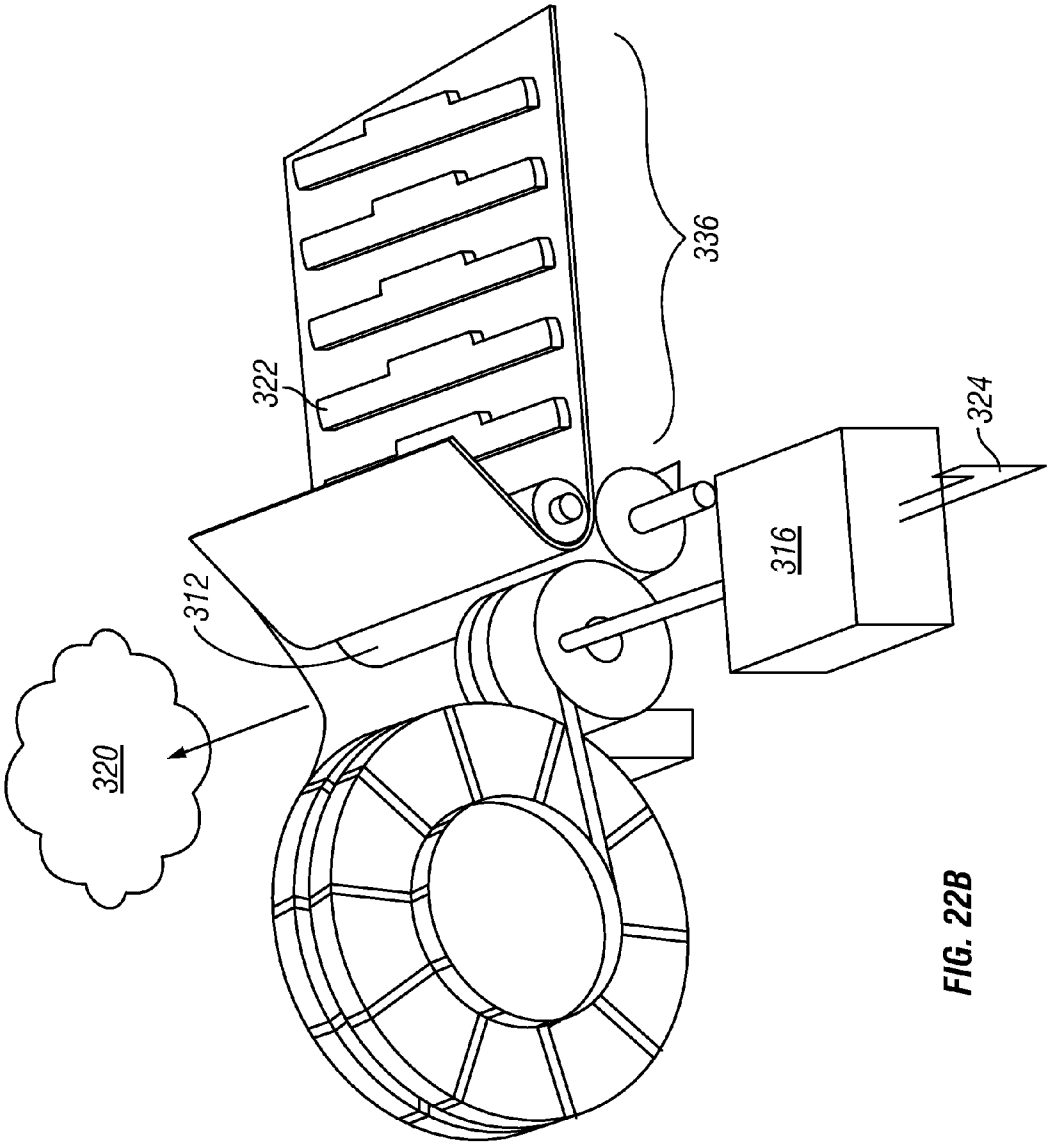


FIG. 22B

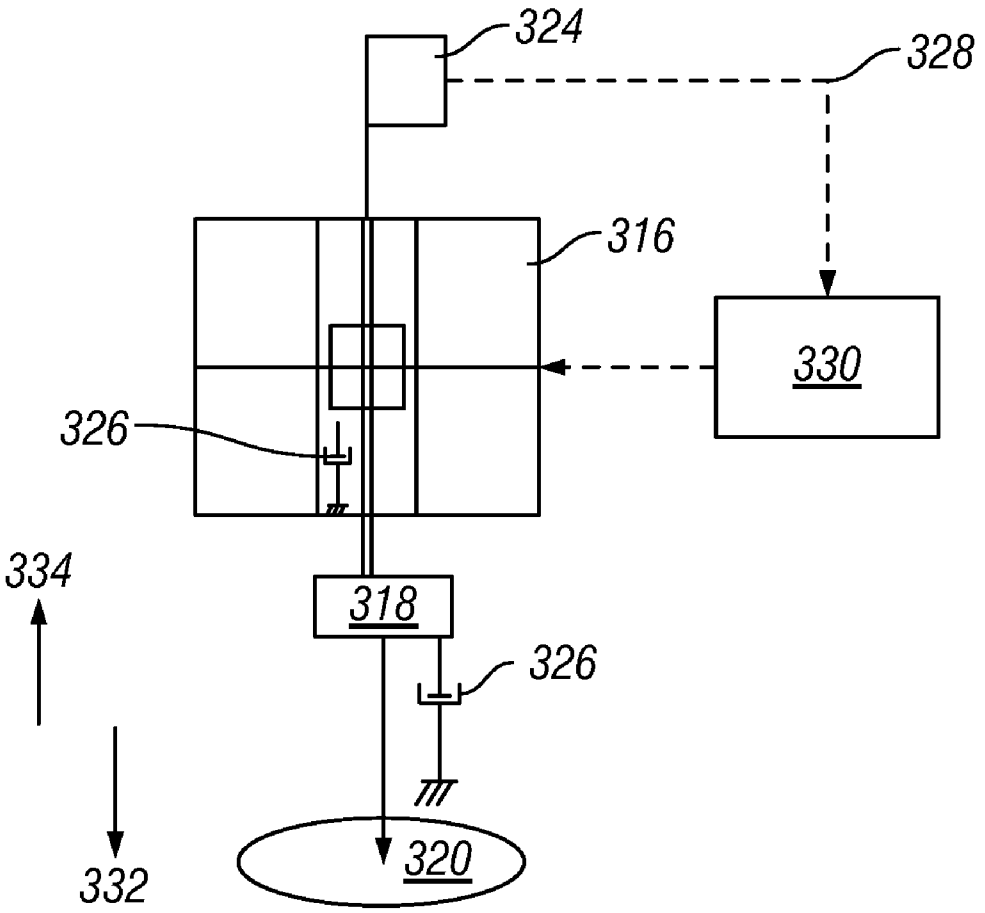


FIG. 22C

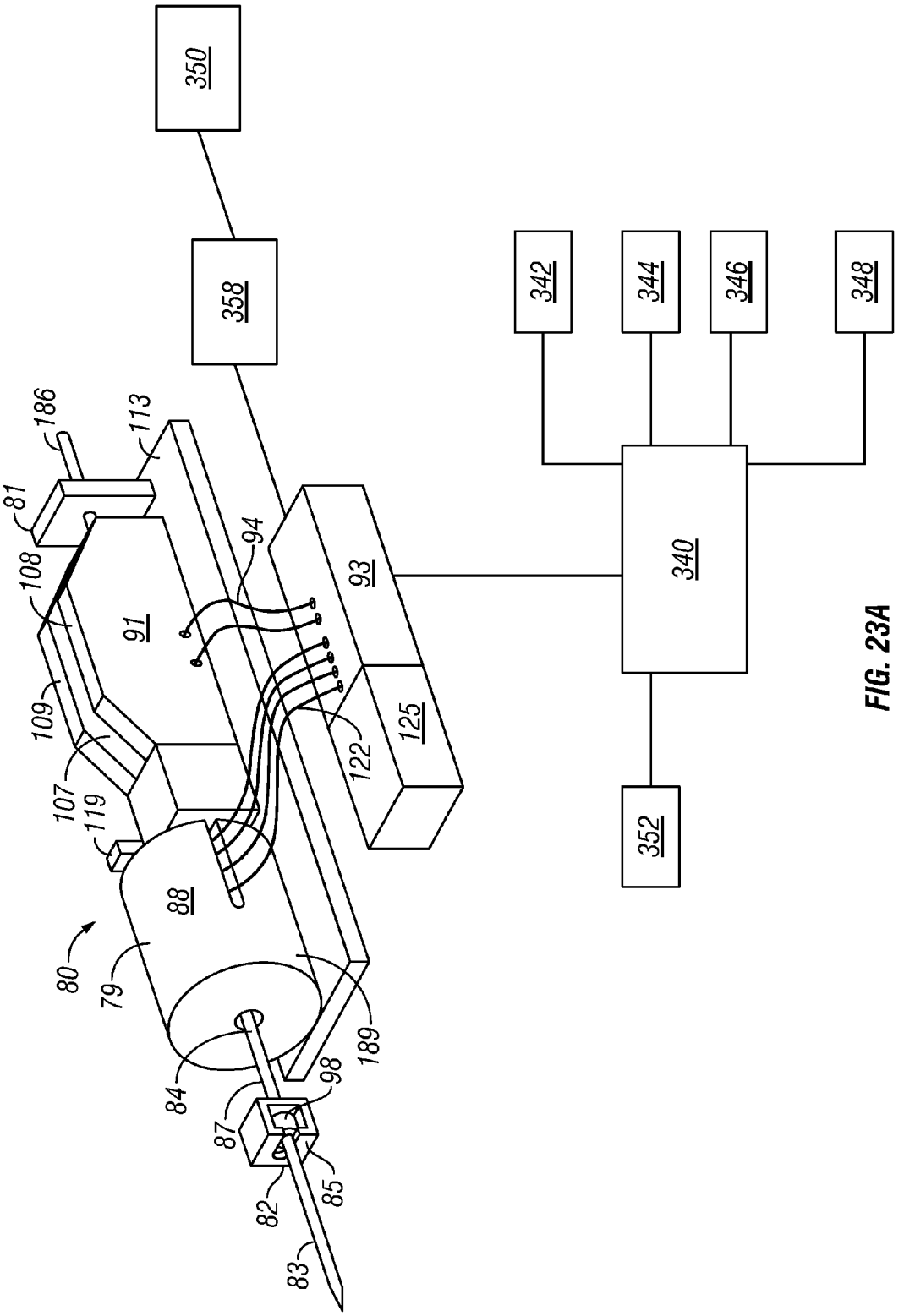

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FIG. 23A

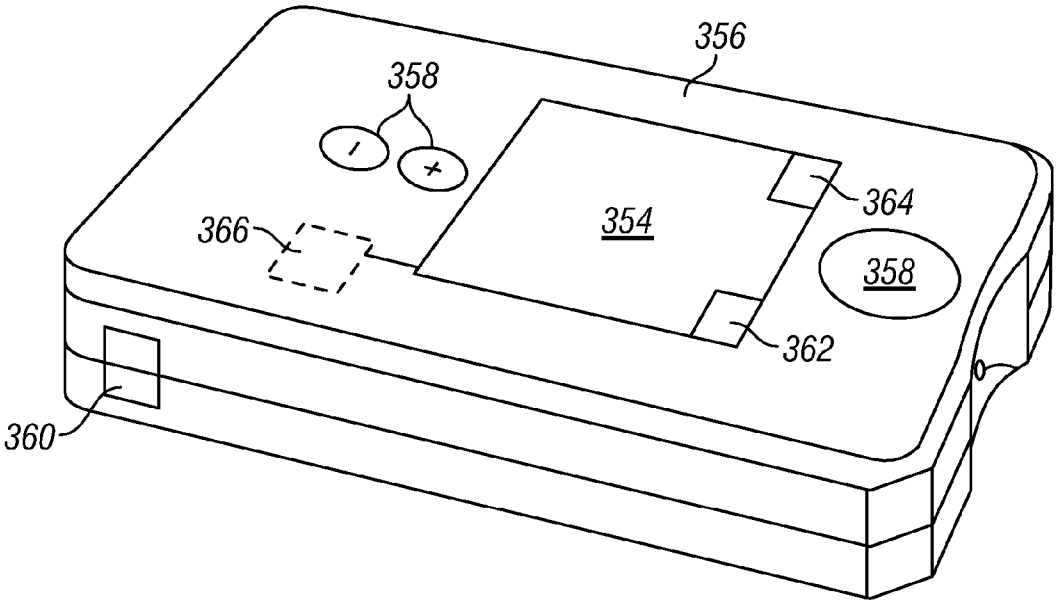


FIG. 23B

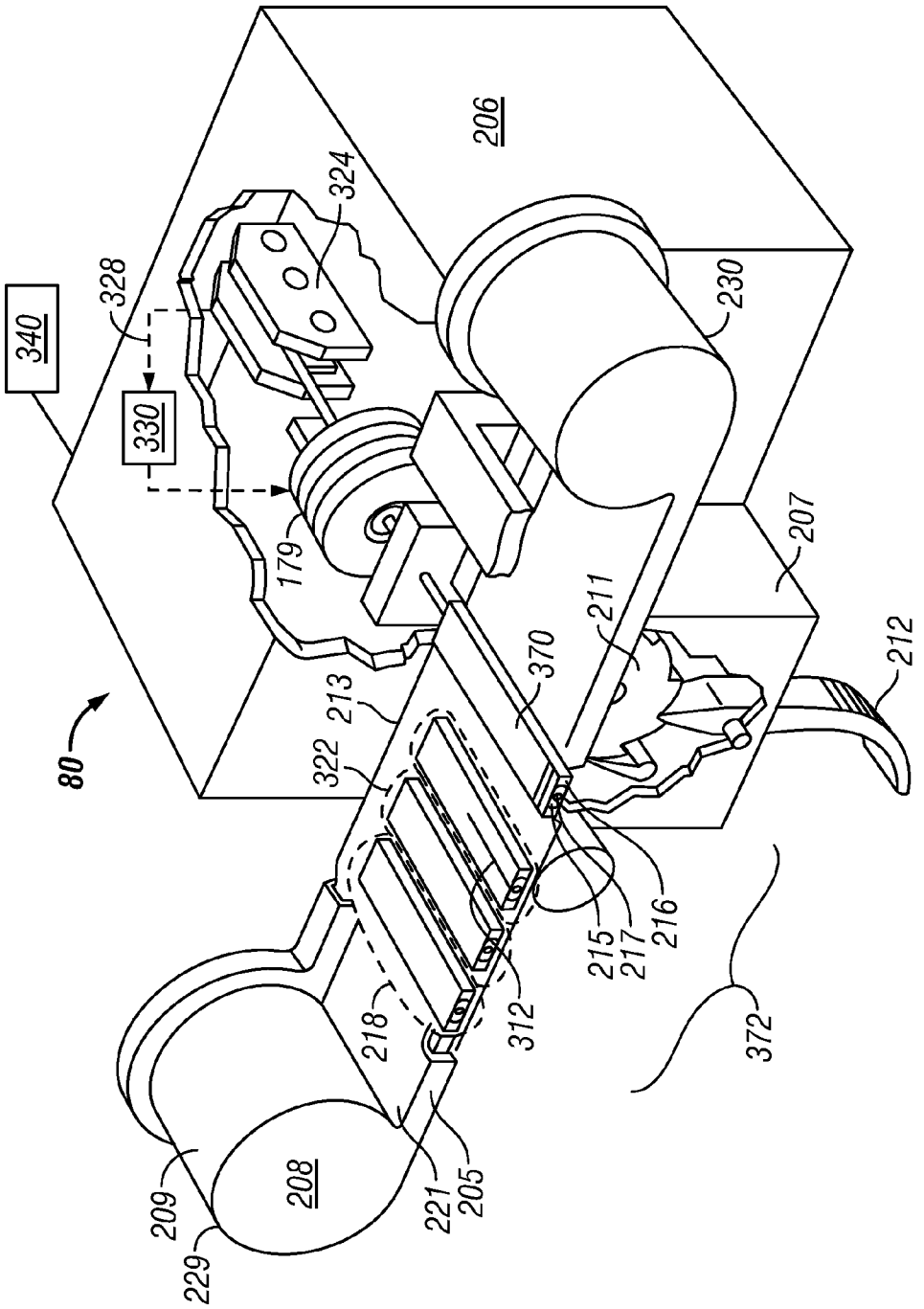

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FIG. 24

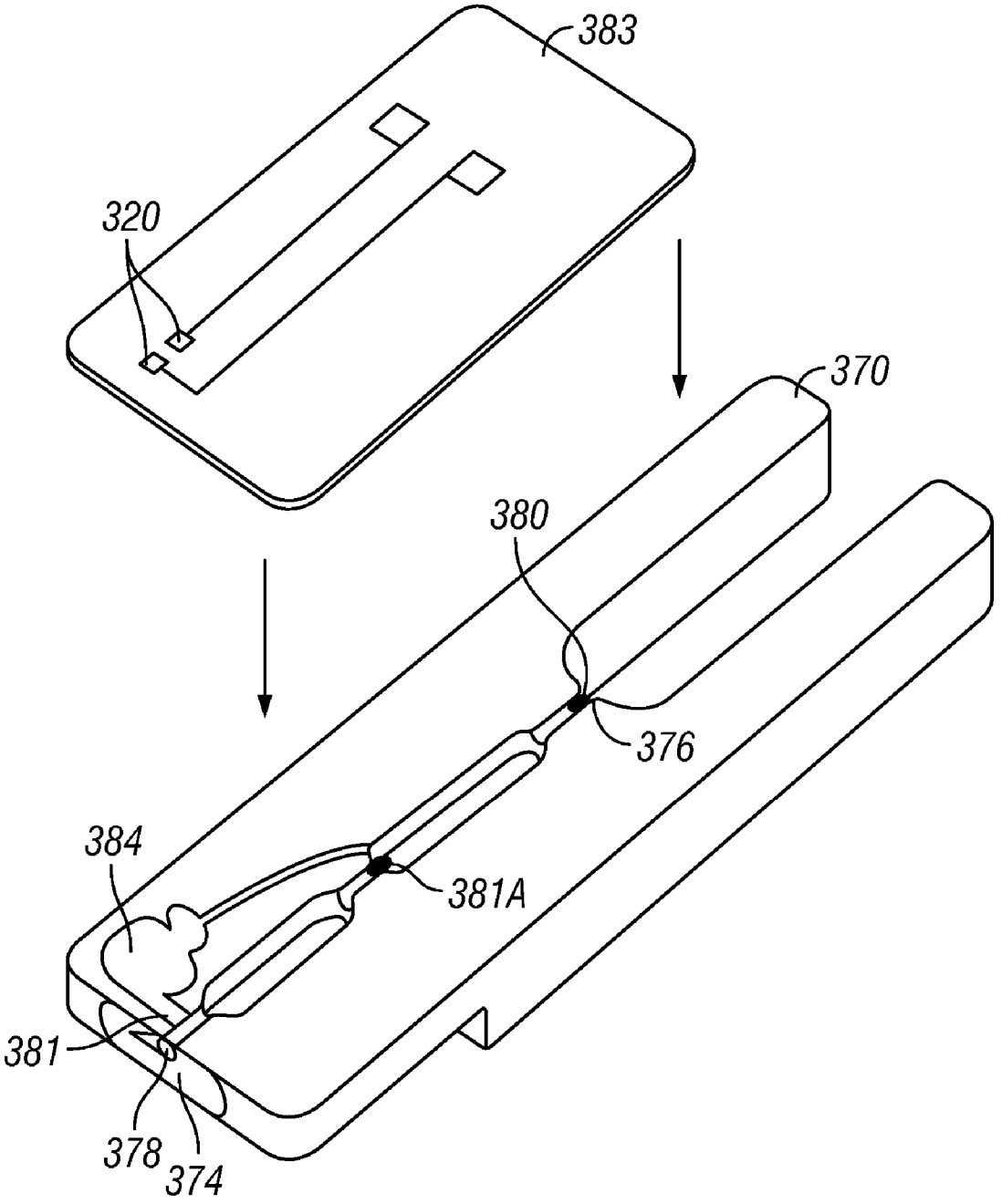


FIG. 25

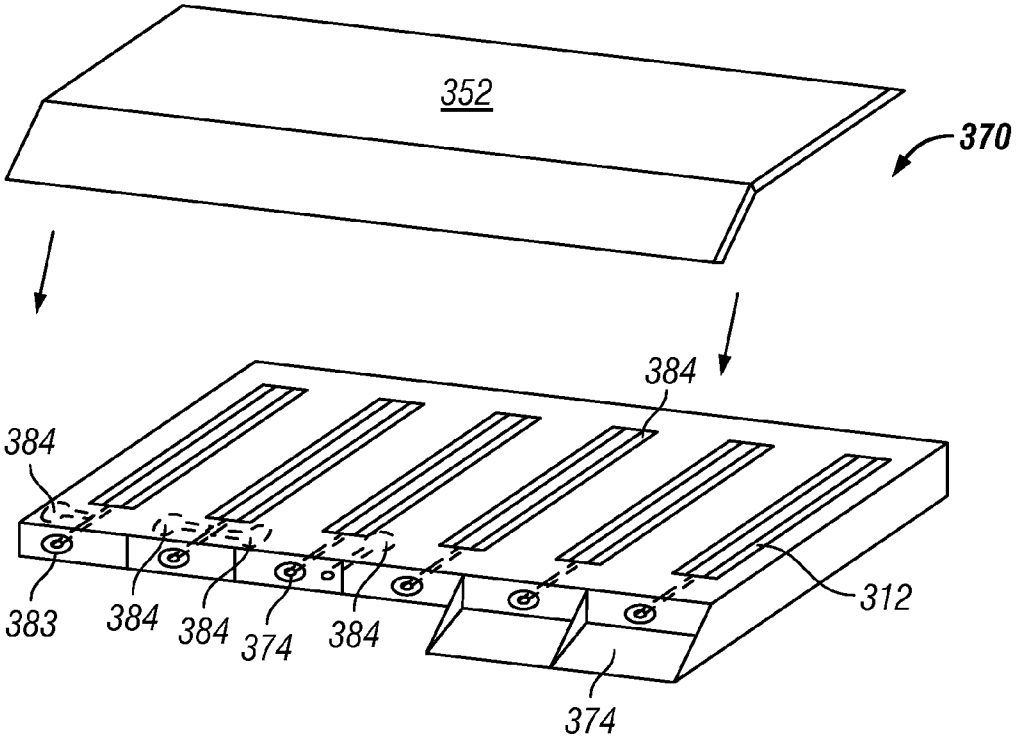


FIG. 26

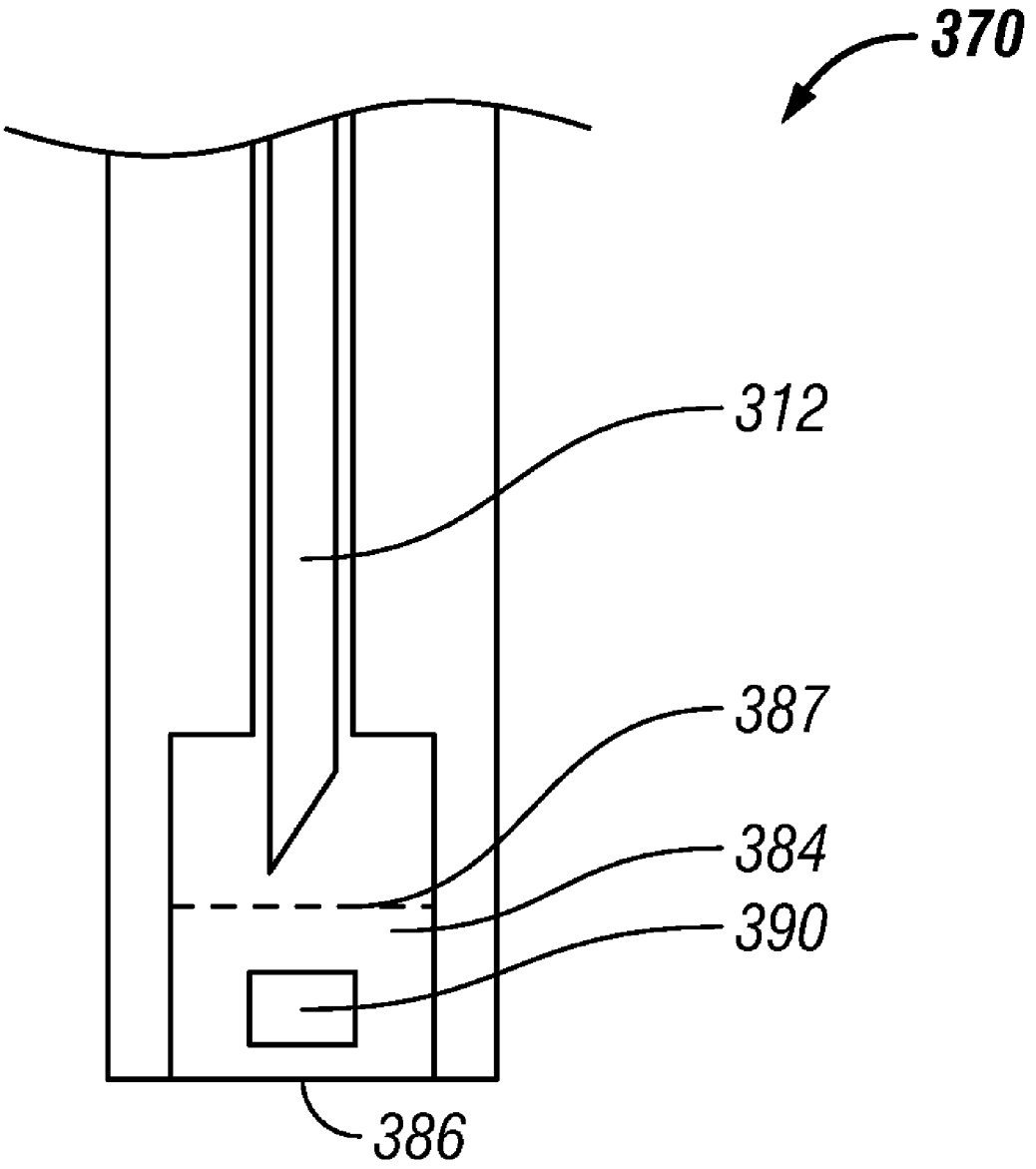


FIG. 27

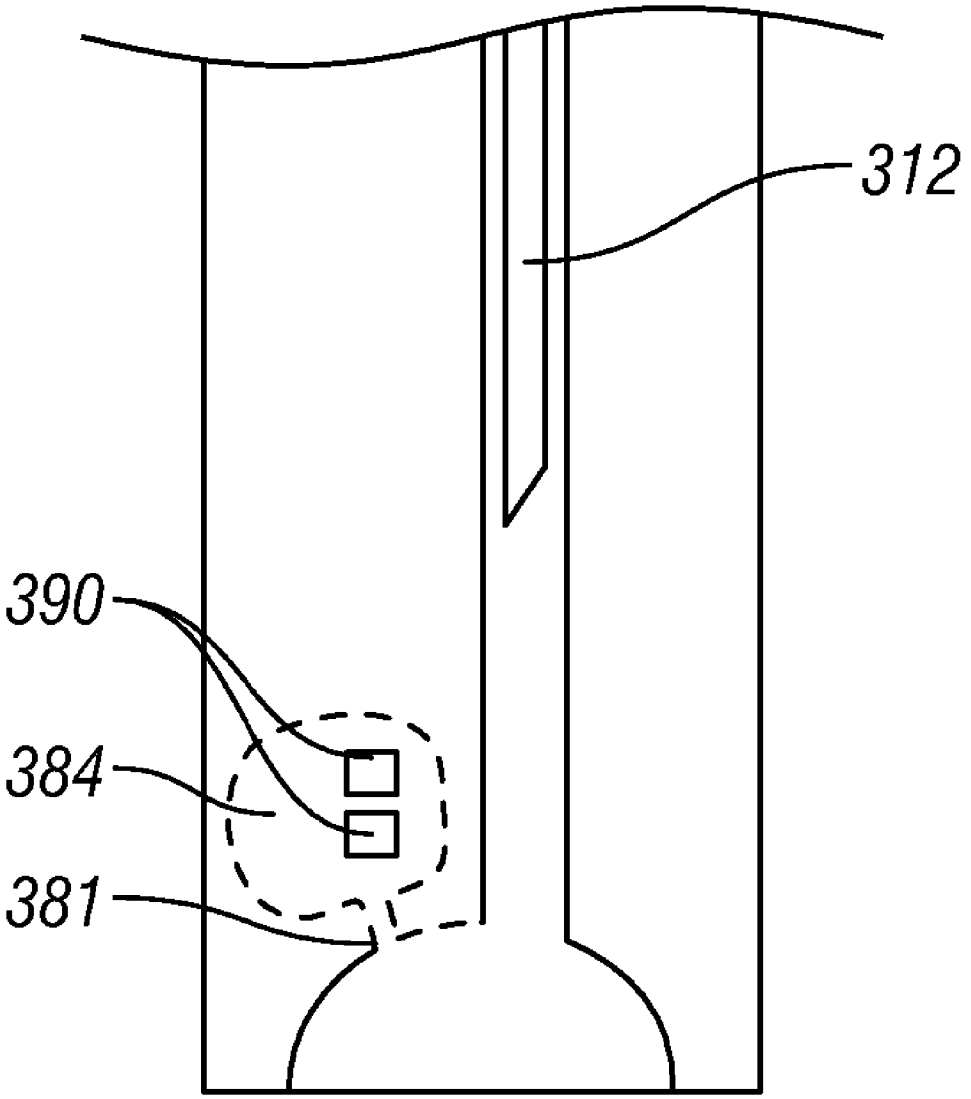


FIG. 28

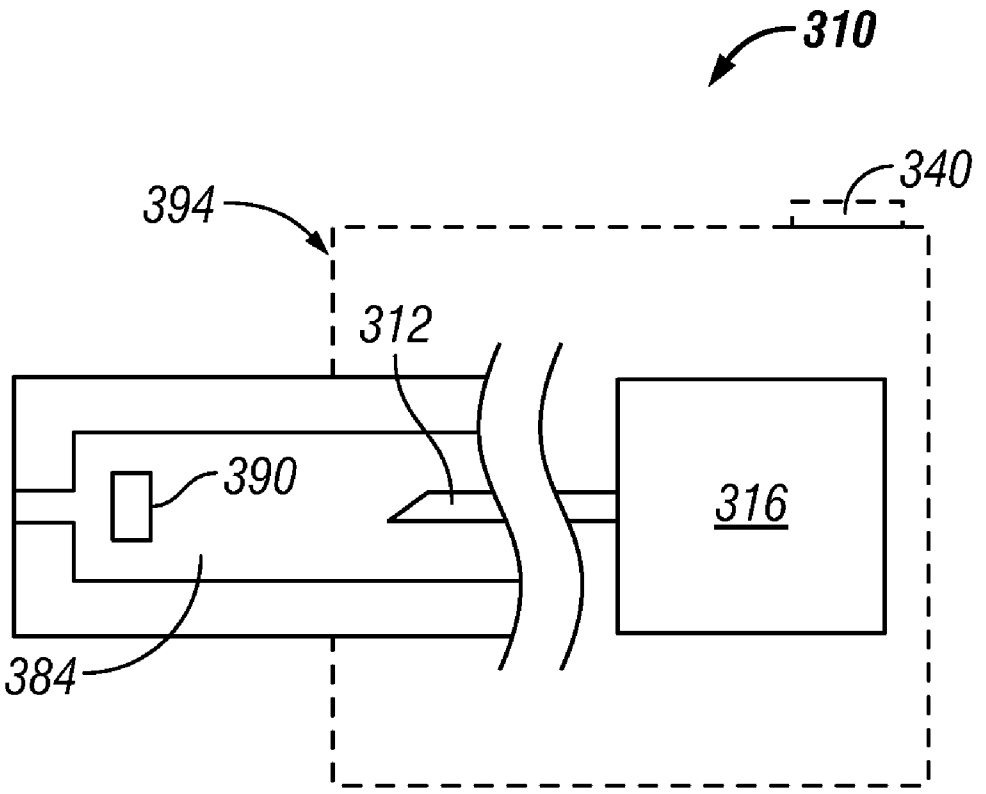


FIG. 29

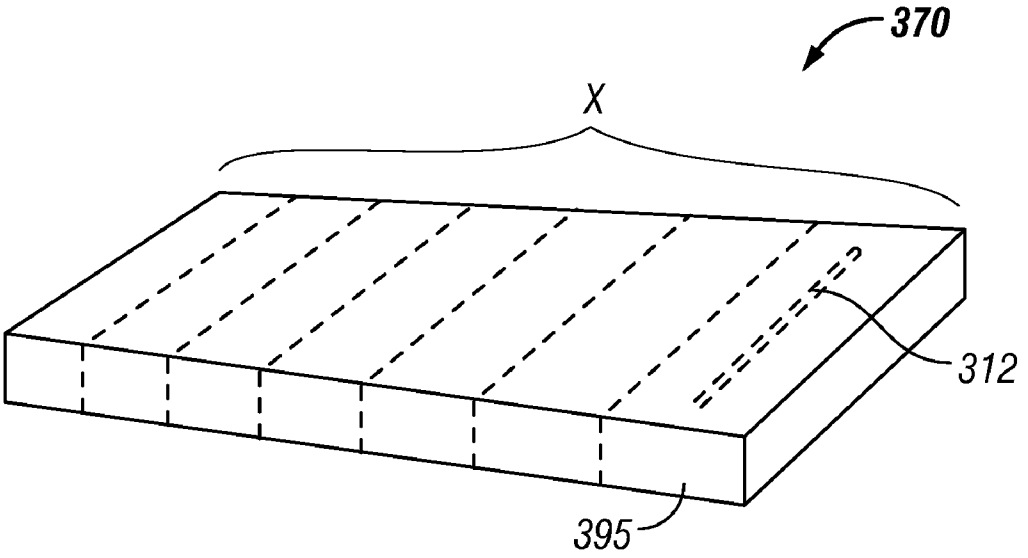


FIG. 30

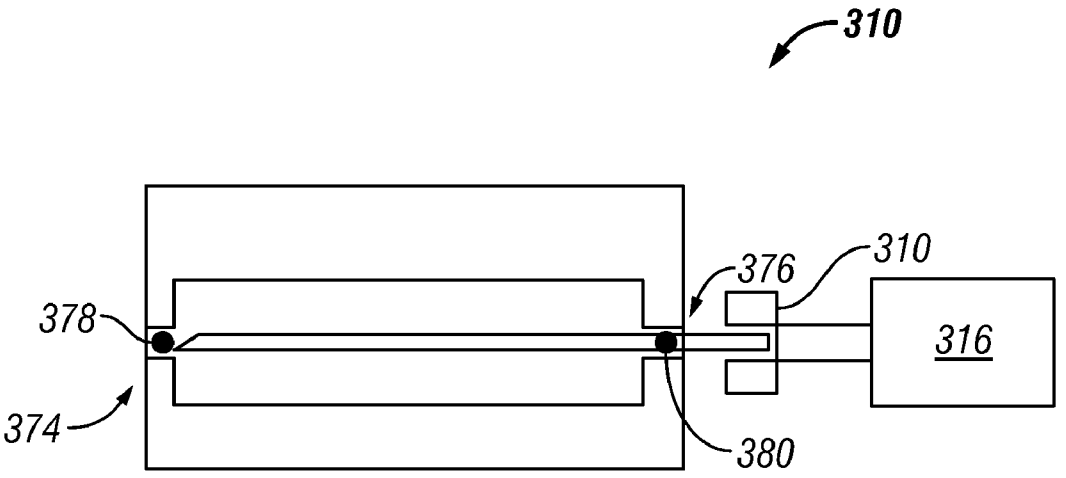


FIG. 31

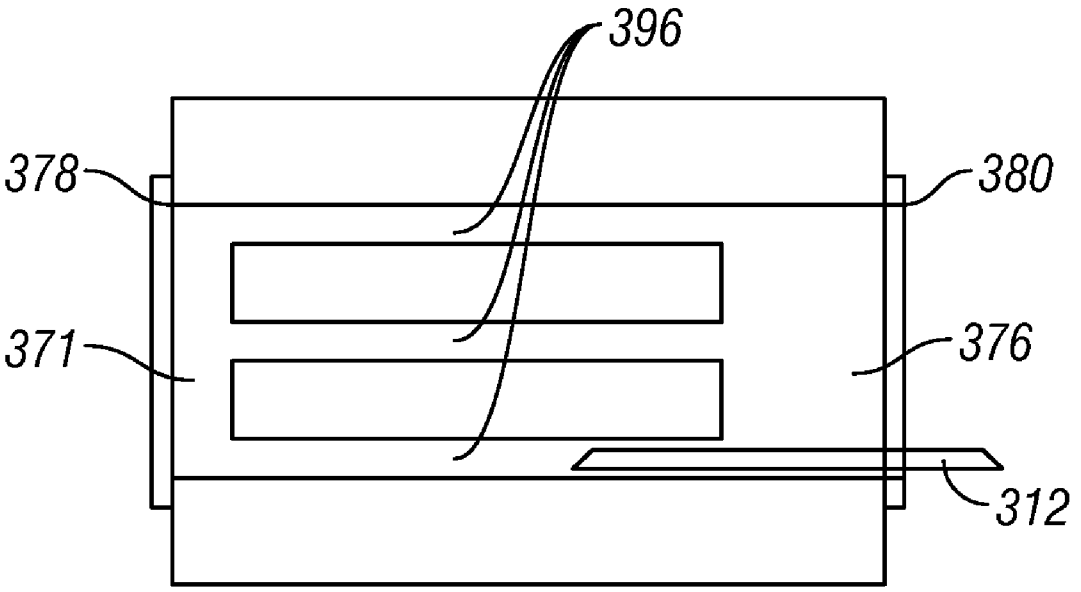


FIG. 32

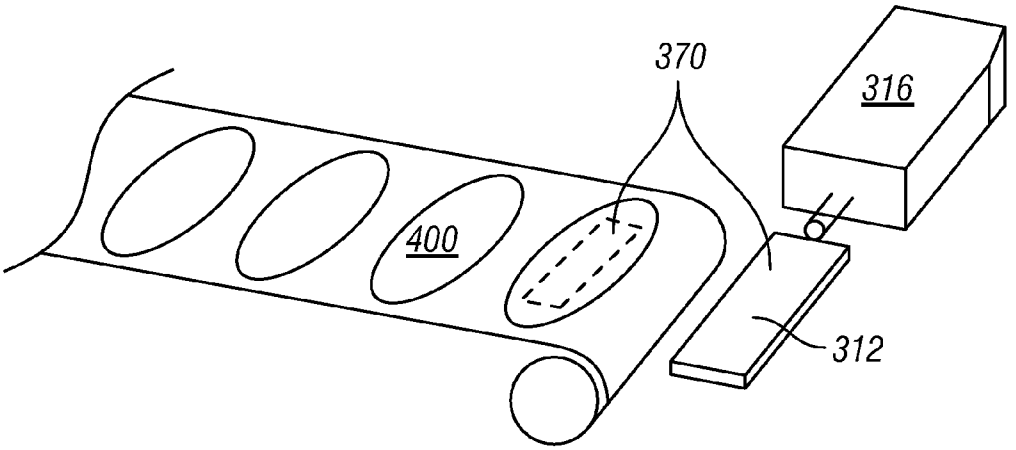


FIG. 33

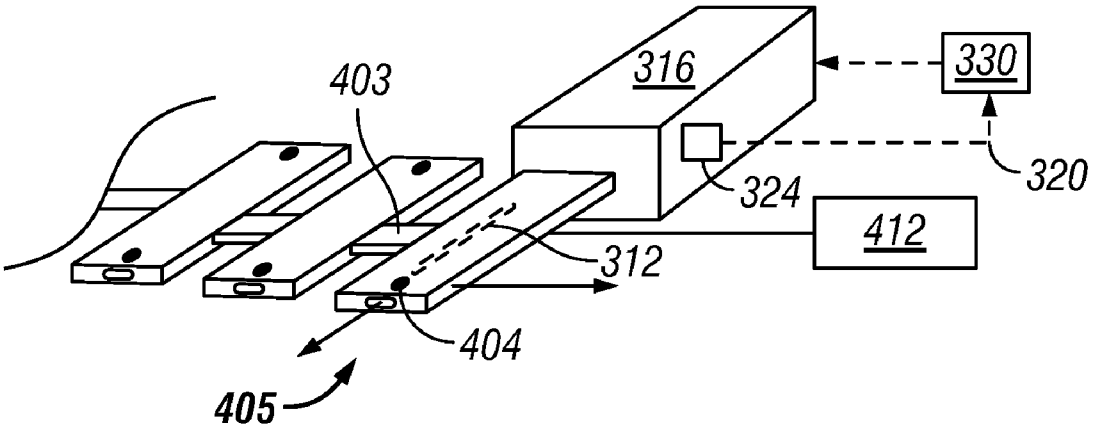


FIG. 34

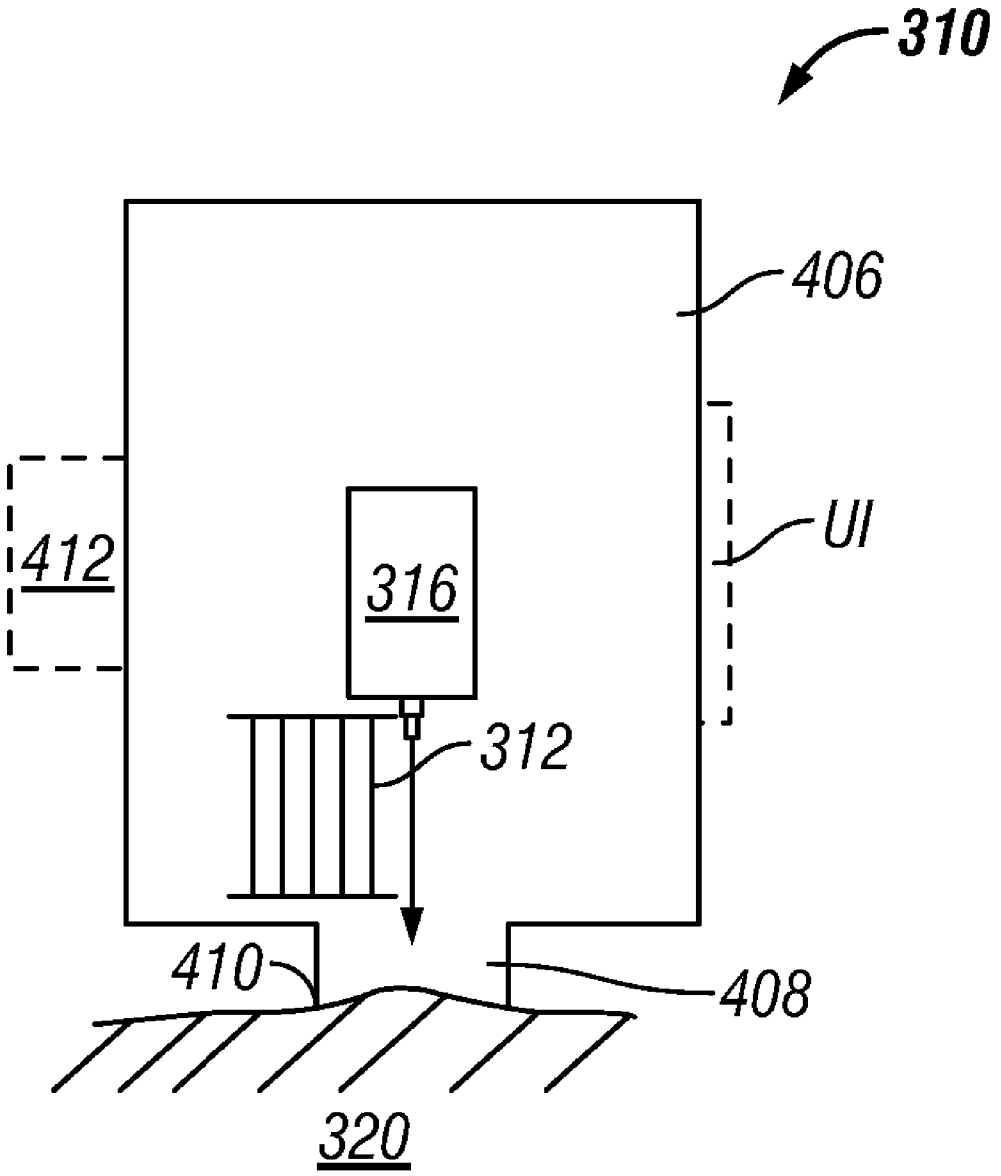


FIG. 35

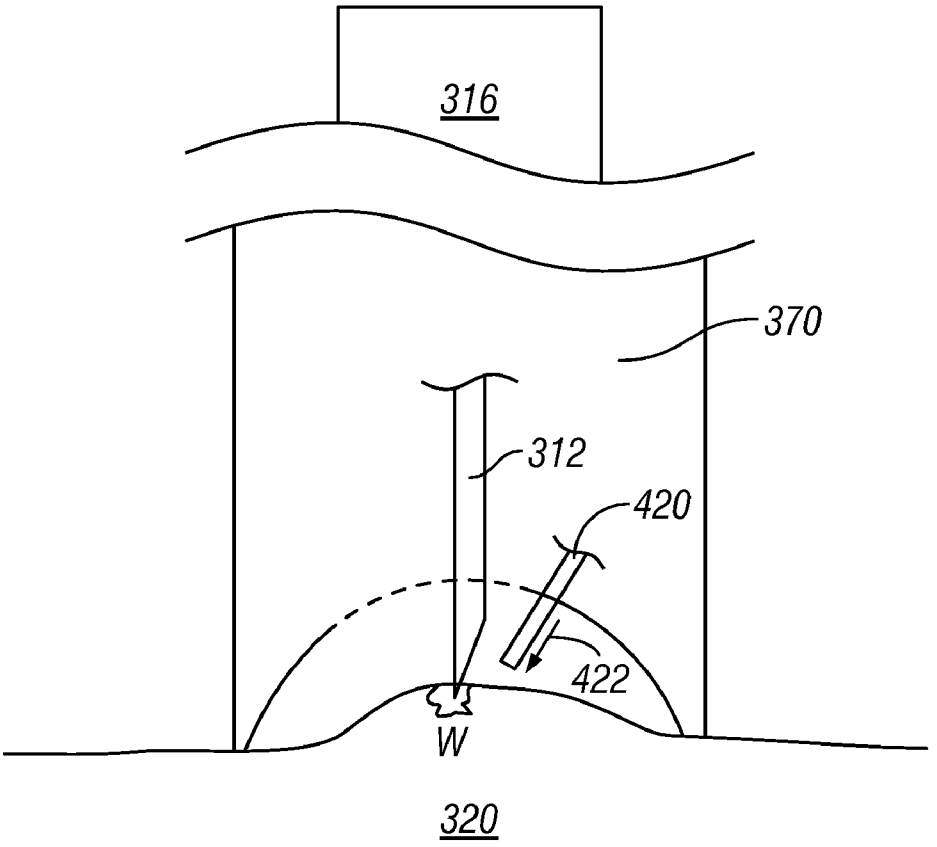


FIG. 36

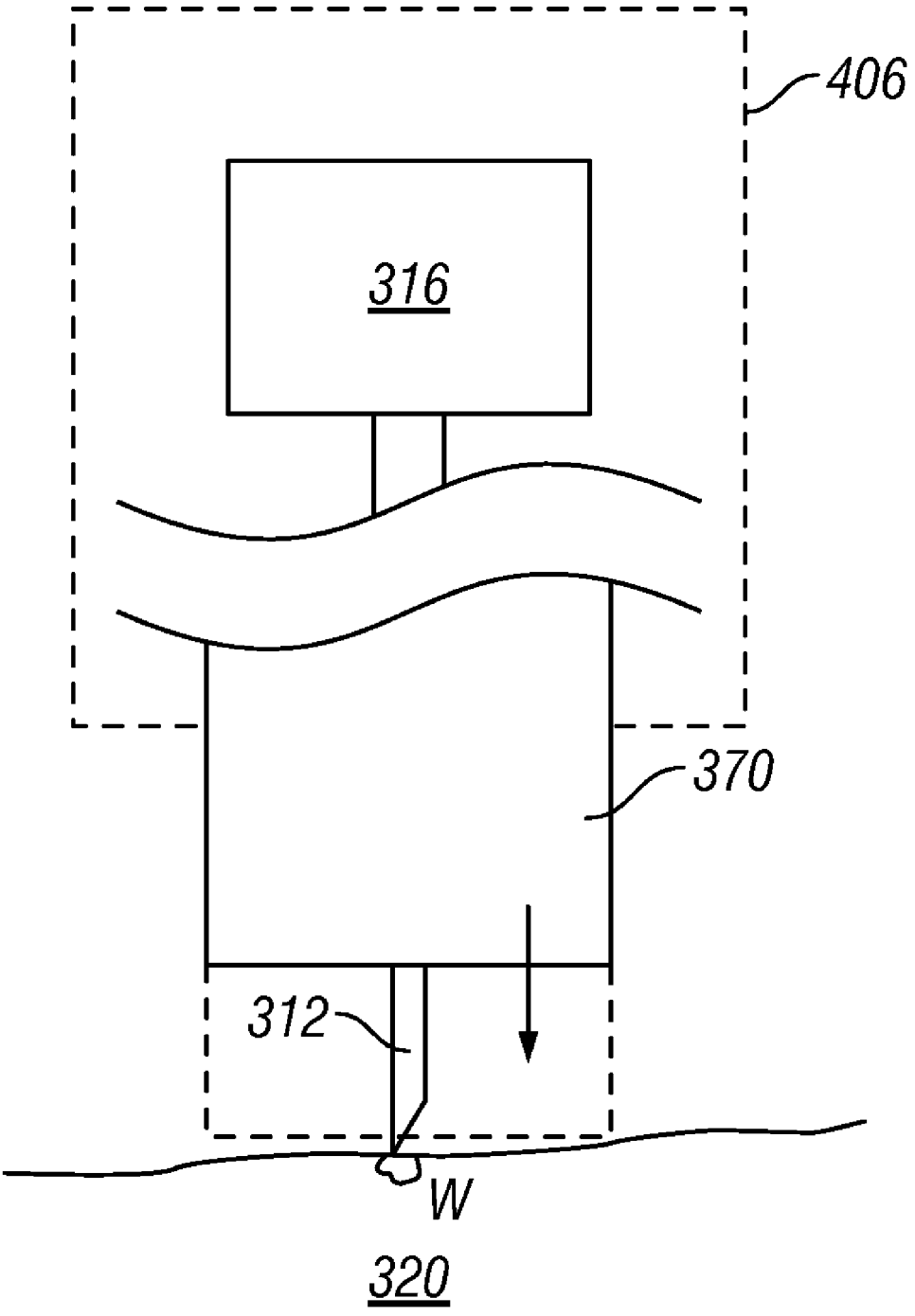


FIG. 37

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PENETRATING TISSUE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application is a divisional of U.S. Ser. No. 10/335,082, filed Dec. 31, 2002, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Ser. No. 10/127,395, filed Apr. 19, 2002. This application is also a continuation-in-part, and claims priority under 35 USC §120 to U.S. Ser. No. 10/237,261, filed Sep. 5, 2002. All applications listed above are fully incorporated herein by reference for all purposes.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Lancing devices are known in the medical health-care products industry for piercing the skin to produce blood for analysis. Typically, a drop of blood for this type of analysis is obtained by making a small incision in the fingertip, creating a small wound, which generates a small blood droplet on the surface of the skin.

[0003] Early methods of lancing included piercing or slicing the skin with a needle or razor. Current methods utilize lancing devices that contain a multitude of spring, cam and mass actuators to drive the lancet. These include cantilever springs, diaphragms, coil springs, as well as gravity plumbs used to drive the lancet. The device may be held against the skin and mechanically triggered to ballistically launch the lancet. Unfortunately, the pain associated with each lancing event using known technology discourages patients from testing. In addition to vibratory stimulation of the skin as the driver impacts the end of a launcher stop, known spring based devices have the possibility of harmonically oscillating against the patient tissue, causing multiple strikes due to recoil. This recoil and multiple strikes of the lancet against the patient is one major impediment to patient compliance with a structured glucose monitoring regime.

[0004] Another impediment to patient compliance is the lack of spontaneous blood flow generated by known lancing technology. In addition to the pain as discussed above, a patient may need more than one lancing event to obtain a blood sample since spontaneous blood generation is unreliable using known lancing technology. Thus the pain is multiplied by the number of tries it takes to successfully generate spontaneous blood flow. Different skin thickness may yield different results in terms of pain perception, blood yield and success rate of obtaining blood between different users of the lancing device. Known devices poorly account for these skin thickness variations.

