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Wu et al.(10) **Pub. No.: US 2011/0264011 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Oct. 27, 2011**(54) **MULTI-DIRECTIONAL DEFLECTABLE
CATHETER APPARUSES, SYSTEMS, AND
METHODS FOR RENAL
NEUROMODULATION****Publication Classification**

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A61B 18/04 (2006.01)
A61B 18/24 (2006.01)
- (52) **U.S. Cl.** 601/2; 606/27; 606/33; 606/13;
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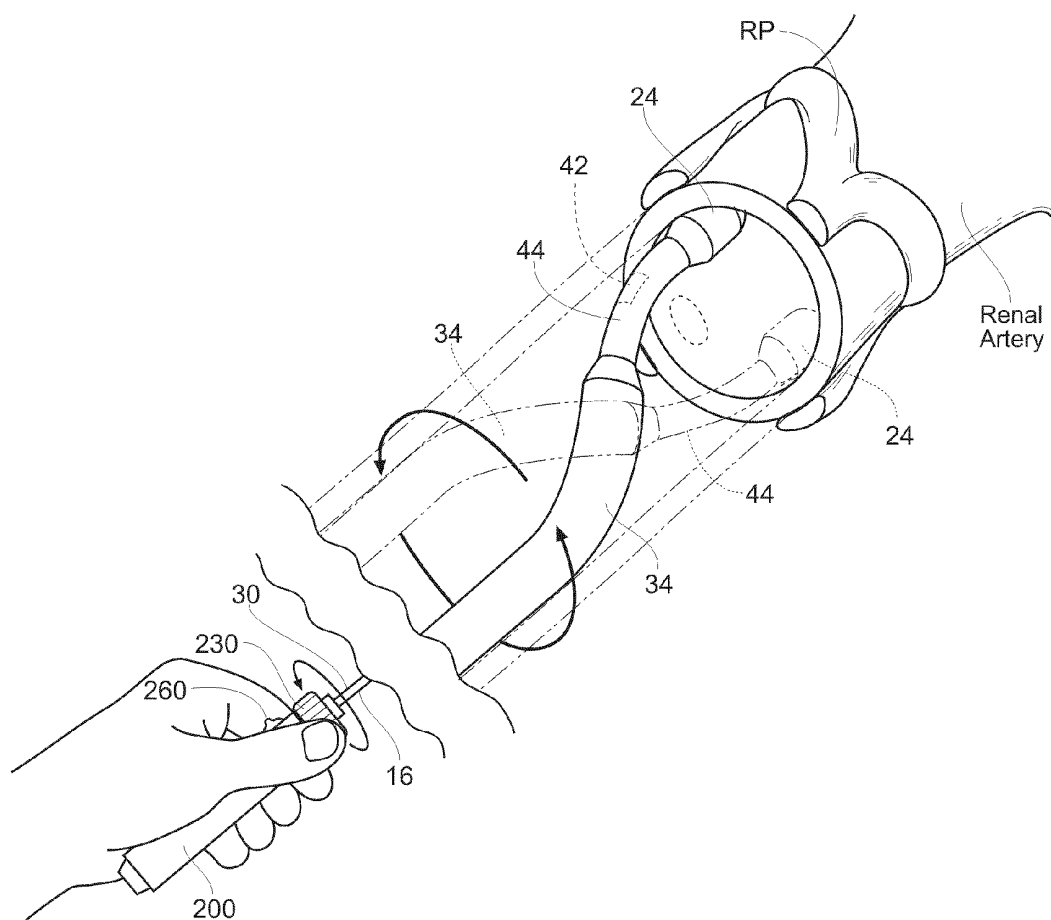
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Related U.S. Application Data

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 26, 2010.

(57) **ABSTRACT**

Multi-directional deflectable catheter apparatuses, systems, and methods for achieving renal neuromodulation by intra-vascular access are disclosed herein. One aspect of the present application, for example, is directed to apparatuses, systems, and methods that incorporate a catheter treatment device comprising an elongated shaft. The elongated shaft is sized and configured to deliver a thermal element to a renal artery via an intravascular path. Thermally or electrical renal neuromodulation may be achieved via direct and/or via indirect application of thermal and/or electrical energy to heat or cool, or otherwise electrically modulate, neural fibers that contribute to renal function, or of vascular structures that feed or perfuse the neural fibers.



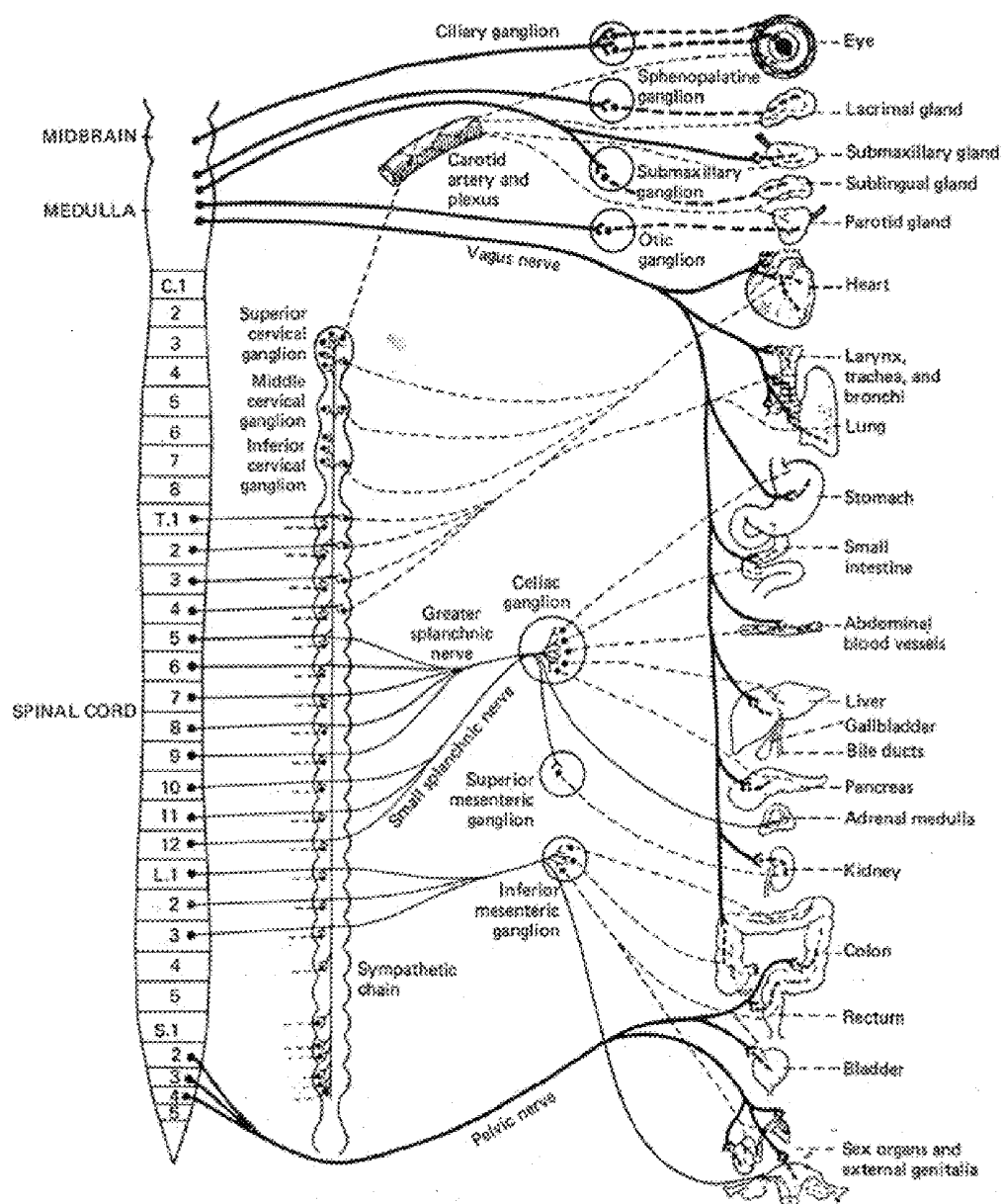


Fig. 1

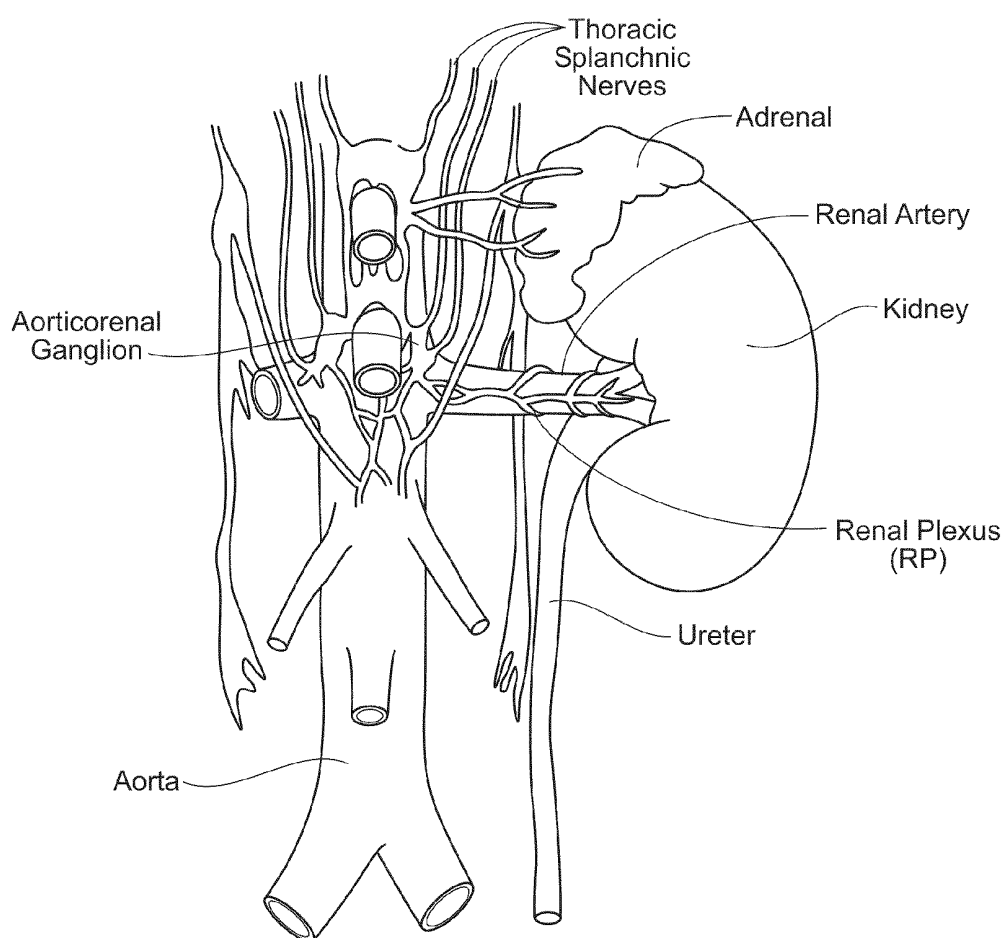
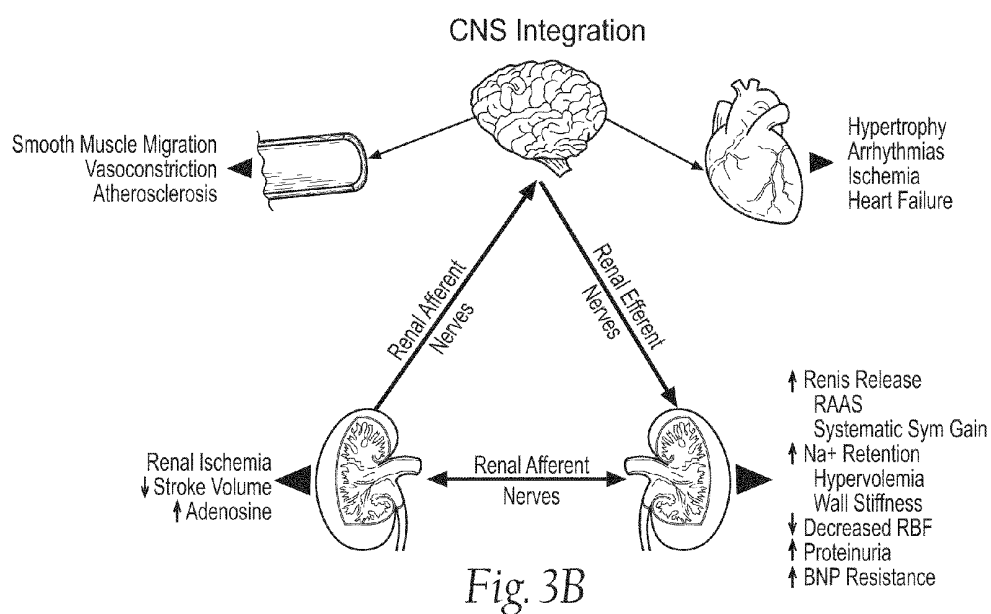
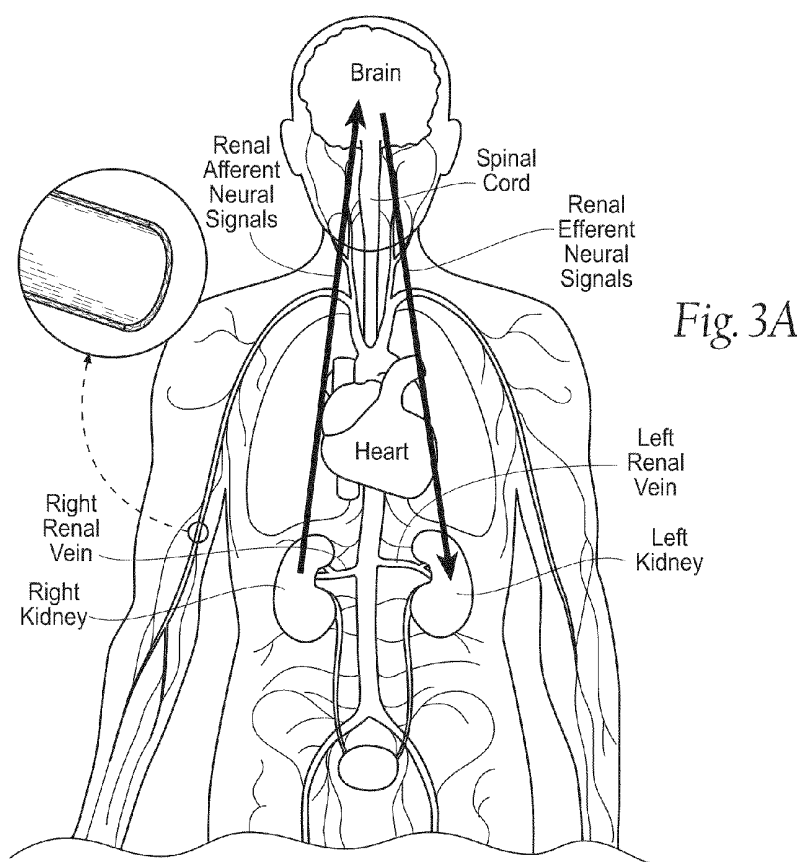


Fig. 2



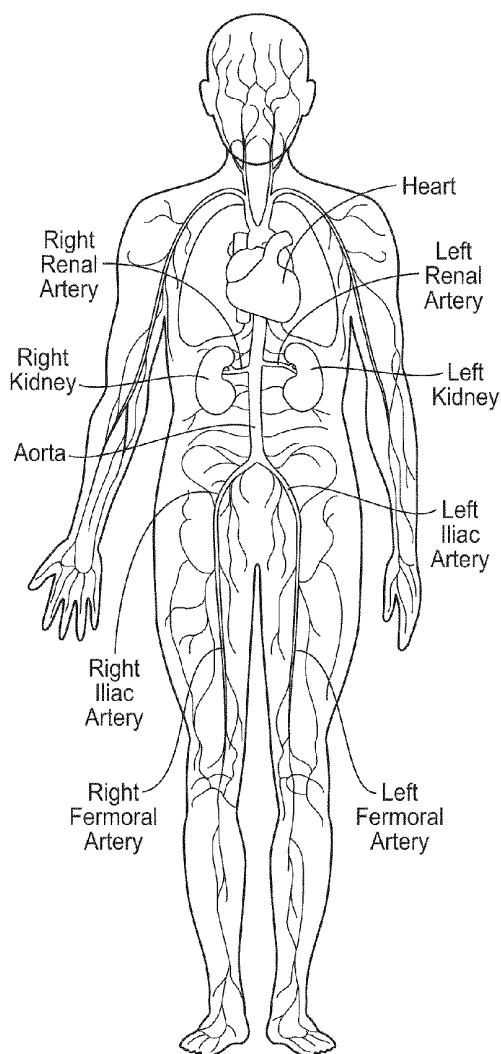


Fig. 4A
Arterial Vasculature

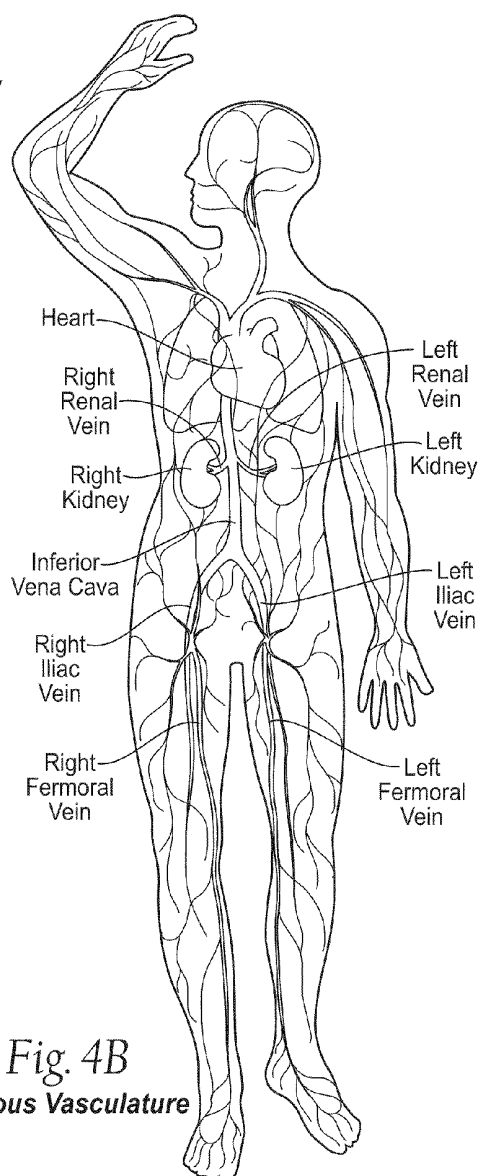
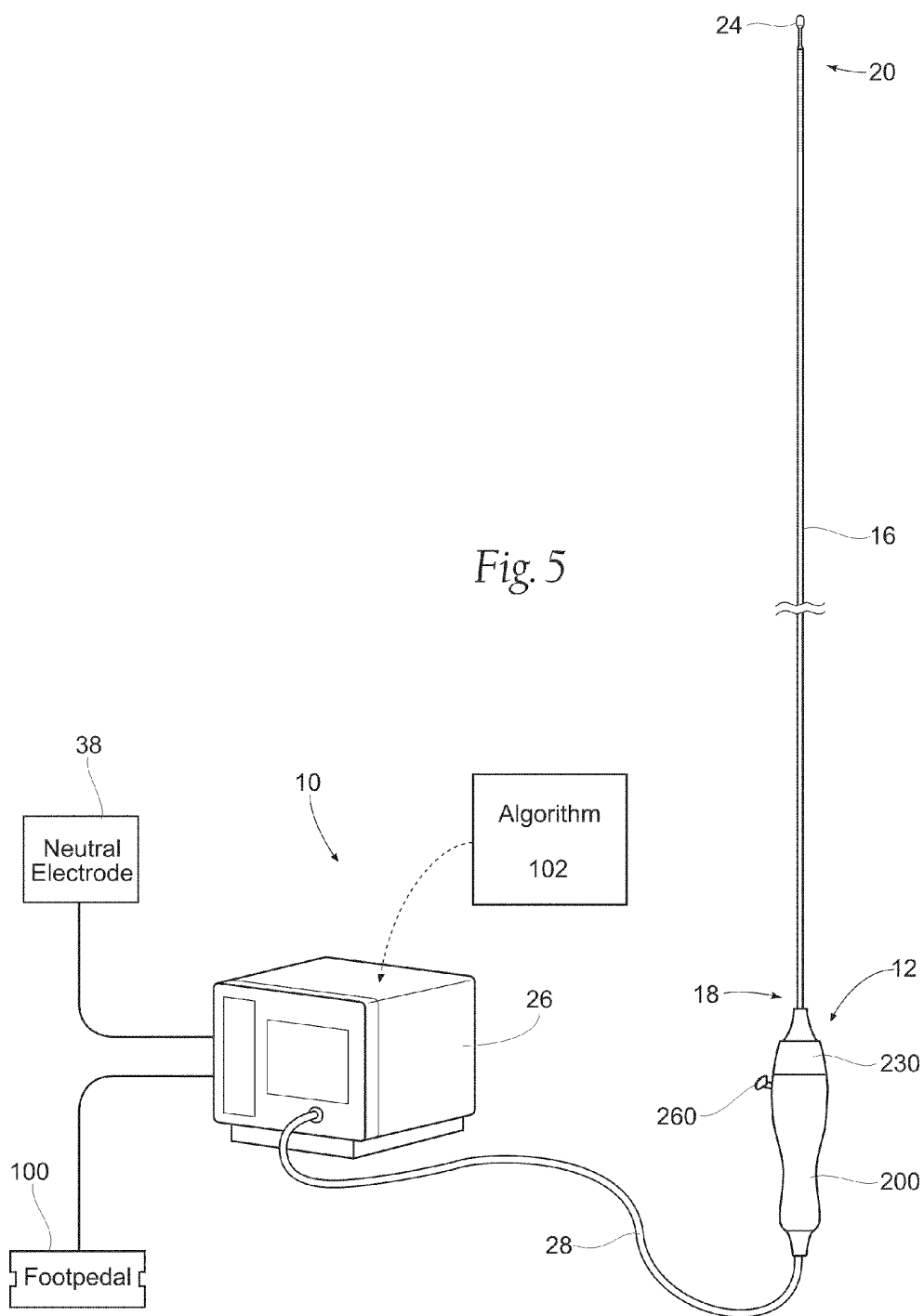


Fig. 4B
Venous Vasculature

Fig. 5



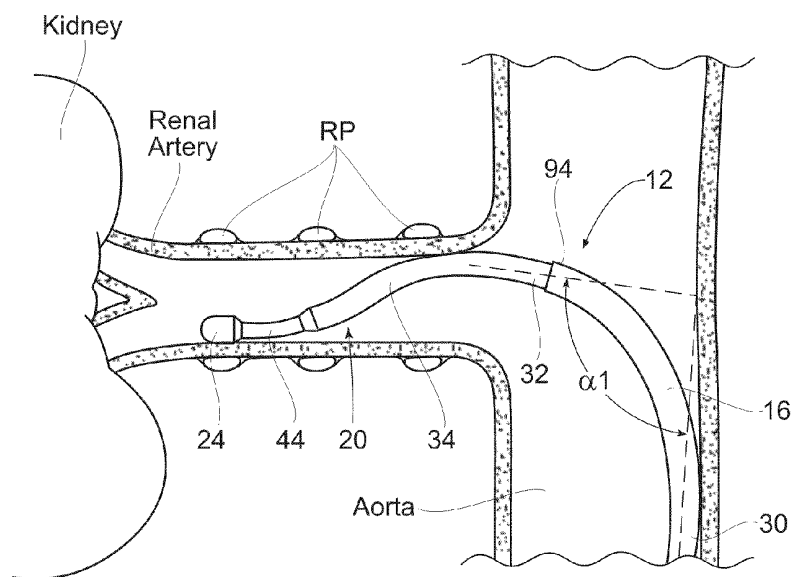
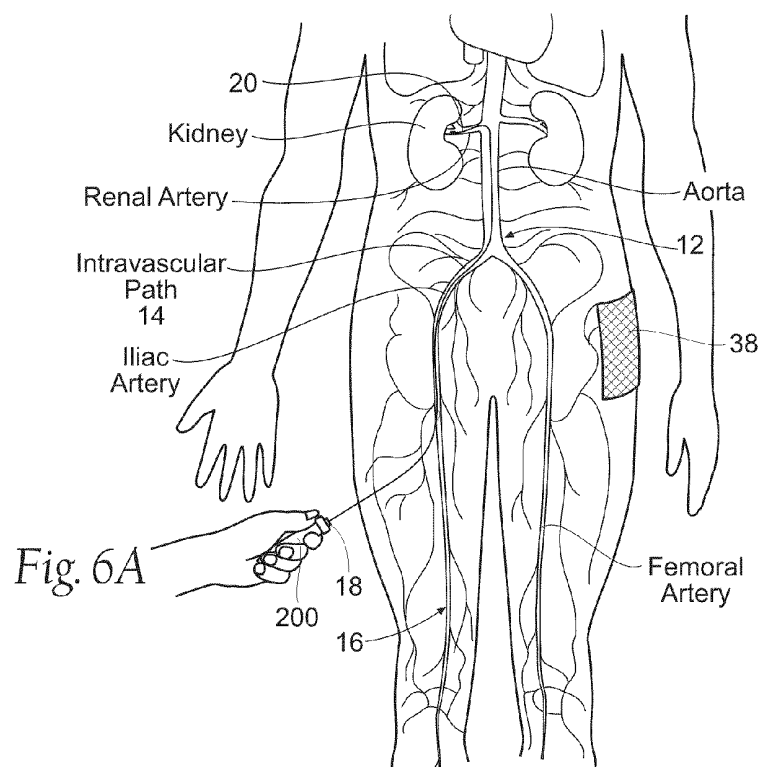


Fig. 6B

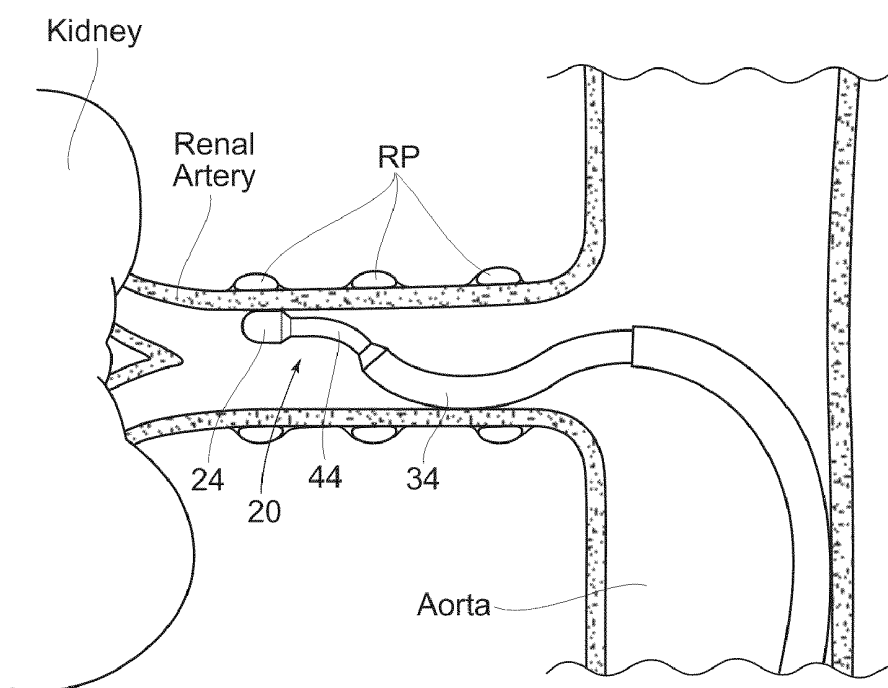


Fig. 6C

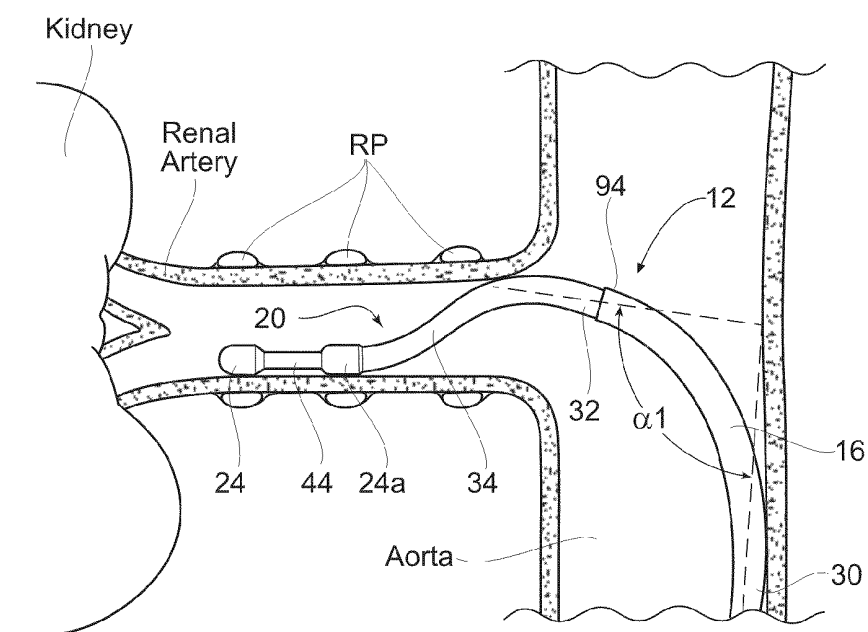


Fig. 7A

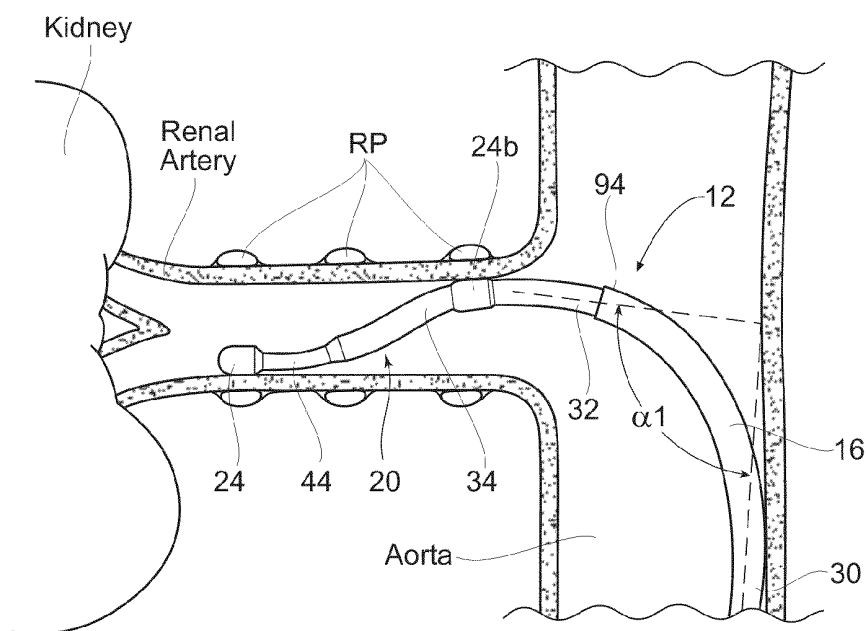
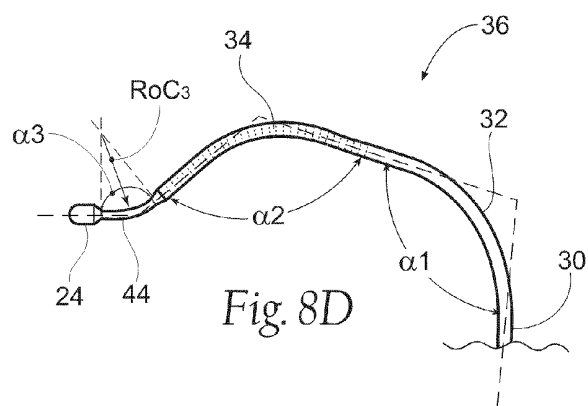
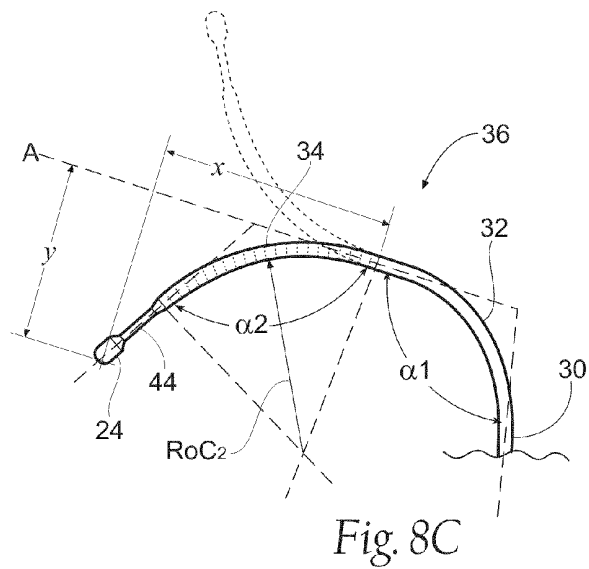
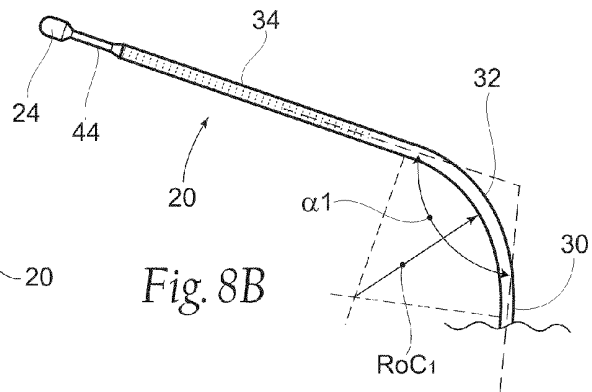
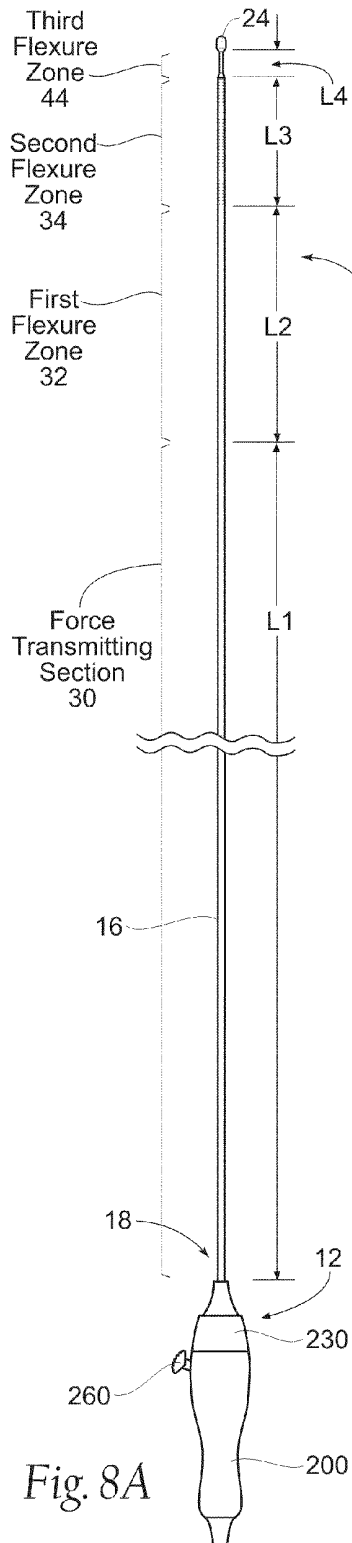


