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(54) **PERCUTANEOUS METHODS FOR
APPARATUS FOR CREATING NATIVE
TISSUE VENOUS VALVES**

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(52) **U.S. Cl.**
USPC **606/159**

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USPC 606/159, 167, 170, 172, 185, 190,
606/191, 194, 198; 623/2.11
See application file for complete search history.

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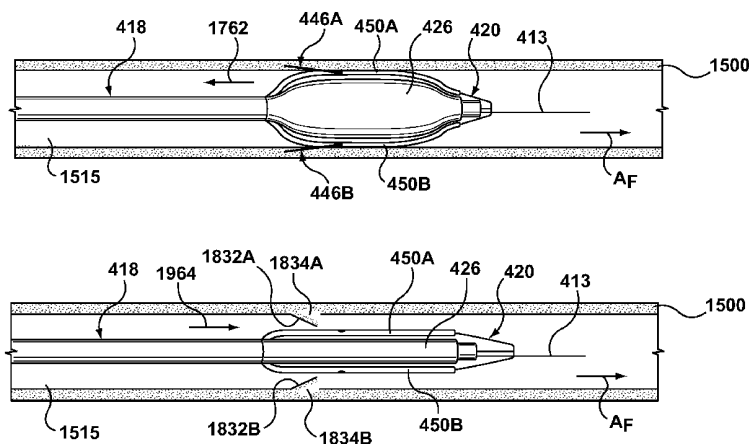
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Primary Examiner — Ryan Severson

(57) **ABSTRACT**

Percutaneous methods and apparatuses for forming a venous
valve from autologous tissue. A catheter having a retractable
dissecting system received therein is delivered to a target
location where a new venous valve is to be created. A distal
balloon or other radially-expandable component mounted on
the catheter is expanded against the vein wall, and the dis-
secting system is proximally retracted to deploy one or more
dissecting components that dissect a subintimal layer of the
vein wall. Radial expansion of the dissecting component(s)
within the vein wall creates one or more leaflets and corre-
sponding pocket/sinuses in the vein that collectively act as a
venous valve, and/or the radially-expandable component of
the catheter is subsequently collapsed such that the dissecting
component(s) each pull a flap of the dissected tissue towards
the vein lumen to create one or more leaflet(s) and corre-
sponding pocket/sinuses in the vein.

16 Claims, 17 Drawing Sheets



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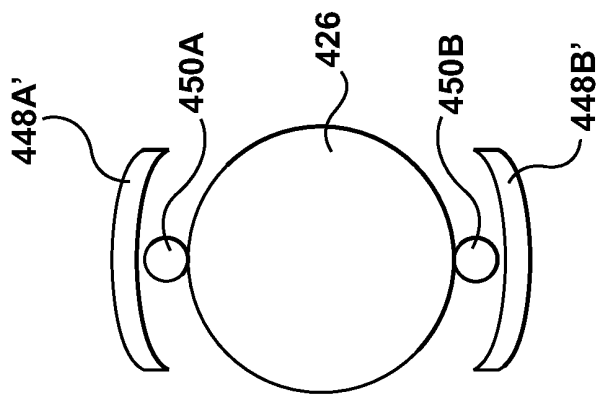