[0005] A still further impediment to improved compliance with glucose monitoring are the many steps and hassle associated with each lancing event. Many diabetic patients that are insulin dependent may need to self-test for blood glucose levels five to six times daily. The large number of steps required in traditional methods of glucose testing, ranging from lancing, to milking of blood, applying blood to the test strip, and getting the measurements from the test strip, discourages many diabetic patients from testing their blood glucose levels as often as recommended. Older patients and those with deteriorating motor skills encounter difficulty loading lancets into launcher devices, transferring blood onto a test strip, or inserting thin test strips into slots on glucose measurement meters. Additionally, the wound channel left on the patient by known systems may also be of a size that discourages those who are active with their hands or who are worried about healing of those wound channels from testing their glucose levels.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] Accordingly, an object of the present invention is to provide improved tissue penetrating systems, and their methods of use.

[0007] Another object of the present invention is to provide tissue penetrating systems, and their methods of use, that provide reduced pain when penetrating a target tissue.

[0008] Yet another object of the present invention is to provide tissue penetrating systems, and their methods of use, that provide controlled depth of penetration.

[0009] Still a further object of the present invention is to provide tissue penetrating systems, and their methods of use, that provide controlled velocities into and out of target tissue.

[0010] A further object of the present invention is to provide tissue penetrating systems, and their methods of use, that provide stimulation to a target tissue.

[0011] Another object of the present invention is to provide tissue penetrating systems, and their methods of use, that apply a pressure to a target tissue.

[0012] Yet another object of the present invention is to provide tissue penetrating systems, and their methods of use, with penetrating members that remain in sterile environments prior to launch.

[0013] Still another object of the present invention is to provide tissue penetrating systems, and their methods of use, with penetrating members that remain in sterile environments prior to launch, and the penetrating members are not used to breach the sterile environment.

[0014] A further object of the present invention is to provide improved tissue penetrating systems, and their methods of use, that have user interfaces.

[0015] Another object of the present invention is to provide improved tissue penetrating systems, and their methods of use, that have human interfaces.

[0016] Yet another object of the present invention is to provide tissue penetrating systems, and their methods of use, that have low volume sample chambers.