Fig. 7B



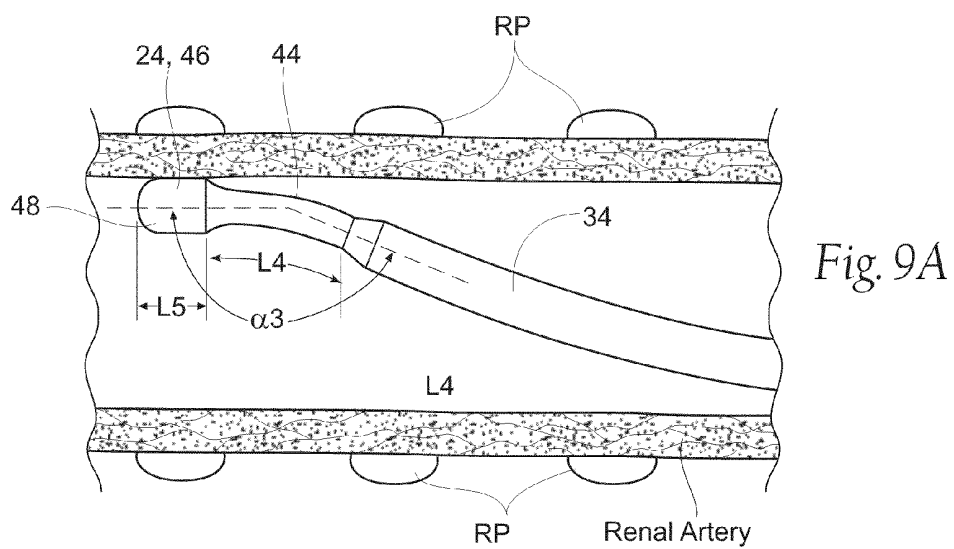
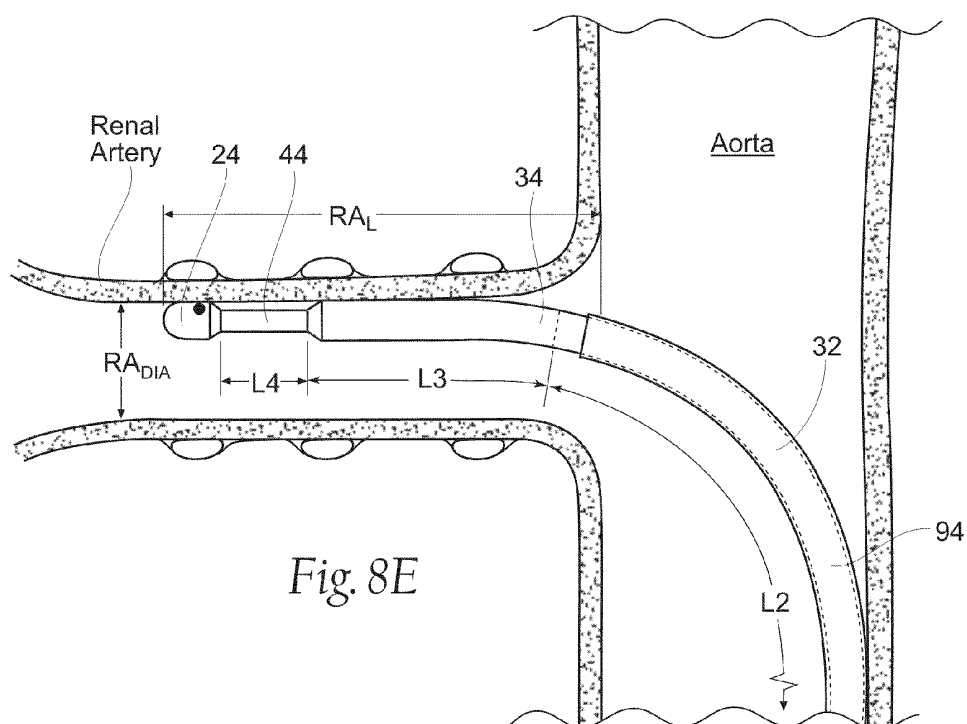


Fig. 9B

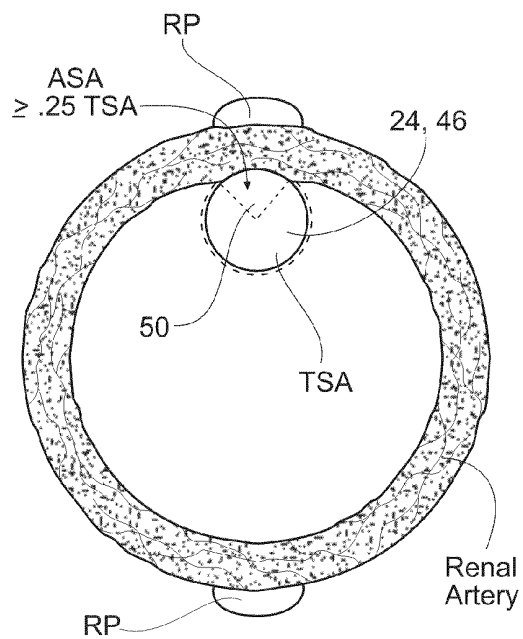
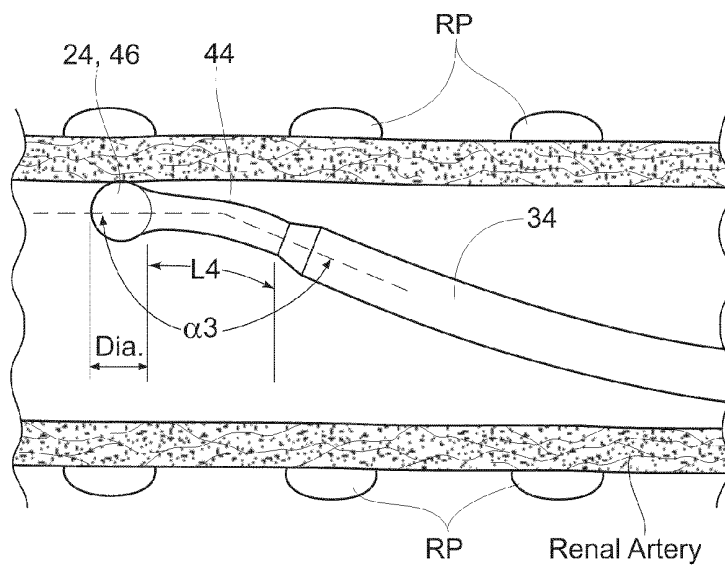


Fig. 9C

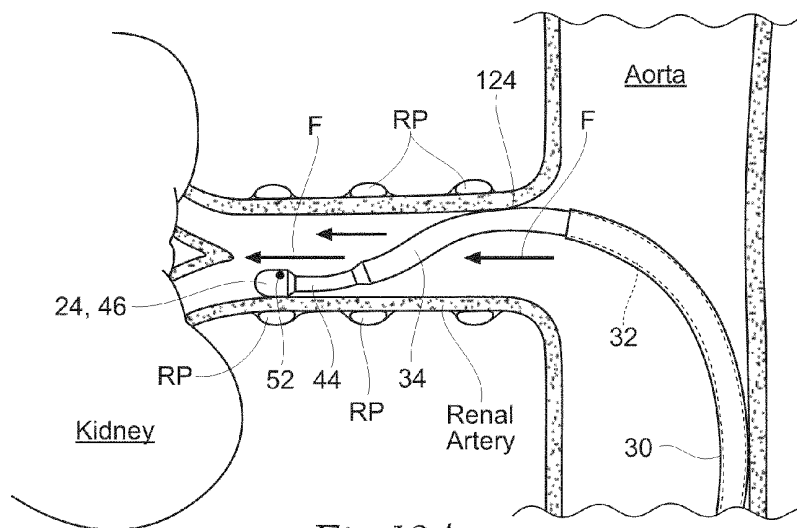


Fig. 10A

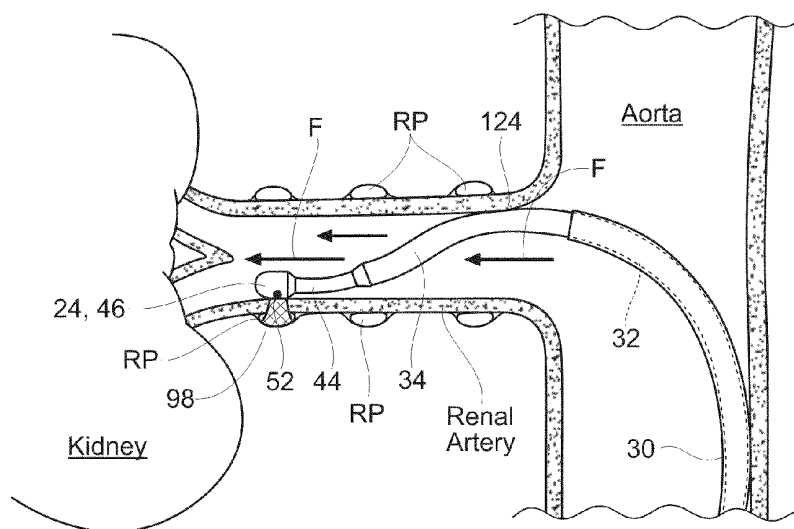


Fig. 10B

Fig. 11A

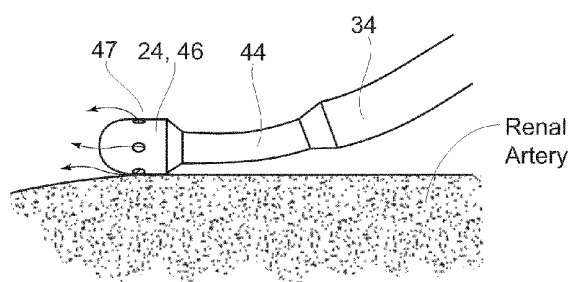


Fig. 11B

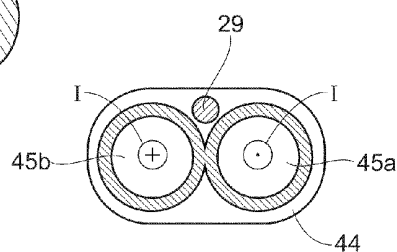
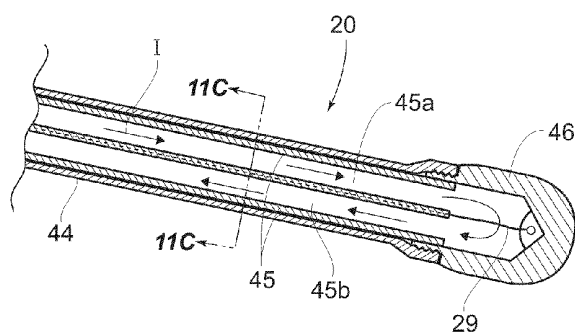


Fig. 11C

Fig. 12A

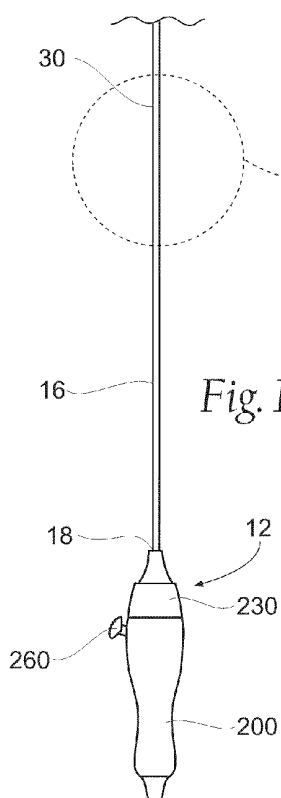
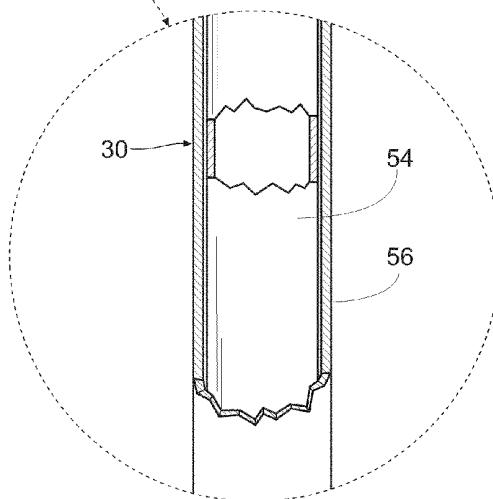
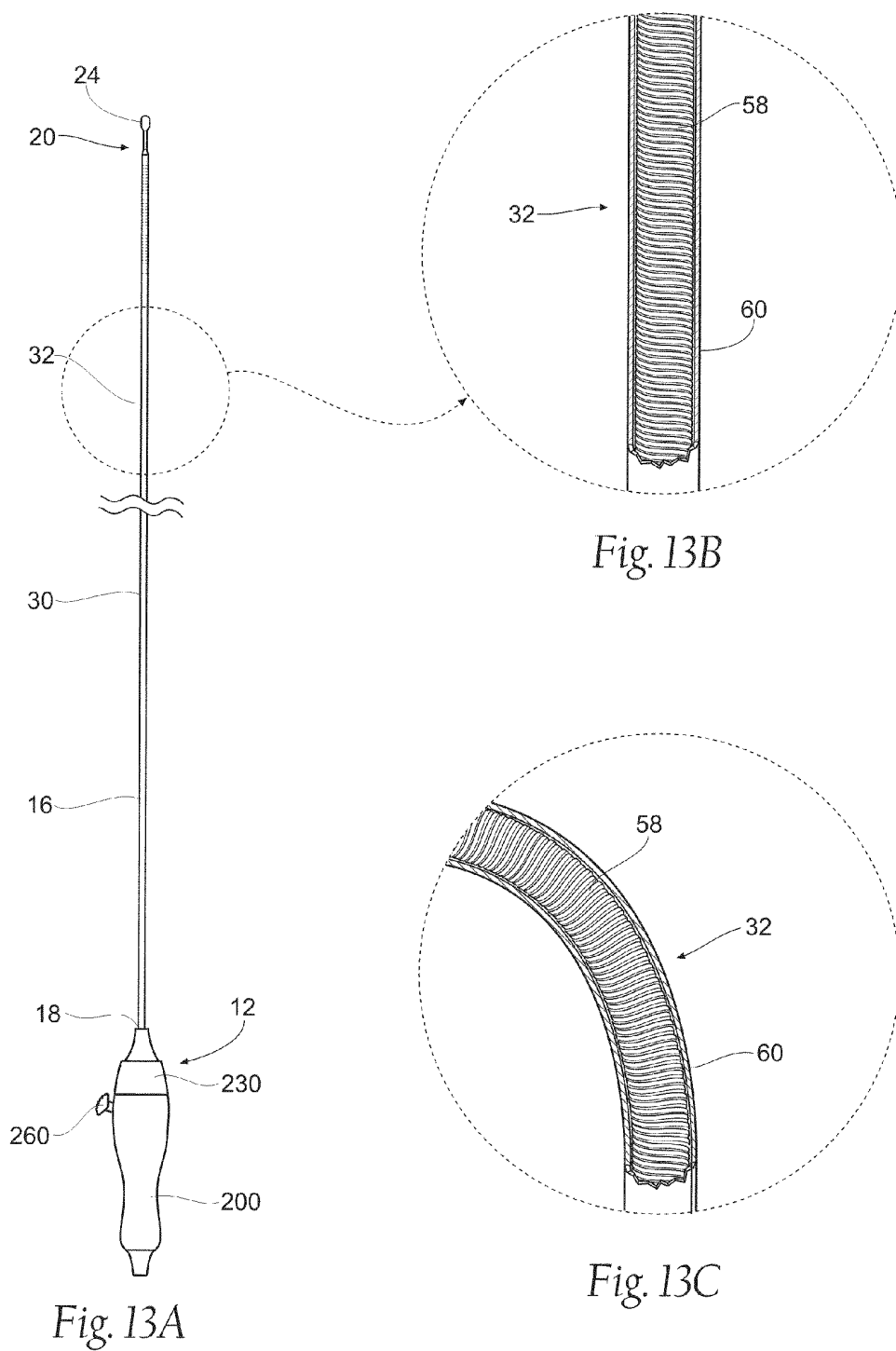


Fig. 12B





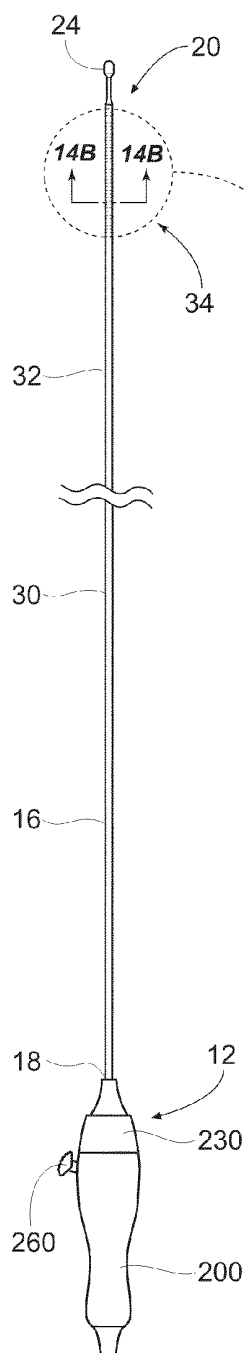


Fig. 14A

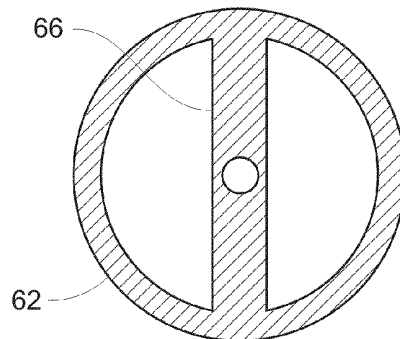


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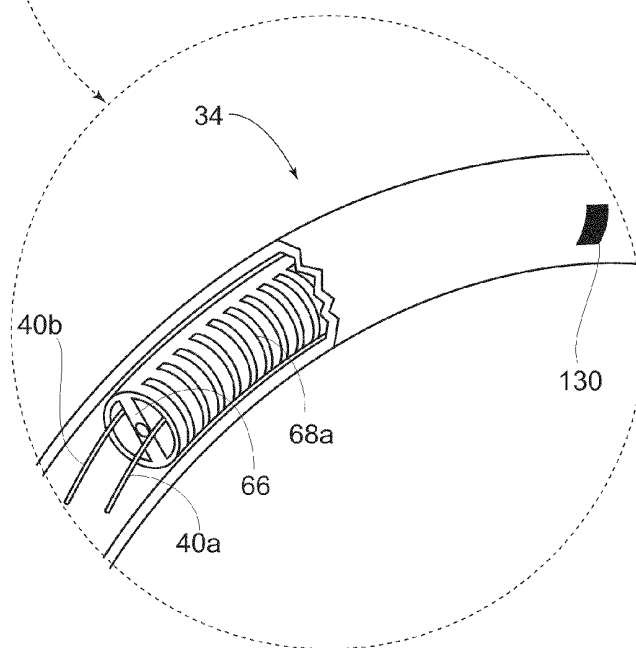


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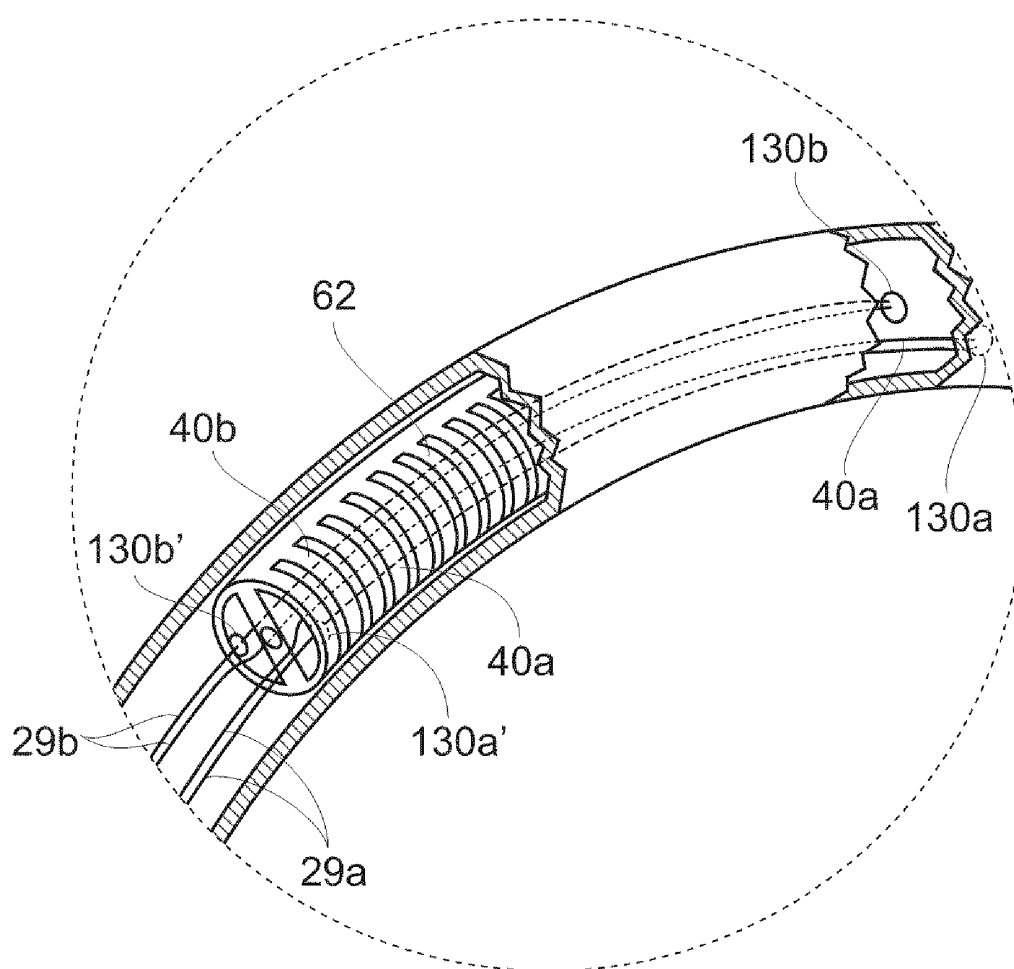


Fig. 15

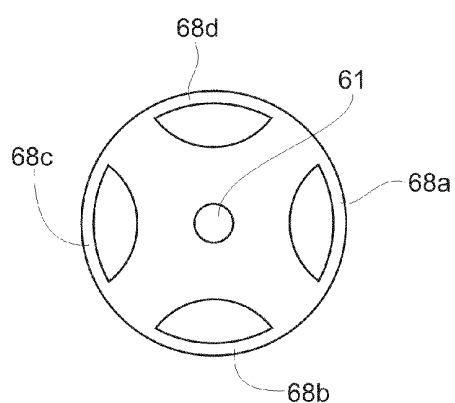


Fig. 16A

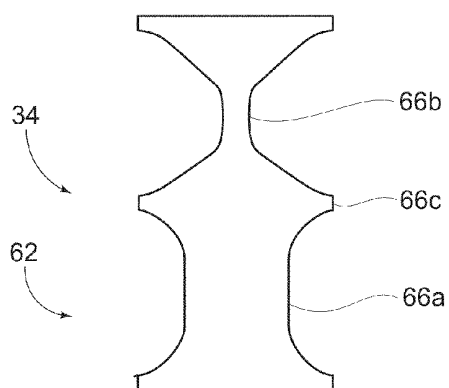


Fig. 16B

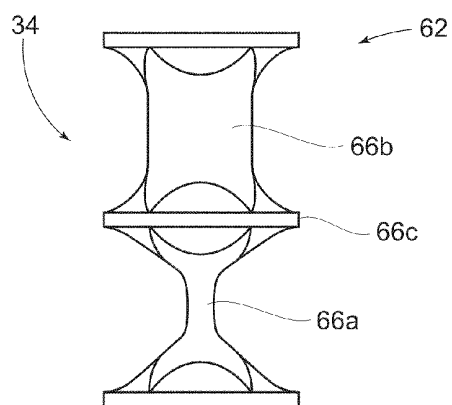


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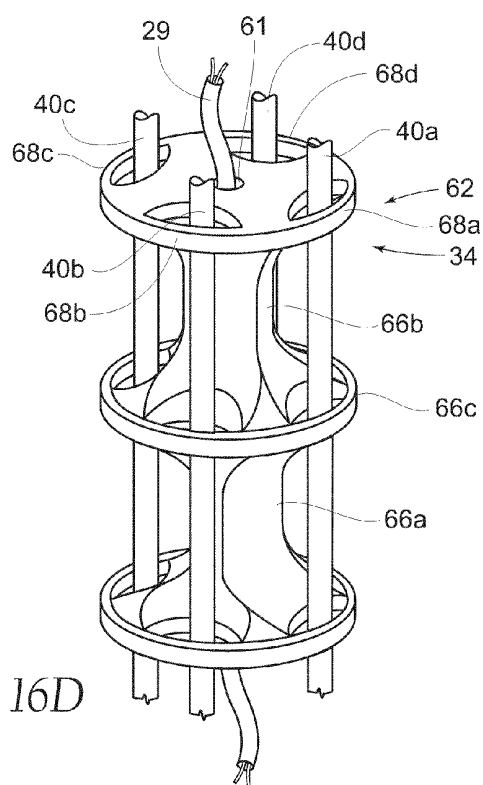


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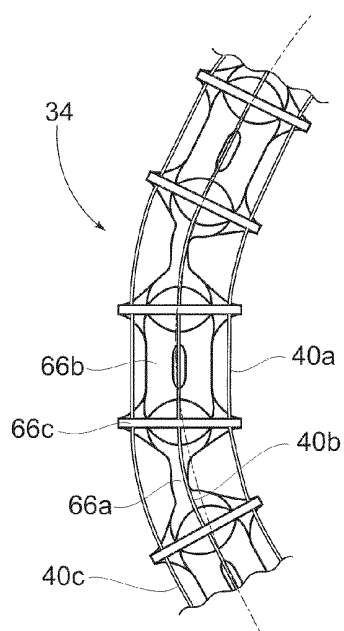


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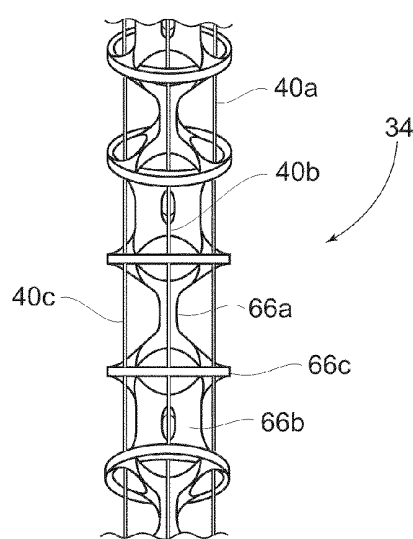


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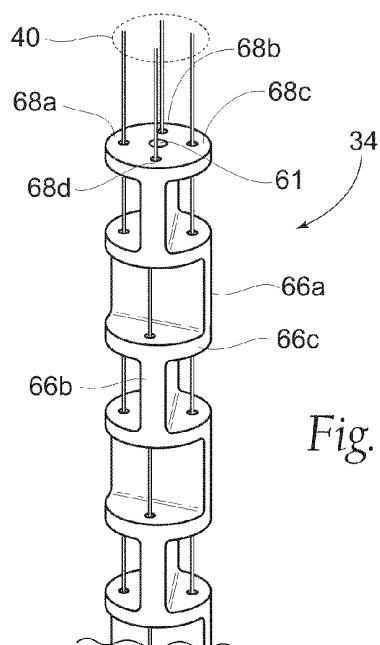


Fig. 16G

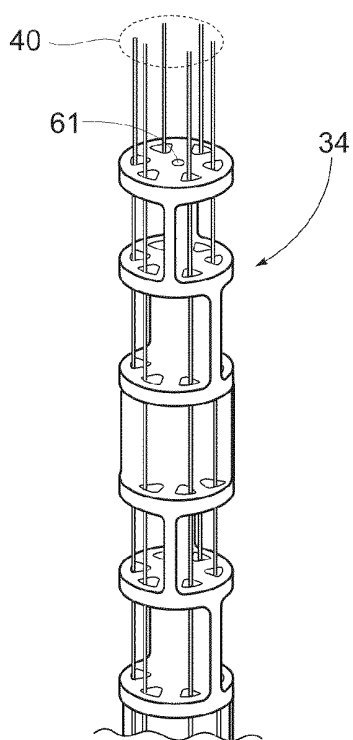


Fig. 16H

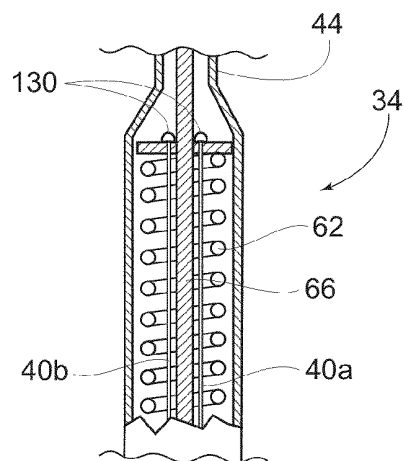


Fig. 16I

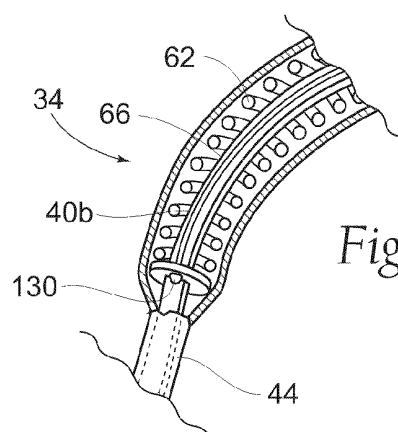
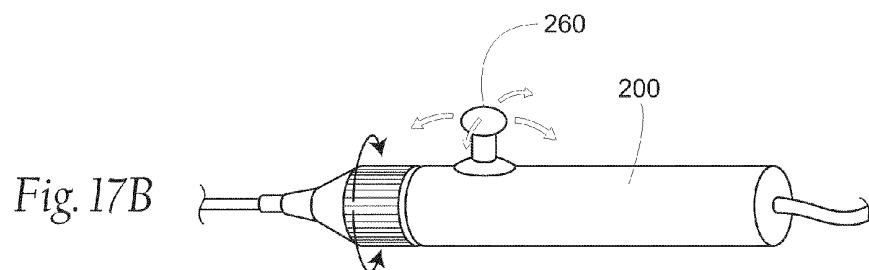
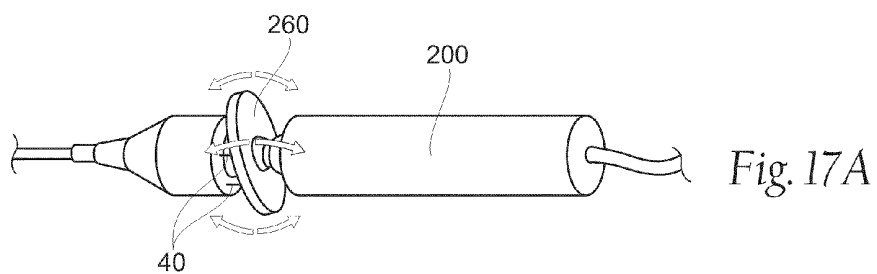
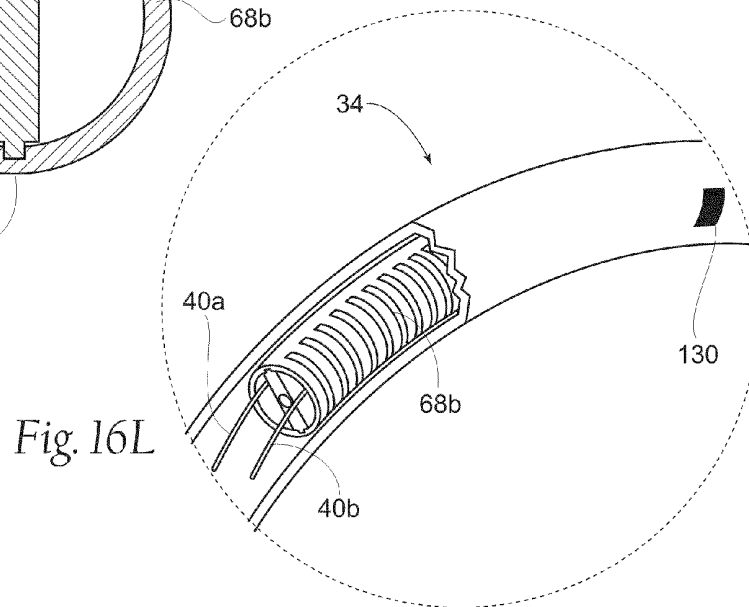
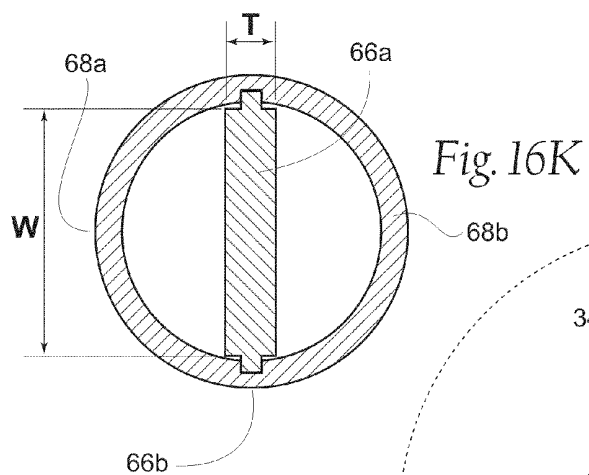