FIG. 12

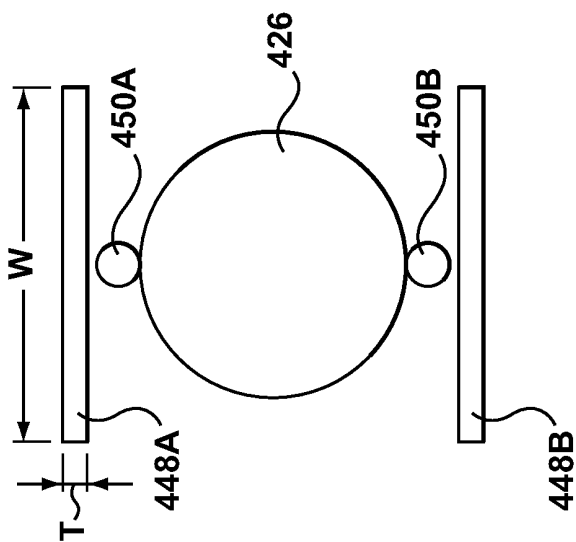


FIG. 11

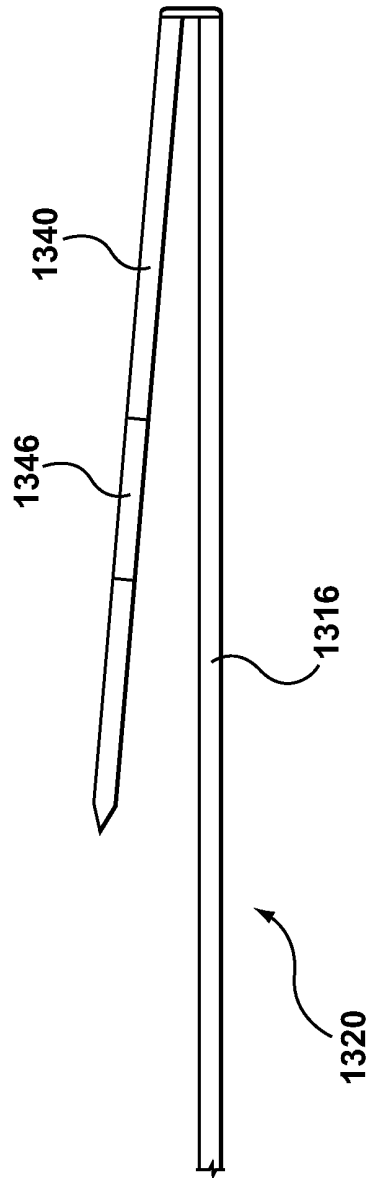


FIG. 13

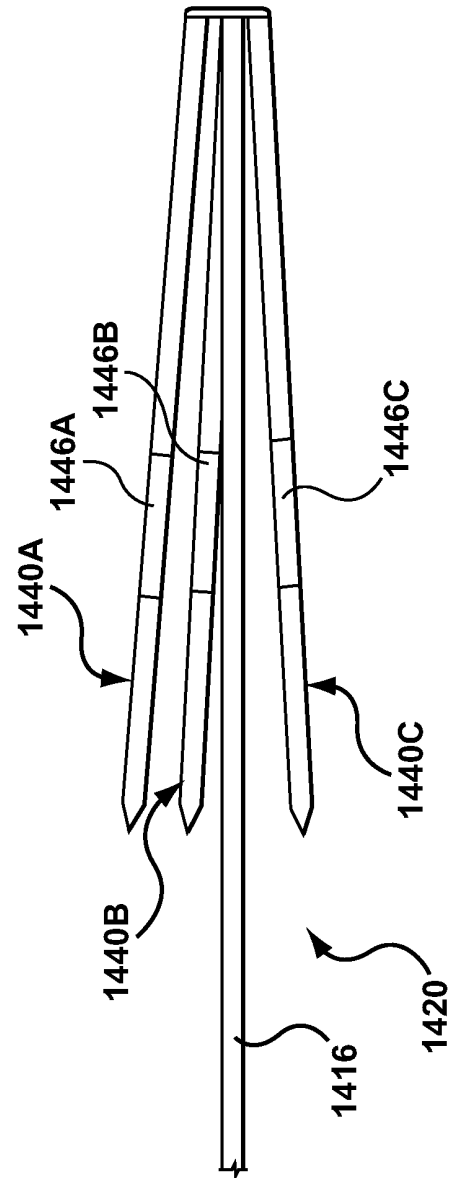


FIG. 14

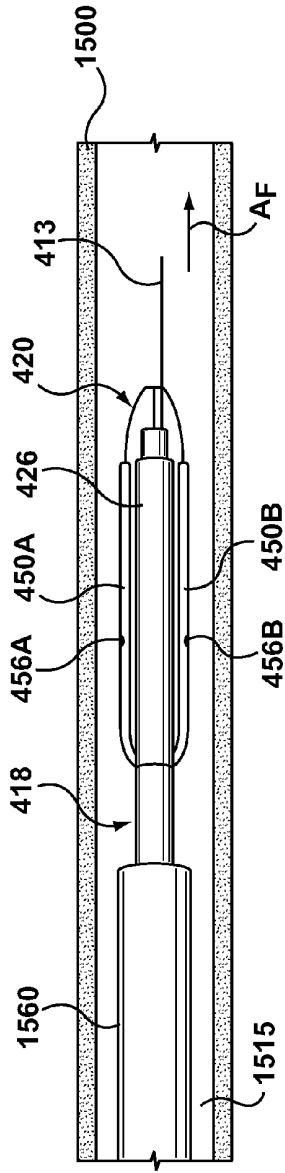


FIG. 15

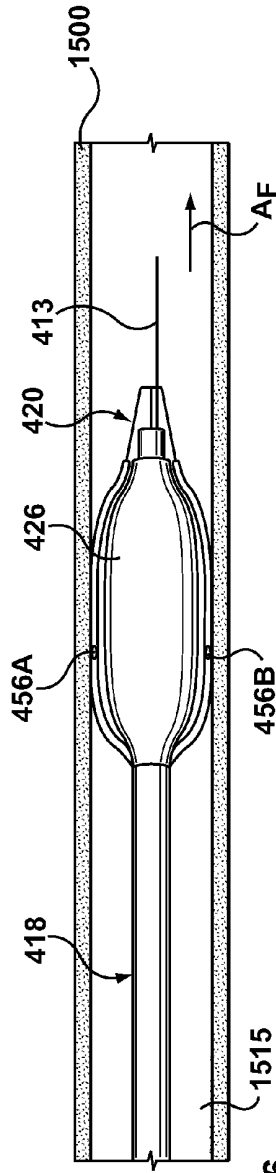


FIG. 16

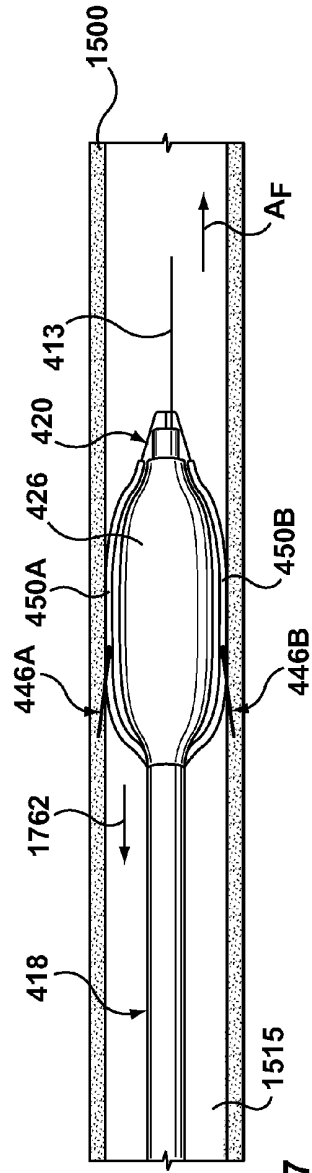


FIG. 17

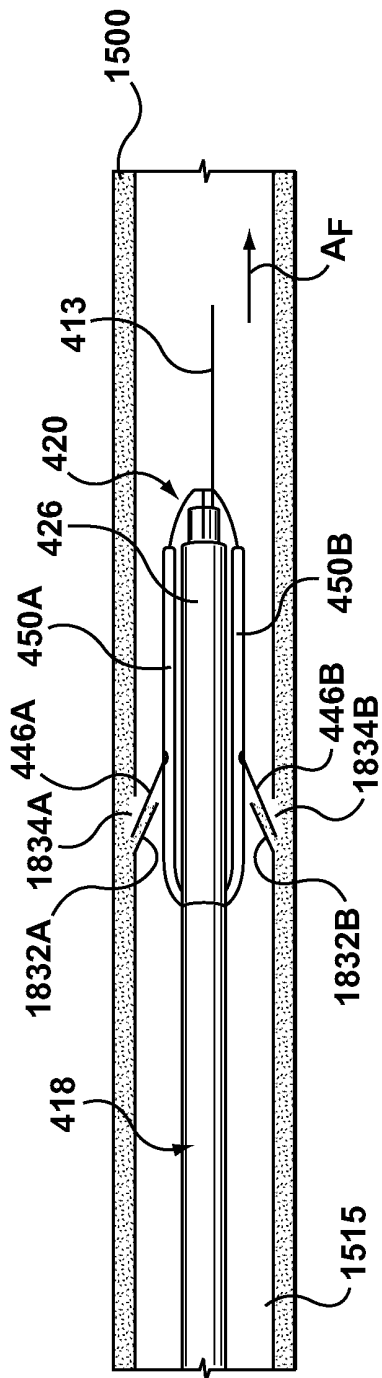


FIG. 18

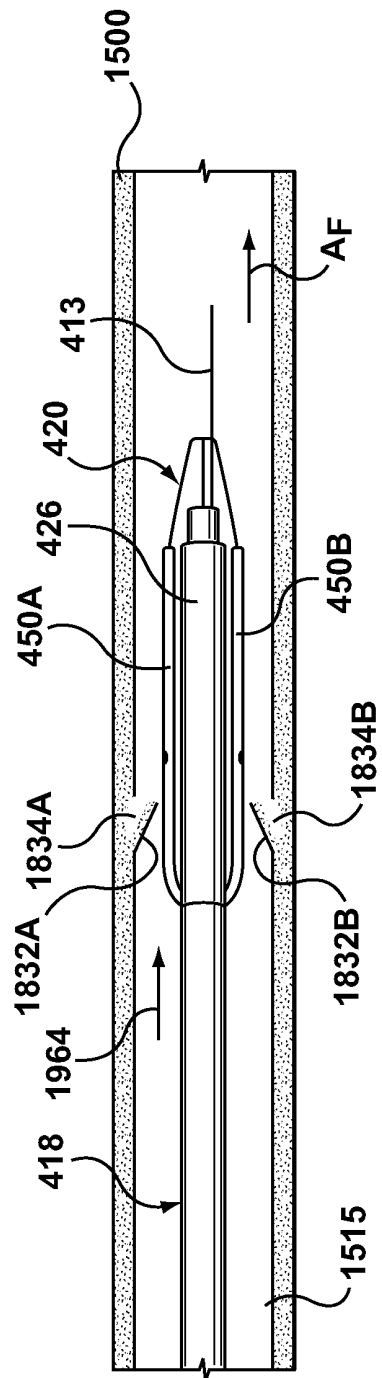


FIG. 19

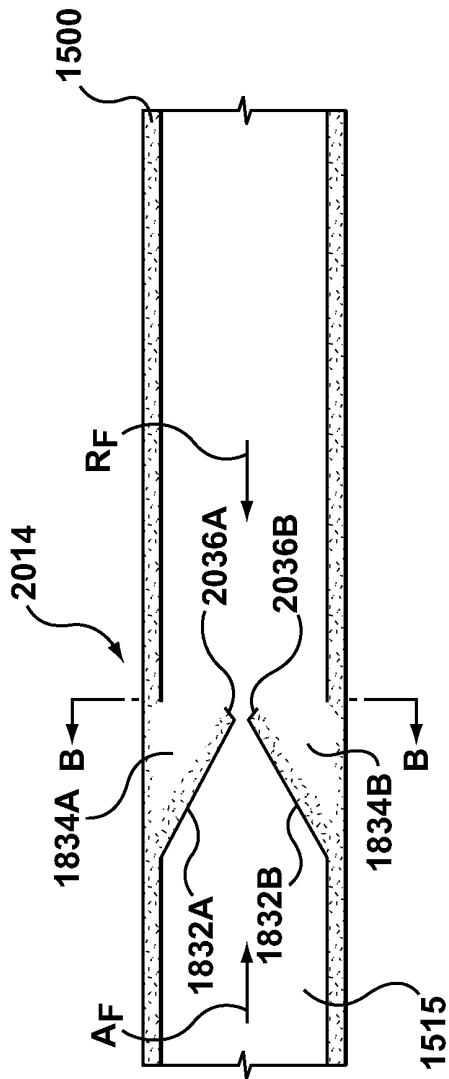


FIG. 20A

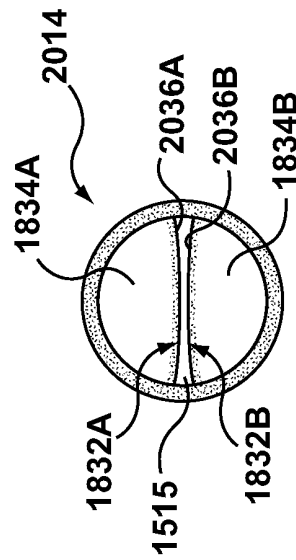
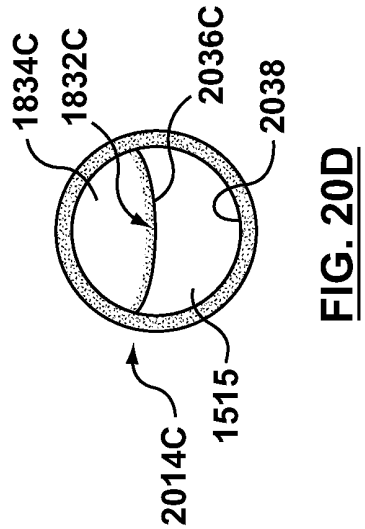
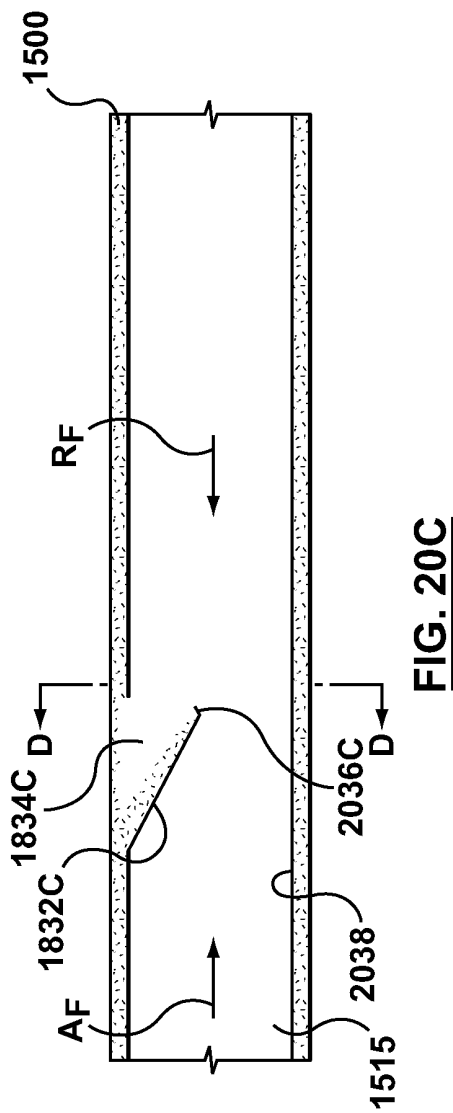


FIG. 20B



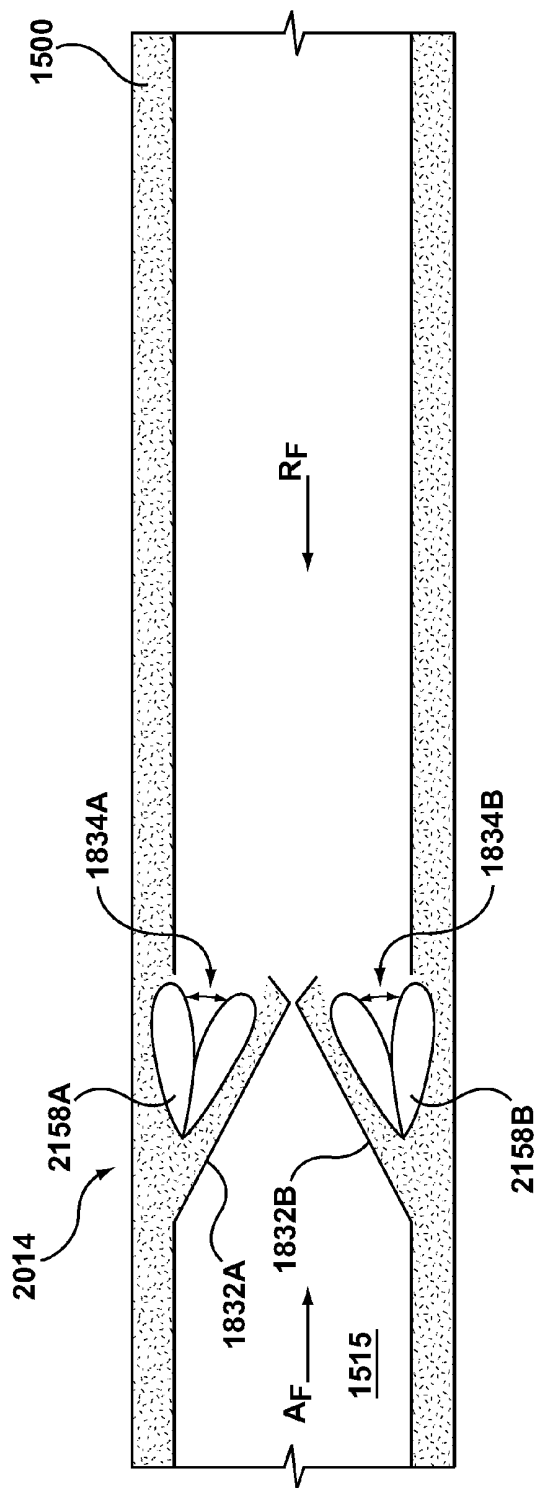


FIG. 21

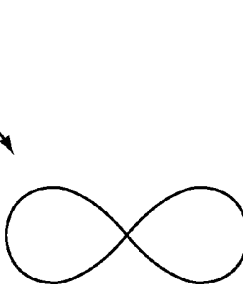


FIG. 21B

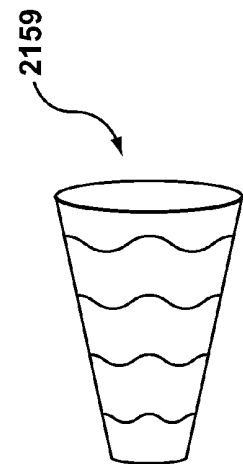
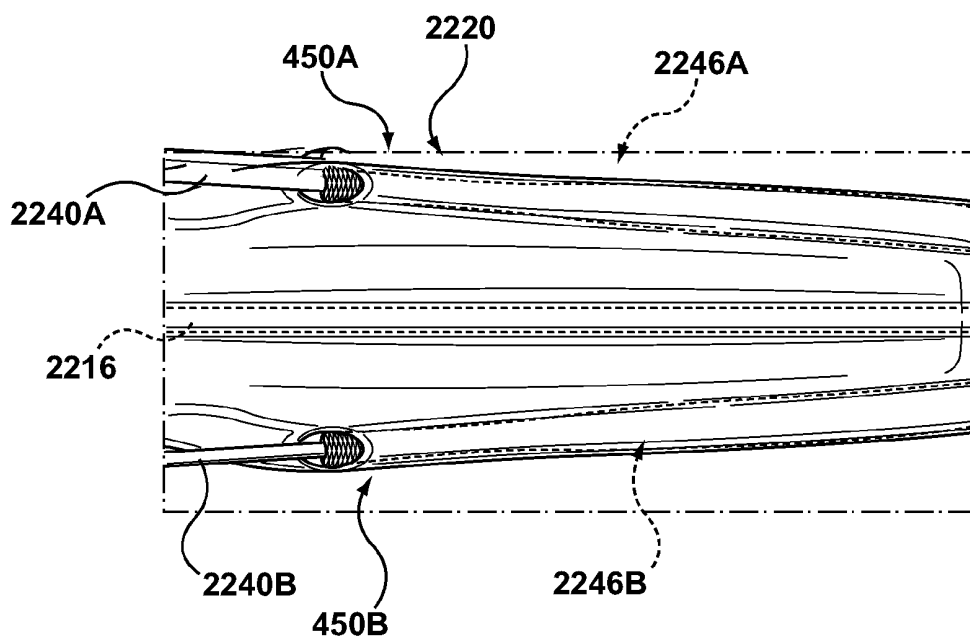
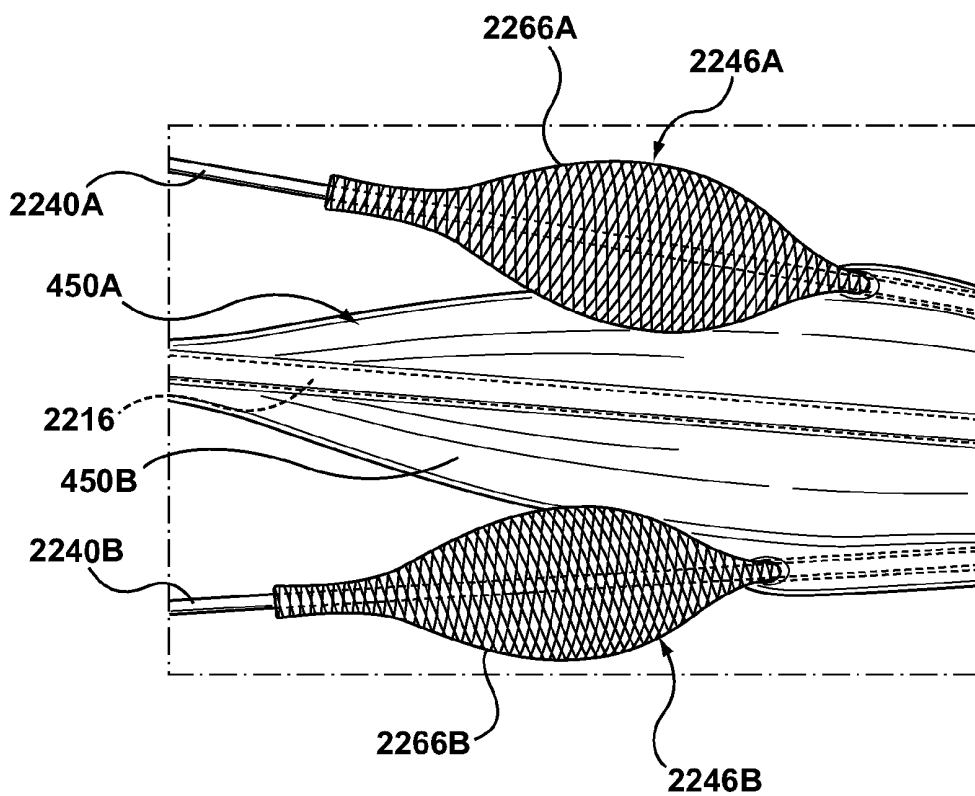
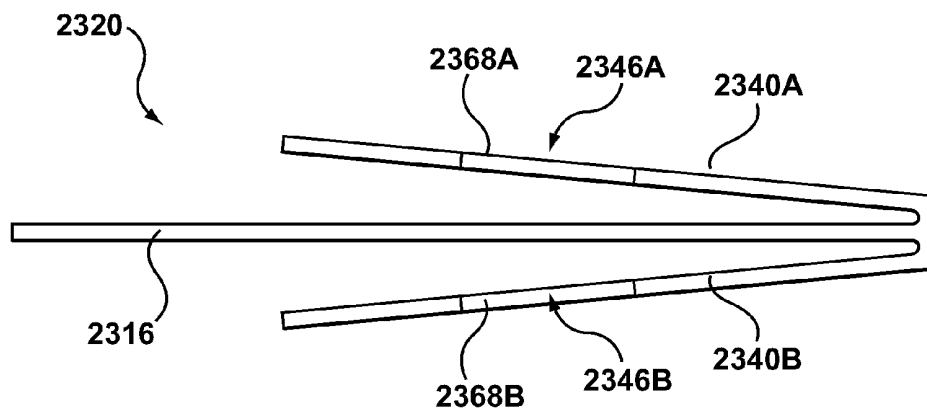
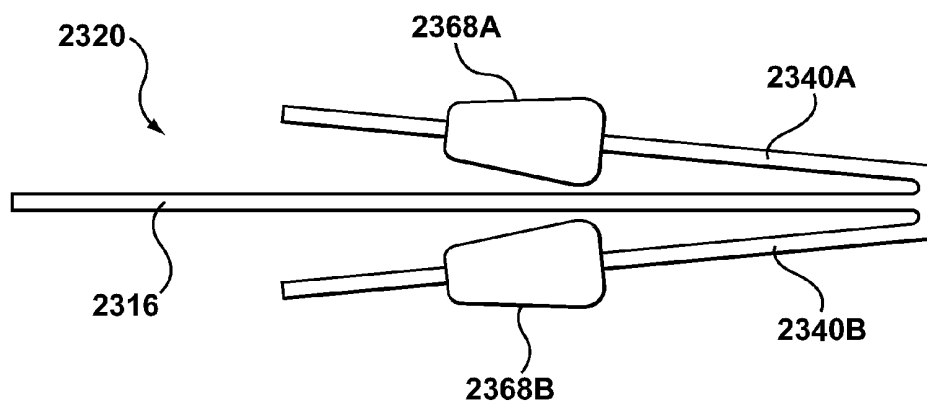
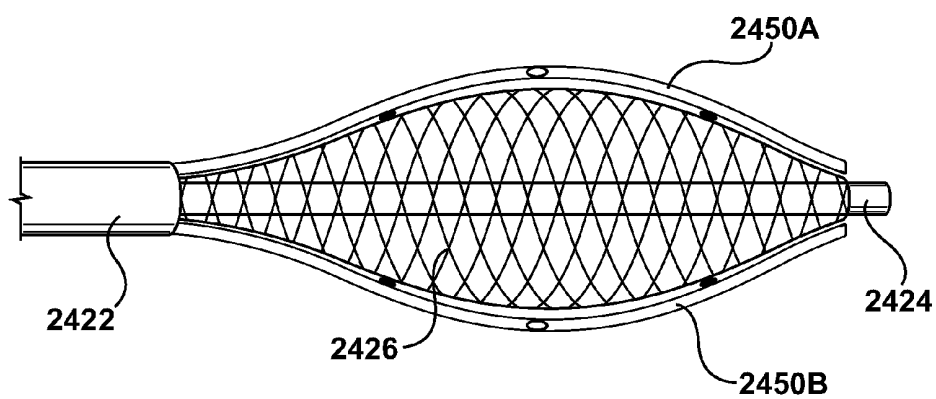