[0017] Still another object of the present invention is to provide tissue penetrating systems, and their methods of use, that have sample chambers with volumes that do not exceed 1 μL.

[0018] Another object of the present invention is to provide tissue penetrating systems, and their methods of use, that have multiple penetrating members housed in a cartridge.

[0019] These and other objects of the present invention are achieved in a tissue penetration device including a penetrating member driver, a cartridge, and a plurality of penetrating members integrated with the cartridge. Each of a penetrating member is coupled to the penetrating member driver when

advanced along a path into a tissue target. A user interface is configured to relay at least one of, skin penetrating performance or a skin penetrating setting.

[0020] In another embodiment of the present invention, a tissue penetrating device includes a housing, a penetrating member driver, a cartridge; and a plurality of penetrating members integrated with the cartridge. Each of a penetrating member is coupled to the penetrating member driver when advanced along a path into a tissue target. A human interface provides at least one output.

[0021] In another embodiment of the present invention, a tissue penetrating system includes a plurality of penetrating members coupled to a penetrating member driver. A cartridge transport device is provided. A plurality of cartridges are included, each associated with a penetrating member. The cartridge transport device is configured to move each cartridge to a position aligning a penetrating member with the penetrating member driver to drive the penetrating member along a path into a target tissue site. A user interface is configured to relay at least one of, skin penetrating performance or a skin penetrating setting.

[0022] In another embodiment of the present invention, a tissue penetrating device includes a housing, a penetrating member driver, a cartridge and a plurality of penetrating members integrated with the cartridge. Each of a penetrating member is coupled to the penetrating member driver when advanced along a path into a tissue target. A human interface provides at least one output.

[0023] A further understanding of the nature and advantages of the invention will become apparent by reference to the remaining portions of the specification and drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0024] FIG. **1** illustrates an embodiment of a controllable force driver in the form of a cylindrical electric penetrating member driver using a coiled solenoid-type configuration.

[0025] FIG. **2**A illustrates a displacement over time profile of a penetrating member driven by a harmonic spring/mass system.

[0026] FIG. **2**B illustrates the velocity over time profile of a penetrating member driver by a harmonic spring/mass system.

[0027] FIG. **2**C illustrates a displacement over time profile of an embodiment of a controllable force driver.

[0028] FIG. **2**D illustrates a velocity over time profile of an embodiment of a controllable force driver.

[0029] FIG. **3** is a diagrammatic view illustrating a controlled feed-back loop.

[0030] FIG. **4** is a perspective view of a tissue penetration device having features of the invention.