Fig. 16J



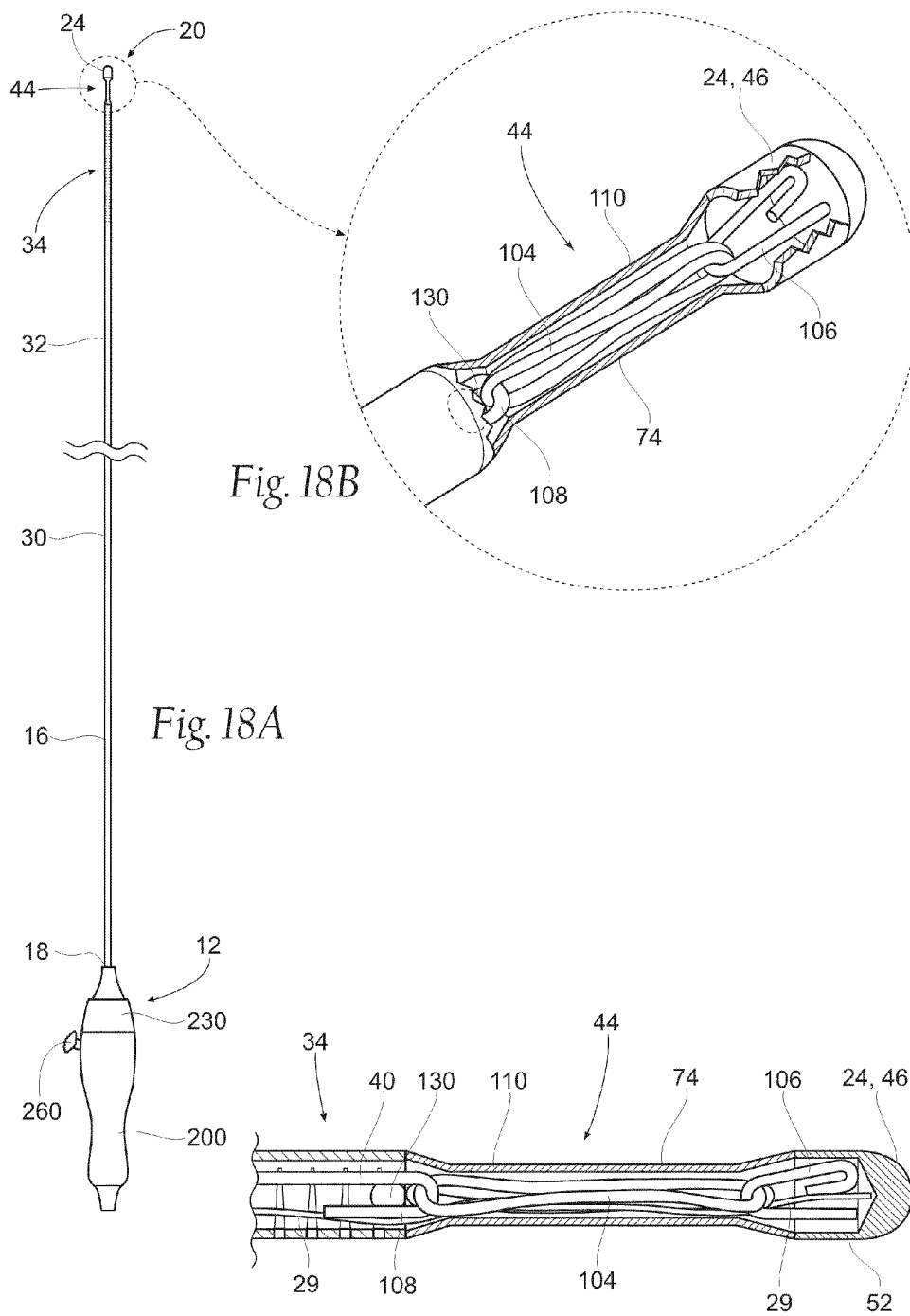


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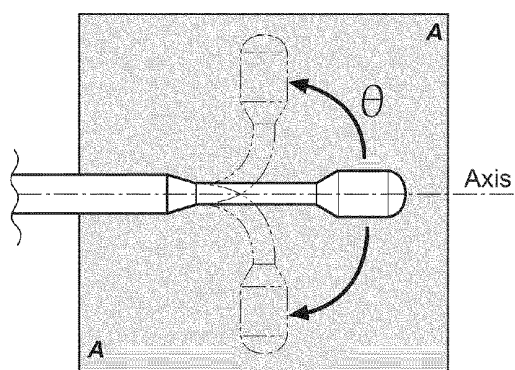
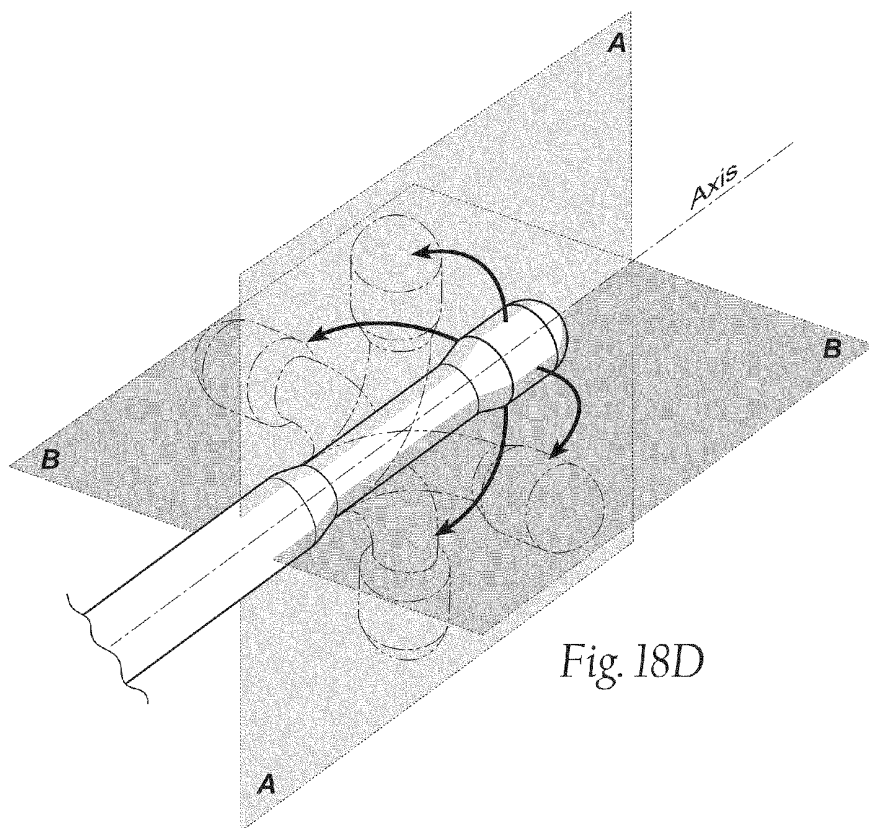
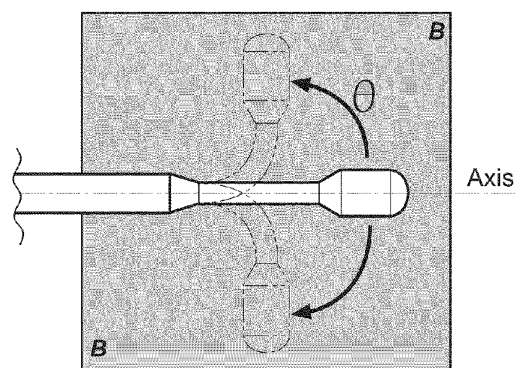


Fig. 18F



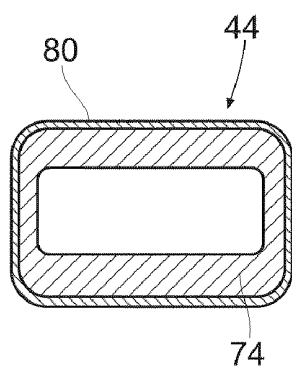


Fig. 18G

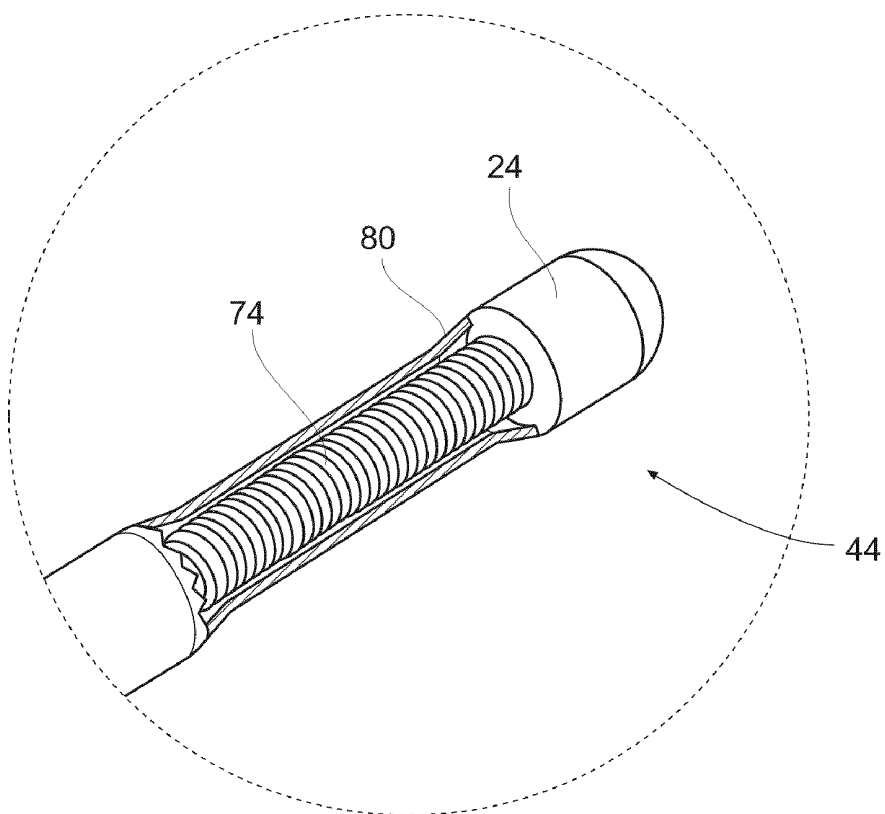
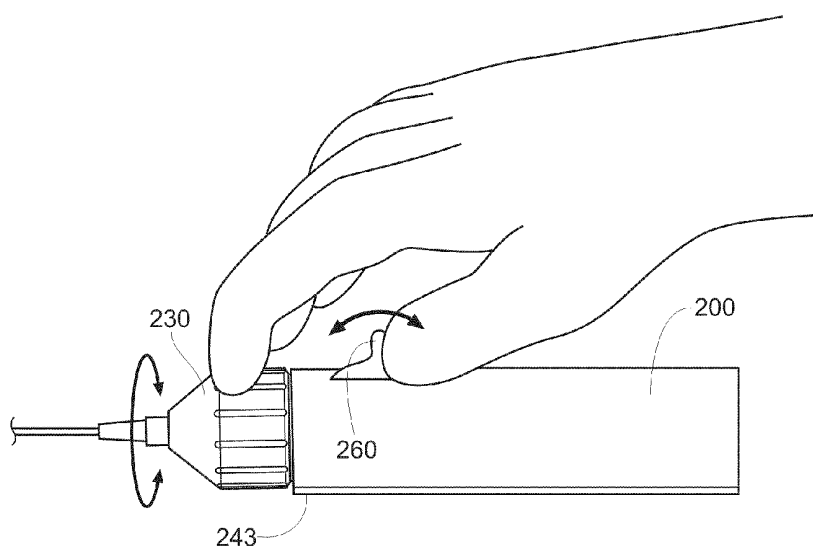
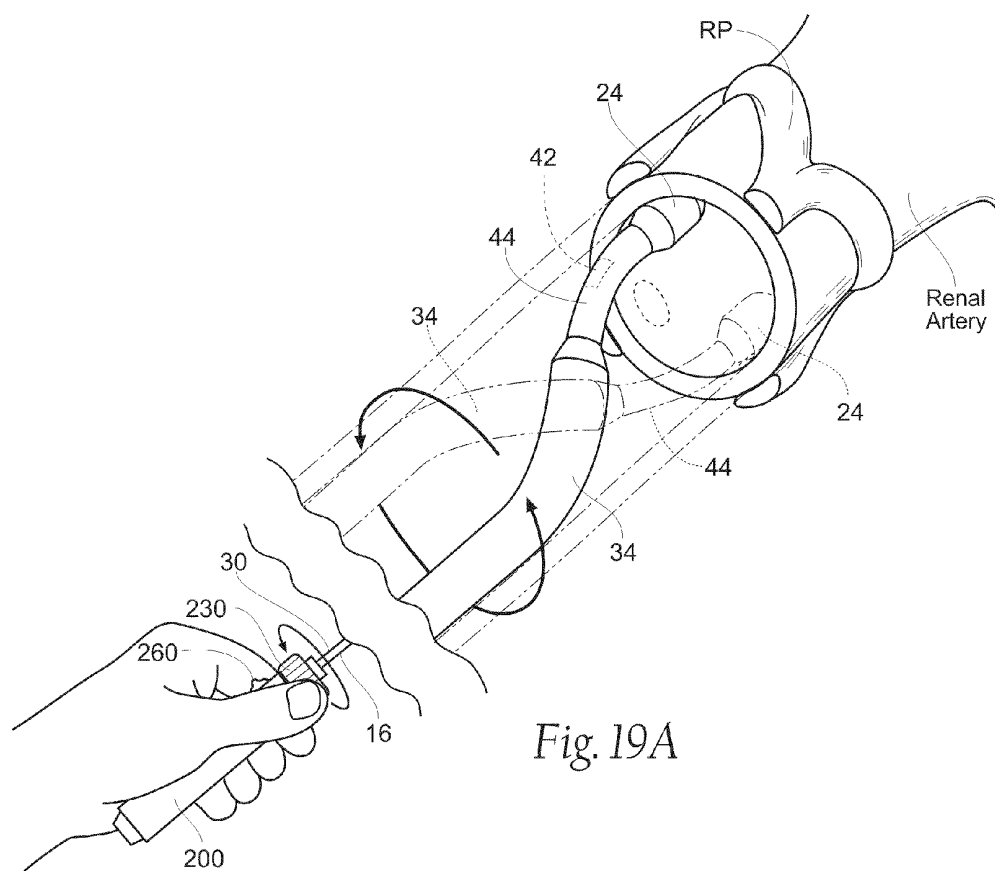


Fig. 18H



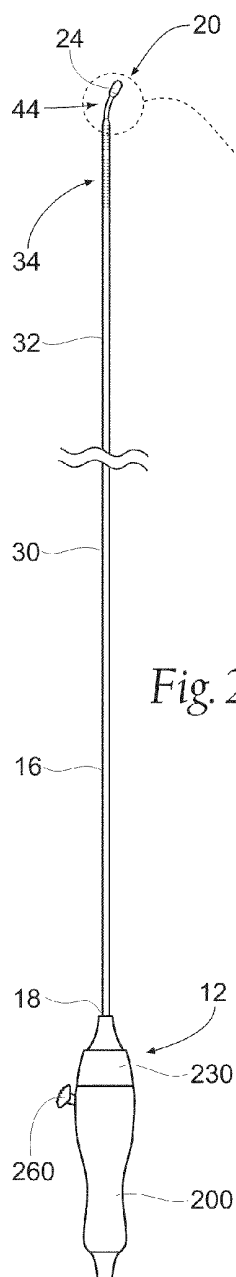


Fig. 20A

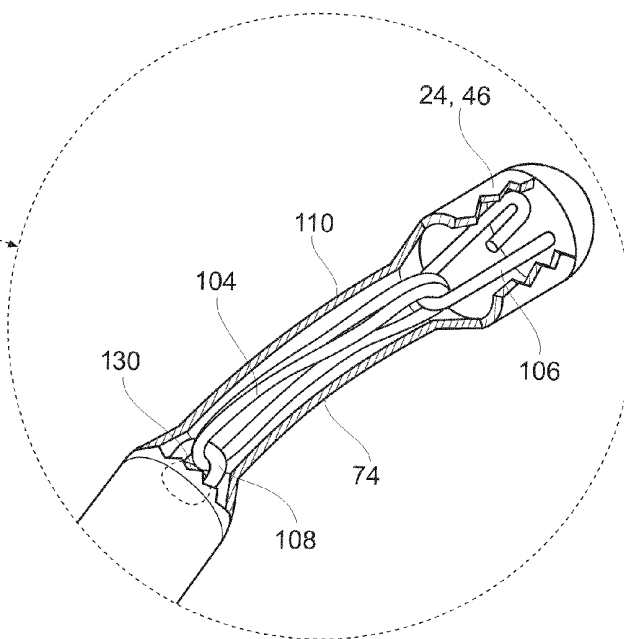


Fig. 20B

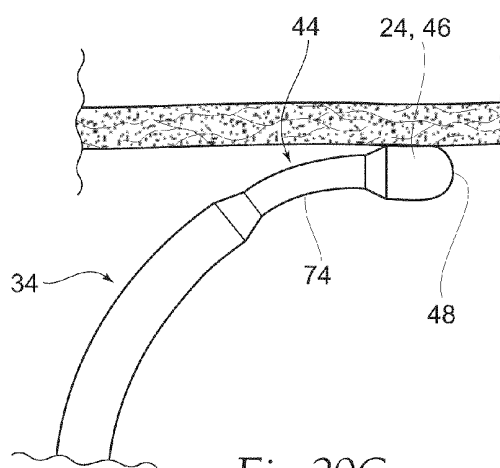


Fig. 20C

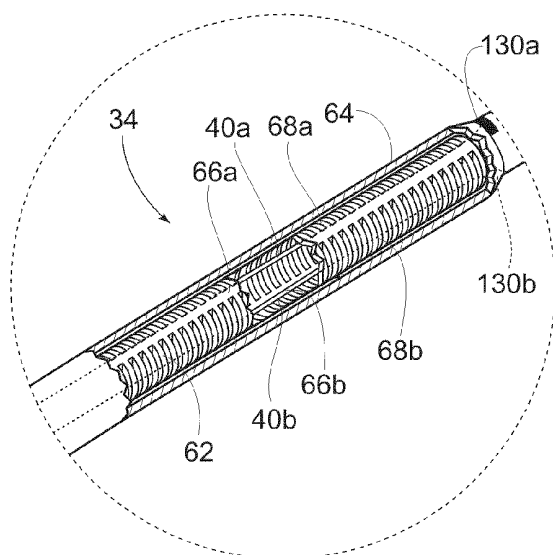


Fig. 21A

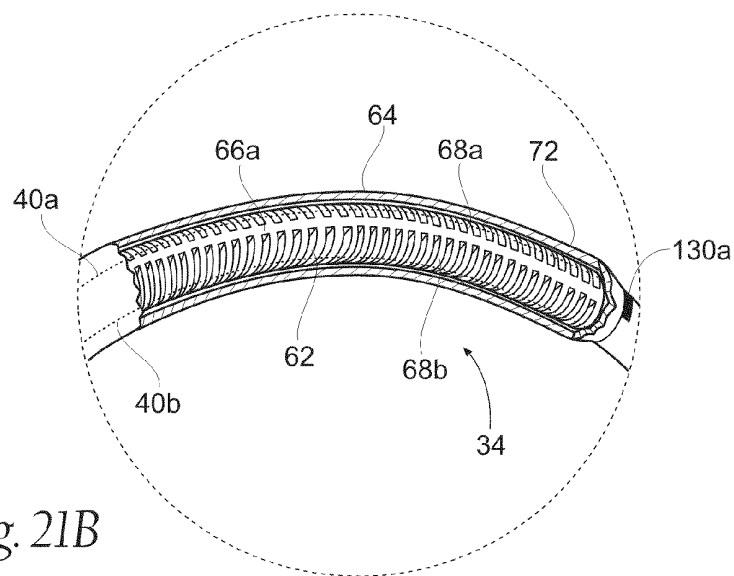


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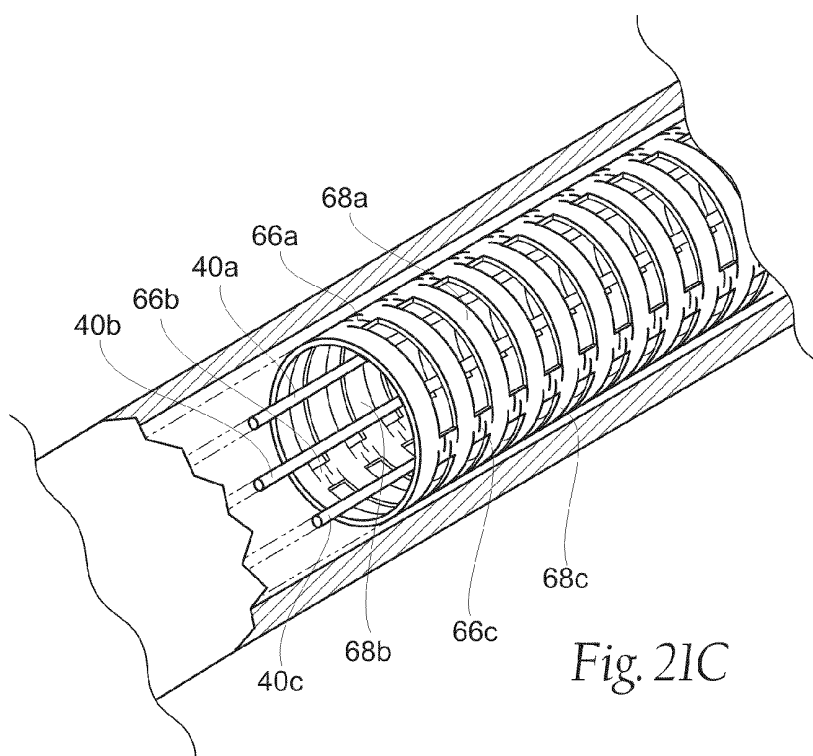


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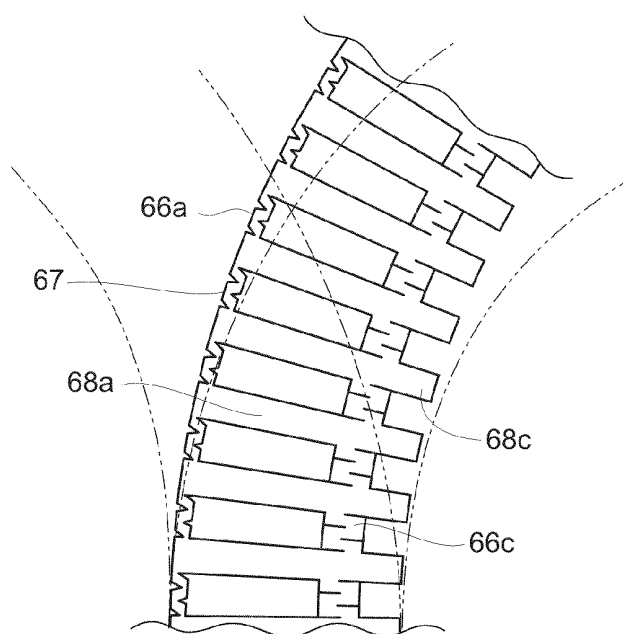


Fig. 21D

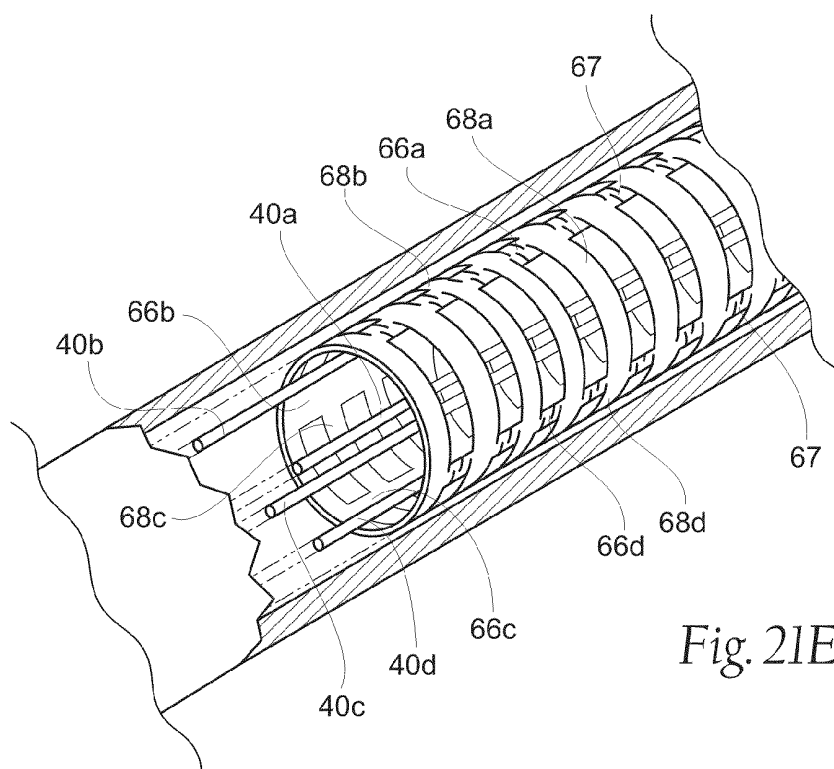


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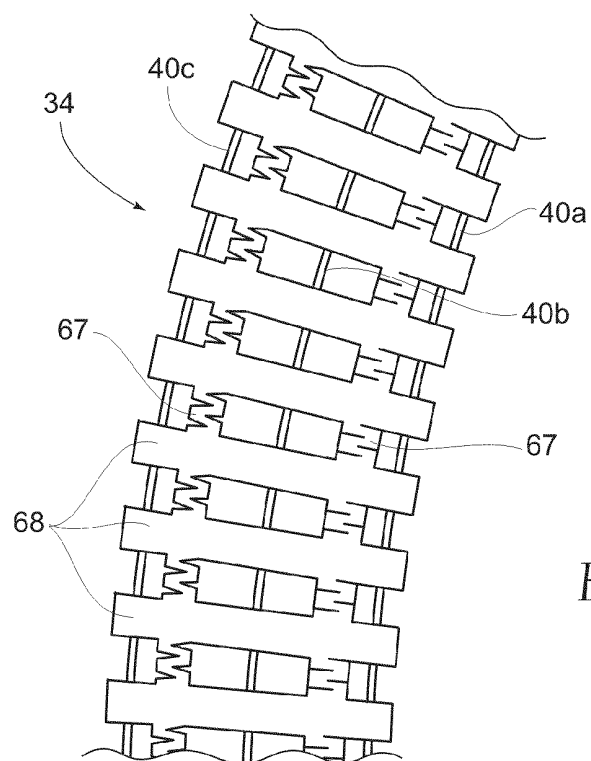


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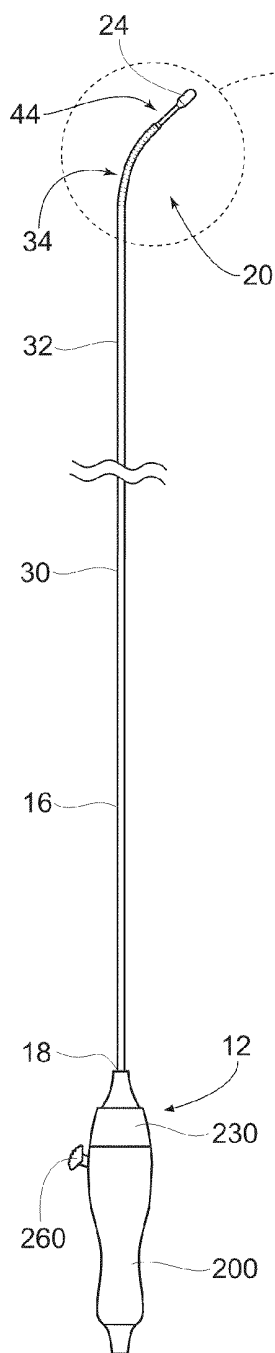


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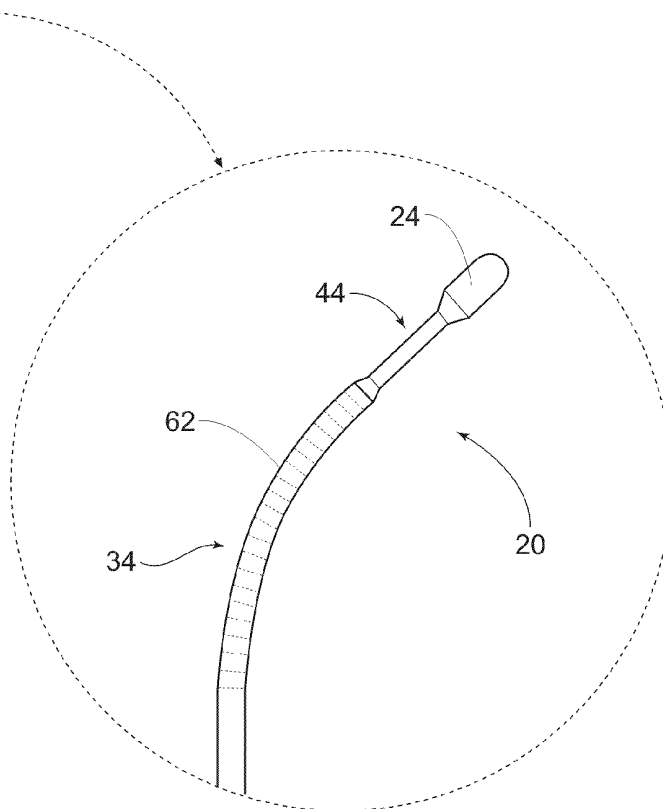


Fig. 22B

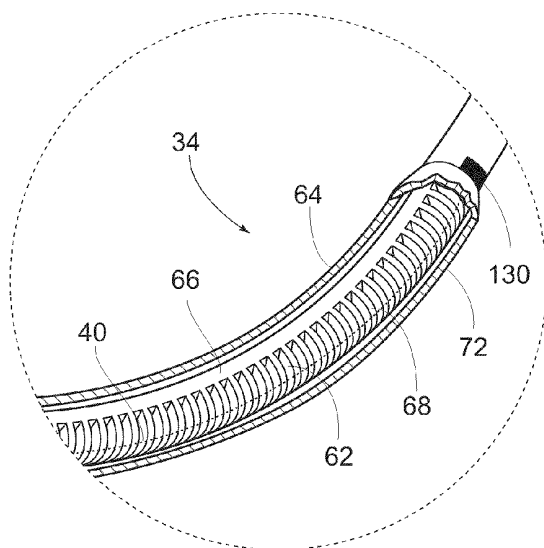


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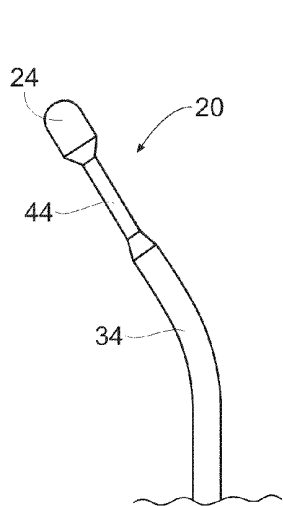


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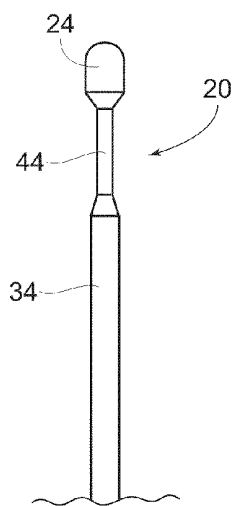


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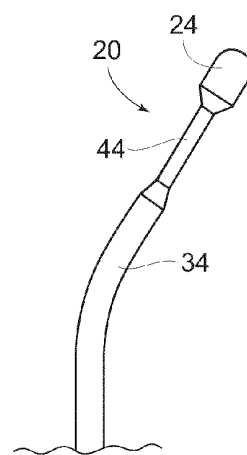


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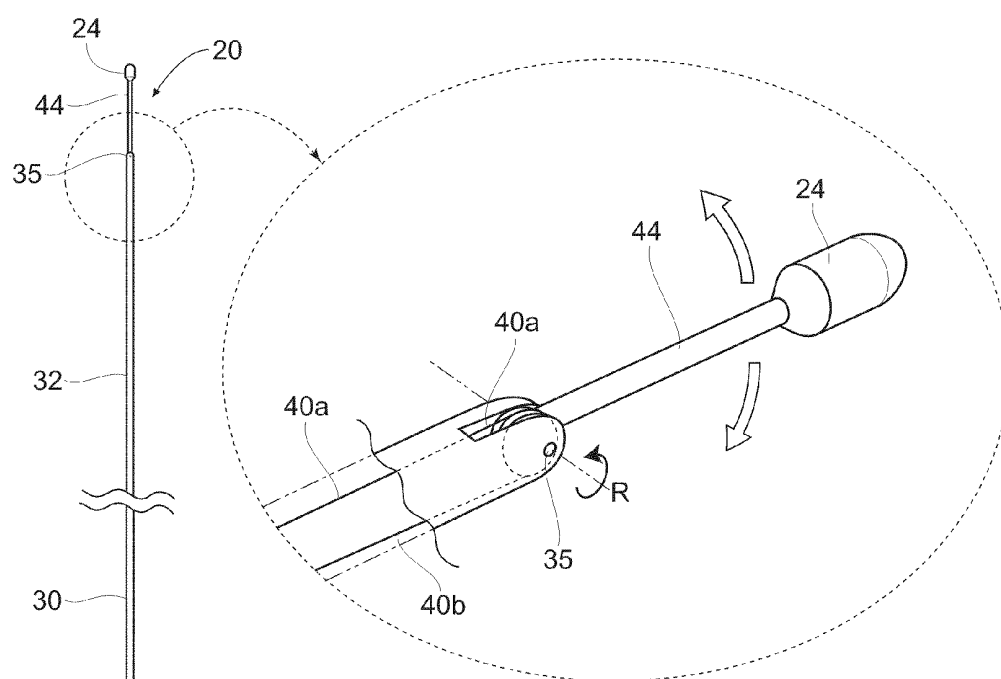
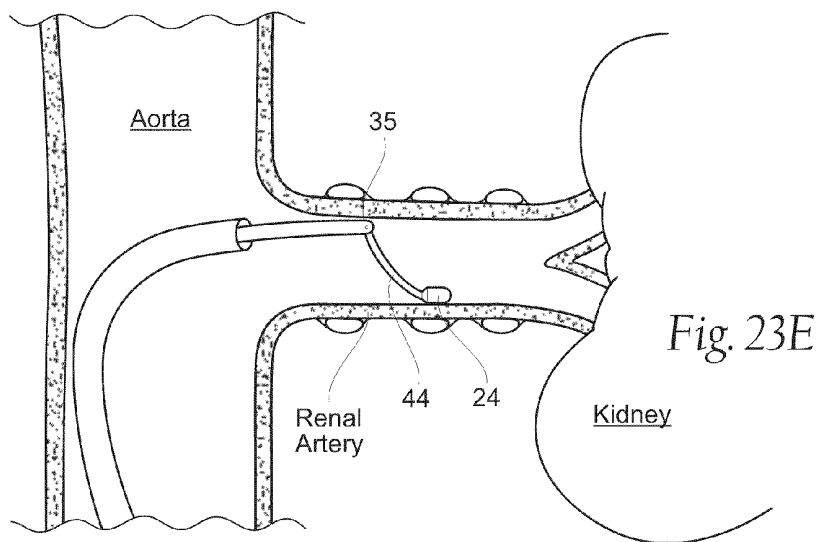
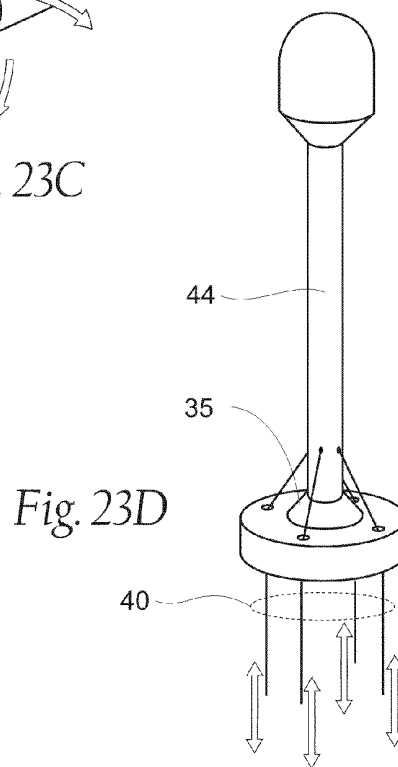
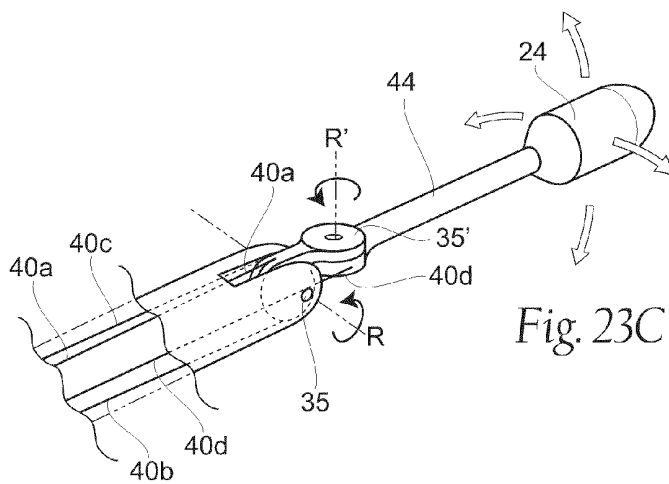