FIG. 21A

**FIG. 22A****FIG. 22B**

**FIG. 23A****FIG. 23B****FIG. 24**

PERCUTANEOUS METHODS FOR APPARATUS FOR CREATING NATIVE TISSUE VENOUS VALVES

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The invention relates to apparatus and methods for percutaneously creating a one-way venous valve in vivo from autologous tissue.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Venous valves are found within native venous vessels and are used to assist in returning blood back to the heart in an antegrade direction from all parts of the body. The venous system of the leg includes the deep venous system and the superficial venous system, both of which are provided with venous valves that are intended to direct blood toward the heart and prevent backflow or retrograde flow, which can lead to blood pooling or stasis in the leg in the setting of incompetent valves. Incompetent valves can also lead to reflux of blood from the deep venous system to the superficial venous system and the formation of varicose veins. Superficial veins, which include the greater and lesser saphenous veins, have perforating branches in the femoral and popliteal regions of the leg that direct blood flow toward the deep venous system and generally have a venous valve located near the junction with the deep system. Deep veins of the leg include the anterior and posterior tibial veins, popliteal veins, and femoral veins. Deep veins are surrounded in part by musculature tissue that assists in generating flow due to muscle contraction during normal walking or exercising. Veins in the lower leg have a static pressure while standing of approximately 80-90 mm Hg that may reduce during exercise to 60-70 mm Hg. Despite exposure to such pressures, the valves of the leg are very flexible and can close with a pressure drop of less than one mm Hg.

FIGS. 1A-1B are schematic representations of blood flow through a healthy native valve **104** within a vein **100**. Venous valve **104** controls blood flow through lumen **102** of vein **100** via leaflets **106**, **108**. More particularly, venous valve **104** opens to allow antegrade flow **112** through leaflets **106**, **108** as shown in FIG. 1A. Venous valve **104** closes to prevent backflow or retrograde flow **114** through leaflets **106**, **108** as shown in FIG. 1B.

Veins typically in the leg can become distended from prolonged exposure to excessive pressure and due to weaknesses found in the vessel wall causing the natural venous valves to become incompetent leading to retrograde blood flow in the veins. Such veins no longer function to help pump or direct the blood back to the heart during normal walking or use of the leg muscles. As a result, blood tends to pool in the lower leg and can lead to leg swelling and the formation of deep venous thrombosis, phlebitis, and varicose veins. The formation of thrombus in the veins can further impair venous valvular function by causing valvular adherence to the venous wall with possible irreversible loss of valvular function. Continued exposure of the venous system to blood pooling and swelling of the surrounding tissue can lead to post phlebitic syndrome with a propensity for open sores, infection, and may lead to possible limb amputation.

Chronic Venous Insufficiency (CVI) occurs in patients that have either deep and/or superficial venous valves of their lower extremities (below their pelvis) that have failed or become incompetent due to congenital valvular abnormalities and/or pathophysiologic disease of their vasculature. As a result, these patients suffer from varicose veins, swelling and

pain of the lower extremities, edema, hyper pigmentation, lipodermatosclerosis, and deep vein thrombosis (DVT). Such patients are at increased risk for development of soft tissue necrosis, ulcerations, pulmonary embolism, stroke, heart attack, and amputations.

FIG. 2 is a schematic representation of blood flow through an incompetent venous valve. Retrograde flow **114** leaks through venous valve **104** creating blood build-up that eventually may destroy the venous valve and cause a venous wall bulge **110**. More specifically, the vessel wall of vein **100** expands into a pouch or bulge, such that the vessel has a knotted appearance when the pouch is filled with blood. The distended vessel wall area may occur on the outflow side of the valve above leaflets **106**, **108** as shown in FIG. 2, and/or on the inflow side of the valve below leaflets **106**, **108**. After a vein segment becomes incompetent, the vessel wall dilates such that the fluid velocity decreases within the incompetent vein segment, which may lead to flow stasis and thrombus formation in the proximity of the venous valve.

Repair and replacement of venous valves presents a formidable problem due to the low blood flow rate found in native veins, the very thin wall structure of the venous wall and the venous valve, and the ease and frequency of which venous blood flow can be impeded or totally blocked for a period of time. Surgical reconstruction techniques used to address venous valve incompetence include venous valve bypass using a segment of vein with a competent valve, venous transposition to bypass venous blood flow through a neighboring competent valve, and valvuloplasty to repair the valve cusps. These surgical approaches may involve placement of synthetic, allograft and/or xenograft prostheses inside of or around the vein. However, such prostheses have not been devoid of problems leading to thrombosis and/or valve failure due to leaflet thickening/stiffening, non-physiologic flow conditions, non-biocompatible materials and/or excessive dilation of the vessels with a subsequent decrease in blood flow rates.

Percutaneous methods for treatment of venous insufficiency are being studied, some of which include placement of synthetic, allograft and/or xenograft prosthesis that suffer from similar problems as the surgically implanted ones discussed above.

In addition, venous valve formation from autologous tissue has been disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 6,902,576 to Drasler et al. Drasler et al. suggests use of autologous tissue with blood contact of an endothelial layer to eliminate biocompatibility issues and also alleviate thrombus formation due to low flow. However, methods of in situ venous valve formation according to Drasler et al. are surgical in nature and involve reshaping a distended, diseased vein, which carries with it the risk of rupture or tearing of the thin-walled structure.

In view of the foregoing, there exists a need for methods and apparatus to restore normal venous circulation to patients suffering from venous valve insufficiency, wherein the methods and apparatus may be used in percutaneous, minimally invasive procedures. Further, such percutaneous methods and apparatus should attend to biocompatibility and thrombosis issues that current approaches do not adequately address.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Embodiments hereof are directed to percutaneous methods and apparatus for creating monocuspid, bicuspid, and tricuspid venous valves from autologous tissue. One method disclosed herein includes obtaining percutaneous access to the lumen of a vein and tracking a catheter to a target location within the vein lumen where a venous valve is to be created in

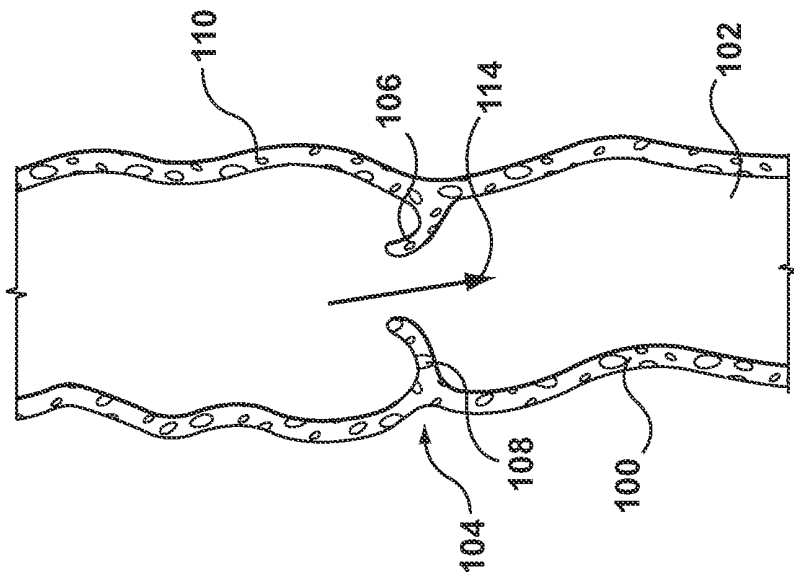


FIG. 2

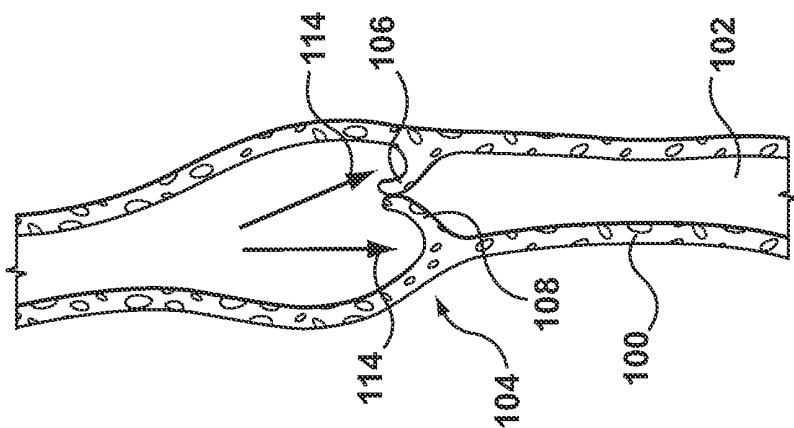


FIG. 1B

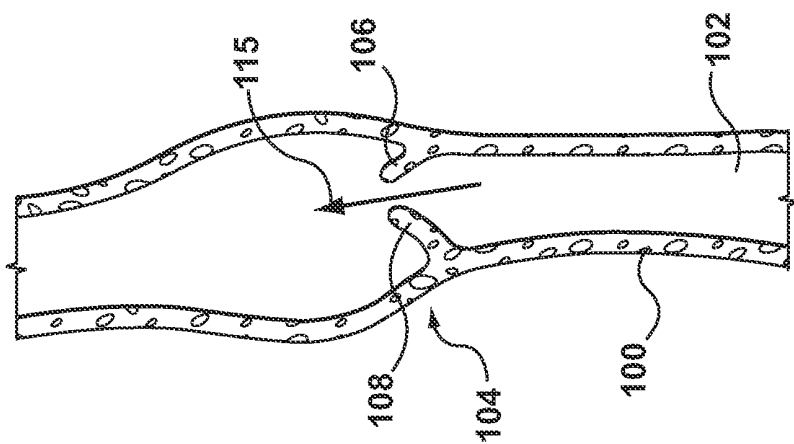


FIG. 1A

an antegrade manner, i.e., in the direction of antegrade blood flow. The catheter includes a radially-expandable component such as a balloon or braided member and at least one delivery shaft defining a delivery lumen and having a port that is positioned on one side of the radially-expandable component. A retractable dissecting system is slidably received within the catheter. The dissecting system includes at least one expandable dissecting component that is constrained in a delivery configuration within the delivery lumen. After being advanced to the target location, the radially-expandable component of the catheter is expanded to bias the port against a wall of the vein. The retractable dissecting system is proximally retracted such that the at least one dissecting component exits the port formed within the delivery shaft, penetrates into the vein wall, and forms a subintimal longitudinal dissection of at least intimal tissue of the vein wall that is separated from remaining tissue of the vein wall. The dissecting component assumes an expanded configuration when it exits the port. The radially-expandable component of the catheter is collapsed such that the at least one dissecting component separates the subintimal longitudinal dissection of tissue from the remaining tissue of the vein wall and pulls the subintimal longitudinal dissection of tissue into a lumen of the vein, thereby simultaneously forming a flap of tissue and a sinus between the flap and the remaining tissue of the vein wall. The flap and the sinus constitute at least a portion of the venous valve.

In another method disclosed herein, the dissecting system includes at least one inflatable dissecting component that is constrained in a delivery configuration within the delivery lumen. The catheter is advanced to a target location within the vein lumen in the same manner as described above, and then the radially-expandable component of the catheter is expanded to bias the port against a wall of the vein. The retractable dissecting system is proximally retracted such that the at least one inflatable dissecting component exits the port formed within the delivery shaft and penetrates into the vein wall to form a subintimal longitudinal dissection of at least intimal tissue of the vein wall that is separated from remaining tissue of the vein wall. The at least one inflatable dissecting component is inflated within the vein wall to further dissect the at least intimal tissue of the vein wall from the remaining tissue of the vein wall, thereby simultaneously forming a flap of tissue and a sinus between the flap and the remaining tissue of the vein wall. The flap and the sinus constitute at least a portion of the venous valve.