[0031] FIG. **5** is an elevation view in partial longitudinal section of the tissue penetration device of FIG. **4**.

[0032] FIGS. **6**A-**6**C show a flowchart illustrating a penetrating member control method.

[0033] FIG. **7** is a diagrammatic view of a patient's finger and a penetrating member tip moving toward the skin of the finger.

[0034] FIG. **8** is a diagrammatic view of a patient's finger and the penetrating member tip making contact with the skin of a patient's finger.

[0035] FIG. **9** is a diagrammatic view of the penetrating member tip depressing the skin of a patient's finger.

[0036] FIG. **10** is a diagrammatic view of the penetrating member tip further depressing the skin of a patient's finger.

[0037] FIG. **11** is a diagrammatic view of the penetrating member tip penetrating the skin of a patient's finger.

[0038] FIG. **12** is a diagrammatic view of the penetrating member tip penetrating the skin of a patient's finger to a desired depth.

[0039] FIG. **13** is a diagrammatic view of the penetrating member tip withdrawing from the skin of a patient's finger.

[0040] FIGS. **14-18** illustrate a method of tissue penetration that may measure elastic recoil of the skin.

[0041] FIG. **19** is a perspective view in partial section of a tissue penetration sampling device with a cartridge of sampling modules.

[0042] FIG. **20** is a perspective view of a sampling module cartridge with the sampling modules arranged in a ring configuration.

[0043] FIG. **21** illustrate an embodiment of a cartridge for use in sampling having a sampling cartridge body and a penetrating member cartridge body.

[0044] FIG. **22**A shows a device for use on a tissue site having a plurality of penetrating members.

[0045] FIG. **22**B shows rear view of a device for use on a tissue site having a plurality of penetrating members.

[0046] FIG. **22**C shows a schematic of a device for use on a tissue site with a feedback loop and optionally a damper.

[0047] FIG. **23**A shows an embodiment of a device with a user interface.

[0048] FIG. **23**B shows an outer view of a device with a user interface.

[0049] FIG. **24** is a cut away view of a system for sampling body fluid.

[0050] FIG. **25** is an exploded view of a cartridge for use with a system for sampling body fluid.

[0051] FIG. **26** is an exploded view of a cartridge having multiple penetrating members for use with a system for sampling body fluid.

[0052] FIGS. **27-28** show cartridges for use with a system for sampling body fluid.

[0053] FIG. **29** shows a cutaway view of another embodiment of a system for sampling body fluid.

[0054] FIG. **30** shows the density associated with a cartridge according to the present invention.

[0055] FIG. **31** shows a cutaway view of another embodiment of a system for sampling body fluid.

[0056] FIG. **32** is a cut away view of a cartridge according to the present invention.

[0057] FIGS. **33-34** show views of a body sampling system using multiple cartridges.

[0058] FIG. **35** shows an embodiment of the present invention with a tissue stabilizing member.

[0059] FIG. **36** shows a cartridge according to the present invention with a tissue stabilizing member.

[0060] FIG. **37** shows a system according to the present invention with a moveable cartridge.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SPECIFIC EMBODIMENTS

[0061] The present invention provides a solution for body fluid sampling. Specifically, some embodiments of the present invention provides a penetrating member device for consistently creating a wound with spontaneous body fluid flow from a patient. The invention may be a multiple penetrating member device with an optional high density design. It may use penetrating members of smaller size than known penetrating members. The device may be used for multiple lancing events without having to remove a disposable from the device or for the user to handle sharps. The invention may provide improved sensing capabilities. At least some of these and other objectives described herein will be met by embodiments of the present invention.

[0062] It is to be understood that both the foregoing general description and the following detailed description are exemplary and explanatory only and are not restrictive of the invention, as claimed. It should be noted that, as used in the specification and the appended claims, the singular forms "a", "an" and "the" include plural referents unless the context clearly dictates otherwise. Thus, for example, reference to "a material" may include mixtures of materials, reference to "a chamber" may include multiple chambers, and the like. References cited herein are hereby incorporated by reference in their entirety, except to the extent that they conflict with teachings explicitly set forth in this specification.

[0063] In this specification and in the claims which follow, reference will be made to a number of terms which shall be defined to have the following meanings:

[0064] "Optional" or "optionally" means that the subsequently described circumstance may or may not occur, so that the description includes instances where the circumstance occurs and instances where it does not. For example, if a device optionally contains a feature for analyzing a blood sample, this means that the analysis feature may or may not be present, and, thus, the description includes structures wherein a device possesses the analysis feature and structures wherein the analysis feature is not present.

[0065] "Analyte detecting member" refers to any use, singly or in combination, of chemical test reagents and methods, electrical test circuits and methods, physical test components and methods, optical test components and methods, and biological test reagents and methods to yield information about a blood sample. Such methods are well known in the art and may be based on teachings of, e.g. Tietz Textbook of Clinical Chemistry, 3d Ed., Sec. V, pp. 776-78 (Burtis & Ashwood, Eds., W.B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1999); U.S. Pat. No. 5,997,817 to Chrismore et al. (Dec. 7, 1999); U.S. Pat. No. 5,059,394 to Phillips et al. (Oct. 22, 1991); U.S. Pat. No. 5,001,054 to Wagner et al. (Mar. 19, 1991); and U.S. Pat. No. 4,392,933 to Nakamura et al. (Jul. 12, 1983), the teachings of which are hereby incorporated by reference, as well as others. Analyte detecting member may include tests in the sample test chamber that test electrochemical properties of the blood, or they may include optical means for sensing optical properties of the blood (e.g. oxygen saturation level), or they may include biochemical reagents (e.g. antibodies) to sense properties (e.g. presence of antigens) of the blood. The analyte detecting member may comprise biosensing or reagent material that will react with an analyte in blood (e.g. glucose) or other body fluid so that an appropriate signal correlating with the presence of the analyte is generated and can be read by the reader apparatus. By way of example and not limitation, analyte detecting member may "associated with", "mounted within", or "coupled to" a chamber or other structure when the analyte detecting member participates in the function of providing an appropriate signal about the blood sample to the reader device. Analyte detecting member may also include nanowire analyte detecting members as described herein. Analyte detecting member may use potentiometric, coulometric, or other method useful for detection of analyte levels.

[0066] The present invention may be used with a variety of different penetrating member drivers. It is contemplated that these penetrating member drivers may be spring based, solenoid based, magnetic driver based, nanomuscle based, or based on any other mechanism useful in moving a penetrating member along a path into tissue. It should be noted that the present invention is not limited by the type of driver used with the penetrating member feed mechanism. One suitable penetrating member driver for use with the present invention is shown in FIG. **1**. This is an embodiment of a solenoid type electromagnetic driver that is capable of driving an iron core or slug mounted to the penetrating member assembly using a direct current (DC) power supply. The electromagnetic driver includes a driver coil pack that is divided into three separate coils along the path of the penetrating member, two end coils and a middle coil. Direct current is alternated to the coils to advance and retract the penetrating member. Although the driver coil pack is shown with three coils, any suitable number of coils may be used, for example, 4, 5, 6, 7 or more coils may be used.

[0067] Referring to the embodiment of FIG. **1**, the stationary iron housing **10** may contain the driver coil pack with a first coil **12** flanked by iron spacers **14** which concentrate the magnetic flux at the inner diameter creating magnetic poles. The inner insulating housing **16** isolates the penetrating member **18** and iron core **20** from the coils and provides a smooth, low friction guide surface. The penetrating member guide **22** further centers the penetrating member **18** and iron core **20**. The penetrating member **18** is protracted and retracted by alternating the current between the first coil **12**, the middle coil, and the third coil to attract the iron core **20**. Reversing the coil sequence and attracting the core and penetrating member back into the housing retracts the penetrating member. The penetrating member guide **22** also serves as a stop for the iron core **20** mounted to the penetrating member **18**.

[0068] As discussed above, tissue penetration devices which employ spring or cam driving methods have a symmetrical or nearly symmetrical actuation displacement and

velocity profiles on the advancement and retraction of the penetrating member as shown in FIGS. **2** and **3**. In most of the available lancet devices, once the launch is initiated, the stored energy determines the velocity profile until the energy is dissipated. Controlling impact, retraction velocity, and dwell time of the penetrating member within the tissue can be useful in order to achieve a high success rate while accommodating variations in skin properties and minimize pain. Advantages can be achieved by taking into account of the fact that tissue dwell time is related to the amount of skin deformation as the penetrating member tries to puncture the surface of the skin and variance in skin deformation from patient to patient based on skin hydration.

[**0069**] In this embodiment, the ability to control velocity and depth of penetration may be achieved by use of a controllable force driver where feedback is an integral part of driver control. Such drivers can control either metal or polymeric penetrating members or any other type of tissue penetration element. The dynamic control of such a driver is illustrated in FIG. **2**C which illustrates an embodiment of a controlled displacement profile and FIG. **2**D which illustrates an embodiment of a the controlled velocity profile. These are compared to FIGS. **2**A and **2**B, which illustrate embodiments of displacement and velocity profiles, respectively, of a harmonic spring/mass powered driver. Reduced pain can be achieved by using impact velocities of greater than about 2 m/s entry of a tissue penetrating element, such as a lancet, into tissue. Other suitable embodiments of the penetrating member driver are described in U.S. Ser. No. 10/127,395, filed Apr. 19, 2002 and previously incorporated herein.

[**0070**] FIG. **3** illustrates the operation of a feedback loop using a processor **60**. The processor **60** stores profiles **62** in non-volatile memory. A user inputs information **64** about the desired circumstances or parameters for a lancing event. The processor **60** selects a driver profile **62** from a set of alternative driver profiles that have been preprogrammed in the processor **60** based on typical or desired tissue penetration device performance determined through testing at the factory or as programmed in by the operator. The processor **60** may customize by either scaling or modifying the profile based on additional user input information **64**. Once the processor has chosen and customized the profile, the processor **60** is ready to modulate the power from the power supply **66** to the penetrating member driver **68** through an amplifier **70**. The processor **60** may measure the location of the penetrating member **72** using a position sensing mechanism **74** through an analog to digital converter **76** linear encoder or other such transducer. Examples of position sensing mechanisms have been described in the embodiments above and may be found in the specification for U.S. Ser. No. 10/127,395, filed Apr. 19, 2002 and previously incorporated herein. The processor **60** calculates the movement of the penetrating member by comparing the actual profile of the penetrating member to the predetermined profile. The processor **60** modulates the power to the penetrating member driver **68** through a signal generator **78**, which may control the amplifier **70** so that the actual velocity profile of the penetrating member does not exceed the predetermined profile by more than a preset error limit. The error limit is the accuracy in the control of the penetrating member.

[**0071**] After the lancing event, the processor **60** can allow the user to rank the results of the lancing event. The processor **60** stores these results and constructs a database **80** for the individual user. Using the database **79**, the processor **60** calculates the profile traits such as degree of painlessness, success rate, and blood volume for various profiles **62** depending on user input information **64** to optimize the profile to the individual user for subsequent lancing cycles. These profile traits depend on the characteristic phases of penetrating member advancement and retraction. The processor **60** uses these calculations to optimize profiles **62** for each user. In addition to user input information **64**, an internal clock allows storage in the database **79** of information such as the time of day to generate a time stamp for the lancing event and the time between lancing events to anticipate the user's diurnal needs. The database stores information and statistics for each user and each profile that particular user uses.

[**0072**] In addition to varying the profiles, the processor **60** can be used to calculate the appropriate penetrating member diameter and geometry suitable to realize the blood volume required by the user. For example, if the user requires about 1-5 microliter volume of blood, the processor **60** may select a 200 micron diameter penetrating member to achieve these results. For each class of lancet, both diameter and lancet tip geometry, is stored in the processor **60** to correspond with upper and lower limits of attainable blood volume based on the predetermined displacement and velocity profiles.

[**0073**] The lancing device is capable of prompting the user for information at the beginning and the end of the lancing event to more adequately suit the user. The goal is to either change to a different profile or modify an existing profile. Once the profile is set, the force driving the penetrating member is varied during advancement and retraction to follow the profile. The method of lancing using the lancing device comprises selecting a profile, lancing according to the selected profile, determining lancing profile traits for each characteristic phase of the lancing cycle, and optimizing profile traits for subsequent lancing events.

[**0074**] FIG. **4** illustrates an embodiment of a tissue penetration device, more specifically, a lancing device **80** that includes a controllable driver **179** coupled to a tissue penetration element. The lancing device **80** has a proximal end **81** and a distal end **82**. At the distal end **82** is the tissue penetration element in the form of a penetrating member **83**, which is coupled to an elongate coupler shaft **84** by a drive coupler **85**. The elongate coupler shaft **84** has a proximal end **86** and a distal end **87**. A driver coil pack **88** is disposed about the elongate coupler shaft **84** proximal of the penetrating member **83**. A position sensor **91** is disposed about a proximal portion **92** of the elongate coupler shaft **84** and an electrical conductor **94** electrically couples a processor **93** to the position sensor **91**. The elongate coupler shaft **84** driven by the driver coil pack **88** controlled by the position sensor **91** and processor **93** form the controllable driver, specifically, a controllable electromagnetic driver.

[**0075**] Referring to FIG. **5**, the lancing device **80** can be seen in more detail, in partial longitudinal section. The penetrating member **83** has a proximal end **95** and a distal end **96** with a sharpened point at the distal end **96** of the penetrating member **83** and a drive head **98** disposed at the proximal end **95** of the penetrating member **83**. A penetrat-

ing member shaft **201** is disposed between the drive head **98** and the sharpened point **97**. The penetrating member shaft **201** may be comprised of stainless steel, or any other suitable material or alloy and have a transverse dimension of about 0.1 to about 0.4 mm. The penetrating member shaft may have a length of about 3 mm to about 50 mm, specifically, about 15 mm to about 20 mm. The drive head **98** of the penetrating member **83** is an enlarged portion having a transverse dimension greater than a transverse dimension of the penetrating member shaft **201** distal of the drive head **98**. This configuration allows the drive head **98** to be mechanically captured by the drive coupler **85**. The drive head **98** may have a transverse dimension of about 0.5 to about 2 mm.

[**0076**] A magnetic member **102** is secured to the elongate coupler shaft **84** proximal of the drive coupler **85** on a distal portion **203** of the elongate coupler shaft **84**. The magnetic member **102** is a substantially cylindrical piece of magnetic material having an axial lumen **204** extending the length of the magnetic member **102**. The magnetic member **102** has an outer transverse dimension that allows the magnetic member **102** to slide easily within an axial lumen **105** of a low friction, possibly lubricious, polymer guide tube **105'** disposed within the driver coil pack **88**. The magnetic member **102** may have an outer transverse dimension of about 1.0 to about 5.0 mm, specifically, about 2.3 to about 2.5 mm. The magnetic member **102** may have a length of about 3.0 to about 5.0 mm, specifically, about 4.7 to about 4.9 mm. The magnetic member **102** can be made from a variety of magnetic materials including ferrous metals such as ferrous steel, iron, ferrite, or the like. The magnetic member **102** may be secured to the distal portion **203** of the elongate coupler shaft **84** by a variety of methods including adhesive or epoxy bonding, welding, crimping or any other suitable method.

[**0077**] Proximal of the magnetic member **102**, an optical encoder flag **206** is secured to the elongate coupler shaft **84**. The optical encoder flag **206** is configured to move within a slot **107** in the position sensor **91**. The slot **107** of the position sensor **91** is formed between a first body portion **108** and a second body portion **109** of the position sensor **91**. The slot **107** may have separation width of about 1.5 to about 2.0 mm. The optical encoder flag **206** can have a length of about 14 to about 18 mm, a width of about 3 to about 5 mm and a thickness of about 0.04 to about 0.06 mm.

[**0078**] The optical encoder flag **206** interacts with various optical beams generated by LEDs disposed on or in the position sensor body portions **108** and **109** in a predetermined manner. The interaction of the optical beams generated by the LEDs of the position sensor **91** generates a signal that indicates the longitudinal position of the optical flag **206** relative to the position sensor **91** with a substantially high degree of resolution. The resolution of the position sensor **91** may be about 200 to about 400 cycles per inch, specifically, about 350 to about 370 cycles per inch. The position sensor **91** may have a speed response time (position/time resolution) of 0 to about 120,000 Hz, where one dark and light stripe of the flag constitutes one Hertz, or cycle per second. The position of the optical encoder flag **206** relative to the magnetic member **102**, driver coil pack **88** and position sensor **91** is such that the optical encoder **91** can provide precise positional information about the penetrating member **83** over the entire length of the penetrating member's power stroke.

[**0079**] An optical encoder that is suitable for the position sensor **91** is a linear optical incremental encoder, model HEDS 9200, manufactured by Agilent Technologies. The model HEDS 9200 may have a length of about 20 to about 30 mm, a width of about 8 to about 12 mm, and a height of about 9 to about 11 mm. Although the position sensor **91** illustrated is a linear optical incremental encoder, other suitable position sensor embodiments could be used, provided they posses the requisite positional resolution and time response. The HEDS 9200 is a two channel device where the channels are 90 degrees out of phase with each other. This results in a resolution of four times the basic cycle of the flag. These quadrature outputs make it possible for the processor to determine the direction of penetrating member travel. Other suitable position sensors include capacitive encoders, analog reflective sensors, such as the reflective position sensor discussed above, and the like.

[**0080**] A coupler shaft guide **111** is disposed towards the proximal end **81** of the lancing device **80**. The guide **111** has a guide lumen **112** disposed in the guide **111** to slidingly accept the proximal portion **92** of the elongate coupler shaft **84**. The guide **111** keeps the elongate coupler shaft **84** centered horizontally and vertically in the slot **102** of the optical encoder **91**.

[**0081**] The driver coil pack **88**, position sensor **91** and coupler shaft guide **111** are all secured to a base **113**. The base **113** is longitudinally coextensive with the driver coil pack **88**, position sensor **91** and coupler shaft guide **111**. The base **113** can take the form of a rectangular piece of metal or polymer, or may be a more elaborate housing with recesses, which are configured to accept the various components of the lancing device **80**.

[**0082**] As discussed above, the magnetic member **102** is configured to slide within an axial lumen **105** of the driver coil pack **88**. The driver coil pack **88** includes a most distal first coil **114**, a second coil **115**, which is axially disposed between the first coil **114** and a third coil **116**, and a proximal-most fourth coil **117**. Each of the first coil **114**, second coil **115**, third coil **116** and fourth coil **117** has an axial lumen. The axial lumens of the first through fourth coils are configured to be coaxial with the axial lumens of the other coils and together form the axial lumen **105** of the driver coil pack **88** as a whole. Axially adjacent each of the coils **114-117** is a magnetic disk or washer **118** that augments completion of the magnetic circuit of the coils **114-117** during a lancing cycle of the device **80**. The magnetic washers **118** of the embodiment of FIG. **5** are made of ferrous steel but could be made of any other suitable magnetic material, such as iron or ferrite. The outer shell **89** of the driver coil pack **88** is also made of iron or steel to complete the magnetic path around the coils and between the washers **118**. The magnetic washers **118** have an outer diameter commensurate with an outer diameter of the driver coil pack **88** of about 4.0 to about 8.0 mm. The magnetic washers **118** have an axial thickness of about 0.05, to about 0.4 mm, specifically, about 0.15 to about 0.25 mm.