Fig. 23B

Fig. 23A



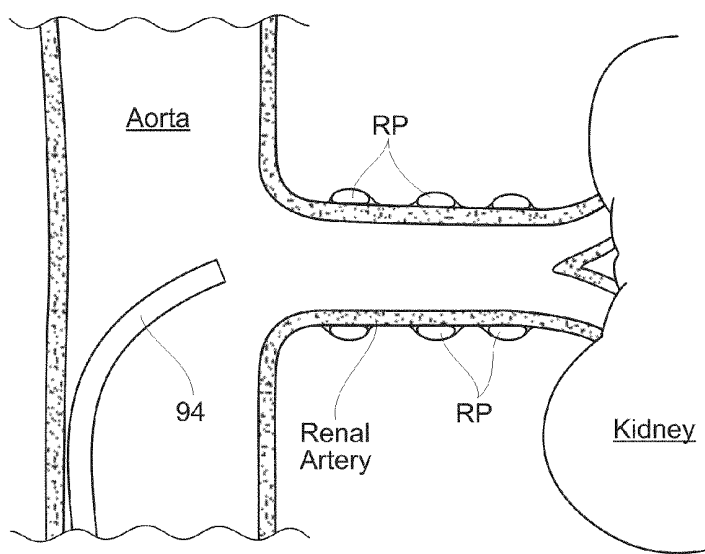


Fig. 24A

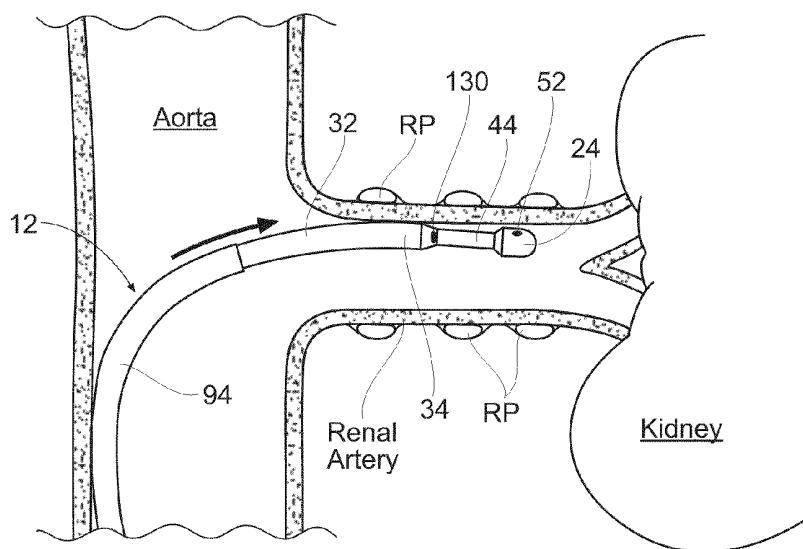
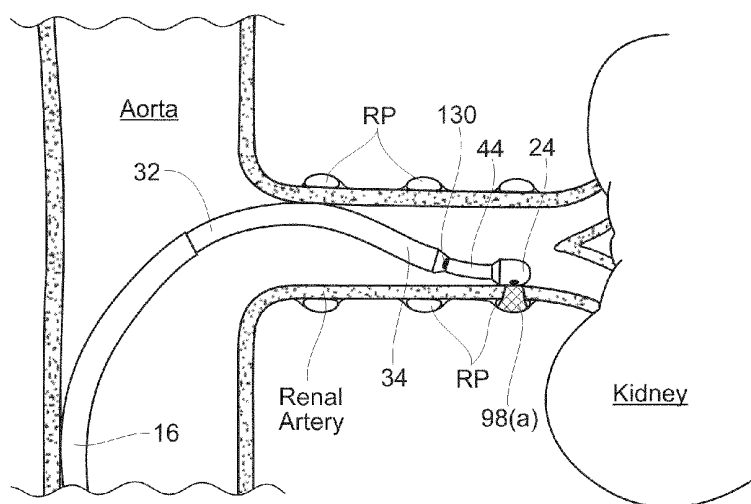
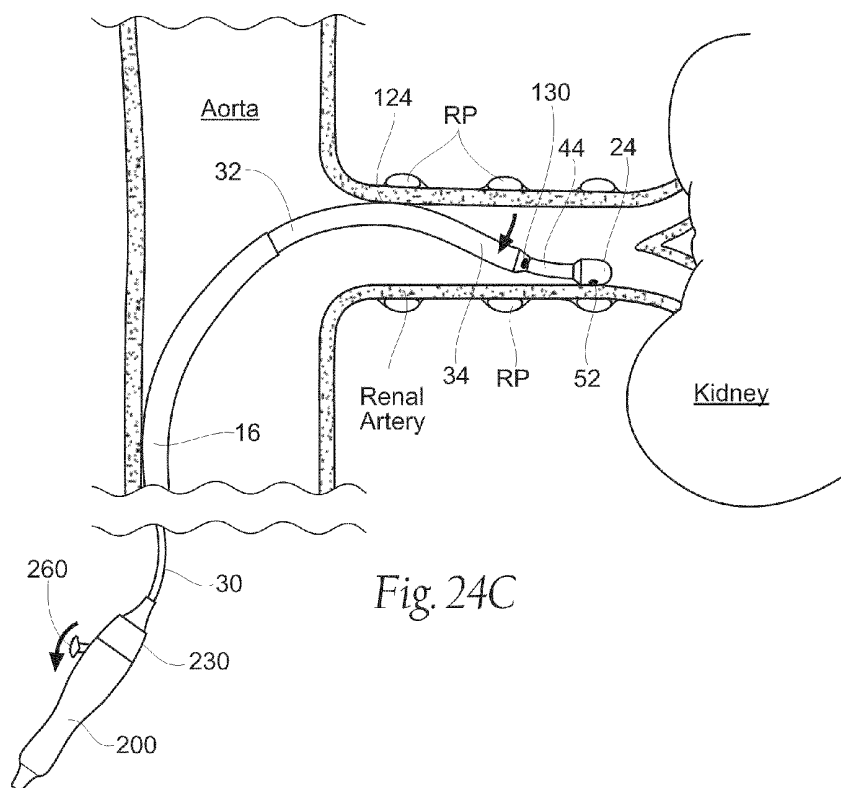
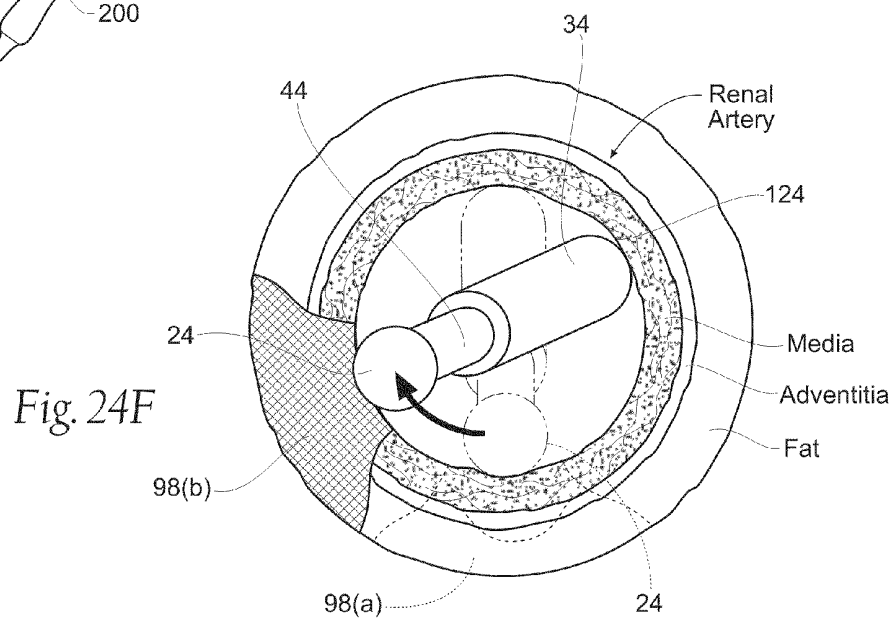
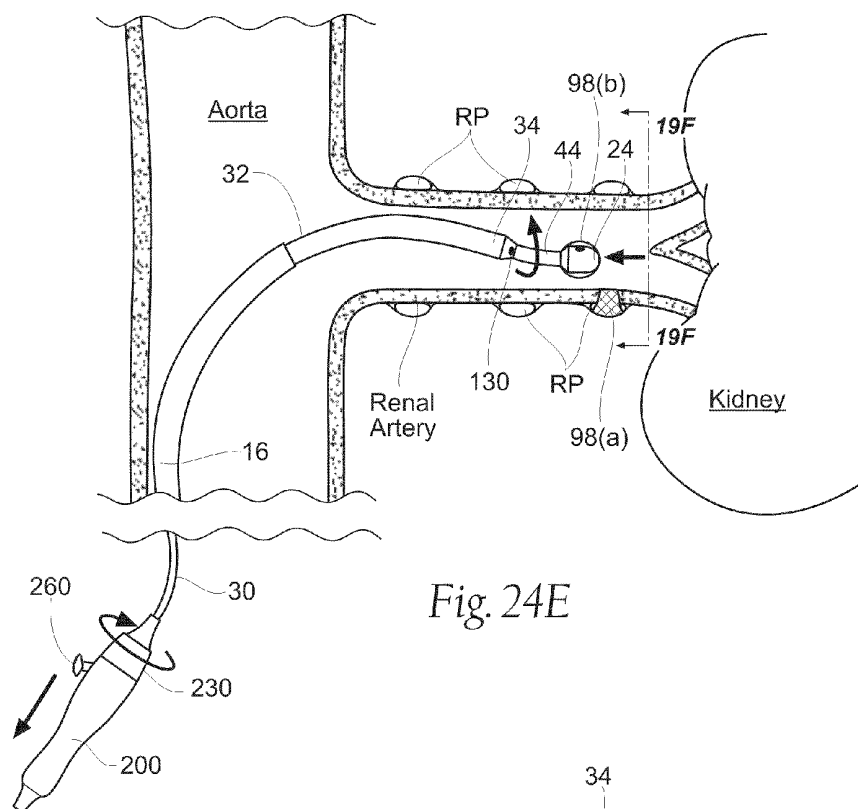
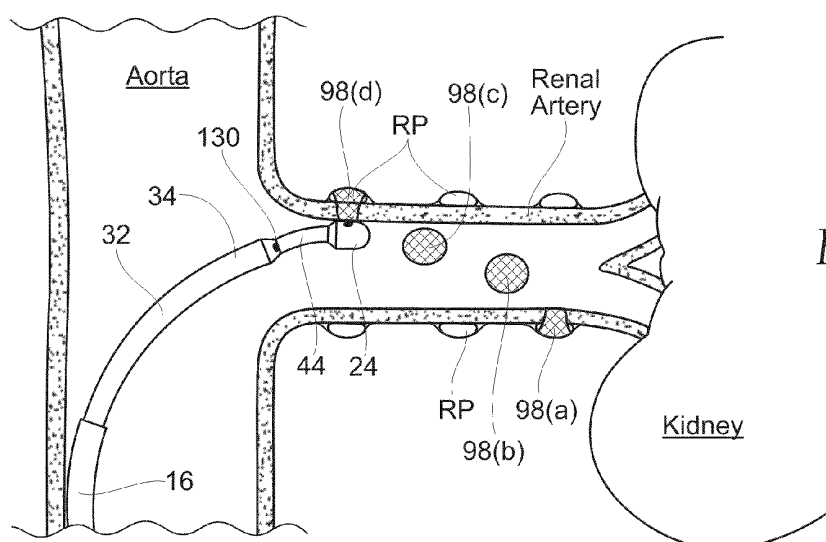
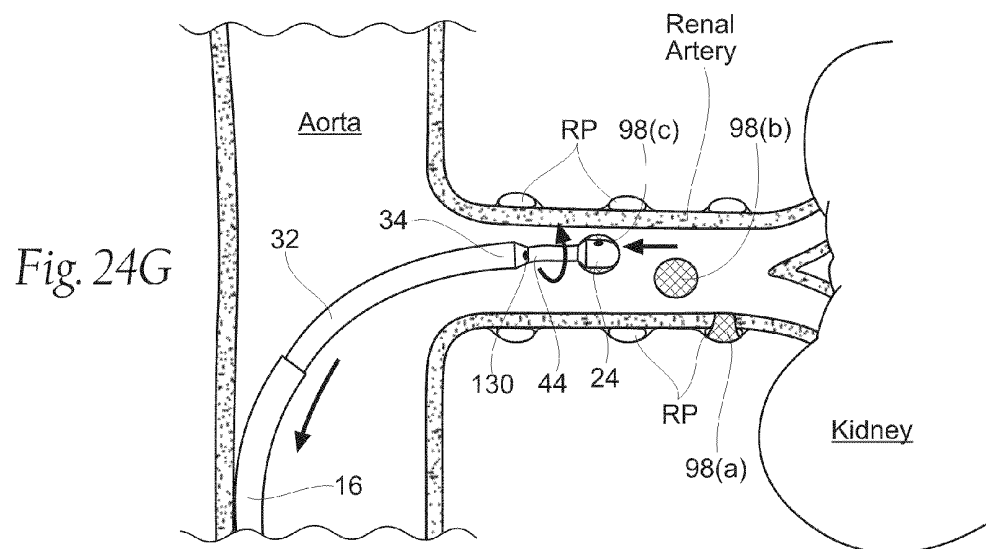


Fig. 24B







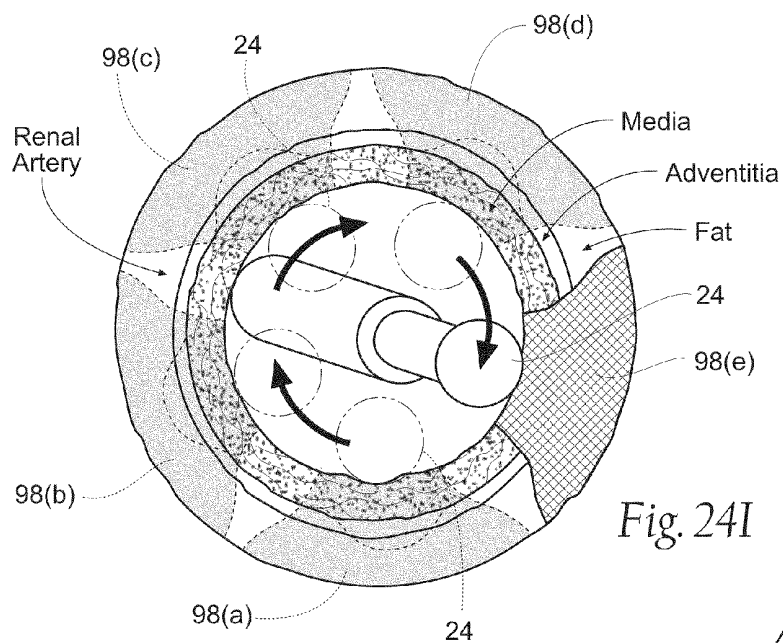


Fig. 24I

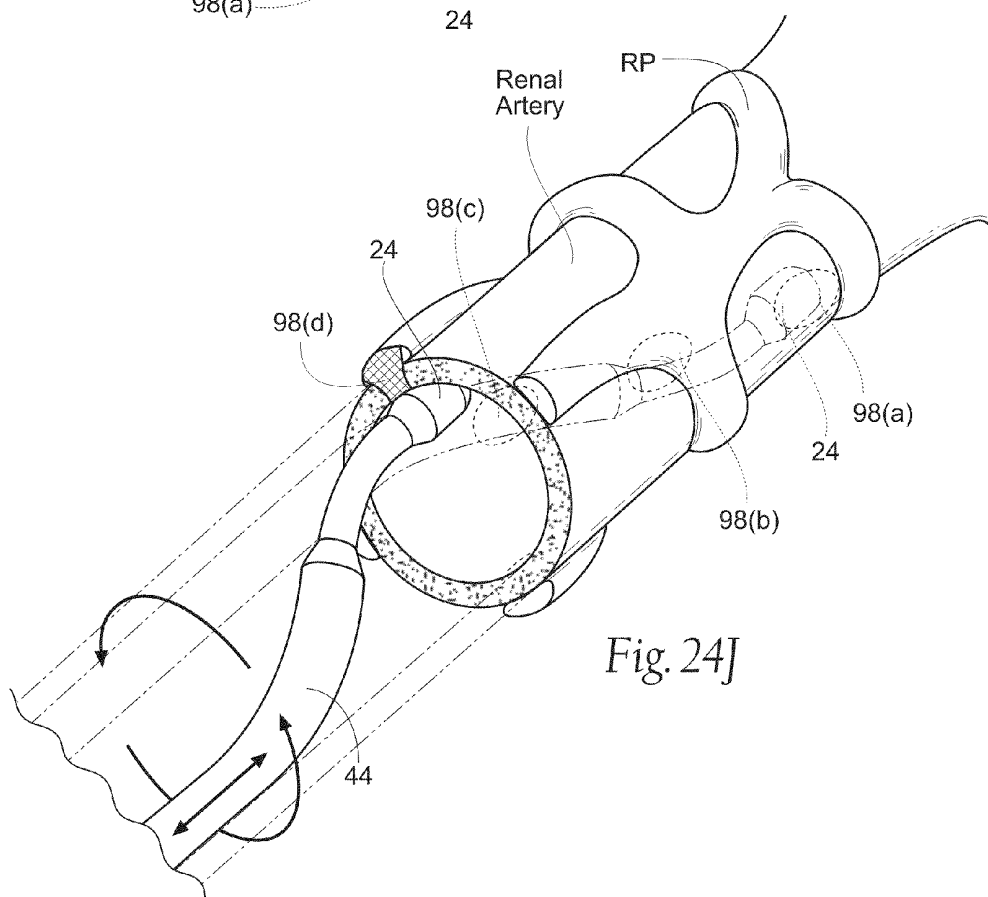


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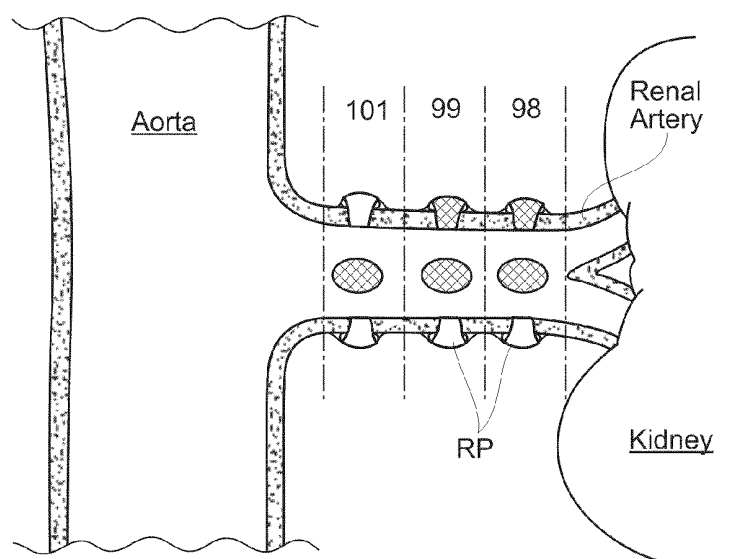
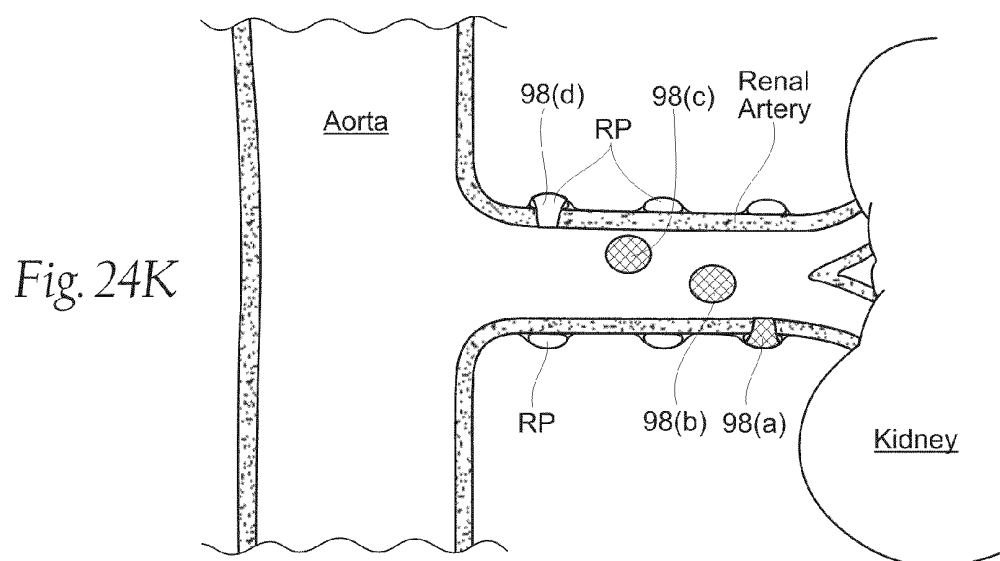
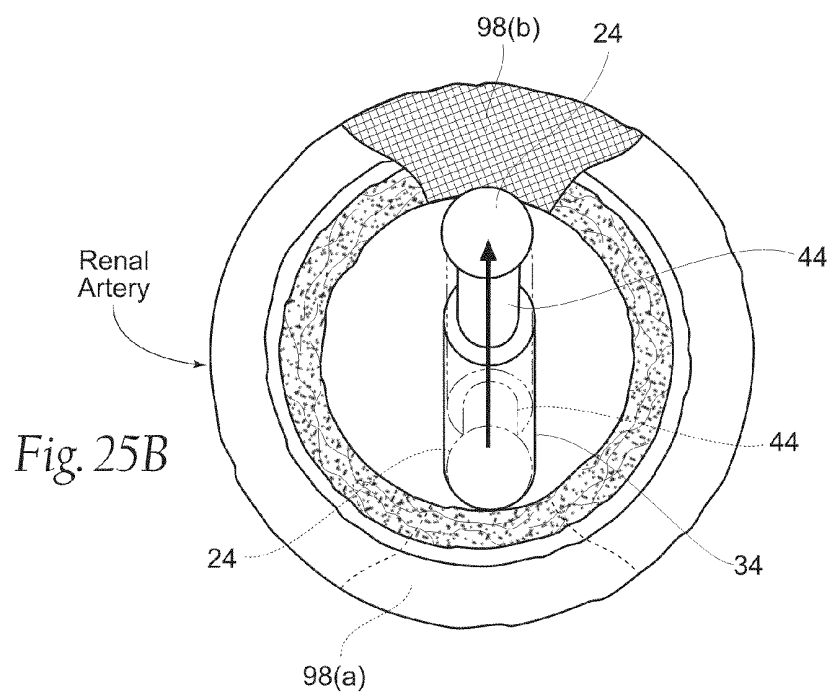
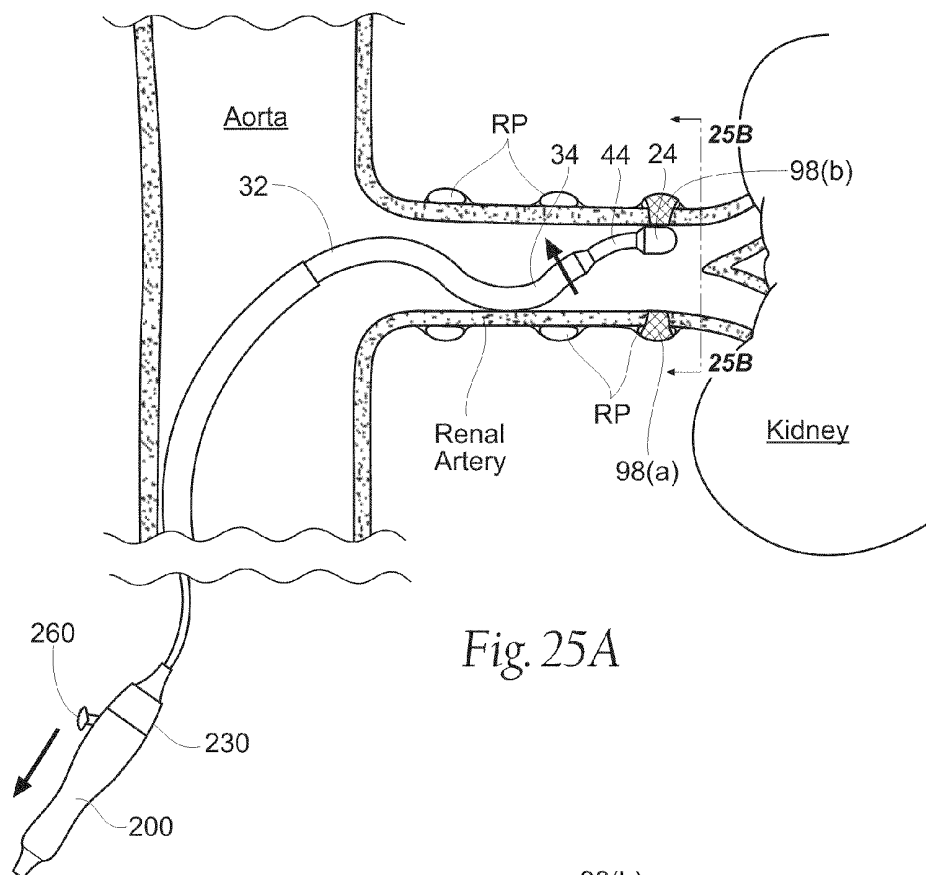
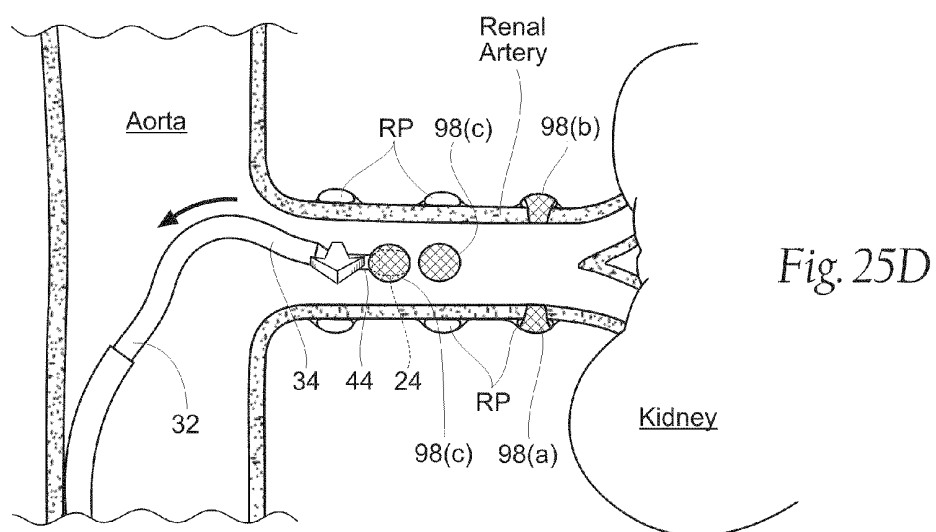
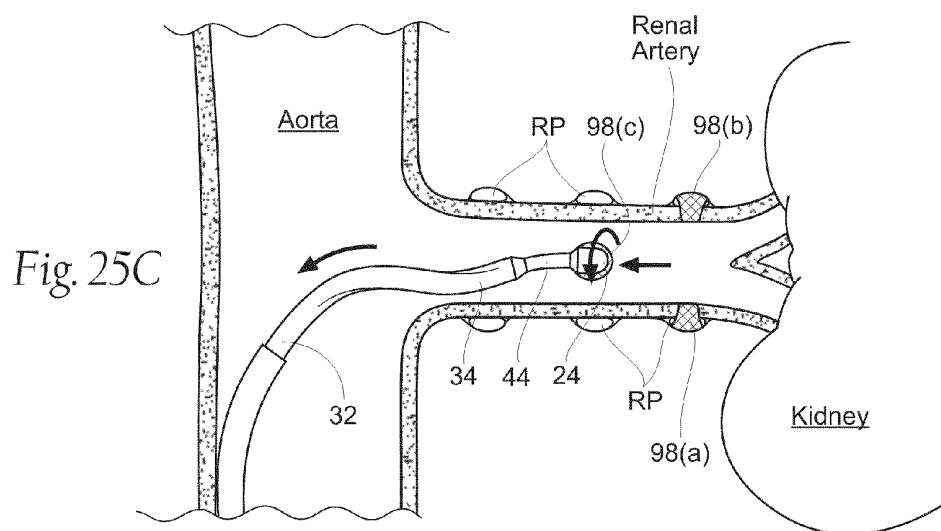