Embodiments hereof are also directed to a system for creating a venous valve from autologous tissue, the system including a catheter having a radially-expandable component such as a balloon or braided member. The catheter includes at least one delivery shaft defining a delivery lumen and having a port that is positioned on one side of the radially-expandable component. A retractable dissecting system including a core element is slidably received within a lumen of the catheter and includes at least one proximally-extending extension wire coupled to a distal end of the core element. The extension wire includes at least one expandable dissecting component that is slidably disposed within the delivery lumen of the catheter. The expandable dissecting component is operable to exit the port to form a subintimal longitudinal dissection of a vein wall that separates at least intimal tissue from remaining tissue of the vein wall.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

The foregoing and other features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following description of

embodiments thereof as illustrated in the accompanying drawings. The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated herein and form a part of the specification, further serve to explain the principles of the invention and to enable a person skilled in the pertinent art to make and use the invention. The drawings are not to scale.

FIGS. 1A-1B are schematic representations of blood flow through a healthy valve within a vein.

FIG. 2 is a schematic representation of blood flow through an incompetent valve within a vein.

FIG. 3 is a sectional view of the anatomy of a healthy vein and valve thereof.

FIG. 4 is a side view of a balloon catheter in accordance with an embodiment hereof.

FIG. 4A is a cross-sectional view of the balloon catheter of FIG. 4 taken along line A-A.

FIG. 4B is a cross-sectional view of the balloon catheter of FIG. 4 taken along line A-A according to another embodiment hereof.

FIG. 4C is a cross-sectional view of the balloon catheter of FIG. 4 taken along line C-C.

FIG. 4D is a sectional view of the balloon catheter of FIG. 4 taken along line D-D.

FIGS. 5A and 5B are side views of the distal portion of the balloon catheter of FIG. 4 according to alternative embodiments hereof.

FIG. 6 is a side view of the retractable dissecting system of FIG. 4 removed from the balloon catheter.

FIGS. 7-10 are perspective illustrations of the distal portion of the retractable dissecting system being deployed from the distal portion of the balloon catheter.

FIG. 11 is an end view of FIG. 4, showing the distal portion of the balloon catheter.

FIG. 12 is an end view of FIG. 4 according to an alternative configuration, showing the distal portion of the balloon catheter.

FIGS. 13-14 are side views of the retractable dissecting system removed from the balloon catheter having two and three dissecting components, respectively, in accordance with embodiments hereof.

FIGS. 15-19 are schematic representations of a method of forming a venous valve from autologous tissue in accordance with an embodiment hereof.

FIG. 20A is a schematic representation of a bicuspid venous valve formed in accordance with embodiments hereof.

FIG. 20B is a cross-sectional view of FIG. 20A taken along line B-B.

FIG. 20C is a schematic representation of a monocuspid venous valve formed in accordance with embodiments hereof.

FIG. 20D is a cross-sectional view of FIG. 20C taken along line D-D.

FIG. 21 is a schematic representation of the bicuspid venous valve of FIG. 20A including biasing elements in accordance with embodiments hereof.

FIG. 21A is a schematic representation of a tapered stent for use in venous valves formed in accordance with embodiments hereof.

FIG. 21B is a schematic representation of a biasing element for use in venous valves formed in accordance with embodiments hereof.

FIGS. 22A-22B are perspective illustrations of a distal portion of a retractable dissecting system being deployed from the distal portion of the balloon catheter, wherein the dissecting system includes radially-expandable braided dissecting components according to an embodiment hereof.

FIGS. 23A-23B are side views of a distal portion of a retractable dissecting system in a delivery configuration and an expanded configuration, respectively, wherein the dissecting system includes radially-expandable balloon dissecting components according to an embodiment hereof.

FIG. 24 is a side view of the distal portion of a delivery catheter having radially-expandable component according to alternative embodiments hereof.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Specific embodiments hereof are now described with reference to the figures, wherein like reference numbers indicate identical or functionally similar elements. The terms “distal” and “proximal” are used in the following description with respect to a position or direction of the balloon catheter and the retractable dissecting system relative to the treating clinician. “Distal” or “distally” are a position distant from or in a direction away from the clinician. “Proximal” and “proximally” are a position near or in a direction toward the clinician. With reference to venous valves and/or the flaps of tissue that form a venous valve, the term “proximal” refers to an end or portion in a direction toward the heart by way of blood flow path while the term “distal” refers to an end or portion in a direction away from the heart by way of blood flow path.

The following detailed description is merely exemplary in nature and is not intended to limit the invention or the application and uses of the invention. Although the description of the invention is in the context of treatment of blood vessels such as the deep and superficial veins of the leg, the invention may also be used in any other body passageways where it is deemed useful. Furthermore, there is no intention to be bound by any expressed or implied theory presented in the preceding technical field, background, brief summary or the following detailed description.

FIG. 3 depicts a sectional view of the anatomy of a vein wall, which for purposes of this description is shown to consist essentially of an outside layer 301, a middle layer 303 and an inside layer 305. Outer layer 301, or adventitia, is made of collagen, vasa vasorum and nerve cells. Middle layer 303, or media, is made of smooth muscle cells, whereas inner layer 305, or intima, is made up of endothelial cells. The endothelium provides a nonthrombogenic surface for flowing blood. Venous valve 304 having two leaflets is formed from folds of the inner or intimal layer such that both upstream and downstream blood contacting surfaces of valve 304 are covered with endothelium.

According to one embodiment hereof, a retractable dissecting system 420 is slidably disposed within a balloon catheter 418 for forming a venous valve from autologous tissue. FIG. 4 is a side view of dissecting system 420 disposed in a retracted position within balloon catheter 418, and FIG. 6 is a side view of retractable dissecting system 420 removed from balloon catheter 418 for illustrative purposes. Dissecting system 420 includes an elongated core element 416 and two proximally-extending extension wires 440A, 440B. Core element 416 may be a solid or hollow wire-like component having a generally circular cross-section as shown in FIG. 4A. Core element 416 has a proximal end 419 that extends proximally out of balloon catheter 418 and may be manipulated by a clinician, and a distal end 421 that extends distally out of balloon catheter 418. Extension wires 440A, 440B are relatively shorter solid or hollow wire-like components that extend in a proximal direction, i.e., towards proximal end 419 of core wire 416. Distal ends 444A, 444B, of extension wires 440A, 440B, respectively, are coupled to distal end 421 of core element 416 and proximal ends 442A, 442B of extension

wires 440A, 440B, respectively, are sharpened or pointed tips that are operable to pierce into tissue. Along the length thereof between proximal tips 442A, 442B and distal ends 444A, 444B, each extension wire 440A, 440B includes an expandable dissecting component 446A, 446B (see FIG. 6) operable to access a sub-intimal space of a vessel wall and dissect or separate intimal issue from medial tissue as will be described in more detail herein with respect to FIGS. 15-19.

Extensions wires 440A, 440B may be integrally or continuously formed with cores shaft 416, or extension wires 440A, 440B may be separate formed and attached to distal end 421 of core element 416 in any suitable manner, including resistance welding, friction welding, laser welding, soldering, by the use of an adhesive, by the addition of a connecting element there between, or by another mechanical method. In one embodiment, core element 416 and/or extension wires 440A, 440B are solid or tubular components having outer diameters that range between 0.010 and 0.018 inches. Although shown as circular, core element 416 and/or extension wires 440A, 440B may have cross-sections known to those of ordinary skill in the art, including but not limited to circular, elliptical, rectangular, triangular, or other polygon. Suitable materials for use in forming core element 416 and/or extension wires 440A, 440B include stainless steel, nitinol (NiTi), nickel-cobalt alloy such as MP35N, cobalt-chromium, a relatively hard and sharp polymer, or a relatively hard and sharp ceramic material.

As shown in FIGS. 4, 4A, 4C, and 4D, core element 416 of dissecting system 420 is slidably received through a central lumen 431 of balloon catheter 418 and extension wires 440A, 440B are slidably received through two delivery shafts 450A, 450B positioned at the distal end of balloon catheter 418. More particularly, balloon catheter 418 includes a tubular outer shaft 422, an inner shaft 424, an inflatable balloon 426 positionable at a target location within the vasculature, and delivery shafts 450A, 450B coupled to the outer surface of balloon 426. Balloon 426 is shown in an expanded or inflated configuration in FIG. 4. Outer shaft 422 has a proximal end that extends out of the patient and is coupled to a hub 428, and a distal end coupled to a proximal end of balloon 426. Outer shaft 422 may be formed of a polymeric material, non-exhaustive examples of which include polyethylene, PEBA (PEBAX), and/or polyamide, and in an embodiment may include a reinforcement material such as braiding, wire mesh, or other wire members incorporated within a polymeric body in order to enhance strength and/or flexibility and torque response while preventing kinking of the shaft. Inner shaft 424 is an elongated tubular component defining at least central lumen 431 of inner shaft 424 for slidably receiving core element 416 of retractable dissecting system 420 there through. In an embodiment depicted in FIGS. 4 and 4A, inner shaft 424 is a dual lumen shaft formed by multi-lumen profile extrusion and, in addition to central lumen 431, also defines a guidewire lumen 433 for slidably receiving a guidewire 413 there through. In another embodiment shown in FIG. 4B, inner shaft 424B has a tubular body defining central lumen 431B for receiving core element 416B and core element 416B has a hollow tubular body defining guidewire lumen 433B for slidably receiving guidewire 413. In an embodiment, inner shaft 424 may be formed from a flexible polymeric material, such as, e.g., polyethylene, polyamide, and/or polyether ether ketone (PEEK), and in an embodiment may include a reinforcement material such as braiding, wire mesh, or other wire members incorporated within a polymeric body in order to enhance strength and/or flexibility and torque response while preventing kinking of the shaft. In an embodiment, inner shaft 424 may include one or more inner liners of polytetrafluoro-

roethylene (PTFE) for central lumen **431** and/or guidewire lumen **433** to improve the slidability thereof. In yet another embodiment, inner shaft **424** may be formed from a hypotube of NiTi (nitinol) or stainless steel.

Inner shaft **424** has a proximal end that extends out of the patient and is coupled to hub **428** and a distal end that terminates distally of balloon **426**, defining distal port **423** of balloon catheter **418**. In the coaxial catheter construction of the illustrated embodiment, inner shaft **424** extends within outer shaft **422** such that an annular inflation lumen **430** is defined between an inner surface of outer shaft **422** and an outer surface of inner shaft **424**. Other types of catheter construction are also amendable to the invention, such as, without limitation thereto, a catheter shaft formed by multi-lumen profile extrusion for defining an inflation lumen. Inflation lumen **430** allows inflation fluid received through an inflation port **427** of hub **428** to be delivered to balloon **426**. As would be understood by one of ordinary skill in the art of balloon catheter design, hub **428** provides a luer hub or other type of fitting that may be connected to a source of inflation fluid and may be of another construction or configuration without departing from the scope of the present invention. In addition, hub **428** includes a port **429** that communicates with lumens **431**, **433** of inner shaft **424** for slidably receiving retractable dissecting system **420** and guidewire **413**, respectively, there through.

Each delivery shaft **450A**, **450B** is a tubular component that defines a delivery lumen **451A**, **451B**, respectively, there through for slidably receiving extension wires **440A**, **440B**, respectively, of retractable dissecting system **420**. Delivery shafts of embodiments hereof may be made from any suitable material known to one of skill in the art of catheter construction, including by example, polyethylene, Polyimide, PEBAX, nylon, co-polyester elastomer, and PEEK. In the embodiment of FIG. 4, delivery shafts **450A**, **450B** include proximal ends **452A**, **452B** that are coupled to a proximal end **425** of balloon **426** and distal ends **454A**, **454B** defining distal ports **455A**, **455B** that are coupled to a distal end **417** of balloon **426**. Delivery shafts **450A**, **450B** are positioned on opposing sides of balloon **426** or approximately 180° from each other with respect to the circumference of balloon **426**. A proximal or side port **456A** is disposed in a sidewall of delivery shaft **450A** and is radially positioned on one side of balloon **426** and a proximal or side port **456B** is disposed in a sidewall of delivery shaft **450B** and is radially positioned on the other side of balloon **426** approximately 180° from proximal port **456A**. Each of proximal ports **456A**, **456B** open so that when catheter **418** is placed within a vessel lumen each port faces an opposed surface of the vessel wall. In an embodiment, proximal ports **456A**, **456B** are longitudinally positioned at approximately the midpoint of the working length of balloon **426**. However, the location of proximal ports **456A**, **456B** is not limited to the longitudinal position illustrated in FIG. 4, such that in other embodiments hereof proximal ports **456A**, **456B** may be positioned adjacent another longitudinal position along balloon **426** to include being positioned on or adjacent to proximal end **425** of balloon **426** or distal end **417** of balloon **426**. As shown in the sectional view of FIG. 4D, each delivery shaft **450A**, **450B** may include a ramp **457A**, **457B** for directing instruments delivered through delivery lumens **451A**, **451B** toward a vein wall in vivo. Since ramps **457A**, **457B** are at an incline, they cause instruments delivered through delivery lumens **451A**, **451B** to be positioned outside of each delivery shaft **450A**, **450B** at an acute angle that may range from between 5° and 60° relative to the longitudinal axis of balloon **426**. Proximally-extending extension wires **440A**, **440B** of retractable

dissecting system **420** are slidably received through distal ports **455A**, **455B** of delivery shafts **450A**, **450B**, respectively, are disposed within delivery lumens **451A**, **451B** of delivery shafts **450A**, **450B** as best shown in the sectional view of FIG. 4D, and may be slidably advanced through delivery shafts **450A**, **450B** such that proximal tips **442A**, **442B** exit proximal ports **456A**, **456B** via ramps **457A**, **457B**.