[**0083**] Wrapping or winding an elongate electrical conductor **121** about an axial lumen until a sufficient number of windings have been achieved forms the coils **114-117**. The

elongate electrical conductor **121** is generally an insulated solid copper wire with a small outer transverse dimension of about 0.06 mm to about 0.88 mm, specifically, about 0.3 mm to about 0.5 mm. In one embodiment, 32 gauge copper wire is used for the coils **114-117**. The number of windings for each of the coils **114-117** of the driver pack **88** may vary with the size of the coil, but for some embodiments each coil **114-117** may have about 30 to about 80 turns, specifically, about 50 to about 60 turns. Each coil **114-117** can have an axial length of about 1.0 to about 3.0 mm, specifically, about 1.8 to about 2.0 mm. Each coil **114-117** can have an outer transverse dimension or diameter of about 4.0, to about 2.0 mm, specifically, about 9.0 to about 12.0 mm. The axial lumen **105** can have a transverse dimension of about 1.0 to about 3.0 mm.

[**0084**] It may be advantageous in some driver coil **88** embodiments to replace one or more of the coils with permanent magnets, which produce a magnetic field similar to that of the coils when the coils are activated. In particular, it may be desirable in some embodiments to replace the second coil **115**, the third coil **116** or both with permanent magnets. In addition, it may be advantageous to position a permanent magnet at or near the proximal end of the coil driver pack in order to provide fixed magnet zeroing function for the magnetic member (Adams magnetic Products 23A0002 flexible magnet material (800) 747-7543).

[**0085**] A permanent bar magnet **119** disposed on the proximal end of the driver coil pack **88**. As shown in FIG. **5**, the bar magnet **119** is arranged so as to have one end disposed adjacent the travel path of the magnetic member **102** and has a polarity configured so as to attract the magnetic member **102** in a centered position with respect to the bar magnet **119**. Note that the polymer guide tube **105'** can be configured to extend proximally to insulate the inward radial surface of the bar magnet **119** from an outer surface of the magnetic member **102**. This arrangement allows the magnetic member **119** and thus the elongate coupler shaft **84** to be attracted to and held in a zero point or rest position without the consumption of electrical energy from the power supply **125**.

[**0086**] Having a fixed zero or start point for the elongate coupler shaft **84** and penetrating member **83** may be useful to properly controlling the depth of penetration of the penetrating member **83** as well as other lancing parameters. This can be because some methods of depth penetration control for a controllable driver measure the acceleration and displacement of the elongate coupler shaft **84** and penetrating member **83** from a known start position. If the distance of the penetrating member tip **96** from the target tissue is known, acceleration and displacement of the penetrating member is known and the start position of the penetrating member is know, the time and position of tissue contact and depth of penetration can be determined by the processor **93**.

[**0087**] Any number of configurations for a magnetic bar **119** can be used for the purposes discussed above. In particular, a second permanent bar magnet (not shown) could be added to the proximal end of the driver coil pack **88** with the magnetic fields of the two bar magnets configured to complement each other. In addition, a disc magnet **119'** could be used as illustrated in FIG. **23**(*a*). The disc magnet is shown disposed at the proximal end of the driver coiled pack **88** with a polymer non-magnetic disc disposed between the proximal-most coil **117** and the disc magnet and positions the disc magnet away from the proximal end of the proximal-most coil **117**. The polymer non-magnetic disc spacer is used so that the magnetic member **102** can be centered in a zero or start position slightly proximal of the proximal-most coil **117** of the driver coil pack **88**. This allows the magnetic member to be attracted by the proximal-most coil **117** at the initiation of the lancing cycle instead of being passive in the forward drive portion of the lancing cycle.

[**0088**] An inner lumen of the polymer non-magnetic disc can be configured to allow the magnetic member **102** to pass axially there through while an inner lumen of the disc magnet can be configured to allow the elongate coupler shaft **84** to pass through but not large enough for the magnetic member **102** to pass through. This results in the magnetic member **102** being attracted to the disc magnet and coming to rest with the proximal surface of the magnetic member **102** against a distal surface of the disc magnet. This arrangement provides for a positive and repeatable stop for the magnetic member, and hence the penetrating member. A similar configuration could also be used for the bar magnet **119** discussed above.

[**0089**] Typically, when the electrical current in the coils **114-117** of the driver coil pack **88** is off, a magnetic member **102** made of soft iron is attracted to the bar magnet **119** or the disc magnet. The magnetic field of the driver coil pack **88** and the bar magnet **119** or disc magnet, or any other suitable magnet, can be configured such that when the electrical current in the coils **114-117** is turned on, the leakage magnetic field from the coils **114-117** has the same polarity as the bar magnet **119** or disc magnet. This results in a magnetic force that repels the magnetic member **102** from the bar magnet **119** or disc magnet and attracts the magnetic member **102** to the activated coils **114-117**. For this configuration, the bar magnet **119** or disc magnet thus act to facilitate acceleration of the magnetic member **102** as opposed to working against the acceleration.

[**0090**] Electrical conductors **122** couple the driver coil pack **88** with the processor **93** which can be configured or programmed to control the current flow in the coils **114-117** of the driver coil pack **88** based on position feedback from the position sensor **91**, which is coupled to the processor **93** by electrical conductors **94**. A power source **125** is electrically coupled to the processor **93** and provides electrical power to operate the processor **93** and power the coil driver pack **88**. The power source **125** may be one or more batteries that provide direct current power to the **93** processor.

[**0091**] Referring to FIGS. **29**A-**29**C, a flow diagram is shown that describes the operations performed by the processor **93** in controlling the penetrating member **83** of the lancing device **80** discussed above during an operating cycle. FIGS. **30-36** illustrate the interaction of the penetrating member **83** and skin **133** of the patient's finger **134** during an operation cycle of the penetrating member device **83**. The processor **93** operates under control of programming steps that are stored in an associated memory. When the programming steps are executed, the processor **93** performs operations as described herein. Thus, the programming steps implement the functionality of the operations described with respect to the flow diagram of FIG. **29**. The processor **93** can

receive the programming steps from a program product stored in recordable media, including a direct access program product storage device such as a hard drive or flash ROM, a removable program product storage device such as a floppy disk, or in any other manner known to those of skill in the art. The processor **93** can also download the programming steps through a network connection or serial connection.

[**0092**] In the first operation, represented by the flow diagram box numbered **245** in FIG. **6**A, the processor **93** initializes values that it stores in memory relating to control of the penetrating member, such as variables that it uses to keep track of the controllable driver **179** during movement. For example, the processor may set a clock value to zero and a penetrating member position value to zero or to some other initial value. The processor **93** may also cause power to be removed from the coil pack **88** for a period of time, such as for about 10 ms, to allow any residual flux to dissipate from the coils.

[**0093**] In the initialization operation, the processor **93** also causes the penetrating member to assume an initial stationary position. When in the initial stationary position, the penetrating member **83** is typically fully retracted such that the magnetic member **102** is positioned substantially adjacent the fourth coil **117** of the driver coil pack **88**, shown in FIG. **5** above. The processor **93** can move the penetrating member **83** to the initial stationary position by pulsing an electrical current to the fourth coil **117** to thereby attract the magnetic member **102** on the penetrating member **83** to the fourth coil **117**. Alternatively, the magnetic member can be positioned in the initial stationary position by virtue of a permanent magnet, such as bar magnet **119**, disc magnet **119'** or any other suitable magnet as discussed above with regard to the tissue penetration device illustrated in FIGS. **20** and **21**.

[**0094**] In the next operation, represented by the flow diagram box numbered **247**, the processor **93** energizes one or more of the coils in the coil pack **88**. This should cause the penetrating member **83** to begin to move (i.e., achieve a non-zero speed) toward the skin target **133**. The processor **93** then determines whether or not the penetrating member is indeed moving. The processor **93** can determine whether the penetrating member **83** is moving by monitoring the position of the penetrating member **83** to determine whether the position changes over time. The processor **93** can monitor the position of the penetrating member **83** by keeping track of the position of the optical encoder flag **106** secured to the elongate coupler shaft **84** wherein the encoder **91** produces a signal coupled to the processor **93** that indicates the spatial position of the penetrating member **83**.

[**0095**] If the processor **93** determines (via timeout without motion events) that the penetrating member **83** is not moving, then the process proceeds to the operation, where the processor deems that an error condition is present. This means that some error in the system is causing the penetrating member **83** not to move. The error may be mechanical, electrical, or software related. For example, the penetrating member **83** may be stuck in the stationary position because something is impeding its movement.

[**0096**] If the processor **93** determines that the penetrating member **83** is indeed moving (a "Yes" result from the decision box numbered **249**), then the process proceeds to the operation represented by the flow diagram box numbered **257**. In this operation, the processor **93** causes the penetrating member **83** to continue to accelerate and launch toward the skin target **133**, as indicated by the arrow **135** in FIG. **7**. The processor **93** can achieve acceleration of the penetrating member **83** by sending an electrical current to an appropriate coil **114-117** such that the coil **114-117** exerts an attractive magnetic launching force on the magnetic member **102** and causes the magnetic member **102** and the penetrating member **83** coupled thereto to move in a desired direction. For example, the processor **93** can cause an electrical current to be sent to the third coil **116** so that the third coil **116** attracts the magnetic member **102** and causes the magnetic member **102** to move from a position adjacent the fourth coil **117** toward the third coil **116**. The processor preferably determines which coil **114-117** should be used to attract the magnetic member **102** based on the position of the magnetic member **102** relative to the coils **114-117**. In this manner, the processor **93** provides a controlled force to the penetrating member that controls the movement of the penetrating member.

[**0097**] During this operation, the processor **93** periodically or continually monitors the position and/or velocity of the penetrating member **83**. In keeping track of the velocity and position of the penetrating member **83** as the penetrating member **83** moves towards the patient's skin **133** or other tissue, the processor **93** also monitors and adjusts the electrical current to the coils **114-117**. In some embodiments, the processor **93** applies current to an appropriate coil **114-117** such that the penetrating member **83** continues to move according to a desired direction and acceleration. In the instant case, the processor **93** applies current to the appropriate coil **114-117** that will cause the penetrating member **83** to continue to move in the direction of the patient's skin **133** or other tissue to be penetrated.

[**0098**] The processor **93** may successively transition the current between coils **114-117** so that as the magnetic member **102** moves past a particular coil **114-117**, the processor **93** then shuts off current to that coil **114-117** and then applies current to another coil **114-117** that will attract the magnetic member **102** and cause the magnetic member **102** to continue to move in the desired direction. In transitioning current between the coils **114-117**, the processor **93** can take into account various factors, including the speed of the penetrating member **83**, the position of the penetrating member **83** relative to the coils **114-117**, the number of coils **114-117**, and the level of current to be applied to the coils **114-117** to achieve a desired speed or acceleration.

[**0099**] In the next operation, the processor **93** determines whether the cutting or distal end tip **96** of the penetrating member **83** has contacted the patient's skin **133**, as shown in FIG. **8** and in FIG. **6**B. The processor **93** may determine whether the penetrating member **83** has made contact with the target tissue **133** by a variety of methods, including some that rely on parameters which are measured prior to initiation of a lancing cycle and other methods that are adaptable to use during a lancing cycle without any predetermined parameters.

[**0100**] In one embodiment, the processor **93** determines that the skin has been contacted when the end tip **96** of the penetrating member **83** has moved a predetermined distance with respect to its initial position. If the distance from the tip

261 of the penetrating member 83 to the target tissue 133 is known prior to initiation of penetrating member 83 movement, the initial position of the penetrating member 83 is fixed and known, and the movement and position of the penetrating member 83 can be accurately measured during a lancing cycle, then the position and time of penetrating member contact can be determined.

[0101] This method requires an accurate measurement of the distance between the penetrating member tip 96 and the patient's skin 133 when the penetrating member 83 is in the zero time or initial position. This can be accomplished in a number of ways. One way is to control all of the mechanical parameters that influence the distance from the penetrating member tip 96 to the patient's tissue or a surface of the lancing device 80 that will contact the patient's skin 133. This could include the start position of the magnetic member 102, magnetic path tolerance, magnetic member 102 dimensions, driver coil pack 88 location within the lancing device 80 as a whole, length of the elongate coupling shaft 84, placement of the magnetic member 102 on the elongate coupling shaft 84, length of the penetrating member 83 etc.

[0102] If all these parameters, as well as others can be suitably controlled in manufacturing with a tolerance stack-up that is acceptable, then the distance from the penetrating member tip 96 to the target tissue 133 can be determined at the time of manufacture of the lancing device 80. The distance could then be programmed into the memory of the processor 93. If an adjustable feature is added to the lancing device 80, such as an adjustable length elongate coupling shaft 84, this can accommodate variations in all of the parameters noted above, except length of the penetrating member 83. An electronic alternative to this mechanical approach would be to calibrate a stored memory contact point into the memory of the processor 93 during manufacture based on the mechanical parameters described above.

[0103] In another embodiment, moving the penetrating member tip 96 to the target tissue 133 very slowly and gently touching the skin 133 prior to actuation can accomplish the distance from the penetrating member tip 96 to the tissue 133. The position sensor can accurately measure the distance from the initialization point to the point of contact, where the resistance to advancement of the penetrating member 83 stops the penetrating member movement. The penetrating member 83 is then retracted to the initialization point having measured the distance to the target tissue 133 without creating any discomfort to the user.

[0104] In another embodiment, the processor 93 may use software to determine whether the penetrating member 83 has made contact with the patient's skin 133 by measuring for a sudden reduction in velocity of the penetrating member 83 due to friction or resistance imposed on the penetrating member 83 by the patient's skin 133. The optical encoder 91 measures displacement of the penetrating member 83. The position output data provides input to the interrupt input of the processor 93. The processor 93 also has a timer capable of measuring the time between interrupts. The distance between interrupts is known for the optical encoder 91, so the velocity of the penetrating member 83 can be calculated by dividing the distance between interrupts by the time between the interrupts.

[0105] This method requires that velocity losses to the penetrating member 83 and elongate coupler 84 assembly due to friction are known to an acceptable level so that these velocity losses and resulting deceleration can be accounted for when establishing a deceleration threshold above which contact between penetrating member tip 96 and target tissue 133 will be presumed. This same concept can be implemented in many ways. For example, rather than monitoring the velocity of the penetrating member 83, if the processor 93 is controlling the penetrating member driver in order to maintain a fixed velocity, the power to the driver 88 could be monitored. If an amount of power above a predetermined threshold is required in order to maintain a constant velocity, then contact between the tip of the penetrating member 96 and the skin 133 could be presumed.

[0106] In yet another embodiment, the processor 93 determines skin 133 contact by the penetrating member 83 by detection of an acoustic signal produced by the tip 96 of the penetrating member 83 as it strikes the patient's skin 133. Detection of the acoustic signal can be measured by an acoustic detector 136 placed in contact with the patient's skin 133 adjacent a penetrating member penetration site 137, as shown in FIG. 8. Suitable acoustic detectors 136 include piezo electric transducers, microphones and the like. The acoustic detector 136 transmits an electrical signal generated by the acoustic signal to the processor 93 via electrical conductors 138. In another embodiment, contact of the penetrating member 83 with the patient's skin 133 can be determined by measurement of electrical continuity in a circuit that includes the penetrating member 83, the patient's finger 134 and an electrical contact pad 240 that is disposed on the patient's skin 133 adjacent the contact site 137 of the penetrating member 83, as shown in FIG. 8. In this embodiment, as soon as the penetrating member 83 contacts the patient's skin 133, the circuit 139 is completed and current flows through the circuit 139. Completion of the circuit 139 can then be detected by the processor 93 to confirm skin 133 contact by the penetrating member 83.

[0107] If the penetrating member 83 has not contacted the target skin 133, then the process proceeds to a timeout operation, in FIG. 6B. In the timeout operation, the processor 93 waits a predetermined time period. If the timeout period has not yet elapsed, then the processor continues to monitor whether the penetrating member has contacted the target skin 133. The processor 93 preferably continues to monitor the position and speed of the penetrating member 83, as well as the electrical current to the appropriate coil 114-117 to maintain the desired penetrating member 83 movement.

[0108] If the timeout period elapses without the penetrating member 83 contacting the skin, then it is deemed that the penetrating member 83 will not contact the skin and the process proceeds to a withdraw phase, where the penetrating member is withdrawn away from the skin 133, as discussed more fully below. The penetrating member 83 may not have contacted the target skin 133 for a variety of reasons, such as if the patient removed the skin 133 from the lancing device or if something obstructed the penetrating member 83 prior to it contacting the skin.

[0109] The processor 93 may also proceed to the withdraw phase prior to skin contact for other reasons. For example, at some point after initiation of movement of the penetrating member 83, the processor 93 may determine that the forward acceleration of the penetrating member 83 towards the

patient's skin **133** should be stopped or that current to all coils **114-117** should be shut down. This can occur, for example, if it is determined that the penetrating member **83** has achieved sufficient forward velocity, but has not yet contacted the skin **133**. In one embodiment, the average penetration velocity of the penetrating member **83** from the point of contact with the skin to the point of maximum penetration may be about 2.0 to about 10.0 m/s, specifically, about 3.8 to about 4.2 m/s. In another embodiment, the average penetration velocity of the penetrating member may be from about 2 to about 8 meters per second, specifically, about 2 to about 4 m/s.

[**0110**] The processor **93** can also proceed to the withdraw phase if it is determined that the penetrating member **83** has fully extended to the end of the power stroke of the operation cycle of lancing procedure. In other words, the process may proceed to withdraw phase when an axial center **141** of the magnetic member **102** has moved distal of an axial center **142** of the first coil **114** as show in FIG. **5**. In this situation, any continued power to any of the coils **114-117** of the driver coil pack **88** serves to decelerate the magnetic member **102** and thus the penetrating member **83**. In this regard, the processor **93** considers the length of the penetrating member **83** (which can be stored in memory) the position of the penetrating member **83** relative to the magnetic member **102**, as well as the distance that the penetrating member **83** has traveled.

[**0111**] With reference again to FIG. **6**B, if the processor **93** determines that the penetrating member **83** has contacted the skin **133**, then the processor **93** can adjust the speed of the penetrating member **83** or the power delivered to the penetrating member **83** for skin penetration to overcome any frictional forces on the penetrating member **83** in order to maintain a desired penetration velocity of the penetrating member. The flow diagram box numbered **167** represents this.

[**0112**] As the velocity of the penetrating member **83** is maintained after contact with the skin **133**, the distal tip **96** of the penetrating member **83** will first begin to depress or tent the contacted skin **137** and the skin **133** adjacent the penetrating member **83** to form a tented portion **243** as shown in FIG. **9** and further shown in FIG. **10**. As the penetrating member **83** continues to move in a distal direction or be driven in a distal direction against the patient's skin **133**, the penetrating member **83** will eventually begin to penetrate the skin **133**, as shown in FIG. **11**. Once penetration of the skin **133** begins, the static force at the distal tip **96** of the penetrating member **83** from the skin **133** will become a dynamic cutting force, which is generally less than the static tip force. As a result in the reduction of force on the distal tip **96** of the penetrating member **83** upon initiation of cutting, the tented portion **243** of the skin **133** adjacent the distal tip **96** of the penetrating member **83** which had been depressed as shown in FIGS. **32** and **24** will spring back as shown in FIG. **11**.