Fig. 24L





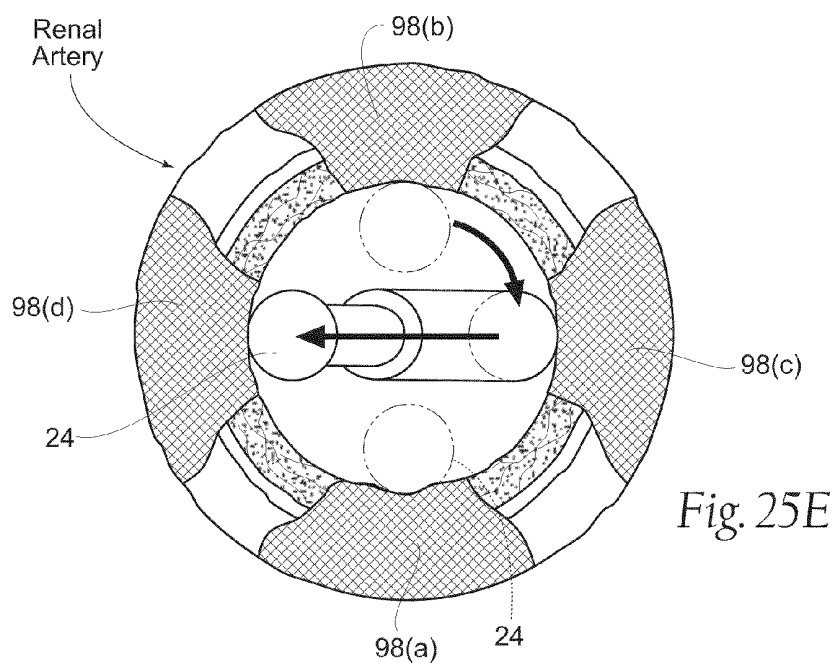


Fig. 25E

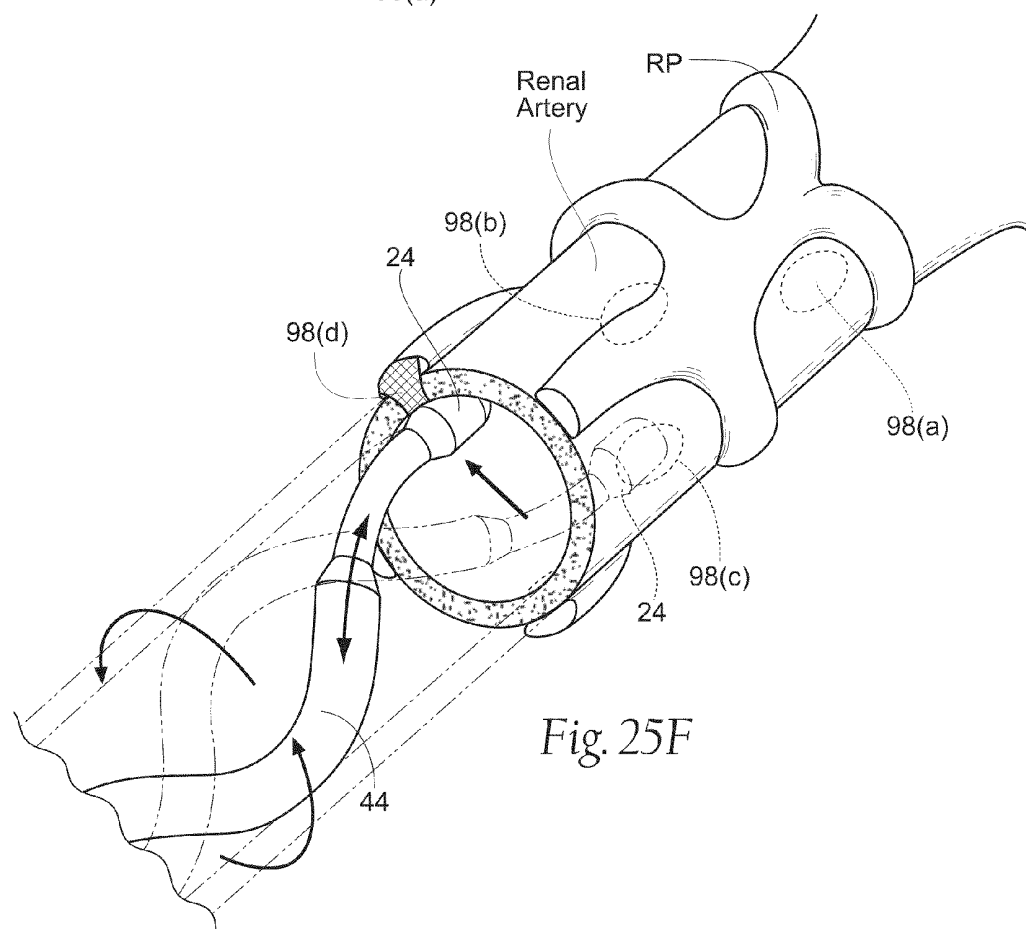


Fig. 25F

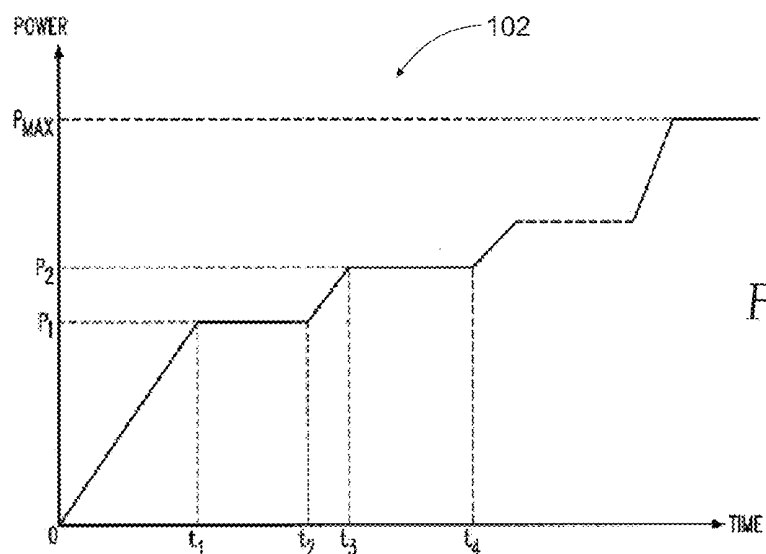


Fig. 26

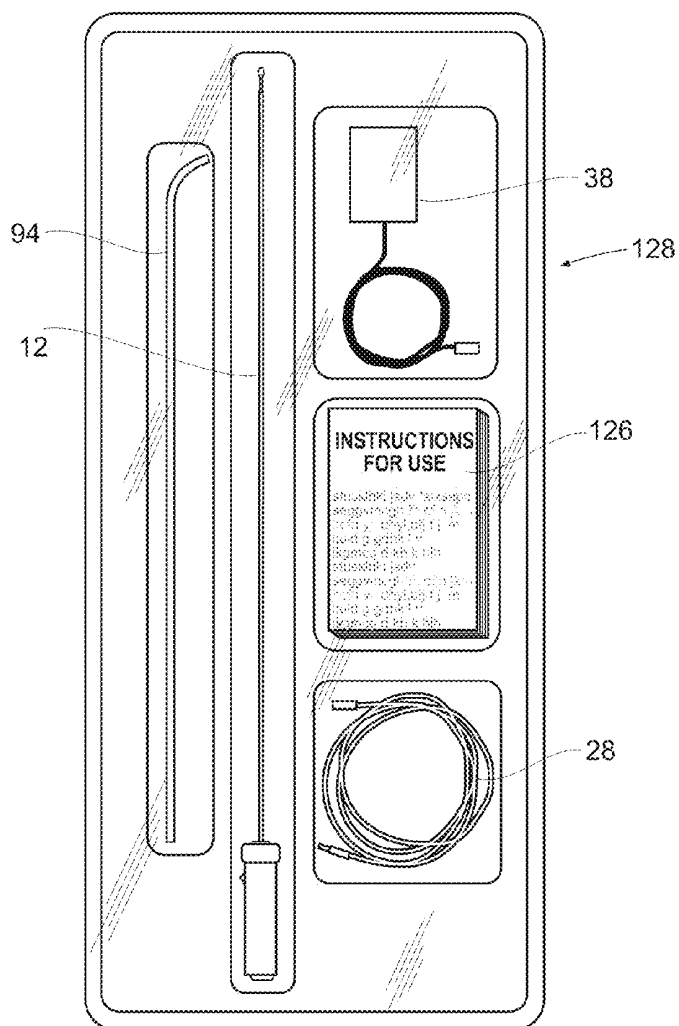


Fig. 27

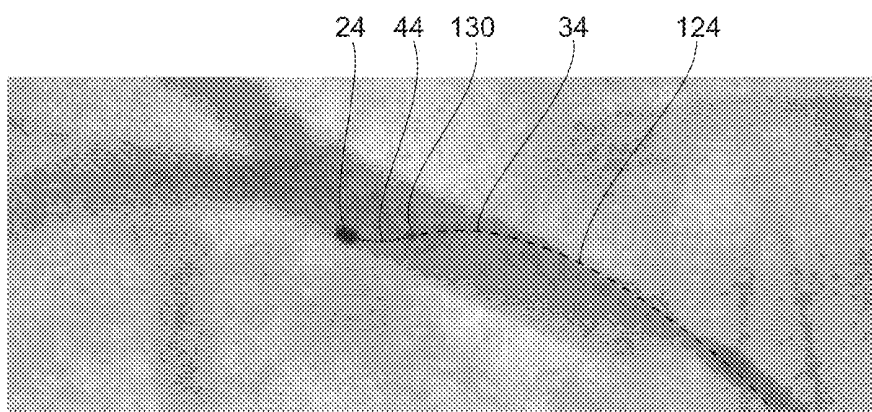


Fig. 28A

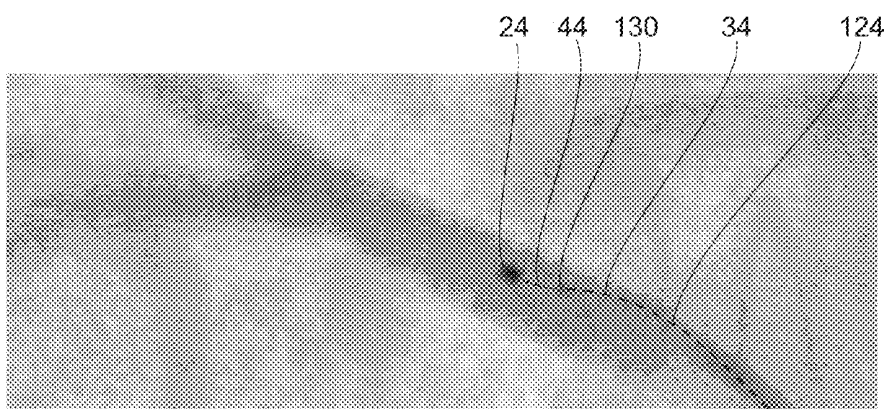


Fig. 28B



Fig. 28C

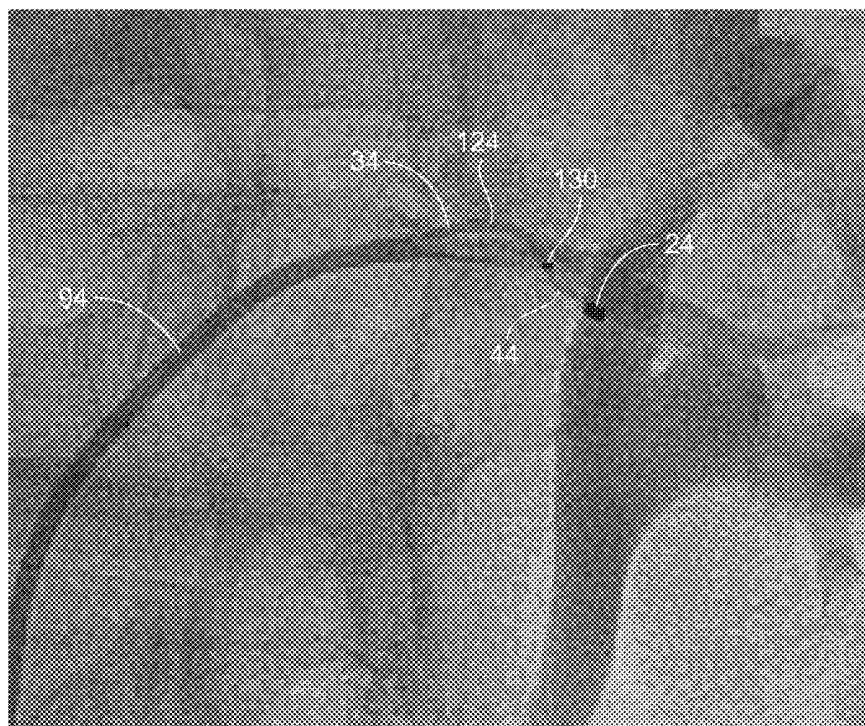


Fig. 28D

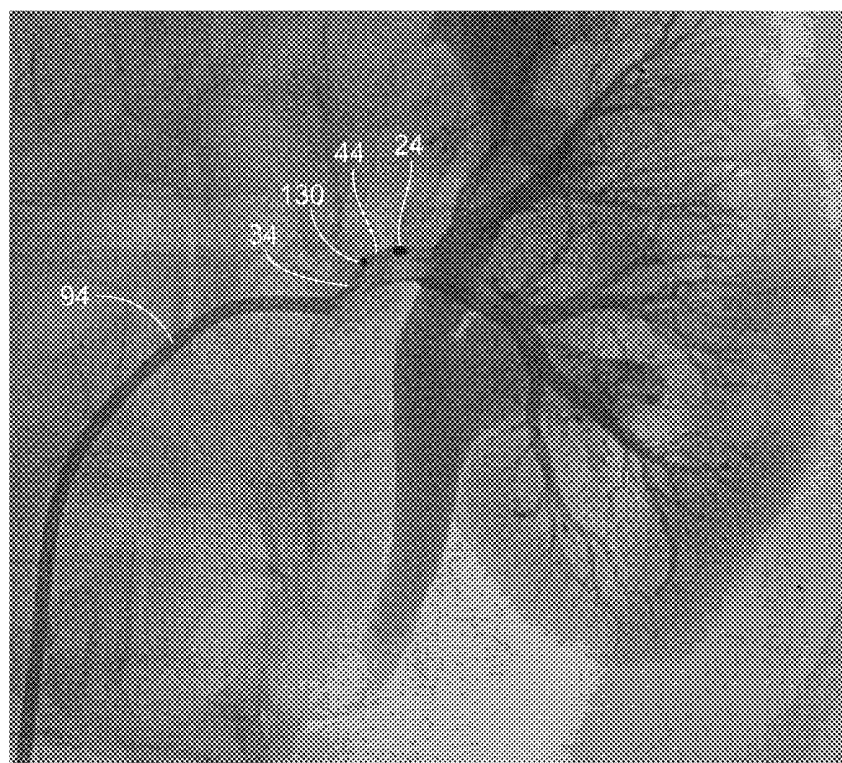


Fig. 28E

**MULTI-DIRECTIONAL DEFLECTABLE
CATHETER APPARATUSES, SYSTEMS, AND
METHODS FOR RENAL
NEUROMODULATION**

REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION(S)

[0001] The present application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/328,105, filed on Apr. 26, 2010, and incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] The technologies disclosed in the present application generally relate to catheter apparatuses, systems and methods for intravascular neuromodulation. More particularly, the technologies disclosed herein relate to multi-directional deflectable catheter apparatuses, systems, and methods for achieving intravascular renal neuromodulation via application of thermal and/or electrical energy.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Hypertension, heart failure, chronic kidney disease, insulin resistance, diabetes and metabolic syndrome represent a significant and growing global health issue. Current therapies for these conditions include non-pharmacological, pharmacological and device-based approaches. Despite this variety of treatment options, the rates of control of blood pressure and the therapeutic efforts to prevent progression of these disease states and their sequelae remain unsatisfactory. Although the reasons for this situation are manifold and include issues of non-compliance with prescribed therapy, heterogeneity in responses both in terms of efficacy and adverse event profile, and others, it is evident that alternative options are required to supplement the current therapeutic treatment regimes for these conditions.

[0004] Reduction of sympathetic renal nerve activity (e.g., via denervation), can reverse these processes. Ardian, Inc., of Palo Alto, Calif., has discovered that an energy field, including and comprising an electric field, can initiate renal neuromodulation via denervation caused by irreversible electroporation, electrofusion, apoptosis, necrosis, ablation, thermal alteration, alteration of gene expression or another suitable modality.

[0005] Catheter-based intervention is widely used for medical treatments where access to a location in the body is obtained, for example, through a vessel of the cardiovascular system. Ardian, Inc. has shown that an energy field can be applied to the sympathetic renal nerves from within a renal artery. The renal artery has features unique from other vessels or parts of the body and thus applying an energy field to the sympathetic renal nerves from within the renal artery is not trivial. Accordingly, a need exists for a catheter capable of effectively delivering energy to the renal sympathetic nerves from within a renal artery, where the catheter is better configured to i) navigate through a renal artery with reduced risk of applying traumatic force to the artery wall; ii) precisely place an energy delivery element at a desired location on the vessel wall; and iii) maintain stable contact between the energy delivery element and the location on the vessel wall during blood flow pulsatility and respiratory motion of the renal artery.

SUMMARY

[0006] The following summary is provided for the benefit of the reader only, and is not intended to limit the disclosure

in any way. The present application provides catheter apparatuses, systems and methods for achieving electrically- and/or thermally-induced renal neuromodulation by intravascular access.

[0007] One aspect of the present application provides apparatuses, systems, and methods that incorporate a catheter treatment device comprising an elongated shaft. The elongated shaft is sized and configured to deliver at least one thermal heating element to a renal artery via an intravascular path that includes a femoral artery, an iliac artery and the aorta. Different sections of the elongated shaft serve different mechanical functions when in use. The sections are differentiated in terms of their size, configuration, and mechanical properties for (i) percutaneous introduction into a femoral or brachial artery through a small-diameter access site; (ii) atraumatic passage through the tortuous intravascular path through an iliac artery, into the aorta, and into a respective left/right renal artery, including (iii) accommodating significant flexure at the junction of the left/right renal arteries and aorta to gain entry into the respective left or right renal artery; (iv) accommodating controlled translation, deflection, and/or rotation within the respective renal artery to attain proximity to and a desired alignment with an interior wall of the respective renal artery; (v) allowing the placement of at least one thermal heating element into contact with tissue on the interior wall in an orientation that optimizes the active surface area of the thermal heating element; and (vi) allowing substantially stable contact force between the at least one thermal heating element and the interior wall during motion of the renal artery with respect to the aorta due to respiration and/or blood flow pulsatility.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] FIG. 1 is a conceptual illustration of the sympathetic nervous system (SNS) and how the brain communicates with the body via the SNS.

[0009] FIG. 2 is an enlarged anatomic view of nerves innervating a left kidney to form the renal plexus surrounding the left renal artery.

[0010] FIGS. 3A and 3B provide anatomic and conceptual views of a human body, respectively, depicting neural efferent and afferent communication between the brain and kidneys.

[0011] FIGS. 4A and 4B are, respectively, anatomic views of the arterial and venous vasculatures of a human.

[0012] FIG. 5 is a perspective view of a system for achieving intravascular, thermally-induced renal neuromodulation, comprising a treatment device and a generator.

[0013] FIGS. 6A to 6C are anatomic views of the intravascular delivery, deflection and placement of various embodiments of the treatment device shown in FIG. 5 through the femoral artery and into a renal artery.

[0014] FIGS. 7A and 7B are anatomic views of the intravascular delivery, deflection and placement of various embodiments of the treatment device shown in FIG. 5 through the femoral artery and into a renal artery.

[0015] FIGS. 8A to 8D are a series of views of the elongated shaft of the treatment device shown in FIG. 5, showing the different mechanical and functional regions that the elongated shaft incorporates.

[0016] FIG. 8E shows an anatomic view of the placement of the treatment device shown in FIG. 5 within the dimensions of the renal artery.

[0017] FIGS. 9A to 9C show the placement of a thermal heating element, which is carried at the distal end of the

elongated shaft of the treatment device shown in FIG. 5, into contact with tissue along a renal artery.

[0018] FIGS. 10A and 10B show placement of the thermal heating element shown in FIGS. 9A to 9C into contact with tissue along a renal artery and delivery of thermal treatment to the renal plexus.

[0019] FIG. 11A shows an open circuit system for actively cooling the thermal heating element and/or the contacted tissue and its surroundings shown in FIGS. 10A and 10B.

[0020] FIGS. 11B and 11C are side-sectional and cross-sectional views, respectively, of a closed circuit system for actively cooling the thermal heating element and/or the contacted tissue and its surroundings shown in FIGS. 10A and 10B.

[0021] FIGS. 12A and 12B show a representative embodiment of the force transmitting section of the elongated shaft of the treatment device shown in FIG. 5.

[0022] FIGS. 13A to 13C show a representative embodiment of the proximal flexure zone of the elongated shaft of the treatment device shown in FIG. 5.

[0023] FIGS. 14A to 14C show a representative embodiment of the second flexure zone of the elongated shaft of the treatment device shown in FIG. 5.

[0024] FIG. 15 shows additional alternative representative embodiments of an elongated shaft for a treatment device like that shown in FIG. 5, showing examples of the different structural, mechanical and functional regions that the elongated shaft can incorporate.

[0025] FIGS. 16A to 16L show additional alternative representative embodiments of an elongated shaft for a treatment device like that shown in FIG. 5, showing examples of the different structural, mechanical and functional regions that the elongated shaft can incorporate, wherein the second flexure zone comprises a centrally positioned spine.

[0026] FIGS. 17A to 17B show representative embodiments of handle for a treatment device like that shown in FIG. 5.

[0027] FIGS. 18A to 18C show a representative embodiment of the distal flexure zone of the elongated shaft of the treatment device shown in FIG. 5.

[0028] FIGS. 18D to 18F show multiple planar views of the bending capability of the distal flexure zone corresponding to the elongated shaft of the treatment device shown in FIG. 5.

[0029] FIGS. 18G and 18H show alternative embodiments of the distal flexure zone corresponding to the elongated shaft of the treatment device shown in FIG. 5.

[0030] FIGS. 19A and 19B show a representative embodiment of a rotational control mechanism coupled to the handle assembly of the treatment device shown in FIG. 5.

[0031] FIGS. 20A to 20C show additional alternative representative embodiments of an elongated shaft for a treatment device like that shown in FIG. 5, showing examples of the different structural, mechanical and functional regions that the elongated shaft can incorporate.

[0032] FIGS. 21A to 21F show additional alternative representative embodiments of an elongated shaft for a treatment device like that shown in FIG. 5, showing examples of the different structural, mechanical and functional regions that the elongated shaft can incorporate.

[0033] FIGS. 22A to 22F show additional alternative representative embodiments of an elongated shaft for a treatment device like that shown in FIG. 5, showing examples of the different structural, mechanical and functional regions that the elongated shaft can incorporate.

[0034] FIGS. 23A to 23E show additional alternative representative embodiments of an elongated shaft for a treatment device like that shown in FIG. 5, showing examples of the different structural, mechanical and functional regions that the elongated shaft can incorporate.

[0035] FIGS. 24A to 24H show the intravascular delivery, placement, deflection, rotation, retraction, repositioning and use of a treatment device, like that shown in FIG. 5, to achieve thermally-induced renal neuromodulation from within a renal artery.

[0036] FIGS. 24I to 24K show the circumferential treatment effect resulting from intravascular use of a treatment device, like that shown in FIG. 5.

[0037] FIG. 24L shows an alternative intravascular treatment approach using a treatment device, like that shown in FIG. 5.

[0038] FIGS. 25A to F show an alternative intravascular treatment approach using a treatment device, like that shown in FIG. 5.

[0039] FIG. 26 shows an energy delivery algorithm corresponding to the energy generator of a system, like that shown in FIG. 5.

[0040] FIG. 27 shows several components of a system and treatment device, like that shown in FIG. 5, packaged within a single kit.

[0041] FIGS. 28A to 28C show fluoroscopic images of a treatment device, like that shown in FIG. 5, in multiple treatment positions within a renal artery of an animal.

[0042] FIGS. 28D and 28E show fluoroscopic images of a treatment device, like that shown in FIG. 5, in multiple treatment positions within a renal artery during a human study.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0043] Although the disclosure hereof is detailed and exact to enable those skilled in the art to practice the disclosed technologies, the physical embodiments herein disclosed merely exemplify the various aspects of the invention, which may be embodied in other specific structures. While the preferred embodiment has been described, the details may be changed without departing from the invention, which is defined by the claims.

I. Pertinent Anatomy and Physiology

[0044] A. The Sympathetic Nervous System

[0045] The Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS) is a branch of the autonomic nervous system along with the enteric nervous system and parasympathetic nervous system. It is always active at a basal level (called sympathetic tone) and becomes more active during times of stress. Like other parts of the nervous system, the sympathetic nervous system operates through a series of interconnected neurons. Sympathetic neurons are frequently considered part of the peripheral nervous system (PNS), although many lie within the central nervous system (CNS). Sympathetic neurons of the spinal cord (which is part of the CNS) communicate with peripheral sympathetic neurons via a series of sympathetic ganglia. Within the ganglia, spinal cord sympathetic neurons join peripheral sympathetic neurons through synapses. Spinal cord sympathetic neurons are therefore called presynaptic (or preganglionic) neurons, while peripheral sympathetic neurons are called postsynaptic (or postganglionic) neurons.

[0046] At synapses within the sympathetic ganglia, preganglionic sympathetic neurons release acetylcholine, a chemi-

cal messenger that binds and activates nicotinic acetylcholine receptors on postganglionic neurons. In response to this stimulus, postganglionic neurons principally release noradrenaline (norepinephrine). Prolonged activation can elicit the release of adrenaline from the adrenal medulla.

[0047] Once released, norepinephrine and epinephrine bind adrenergic receptors on peripheral tissues. Binding to adrenergic receptors causes a neuronal and hormonal response. The physiologic manifestations include pupil dilation, increased heart rate, occasional vomiting, and increased blood pressure. Increased sweating is also seen due to binding of cholinergic receptors of the sweat glands.

[0048] The sympathetic nervous system is responsible for up- and down-regulating many homeostatic mechanisms in living organisms. Fibers from the SNS innervate tissues in almost every organ system, providing at least some regulatory function to things as diverse as pupil diameter, gut motility, and urinary output. This response is also known as sympatho-adrenal response of the body, as the preganglionic sympathetic fibers that end in the adrenal medulla (but also all other sympathetic fibers) secrete acetylcholine, which activates the secretion of adrenaline (epinephrine) and to a lesser extent noradrenaline (norepinephrine). Therefore, this response that acts primarily on the cardiovascular system is mediated directly via impulses transmitted through the sympathetic nervous system and indirectly via catecholamines secreted from the adrenal medulla.

[0049] Science typically looks at the SNS as an automatic regulation system, that is, one that operates without the intervention of conscious thought. Some evolutionary theorists suggest that the sympathetic nervous system operated in early organisms to maintain survival as the sympathetic nervous system is responsible for priming the body for action. One example of this priming is in the moments before waking, in which sympathetic outflow spontaneously increases in preparation for action.

[0050] 1. The Sympathetic Chain

[0051] As shown in FIG. 1, the SNS provides a network of nerves that allows the brain to communicate with the body. Sympathetic nerves originate inside the vertebral column, toward the middle of the spinal cord in the intermediolateral cell column (or lateral horn), beginning at the first thoracic segment of the spinal cord and are thought to extend to the second or third lumbar segments. Because its cells begin in the thoracic and lumbar regions of the spinal cord, the SNS is said to have a thoracolumbar outflow. Axons of these nerves leave the spinal cord through the anterior rootlet/root. They pass near the spinal (sensory) ganglion, where they enter the anterior rami of the spinal nerves. However, unlike somatic innervation, they quickly separate out through white rami connectors which connect to either the paravertebral (which lie near the vertebral column) or prevertebral (which lie near the aortic bifurcation) ganglia extending alongside the spinal column.

[0052] In order to reach the target organs and glands, the axons must travel long distances in the body, and, to accomplish this, many axons relay their message to a second cell through synaptic transmission. The ends of the axons link across a space, the synapse, to the dendrites of the second cell. The first cell (the presynaptic cell) sends a neurotransmitter across the synaptic cleft where it activates the second cell (the postsynaptic cell). The message is then carried to the final destination.

[0053] In the SNS and other components of the peripheral nervous system, these synapses are made at sites called ganglia. The cell that sends its fiber is called a preganglionic cell, while the cell whose fiber leaves the ganglion is called a postganglionic cell. As mentioned previously, the preganglionic cells of the SNS are located between the first thoracic (T1) segment and third lumbar (L3) segments of the spinal cord. Postganglionic cells have their cell bodies in the ganglia and send their axons to target organs or glands.

[0054] The ganglia include not just the sympathetic trunks but also the cervical ganglia (superior, middle and inferior), which sends sympathetic nerve fibers to the head and thorax organs, and the celiac and mesenteric ganglia (which send sympathetic fibers to the gut).

[0055] 2. Innervation of the Kidneys

[0056] As FIG. 2 shows, the kidney is innervated by the renal plexus (RP), which is intimately associated with the renal artery. The renal plexus is an autonomic plexus that surrounds the renal artery and is embedded within the adventitia of the renal artery. The renal plexus extends along the renal artery until it arrives at the substance of the kidney. Fibers contributing to the renal plexus arise from the celiac ganglion, the superior mesenteric ganglion, the aorticorenal ganglion and the aortic plexus. The renal plexus (RP), also referred to as the renal nerve, is predominantly comprised of sympathetic components. There is no (or at least very minimal) parasympathetic innervation of the kidney.

[0057] Preganglionic neuronal cell bodies are located in the intermediolateral cell column of the spinal cord. Preganglionic axons pass through the paravertebral ganglia (they do not synapse) to become the lesser splanchnic nerve, the least splanchnic nerve, first lumbar splanchnic nerve, second lumbar splanchnic nerve, and travel to the celiac ganglion, the superior mesenteric ganglion, and the aorticorenal ganglion. Postganglionic neuronal cell bodies exit the celiac ganglion, the superior mesenteric ganglion, and the aorticorenal ganglion to the renal plexus (RP) and are distributed to the renal vasculature.

[0058] 3. Renal Sympathetic Neural Activity

[0059] Messages travel through the SNS in a bidirectional flow. Efferent messages can trigger changes in different parts of the body simultaneously. For example, the sympathetic nervous system can accelerate heart rate; widen bronchial passages; decrease motility (movement) of the large intestine; constrict blood vessels; increase peristalsis in the esophagus; cause pupil dilation, piloerection (goose bumps) and perspiration (sweating); and raise blood pressure. Afferent messages carry signals from various organs and sensory receptors in the body to other organs and, particularly, the brain.

[0060] Hypertension, heart failure and chronic kidney disease are a few of many disease states that result from chronic activation of the SNS, especially the renal sympathetic nervous system. Chronic activation of the SNS is a maladaptive response that drives the progression of these disease states. Pharmaceutical management of the renin-angiotensin-aldosterone system (RAAS) has been a longstanding, but somewhat ineffective, approach for reducing over-activity of the SNS.

[0061] As mentioned above, the renal sympathetic nervous system has been identified as a major contributor to the complex pathophysiology of hypertension, states of volume overload (such as heart failure), and progressive renal disease, both experimentally and in humans. Studies employing radiotracer dilution methodology to measure overflow of

norepinephrine from the kidneys to plasma revealed increased renal norepinephrine (NE) spillover rates in patients with essential hypertension, particularly so in young hypertensive subjects, which in concert with increased NE spillover from the heart, is consistent with the hemodynamic profile typically seen in early hypertension and characterized by an increased heart rate, cardiac output and renovascular resistance. It is now known that essential hypertension is commonly neurogenic, often accompanied by pronounced sympathetic nervous system overactivity.

[0062] Activation of cardiorenal sympathetic nerve activity is even more pronounced in heart failure, as demonstrated by an exaggerated increase of NE overflow from the heart and the kidneys to plasma in this patient group. In line with this notion is the recent demonstration of a strong negative predictive value of renal sympathetic activation on all-cause mortality and heart transplantation in patients with congestive heart failure, which is independent of overall sympathetic activity, glomerular filtration rate and left ventricular ejection fraction. These findings support the notion that treatment regimens that are designed to reduce renal sympathetic stimulation have the potential to improve survival in patients with heart failure.

[0063] Both chronic and end stage renal disease are characterized by heightened sympathetic nervous activation. In patients with end stage renal disease, plasma levels of norepinephrine above the median have been demonstrated to be predictive for both all cause death and death from cardiovascular disease. This is also true for patients suffering from diabetic or contrast nephropathy. There is compelling evidence that suggests that sensory afferent signals originating from the diseased kidneys are major contributors to the initiation and sustainment of elevated central sympathetic outflow in this patient group, which facilitates the occurrence of the well known adverse consequences of chronic sympathetic overactivity such as hypertension, left ventricular hypertrophy, ventricular arrhythmias, sudden cardiac death, insulin resistance, diabetes and metabolic syndrome.

[0064] (i) Renal Sympathetic Efferent Activity

[0065] Sympathetic nerves to the kidneys terminate in the blood vessels, the juxtaglomerular apparatus and the renal tubules. Stimulation of the renal sympathetic nerves causes increased renin release, increased sodium (Na⁺) reabsorption and a reduction of renal blood flow. These components of the neural regulation of renal function are considerably stimulated in disease states characterized by heightened sympathetic tone and clearly contribute to the rise in blood pressure in hypertensive patients. The reduction of renal blood flow and glomerular filtration rate as a result of renal sympathetic efferent stimulation is likely a cornerstone of the loss of renal function in cardio-renal syndrome, which is renal dysfunction as a progressive complication of chronic heart failure, with a clinical course that typically fluctuates with the patient's clinical status and treatment. Pharmacologic strategies to thwart the consequences of renal efferent sympathetic stimulation include centrally acting sympatholytic drugs, beta blockers (intended to reduce renin release), angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitors and receptor blockers (intended to block the action of angiotensin II and aldosterone activation consequent to renin release) and diuretics (intended to counter the renal sympathetic mediated sodium and water retention). However, the current pharmacologic strategies have significant limitations including limited efficacy, compliance issues, side effects and others.

[0066] (ii) Renal Sensory Afferent Nerve Activity

[0067] The kidneys communicate with integral structures in the central nervous system via renal sensory afferent nerves. Several forms of "renal injury" can induce activation of sensory afferent signals. For example, renal ischemia, reduction in stroke volume or renal blood flow, or an abundance of adenosine enzyme may trigger activation of afferent neural communication. As shown in FIGS. 3A and 3B, this afferent communication might be from the kidney to the brain or might be from one kidney to the other kidney (via the central nervous system). These afferent signals are centrally integrated and can result in increased sympathetic outflow. This sympathetic drive is directed towards the kidneys, thereby activating the RAAS and inducing increased renin secretion, sodium retention, volume retention and vasoconstriction. Central sympathetic overactivity also impacts other organs and bodily structures innervated by sympathetic nerves such as the heart and the peripheral vasculature, resulting in the described adverse effects of sympathetic activation, several aspects of which also contribute to the rise in blood pressure.

[0068] The physiology therefore suggests that (i) denervation of tissue with efferent sympathetic nerves will reduce inappropriate renin release, salt retention, and reduction of renal blood flow, and that (ii) denervation of tissue with afferent sensory nerves will reduce the systemic contribution to hypertension, and other disease states associated with increased central sympathetic tone, through its direct effect on the posterior hypothalamus as well as the contralateral kidney. In addition to the central hypotensive effects of afferent renal denervation, a desirable reduction of central sympathetic outflow to various other sympathetically innervated organs such as the heart and the vasculature is anticipated.

[0069] B. Additional Clinical Benefits of Renal Denervation

[0070] As provided above, renal denervation is likely to be valuable in the treatment of several clinical conditions characterized by increased overall and particularly renal sympathetic activity such as hypertension, metabolic syndrome, insulin resistance, diabetes, left ventricular hypertrophy, chronic and end stage renal disease, inappropriate fluid retention in heart failure, cardio-renal syndrome and sudden death. Since the reduction of afferent neural signals contributes to the systemic reduction of sympathetic tone/drive, renal denervation might also be useful in treating other conditions associated with systemic sympathetic hyperactivity. Accordingly, renal denervation can also benefit other organs and bodily structures innervated by sympathetic nerves, including those identified in FIG. 1. For example, a reduction in central sympathetic drive may reduce the insulin resistance that afflicts people with metabolic syndrome and Type II diabetics. Additionally, patients with osteoporosis are also sympathetically activated and might also benefit from the down-regulation of sympathetic drive that accompanies renal denervation.

[0071] C. Achieving Intravascular Access to the Renal Artery

[0072] In accordance with the present invention, neuromodulation of a left and/or right renal plexus (RP), which is intimately associated with a left and/or right renal artery, may be achieved through intravascular access. As FIG. 4A shows, blood moved by contractions of the heart is conveyed from the left ventricle of the heart by the aorta. The aorta descends through the thorax and branches into the left and right renal

arteries. Below the renal arteries, the aorta bifurcates at the left and right iliac arteries. The left and right iliac arteries descend, respectively, through the left and right legs and join the left and right femoral arteries.

[0073] As FIG. 4B shows, the blood collects in veins and returns to the heart, through the femoral veins into the iliac veins and into the inferior vena cava. The inferior vena cava branches into the left and right renal veins. Above the renal veins, the inferior vena cava ascends to convey blood into the right atrium of the heart. From the right atrium, the blood is pumped through the right ventricle into the lungs, where it is oxygenated. From the lungs, the oxygenated blood is conveyed into the left atrium. From the left atrium, the oxygenated blood is conveyed by the left ventricle back to the aorta.

[0074] As will be described in greater detail later, the femoral artery can be exposed and cannulated at the base of the femoral triangle, just inferior to the midpoint of the inguinal ligament. A catheter can be inserted through this access site, percutaneously into the femoral artery and passed into the iliac artery and aorta, into either the left or right renal artery. This comprises an intravascular path that offers minimally invasive access to a respective renal artery and/or other renal blood vessels.

[0075] The wrist, upper arm, and shoulder region provide other locations for introduction of catheters into the arterial system. Catheterization of either the radial, brachial, or axillary artery may be utilized in select cases. Catheters introduced via these access points may be passed through the subclavian artery on the left side (or via the subclavian and brachiocephalic arteries on the right side), through the aortic arch, down the descending aorta and into the renal arteries using standard angiographic technique.

[0076] D. Properties and Characteristics of the Renal Vasculature

[0077] Since neuromodulation of a left and/or right renal plexus (RP) may be achieved in accordance with the present invention through intravascular access, properties and characteristics of the renal vasculature may impose constraints upon and/or inform the design of apparatus, systems and methods for achieving such renal neuromodulation. Some of these properties and characteristics may vary across the patient population and/or within a specific patient across time, as well as in response to disease states, such as hypertension, chronic kidney disease, vascular disease, end-stage renal disease, insulin resistance, diabetes, metabolic syndrome, etc. These properties and characteristics, as explained below, may have bearing on the clinical safety and efficacy of the procedure and the specific design of the intravascular device. Properties of interest may include, for example, material/mechanical, spatial, fluid dynamic/hemodynamic and/or thermodynamic properties.

[0078] As discussed previously, a catheter can be advanced percutaneously into either the left or right renal artery via a minimally invasive intravascular path. However, minimally invasive renal arterial access can be challenging, for example, because, as compared to some other arteries that are routinely accessed using catheters, the renal arteries are often extremely tortuous, may be of relatively small diameter and/or may be of relatively short length. Furthermore, renal arterial atherosclerosis is common in many patients, particularly those with cardiovascular disease. Renal arterial anatomy also may vary significantly from patient to patient, further complicating minimally invasive access. Significant inter-patient variation may be seen, for example, in relative tortu-

osity, diameter, length and/or atherosclerotic plaque burden, as well as in the take-off angle at which a renal artery branches from the aorta. Apparatus, systems and methods for achieving renal neuromodulation via intravascular access must account for these and other aspects of renal arterial anatomy and its variation across the patient population when minimally invasively accessing a renal artery.

[0079] In addition to complicating renal arterial access, specifics of the renal anatomy also complicate establishment of stable contact between neuromodulatory apparatus and a luminal surface or wall of a renal artery. When the neuromodulatory apparatus comprises a thermal heating element, such as an electrode, consistent positioning and contact force application between the thermal heating element and the vessel wall is important for predictability and safety. However, navigation is impeded by the tight space within a renal artery, as well as tortuosity of the artery. Furthermore, respiration and/or the cardiac cycle may cause significant movement of the renal artery relative to the aorta, and the cardiac cycle and/or the neuromodulatory apparatus may transiently dislodge the renal artery, further complicating establishment of stable contact.

[0080] Even after accessing a renal artery and facilitating stable contact between neuromodulatory apparatus and a luminal surface of the artery, nerves in and around the adventitia of the artery must be safely modulated via the neuromodulatory apparatus. Safely applying thermal treatment from within a renal artery is non-trivial given the potential clinical complications associated with such treatment. For example, the intima and media of the renal artery are highly vulnerable to thermal injury. As discussed in greater detail below, the Intima-Media Thickness separating the vessel lumen from its adventitia means that target renal nerves may be multiple millimeters distant from the luminal surface of the artery. Sufficient thermal energy must be delivered to the target renal nerves to modulate the target renal nerves without excessively heating and desiccating the vessel wall. Another potential clinical complication associated with excessive heating is thrombus formation from coagulating blood flowing through the artery. Given that this thrombus can cause a kidney infarct, thereby causing irreversible damage to the kidney, thermal treatment from within the renal artery must be applied carefully. Accordingly, the complex fluid mechanic and thermodynamic conditions present in the renal artery during treatment, particularly those that may impact heat transfer dynamics at the treatment site, can be important in applying thermal treatment from within the renal artery.