In one embodiment as shown in FIG. 4, delivery shafts **450A**, **450B** are detached from balloon **426** except at bonds **453** located adjacent balloon proximal end **417** and balloon distal end **425**. In various embodiments, the bonds may be made by an adhesive or by creating a thermal bond between the materials of the components with, by e.g., heat shrink tubing. In such a configuration, semi-detached delivery shafts **450A**, **450B** do not interfere with the inflation of balloon **426**. An optional stretchable sheath (not shown) may surround catheter **418** and hold the detached portions of delivery shafts **450A**, **450B** in apposition with balloon **426** during tracking of catheter **418** through the vasculature but may also allow for inflation of balloon **426** at the treatment site without being removed. The sheath would include side openings that correspond with proximal ports **456A**, **456B** to allow egress of extension wires **440A**, **440B** from delivery lumens **451A**, **451B** via the ports. In an embodiment, the sheath may be polyurethane or another elastomeric material and may be attached to the balloon by either a friction fit, with an adhesive, or thermal bonding the ends. In an alternate embodiment, shafts **450A**, **450B** may be attached along their length to the balloon working length.

FIGS. 5A and 5B depict alternative configurations of the delivery shafts for slidably receiving extension wires **440A**, **440B**, respectively, of retractable dissecting system **420**. In the embodiment of FIG. 5A, delivery shafts **550A**, **550B** extend only over the distal half of balloon **426**. More particularly, delivery shafts **550A**, **550B** extend only between proximal ends **552A**, **552B** defining proximal ports **556A**, **556B** located at approximately the midpoint of the working length of balloon **426** to distal ports **555A**, **555B** located at distal end **417** of balloon **426**. Delivery shafts **550A**, **550B** may be attached along their length to the balloon working length as shown, or may be semi-detached from balloon **426** similar to delivery shafts **450A**, **450B** described above. In the embodiment of FIG. 5B, the delivery shafts are integrally formed within the material of the balloon rather than being attached to the outside surface of the balloon. More particularly, balloon **526** is a polymeric extrusion with delivery lumens **551A**, **551B** formed therein during the extrusion process. Extension wires of the retractable dissecting system are slidably received through distal ports **555A'**, **555B'** and exit proximal ports **556A'**, **556B'** located at approximately the midpoint of the working length of balloon **526**.

In use, dissecting system **420** is operable to alternate between a retracted position in which extension wires **440A**, **440B** and dissecting component **446A**, **446B** are within delivery lumens **451A**, **451B** of delivery shafts **450A**, **450B**, and an exposed position in which extension wires **440A**, **440B** and dissecting component **446A**, **446B** extend transversely from proximal ports **456A**, **456B** of delivery shafts **450A**, **450B** until dissecting component **446A**, **446B** extend beyond an outer surfaces of delivery shafts **450A**, **450B**. To deploy or expose dissecting component **446A**, **446B**, core element **416** is proximally retracted within inner shaft **424** causing dissecting component **446A**, **446B** to also proximally retract within delivery shafts **450A**, **450B** and push against ramps **457** formed adjacent proximal ports **456A**, **456B**. Ramps **457** deflect extension wires **440A**, **440B** and dissecting compo-

nent **446A**, **446B** through proximal ports **456A**, **456B** to the exposed or working position outside of delivery shafts **450A**, **450B**.

More particularly, FIGS. 7-10 illustrate deployment of dissecting component **446A**, **446B** through delivery shafts **450A**, **450B**. FIG. 7 illustrates extension wires **440A**, **440B** of retractable dissecting system **420** shown in the delivery lumens of delivery shafts **450A**, **450B**, respectively. Dissecting components **446A**, **446B** (not shown on FIG. 7) are compressed into a generally straightened delivery configuration. As core element **416** is proximally retracted or pulled, extension wires **440A**, **440B**, also move in a proximal direction until pointed tips **442A**, **442B** of extension wires **440A**, **440B**, respectively, exit out of proximal ports **456A**, **456B** of delivery shafts **450A**, **450B** as shown in FIG. 8. Continued proximal retraction of core element **416** results in dissecting component **446A**, **446B** being released or exposed from the delivery lumens of delivery shafts **450A**, **450B** as shown in FIG. 9 until dissecting component **446A**, **446B** are fully deployed into their preset configurations as shown in FIG. 10. In this embodiment, dissecting components **446A**, **446B** are diamond-shaped elements **448A**, **448B**. Diamond-shaped elements **448A**, **448B** are formed from a self-expanding material and are preset to splay outwardly and be radially spaced from extension wires **440A**, **440B**. "Self-expanding" as used herein means that diamond-shaped elements **448A**, **448B** have a mechanical memory to return to the expanded, deployed configuration shown in FIG. 10 from the straightened delivery configuration shown in FIG. 7. Mechanical memory may be imparted to diamond-shaped elements **448A**, **448B** by thermal treatment to achieve a spring temper in stainless steel, for example, or to set a shape memory in a susceptible metal alloy, such as nitinol. When expanded, each diamond-shaped element **448A**, **448B** has a rectangular or flat cross-section as shown in the end view of FIG. 11. In one embodiment, each diamond-shaped element **448A**, **448B** may have a width W that ranges between 4 and 15 mm, a thickness T that ranges between 0.1 and 0.5 mm, and a length that ranges between 4 to 15 mm. In another embodiment shown in the end view of FIG. 12, each diamond-shaped element **448A'**, **448B'** may have a curved or semi-rounded cross-section that substantially corresponds to the outer surface or profile of inflated balloon **426**. The curved cross-section of diamond-shaped elements **448A'**, **448B'** may be beneficial when dissecting the intima from the vein wall in that the curved nature may enable them to more effectively cut through or "scoop" the curved vein wall.

Although dissecting system **420** is shown as having two dissecting components **446A**, **446B**, the dissecting system may alternatively include one or three extension wire(s) and corresponding dissecting component(s), as shown in FIGS. 13 and 14 respectively. Specifically, as shown in FIG. 13, dissecting system **1320** includes core element **1316** and a single extension wire **1340** with dissecting component **1346** thereon which operates to create one intimal flap of tissue that functions as a monocusp leaflet as will be described in more detail herein. The balloon catheter for delivering dissecting system **1320** includes one delivery shaft for slidably receiving extension wire **1340**. Similarly, FIG. 14 illustrates dissecting system **1420** includes core element **1416** and three extension wires **1440A**, **1440B**, **1440C** with dissecting components **1446A**, **1446B**, **1446C** respectively thereon which operate to create three intimal flaps of tissue that functions as tricuspid leaflets. The balloon catheter for delivering dissecting system **1420** includes three delivery shafts for slidably receiving extension wires **1440A**, **1440B**, **1440C** and the three delivery

shafts may be located at equally-spaced radial positions around the circumference of balloon **426**.

FIGS. 15-19 are schematic representations of a method of forming a venous valve from autologous tissue in accordance with an embodiment hereof, wherein the method includes utilizing dissecting components **446A**, **446B** of dissecting system **420** described above to create two intimal flaps of tissue from a vein wall which then act as a one-way valve in the manner of a native venous valve. The dissecting system described herein may be delivered to the target location in an antegrade manner. Antegrade delivery allows the dissecting system to easily and slidably pass through the native valves without incidental damage thereto. In one embodiment, percutaneous luminal access to a desired peripheral vein **1500** is obtained through the popliteal vein or posterior tibial vein in the lower leg and delivery of the dissecting system is in an antegrade direction such that the dissecting system passes forwardly (i.e., distal to proximal relative to the heart) through native valves located within the vein in route to a target location where a new vein valve is to be created. In other embodiments, luminal access to desired peripheral vein **1500** is obtained through the greater or lesser saphenous, femoral, or popliteal veins using standard percutaneous techniques. It should be understood by one of skill in the art that methods as described herein may be used to form an autologous valve in any vein of sufficient thickness to enable a dissection to occur as described in greater detail below. Initially guidewire **413** may be maneuvered through the vasculature to rest across a target location within lumen **1515** of vein **1500** where a new venous valve is to be created. Balloon catheter **418** having deployable dissecting system **420** located therein is then advanced over guidewire **413** in an antegrade direction, i.e., in the direction of antegrade flow A_p , over the guidewire to the target location. If desired, a protective sheath **1560** may be provided to surround and cover balloon **426** and dissecting system **420** until deployment to facilitate tracking of balloon catheter **418** through the vasculature and prevent unintentional vessel damage while advancing dissecting system **420** to the target location. FIG. 15 illustrates balloon catheter **418** positioned at the target location, with balloon **426** in a delivery or non-inflated configuration and sheath **1560** partially retracted. Dissecting components **446A**, **446B**, are housed in a generally straightened delivery configuration within delivery shafts **450A**, **450B**, respectively.

Once positioned as desired, inflation fluid is provided via inflation port **427** (shown in FIG. 4) of hub **428** so that balloon **426** may be inflated as is known to one of ordinary skill in the art. As shown in FIG. 16, balloon **426** of catheter **418** is inflated to such an extent to press balloon **426**, into apposition against the vascular wall of the vessel, i.e., fully positioned against or makes contact with the vessel wall. Delivery shafts **450A**, **450B** are also pressed against the vascular wall of the vessel, with proximal ports **456A**, **456B** thereof facing opposing surfaces of the vessel wall. Extension wires **440A**, **440B** of dissecting system **420** are still housed within the delivery lumens of delivery shafts **450A**, **450B**, respectively.

After balloon expansion, dissecting system **420** is proximally retracted in a direction indicated by arrow **1762** as shown in FIG. 17. As described above with respect to FIGS. 7-10, proximal retraction of core element **416** causes extension wires **440A**, **440B** to also move in the same proximal direction until pointed tips **442A**, **442B** of extension wires **440A**, **440B**, respectively, exit out of proximal ports **456A**, **456B** of delivery shafts **450A**, **450B** and puncture or pierce the intimal layer of the wall of vein **1500**. Continued proximal retraction of core element **416** results in diamond-shaped elements **448A**, **448B** also exiting out of proximal ports

456A, 456B and deploying into their preset diamond-shaped configurations. Dissecting system 420 is proximally retracted a sufficient distance to allow diamond shaped elements 448A, 448B to create a subintimal longitudinal dissection of the intimal layer that separates tissue of the vein wall that substantially parallels a longitudinal axis of vein 1500. The subintimal longitudinal dissection may longitudinally extend within the intimal layer, between the intimal layer and the medial layer, between the medial layer and the adventitial layer, or within the medial layer; with care being taken that dissecting components 446A, 446B do not pass entirely through the vein wall.

Fluoroscopic or ultrasonographic guidance of retracting catheter 418 may be utilized to assure a length of the dissection plane created within the vein wall, as a length of the dissection plane will determine a length of the resulting flap. In one embodiment, at least dissecting components 446A, 446B are formed from a radiopaque material to aid in positioning the components within the vein wall. In another embodiment, radiopaque markers such as gold or platinum discs or bands may be placed onto extension wires 440A, 440B adjacent to pointed tips 442A, 442B and/or dissecting components 446A, 446B to aid in positioning the components within the vein wall. In order to make a bicuspid flap, each flap must have a free edge length of roughly half of the circumference of the vessel lumen with the depth of each dissection plane being sufficient to allow the resulting flaps to touch one another in the centerline of the vessel lumen. In order to make a monocuspid flap, the flap must have a free edge length of greater than half of the circumference of the vessel lumen with the depth of the dissection plane being sufficient to allow the resulting flap to touch the opposite side of the vessel wall. In order to determine an accurate depth/length of the dissection plane, an accurate measurement of the diameter of the vessel may be obtained by using fluoroscopy and quantitative coronary angiography (QCA). In such a procedure, the clinician uses a tool to "mark" the monitor with the fluoroscopic image. The tool has a calibrated measurement system so the clinician can accurately measure the diameter of the vein. Further, vessel diameter and wall thickness measurements may be obtained via intravascular ultrasound (IVUS), a medical imaging methodology that utilizes a miniaturized ultrasound probe attached to a distal end of a catheter to see from inside blood vessels out through the surrounding blood column. IVUS allows visualization of the inner wall of the vessel and thus the clinician may watch dissecting components 446A, 446B creating the dissection in real time. Alternatively, angiography with a road map may also be utilized to watch the vessel in real time or external ultrasound (Duplex) may be utilized to obtain information about the vessel diameter.

In addition, a series of depth markers 435 (see FIG. 4) may be located on the proximal portion of outer shaft 422 that extends outside of the patient's body in order to aid the physician in assessing how much to proximally retract catheter 418 to ensure that the appropriate length of tissue is dissected. Series of markers 435 may be spaced apart at predefined increments, such as for example between 1 mm and 5 mm apart. The location or position of the series of markers 435 on outer shaft 422 relative to a stationary object, such as a proximal hub of a guide catheter or sheath, may be monitored by the physician to track or measure how far catheter 418 is retracted during the cutting step of the procedure, thereby monitoring the length or depth of the dissection performed by dissecting components 446A, 446B situated near the distal end of catheter 418. The series of markers 435 may be printed on outer shaft 422 using pad-printing, laser print-

ing, or other common printing techniques. Another method to monitor the length of the dissection includes placing a single marker such as an O-ring over the proximal portion of catheter 418. The single marker may be placed adjacent to or abutting against the insertion point of catheter 418 prior to performance of the dissection step. As catheter 418 is proximally retracted in order to create a dissection plane within the vein wall, the distance between the marker and the insertion point is monitored and measured to track the length of the dissection being formed by dissecting components 446A, 446B.

To complete the formation of the new venous valve after the dissection has been created in the vein wall, balloon 426 is subsequently collapsed or deflated such that the dissecting components 446A, 446B pulls or directs flaps 1832A, 1832B of tissue towards lumen 1515 of vein 1500 as shown in FIG. 18. In addition, deflation of balloon 426 may aid in further tearing the intimal flaps 1832A, 1832B so that they may function as a vein valve. The width W dissecting components 446A, 446B, as well as the fact that dissecting components 446A, 446B extends from balloon 426 at angle θ due to ramps 457A, 457B of delivery shafts 450A, 450B, causes flaps 1832A, 1832B of tissue to pull away from the vessel wall as balloon 426 is deflated to a smaller profile. Stated another way, deflation of balloon 426 essentially peels flaps 1832A, 1832B of tissue away from the remaining tissue of the vein wall. A flap by definition is a moveable piece of tissue partly connected to the body, and accordingly, it should be understood by the preceding description that a distal end of flaps 1832A, 1832B remain connected to the remaining tissue of vein 1500 while a proximal end or edge of flaps 1832A, 1832B are dissected away from the remaining tissue of the vein wall. When dissecting components 446A, 446B pull flaps 1832A, 1832B of tissue towards lumen 1515 of vein 1500, two pockets or sinuses 1834A, 1834B are simultaneously formed between flaps 1832A, 1832B and the remaining tissue of the vein wall. Sinuses 1834A, 1834B have a tapered shape in which a distal diameter thereof is smaller than a proximal diameter thereof. The tapered shape of sinuses 1834A, 1834B, which mimics native valve sinuses, aids in permitting blood to fill sinuses 1834A, 1834B and close flaps 1832A, 1832B. As mentioned previously, when referring to flaps 1832A, 1832B of tissue and other features of the venous valve, the term "proximal" refers to the end closest to the heart by way of blood flow path while the term "distal" refers to the end away from the heart by way of blood flow path.