[**0113**] In the next operation, represented by the decision box numbered **171** in FIG. **6**B, the processor **93** determines whether the distal end **96** of the penetrating member **83** has reached a brake depth. The brake depth is the skin penetration depth for which the processor **93** determines that deceleration of the penetrating member **83** is to be initiated in order to achieve a desired final penetration depth **144** of the penetrating member **83** as show in FIG. **12**. The brake depth may be pre-determined and programmed into the processor's memory, or the processor **93** may dynamically determine the brake depth during the actuation. The amount of penetration of the penetrating member **83** in the skin **133** of the patient may be measured during the operation cycle of the penetrating member device **80**. In addition, as discussed above, the penetration depth suitable for successfully obtaining a useable sample can depend on the amount of tenting of the skin **133** during the lancing cycle. The amount of tenting of the patient's skin **133** can in turn depend on the tissue characteristics of the patient such as elasticity, hydration etc. A method for determining these characteristics is discussed below with regard to skin **133** tenting measurements during the lancing cycle and illustrated in FIGS. **37-41**.

[**0114**] Penetration measurement can be carried out by a variety of methods that are not dependent on measurement of tenting of the patient's skin. In one embodiment, the penetration depth of the penetrating member **83** in the patient's skin **133** is measured by monitoring the amount of capacitance between the penetrating member **83** and the patient's skin **133**. In this embodiment, a circuit includes the penetrating member **83**, the patient's finger **134**, the processor **93** and electrical conductors connecting these elements. As the penetrating member **83** penetrates the patient's skin **133**, the greater the amount of penetration, the greater the surface contact area between the penetrating member **83** and the patient's skin **133**. As the contact area increases, so does the capacitance between the skin **133** and the penetrating member **83**. The increased capacitance can be easily measured by the processor **93** using methods known in the art and penetration depth can then be correlated to the amount of capacitance. The same method can be used by measuring the electrical resistance between the penetrating member **83** and the patient's skin.

[**0115**] If the brake depth has not yet been reached, then a "No" results from the decision box **171** and the process proceeds to the timeout operation represented by the flow diagram box numbered **173**. In the timeout operation, the processor **93** waits a predetermined time period. If the timeout period has not yet elapsed (a "No" outcome from the decision box **173**), then the processor continues to monitor whether the brake depth has been reached. If the timeout period elapses without the penetrating member **83** achieving the brake depth (a "Yes" output from the decision box **173**), then the processor **93** deems that the penetrating member **83** will not reach the brake depth and the process proceeds to the withdraw phase, which is discussed more fully below. This may occur, for example, if the penetrating member **83** is stuck at a certain depth.

[**0116**] With reference again to the decision box numbered **171** in FIG. **6**B, if the penetrating member does reach the brake depth (a "Yes" result), then the process proceeds to the operation represented by the flow diagram box numbered **275**. In this operation, the processor **93** causes a braking force to be applied to the penetrating member to thereby reduce the speed of the penetrating member **83** to achieve a desired amount of final skin penetration depth **144**, as shown in FIG. **26**. Note that FIGS. **32** and **33** illustrate the penetrating member making contact with the patient's skin and deforming or depressing the skin prior to any substantial penetration of the skin. The speed of the penetrating member **83** is preferably reduced to a value below a desired threshold

and is ultimately reduced to zero. The processor **93** can reduce the speed of the penetrating member **83** by causing a current to be sent to a **114-117** coil that will exert an attractive braking force on the magnetic member **102** in a proximal direction away from the patient's tissue or skin **133**, as indicated by the arrow **190** in FIG. **13**. Such a negative force reduces the forward or distally oriented speed of the penetrating member **83**. The processor **93** can determine which coil **114-117** to energize based upon the position of the magnetic member **102** with respect to the coils **114-117** of the driver coil pack **88**, as indicated by the position sensor **91**.

[**0117**] In the next operation, the process proceeds to the withdraw phase, as represented by the flow diagram box numbered **177**. The withdraw phase begins with the operation represented by the flow diagram box numbered **178** in FIG. **6**C. Here, the processor **93** allows the penetrating member **83** to settle at a position of maximum skin penetration **144**, as shown in FIG. **12**. In this regard, the processor **93** waits until any motion in the penetrating member **83** (due to vibration from impact and spring energy stored in the skin, etc.) has stopped by monitoring changes in position of the penetrating member **83**. The processor **93** preferably waits until several milliseconds (ms), such as on the order of about 8 ms, have passed with no changes in position of the penetrating member **83**. This is an indication that movement of the penetrating member **83** has ceased entirely. In some embodiments, the penetrating member may be allowed to settle for about 1 to about 2000 milliseconds, specifically, about 50 to about 200 milliseconds. For other embodiments, the settling time may be about 1 to about 200 milliseconds.

[**0118**] It is at this stage of the lancing cycle that a software method can be used to measure the amount of tenting of the patient's skin **133** and thus determine the skin **133** characteristics such as elasticity, hydration and others. Referring to FIGS. **37-41**, a penetrating member **83** is illustrated in various phases of a lancing cycle with target tissue **133**. FIG. **14** shows tip **96** of penetrating member **83** making initial contact with the skin **133** at the point of initial impact.

[**0119**] FIG. **15** illustrates an enlarged view of the penetrating member **83** making initial contact with the tissue **133** shown in FIG. **14**. In FIG. **16**, the penetrating member tip **96** has depressed or tented the skin **133** prior to penetration over a distance of X, as indicated by the arrow labeled X in FIG. **16**. In FIG. **17**, the penetrating member **83** has reached the full length of the cutting power stroke and is at maximum displacement. In this position, the penetrating member tip **96** has penetrated the tissue **133** a distance of Y, as indicated by the arrow labeled Y in FIG. **16**. As can be seen from comparing FIG. **15** with FIG. **17**, the penetrating member tip **96** was displaced a total distance of X plus Y from the time initial contact with the skin **133** was made to the time the penetrating member tip **96** reached its maximum extension as shown in FIG. **17**. However, the penetrating member tip **96** has only penetrated the skin **133** a distance Y because of the tenting phenomenon.

[**0120**] At the end of the power stroke of the penetrating member **83**, as discussed above with regard to box **179** of FIG. **6**C, the processor **93** allows the penetrating member to settle for about 8 msec. It is during this settling time that the skin **133** rebounds or relaxes back to approximately its original configuration prior to contact by the penetrating member **83** as shown in FIG. **18**. The penetrating member tip **96** is still buried in the skin to a depth of Y, as shown in FIG. **18**, however the elastic recoil of the tissue has displaced the penetrating member rearward or retrograde to the point of inelastic tenting that is indicated by the arrows Z in FIG. **18**. During the rearward displacement of the penetrating member **83** due to the elastic tenting of the tissue **133**, the processor reads and stores the position data generated by the position sensor **91** and thus measures the amount of elastic tenting, which is the difference between X and Z.

[**0121**] Referring to FIG. **19**, a tissue penetration sampling device **80** is shown with the controllable driver **179** of FIG. **4** coupled to a sampling module cartridge **205** and disposed within a driver housing **206**. A ratchet drive mechanism **207** is secured to the driver housing **206**, coupled to the sampling module cartridge **205** and configured to advance a sampling module belt **208** within the sampling module cartridge **205** so as to allow sequential use of each sampling module **209** in the sampling module belt **208**. The ratchet drive mechanism **207** has a drive wheel **211** configured to engage the sampling modules **209** of the sampling module belt **208**. The drive wheel **211** is coupled to an actuation lever **212** that advances the drive wheel **211** in increments of the width of a single sampling module **209**. A T-slot drive coupler **213** is secured to the elongated coupler shaft **84**.

[**0122**] A sampling module **209** is loaded and ready for use with the drive head **98** of the penetrating member **83** of the sampling module **209** loaded in the T-slot **214** of the drive coupler **213**. A sampling site **215** is disposed at the distal end **216** of the sampling module **209** disposed about a penetrating member exit port **217**. The distal end **216** of the sampling module **209** is exposed in a module window **218**, which is an opening in a cartridge cover **221** of the sampling module cartridge **205**. This allows the distal end **216** of the sampling module **209** loaded for use to be exposed to avoid contamination of the cartridge cover **221** with blood from the lancing process.

[**0123**] A reader module **222** is disposed over a distal portion of the sampling module **209** that is loaded in the drive coupler **213** for use and has two contact brushes **224** that are configured to align and make electrical contact with analyte detecting member contacts **225** of the sampling module **209** as shown in FIG. **77**. With electrical contact between the analyte detecting member contacts **225** and contact brushes **224**, the processor **93** of the controllable driver **179** can read a signal from an analytical region **226** of the sampling module **209** after a lancing cycle is complete and a blood sample enters the analytical region **226** of the sampling module **209**. The contact brushes **224** can have any suitable configuration that will allow the sampling module belt **208** to pass laterally beneath the contact brushes **224** and reliably make electrical contact with the sampling module **209** loaded in the drive coupler **213** and ready for use. A spring loaded conductive ball bearing is one example of a contact brush **224** that could be used. A resilient conductive strip shaped to press against the inside surface of the flexible polymer sheet **227** along the analyte detecting member region **228** of the sampling module **209** is another embodiment of a contact brush **224**.

[**0124**] The sampling module cartridge **205** has a supply canister **229** and a receptacle canister **230**. The unused sampling modules of the sampling module belt **208** are

disposed within the supply canister **229** and the sampling modules of the sampling module belt **208** that have been used are advanced serially after use into the receptacle canister **230**.

[**0125**] FIG. **20** illustrates a further embodiment of sampling module cartridges. FIG. **20** shows a sampling module cartridge **202** in a carousel configuration with adjacent sampling modules **204** connected rigidly and with analyte detecting members **206** from the analytical regions of the various sampling modules **204** disposed near an inner radius **208** of the carousel. The sampling modules **204** of the sampling module cartridge **202** are advanced through a drive coupler **213** but in a circular as opposed to a linear fashion.

[**0126**] FIG. **21** shows an exploded view in perspective of the cartridge **245**, which has a proximal end portion **254** and a distal end portion **255**. The penetrating member cartridge body **246** is disposed at the proximal end portion **254** of the cartridge **245** and has a plurality of penetrating member module portions **250**, such as the penetrating member module portion **250**. Each penetrating member module portion **250** has a penetrating member channel **251** with a penetrating member **83** slidably disposed within the penetrating member channel **251**. The penetrating member channels **251** are substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis **252** of the penetrating member cartridge body **246**. The penetrating members **83** shown have a drive head **98**, shaft portion **201** and sharpened tip **96**. The drive head **98** of the penetrating members are configured to couple to a drive coupler (not shown), such as the drive coupler **85** discussed above.

[**0127**] The penetrating members **83** are free to slide in the respective penetrating member channels **251** and are nominally disposed with the sharpened tip **96** withdrawn into the penetrating member channel **251** to protect the tip **96** and allow relative rotational motion between the penetrating member cartridge body **246** and the sampling cartridge body **247** as shown by arrow **256** and arrow **257** in FIG. **21**. The radial center of each penetrating member channel **251** is disposed a fixed, known radial distance from the longitudinal axis **252** of the penetrating member cartridge body **246** and a longitudinal axis **258** of the cartridge **245**. By disposing each penetrating member channel **251** a fixed known radial distance from the longitudinal axes **252** and **258** of the penetrating member cartridge body **246** and cartridge **245**, the penetrating member channels **251** can then be readily and repeatably aligned in a functional arrangement with penetrating member channels **253** of the sampling cartridge body **247**. The penetrating member cartridge body **246** rotates about a removable pivot shaft **259** which has a longitudinal axis **260** that is coaxial with the longitudinal axes **252** and **250** of the penetrating member cartridge body **246** and cartridge **245**.

[**0128**] The sampling cartridge body **247** is disposed at the distal end portion **255** of the cartridge and has a plurality of sampling module portions **248** disposed radially about the longitudinal axis **249** of the sampling cartridge body **247**. The longitudinal axis **249** of the sampling cartridge body **247** is coaxial with the longitudinal axes **252**, **258** and **260** of the penetrating member cartridge body **246**, cartridge **245** and pivot shaft **259**. The sampling cartridge body **247** may also rotate about the pivot shaft **259**. In order to achieve precise relative motion between the penetrating member cartridge body **246** and the sampling cartridge body **247**, one or both of the cartridge bodies **246** and **247** may be rotatable about the pivot shaft **259**, however, it is not necessary for both to be rotatable about the pivot shaft **259**, that is, one of the cartridge bodies **246** and **247** may be secured, permanently or removably, to the pivot shaft **259**.

[**0129**] The sampling cartridge body **247** includes a base **261** and a cover sheet **262** that covers a proximal surface **263** of the base forming a fluid tight seal. Each sampling module portion **248** of the sampling cartridge body **247**, such as the sampling module portion **248**, has a sample reservoir **264** and a penetrating member channel **253**. The sample reservoir **264** has a vent **965** at an outward radial end that allows the sample reservoir **264** to readily fill with a fluid sample. The sample reservoir **264** is in fluid communication with the respective penetrating member channel **253** which extends substantially parallel to the longitudinal axis **249** of the sampling cartridge body **247**. The penetrating member channel **253** is disposed at the inward radial end of the sample reservoir **264**. Still further description of the device of FIG. **21** may be found in U.S. Ser. No. 10/127,395, filed Apr. 19, 2002.

[**0130**] Referring to FIG. **22**A, one embodiment of the present invention is a tissue penetrating system **310** with a plurality of penetrating members **312** that each have a tissue penetrating tip **314**. The number of penetrating members **310** can vary, but numbers in the ranges of 10, 15, 25, 50, 75, 100, 500 or any other number, are suitable. Each penetrating member **312** can be a lancet, a traditional lancet with a molded body, a needle with a lumen, a knife like element, an elongate member without molded attachments, and the like, and may have a size in the range of 20 mm to 10 mm in length and between 0.012-0.040 mm in diameter. It should be understood of course that penetrating members of a variety of different sizes useful for lancing such as those of conventional lancets may be used in other embodiments. As seen in FIG. **22**A, the penetrating member may have an elongate portion with a bend near a proximal end of the member.

[**0131**] Each penetrating member **312** is coupled to a penetrating member driver **316**. Suitable penetrating member drivers **316** include but are not limited to, an electric drive force member, a voice coil drive force generator, a linear voice coil device, a rotary voice coil device, and the like. Suitable drive force generators can be found in U.S. Ser. No. 10/127,395, filed Apr. 19, 2002. In one embodiment, the penetrating member driver or drive force generator **316** may be a single actuator used to advance the penetrating member and to withdraw the member. The driver **316** may also be used to stop the penetrating member in the tissue site. Penetrating member driver **316** can be a non-spring actuator for drawing penetrating member **312** in a direction back towards penetrating member driver **316**. A coupler **318** on penetrating member driver **316** is configured to engage at least a portion of an elongate portion of a penetrating member **312** in order to drive the penetrating member **312** along a path into and through target tissue **320**, and then withdrawn from target tissue **320**.

[**0132**] Referring now to FIG. **22**B, the tips of the penetrating members **312** can be uncovered when they are launched into a selected target tissue **320**. In one embodiment, sterility enclosures **322** are provided for covering at least the tip of each penetrating member **312**. FIG. **22**B

shows that the enclosure may also cover the entire lancet. In one embodiment, each sterility enclosure **322** is removed from the penetrating member **312** prior to actuation, launch, of penetrating member **312** and positioned so that penetrating member **312** does not contact the associated sterility enclosure **322** during actuation. As seen in FIG. **22**B, the enclosure **322** may be peel away to reveal the penetrating member **312** prior to coupling of the member **312** to the drive force generator **316**. In another embodiment, each penetrating member **312** breaches its associated sterility enclosure **322** during launch.

[**0133**] Tissue penetrating system **310** can also include one or more penetrating member sensors **324** that are coupled to penetrating members **312**. Examples of suitable penetrating member sensors **324** include but are not limited to, a capacitive incremental encoder, an incremental encoder, an optical encoder, an interference encoder, and the like. Each penetrating member sensor **324** is configured to provide information relative to a depth of penetration of a penetrating member **312** through a target tissue **320** surface, including but not limited to a skin surface, and the like. The penetrating member sensor **324** may be positioned as shown in FIG. **22**B. The penetrating member sensor **324** may also be positioned in a variety of location such as but not limited to being closer to the distal end of the penetrating member, in a position as shown in FIG. **5**, or in any other location useful for providing an indication of the position of a penetrating member **312** being driven by the force generator **316**.

[**0134**] In various embodiments, the penetration depth of a penetrating member **312** through the surface of a target tissue **320** can be, 100 to 2500 microns, 500 to 750 microns, and the like. Each penetrating member sensor **324** can also provide an indication of velocity of a penetrating member **312**. Referring to FIG. **22**C, a damper **326** can be coupled to penetrating member driver **316**. Damper **326** prevents multiple oscillations of penetrating member **312** in target tissue **320**, particularly after penetrating member **312** has reached a desired depth of penetration. The damper **326** may be placed in a variety of positions such as but not limited to being coupled to the penetrating member, being coupled to the coupler **318**, being coupled to a core or shaft in the drive force generator **316**, or at any other position useful for slowing the motion of the penetrating member **312**.

[**0135**] A feedback loop **328** can also be included that is coupled to penetrating member sensor **324**. Each penetrating member **312** sensor can be coupled to a processor **330** that has control instructions for penetrating member driver **316**. By way of illustration, and without limitation, processor **330** can include a memory for storage and retrieval of a set of penetrating member **312** profiles utilized with penetrating member driver **316**. Processor **330** can also be utilized to monitor position and speed of a penetrating member **312** as it moves in first direction **332** to and through the target tissue **320**.

[**0136**] Processor **330** can adjust an application of force to a penetrating member **312** in order to achieve a desired speed of a penetrating member **312**. Additionally, processor **330** can also be used to adjust an application of force applied to a penetrating member **312** when penetrating member **312** contacts target tissue **320** so that penetrating member **312** penetrates target tissue **320** within a desired range of speed. Further, processor **330** can also monitor position and speed of a penetrating member **312** as penetrating member **312** moves in first direction **332** toward the target tissue **320**. Application of a launching force to penetrating member **312** can be controlled based on position and speed of penetrating member **312**. Processor **330** can control a withdraw force, from target tissue **320**, to penetrating member **312** so that penetrating member **312** moves in second direction **334** away from target tissue **320**.

[**0137**] Processor **330** can produce a signal that is indicative of a change in direction and magnitude of force exerted on penetrating member **312**. Additionally, processor **330** can cause a braking force to be applied to penetrating member **312**.

[**0138**] In one embodiment, in first direction **332** penetrating member **312** moves toward target tissue **320** at a speed that is different than a speed at which penetrating member **312** moves away from target tissue **320** in second direction **334**. In one embodiment, the speed of penetrating member **312** in first direction **332** is greater than the speed of penetrating member **312** in second direction **334**. The speed of penetrating member **312** in first direction **332** can be a variety of different ranges including but not limited to, 0.05 to 60 m/sec, 0.1 to 20.0 m/sec, 1.0 to 10.0 m/sec, 3.0 to 8.0 m/sec, and the like. Additionally, the dwell time of penetrating member **312** in target tissue **320**, below a surface of the skin or other structure, can be in the range of, 1 microsecond to 2 seconds, 500 milliseconds to 1.5 second, 100 milliseconds to 1 second, and the like.