[0081] The neuromodulatory apparatus should also be configured to allow for adjustable positioning and repositioning of the thermal element within the renal artery since location of treatment may also impact clinical safety and efficacy. For example, it may be tempting to apply a full circumferential treatment from within the renal artery given that the renal nerves may be spaced circumferentially around a renal artery. However, the full-circle lesion likely resulting from a continuous circumferential treatment may create a heightened risk of renal artery stenosis, thereby negating any potential therapeutic benefit of the renal neuromodulation. Therefore, the formation of more complex lesions along a longitudinal dimension of the renal artery and/or repositioning of the neuromodulatory apparatus to multiple treatment locations may be desirable. Additionally, variable positioning and repositioning of the neuromodulatory apparatus may prove to be useful in circumstances where the renal artery is particu-

larly tortuous or where there are proximal branch vessels off the renal artery main vessel, making treatment in certain locations challenging.

[0082] Based on the above described challenges of (1) renal artery intervention, (2) consistent and stable placement of the thermal element against the vessel wall, (3) safe application of thermal treatment across the vessel wall, and (4) positioning and repositioning the treatment apparatus to allow for multiple treatment locations, various independent and dependent properties of the renal vasculature that may be of interest include, for example, vessel diameter, length, intima-media thickness, coefficient of friction and tortuosity; distensibility, stiffness and modulus of elasticity of the vessel wall; peak systolic and end-diastolic blood flow velocity, as well as the mean systolic-diastolic peak blood flow velocity, mean/max volumetric blood flow rate; specific heat capacity of blood and/or of the vessel wall, thermal conductivity of blood and/or of the vessel wall, thermal convectivity of blood flow past a vessel wall treatment site and/or radiative heat transfer; and renal motion relative to the aorta, induced by respiration and/or blood flow pulsatility, as well as the take-off angle of a renal artery relative to the aorta. These properties will be discussed in greater detail with respect to the renal arteries. However, dependent on the apparatus, systems and methods utilized to achieve renal neuromodulation, such properties of the renal veins also may guide and/or constrain design characteristics.

[0083] Apparatus positioned within a renal artery must conform to the geometry of the artery. Renal artery vessel diameter, D_{RA} , typically is in a range of about 2-10 mm, with an average of about 6 mm. Renal artery vessel length, L_{RA} , between its ostium at the aorta/renal artery juncture and its distal branchings, generally is in a range of about 5-70 mm, more generally in a range of about 20-50 mm. Since the target renal plexus is embedded within the adventitia of the renal artery, the composite Intima-Media Thickness, IMT, (i.e., the radial outward distance from the artery's luminal surface to the adventitia containing target neural structures) also is notable and generally is in a range of about 0.5-2.5 mm, with an average of about 1.5 mm. Although a certain depth of treatment is important to reach the target neural fibers, the treatment should not be too deep (e.g., >5 mm from inner wall of the renal artery) to avoid non-target tissue and anatomical structures such as the renal vein.

[0084] Apparatus navigated within a renal artery also must contend with friction and tortuosity. The coefficient of friction, μ , (e.g., static or kinetic friction) at the wall of a renal artery generally is quite low, for example, generally is less than about 0.05, or less than about 0.03. Tortuosity, τ , a measure of the relative twistiness of a curved segment, has been quantified in various ways. The arc-chord ratio defines tortuosity as the length of a curve, L_{curve} , divided by the chord, C_{curve} , connecting the ends of the curve (i.e., the linear distance separating the ends of the curve):

$$\tau = L_{curve} / C_{curve} \quad (1)$$

[0085] Renal artery tortuosity, as defined by the arc-chord ratio, is generally in the range of about 1-2.

[0086] The pressure change between diastole and systole changes the luminal diameter of the renal artery, providing information on the bulk material properties of the vessel. The Distensibility Coefficient, DC, a property dependent on

actual blood pressure, captures the relationship between pulse pressure and diameter change:

$$\Delta X = 2 * ((\Delta_{syst} - \Delta_{diast}) / \Delta_{diast}) / \Delta \Pi = 2 * (\Delta \Delta / \Delta_{diast}) / \Delta \Pi, \quad (2)$$

where D_{syst} is the systolic diameter of the renal artery, D_{diast} is the diastolic diameter of the renal artery, and ΔD (which generally is less than about 1 mm, e.g., in the range of about 0.1 mm to 1 mm) is the difference between the two diameters:

$$\Delta \Delta = \Delta_{syst} - \Delta_{diast} \quad (3)$$

[0087] The renal arterial Distensibility Coefficient is generally in the range of about 20-50 $\text{kPa}^{-1} * 10^{-3}$.

[0088] The luminal diameter change during the cardiac cycle also may be used to determine renal arterial Stiffness, β . Unlike the Distensibility Coefficient, Stiffness is a dimensionless property and is independent of actual blood pressure in normotensive patients:

$$\beta = (\lambda \nu [B \Pi_{syst} / B \Pi_{diast}]) / (\Delta \Delta / \Delta_{diast}) \quad (4)$$

[0089] Renal arterial Stiffness generally is in the range of about 3.5-4.5.

[0090] In combination with other geometric properties of the renal artery, the Distensibility Coefficient may be utilized to determine the renal artery's Incremental Modulus of Elasticity, E_{inc} :

$$E_{inc} = 3(1 + (\Delta X \Sigma A / \text{IM} \Sigma A)) / \Delta X, \quad (5)$$

where LCSA is the luminal cross-sectional area and IMCSA is the intima-media cross-sectional area:

$$\Delta X \Sigma A = \pi (\Delta_{diast} / 2)^2 \quad (6)$$

$$\text{IM} \Sigma A = \pi (\Delta_{diast} / 2 + \text{IMT})^2 - \Delta X \Sigma A \quad (7)$$

[0091] For the renal artery, LCSA is in the range of about 7-50 mm^2 , IMCSA is in the range of about 5-80 mm^2 , and E_{inc} is in the range of about 0.1-0.4 $\text{kPa} * 10^3$.

[0092] For patients without significant Renal Arterial Stenosis (RAS), peak renal artery systolic blood flow velocity, $v_{max-syst}$, generally is less than about 200 cm/s; while peak renal artery end-diastolic blood flow velocity, $v_{max-dia}$, generally is less than about 150 cm/s, e.g., about 120 cm/s.

[0093] In addition to the blood flow velocity profile of a renal artery, volumetric flow rate also is of interest. Assuming Poiseuille flow, the volumetric flow rate through a tube, Φ , (often measured at the outlet of the tube) is defined as the average velocity of fluid flow through the tube, v_{avg} , times the cross-sectional area of the tube:

$$\Phi = v_{avg} * \pi R^2 \quad (8)$$

[0094] By integrating the velocity profile (defined in Eq. 10 above) over all r from 0 to R , it can be shown that:

$$\Phi = v_{avg} * \pi R^2 = (\pi P^4 * \Delta \Pi \rho) / 8 \eta \Delta \xi \quad (9)$$

[0095] As discussed previously, for the purposes of the renal artery, η may be defined as η_{blood} , Δx may be defined as L_{RA} , and R may be defined as $D_{RA} / 2$. The change in pressure, ΔP , across the renal artery may be measured at a common point in the cardiac cycle (e.g., via a pressure-sensing guidewire) to determine the volumetric flow rate through the renal artery at the chosen common point in the cardiac cycle (e.g. during systole and/or during enddiastole). Volumetric flow rate additionally or alternatively may be measured directly or may be determined from blood flow velocity measurements. The volumetric blood flow rate through a renal artery generally is in the range of about 500-1000 mL/min.

[0096] Thermodynamic properties of the renal artery also are of interest. Such properties include, for example, the specific heat capacity of blood and/or of the vessel wall, thermal conductivity of blood and/or of the vessel wall, thermal convectivity of blood flow past a vessel wall treatment site. Thermal radiation also may be of interest, but it is expected that the magnitude of conductive and/or convective heat transfer is significantly higher than the magnitude of radiative heat transfer.

[0097] The heat transfer coefficient may be empirically measured, or may be calculated as a function of the thermal conductivity, the vessel diameter and the Nusselt Number. The Nusselt Number is a function of the Reynolds Number and the Prandtl Number. Calculation of the Reynolds Number takes into account flow velocity and rate, as well as fluid viscosity and density, while calculation of the Prandtl Number takes into account specific heat, as well as fluid viscosity and thermal conductivity. The heat transfer coefficient of blood flowing through the renal artery is generally in the range of about 500-6000 W/m²K.

[0098] An additional property of the renal artery that may be of interest is the degree of renal motion relative to the aorta, induced by respiration and/or blood flow pulsatility. A patient's kidney, located at the distal end of the renal artery, can move as much as 5 cm cranially with respiratory excursion. This may impart significant motion to the renal artery connecting the aorta and the kidney, thereby requiring from the neuromodulatory apparatus a unique balance of stiffness and flexibility to maintain contact between the thermal treatment element and the vessel wall during cycles of respiration. Furthermore, the take-off angle between the renal artery and the aorta may vary significantly between patients, and also may vary dynamically within a patient, e.g., due to kidney motion. The take-off angle generally may be in a range of about 30°-135°.

[0099] These and other properties of the renal vasculature may impose constraints upon and/or inform the design of apparatus, systems and methods for achieving renal neuromodulation via intravascular access. Specific design requirements may include accessing the renal artery, facilitating stable contact between neuromodulatory apparatus and a luminal surface or wall of the renal artery, and/or safely modulating the renal nerves with the neuromodulatory apparatus.

II. Catheter Apparatuses, Systems and Methods for Renal Neuromodulation

[0100] A. Overview

[0101] FIG. 5 shows a system 10 for thermally inducing neuromodulation of a left and/or right renal plexus (RP) through intravascular access.

[0102] As just described, the left and/or right renal plexus (RP) surrounds the respective left and/or right renal artery. The renal plexus (RP) extends in intimate association with the respective renal artery into the substance of the kidney. The system thermally induces neuromodulation of a renal plexus (RP) by intravascular access into the respective left or right renal artery.

[0103] The system 10 includes an intravascular treatment device 12. The treatment device 12 provides access to the renal plexus (RP) through an intravascular path 14 that leads to a respective renal artery, as FIG. 6A shows.

[0104] As FIG. 5 shows, the treatment device 12 includes an elongated shaft 16 having a proximal end region 18 and a distal end region 20.

[0105] The proximal end region 18 of the elongated shaft 16 is connected to a handle assembly 200. The handle assembly 200 is sized and configured to be securely or ergonomically held and manipulated by a caregiver (see, e.g., FIG. 19A) outside an intravascular path 14 (see, e.g., FIG. 6A). By manipulating the handle assembly 200 from outside the intravascular path 14, the caregiver can advance the elongated shaft 16 through the tortuous intravascular path 14 and remotely manipulate or actuate the distal end region 20. Image guidance, e.g., CT, radiographic, IVUS, OCT or another suitable guidance modality, or combinations thereof, can be used to aid the caregiver's manipulation.

[0106] As shown in FIG. 6B, the distal end region 20 of the elongated shaft 16 can flex in a substantial fashion to gain entrance into a respective left/right renal artery by manipulation of the elongated shaft 16. As shown in FIGS. 24A and 24B, the distal end region 20 of the elongated shaft 16 can gain entrance to the renal artery via passage within a guide catheter 94. The distal end region 20 of the elongated shaft 16 carries at least one thermal element 24 (e.g., thermal heating element, energy delivery element, radiofrequency electrode, electrode, cooled radiofrequency electrode, electrically resistive heating element, cryoablation applicator, microwave antenna, ultrasound transducer, high intensity focused ultrasound transducer, laser emitter). The thermal heating element 24 is also specially sized and configured for manipulation and use within a renal artery.

[0107] As FIG. 6B shows (and as will be described in greater detail later), once entrance to a renal artery is gained, further manipulation of the distal end region 20 and the thermal heating element(s) 24 within the respective renal artery establishes proximity to and alignment between the thermal heating element(s) 24 and tissue along an interior wall of the respective renal artery. In some embodiments, manipulation of the distal end region 20 will also facilitate contact between the thermal heating element(s) 24 and wall of the renal artery. In the context of the present application, the phrasing "contact between an energy delivery element and a wall of the renal artery" generally means contiguous physical contact with or without atraumatic distension of the renal artery wall and without puncturing or perforating the renal artery wall.

[0108] As will be described in greater detail later, in the representative embodiment of FIG. 6B, the thermal heating element 24 of distal end region 20 is positioned along a distal tip or end of the distal end region, e.g., at a distal end of an optional third or distal flexure zone 44. However, it should be understood that the distal end region 20 optionally may comprise one or more additional thermal heating elements that are positioned relatively more proximal. When multiple thermal heating elements are provided, the thermal heating elements may deliver power independently (i.e., may be used in a monopolar fashion), either simultaneously or progressively, and/or may deliver power between any desired combination of the elements (i.e., may be used in a bipolar fashion). Furthermore, the caregiver optionally may be capable of dynamically choosing which thermal heating element(s) are used for power delivery in order to form highly customizable lesion(s) within the renal artery, as desired.

[0109] In one representative embodiment shown in FIG. 7A, one or more additional thermal heating elements 24a optionally may be positioned proximally of thermal heating

element **24**, e.g., along a third flexure zone **44**, at a proximal region of the optional third flexure zone **44** and/or at a distal region of an optional second or intermediate flexure zone **34** for contacting an internal wall of the renal artery at position(s) longitudinally spaced, but generally in angular alignment, with the distally located thermal heating element **24**. The spacing of the thermal heating elements **24** and **24a** may be specified to provide a desired spacing between lesions formed when using the elements within a renal artery. In one representative embodiment, thermal heating elements **24** and **24a** are spaced apart as far as about 1 cm. In other embodiments, the spacing between thermal heating elements **24** and **24a** is in the range of about 2 mm to about 5 mm. In one representative embodiment, the thermal heating elements **24** and **24a** are spaced apart about 5 mm. In another representative embodiment, the thermal heating elements **24** and **24a** are spaced apart about 2 mm.

[0110] Additionally or alternatively, as shown in FIG. 7B, one or more thermal heating elements **24b** may be positioned relatively more proximal for contacting an internal wall of the renal artery at position(s) that are longitudinally and angularly spaced (e.g., in angular opposition) from the distally located thermal heating element **24**. Such thermal heating element(s) **24b** may, for example, be positioned at an apex of a bend formed during deflection of the optional second flexure zone **34**, and/or at a distal region of a first or proximal flexure zone **32**. The spacing separating thermal heating element **24b** from thermal heating element **24** and/or from optional thermal heating element **24a** may be specified as desired to provide desired longitudinal and angular spacing between lesions formed within renal vasculature. In one representative embodiment, thermal heating elements **24** and **24b** are spaced apart about 5 mm to about 25 mm. In another representative embodiment, the thermal heating elements **24** and **24b** can be spaced as far as about 30 mm. In another representative embodiment, the thermal heating elements **24** and **24b** are spaced apart about 11 mm. In still another representative embodiment, the thermal heating elements **24** and **24b** are spaced apart about 17.5 mm.

[0111] As also will be described in greater detail later, different sections of the elongated shaft **16** serve different mechanical functions when in use. The sections are thereby desirably differentiated in terms of their size, configuration and mechanical properties for (i) percutaneous introduction into a femoral artery through a small-diameter access site; (ii) atraumatic passage through the tortuous intravascular path **14** through an iliac artery, into the aorta, and into a respective left/right renal artery, including (iii) significant flexure near the junction of the left/right renal arteries and aorta to gain entry into the respective left or right renal artery; (iv) controlled translation, deflection, rotation and/or actuation within the respective renal artery to attain proximity to and a desired alignment with an interior wall of the respective renal artery; (v) the placement of at least one thermal heating element **24** into contact with tissue on the interior wall; and (vi) allowing substantially stable contact force between the at least one thermal heating element and the interior wall during motion of the renal artery with respect to the aorta due to respiration and/or blood flow pulsatility; and (vii) repositioning via retraction and/or deflection in a second direction and/or rotation within the renal artery for subsequent treatment(s).

[0112] Referring back to FIG. 5, the system **10** also includes a generator **26** (e.g., a thermal energy generator).

Under the control of the caregiver or automated control algorithm **102** (as will be described in greater detail later), the generator **26** generates a selected form and magnitude of energy. A cable **28** operatively attached to the handle assembly **200** electrically connects the thermal heating element **24** to the generator **26**. At least one supply wire (not shown) passing along the elongated shaft **16** or through a lumen in the elongated shaft **16** from the handle assembly **200** to the thermal heating element **24** conveys the treatment energy to the thermal heating element **24**. A control mechanism, such as foot pedal **100**, can be connected (e.g., pneumatically connected or electrically connected) to the generator **26** to allow the operator to initiate, terminate and, optionally, adjust various operational characteristics of the generator, including, but not limited to, power delivery.

[0113] For systems that provide for the delivery of a monopolar electric field via the thermal heating element **24**, a neutral or dispersive electrode **38** can be electrically connected to the generator **26** and attached to the exterior of the patient. Additionally, one or more sensors **52** (see, e.g., FIGS. **10** and **24**), such as one or more temperature (e.g., thermocouple, thermistor, etc.), impedance, pressure, optical, flow, chemical or other sensors, can be located proximate to or within the thermal heating element and connected to one or more of the supply wires. For example, a total of two supply wires can be included, in which both wires could transmit the signal from the sensor and one wire could serve dual purpose and also convey the energy to the thermal heating element. Alternatively, both wires could transmit energy to the thermal heating element.

[0114] Once proximity between, alignment with, and contact between the thermal heating element **24** and tissue are established within the respective renal artery (as FIG. **6B** shows), the purposeful application of energy from the generator **26** to tissue by the thermal heating element **24** induces one or more desired neuromodulating effects on localized regions of the renal artery and adjacent regions of the renal plexus (RP), which lay intimately within or adjacent to the adventitia of the renal artery. The purposeful application of the neuromodulating effects can achieve neuromodulation along all or a portion of the RP.

[0115] The neuromodulating effects can include thermal ablation, non-ablative thermal alteration or damage (e.g., via sustained heating and/or resistive heating), and electromagnetic neuromodulation. Desired thermal heating effects may include raising the temperature of target neural fibers above a desired threshold to achieve non-ablative thermal alteration, or above a higher temperature to achieve ablative thermal alteration. For example, the target temperature can be above body temperature (e.g., approximately 37° C.) but less than about 45° C. for non-ablative thermal alteration, or the target temperature can be about 45° C. or higher for the ablative thermal alteration. Desired electromagnetic neuromodulation effects may include altering the electrical signals transmitted in a nerve.

[0116] Further details of special size, configuration, and mechanical properties of the elongated shaft **16**, the distal end region **20** and the thermal heating element **24**, as well as other aspects of the system **10**, will now be described. In still other embodiments, the system **10** may have a different configuration and/or include different features. For example, alternative multi-thermal heating element devices, such as multi-electrode baskets, spirals or lassos, or balloon expandable

devices, may be implemented to intravascularly deliver neuromodulatory treatment with or without contacting the vessel wall.

[0117] B. Size and Configuration of the Elongated Shaft for Achieving Intravascular Access to a Renal Artery

[0118] As explained above, intravascular access to an interior of a renal artery can be achieved, for example, through the femoral artery. As FIG. 6B shows, the elongated shaft 16 is specially sized and configured to accommodate passage through this intravascular path 14, which leads from a percutaneous access site in the femoral artery to a targeted treatment site within a renal artery. In this way, the caregiver is able to orient the thermal heating element 24 within the renal artery for its intended purpose.

[0119] For practical purposes, the maximum outer dimension (e.g., diameter) of any section of the elongated shaft 16, including the thermal heating element 24 it carries, is dictated by the inner diameter of the guide catheter through which the elongated shaft 16 is passed. Assuming, for example, that an 8 French guide catheter (which has an inner diameter of approximately 0.091 inches) would likely be, from a clinical perspective, the largest guide catheter used to access the renal artery, and allowing for a reasonable clearance tolerance between the thermal heating element 24 and the guide catheter, the maximum outer dimension can be realistically expressed as being less than or equal to approximately 0.085 inches. However, use of a smaller 5 French guide catheter 94 may require the use of smaller outer diameters along the elongated shaft 16. For example, a thermal heating element 24 that is to be routed within a 5 French guide catheter would have an outer dimension of no greater than 0.053 inches. In another example, a thermal heating element 24 that is to be routed within a 6 French guide catheter would have an outer dimension of no greater than 0.070 inches.

[0120] 1. Force Transmitting Section

[0121] As FIG. 8A shows, the proximal end region 18 of the elongated shaft 16 includes, coupled to the handle assembly 200, a force transmitting section 30. The force transmitting section 30 is sized and configured to possess selected mechanical properties that accommodate physical passage through and the transmission of forces within the intravascular path 14, as it leads from the accessed femoral artery (left or right), through the respective iliac branch artery and into the aorta, and in proximity to the targeted renal artery (left or right). The mechanical properties of the force transmitting section 30 include at least a preferred effective length (expressed in inches or centimeters). It should be understood that the term force transmitting section can be used interchangeably with elongated tubular shaft or proximal force transmitting section.

[0122] As FIG. 8A shows, the force transmitting section 30 includes a preferred effective length L1. The preferred effective length L1 is a function of the anatomic distance within the intravascular path 14 between the access site and a location proximate to the junction of the aorta and renal arteries. The preferred effective length L1 can be derived from textbooks of human anatomy, augmented by a caregiver's knowledge of the targeted site generally or as derived from prior analysis of the particular morphology of the targeted site. The preferred effective length L1 is also dependent on the length of the guide catheter that is used, if any. In a representative embodiment, for a normal human, the preferred effective length L1 comprises about 30 cm to about 110 cm. If no guide catheter is used, then the preferred effective length L1 comprises

about 30 cm to about 35 cm. If a 55 cm length guide catheter is used, then the preferred effective length L1 comprises about 65 cm to about 70 cm. If a 90 cm length guide catheter is used, then the preferred effective length L1 comprises about 95 cm to about 105 cm.

[0123] The force transmitting section 30 also includes a preferred axial stiffness and a preferred torsional stiffness. The preferred axial stiffness expresses the capability of the force transmitting section 30 to be advanced or withdrawn along the length of the intravascular path 14 without buckling or substantial deformation. Since some axial deformation is necessary for the force transmitting section 30 to navigate the tortuous intravascular path 14 without providing too much resistance, the preferred axial stiffness of the force transmitting section should also provide this capability. The preferred torsional stiffness expresses the capability of the force transmitting section 30 to rotate the elongated shaft 16 about its longitudinal axis along its length without kinking or permanent deformation. As will be described in greater detail later, the ability to advance and retract, as well as rotate, the distal end region 20 of the elongated shaft 16 within the respective renal artery is desirable.

[0124] The desired magnitude of axial stiffness and rotational stiffness for the force transmitting section 30 can be obtained by selection of constituent material or materials to provide a desired elastic modulus (expressed in terms, e.g., of a Young's Modulus (E)) indicative of axial and torsional stiffnesses, as well as selecting the construct and configuration of the force transmitted section in terms of, e.g., its interior diameter, outer diameter, wall thickness, and structural features, including cross-sectional dimensions and geometry. Representative examples are described in greater detail below.

[0125] 2. First Flexure Zone

[0126] As FIGS. 8A and 8B show, the distal end region 20 of the elongated shaft 16 is coupled to the force transmitting section 30. The length L1 of the force transmitting section 30 generally serves to bring the distal end region 20 into the vicinity of the junction of the respective renal artery and aorta (as FIG. 6B shows). The axial stiffness and torsional stiffness of the force transmitting region transfer axial and rotation forces from the handle assembly 200 to the distal end region 20, as will be described in greater detail later. It should be understood that the term first flexure zone can be used interchangeably with flexible tubular structure.

[0127] As shown in FIG. 8B, the distal end region 20 includes a first or proximal flexure zone 32 proximate to the force transmitting section 30. The first flexure zone 32 is sized and configured to have mechanical properties that accommodate significant flexure or bending at a prescribed preferred access angle $\alpha 1$ and provide for the transmission of torque during rotation, without fracture, collapse, or significant twisting of the elongated shaft 16. The proximal flexure zone 32 should accommodate flexure sufficient for the distal end region 20 to advance via a guide catheter into the renal artery without substantially straightening out the guide catheter.

[0128] Angle $\alpha 1$ is defined by the angular deviation that the treatment device 12 must navigate to transition between the aorta (along which the force transmitting section 30 is aligned) and the targeted renal artery (along which the distal end region 20 is aligned) (this is also shown in FIG. 6B). This is the angle that the first flexure zone 32 must approximate to align the distal end region 20 of the elongated shaft 16 with the targeted renal artery, while the force transmitting section

30 of the elongated shaft 16 remains aligned with the native axis of the aorta (as FIG. 6B shows). The more tortuous a vessel, or the more severe the take-off angle between the renal artery and the aorta, the greater bend the first flexure zone 32 will need to make for the distal end region of the treatment device to access the renal artery and the smaller the angle $\alpha 1$.

[0129] When the catheter is outside the patient and the first flexure zone 32 is in a substantially straight, non-deflected configuration, angle $\alpha 1$ (as shown in FIG. 8B) is approximately 180° . Upon full deflection of the first flexure zone 32, the angle $\alpha 1$ is reduced to anywhere between about 30° and 180° . In a representative embodiment, upon full deflection angle $\alpha 1$ is about 30° to about 135° . In another representative embodiment, upon full deflection angle $\alpha 1$ is about 90° .

[0130] The first flexure zone 32 is sized and configured to possess mechanical properties that accommodate significant, abrupt flexure or bending at the access angle $\alpha 1$ near the junction of the aorta and the renal artery. Due to its size, configuration, and mechanical properties, the proximal flexure zone 32 must resolve these flexure or bending forces without fracture, collapse, distortion, or significant twisting. Such flexure or bending of the first flexure zone may occur at least in part within the distal region of a guide catheter without substantially straightening out the guide catheter. The resolution of these flexure or bending forces by the first flexure zone 32 makes it possible for the distal end region 20 of the elongated shaft 16 to gain entry along the intravascular path 14 into a targeted left or right renal artery.

[0131] The first flexure zone 32 is sized and configured in length L2 to be less than length L1 (see FIG. 8A). That is because the distance between the femoral access site and the junction of the aorta and renal artery (typically approximating about 40 cm to about 55 cm) is generally greater than the length of a renal artery between the aorta and the most distal treatment site along the length of the renal artery, which is typically less than about 7 cm. The preferred effective length L2 can be derived from textbooks of human anatomy, augmented with a caregiver's knowledge of the site generally or as derived from prior analysis of the particular morphology of the targeted site. For example, the length L2 generally may be less than about 15 cm, e.g., may be less than about 10 cm. In one representative embodiment, the length L2 may be about 9 cm.

[0132] Desirably, the length L2 is selected to make it possible to rest a portion of the first flexure zone 32 partially in the aorta at or near the length L1, as well as rest the remaining portion of the first flexure zone 32 partially within the renal artery (as FIG. 6B shows). In this way, the first flexure zone 32 defines a transitional bend that is supported and stable within the vasculature.

[0133] In the deflected configuration of FIG. 8B, the first flexure zone 32 comprises a radius of curvature RoC_1 . In embodiments where the curvature of first flexure zone 32 does not vary or is consistent along the length L2, the length L2 and the deflection angle $\alpha 1$ may define the radius of curvature RoC_1 . It should be understood that the curvature of first flexure zone 32, and thereby the radius of curvature RoC_1 of the first flexure zone, alternatively may vary along the length L2.

[0134] In such embodiments where the curvature does not vary, the length L2 may define a fraction $(180^\circ - \alpha 1)/360^\circ$ of the circumference C_1 of a circle with an equivalent radius of curvature RoC_1 . Thus, the circumference of such an equivalent circle is:

$$C_1 = \frac{360^\circ}{(180^\circ - \alpha 1)} \times L2 = 2\pi \times RoC_1 \quad (10)$$

[0135] Solving for the radius of curvature RoC_1 :

$$RoC_1 = \frac{360^\circ \times L2}{2\pi \times (180^\circ - \alpha 1)} \quad (11)$$

[0136] Thus, in a representative embodiment of the first flexure zone 32 where the curvature of the first flexure zone does not vary along the length L2, where the length L2 is less than or equal to about 9 cm, and where the angle $\alpha 1$ is about 30° to about 135° , the radius of curvature RoC_1 is about 3.5 cm to about 11.5 cm. In a representative embodiment of first flexure zone 32 where the curvature of the first flexure zone does not vary along the length L2, where the length L2 is less than or equal to about 9 cm, and where the angle $\alpha 1$ is less than or equal to about 90° , the radius of curvature RoC_1 is less than or equal to about 5.75 cm.

[0137] As will be apparent, Equation (11) may be rearranged such that the length L2 and the radius of curvature RoC_1 define the angle $\alpha 1$. Furthermore, Equation (11) may be rearranged such that the radius of curvature RoC_1 and the angle $\alpha 1$ define the length L2. Thus, in embodiments where the curvature of first flexure zone 32 does not vary along the length L2, any one of the length L2, angle $\alpha 1$ and radius of curvature RoC_1 may be specified by specifying the other two variables.

[0138] As will be described in greater detail later, and as shown in FIG. 6B, the length L2 of the first flexure zone 32 optionally does not extend the full length of the targeted length of the renal artery. That is because the distal end region 20 of the elongated shaft 16 optionally includes one or more additional flexure zones, distal to the first flexure zone 32 (toward the substance of the kidney), to accommodate other different functions important to the therapeutic objectives of the treatment device 12. As will be described later, the ability to transmit torque through the first flexure zone 32 makes it possible to rotate the thermal heating device to properly position the thermal heating element within the renal artery for treatment.

[0139] In terms of axial and torsional stiffness, the mechanical properties of first flexure zone 32 can, and desirably do, differ from the mechanical properties of the force transmitting section 30. This is because the proximal flexure zone 32 and the force transmitting section serve different functions while in use. Alternatively, the mechanical properties of proximal flexure zone 32 and force transmitting section 30 can be similar.

[0140] The force transmitting section 30 serves in use to transmit axial load and torque over a relatively long length (L1) within the vascular pathway. In contrast, the first flexure zone 32 needs to transmit axial load and torque over a lesser length L2 proximate to or within a respective renal artery. Importantly, the first flexure zone 32 must abruptly conform to an access angle $\alpha 1$ near the junction of the aorta and the respective renal artery, without fracture, collapse, significant twisting, or straightening a guide catheter imparting the access angle $\alpha 1$. This is a function that the force transmitting zone need not perform. Accordingly, the first flexure zone 32

is sized and configured to be less stiff and to possess greater flexibility than the force transmitting section 30.

[0141] Additionally, the first flexure zone 32 may allow thermal heating element(s) 24 to maintain stable contact with the interior wall of the renal artery as the respective kidney moves due to patient respiration. As a patient breathes the kidney may move, causing the renal artery to pivot about the ostium, where the renal artery joins the aorta. Stable contact between the thermal heating element(s) 24 and the inner wall of the renal artery is desired during energy delivery. Therefore, the thermal heating element(s) 24 must move, along with the renal artery, relative to the aorta. The mechanical properties of the first flexure zone 32 that accommodate significant, abrupt flexure or bending at the access angle α_1 near the junction of the aorta and the renal artery also allow the sections of the catheter distal to the first flexure zone 32 to pivot about the ostium without significant impediment, allowing the thermal heating element to maintain stable contact force with the inner wall of the renal artery. In some embodiments, second flexure zone 34 distal to first flexure zone 32 may become more stiff than the first flexure zone 32 when it is controllably deflected. The additional stiffness of second flexure zone 34 helps maintain a stable contact force between the energy delivery element 24 and an inner wall of the renal artery and allows the catheter to move with the renal artery relative to the aorta with sufficient freedom due to the flexible deformation of the first flexure zone 32. The renal artery pivots about the juncture with the aorta such that movement of the renal artery increases with distance from the juncture with the aorta. The length of the distal end region 20 distal to the first flexure zone 32 along with the length of the first flexure zone 32 is configured such that an increasing portion of the first flexure zone 32 is positioned in the renal artery the more distal the treatment site to provide sufficient increased flexibility in the region of the juncture with the aorta to allow stable contact force between the energy delivery element 24 and the more distal treatment site of the inner wall of the renal artery, especially during increased motion at the more distal treatment site.

[0142] The desired magnitude of axial stiffness, rotational stiffness, and flexibility for the proximal flexure zone 32 can be obtained by selection of constituent material or materials to provide a desired elastic modulus (expressed, e.g., in terms of a Young's Modulus (E)) indicative of flexibility, as well as selecting the construct and configuration of the force transmitting section, e.g., in terms of its interior diameter, outer diameter, wall thickness, and structural features, including cross-sectional dimensions and geometry. Representative examples will be described in greater detail later.

[0143] Although it is desirable that the force transmitting section 30 and the first flexure zone 32 have stiffness and flexibility properties that are unique to their respective functions, it is possible that the force transmitting section 30 and the first flexure zone 32 comprise the same materials, size and geometric configuration such that the force transmitting section 30 and the first flexure zone 32 constitute the same section.

[0144] 3. Second Flexure Zone

[0145] As shown in FIGS. 8A, 8B, and 8C, the distal end region 20 of the elongated shaft 16 also includes, distal to the first or proximal flexure zone 32, a second or intermediate flexure zone 34. It should be understood that the term second flexure zone can be used interchangeably with deflectable

section or intermediate flexure zone or deflectable tubular body or multi-directional deflectable assembly.

[0146] The second flexure zone 34 is sized, configured, and has the mechanical properties that accommodate additional flexure or bending, independent of the first flexure zone 32, at a preferred contact angle α_2 , without fracture, collapse, or significant twisting. The second flexure zone 34 should also accommodate flexure sufficient for the distal end region 20 to advance via a guide catheter into the renal artery without straightening out the guide catheter. The second flexure zone 34 is further configured for controllable deflection in multiple directions.

[0147] Controlled, multi-directional bending of the second flexure zone may facilitate placement of thermal heating element 24 into stable contact with a treatment site or with multiple treatment sites within a renal artery. Such control over placement of the thermal heating element may be especially useful in patients with relatively tortuous vessels. For example, if placement of the thermal heating element 24 into contact with a renal arterial treatment site is sub-optimal under controlled bending of the second flexure zone in a first direction, the second flexure zone may be controllably deflected in a second direction to more optimally place the thermal heating element into contact with the treatment site, or with an alternative or additional treatment site. Deflection in a first direction can achieve placement of a thermal element 24 in contact with a first location in a renal artery, for example as shown in FIG. 6B. Deflection in a second direction can achieve placement of the thermal element 24 in contact with a second location in the renal artery, for example as shown in FIG. 6C. Additionally, multi-direction controllable deflection can facilitate precise placement of a thermal element 24 by reducing the need for twisting the catheter when manipulating the distal end region 20.

[0148] Furthermore, stable contact and energy delivery may be achievable at multiple treatment sites via controlled multi-directional deflection of the second flexure zone. For example, as shown in FIG. 24B a thermal element 24 may be placed in contact with an inner wall of a renal artery without controlled deflection of the second flexure zone 24. However, contact may not be stable and during energy delivery, especially while the artery undergoes motion due to respiration and blood pulsatility, the thermal element 24 could intermittently lose contact or contact could migrate resulting in a less effective treatment. By deflecting the second flexure zone 34, the thermal element can be radially deflected from the axis of the elongated body 16; in addition to the contact between the thermal element and the artery wall, contact can be made between a second location on the distal end region 20 for example on the second flexure zone (as shown in FIG. 25A); and the stiffness of the second flexure zone can be increased to hold the thermal element in stable contact with the artery wall while the flexibility of a portion of the first flexure zone allows the distal end region 20 to pivot about the junction of the renal artery and aorta. These functions contribute to increased stable contact force between the thermal element 24 and the treatment site.