In order to remove balloon catheter 418, retractable dissection system 420 is distally advanced in a direction indicated by arrow 1964 while holding balloon catheter 418 stationary to disengage dissecting components 446A, 446B from flaps 1832A, 1832B and reposition dissecting system 420 into the delivery lumens of delivery shafts 450A, 450B as shown in FIG. 19. Balloon catheter 418 and dissecting system 420 may then be proximally retracted and removed from the patient. If desired, sheath 1560 may be re-advanced over balloon catheter 418 and dissecting system 420 prior to proximally retracting and removing them from the patient.

In the embodiment of FIGS. 20A and 20B, flaps 1832A, 1832B include free edges 2036A, 2036B, respectively, that meet to close lumen 1515 in the absence of antegrade blood flow A_F , represented by arrow A_F , when retrograde or gravitational blood flow, represented by arrow R_F , fills sinuses 1834A, 1834B. When antegrade blood flow A_F is once again present in vein 1500, and a pressure gradient exists such that $A_F > R_F$, flaps 1832A, 1832B are pushed away from each other, as shown in FIG. 20B, to allow blood flow through new

venous valve **2014** on its way back to the heart. Flaps **1832A**, **1832B** are each of a sufficient length to permit free edges **2036A**, **2036B** of flaps **1832A**, **1832B** to touch against each other. In such an embodiment, flaps **1832A**, **1832B** and sinuses **1834A**, **1834B** constitute a bicuspid or two-leaflet venous valve **2014**.

In another embodiment hereof illustrated in FIGS. **20C** and **20D**, the dissecting system may include only one dissecting component for creating a single flap **1832C** of intimal tissue as described above in relation to FIG. **13**. Flap **1832C** is of a sufficient length to make contact with an opposing side **2038** of the vein wall of lumen **1515**, such that in the absence of antegrade blood flow, free edge **2036C** of flap **1832C** seals against opposing side **2038** while retrograde flow fills pocket **1834C**. In such an embodiment, flap **1832C** and pocket **1834C** constitute a one-way monocuspid or one-leaflet venous valve **2014C** of autologous tissue. Further, even if flap **1832C** is not a sufficient length to fully extend across lumen **1515** and seal against opposing side **2038** of the vein wall, the presence of flap **1832C** and pocket **1834C** will significantly reduce the amount of blood that can reflux or backflow down the vessel. In another embodiment illustrated in FIG. **14**, a total of three dissecting components may be deployed at equally-spaced radial positions around the circumference of balloon **426** in order to simultaneously form a tricuspid or three-leaflet valve.

In each of the aforementioned embodiments, the dissected flaps provide the same internal, i.e., facing the blood flow, tissue structure as a native valve thus providing a distinct advantage over prosthetic valve approaches. If the newly created flaps or leaflets **1832A**, **1832B** do not exhibit enough structural integrity to take the shape of a cusp or leaflet or if the flaps remain adhered to the remaining tissue of the vein wall the performance of those structures may be supplemented via biasing elements placed into pockets **1834A**, **1834B**. The biasing elements are designed to hold the shape of the pockets and do not offer much resistance to antegrade blood flow but instead collapse and allow the valve to open in the presences of antegrade flow. More particularly, with reference to FIG. **21**, spring clip devices **2158A**, **2158B** may be placed into pockets **1834A**, **1834B** to aid in completely closing vessel lumen **1515** in the absence of antegrade blood flow A_F by biasing flaps **1832A**, **1832B** against one and other. In this manner, retrograde blood flow R_F is impeded from seeping through free edges **2036A**, **2036B** and causing reflux to instead fill pockets **1834A**, **1834B**. When antegrade blood flow A_F once again pushes upon flaps **1832A**, **1832B**, spring clip devices **2158A**, **2158B** are compliant enough to compress to allow flaps **1832A**, **1832B** to part such that antegrade blood flows through bicuspid valve **2014**. Spring clip devices **2158A**, **2158B** would be percutaneously delivered. In an embodiment the spring clips may be manufactured from a superelastic material such as nitinol. The clips may be shaped into a FIG. **8**, as shown in FIG. **21B**, and then folded at the mid-point to an appropriate angle, as shown in FIG. **21**. In an embodiment, a suitable range for this angle is between 20 to 60 degrees. The spring-clip may be shape-set into this configuration using an oven set to an appropriate temperature for the material, by e.g., 525°C. for nitinol. The spring clip would then be loaded into a catheter assembly at the distal tip and advanced to the tissue pockets (sinus) in a retrograde direction. A pusher rod or other delivery mechanism may then be used to push the spring-clip out of the distal tip of the catheter and into the tissue pocket. Because of the materials superelasticity, the spring clip will self-expand to its original folded FIG. **8** configuration. Thus the material would contact the inner edge of the vessel wall and the inner edge of the created

tissue pocket. In another embodiment, a tapered self-expanding stent **2159** as shown in FIG. **21A** may be placed in each of pockets **1834A**, **1834B** to function in the same manner as previously described for spring clip devices **2158A**, **2158B**. Self-expanding stent **2159** may be made of nitinol with a very thin wall, such as having a wall thickness of between 0.001 to 0.005 inches.

The expandable dissecting components may have alternative configurations from the diamond-shaped elements described above. For example, in another embodiment shown in FIGS. **22A** and **22B**, dissecting system **2220** includes a core element **2216** and two proximally-extending extension wires **2240A**, **2240B** coupled to the distal end (not shown) of core element **2216**. Extension wires **2240A**, **2240B** include dissecting components **2246A**, **2246B** respectively that are self-expanding braided or mesh tubular components **2266A**, **2266B** constructed from a plurality of metallic or polymeric filaments woven together. In an embodiment, the filaments of braided tubular components **2266A**, **2266B** are formed from a self-expanding material including but not limited to stainless steel or a superelastic material such as NiTi (Nitinol) such that that braided tubular components **2266A**, **2266B** have a mechanical memory to return to the expanded, deployed configuration shown in FIG. **22B** from the straightened or compressed delivery configuration shown in FIG. **22A**. Thus, when dissecting system **2220** is proximally retracted, tubular components **2266A**, **2266B** are released or exposed from the delivery lumens of delivery shafts **450A**, **450B** until tubular components **2266A**, **2266B** are fully deployed into their pre-set radially-expanded configurations as shown in FIG. **22B**. In the radially-expanded configuration, tubular components **2266A**, **2266B** may each approximate one of an ellipsoidal, spherical, and cylindrical-like shape. In operation, tubular components **2266A**, **2266B** expand or deploy into the sub-intimal layer and dissect the intimal layer from the media. In addition, in one embodiment, tubular components **2266A**, **2266B** in the expanded or deployed configuration may each have a sufficient outer diameter to dilate the sub-intimal space an adequate amount to create two intimal flaps of tissue and corresponding sinuses/pockets. Dissecting system **2220** is distally advanced in order to reposition tubular components **2266A**, **2266B** within the delivery lumens of delivery shafts **450A**, **450B**. Dissecting system **2220**, as well as balloon catheter **418**, may be retracted and removed from the patient.

In another embodiment shown in FIGS. **23A** and **23B**, dissecting system **2320** includes a core element **2316** and two proximally-extending extension wires **2340A**, **2340B** coupled to the distal end of core element **2316**. Extension wires **2340A**, **2340B** include dissecting components **2346A**, **2346B** respectively that are radially-expandable balloons **2368A**, **2368B**. In this embodiment, core element **2316** and extension wires **2340A**, **2340B** are each metallic or polymeric hypotubes defining lumens that are in fluid communication with each other such that inflation fluid injected through core element **2316** passes into extension wires **2340A**, **2340B** to inflate balloons **2368A**, **2368B**. In operation, dissecting system **2340** is proximally refracted until balloons **2368A**, **2368B** are no longer contained within the delivery lumens of the catheter delivery shafts and are properly positioned within the respective dissection planes made in the wall of the vein. Balloons **2368A**, **2368B** are simultaneously inflated within their respective dissection planes to expand or deploy within the sub-intimal space and dissect the intimal layer from the media. In addition, in one embodiment, balloons **2368A**, **2368B** may be expanded to a sufficient outer diameter to dilate the sub-intimal space an adequate amount to create two intimal flaps of tissue and corresponding sinuses/pockets.

Balloons **2368A**, **2368B** are then deflated and dissecting system **2320** is distally advanced in order to reposition balloons **2368A**, **2368B** within extension wires **2340A**, **2340B**. Dissecting system **2320**, as well as balloon catheter **418**, may be retracted and removed from the patient.

As shown FIG. **23B**, balloons **2368A**, **2368B** may have tapered shapes with a proximal inflated diameter that is smaller than a distal inflated diameter, wherein “proximal” and “distal” are used to describe a position relative to the treating clinician. The tapered shape of balloons **2368A**, **2368B** create conically shaped recesses between the dissected flaps of intimal tissue and the respective remaining medial tissue. The conically shaped recesses or spaces define pockets or sinuses and their shape, which mimics native valve sinuses, aids in permitting blood to fill the pockets and close the flaps of intimal tissue. An expanded proximal diameter of balloons **2368A**, **2368B** may be selected such that the resulting flaps are able to contact each other within the lumen in the absence of antegrade blood flow A_F .

In addition, the catheter described herein for delivering the dissecting system to the target location may have alternative configurations from the balloon catheter described above. For example, FIG. **24** depicts a distal portion of the catheter having a radially-expandable component that may be utilized in place of an inflatable balloon in embodiments described herein. More particularly, the delivery catheter may include an outer shaft **2422**, an inner shaft **2424** concentrically disposed within outer shaft **2422**, a braided or mesh tubular component **2426** constructed from a plurality of metallic or polymeric filaments woven together, and two delivery shafts **2450A**, **2450B** disposed over an outer surface of braided component **2426**. A dissecting system such as dissecting system **420** described above is slidably disposed through inner shaft **2424** and delivery shafts **2450A**, **2450B** in the same manner as described above with respect to inner shaft **424** and delivery shafts **450A**, **450B**. Further, delivery shafts **440A**, **440B** or **540A**, **540B** will be attached to the outer surface of braided component **2426** in the same manner as they were attached to the outer surface of balloon **426** described above. A proximal end of braided component **2426** is connected to a distal end of outer shaft **2422**, and a distal end of braided component **2426** is connected to a distal end of inner shaft **2422**. In one embodiment, braided component **2426** may be formed of a self-expanding material such as NiTi (Nitinol) such that when an outer sheath is retracted or pulled back, braided component **2426** resumes its radially-expanded configuration that contacts the vessel wall. In another embodiment, relative movement between outer and inner shafts **422**, **424** radially expands braided component **2426** into apposition with the vessel wall and also straightens or collapses braided component **2426** into the delivery configuration after the retractable dissecting system forms a subintimal longitudinal dissection of at least intimal tissue of the vein wall. When fully expanded within the vessel, braided component **2426** may approximate one of an ellipsoidal, spherical, and cylindrical-like shape.

While various embodiments hereof have been described above, it should be understood that they have been presented by way of illustration and example only, and not limitation. It will be apparent to persons skilled in the relevant art that various changes in form and detail can be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Thus, the breadth and scope hereof should not be limited by any of the above-described exemplary embodiments, but should be defined only in accordance with the appended claims and their equivalents. It will also be understood that each feature

cited herein, can be used in combination with the features of any other embodiment. All patents and publications discussed herein are incorporated by reference herein in their entirety.