[**0139**] As seen in FIGS. **22**A and **22**B, tissue penetrating system **310** can include a penetrating member transport device **336** for moving each of penetrating member **312** into a position for alignment with penetrating member driver **316**. Penetrating members **312** can be arranged in an array configuration by a number of different devices and structures defining support **338**, including but not limited to, a belt, a flexible or non-flexible tape device, support channel, cog, a plurality of connectors, and the like. Support **338** can have a plurality of openings each receiving a penetrating member **312**. Suitable supports **338** may also include but are not limited to, a bandolier, drum, disc and the like. A description of supports **338** can be found in U.S. Ser. No. 10/127,395, filed Apr. 19, 2002; U.S. Ser. No. 60/437,359, filed Dec. 31, 2002; and U.S. Ser. No. 60/437,205, filed Dec. 31, 2002. All applications listed above are fully incorporated herein by reference for all purposes.

[**0140**] As illustrated in FIG. **23**, tissue penetrating system **310** can include a single penetrating member driver **316** and a plurality of penetrating members **312**. Penetrating member driver **316** moves each penetrating member **312** along a path out of a housing that has a penetrating member exit and then into target tissue **320**, stopping in target tissue **320**, and then withdrawing out of the target tissue **320**. Support **338** couples the penetrating members **312** to define a linear array. Support **338** is movable and configured to move each penetrating member **312** to a launch position associated with penetrating member driver **316**. Penetrating member driver **316** can be controlled to follow a predetermined velocity trajectory into and out of target tissue **320**.

[**0141**] Tissue penetrating system **310** can include a user interface **340** configured to relay different information, including but not limited to, skin penetrating performance, a

skin penetrating setting, and the like. User interface **340** can provide a user with at a variety of different outputs, including but not limited to, penetration depth of a penetrating member **312**, velocity of a penetrating member **312**, a desired velocity profile, a velocity of penetrating member **312** into target tissue **320**, velocity of the penetrating member **312** out of target tissue **320**, dwell time of penetrating member **312** in target tissue **320**, a target tissue relaxation parameter, and the like. User interface **340** can include a variety of components including but not limited to, a real time clock **342**, one or more alarms **344** to provide a user with a reminder of a next target penetrating event is needed, a user interface processor **346**, and the like.

[**0142**] User interface **340** can provide a variety of different outputs to a user including but not limited to, number of penetrating members **312** available, number of penetrating members **312** used, actual depth of penetrating member **312** penetration on target tissue **320**, stratum corneum thickness in the case where the target tissue **320** is the skin and an area below the skin, force delivered on target tissue **320**, energy used by penetrating member driver **316** to drive penetrating member **312** into target tissue **320**, dwell time of penetrating member **312**, battery status of tissue penetrating system **310**, status of tissue penetrating system **310**, the amount of energy consumed by tissue penetrating system **310**, or any component of tissue penetrating system **310**, speed profile of penetrating member **312**, information relative to contact of penetrating member **312** with target tissue **320** before penetration by penetrating member **312**, information relative to a change of speed of penetrating member **312** as in travels in target tissue **320**, and the like.

[**0143**] User interface **340** can include a data interface **348** that couples tissue penetrating system **310** to support equipment **350** with an interface, the internet, and the like. The data interface **348** may also be coupled to the processor **93**. Suitable support equipment **350** includes but is not limited to, a base station, home computer, central server, main processing equipment for storing analyte, such as glucose, level information, and the like.

[**0144**] Data interface **348** can be a variety of interfaces including but not limited to, Serial RS-232, modem interface, USB, HPNA, Ethernet, optical interface, IRDA, RF interface, BLUETOOTH interface, cellular telephone interface, two-way pager interface, parallel port interface standard, near field magnetic coupling, RF transceiver, telephone system, and the like.

[**0145**] User interface **340** be coupled to a memory **352** that stores, a target tissue parameter, target tissue **320** penetrating performance, and the like. The memory **352** may also be connected to processor **93** and store data from the user interface **340**.

[**0146**] In one embodiment, memory **352** can store, the number of target tissue penetrating events, time and date of the last selected number of target tissue penetrating events, time interval between alarm and target tissue penetrating event, stratum corneum thickness, time of day, energy consumed by penetrating member driver **316** to drive penetrating member **312** into target tissue **320**, depth of penetrating member **312** penetration, velocity of penetrating member **312**, a desired velocity profile, velocity of penetrating member **312** into target tissue **320**, velocity of penetrating member **312** out of target tissue **320**, dwell time of penetrating member **312** in target tissue **320**, a target tissue relaxation parameter, force delivered on target tissue **320** by any component of tissue penetrating device, dwell time of penetrating member **312**, battery status of tissue penetrating system **310**, tissue penetrating system **310** status, consumed energy by tissue penetrating system **310** or any of its components, speed profile of penetrating member **312** as it penetrates and advances through target tissue **320**, a tissue target tissue relaxation parameter, information relative to contact of penetrating member **312** with target tissue **320** before penetration by penetrating member **312**, information relative to a change of speed of penetrating member **312** as in travels in and through target tissue **320**, information relative to consumed analyte detecting members, and information relative to consumed penetrating members **312**.

[**0147**] In one embodiment, processor **330** is coupled to and receives any of a different type of signals from user interface **340**. User interface **340** can respond to a variety of different commands, including but not limited to audio commands, and the like. User interface **340** can include a sensor for detecting audio commands. Information can be relayed to a user of tissue penetrating system **310** by way of an audio device, wireless device **329**, and the like.

[**0148**] In another embodiment as seen in FIG. **23**B, tissue penetrating device includes a human interface **354** with at least one output. The human interface **354** is specific for use by humans while a user interface **340** may be for any type of user, with user defined generically. Human interface **354** can be coupled to processor **330** and penetrating member sensor **324**. Human interface **354** can be a variety of different varieties including but not limited to, LED, LED digital display, LCD display, sound generator, buzzer, vibrating device, and the like.

[**0149**] The output of human interface **354** can be a variety of outputs including but not limited to, a penetration event by penetrating member **312**, number of penetrating members **312** remaining, time of day, alarm, penetrating member **312** trajectory waveform profile information, force of last penetration event, last penetration event, battery status of tissue penetrating system **310**, analyte status, time to change cassette status, jamming malfunction, tissue penetrating system **310** status, and the like.

[**0150**] Human interface **354** is coupled to a housing **356**. Suitable housings **356** include but are not limited to a, telephone, watch, PDA, electronic device, medical device, point of care device, decentralized diagnostic device and the like. An input device **358** is coupled to housing. Suitable input devices **358** include but are not limited to, one or more pushbuttons, a touch pad independent of the display device, a touch sensitive screen on a visual display, and the like.

[**0151**] A data exchange device **360** can be utilized for coupling tissue penetrating system **310** to support equipment **350** including but not limited to, personal computer, modem, PDA, computer network, and the like. Human interface **354** can include a real time clock **362**, and one or more alarms **364** that enable a user to set and use for reminders for the next target tissue penetration event. Human interface **354** can be coupled to a human interface processor **366** which is distinct from processor **330**. Human interface processor **366** can include a sleep mode and can run intermittently to conserve power. Human interface processor **366** includes logic that can provide an alarm time set for a first subset of

days, and a second alarm time set for a second subset of days. By way of example, and without limitation, the first subset of days can be Monday through Friday, and the second subset of days can be Saturday and Sunday.

[0152] Human interface **354** can be coupled to a memory **368** for storing a variety of information, including but not limited to, the number of target tissue penetrating events, time and date of the last selected number of target tissue penetrating events, time interval between alarm and target tissue penetrating event, stratum corneum thickness when target tissue **320** is below the skin surface and underlying tissue, time of day, energy consumed by penetrating member driver **316** to drive penetrating member **312** into target tissue **320**, depth of penetrating member **312** penetration, velocity of penetrating member **312**, a desired velocity profile, velocity of penetrating member **312** into target tissue **320**, velocity of penetrating member **312** out of target tissue **320**, dwell time of penetrating member **312** in target tissue **320**, a target tissue relaxation parameter, force delivered on target tissue **320**, dwell time of penetrating member **312**, battery status of tissue penetrating system **310** and its components, tissue penetrating system **310** status, consumed energy, speed profile of penetrating member **312** as it advances through target tissue **320**, a target tissue relaxation parameter, information relative to contact of a penetrating member **312** with target tissue **320** before penetration by penetrating member **312**, information relative to a change of speed of penetrating member **312** as in travels in target tissue **320**, information relative to consumed sensors, information relative to consumed penetrating members **312**.

[0153] As illustrated in FIG. **24**, tissue penetrating system **310** can include a penetrating member driver **316** and a plurality of cartridges **370**. Each cartridge **370** contains a penetrating member **312**. The cartridges **370** can be coupled together in an array, which can be a flexible array. A cartridge transport device **372** moves cartridges **370** into a launch position that operatively couples a penetrating member **312** to penetrating member driver **316**. A support couples cartridges **370** to define an array. A plurality of sterility enclosures **322** can be provided to at least cover tips of penetrating members **312**. Sterility enclosure **322** (shown in phantom) is removed from their associated penetrating members **312** prior to launch of the penetrating member **312**. The enclosure may be peeled away (not shown) in a manner similar to that as seen in FIG. **22**B, with the enclosure **322** on one tape surface being peeled away. The enclosure **322** may be a blister sack, a sack tightly formed about each cartridge **370**, or other enclosure useful for maintaining a sterile environment about the cartridge **370** prior to actuation or launch. The enclosure **322** may contain the entire cartridge **370** or some portion of the cartridge **370** which may need to remain sterile prior to launch. During launch, enclosure or sterility barrier **322** can be breached by a device other than penetrating member **312**, or can be breached by penetrating member **312** itself. An analyte detection member, sensor, may be positioned to receive fluid from a wound created by the penetrating member **312**. The member may be on the cartridge **370** or may be on the device **80**.

[0154] Referring to FIGS. **24** and **25**, one embodiment of tissue penetrating system **310** includes cartridge transport device **372** and a plurality of cartridges **370**. Each cartridge **370** is associated with a penetrating member **312**. Cartridge transport device **372** moves each cartridge **370** to a position to align the associated penetrating member **312** with penetrating member driver **316** to drive penetrating member **312** along a path into target tissue **320**. In one embodiment as seen in FIG. **25**, each cartridge **370** has at least one of a distal port **374** and a proximal port **376**. A first seal **378** is positioned at distal or proximal ports. As seen in FIG. **25**, the seal **378** may be placed at the distal port. First seal **378** is formed of a material that is fractured by penetrating member **312** before it is launched. A second seal **380** can be positioned at the other port. It will be appreciated that only one or both of distal and proximal ports **374** and **376** can be sealed, and that each cartridge **370** can include only one port **374** and **376**. For ease of illustration, the penetrating member **312** extending longitudinally through the lumen in the cartridge **370** is not shown. The seals **380** and **378** may be fracturable seals formed between the penetrating member and the cartridge **370**. During actuation, the seals **378** and **380** are broken. Seal **378** may be also be positioned to cover the distal port or exit port **374** without being sealed against the penetrating member (i.e. covering the port without touching the penetrating member). A third seal **381** may be positioned to cover an entrance to sample chamber **384**. The seal **381** may be configured to be broken when the penetrating member **312** is actuated. A still further seal **381**A may be placed in the lumen. The tip of a penetrating member may be located at any position along the lumen, and may also be at or surrounded by one of the seals **378**, **381**, **381**A, or **376**.

[0155] Referring still to FIG. **25**, a cover sheet **383** may be a flexible polymer sheet as described in U.S. Ser. No. 10/127,395, filed Apr. 19, 2002. It should be understood of course that the sheet may be made of a variety of materials useful for coupling an analyte detecting member **390**. This allows the analyte detecting member **390** to be sterilized separately from the cartridge **370** and assembled together with the cartridge at a later time. This process may be used on certain analyte detecting members **390** that may be damaged if exposed to the sterilization process used on the cartridge **370**. Of course, some embodiments may also have the analyte detecting member **390** coupled to the cartridge **370** during sterilization. The cover sheet **383** may also form part of the seal to maintain a sterile environment about portions of the penetrating member. In other embodiments, the lumen housing penetrating member may be enclosed and not use a sheet **383** to help form a sterile environment. In still further embodiments, the sheet **383** may be sized to focus on covering sample chamber **384**.

[0156] As illustrated in FIG. **26**, cartridge **370** has at least one port **374**. A plurality of penetrating members **312** are in cartridge **370**. Although cartridge **370** is shown in FIG. **26** to have a linear design, the cartridge **370** may also have a curved, round, circular, triangular, or other configuration useful for positioning a penetrating member for use with a drive force generator. A seal **382** is associated with each penetrating member **312** in order to maintain each penetrating member **312** in a sterile environment in cartridge **370** prior to launch. Prior to launch, seal **382** associated with the penetrating member **312** to be launched is broken. In one embodiment, a punch (not shown) is used to push down on the seal **382** covering the port **376** of the cartridge **370**. This breaks the seal **382** and also pushes it downward, allowing the penetrating member to exit the cartridge without contacting the seal **382**. The timing of the breaking of the seal **382** may be varied so long as the penetrating member remains substantially sterile when being launched towards

the tissue site **320**. In other embodiments, the port **376** may have a seal **383** that protrudes outward and is broken off by the downward motion of the punch. One or more sample chambers **384** are included in cartridge **370**. In one embodiment, each penetrating member **312** has an associated sample chamber **384**. In one embodiment, illustrated in FIG. **27**, penetrating member **312** is extendable through an opening **386** of its associated sample chamber **384**. In some embodiments, a seal **387** may be included in the sample chamber **384**. Seals **382** and **387** may be made from a variety of materials such as but not limited to metallic foil, aluminum foil, paper, polymeric material, or laminates combining any of the above. The seals may also be made of a fracturable material. The seals may be made of a material that can easily be broken when a device applies a force thereto. The seals alone or in combination with other barriers may be used to create a sterile environment about at least the tip of the penetrating member prior to lancing or actuation.

[**0157**] With reference now to the embodiment of FIG. **28**, each sample chamber **384** may have an opening **388** for transport of a body fluid into the sample chamber **384**. The size of sample chambers **384** in FIGS. **26** through **28** can vary. In various embodiments, sample chambers **384** are sized to receive, no more than 1.0 μL of the body fluid, no more than 0.75 μL of the body fluid, no more than 0.5 μL of the body fluid, no more than 0.25 μL of the body fluid, no more than 0.1 μL of the body fluid, and the like. It will be appreciated that sample chambers **384** can have larger or smaller sizes.

[**0158**] An analyte detecting member **390** may associated with each sample chamber **384**. The analyte detecting member **390** may be designed for use with a variety of different sensing techniques as described in U.S. Ser. No. 10/127,395, filed Apr. 19, 2002. Analyte detecting member **390** can be positioned in sample chamber **384**, at an exterior of sample chamber **384**, or at other locations useful for obtaining an analyte. Analyte detecting member **390** can be in a well **392**, or merely be placed on a support.

[**0159**] In one embodiment, analyte detecting member **390** includes chemistries that are utilized to measure and detect glucose, and other analytes. In another embodiment, analyte detecting member **390** is utilized to detect and measure the amount of different analytes in a body fluid or sample. In various embodiments, analyte detecting member **390** determines a concentration of an analyte in a body fluid using a sample that does not exceed a volume of, 1 μL of a body fluid disposed in sample chamber **384**, 0.75 μL of a body fluid disposed in sample chamber **384**, 0.5 μL of a body fluid disposed in sample chamber **384**, 0.25 μL of a body fluid disposed in sample chamber **384**, 0.1 μL of a body fluid disposed in sample chamber **384**, and the like. For example and not by way of limitation, the sample chamber **384** may be of a size larger than the volumes above, but the analyte detecting member **390** can obtain an analyte reading using the amounts of fluid described above.

[**0160**] As illustrated in FIG. **29**, tissue penetrating system **310** can include a housing member **394**, a penetrating member **312** positioned in housing member **394**, and analyte detecting member **390** coupled to a sample chamber **384**. Analyte detecting member **390** is configured to determine a concentration of an analyte in a body fluid using with a variety of different body fluid, sample, volumes. In various embodiments, the volume is less than 1 μL of body fluid disposed in sample chamber **384**, 0.75 of body fluid disposed in sample chamber **384**, 0.5 of body fluid disposed in sample chamber **384**, 0.25 of body fluid disposed in sample chamber **384**, 0.1 of body fluid disposed in sample chamber **384** and the like. Each tip of a penetrating member **312** is configured to extend through an opening of sample chamber **384**. A plurality of penetrating members **312** can be positioned in housing member **394**. Housing member **394** can be the same as cartridge **370**. Cartridge **370** can have distal and proximal ports **374** and **376**, respectively. Additionally, in this embodiment, a plurality of cartridges **370** can be provided, each associated with a penetrating member **312**.

[**0161**] Referring to FIG. **30**, each penetrating member **312** has a packing density, or occupied volume, in cartridge **370**. In various embodiments, the packing density of each penetrating member **312** in cartridge **370** can be no more than, 5.0 cm^3/penetrating member **312**, 4.0 cm^3/penetrating member **312**, 3.0 cm^3/penetrating member **312**, 2.0 cm^3/penetrating member **312**, 1.0 cm^3/penetrating member **312**, 0.75 cm^3/penetrating member **312**, 0.5 cm^3/penetrating member **312**, 0.25 cm^3/penetrating member **312**, 0.1 cm^3/penetrating member **312**, and the like. In other words, the volume required for each penetrating member does not exceed 5.0 cm^3/penetrating member **312**, 4.0 cm^3/penetrating member **312**, 3.0 cm^3/penetrating member **312**, 2.0 cm^3/penetrating member **312**, 1.0 cm^3/penetrating member **312**, 0.75 cm^3/penetrating member **312**, 0.5 cm^3/penetrating member **312**, 0.25 cm^3/penetrating member **312**, 0.1 cm^3/penetrating member **312**, and the like. So, as seen in FIG. **30**, if the total package volume of the cartridge is defined as X and the cartridge includes Y number of penetrating members **312**, penetrating members **312** and test area, or other unit **395**, the volume for each unit does not exceed 5.0 cm^3/unit, 4.0 cm^3/unit, 3.0 cm^3/unit, 2.0 cm^3/unit, 1.0 cm^3/unit, 0.75 cm^3/unit, 0.5 cm^3/unit, 0.25 cm^3/unit, 0.1 cm^3/unit, and the like.

[**0162**] In various embodiments, each penetrating member **312** and its associated sample chamber **384** have a combined packing density of no more than about 5.0 cm^3, 4.0 cm^3, 3.0 cm^3, 2.0 cm^3, 1.0 cm^3, 0.75 cm^3, 0.5 cm^3, 0.25 cm^3, 0.1 cm^3, and the like.

[**0163**] With reference now to FIG. **31**, tissue penetrating system **310** can have a first seal **378** formed at distal port **374** and a second seal **380** formed at proximal port **376** of cartridge **370**. Prior to launching of penetrating member **312**, distal seal **378** and second seal **380** maintain a distal tip of penetrating member **312** and sample chamber **384** in a sterile environment. Second seal **380** is breached, and penetrating member **312** is then launched.