[0149] The preferred contact angle α_2 is defined by the angle through which the thermal heating element 24 can be radially deflected within the renal artery to establish contact between the thermal heating element 24 and an inner wall of the respective renal artery (as FIG. 6B shows). The magnitude of the contact angle α_2 and the length of the second flexure zone L3 preferably are based on the native inside diameter of

the respective renal artery where the thermal heating element **24** rests, which may vary between about 2 mm and about 10 mm, as well as the diameter of the thermal heating element **24**. It is most common for the diameter of the renal artery to vary between about 2 mm and about 8 mm, with a mean diameter of about 6 mm. The contact angle α_2 when deflected in a first direction can be equal to a contact angle α_2 when deflected in a second direction. Alternatively, a contact angle when deflected in a second direction can be different from a contact angle when deflected in a first direction.

[0150] The second flexure zone **34** extends distally from the first flexure zone **32** for a length L_3 into the targeted renal artery (see FIG. 6B). Desirably, the length L_3 is selected, taking into account the length L_2 of the proximal flexure zone **32** that extends into the renal artery, as well as the anatomy of the respective renal artery, to actively place the thermal heating element **24** (carried at the end of the distal end region **20**) at or near the targeted treatment site (as FIG. 6B shows). The length L_3 can be derived, taking the length L_2 into account, from textbooks of human anatomy, together with a caregiver's knowledge of the site generally or as derived from prior analysis of the particular morphology of the targeted site.

[0151] As FIG. 8A shows, the second flexure zone **34** is desirably sized and configured in length L_3 to be less than length L_2 . This is because, in terms of length, the distance required for actively deflecting the thermal heating element **24** into contact with a wall of the renal artery is significantly less than the distance required for bending the elongated shaft **16** to gain access from the aorta into the renal artery. Thus, the length of the renal artery is occupied in large part by the second flexure zone **34** and not as much by the first flexure zone **32**.

[0152] In a representative embodiment, L_2 is less than or equal to about 9 cm and L_3 is about 5 mm to about 15 mm. In certain embodiments, particularly for treatments in relatively long blood vessels, L_3 can be less than or equal to about 20 mm. In another representative embodiment, and as described later in greater detail, L_3 is less than or equal to about 12.5 mm. In another representative embodiment, particularly wherein second flexure zone comprises a hinge joint, L_3 is no greater than 3 mm.

[0153] When the catheter is outside the patient and the second flexure zone **34** is in a substantially straight, non-deflected configuration, contact angle α_2 (as shown in FIG. 8C) is approximately 180°. Upon full deflection of the second flexure zone **34**, the angle α_2 is reduced to anywhere between about 45° and 180°. In a representative embodiment, upon full deflection, angle α_2 is about 75° to about 135°. In another representative embodiment, upon full deflection, angle α_2 is less than or equal to about 90°.

[0154] In the deflected configuration of FIG. 8C, the second flexure zone **34** comprises a radius of curvature RoC_2 . In embodiments where the curvature of second flexure zone **34** does not vary or is consistent along the length L_3 , the length L_3 and the contact angle α_2 may define the radius of curvature RoC_2 . It should be understood that the curvature of second flexure zone **34**, and thereby the radius of curvature RoC_2 of the second flexure zone, alternatively may vary along the length L_3 .

[0155] In such embodiments where the curvature does not vary, the length L_3 may define a fraction $(180^\circ - \alpha_2)/360^\circ$ of the circumference C_2 of a circle with an equivalent radius of curvature RoC_2 . Thus, the circumference of such an equivalent circle is:

$$C_2 = \frac{360^\circ}{(180^\circ - \alpha_2)} \times L_3 = 2\pi \times RoC_2 \quad (12)$$

[0156] Solving for the radius of curvature RoC_2 :

$$RoC_2 = \frac{360^\circ \times L_3}{2\pi \times (180^\circ - \alpha_2)} \quad (13)$$

[0157] Thus, in a representative embodiment of the second flexure zone **34** where the curvature of the second flexure zone does not vary along the length L_3 , where the length L_3 is about 5 mm to about 20 mm, and where the contact angle α_2 is about 75° to about 135°, the radius of curvature RoC_2 is about 3 mm to about 25 mm. In a representative embodiment of intermediate flexure zone **34** where the curvature of the intermediate flexure zone does not vary along the length L_3 , where the length L_3 is less than or equal to about 12.5 mm, and where the angle α_2 is about 75° to about 135°, the radius of curvature RoC_2 is about 7 mm to about 16 mm. In a representative embodiment of second flexure zone **34** where the curvature of the second flexure zone does not vary along the length L_3 , where the length L_3 is less than or equal to about 12.5 mm, and where the angle α_2 is less than or equal to about 90°, the radius of curvature RoC_2 is less than or equal to about 8 mm. In a representative embodiment where the second flexure zone **34** comprises a joint the angle α_2 is obtained about a pivot axis in the joint and therefore a radius of curvature does not exist.

[0158] As will be apparent, Equation (13) may be rearranged such that the length L_3 and the radius of curvature RoC_2 define the contact angle α_2 . Furthermore, Equation (13) may be rearranged such that the radius of curvature RoC_2 and the angle α_2 define the length L_3 . Thus, in embodiments where the curvature of second flexure zone **34** does not vary along the length L_3 , any one of the length L_3 , angle α_2 and radius of curvature RoC_2 may be specified by specifying the other two variables.

[0159] In the deflected configuration of FIG. 8C, the second flexure zone **34** locates the thermal heating element **24** at a dimension Y from a longitudinal axis A of the second flexure zone **34** just distal of the first flexure zone **32**. The dimension Y can vary from about 2 mm to about 20 mm. In some configurations, and given the dimension of most renal arteries, the dimension Y can be from about 5 mm to about 15 mm. Since the average diameter of most renal arteries is generally less than 10 mm as described below, it may be desirable for dimension Y to be less than or equal to 10 mm. For example the Y dimension can be 6 mm or 8 mm or anywhere between and including 6 to 10 mm.

[0160] By way of example, the average diameter of a human renal artery is from about 2 mm to about 8 mm, but may range from about 2 mm to about 10 mm. Accordingly, if the distal end of the first flexure zone **32** were positioned adjacent to a wall of an artery having an 8 mm diameter, the second flexure zone **34** would be capable of deflection sufficient for the thermal heating element **24** to contact the opposite wall of the artery. In other embodiments, however, the dimension Y may have a different value and may be oversized to facilitate contact in a straight or curved vessel. The second flexure zone **34** is also configured to locate the thermal heat-

ing element **24** at a dimension X from a distal end of the first flexure zone **32**. The dimension X can vary, e.g., based on the dimension Y and the length L3.

[0161] As FIG. 8C shows, having first and second flexure zones **32** and **34**, the distal end region **20** of the elongated shaft **16** can, in use, be placed into a complex, multi-bend structure **36**. The complex, multi-bend structure **36** comprises one deflection region at the access angle $\alpha 1$ over a length L2 (the first flexure zone **32**) and a second deflection region at the contact angle $\alpha 2$ over a length L3 (the second flexure zone **34**). In the complex, multi-bend, both L2 and L3 and angle $\alpha 1$ and angle $\alpha 2$ can differ. This is because the angle $\alpha 1$ and length L2 are specially sized and configured to gain access from an aorta into a respective renal artery through a femoral artery access point, and the angle $\alpha 2$ and length L3 are specially sized and configured to align a thermal heating element **24** with an interior wall inside the renal artery.

[0162] In the illustrated embodiment (see, e.g., FIG. 8C), the second flexure zone **34** is sized and configured to allow a caregiver to remotely deflect the second flexure zone **34** within the renal artery in multiple directions, to radially position the thermal heating element **24** into contact with an inner wall of the renal artery.

[0163] In the illustrated embodiment, a control mechanism is coupled to the second flexure zone **34**. The control mechanism includes one or more flexure control elements (for example control wire(s) **40**) attached to the distal end of the second flexure zone **34** (a representative embodiment is shown in FIGS. 23B and 23C and will be described in greater detail later). Each flexure control element **40** is passed proximally through the elongated shaft **16** and coupled to an actuator **260** (also called a flexure controller) on the handle assembly **200**. Operation of the actuator **260** (e.g., by the caregiver pulling proximally on or pushing forward the actuator **260**) pulls the control wire **40** back to apply a tension to the control wire which applies compression to the intermediate flexure zone **34** (as FIGS. 8C and 14C show). The compressive force in combination with the directionally biased compression (described further below) of the second flexure zone **34** deflects the second flexure zone **34** and, thereby, radially moves the thermal heating element **24** toward an interior wall of the renal artery (as FIG. 6B shows).

[0164] Desirably, as will be described in greater detail later, the distal end region **20** of the elongated shaft **16** can be sized and configured to vary the compressibility of the second flexure zone **34** about its circumference. The variable circumferential compressibility imparts preferential and directional bending to the intermediate flexure zone **34** (i.e., directionally biased compressibility). In response to operation of the actuator **260**, the second flexure zone **34** may be configured to bend in a single preferential direction. Deflection in additional directions can be achieved in response to operation of an actuator **260** in a different direction applying tension to other control wires. Representative embodiments depicting multi-directional bending with multiple control wires will be described later in greater detail.

[0165] Multiple direction deflection of second flexure zone **34** alternatively can be achieved with one control wire, as will be discussed in more detail later. As shown in FIGS. 22A to 22F second flexure zone can be configured to deflect in a radial direction from the axis of an elongated body **16** upon application of compression to the second flexure zone by a control wire. The second flexure zone can be configured to have substantial elastic properties such that when the second

flexure zone is not under compression it elastically returns to a preconfigured shape which is radially deflected from the axis of the elongated body in a second direction.

[0166] In another embodiment multiple direction deflection of second flexure zone **34** is achieved with electrical initiation. As shown in FIG. 15 control wires **40a** and **40b** are attached to a distal end of the second flexure zone with solder joints **130a** and **130b** respectively. As with the embodiment of FIG. 14C, in response to one of the control wires **40a** or **40b** pulling proximally on the distal end of the second flexure zone, the third tubular structure's laser-cut pattern biases deflection of the third tubular structure in a plane approximately orthogonal to the spine. However, unlike in previously described embodiments, control wires **40a** and **40b** pull on the distal end of the second flexure zone due to electrically initiated shortening of the control wires rather than mechanically initiated tension along their length. As seen in FIG. 15, control wires **40a** and **40b** also are attached to a proximal end of the second flexure zone via solder joints **130a'** and **130b'** respectively. Unlike in the embodiment of FIG. 14C, the control wires **40a** and **40b** do not extend proximal of the second flexure zone all the way through the elongated body **16** to handle assembly **200**. Rather, electrical supply wires **29a** and **29b** travel from handle **200** through the elongated body and are electrically connected to the control wire **40a** and **40b** at solder joints **130a** and **130a'**, and **130b** and **130b'** respectively. Actuator **260** of handle assembly **200** applies electrical current to supply one of wires **29a** or **29b**, which transfers the electrical current to an electrically connected control wire **40a** or **40b**. The control wire **40a** or **40b**, through which electrical current is passed, is shortened in response to the electrical current, which causes deflection of the second flexure zone **34**.

[0167] In contrast to electrically initiated deflection, deflection via pulling a control wire (as in the embodiment shown in FIGS. 14A to 14C) involves one or more control wires **40a** or **40b** extending all the way through elongated shaft **16** from second flexure zone **34** to handle assembly **200**. The elongated shaft **16** proximal to the second flexure zone is relatively resistant to compression along its length so when tension is applied to the control wire substantially only the second flexure zone **34** deflects. An elongated shaft **16** proximal to the second flexure zone that is constructed to be resistant to compression may also be inherently stiff relative to a shaft that does not need to resist compression. Furthermore, its stiffness may increase when it is resisting compression applied by a control wire under tension. Conversely, for electrically initiated deflection as in FIG. 15, since control wires **40a** and **40b** are positioned in the second flexure zone and do not extend all the way through the elongated body to the handle, the section of the elongated body **16** proximal to the second flexure zone is not under compression when the control wires are shortened. Thus, the elongated shaft may be fabricated in a manner that provides greater flexibility, which may enhance deliverability and/or may reduce catheter whip during rotation. Electrically initiated control wire shape change or shortening may be utilized in conjunction with any of the previously described second flexure zones **34** and control wires **40**.

[0168] In one representative embodiment of electrically initiated deflection, flexure control element **40a** and **40b** comprises shape memory material, such as Nitinol wire. Electric current applied by supply wires **29** to the Nitinol control wires resistively heats the Nitinol above its transformation tempera-

ture causing the control wire to shorten, which in turn causes the second flexure zone to deflect. The control wire or the third tubular structure 62 (which optionally may be resistively heated via supply wires 29) alternatively may comprise shape memory material, such as Nitinol with a heat-programmed bent shape, that pulls the second flexure zone in the direction of the bend.

[0169] In another representative embodiment of electrically initiated deflection, the control wires 40a and 40b comprise an electroactive polymer, commonly referred to as an artificial muscle. Electricity applied to the electroactive polymer control wire shortens the control wire, causing the second flexure zone to deflect. When the electricity is turned off, the control wire resumes its initial shape, allowing the second flexure zone to straighten (or to be straightened).

[0170] The compressive and bending force and resulting directional bending from the deflection of the second flexure zone 34 has the consequence of altering the axial stiffness of the second flexure zone. The actuation of the control wire 40 serves to increase the axial stiffness of the second flexure zone. As will be described later, the axial stiffness of the deflected second flexure zone in combination with other flexible aspects of the distal end region of the catheter treatment device allows for favorable performance in a renal artery neuromodulation treatment.

[0171] In terms of axial and torsional stiffnesses, the mechanical properties of second flexure zone 34 can, and desirably do, differ from the mechanical properties of the first flexure zone 32. This is because the first flexure zone 32 and the second flexure zone 34 serve different functions while in use.

[0172] The first flexure zone 32 transmits axial load and torque over a longer length (L2) than the second flexure zone 34 (L3). Importantly, the second flexure zone 34 is also sized and configured to be deflected remotely within the renal artery by the caregiver. In this arrangement, less resistance to deflection is desirable. This is a function that the first flexure zone 32 need not perform. Accordingly, the second flexure zone 34 is desirably sized and configured to be less stiff (when the control wire 40 is not actuated) and, importantly, to possess greater flexibility than the first flexure zone 32 in at least one plane of motion.

[0173] Still, because the second flexure zone 34, being distal to the first flexure zone 32, precedes the first flexure zone 32 through the access angle α_1 , the second flexure zone 34 also includes mechanical properties that accommodate its flexure or bending at the preferred access angle α_1 , without fracture, collapse, or significant twisting of the elongated shaft 16.

[0174] The desired magnitude of axial stiffness, rotational stiffness, and flexibility for the second flexure zone 34 can be obtained by selection of constituent material or materials to provide a desired elastic modulus (expressed, e.g., in terms of a Young's Modulus (E)) indicative of flexibility, as well as by selecting the construct and configuration of the second flexure zone 34, e.g., in terms of its interior diameter, outer diameter, wall thickness, and structural features, including cross-sectional dimensions and geometry. Representative examples will be described in greater detail later. Axial stiffness, torsional stiffness, and flexibility are properties that can be measured and characterized in conventional ways.

[0175] As before described, both the first and second flexure zones 32 and 34 desirably include the mechanical properties of axial stiffness sufficient to transmit to the thermal

heating element 24 an axial locating force. By pulling back on the handle assembly 200, axial forces are transmitted by the force transmitting section 30 and the first and second flexure zones 32 and 34 to retract the thermal heating element 24 in a proximal direction (away from the kidney) within the renal artery. Likewise, by pushing forward on the handle assembly 200, axial forces are transmitted by the force transmitting section 30 and the first and second flexure zones 32 and 34 to advance the thermal heating element 24 in a distal direction (toward the kidney) within the renal artery. Thus, proximal retraction of the distal end region 20 and thermal heating element 24 within the renal artery can be accomplished by the caregiver by manipulating the handle assembly 200 or shaft from outside the intravascular path 14.

[0176] As before described, both the first and second flexure zones 32 and 34 also desirably include torsional strength properties that will allow the transmission of sufficient rotational torque to rotate the distal end region 20 of the treatment device 12 such that the thermal heating element 24 is alongside the circumference of the blood vessel wall when the second flexure zone 34 is deflected. By pulling or pushing on the actuator to deflect the thermal heating element 24 such that it achieves vessel wall contact, and then rotating the force transmitting section 30 and, with it, the first and second flexure zones 32 and 34, the thermal heating element 24 can be rotated in a circumferential path within the renal artery. As described later, this rotating feature enables the clinical operator to maintain vessel wall contact as the thermal heating element 24 is being relocated to another treatment site. By maintaining wall contact in between treatments, the clinical operator is able to achieve wall contact in subsequent treatments with higher certainty in orientations with poor visualization.

[0177] 4. Third Flexure Zone

[0178] As FIGS. 8A to 8D show, the distal end region 20 of the elongated shaft 16 also optionally may include, distal to the optional second flexure zone 34, a third or distal flexure zone 44. In this arrangement, the length L3 of the second flexure zone 34 may be shortened by a length L4, which comprises the length of the third flexure zone 44. In this arrangement, the thermal heating element 24 is carried at the end of the third flexure zone 44. It should be understood that the third flexure zone can be used interchangeably with distal flexure zone or force dampening section or passively flexible structure or flexible tubular structure.

[0179] As FIG. 8D shows, the third flexure zone 44 is sized, configured, and has the mechanical properties that accommodate additional flexure or bending, independent of the first flexure zone 32 and the second flexure zone 34, at a preferred treatment angle α_3 . The distal flexure zone 44 should also accommodate flexure sufficient for the distal end region 20 to advance via a guide catheter into the renal artery without straightening out the guide catheter or causing injury to the blood vessel. The treatment angle α_3 provides for significant flexure about the axis of the distal end region 20 (a representative embodiment is shown in FIG. 18C). Not under the direct control of the physician, flexure at the third flexure zone occurs in response to contact between the thermal heating element 24 and wall tissue occasioned by the radial deflection of the thermal heating element 24 at the second flexure zone 34 (see FIG. 6B). Passive deflection of the third flexure zone provides the clinical operator with visual feedback via fluoroscopy or other angiographic guidance of vessel wall contact (as shown in FIGS. 28A to 28E). Additionally, the third flex-

ure zone desirably orients the region of tissue contact along a side of the thermal heating element 24, thereby increasing the area of contact. The third flexure zone 44 also biases the thermal heating element 24 against tissue, thereby stabilizing the thermal heating element 24.

[0180] The function of the third flexure zone 44 provides additional benefits to the therapy. As actuation of the control wire 40 deflects the second flexure zone 34, pressing the thermal heating element 24 against an inner wall of a renal artery the third flexure zone 44 effectively dampens the contact force between the thermal heating element 24 and the vessel wall. This effect is particularly valuable in a renal artery treatment due to movement of the renal artery caused by respiration and/or pulsatile flow. While the flexibility of the proximal flexure zone allows the distal end region of the treatment catheter to follow movement of the renal artery during respiration, the increased axial stiffness of the deflected second or intermediate flexure zone provides helpful integrity to the distal end region to maintain contact between the thermal heating element and vessel wall. The third or distal flexure zone helps soften or cushion the contact force so that atraumatic contact can be achieved and maintained, particularly during movement of the renal artery. By dampening this contact force, the third flexure zone minimizes the chance of mechanical injury to the vessel wall and avoids excessive contact between the thermal heating element and vessel wall (see discussion of active surface area).

[0181] As FIG. 8A shows, the third flexure zone 44 is desirably sized and configured in length L4 to be less than length L3. This is because, in terms of length, the distance required for orienting and stabilizing the thermal heating element 24 in contact with a wall of the renal artery is significantly less than the distance required for radially deflecting the thermal heating element 24 within the renal artery. In some embodiments, length L4 can be less than or equal to about 1 cm. In other embodiments, the length L4 is from about 2 mm to about 5 mm. In one representative embodiment, the length L4 is less than or equal to about 5 mm. In another representative embodiment, the length L4 is less than or equal to about 2 mm. In another representative embodiment wherein the second flexure zone 34 is comprised of a hinge joint, the length L4 is less than or equal to about 16 mm which, in this embodiment, can be greater than the length L3 of the second flexure zone 34.

[0182] When the catheter is outside the patient and the third flexure zone 44 is in a substantially straight, non-deflected configuration, treatment angle $\alpha 3$ (as shown in FIG. 8D) is approximately 180°. Upon full deflection of the third flexure zone 44, the angle $\alpha 3$ is reduced to anywhere between about 45° and 180°. In a representative embodiment, upon full deflection, angle $\alpha 3$ is about 75° to about 135°. In another representative embodiment, upon full deflection, angle $\alpha 3$ is less than or equal to about 90°.

[0183] In the passively deflected configuration of FIG. 8D, the third flexure zone 44 comprises a radius of curvature RoC_3 . In embodiments where the curvature of third flexure zone 44 does not vary or is consistent along the length L4, the length L4 and the contact angle $\alpha 3$ may define the radius of curvature RoC_3 . It should be understood that the curvature of third flexure zone 44, and thereby the radius of curvature RoC_3 of the third flexure zone, alternatively may vary along the length L4.

[0184] In such embodiments where the curvature does not vary, the length L4 may define a fraction $(180^\circ - \alpha 3)/360^\circ$ of

the circumference C_3 of a circle with an equivalent radius of curvature RoC_3 . Thus, the circumference of such an equivalent circle is:

$$C_3 = \frac{360^\circ}{(180^\circ - \alpha 3)} \times L4 = 2\pi \times RoC_3 \quad (14)$$

[0185] Solving for the radius of curvature RoC_2 :

$$RoC_3 = \frac{360^\circ \times L4}{2\pi \times (180^\circ - \alpha 3)} \quad (15)$$

[0186] Thus, in a representative embodiment of the third flexure zone 44 where the curvature of the third flexure zone does not vary along the length L4, where the length L4 is about 2 mm to about 5 mm, and where the contact angle $\alpha 3$ is about 75° to about 135°, the radius of curvature RoC_3 is about 1 mm to about 6 mm.

[0187] As will be apparent, Equation (15) may be rearranged such that the length L4 and the radius of curvature RoC_3 define the contact angle $\alpha 3$. Furthermore, Equation (15) may be rearranged such that the radius of curvature RoC_3 and the angle $\alpha 3$ define the length L4. Thus, in embodiments where the curvature of third flexure zone 44 does not vary along the length L4, any one of the length L4, angle $\alpha 3$ and radius of curvature RoC_3 may be specified by specifying the other two variables.

[0188] The mechanical properties of third flexure zone 44 and the second flexure zone 34 in terms of axial stiffness, torsional stiffness, and flexibility can be comparable. However, the third flexure zone 44 can be sized and configured to be less stiff and, importantly, to possess greater flexibility than the second flexure zone 34.

[0189] In the embodiment just described (and as shown in FIG. 8D), the distal end region 20 may comprise a first or proximal flexure zone 32, a second or intermediate flexure zone 34, and a third or distal flexure zone 44. The first, second and third flexure zones function independently from each other, so that the distal end region 20 of the elongated shaft 16 can, in use, be placed into a more compound, complex, multi-bend structure 36. The compound, complex, multi-bend structure 36 comprises a first deflection region at the access angle $\alpha 1$ over a length L2 (the first flexure zone 32); a second deflection region at the contact angle $\alpha 2$ over a length L3 (the second flexure zone 34); and a third deflection region at the treatment angle $\alpha 3$ over a length L4 (the third flexure zone 44). In the compound, complex, multi-bend structure 36, all lengths L2, L3, and L4 and all angles $\alpha 1$, $\alpha 2$, and $\alpha 3$ can differ. This is because the angle $\alpha 1$ and length L2 are specially sized and configured to gain access from an aorta into a respective renal artery through a femoral artery access point; the angle $\alpha 2$ and length L3 are specially sized and configured to align a thermal heating element 24 element with an interior wall inside the renal artery; and the angle $\alpha 3$ and length L4 are specially sized and configured to optimize surface contact between tissue and the thermal heating element/heat transfer element.

[0190] The composite length of L2, L3 and L4 of the first, second and third flexure zones, respectively, of the distal end region 20, along with the length L1 of the force transmitting section 30 and the length L5 (see FIG. 9A) of the thermal

heating element **24** (i.e., the composite length equal to $L1+L2+L3+L4+L5$), specifies a working length of the elongated shaft **16** of the treatment device **12**. In some representative embodiments, this working length is about 40 cm to about 125 cm. In a representative embodiment where no guide catheter is used, then this working length may be about 40 cm to about 50 cm. If, alternatively, a 55 cm length guide catheter is used, then this working length may be about 70 cm to about 80 cm. If a 90 cm length guide catheter is used, then this working length may be about 105 cm to about 115 cm.

[0191] As shown in FIGS. **20A** to **20C**, third flexure zone can optionally include a force redirecting element **49** which is sized and configured to promote buckling or bending in the first and/or second flexure zones with reduced vessel wall contact force. This can reduce a risk of trauma during advancement of the distal end region **20** in to a renal artery, facilitate navigation through tortuous vessels, and facilitate placement of a thermal element **24** in contact with an inner wall of a renal artery. Force redistribution element **49** distances a thermal element **24** on the distal tip of an elongated body **16** from an axis of the elongated body by about 1 mm to 4 mm and is located within the distal 4 mm to 10 mm of the elongated body. For example the force redirecting element **49** comprise a bend in a third flexure zone of about 15° to 45° (e.g. 30°). Applicants have previously described force redirecting elements. See, for example Applicants' U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/790,639 filed on May 28, 2010 which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

[0192] C. Size and Configuration of the Thermal Heating Element for Achieving Neuromodulation in a Renal Artery

[0193] In some patients, it may be desirable to create multiple focal lesions that are circumferentially spaced along the longitudinal axis of the renal artery. However, it should be understood that a single focal lesion with desired longitudinal and/or circumferential dimensions, one or more full-circle lesions, multiple circumferentially spaced focal lesions at a common longitudinal position, and/or multiple longitudinally spaced focal lesions at a common circumferential position alternatively or additionally may be created.

[0194] Creating multiple focal lesions that are circumferentially spaced along the longitudinal axis of the renal artery avoids the creation of a full-circle lesion, thereby reducing a risk of vessel stenosis, while still providing the opportunity to circumferentially treat the renal plexus, which is distributed about the renal artery. It is desirable for each lesion to cover at least 10% of the vessel circumference to increase the probability of affecting the renal plexus. However, it is important that each lesion not be too large (e.g., >60% of vessel circumference) lest the risk of a stenotic effect increases (or other undesirable healing responses such as thrombus formation or collateral damage). In one embodiment the energy delivery element **24** is configured to create a lesion at least 30% (i.e. greater than or equal to 30%) of the vessel circumference. In another embodiment, the energy delivery element **24** is configured to create a lesion of greater than or equal to 30% but less than 60% of the vessel circumference. It is also important that each lesion be sufficiently deep to penetrate into and beyond the adventitia to thereby affect the renal plexus. However, lesions that are too deep (e.g., >5 mm) run the risk of interfering with non-target tissue and tissue structures (e.g., renal vein) so a controlled depth of thermal treatment is desirable.

[0195] As described in greater detail below, thermal heating element **24** may be delivered to a first treatment site within

the renal artery such that the thermal heating element **24** is positioned in contact with an interior wall of the artery for treating the renal plexus (see FIG. **25**). Once positioned within the artery as desired, energy may be delivered via the thermal heating element to create a first focal lesion at this first treatment site (see FIG. **25**). The first focal lesion creates a first treatment zone **98a** that is not continuous completely around the circumference of the renal artery in a radial plane or cross-section normal to the wall or to the longitudinal axis of the artery (i.e., the first focal lesion does not extend all the way around the circumference of the vessel wall). As a result, there is a discrete untreated zone about the circumference of the artery in the radial plane of the first treatment zone normal to the longitudinal axis of the artery.

[0196] After formation of the first focal lesion at the first treatment zone **98a**, the thermal heating element **24** optionally may be angularly repositioned relative to the renal artery (see FIGS. **24E** and **24F**). This angular repositioning may be achieved, for example, by angularly rotating the elongated shaft **16** of treatment device **12** via handle assembly **200** (see FIG. **19A**). In addition to angular repositioning of the thermal heating element **24**, the thermal heating element optionally may be repositioned along the lengthwise or longitudinal dimension of the renal artery (see FIG. **24E**). This longitudinal repositioning may be achieved, for example, by translating the elongated shaft **16** of treatment device **12** via handle assembly **200**, and may occur before, after or concurrent with angular repositioning of the thermal heating element **24**.

[0197] Repositioning the thermal heating element **24** in both the longitudinal and angular dimensions places the thermal heating element in contact with the interior wall of the renal artery at a second treatment site for treating the renal plexus (see FIG. **24E**). Energy then may be delivered via the thermal heating element to form a second focal lesion at this second treatment site, thereby creating a second treatment zone **98b** and a second untreated zone (see FIG. **24F**).

[0198] As with the first treatment zone created by the first focal lesion, the second treatment zone is not continuous about the complete circumference of the renal artery. However, the first and second treatment zones (as well as the first and second untreated zones) are angularly and longitudinally offset from one another about the angular and lengthwise dimensions of the renal artery, respectively (see FIG. **24G**). Superimposing the first and second treatment zones, which are positioned along different cross-sections or radial planes of the renal artery, about a common cross-section provides a composite treatment zone that covers a greater portion of the circumference of the artery than either treatment zone individually. As this composite treatment zone is not continuous (i.e., it is formed from multiple, longitudinally and angularly spaced treatment zones), it is expected that a greater portion of the circumference of the arterial wall may be treated with reduced risk of vessel stenosis, as compared to formation of a single focal lesion covering an equivalent portion of the arterial circumference at a single treatment site (i.e., at a single lengthwise position or about a single cross-section of the renal artery).

[0199] One or more additional focal lesions optionally may be formed at one or more additional angularly and longitudinally spaced treatment sites to created additional angularly and longitudinally spaced treatment zones (see FIGS. **24G-24K**). In one representative embodiment, superimposition of all or a portion of the treatment zones provides a composite treatment zone that is non-continuous (i.e., that is broken up

along the lengthwise dimension or longitudinal axis of the renal artery), yet that is substantially circumferential (i.e., that substantially extends all the way around the circumference of the renal artery over a lengthwise segment of the artery). This superimposed treatment zone beneficially does not create a continuous circumferential lesion along any individual radial plane or cross-section normal to the artery, which may reduce a risk of acute or late stenosis formation, as compared to circumferential treatments that create such continuous circumferential lesions.

[0200] Non-continuous circumferential treatment by positioning thermal heating element(s) at different angular orientations along multiple lengthwise locations may preferentially affect anatomical structures that substantially propagate along the lengthwise dimension of the artery. Such anatomical structures can be neural fibers and/or structures that support the neural fibers (e.g., the renal plexus). Furthermore, such non-continuous circumferential treatment may mitigate or reduce potentially undesirable effects induced in structures that propagate about the angular dimension of the artery, such as smooth muscle cells. Were a continuous circumferential lesion alternatively to be formed, the angular or circumferential orientation of the smooth muscle cells relative to the artery may increase a risk of acute or late stenosis or acute vessel spasm.

[0201] In multi-thermal heating element configurations (e.g., multi-electrode configurations), such as in FIG. 7B, multiple non-continuous circumferential treatment zones can be created during a single catheter placement within the renal artery. The multiple thermal heating elements can be spaced and located such that they are longitudinally and angularly spaced apart from one another and such that they create longitudinally offset and angularly opposed or offset treatment zones. Retraction and rotation of the treatment device 12 can reposition the thermal heating elements to create additional longitudinally and angularly separated treatment zones, thereby allowing the practitioner the ability to create multiple treatment zones per catheter placement and several treatment zones via only two catheter placements.

[0202] As described (and as FIG. 9A shows), the thermal heating element 24 is sized and configured, in use, to contact an internal wall of the renal artery. In the illustrated embodiment (see FIG. 9A), the thermal heating element 24 takes the form of an electrode 46 sized and configured to apply an electrical field comprising radiofrequency (RF) energy from the generator 26 to a vessel wall. In the illustrated embodiment, the electrode 46 is operated in a monopolar or unipolar mode. In this arrangement, a return path for the applied RF electric field is established, e.g., by an external dispersive electrode (shown as 38 in FIG. 6A), also called an indifferent electrode or neutral electrode. The monopolar application of RF electric field energy serves to ohmically or resistively heat tissue in the vicinity of the electrode 46. The application of the RF electrical field thermally injures tissue. The treatment objective is to thermally induce neuromodulation (e.g., necrosis, thermal alteration or ablation) in the targeted neural fibers. The thermal injury forms a lesion in the vessel wall, which is shown, e.g., in FIG. 10B. Alternatively, a RF electrical field can be delivered with an oscillating intensity that does not thermally injure the tissue whereby neuromodulation in the targeted nerves is accomplished by electrical modification of the nerve signals.

[0203] The active surface area of contact (ASA) between the thermal element 24 or electrode 46 and the vessel wall has

great bearing on the efficiency and control of the transfer of a thermal energy field across the vessel wall to thermally affect targeted neural fibers in the renal plexus (RP). The active surface area of the thermal element 24 or electrode 46 is defined as the energy transmitting area of the thermal element 24 or electrode 46 that can be placed in intimate contact against tissue. Too much contact between the thermal element and the vessel wall and/or too much power may create unduly high temperatures at or around the interface between the tissue and the thermal element, thereby creating excessive heat generation at this interface and/or spasm and contraction of the vessel wall. This excessive heat can also create a lesion that is circumferentially too large, increasing the risk of stenosis. This excessive heat can also lead to undesirable thermal damage at the vessel wall, which stiffens and desiccates the vessel tissue making it more susceptible to puncture and perforation. Additionally, the tissue desiccation (i.e., dehydration) reduces the electrical and thermal conductivity of the tissue. Reduced conductivity may potentially create a lesion that is too shallow to reach the neural fibers and may also result in the buildup of excessive heat, causing increased and undesirable damage to the vessel wall and increasing the likelihood of thrombus formation. Although the risks of excessive wall contact and heating are many, too little contact between the thermal element and the vessel wall may impair the efficacy of the treatment. For example, too little contact may result in superficial heating of the vessel wall, thereby creating a lesion that is too small (e.g., <10% of vessel circumference) and/or too shallow to reach the target renal neural fibers.

[0204] While the active surface area (ASA) of the thermal heating element 24 and electrode 46 is important to creating lesions of desirable size and depth, the ratio between the active surface area (ASA) and total surface area (TSA) of the thermal heating element 24 and electrode 46 is also important. The ASA to TSA ratio influences lesion formation in two ways: (1) the degree of resistive heating via the electric field, and (2) the effects of blood flow or other convective cooling elements such as injected or infused saline. As discussed above, the RF electric field causes lesion formation via resistive heating of tissue exposed to the electric field. The higher the ASA to TSA ratio (i.e., the greater the contact between the electrode and tissue), the greater the resistive heating. As discussed in greater detail below, the flow of blood over the exposed portion of the electrode (TSA-ASA) provides conductive and convective cooling of the electrode, thereby carrying excess thermal energy away from the interface between the vessel wall and electrode. If the ratio of ASA to TSA is too high (e.g., 50%), resistive heating of the tissue can be too aggressive and not enough excess thermal energy is being carried away, resulting in excessive heat generation and increased potential for stenotic injury, thrombus formation and undesirable lesion size. If the ratio of ASA to TSA is too low (e.g., 10%), then there is too little resistive heating of tissue, thereby resulting in superficial heating and smaller and shallower lesions.