What is claimed is:

1. A percutaneous method for creating a venous valve from autologous tissue, the method comprising the steps of:
 - advancing a catheter having a radially-expandable component and a retractable dissecting system slidably received within the catheter to a target location, wherein the catheter includes at least one delivery shaft defining a delivery lumen and having a port that is positioned on one side of the radially-expandable component and the dissecting system includes at least one expandable dissecting component that is constrained in a delivery configuration within the delivery lumen;
 - expanding the radially-expandable component of the catheter to bias the port against a wall of the vein;
 - proximally retracting the retractable dissecting system such that the at least one dissecting component exits the port formed within the delivery shaft and penetrates into the vein wall and forms a subintimal longitudinal dissection of at least intimal tissue of the vein wall that is separated from remaining tissue of the vein wall, wherein the dissecting component assumes an expanded configuration when it exits the port;
 - collapsing the radially-expandable component of the catheter such that the at least one dissecting component separates the subintimal longitudinal dissection of tissue from the remaining tissue of the vein wall and pulls the subintimal longitudinal dissection of tissue into a lumen of the vein and thereby simultaneously forms a flap of tissue and a sinus between the flap and the remaining tissue of the vein wall, wherein the flap and the sinus constitute at least a portion of the venous valve.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:
 - distally advancing the retractable dissecting system to disengage the at least one dissecting component from the flap of tissue after collapsing the radially-expandable component of the catheter and further distally advancing the retractable dissecting system until the at least one dissecting component is re-constrained in the delivery configuration within the delivery lumen.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein fluoroscopic or ultrasonographic guidance is used while proximally retracting the retractable dissecting system to determine a length of the subintimal longitudinal dissection plane created by the at least one dissecting component.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein a proximal portion of the catheter includes at least one marker that is utilized while proximally retracting the retractable dissecting system to determine a length of the subintimal longitudinal dissection plane created by the at least one dissecting component.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the retractable dissecting system has one dissecting component and a free edge of the flap is of a length that is greater than half the circumference of the vein lumen to form a monocuspid leaflet of the venous valve.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein the retractable dissecting system includes first and second dissecting components that are constrained in delivery configurations within first and second delivery lumens formed within the catheter on opposing sides of the radially-expandable component approximately 180 degrees from each other and wherein the first and second dissecting components exit first and second ports formed within the catheter that are in fluid communication with the first and second delivery lumens to assume expanded configurations, and wherein the first and second dissecting

components penetrate into the vein wall to create respective first and second subintimal longitudinal dissections in the vein wall so that at least intimal tissue of the vein wall is separated from remaining tissue of the vein wall and wherein collapsing the radially-expandable component forms first and second flaps of tissue and first and second sinuses between the flaps and the remaining tissue of the vein wall, wherein the first and second flaps and first and second sinuses constitute a venous valve having bicuspid leaflets.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the retractable dissecting system includes first, second, and third dissecting components that are constrained in delivery configurations within first, second, and third delivery lumens formed within the catheter around the circumference of the radially-expandable component and wherein the first, second, and third dissecting components exit first, second, and third ports formed within the catheter that are in fluid communication with the first, second, and third delivery lumens to assume expanded configurations, and wherein the first, second, and third dissecting components penetrate into the vein wall to create respective first, second, and third subintimal longitudinal dissections in the vein wall so that at least intimal tissue of the vein wall is separated from remaining tissue of the vein wall and wherein collapsing the radially-expandable component forms first, second, and third flaps of tissue and first, second, and third sinuses between the flaps and the remaining tissue of the vein wall, wherein the first, second, and third flaps and first, second, and third sinuses constitute a venous valve having tricuspid leaflets.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the catheter is advanced in an antegrade manner via percutaneous access to the lumen of the vein.

9. A percutaneous method for creating a venous valve from autologous tissue, the method comprising the steps of:

advancing a catheter having a radially-expandable component and a retractable dissecting system slidably received within the catheter to a target location, wherein the catheter includes at least one delivery shaft defining a delivery lumen and having a port that is positioned on one side of the radially-expandable component and the dissecting system includes at least one inflatable dissecting component that is constrained in a delivery configuration within the delivery lumen;

expanding the radially-expandable component of the catheter to bias the port against a wall of the vein;

proximally retracting the retractable dissecting system such that the at least one inflatable dissecting component exits the port formed within the catheter and penetrates into the vein wall to form a subintimal longitudinal dissection of at least intimal tissue of the vein wall that is separated from remaining tissue of the vein wall; and

inflating the at least one inflatable dissecting component within the vein wall to further dissect the at least intimal tissue of the vein wall from the remaining tissue of the vein wall and thereby simultaneously form a flap of tissue and a sinus between the flap and the remaining tissue of the vein wall, wherein the flap and the sinus constitute at least a portion of the venous valve.

10. The method of claim 9, further comprising the step of: deflating the at least one inflatable dissecting component and distally advancing the retractable dissecting system

until the at least one inflatable dissecting component is re-constrained in the delivery configuration within the delivery lumen.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein fluoroscopic or ultrasonographic guidance is used while proximally retracting the retractable dissecting system to determine a length of the subintimal longitudinal dissection plane created by the at least one dissecting component.

12. The method of claim 9, wherein a proximal portion of the catheter includes at least one marker that is utilized while proximally retracting the retractable dissecting system to determine a length of the subintimal longitudinal dissection plane created by the at least one dissecting component.

13. The method of claim 9, wherein the retractable dissecting system has one dissecting component and a free edge of the flap is of a length that is greater than half the circumference of the vein lumen to form a monocuspid leaflet of the venous valve.

14. The method of claim 9, wherein the retractable dissecting system includes first and second inflatable dissecting components that are constrained in delivery configurations within first and second delivery lumens formed within the catheter on opposing sides of the radially-expandable component approximately 180 degrees from each other and wherein the first and second inflatable dissecting components exit first and second ports formed within the catheter that are in fluid communication with the first and second delivery lumens to assume expanded configurations, and wherein the inflatable first and second dissecting components penetrate into the vein wall to create respective first and second subintimal longitudinal dissections in the vein wall so that at least intimal tissue of the vein wall is separated from remaining tissue of the vein wall and wherein collapsing the radially-expandable component forms first and second flaps of tissue and first and second sinuses between the flaps and the remaining tissue of the vein wall, wherein the first and second flaps and first and second sinuses constitute a venous valve having bicuspid leaflets.

15. The method of claim 9, wherein the retractable dissecting system includes first, second, and third dissecting components that are constrained in delivery configurations within first, second, and third delivery lumens formed within the catheter around the circumference of the radially-expandable component and wherein the first, second, and third dissecting components exit first, second, and third ports formed within the catheter that are in fluid communication with the first, second, and third delivery lumens to assume expanded configurations, and wherein the first, second, and third dissecting components penetrate into the vein wall to create respective first, second, and third subintimal longitudinal dissections in the vein wall so that at least intimal tissue of the vein wall is separated from remaining tissue of the vein wall and wherein collapsing the radially-expandable component forms first, second, and third flaps of tissue and first, second, and third sinuses between the flaps and the remaining tissue of the vein wall, wherein the first, second, and third flaps and first, second, and third sinuses constitute a venous valve having tricuspid leaflets.

16. The method of claim 9, wherein the catheter is advanced in an antegrade manner via percutaneous access to the lumen of the vein.