[**0164**] As illustrated in FIG. **32**, a plurality of lumens **396** can be positioned between distal port **374** and proximal port **376** of cartridge **370** for slidably receiving a penetrating member **312**. Sample chamber **384** is defined by cartridge **370**, has an opening **398** and is associated with penetrating member **312**. First seal **378** covers distal port **374**, and a second seal **380** covers proximal port **376**.

[**0165**] In another embodiment as shown in FIG. **33**, tissue penetrating system **310** includes a plurality of cartridges **370**, penetrating member driver **316**, and a plurality of penetrating members **312** coupled to penetrating member driver **316**. Each penetrating member **312** is associated with

a cartridge **370**. A plurality of gas-tightly sealed enclosures **400** are coupled in an array. Each enclosure **400** fully contains at least one of cartridge **370**. Enclosures **400** are configured to be advanceable on cartridge transport device **372** that individually releases cartridges **370** from sacks or enclosures **400** and loads them individually onto penetrating member driver **316**. The enclosures **400** may be removed by peeling back a top portion of the tape as shown in FIG. **22**B.

[**0166**] In another embodiment, a plurality of penetrating members **312** each have a sharpened distal tip. A penetrating member driver **316** is coupled to each penetrating member **312**. A plurality of cartridges **370** are coupled in an array. Each cartridge **370** houses a penetrating member **312** and is configured to permit penetrating member driver **316** to engage each of penetrating members **312** sequentially. Each cartridge **370** has a plurality of seals positioned to provide that the sharpened distal tips remain in a sterile environment before penetrating target tissue **320**. Penetrating members **312** are launched without breaking a seal using the penetrating member.

[**0167**] Referring now to FIG. **34**, a plurality of cartridges **370** are provided, each having distal and proximal ports **374** and **376**, respectively. A plurality of penetrating members **312** are each associated with a cartridge **370**. Each penetrating member **312** has a sharpened distal tip and a shaft portion slidably disposed within cartridge **370**. As seen in FIG. **34**, the cartridges **370** may be coupled together by a connector or flexible support **403**. A seal **404** is formed by a fracturable material between the penetrating member **312** and each cartridge **370**. Seal **404** is positioned in at least one of distal or proximal ports **374** and **376**, respectively, of cartridge **370**. Cartridge transport device **372** moves each cartridge **370** to a position **405** that aligns penetrating member **312** with penetrating member driver **316** so that penetrating member **312** can be driven along a path into target tissue **320**.

[**0168**] In another embodiment of the present invention as seen in FIG. **35**, tissue penetrating system **310** includes a housing member **406**, the plurality of penetrating members **312** positioned in housing member **406**, and a tissue stabilizing member **408**, which can also be a pressure applicator, stimulating member, stimulating vibratory member that imparts motion to a tissue surface, and the like. Tissue stabilizing member **408** can be positioned to at least partially surround an impact location of the penetrating member **312** on the target tissue **320** site. Tissue stabilizing member **408** can, enhance fluid flow from target tissue **320**, stretch a target tissue **320** surface, apply a vacuum to target tissue **320**, apply a force to target tissue **320** and cause target tissue **320** to press in an inward direction relative to housing member **406**, apply a stimulation to target tissue **320**, and the like. Tissue stabilizing member **408** can have a variety of different configurations. In one embodiment, tissue stabilizer member **408** includes a plurality of protrusions **410**. In some further embodiments, a vacuum source **412** may be provided to assist the creation of a low pressure environment in the tissue stabilizing member **408** or along the fluid path to a sample chamber associated with the system **310**. In some embodiments, the tissue stabilizing member **408** is mounted on the cartridge **370**. In other embodiments, the member **408** may be mounted on the housing **406**. The member **408** may also be pressed against the tissue site **320** and act as a pressure applicator. The member **408** may also be used against a variety of tissue including but not limited to skin or other body tissue.

[**0169**] Referring now to FIGS. **36** and **37**, a cartridge **370** is shown with a penetrating member **312** creating a wound W in the tissue site **320**. In FIG. **36**, a movable capillary member **420** is extended towards the wound W as indicated by arrow **422** to gather body fluid being expressed from the wound. The fluid may be drawn to a sample chamber **384** (not shown). In FIG. **37**, the wound W is created and then the entire cartridge is moved to the tissue site **320** to gather body fluid from the wound W. In some embodiments, the cartridge **370** moves towards the wound W relative to the housing **406**.

[**0170**] Tissue penetrating systems **310** of FIGS. **22** through **37**, can be utilized in a variety of different applications to detect any number of different analytes, including but not limited to glucose. The systems **310** may be used to measure potassium, other ions, or analytes associated with the process of glucose monitoring. The analyte detecting member **390** may further be adapted to measure other analytes found in body fluid.

[**0171**] In a still further embodiment, penetrating member **312** may be moved and positioned to be in engagement with penetrating member driver **316**. Penetrating member **312** is in a sterile environment, and prior to launch, the sterilizing covering, which can be a seal is removed. Tissue stabilizing member can apply a stimulation to a surface of the target tissue **320** prior to, and during penetration by penetration member. Penetrating member **312** is engaged with penetrating driving member and controllably pierces a target tissue **320** site. Penetrating member sensor **324** is utilized to control penetration depth and velocity of penetrating member **312**. Penetrating member **312** is stopped at a desired depth below a surface of target tissue **320** in order to reduce or eliminate without multiple oscillations against the surface of target tissue **320**. A wound is created, causing blood to flow into sample chamber **384**. In various embodiments, no more than 1 μL of a body fluid is collected in sample chamber **384**.

[**0172**] A number of different preferences, options, embodiment, and features have been given above, and following any one of these may results in an embodiment of this invention that is more presently preferred than a embodiment in which that particular preference is not followed. These preferences, options, embodiment, and features may be generally independent, and additive; and following more than one of these preferences may result in a more presently preferred embodiment than one in which fewer of the preferences are followed.

[**0173**] While the invention has been described and illustrated with reference to certain particular embodiments thereof, those skilled in the art will appreciate that various adaptations, changes, modifications, substitutions, deletions, or additions of procedures and protocols may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Any of the embodiments of the invention may be modified to include any of the features described above or feature incorporated by reference herein. For example, the cartridge of FIG. **26** may be adapted to include a distal portion with a tissue stabilizing member. The cartridge of FIG. **26** may be adapted for use with a vacuum device. The cartridge may

include indexing features such as notches on the distal portion or outer radial periphery for those cartridges with a radial configuration. The notches will facilitate positioning, among other things, and may be used for movement. Other cartridges or tapes herein may be modified with notches or tractor holes to facilitate movement. User interfaces, human interfaces, and other interfaces may be added to any of the embodiments of the present invention.

[0174] With any of the above embodiments, the location of the penetrating member drive device may be varied, relative to the penetrating members or the cartridge. With any of the above embodiments, the penetrating member tips may be uncovered during actuation (i.e. penetrating members do not pierce the penetrating member enclosure or protective foil during launch). With any of the above embodiments, the penetrating members may be a bare penetrating member during launch. With any of the above embodiments, the penetrating members may be bare penetrating members prior to launch as this may allow for significantly tighter densities of penetrating members. In some embodiments, the penetrating members may be bent, curved, textured, shaped, or otherwise treated at a proximal end or area to facilitate handling by an actuator. The penetrating member may be configured to have a notch or groove to facilitate coupling to a gripper or coupler. The notch or groove may be formed along an elongate portion of the penetrating member. The coupler may be designed to create a frictional only type grip on the penetrating member.

[0175] With any of the above embodiments, any open cavity housing the penetrating may be on the bottom or the top of the cartridge, with the gripper on the other side. In some embodiments, sensors may be printed on the top, bottom, or side of the cavities. The front end of the cartridge maybe in contact with a user during lancing. The same driver may be used for advancing and retraction of the penetrating member. The penetrating member may have a diameters and length suitable for obtaining the blood volumes described herein. The penetrating member driver may also be in substantially the same plane as the cartridge. The driver may use a through hole or other opening to engage a proximal end of a penetrating member to actuate the penetrating member along a path into and out of the tissue.

[0176] Any of the features described in this application or any reference disclosed herein may be adapted for use with any embodiment of the present invention. For example, the devices of the present invention may also be combined for use with injection penetrating members or needles as described in U.S. Ser. No. 10/127,395, filed Apr. 19, 2002. A sensor to detect the presence of foil may also be included in the lancing apparatus. For example, if a cavity has been used before, the foil or sterility barrier will be punched. The sensor can detect if the cavity is fresh or not based on the status of the barrier. It should be understood that in optional embodiments, the sterility barrier may be designed to pierce a sterility barrier of thickness that does not dull a tip of the penetrating member. The lancing apparatus may also use improved drive mechanisms. For example, a solenoid force generator may be improved to try to increase the amount of force the solenoid can generate for a given current. A solenoid for use with the present invention may have five coils and in the present embodiment the slug is roughly the size of two coils. One change is to increase the thickness of the outer metal shell or windings surround the coils. By increasing the thickness, the flux will also be increased. The slug may be split; two smaller slugs may also be used and offset by ½ of a coil pitch. This allows more slugs to be approaching a coil where it could be accelerated. This creates more events where a slug is approaching a coil, creating a more efficient system.

[0177] In another optional alternative embodiment, a gripper in the inner end of the protective cavity may hold the penetrating member during shipment and after use, eliminating the feature of using the foil, protective end, or other part to retain the used penetrating member. Some other advantages of the disclosed embodiments and features of additional embodiments include: same mechanism for transferring the used penetrating members to a storage area; a high number of penetrating members such as 25, 50, 75, 100, 500, or more penetrating members may be put on a disk or cartridge; molded body about a penetrating member becomes unnecessary; manufacturing of multiple penetrating member devices is simplified through the use of cartridges; handling is possible of bare rods metal wires, without any additional structural features, to actuate them into tissue; maintaining extreme (better than 50 micron-lateral- and better than 20 micron vertical) precision in guiding; and storage system for new and used penetrating members, with individual cavities/slots is provided. The housing of the lancing device may also be sized to be ergonomically pleasing. In one embodiment, the device has a width of about 56 mm, a length of about 105 mm and a thickness of about 15 mm. Additionally, some embodiments of the present invention may be used with non-electrical force generators or drive mechanism. For example, the punch device and methods for releasing the penetrating members from sterile enclosures could be adapted for use with spring based launchers. The gripper using a frictional coupling may also be adapted for use with other drive technologies.

[0178] Still further optional features may be included with the present invention. For example, with any of the above embodiments, the location of the penetrating member drive device may be varied, relative to the penetrating members or the cartridge. With any of the above embodiments, the penetrating member tips may be uncovered during actuation (i.e. penetrating members do not pierce the penetrating member enclosure or protective foil during launch). The penetrating members may be a bare penetrating member during launch. The same driver may be used for advancing and retraction of the penetrating member. Different analyte detecting members detecting different ranges of glucose concentration, different analytes, or the like may be combined for use with each penetrating member. Non-potentiometric measurement techniques may also be used for analyte detection. For example, direct electron transfer of glucose oxidase molecules adsorbed onto carbon nanotube powder microelectrode may be used to measure glucose levels. In all methods, nanoscopic wire growth can be carried out via chemical vapor deposition (CVD). In all of the embodiments of the invention, preferred nanoscopic wires may be nanotubes. Any method useful for depositing a glucose oxidase or other analyte detection material on a nanowire or nanotube may be used with the present invention. Expected variations or differences in the results are contemplated in accordance with the objects and practices of the present invention. It is intended, therefore, that the invention be

defined by the scope of the claims which follow and that such claims be interpreted as broadly as is reasonable.

1. A tissue penetrating system, comprising:

a plurality of penetrating members

a penetrating member driver coupled to the plurality of penetrating members;

a disposable transport device;

a plurality of disposables each associated with a penetrating member, the disposable transport device being configured to move each disposable to a position aligning a penetrating member with the penetrating member driver to drive the penetrating member along a path into a target tissue site; and

a user interface coupled to a processor, wherein in response to an input at the user interface by a user the processor provides an input to the penetrating member driver

selected from, depth of a penetrating member penetration, velocity of a penetrating member, a desired velocity profile, a velocity of a penetrating member into the target tissue, velocity of the penetrating member out of the target tissue, dwell time of the penetrating member in the target tissue, and a target tissue relaxation parameter.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the user interface provides at least one output to the user selected from, number of penetrating members available, number of penetrating members used, actual depth of penetrating member penetration on a target tissue, stratum corneum thickness, force delivered on a target tissue, energy used by a penetrating member driver to drive a penetrating member into the target tissue, dwell time of the penetrating member, battery status, system status, consumed energy, speed profile of a penetrating member, information relative to contact of a penetrating member with target tissue before penetration by the penetrating member, and information relative to a change of speed of a penetrating member as in travels in the target tissue.

3. The system of claim 1, further comprising:

a data interface configured to couple the tissue penetrating system to at least one of, support equipment with a data interface and the internet.

4. The system of claim 2, wherein the support equipment is selected from at least one of, a base station, home computer, central server, and main processing equipment for storing glucose level information.

5. The system of claim 2, wherein the data interface is selected from at least one of, Serial RS-232, modem interface, USB, HPNA, Ethernet, optical interface, IRDA, RF interface, BLUETOOTH interface, cellular telephone interface, 2 way pager interface, parallel port interface standard, near field magnetic coupling, RF transceiver and a telephone systems.

6. The system of claim 1, wherein the user interface includes a real time clock and one or more alarms to provide a user with a reminder of a next target penetrating event is needed.

7. The system of claim 1, further comprising:

a processor coupled to the penetrating member driver and configured to receive signals from the user interface.

8. The system of claim 6, wherein the processor is configured to assist in an adjustment of force applied to the penetrating member driver in response to a target tissue parameter.

9. The system of claim 1, further comprising:

a user interface processor coupled to the user interface.

10. The system of claim 1, further comprising:

a memory for storing a target tissue parameter.

11. The system of claim 1, further comprising:

a memory for storing data on target tissue penetrating performance.

12. The system of claim 1, further comprising:

a memory for storing at least one of, a number of penetrating members used; number of target tissue penetrating events, time and date of the last selected number of target tissue penetrating events, time interval between alarm and target tissue penetrating event; stratum corneum thickness, time of day, energy consumed by a penetrating member driver to drive a penetrating member into the target tissue, depth of penetrating member penetration, velocity of the penetrating member, a desired velocity profile, velocity of the penetrating member into the target tissue, velocity of the penetrating member out of the target tissue, dwell time of the penetrating member in the target tissue; tent and hold characteristic of the penetrating member, force delivered on the target tissue penetrating cycle, dwell time of the penetrating member, battery status, system status, consumed energy, and speed profile of the penetrating member during the target tissue penetrating cycle.

13. The system of claim 1, further comprising:

a memory for storing at least one of, a number of penetrating members used, number of target tissue penetrating events, time and date of the last selected number of target tissue penetrating events, time interval between alarm and target tissue penetrating event, stratum corneum thickness, time of day, energy consumed by a penetrating member driver to drive a penetrating member into the target tissue, depth of penetrating member penetration, velocity of the penetrating member, a desired velocity profile, velocity of the penetrating member into the target tissue, velocity of the penetrating member out of the target tissue, dwell time of the penetrating member in the target tissue, a target tissue relaxation parameter, force delivered on the target tissue, dwell time of the penetrating member, battery status, system status, consumed energy, speed profile of the penetrating member as the penetrating penetrates and advances through the target tissue, a tissue target tissue relaxation parameter, information relative to contact of a penetrating member with target tissue before penetration by the penetrating member, information relative to a change of speed of a penetrating member as in travels in the target tissue, information relative to consumed sensors and information relative to consumed penetrating members.

14. The system of claim 1, the user interface responds to audio commands.

15. The system of claim 13, wherein the user interface includes a sensor for detecting audio commands.

16. The system of claim 1, wherein the user interface relays information to a user via an audio device.

17. The system of claim 1, wherein the user interface relays information to a user via a wireless device.

18. A tissue penetrating device, comprising:

a housing;

a penetrating member driver;

a disposable;

a plurality of penetrating members integrated with the disposable, each of a penetrating member being coupled to the penetrating member driver when advanced along a path into a tissue target; and

a human interface providing at least one outputa human interface providing at least one output, the human interface including a sensor for detecting audio commands.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein the human interface relays information to a user via an audio device.

20. The system of claim 18, wherein the human interface relays information to a user via a wireless device.

21. The system of claim 18, further comprising:

a processor coupled to the penetrating member driver and configured to change a direction and magnitude of force exerted on a penetrating member as it penetrates or advances through the target tissue.

22. The system of claim 18, further comprising:

a penetrating member sensor configured to detect a penetrating member position during target tissue penetration.

23. The system of claim 18, wherein the at least one output is selected from, a penetration event of a penetrating member, number of penetrating members remaining, time of day, alarm, penetrating member trajectory waveform profile information, force for last penetration event, the last penetration event, how or low battery status, analyte status, time to change support status, jamming malfunction, and system status.

24. The system of claim 18, wherein the human interface is selected from an LED, an LED digital display, an LCD display, a sound generator, a buzzer, and a vibrating device.

25. The system of claim 18, wherein the housing is selected from at least one of, a telephone, a watch, a PDA, electronic device, medical device, point of care device and a decentralized diagnostic device.

26. The system of claim 18, further comprising:

an input device coupled to the housing, the input device selected from one or more pushbuttons, a touch pad independent of the display device, or a touch sensitive screen on a visual display.

27. The system of claim 18, further comprising:

a data exchange device for coupling the tissue penetrating system to support equipment.

28. The system of claim 27, further comprising:

a data interface configured to couple the tissue penetrating system to support equipment with a data interface.

29. The system of claim 18, further comprising:

a data exchange device for coupling the tissue penetrating system to support equipment selected from one of the following: personal computer, modem, PDA.

30. The system of claim 18, wherein the human interface includes a real time clock and one or more alarms a user can set for reminders of when a next target tissue penetration event is needed.

31. The system of claim 18, wherein the human interface is coupled to receive signals from a human interface processor separate from the processor coupled to the penetrating member driver

32. The system of claim 31, wherein the human interface processor has a sleep mode and runs intermittently to conserve power.

33. The system of claim 18, further comprising:

a memory for storing at least one of, a number of penetrating members used, number of target tissue penetrating events, time and date of the last selected number of target tissue penetrating events, time interval between alarm and target tissue penetrating event, stratum corneum thickness, time of day, energy consumed by a penetrating member driver to drive a penetrating member into the target tissue, depth of penetrating member penetration, velocity of the penetrating member, a desired velocity profile, velocity of the penetrating member into the target tissue, velocity of the penetrating member out of the target tissue, dwell time of the penetrating member in the target tissue, a target tissue relaxation parameter, force delivered on the target tissue, dwell time of the penetrating member, battery status, system status, consumed energy, speed profile of the penetrating member as the penetrating penetrates and advances through the target tissue, a tissue target tissue relaxation parameter, information relative to contact of a penetrating member with target tissue before penetration by the penetrating member, information relative to a change of speed of a penetrating member as in travels in the target tissue, information relative to consumed sensors and information relative to consumed penetrating members.

34. The system of claim 31, wherein the human interface processor has logic that provides an alarm time set for a first subset of days and a second alarm time set for a second subset of days.

35. The system of claim 34, wherein the first subset of days is Monday thru Friday and the second subset of days is Saturday and Sunday.

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