* * * * *

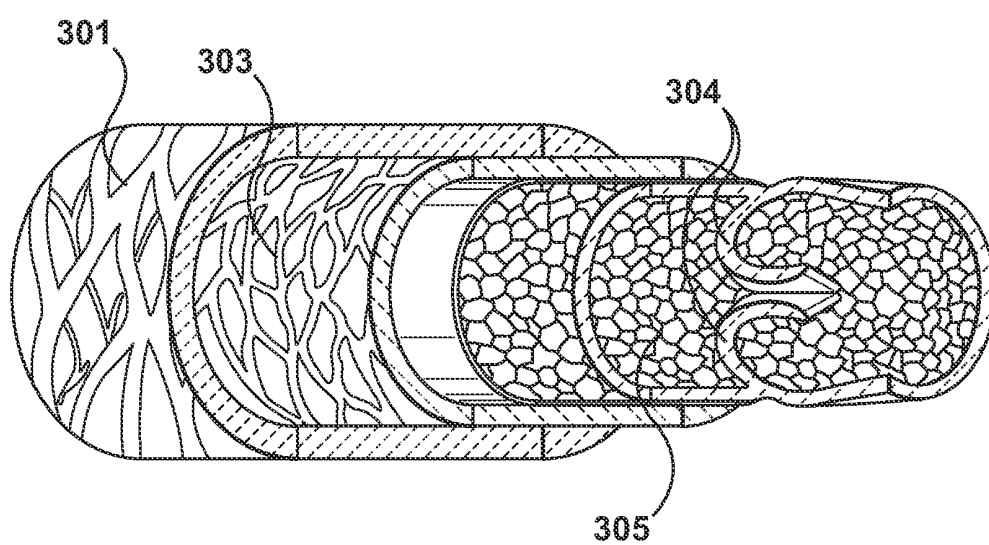


FIG. 3

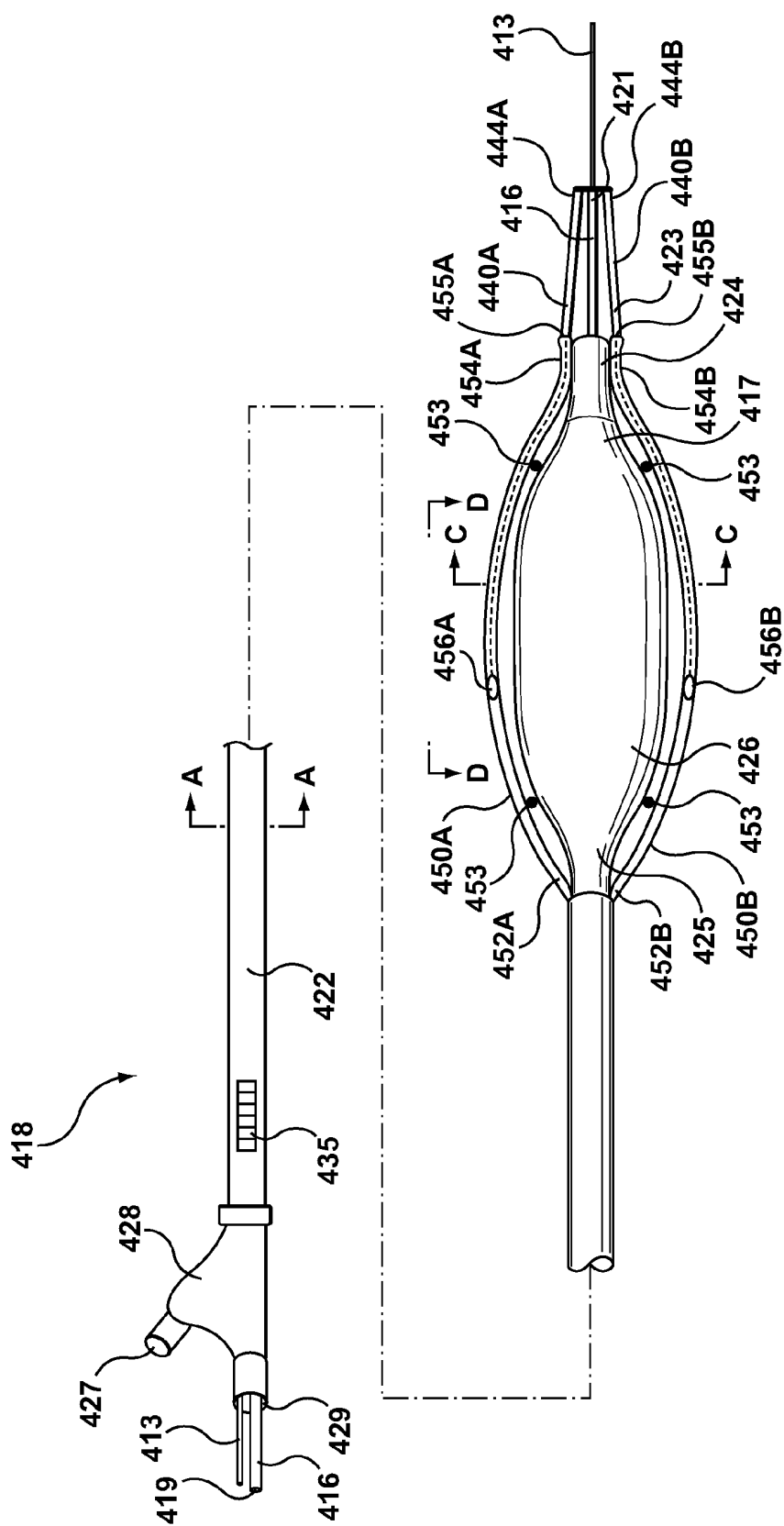


FIG. 4

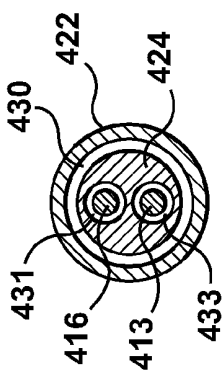


FIG. 4A

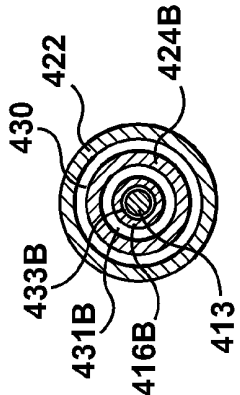


FIG. 4B

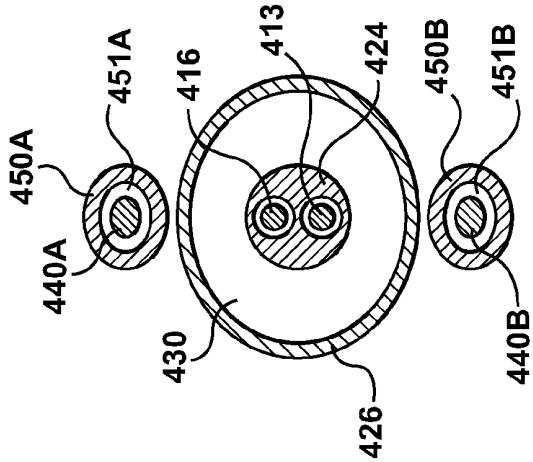


FIG. 4C

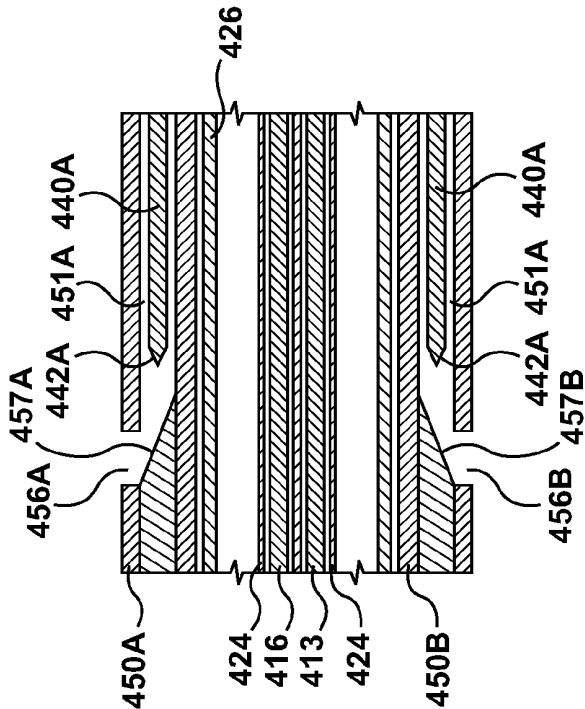


FIG. 4D

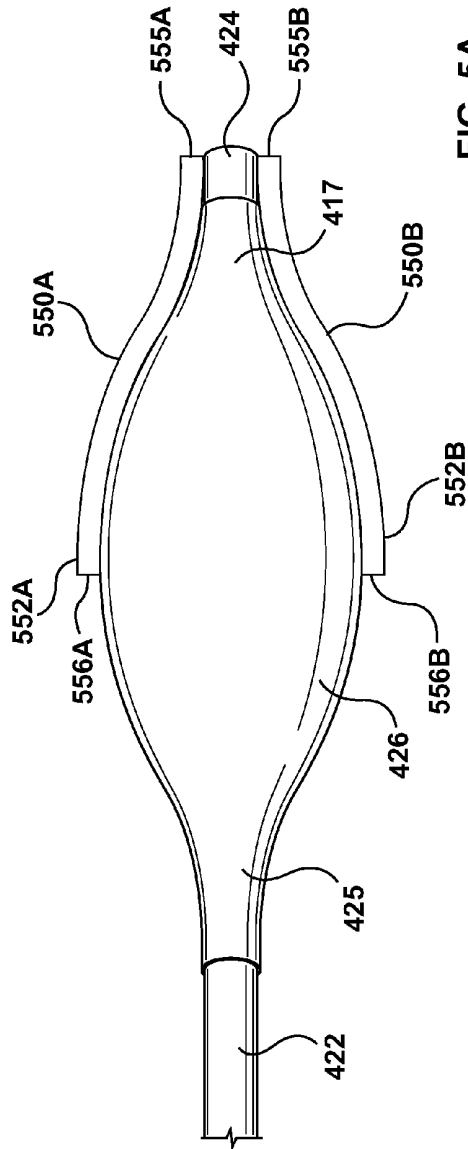


FIG. 5A

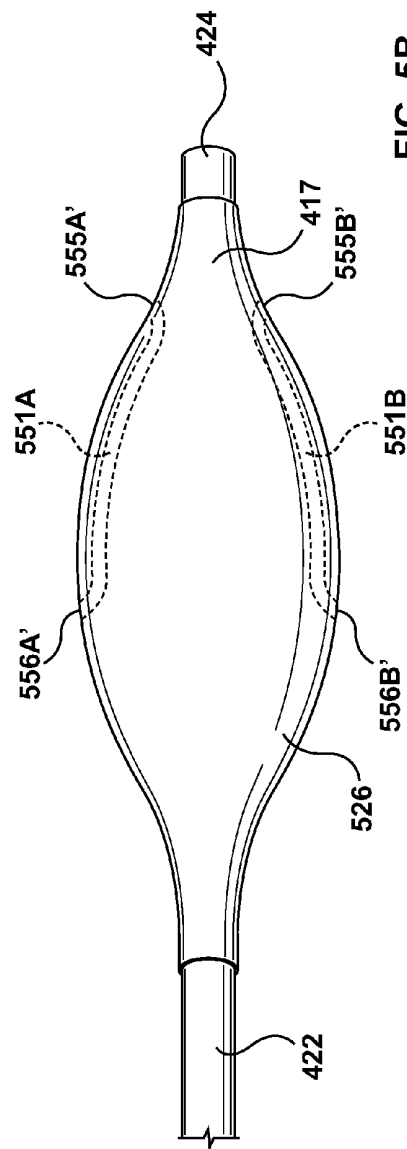


FIG. 5B

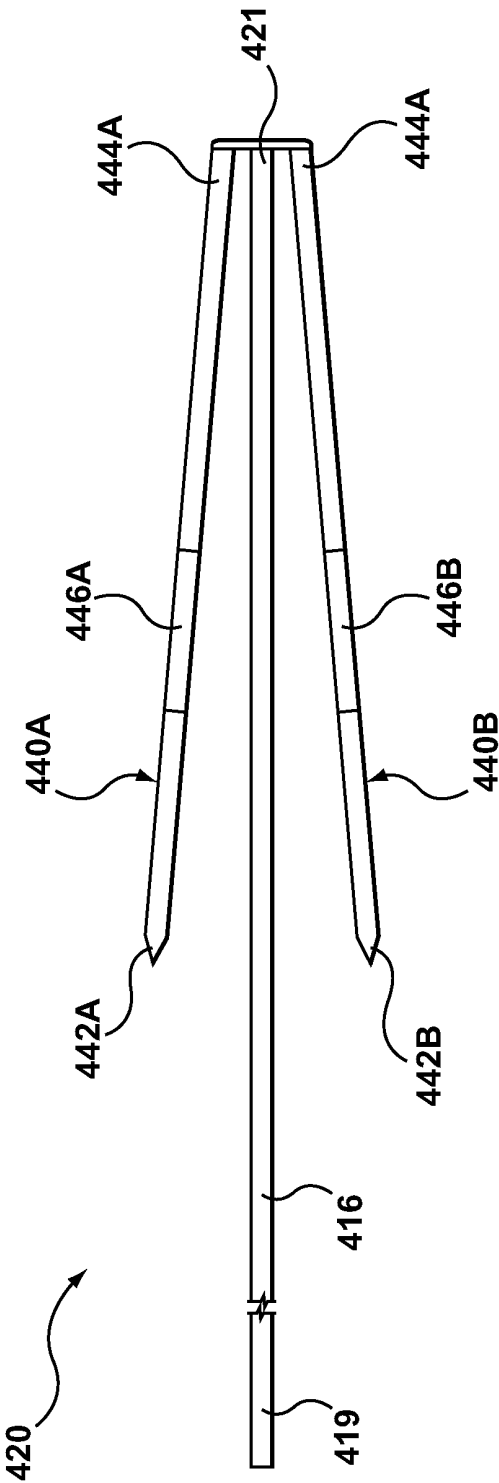


FIG. 6

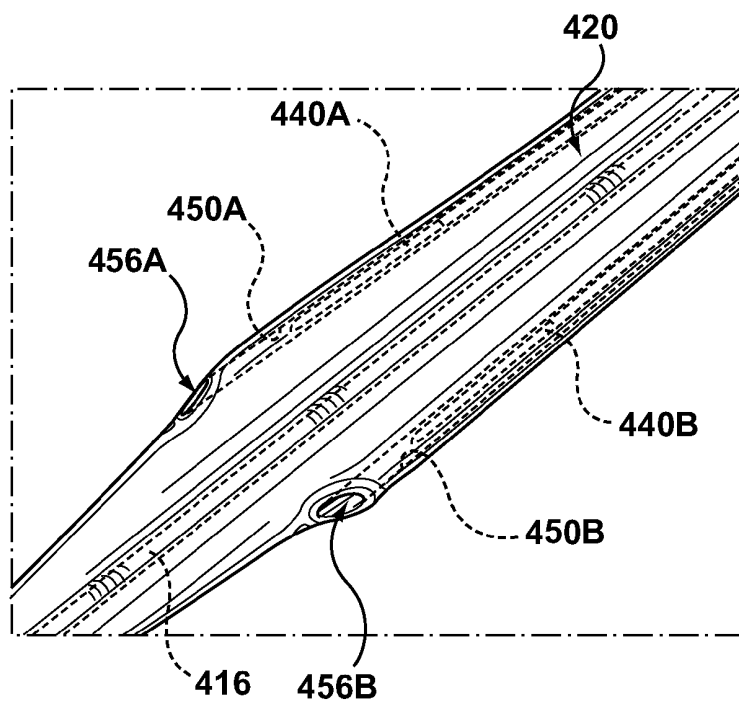


FIG. 7

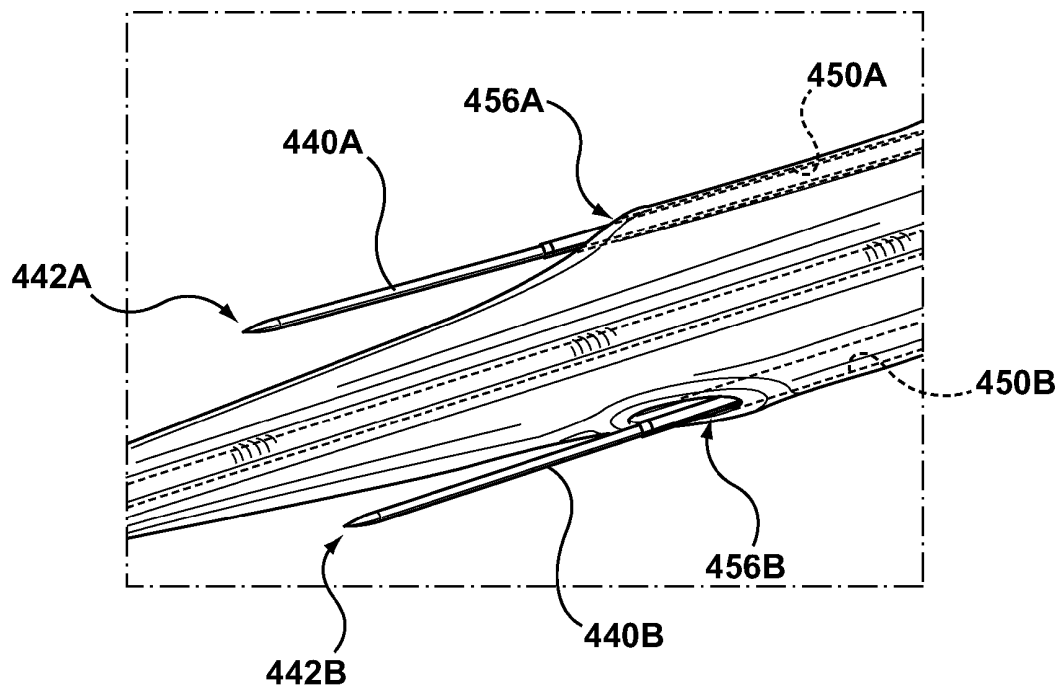


FIG. 8

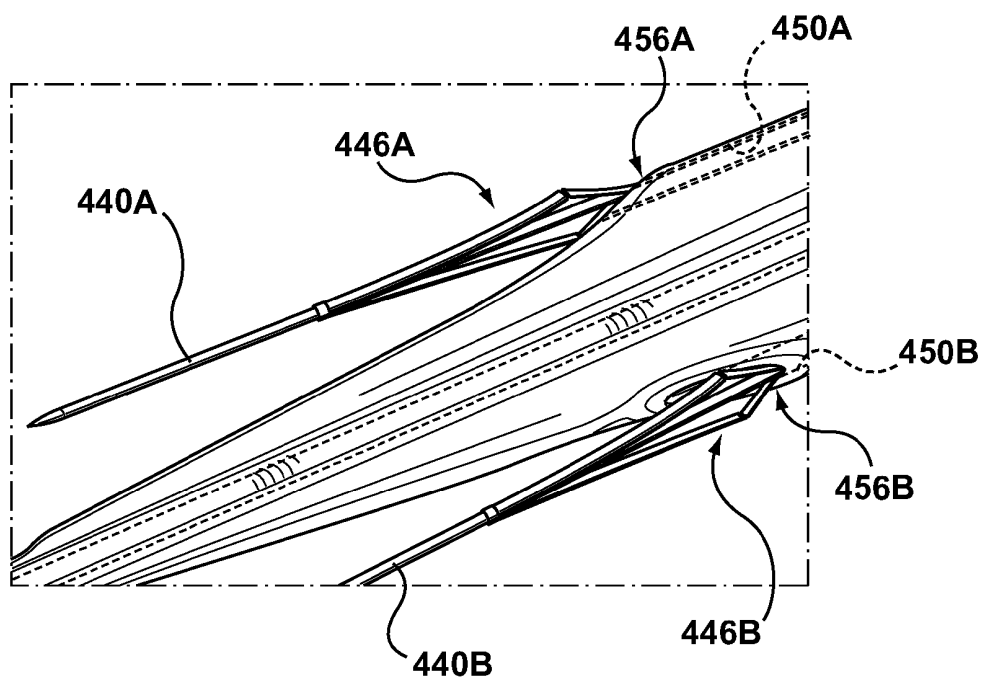


FIG. 9

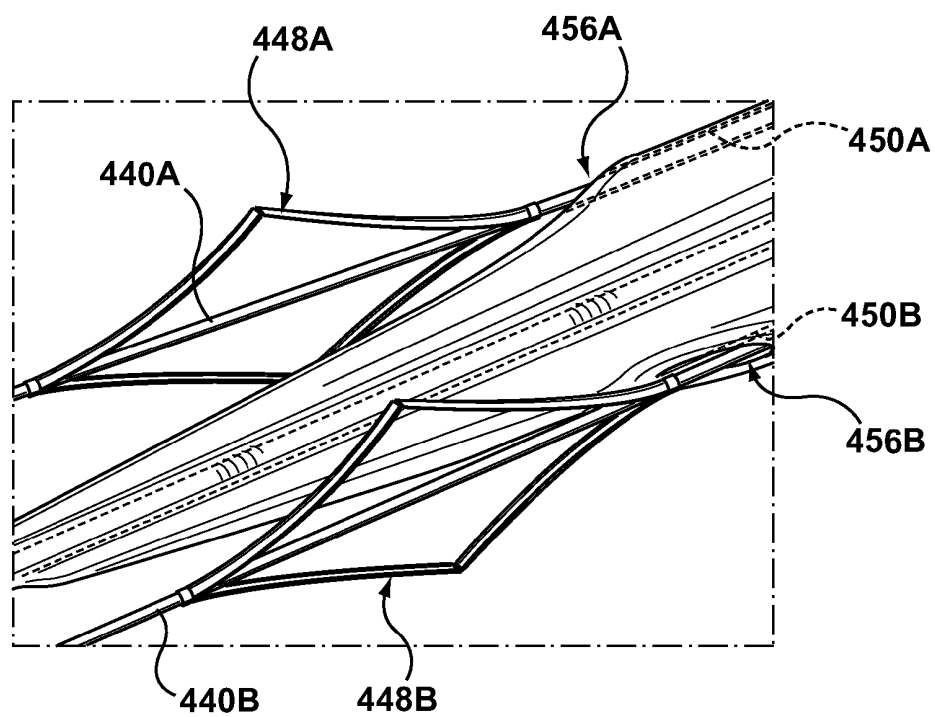


FIG. 10