[0205] Various size constraints for the thermal heating element 24 may be imposed for clinical reasons by the maximum desired dimensions of the guide catheter, as well as by the size and anatomy of the renal artery itself. Typically, the maximum outer diameter (or cross-sectional dimension for non-circular cross-section) of the electrode 46 comprises the largest diameter encountered along the length of the elongated shaft 16 distal to the handle assembly 200. Thus, the outer

diameters of the force transmitting section **30** and proximal, intermediate and distal flexure zones **32**, **34**, and **44** are equal to or (desirably) less than the maximum outer diameter of the electrode **46**.

[0206] In a representative embodiment shown in FIG. 9A, the electrode **46** takes the form of a right circular cylinder, possessing a length **L5** that is greater than its diameter. The electrode **46** further desirably includes a distal region that is rounded to form an atraumatic end surface **48**. In the representative embodiment shown in FIG. 9B, the electrode **46** is spherical in shape, such that the length **L5** is equal to the electrode's diameter. The spherical shape, too, presents an atraumatic surface to the tissue interface.

[0207] As shown in FIGS. 9A and 9B, the angle $\alpha 3$ and length **L4** of the distal flexure zone **44** are specially sized and configured, given the TSA of the respective electrode, to optimize an active surface area of contact between tissue and the respective electrode **46** (ASA). The angle $\alpha 3$ and the length **L4** of the distal flexure zone **44** make it possible to desirably lay at least a side quadrant **50** of the electrode **46** against tissue (see FIG. 9C), though it should be understood that the electrode **46** does not necessarily need to be positioned with its side quadrant **50** against tissue prior to power delivery. In a representative embodiment, the active surface area of the electrode **46** contacting tissue (ASA) can be expressed as ASA 0.25 TSA and ASA 0.50 TSA.

[0208] An ASA to TSA ratio of over 50% may be effective with a reduced power delivery profile. Alternatively, increasing the convective cooling of the electrode that is exposed to blood flow can compensate for a higher ASA to TSA ratio. As discussed further below, this could be achieved by injecting or infusing cooling fluids such as saline (e.g., room temperature saline or chilled saline) over the electrode and into the blood stream.

[0209] The stiffnesses of each of the second and third flexure zones **34** and **44** are also selected to apply via the electrode a stabilizing force that positions the electrode **46** in substantially secure contact with the vessel wall tissue. This stabilizing force also influences the amount of wall contact achieved by the thermal heating element (i.e., the ASA to TSA ratio). With greater stabilizing force, the thermal heating element has more wall contact and with less stabilizing force, less wall contact is achieved. Additional advantages of the stabilizing force include, (1) softening the contact force between the distal end **20** and vessel wall to minimize risk of mechanical injury to vessel wall, (2) consistent positioning of the electrode **46** flat against the vessel wall, and (3) stabilizing the electrode **46** against the vessel wall. As discussed above with respect to the combined effect of the first/proximal flexure zone and second/intermediate flexure zone, this stabilizing force allows the catheter treatment device to maintain consistent contact with the vessel wall even during motion of the renal artery during respiration. The stabilizing force also allows the electrode to return to a neutral position after the electrode is removed from contact with the wall.

[0210] As previously discussed, for clinical reasons, the maximum outer diameter (or cross-sectional dimension) of the electrode **46** is constrained by the maximum inner diameter of the guide catheter through which the elongated shaft **16** is to be passed through the intravascular path **14**. Assuming that an 8 French guide catheter **94** (which has an inner diameter of approximately 0.091 inches) is, from a clinical perspective, the largest desired catheter to be used to access the renal artery, and allowing for a reasonable clearance tolerance

between the electrode **46** and the guide catheter, the maximum diameter of the electrode **46** is constrained to about 0.085 inches. In the event a 6 French guide catheter is used instead of an 8 French guide catheter, then the maximum diameter of the electrode **46** is constrained to about 0.070 inches. In the event a 5 French guide catheter is used, then maximum diameter of the electrode **46** is constrained to about 0.053 inches. Based upon these constraints and the aforementioned power delivery considerations, the electrode **46** desirably has a maximum outer diameter of from about 0.049 to about 0.051 inches. The electrode **46** also desirably has a minimum outer diameter of about 0.020 inches to provide sufficient cooling and lesion size. In some embodiments, the electrode **46** (i.e., the thermal heating element **24**) may have a length of about 1 mm to about 3 mm. In some embodiments in which the thermal heating element is a resistive heating element, it can have a maximum outer diameter from about 0.049 to 0.051 inches and a length of about 10 mm to 30 mm.

[0211] D. Applying Energy to Tissue Via the Thermal Heating Element

[0212] Referring back to FIG. 5, in the illustrated embodiment, the generator **26** may supply to the electrode **46** a pulsed or continuous RF electric field. Although a continuous delivery of RF energy is desirable, the application of thermal energy in pulses may allow the application of relatively higher energy levels (e.g., higher power), longer or shorter total duration times, and/or better controlled intravascular renal neuromodulation therapy. Pulsed energy may also allow for the use of a smaller electrode.

[0213] The thermal therapy may be monitored and controlled, for example, via data collected with one or more sensors **52**, such as temperature sensors (e.g., thermocouples, thermistors, etc.), impedance sensors, pressure sensors, optical sensors, flow sensors, chemical sensors, force sensors, strain sensors, etc. (see FIGS. 10A and 10B). Sensor(s) **52** may be incorporated into or on electrode **46** and/or in/on adjacent areas on the distal end region **20**.

[0214] Advantageously, since the second flexure zone **34** deflects in a controlled manner, the surface of electrode **46** that contacts tissue during treatment may be known. As such, sensor(s) **52** may be incorporated into the electrode in a manner that specifies whether the sensor(s) are in contact with tissue at the treatment site and/or are facing blood flow. The ability to specify sensor placement relative to tissue and blood flow is highly significant, since a temperature gradient across the electrode from the side facing blood flow to the side in contact with the vessel wall may be up to about 15° C. Significant gradients across the electrode in other sensed data (e.g., flow, pressure, impedance, etc.) also are expected.

[0215] The sensor(s) **52** may, for example, be incorporated on the side of the electrode that contacts the vessel wall at the treatment site during power and energy delivery (see FIG. 10B), may be incorporated into the tip of the electrode, may be incorporated on the opposing side of the electrode that faces blood flow during energy delivery (see FIG. 10A), and/or may be incorporated within certain regions of the electrode (e.g., distal, proximal, quadrants, etc.). In some embodiments, multiple sensors may be provided at multiple positions along the electrode and/or relative to blood flow. For example, a plurality of circumferentially and/or longitudinally spaced sensors may be provided. In one embodiment, a first sensor may contact the vessel wall during treatment, and a second sensor may face blood flow.

[0216] Additionally or alternatively, various microsensors can be used to acquire data corresponding to the thermal heating element, the vessel wall and/or the blood flowing across the thermal heating element. For example, arrays of micro thermocouples and/or impedance sensors can be implemented to acquire data along the thermal heating element or other parts of the treatment device. Sensor data can be acquired or monitored prior to, simultaneous with, or after the delivery of energy or in between pulses of energy, when applicable. The monitored data may be used in a feedback loop to better control therapy, e.g., to determine whether to continue or stop treatment, and it may facilitate controlled delivery of an increased or reduced power or a longer or shorter duration therapy.

[0217] Non-target tissue may be protected by blood flow (F) within the respective renal artery that serves as a conductive and/or convective heat sink that carries away excess thermal energy. For example (as FIGS. 10A and 10B show), since blood flow (F) is not blocked by the elongated shaft 16 and the electrode 46 it carries, the native circulation of blood in the respective renal artery serves to remove excess thermal energy from the non-target tissue and the thermal heating element. The removal of excess thermal energy by blood flow also allows for treatments of higher power, where more power can be delivered to the target tissue as thermal energy is carried away from the electrode and non-target tissue. In this way, intravascularly-delivered thermal energy heats target neural fibers located proximate to the vessel wall to modulate the target neural fibers, while blood flow (F) within the respective renal artery protects non-target tissue of the vessel wall from excessive or undesirable thermal injury. When energy is delivered in pulses, the time interval between delivery of thermal energy pulses may facilitate additional convective or other cooling of the non-target tissue of the vessel wall compared to applying an equivalent magnitude or duration of continuous thermal energy.

[0218] It may also be desirable to provide enhanced cooling by inducing additional native blood flow across the thermal heating element. For example, techniques and/or technologies can be implemented by the caregiver to increase perfusion through the renal artery or to the thermal heating element itself. These techniques include positioning partial occlusion elements (e.g., balloons) within upstream vascular bodies such as the aorta or proximal portion of the renal artery to improve flow across the thermal heating element.

[0219] In addition, or as an alternative, to passively utilizing blood flow (F) as a heat sink, active cooling may be provided to remove excess thermal energy and protect non-target tissues. For example, a thermal fluid infusate may be injected, infused, or otherwise delivered into the vessel in an open circuit system. Additionally or alternatively, the thermal heating element 24 (e.g., electrode 46) may be actively cooled in a closed circuit system (i.e., without delivering any agents into the bloodstream) to remove excess thermal energy, such as by circulating a thermal fluid infusate (e.g., a cryogenic or chilled fluid) within the distal end region 20 or by some other mechanism.

[0220] Thermal fluid infusates used for active cooling may, for example, comprise (room temperature or chilled) saline or some other biocompatible fluid. The thermal fluid infusate(s) may, for example, be introduced through the treatment device 12 via one or more infusion lumens and/or ports. When introduced into the bloodstream, the thermal fluid infusate(s) may, for example, be introduced through a guide catheter at a

location upstream from the thermal heating element 24 or electrode 46, or at other locations relative to the tissue for which protection is sought. The delivery of a thermal fluid infusate in the vicinity of the treatment site (via an open circuit system and/or via a closed circuit system) may, for example, allow for the application of increased/higher power, may allow for the maintenance of lower temperature at the vessel wall during energy delivery, may facilitate the creation of deeper or larger lesions, may facilitate a reduction in treatment time, may allow for the use of a smaller electrode size, or a combination thereof.

[0221] As seen in FIG. 11A, electrode 46 may comprise an open circuit system having an irrigated electrode with at least one port 47 that is coupled to a lumen in fluid communication with a source of infusate and a pumping mechanism (e.g., manual injection or a motorized pump) for injection or infusion of saline or some other biocompatible thermal fluid infusate I from outside the patient, through elongated shaft 16 and through the electrode 46 into the patient's bloodstream during energy delivery. In an alternative closed circuit embodiment, such as that seen in FIG. 11B, the lumen 45 may, for example, comprise a supply lumen 45a and a return lumen 45b that may be utilized to circulate the thermal fluid infusate I near or through the electrode 46 to remove excess thermal energy without releasing the fluid into the bloodstream. The thermal fluid acts as a convective and conductive heat sink that cools the electrode and/or the vessel wall during power and energy delivery.

[0222] In FIG. 11A, the electrode 46 illustratively comprises six ports 47 that are spaced roughly equidistant about the circumference of the electrode, but it should be understood that any alternative number of ports 47 (for example, any alternative number of ports 47 in the range of about one port to about twelve ports) and/or any alternative spacing of the ports 47 about the circumference of the electrode 46 alternatively may be provided. For example, in one alternative embodiment, a single port 47 may be provided on the side of the electrode that contacts the vessel wall for injection or infusion of saline directly at the treatment site.

[0223] Although many of the embodiments described herein pertain to electrical systems configured for the delivery of RF energy, it is contemplated that the desired treatment can be accomplished by other means, e.g., by coherent or incoherent light; direct thermal modification (e.g., with a heated or cooled fluid or resistive heating element); microwave; ultrasound (including high intensity focused ultrasound); diode laser; radiation; a tissue heating fluid; and/or a cryogenic fluid.

III. Representative Embodiments

[0224] A. First Representative Embodiment (First Flexure Zone, Second Flexure Zone with a Centrally Positioned Spine, and Third Flexure Zone with Distally Carried Thermal Heating Element)

[0225] FIGS. 12A to 18H show a representative embodiment of an elongated shaft 16 that includes a proximal force transmitting section 30, as well as first, second and third flexure zones 32, 34, and 44, having the physical and mechanical features described above. In this embodiment, the thermal heating element 24 is carried distally of the third flexure zone 44 (see, e.g., FIG. 13A).

[0226] 1. Force Transmitting Section

[0227] In the illustrated embodiment, as shown in FIGS. 12A and 12B, the proximal force transmitting section 30

comprises a first elongated and desirably tubular structure, which can take the form of, e.g., a first tubular structure **54**. The first tubular structure **54** is desirably a hypo tube that is made of a metal material, e.g. of stainless steel, or a shape memory alloy, e.g., nickel titanium (a.k.a., Nitinol or NiTi), to possess the requisite axial stiffness and torsional stiffness, as already described, for the force transmitting section **30**. As already described, the force transmitting section **30** comprises the most stiff section along the elongated shaft **16**, to facilitate axially movement of the elongated shaft **16**, as well as rotational manipulation of the elongated shaft **16** within the intravascular path **14**. Alternatively, the first tubular structure **54** may comprise a hollow coil, hollow cable, solid cable (w/embedded wires), a braided or braid reinforced shaft, a coil reinforced polymer shaft, a metal/polymer composite, etc.

[0228] The stiffness is a function of material selection as well as structural features such as interior diameter, outside diameter, wall thickness, geometry and other features that are made by micro-engineering, machining, cutting and/or skiving the hypo tube material to provide the desired axial and torsional stiffness characteristics. For example, the elongated shaft can be a hypo tube that is laser cut to various shapes and cross-sectional geometries to achieve the desired functional properties.

[0229] When the first tubular structure **54** is made from an electrically conductive metal material, the first tubular structure **54** may include a sheath **56** or covering made from an electrically insulating polymer material or materials, which is placed over the outer diameter of the underlying tubular structure. The polymer material can also be selected to possess a desired durometer (expressing a degree of stiffness or lack thereof) to contribute to the desired overall stiffness of the first tubular structure **54**. Candidate materials for the polymer material include, but are not limited to, polyethylene terephthalate (PET); Pebax® material; nylon; polyurethane, Grilamid® material or combinations thereof. The polymer material can be laminated, dip-coated, spray-coated, or otherwise deposited/attached to the outer diameter of the tube.

[0230] 2. First Flexure Zone

[0231] As FIGS. **13A**, **13B**, and **13C** show, the first or proximal flexure zone **32** comprises a second elongated and desirably tubular structure, which can take the form of, e.g., a second tubular structure **58**. The second tubular structure **58** can be made from the same or different material as the first tubular structure **54**. The axial stiffness and torsional stiffness of the second tubular structure **58** possesses the requisite axial stiffness and torsional stiffness, as already described, for the first flexure zone **32**. As already described, the first flexure zone **32** may be less stiff and more flexible than the force transmitting section **30**, to navigate the severe bend at and prior to the junction of the aorta and respective renal artery. The second tubular structure is desirably a hypo tube, but can alternatively comprise a hollow coil, hollow cable, braided shaft, etc.

[0232] It may be desirable for the first and second tubular structures **54** and **58** to share the same material. In this event, the form and physical features of the second tubular structure **58** may be altered, compared to the first tubular structure **54**, to achieve the desired stiffness and flexibility differences. For example, the interior diameter, outside diameter, wall thickness, and other engineered features of the second tubular structure **58** can be tailored to provide the desired axial and torsional stiffness and flexibility characteristics. For example,

the second tubular structure **58** can be laser cut along its length to provide a bendable, spring-like structure. Depending on the ease of manufacturability the first and second tubular structures may be produced from the same piece of material or from two separate pieces. In the event the first tubular structure and second tubular structure are not of the same material, the outside diameter of the second tubular structure **58** can be less than the outer diameter of first tubular structure **54** (or have a smaller wall thickness) to create the desired differentiation in stiffness between the first and second tubular structures **54** and **58**.

[0233] When the second tubular structure **58** is made from an electrically conductive metal material, the second tubular structure **58**, like the first tubular structure **54**, includes a sheath **60** (see FIGS. **13B** and **13C**) or covering made from an electrically insulating polymer material or materials, as already described. The sheath **60** or covering can also be selected to possess a desired durometer to contribute to the desired differentiation in stiffness and flexibility between the first and second tubular structures **58**.

[0234] The second tubular structure **58** can comprise a different material than the first tubular structure **54** to impart the desired differentiation in stiffness and flexibility between the first and second tubular structures **58**. For example, the second tubular structure **58** can comprise a cobalt-chromium-nickel alloy, instead of stainless steel. Alternatively, the second tubular structure **58** can comprise a less rigid polymer, a braided or braid-reinforced shaft, a coil reinforced polymer shaft, a metal/polymer composite, nitinol or hollow cable-like structure. In addition to material selection, the desired differentiation in stiffness and overall flexibility can be achieved by selection of the interior diameter, outside diameter, wall thickness, and other engineered features of the second tubular structure **58**, as already described. Further, a sheath **60** or covering made from an electrically insulating polymer material, as above described, can also be placed over the outer diameter of the second tubular structure **58** to impart the desired differentiation between the first and second tubular structures **54** and **58**.

[0235] 3. Second Flexure Zone

[0236] As FIGS. **14A**, **14B**, and **14C** show, the second or intermediate flexure zone **34** comprises a third elongated and desirably tubular structure, which can take the form of, e.g., a third tubular structure **62**. The third tubular structure **62** can be made from the same or different material as the first and/or second tubular structures **54** and **58**. The axial stiffness and torsional stiffness of the third tubular structure **62** possesses the requisite axial stiffness and torsional stiffness, as already described, for the second flexure zone **34**. As already described, the second flexure zone **34** may be less stiff and more flexible than the first flexure zone **32**, to facilitate controlled deflection of the second flexure zone **34** within the respective renal artery.

[0237] If the second and third tubular structures **58** and **62** share the same material, the form and physical features of the third tubular structure **62** are altered, compared to the second tubular structure **58**, to achieve the desired stiffness and flexibility differences. For example, the interior diameter, outside diameter, wall thickness, and other engineered features of the third tubular structure **62** can be tailored to provide the desired axial and torsional stiffness and flexibility characteristics. For example, the third tubular structure **62** can be laser cut along its length to provide a more bendable, more spring-like structure than the second tubular structure **58**.

[0238] When the third tubular structure 62 is made from an electrically conductive metal material, the third tubular structure 62 also may include a sheath 64 (see FIG. 14C) or covering made from an electrically insulating polymer material or materials, as already described. The sheath 64 or covering can also be selected to possess a desired durometer to contribute to the desired differentiation in stiffness and flexibility between the second and third tubular structure 62.

[0239] The third tubular structure 62 can comprise a different material than the second tubular structure to impart the desired differentiation in stiffness and flexibility between the second and third tubular structures 62. For example, the third tubular structure 62 can include a Nitinol material, to impart the desired differentiation in stiffness between the second and third tubular structures 58 and 62. In addition to material selection, the desired differentiation in stiffness and overall flexibility can be achieved by selection of the interior diameter, outside diameter, wall thickness, and other engineered features of the third tubular structure 62, as already described.

[0240] For example, in diameter, the outside diameter of the third tubular structure 62 is desirably less than the outer diameter of second tubular structure 58. Reduction of outside diameter or wall thickness influences the desired differentiation in stiffness between the second and third tubular structures 58 and 62.

[0241] As discussed in greater detail above, preferential deflection of the second flexure zone is desirable. This can be achieved by making the third tubular structure 62 compressible in the desired direction of deflection and resilient to compression along a plane perpendicular to the deflection. In this embodiment such variable compressibility is achieved with a centrally positioned spine 66 that is resilient to compression along its axis yet is sufficiently flexible to bend in a plane perpendicular to its width. FIGS. 14B to 16L provide representative embodiments of the first embodiment with a second flexure zone 34 configured for controlled, multi-directional bending having a central spine and multiple control wires.

[0242] In the embodiment of FIGS. 14A to 14C, the width of the spine 66 affects the relative stiffness and elasticity of the third tubular structure 62. It should be understood that the width of the spine 66 may be specified to provide the third tubular structure 62 with a desired relative stiffness and/or elasticity. Furthermore, the width of the spine 66 may vary along the longitudinal axis of the third tubular structure 62, thereby providing the third tubular structure with a varying relative stiffness and/or elasticity along its length. Such variation in the width of the spine 66 may be gradual, continuous, abrupt, discontinuous, or combinations thereof.

[0243] A flat ribbon material (not shown) (e.g., Nitinol, stainless steel, or spring stainless steel) can be attached to the spine 66. When the pulling force is removed from the control wire 40, the flat ribbon, which serves to reinforce the deflectable third tubular structure 62, will elastically straighten out the deflectable third tubular structure 62.

[0244] The length L3 of the second flexure zone 34 is between about 5 mm and 20 mm, for example less than or equal to about 12.5 mm. As the distal end region 20 is advanced from a guide catheter into a renal artery the energy delivery element 24 contacts the superior surface of the renal artery wall. The length L3 allows the energy delivery element 24 to be manipulated through deflection of the second flexure zone 34 to contact dorsal, ventral and inferior surfaces of the renal artery wall within a short distance as long as a portion of

the second flexure zone 34 protrudes from the guide catheter. Thus the length L3 of the second flexure zone 34 is chosen to be specially suited for use in a renal artery.

[0245] The width of the ribs 68 (i.e., the distance spanned by each rib along the longitudinal axis of the third tubular structure 62), as well as the spacing of the ribs 68 (i.e., the distance spanned by the spine 66 along the longitudinal axis of the third tubular member 62 between adjacent ribs 68), optionally may affect a maximal preferential deflection achievable by the intermediate flexure zone 34 before adjacent ribs 68 contact one another, i.e. may limit the maximum amount of compression to the side of the third tubular structure that is compressible. Such contact between adjacent ribs 68 optionally may define the radius of curvature and/or the angle $\alpha 2$ (see FIG. 8C) of the second flexure zone 34 under such maximal preferential deflection. The second flexure zone is configured for a state of maximum flexure, wherein the state of maximum flexure is achieved when the deflectable body moves the energy delivery element away from the axis of the elongated tubular shaft by a predetermined distance. The maximum flexure avoids the risk of causing trauma to the renal artery wall which could happen if a second flexure zone 34 of length L3 were deflected significantly more than the diameter of a renal artery. As will be discussed in more detail later, the third flexure zone 44 is configured to dampen force exerted to the artery wall when the second flexure zone 34 is deflected. Stable contact force between an energy delivery element 24 and an inner wall of a renal artery can be created by exerting a force that is greater than an instable force and less than a traumatic force. The third flexure zone 44 dampens the contact force keeping it within a stable yet atraumatic range even when the second flexure zone 34 moves the energy delivery element 24 away from the axis of the elongated tubular shaft by a distance greater than the diameter of a renal artery. For example, the third flexure zone 44 may flex enough for the second flexure zone 34 to be configured for a state of maximum flexure such that the predetermined distance is less than or equal to about 4 mm greater than a renal artery diameter. In one embodiment the distal assembly 53 has a length of about 3 mm to 6 mm (e.g. less than or equal to 5 mm), the second flexure zone 34 has a length L3 of about 8 mm to 15 mm (e.g. less than or equal to 12.5 mm) and has a maximum flexure displacing the energy delivery element 24 a predetermined distance of about 10 to 15 mm. Alternatively or additionally, the predetermined distance can be adjusted by a deflection limiter in the handle 200 that limits the actuator 260 to displacing the control wire a maximum amount thus limiting the deflection to an adjusted state of maximum flexure.

[0246] It should be understood that the width and/or the spacing of the ribs 68 may be specified as desired to achieve a desired maximal preferential deflection. Furthermore, the width and/or the spacing of the ribs 68 may vary along the longitudinal axis of the third tubular structure 62, thereby providing the intermediate flexure zone 34 with a varying radius of curvature under such maximal preferential deflection. Such variation in the width and/or spacing of the ribs 68 may be gradual, continuous, abrupt, discontinuous, or combinations thereof.

[0247] In the embodiment of FIGS. 14B and 14C, the second flexure zone is configured for controlled, bi-directional bending. As seen in the cross-section of FIG. 14B, the third tubular structure 62 of the second flexure zone 34 comprises a centrally positioned spine 66 having a substantially flat or ribbon shape (i.e., the spine's width is significantly greater

than its thickness) that substantially divides the third tubular structure in half. A central lumen **61** may be formed through the center of the spine **66** for passage of electrical transmission wire(s) and/or sensor/thermocouple wire(s) **29**. Alternatively, wire(s) **29** can pass through a lumen defined by centrally positioned spine **66** and ribs **68**.

[0248] Third tubular structure **62** may be fabricated, for example, via Electrical Discharge Machining (EDM), micro-machining and/or extrusion, to form a tube with a ribbon having a lumen, wherein the ribbon bisects the tube, as in FIG. **14B**. As seen in FIG. **14C**, a laser-cut pattern then may remove sections of the ribboned tube along its length to form connecting ribs **68a** and **68b** at spaced intervals along the tube's length that extend on opposing sides of spine **66** about the circumference of the third tubular structure **62**. Control wires **40a** and **40b** are attached to a distal end of the second flexure zone with solder **130** on opposing sides of spine **66** and travel along the length of the third tubular structure radially positioned between the spine **66** and the ribs **68**.

[0249] The geometry of spine **66**, in combination with the geometry of ribs **68a** and **68b** and the distal attachment locations of control wires **40a** and **40b**, facilitate controlled, bi-directional bending of the second flexure zone **34**, e.g., by substantially constraining buckling or bending of the spine **66** in response to pulling of a wire **40a** or **40b** to planes perpendicular to the width of the spine. The second flexure zone deflects in a first direction in response to pulling on the control wire **40a** while the control wire **40b** is not under significant tension (see FIG. **14C**). The second flexure zone deflects in a second, opposing direction in response to pulling on the control wire **40b** while the control wire **40a** is not under significant tension.

[0250] While FIGS. **14B** and **14C** illustrate a bi-directional bending embodiment of the second flexure zone **34**, the third tubular structure **62** may be fabricated with a centrally positioned spine that facilitates bending in any number of directions, as desired. FIGS. **16A** to **16G** illustrate an embodiment of the second flexure zone with a centrally positioned spine that is configured for controlled, quad-directional deflection. As seen in FIGS. **16D** to **16F**, the third tubular structure **62** comprises centrally positioned spine **66** with longitudinally-spaced spinal ribbon sections **66a** and **66b** whose widths are angularly offset from one another by about 90° in an alternating pattern along the length of the third tubular structure. A centrally-positioned lumen extends through the ribbon sections along the length of the third tubular structure for passage of electrical transmission wire(s) and/or sensor/thermocouple wire(s) **29**. Between each pair of the spinal ribbon sections **66a** and **66b**, the spine **66** flares radially outward to form a spinal ribbon connector section **66c** that connects the pair of spinal ribbon sections.

[0251] In the embodiment of FIGS. **16D** to **16F**, each connector section **66c** has four sides or extensions that extend to the circumference of the third tubular structure **62**. The four sides or extensions have radial-most points that are angularly offset by about 45° from the widths of ribbon sections **66a** and **66b**. Connecting ribs **68a**, **68b**, **68c** and **68d** connect each of the four sides or extensions of each connector section **66c** at the radial-most points, forming a circumferential ring or hoop at the level of each connector section **66c**.

[0252] Third tubular structure **62** thus comprises a series of repeating segments along the length of the structure. Each repeating segment has a first connector section **66c** with ribs **68**; followed lengthwise by a ribbon section **66a** having a

width that is 45° angularly offset from the radial-most points of the sides or extensions of the first connector section **66c**; followed lengthwise by a second connector section **66c** with ribs **68**, the second connector section having sides or extensions with radial-most points that are 45° angularly offset from the width of the ribbon section **66a** and that are angularly aligned with the radial-most points of the sides or extensions of the first connector section **66c**; followed lengthwise by a ribbon section **66b** having a width that is 45° angularly offset from the radial-most points of the sides or extensions of the second connector section **66c** and that is 90° angularly offset from the width of ribbon section **66a**; followed lengthwise by a repeating first connector section **66c** with ribs **68**, the repeating first connector section having sides or extensions with radial-most points that are 45° angularly offset from the width of the ribbon section **66b** and that are angularly aligned with the radial-most points of the sides or extensions of the second connector section **66c**; etc.

[0253] The ribbon sections **66a** and **66b** preferably have widths that are less than the diameter of third tubular structure **62** at the level of each connector section **66c** (e.g., less than the diameter of the rings formed by ribs **68**), such that the geometry of the repeating segments of the third tubular structure **62** forms four lengthwise voids along the length of the third tubular structure. Two of the voids are substantially aligned with, but positioned radially outward of, the width of the spinal ribbon section **66a**, while the remaining two voids are substantially aligned with, but positioned radially outward of, the width of the spinal ribbon section **66b**. Thus, the four voids are about 45° angularly offset from the radial-most points of the sides or extensions of the connector sections **66c**, i.e. the voids occupy the space between the sides or extensions where the sides or extensions extend to the circumference of the third tubular structure **62** and are connected by ribs **68**.

[0254] A control wire **40a**, **40b**, **40c** or **40d** is positioned within each of the voids along the length of the third tubular structure and is attached to a distal end of the second flexure zone with solder **130**. Pulling on any one of the control wires while the other three control wires are not under significant tension may provide controlled deflection of the second flexure zone **34** in the direction of the wire being pulled (alternatively, any three control wires may be pulled while the fourth control wire is not under significant tension in order to provide controlled deflection of the second flexure zone in the opposite direction of the control wire not being pulled). In this manner, the second flexure zone **34** may be configured for controlled, quad-directional bending in four directions that are about 90° angularly offset or out of phase from one another.

[0255] For example, as seen in FIG. **16E**, pulling on wire **40a** causes ribbon sections **66a**, whose widths are in a plane perpendicular to the plane of wire **40a**, to buckle or bend in the direction of the wire **40a**, providing controlled bending of the third tubular structure **62** and second flexure zone **34** in the direction of the wire **40a**. Likewise, as seen in FIG. **16F**, pulling on wire **40b** causes the ribbon sections **66b** to buckle or bend in the direction of the wire **40b**, providing controlled bending of the second flexure zone **34** in the direction of the wire **40b**. Conversely, pulling on wire **40c** would cause the ribbon sections **66a** (and thereby the second flexure zone **34**) to buckle or bend in the opposite direction of that achieved with wire **40a** (not shown), while pulling on wire **40d** would cause the ribbon sections **66b** (and thereby the second flexure

zone 34) to buckle or bend in the opposite direction of that achieved with wire 40b (not shown).

[0256] In some multi-directional deflection embodiments, such as those shown in FIGS. 16D to 16G, pulling on any two adjacent control wires while the remaining control wires are not under significant tension may provide controlled deflection of the second flexure zone 34 in additional directions offset or out of phase from the directions achieved by pulling on any single control wire 40. When two adjacent wires are pulled, substantially all of the alternating ribbon sections 66a and 66b would be expected to buckle or bend. Ribbon sections 66a would be expected to bend in their flexibly biased plane in the direction of applied tension by a first control wire, while alternate ribbon sections 66b would be expected to bend in their flexibly biased plane in the direction of applied tension by a second adjacent control wire. The alternating ribbon sections would bend in directions which are about 90° offset from one another. The amount of bending the alternating ribbon sections 66a and 66b would be proportionate to the amount of tension applied by each respective control wire. The cumulative effect, along the total length of the second flexure zone 34, of bending both alternating ribbon sections would be a bend in the direction between the two flexibly biased planes. In this manner, the second flexure zone 34 may be configured for controlled deflection in four directions by pulling one of the four control wires 40, and additional directions by pulling two adjacent control wires 40 with equal or disproportionate tensions.

[0257] The third tubular structures 62 of FIGS. 16D to 16F may, for example, be fabricated from a combination of EDM, micromachining and/or extrusion, as well laser cutting. As seen in FIG. 16A, the third tubular structure may be fabricated via EDM, micromachining and/or extrusion with the cross section of spinal connector sections 66c. As seen in FIG. 16C, laser cutting in a first side-sectional plane of the third tubular member 62 that is about 45° angularly offset from points at which the interior portion of the third tubular structure connects to the tubular outer portion, may form spinal ribbon sections 66a, as well as diametric narrowing at the level of spinal ribbon sections 66b. Likewise, as seen in FIG. 16B, laser cutting in a second side-sectional plane of the third tubular member 62 that is perpendicular to (i.e., that is 90° angularly offset from) the first side-sectional plane may form spinal ribbon sections 66b and spinal connector sections 66c, as well as diametric narrowing at the level of the spinal ribbon sections 66a. This provides the spinal connector sections 66c with four sides, as in FIG. 16D.

[0258] With reference now to FIG. 16G, an alternative configuration of the third tubular structure configured for quad-directional controlled deflection (and deflection in additional directions when two adjacent control wires are pulled, as previously described) is described. In FIG. 16G, each of the spinal ribbon sections 66a and 66b flares radially outward to connect to the spinal connector sections 66c along only two sides or extensions that extend to the circumference of the third tubular structure 62. The two sides or extensions have radial-most points that are substantially aligned with the widths of each of the ribbon sections 66a and 66b, respectively. Connecting ribs 68a and 68b, 68c and 68d connect each of the four sides or extensions found at each connector section 66c (two such sides or extensions emanating from each of the ribbon sections 66a and 66b, respectively, about

90° out of phase with the other two sides or extensions), forming a circumferential ring or hoop at the level of each connector section 66c.

[0259] Third tubular structure 62 thus comprises a series of repeating segments along the length of the structure. Each repeating segment has a first connector section 66c with ribs 68; followed lengthwise by a ribbon section 66a having a width that is angularly aligned with two of the radial-most points of the sides or extensions of the first connector section 66c and about 90° out of phase with the other two sides or extensions of the first connector section; followed lengthwise by a second connector section 66c with ribs 68, the second connector section having four sides or extensions with four radial-most points, two of which are again aligned with the width of the ribbon section 66a and two that are about 90° out of phase with the ribbon section 66a; followed lengthwise by a ribbon section 66b having a width that is 90° angularly offset from the two radial-most points of the sides or extensions of the second connector section 66c that are aligned with the width of ribbon section 66a, and having a width that is angularly aligned with the remaining two radial-most points of the second connector section 66c; followed lengthwise by a repeating first connector section 66c with ribs 68, the repeating first connector section having four sides or extensions with four radial-most points, two of which are again aligned with the width of the ribbon section 66b and two that are about 90° out of phase with the ribbon section 66b; etc.

[0260] In the embodiment of FIG. 16G, two lumens extend through each ribbon section 66a and 66b, respectively, near either end of the width of each ribbon section (i.e., four such lumens in all, in addition to the centrally-positioned lumen for passage of wire 29). Control wires 40 may be routed through these lumens for controlled quad-directional deflection (and deflection in additional directions when two adjacent control wires are pulled) of the second flexure zone 34, as described previously.

[0261] FIGS. 14B and 14C illustrate a second flexure zone 34 with a centrally positioned spine 66 configured for bi-directional controlled deflection, while FIGS. 16D to 16F illustrate second flexure zones 34 with a centrally positioned spine 66 configured for quad-directional controlled deflection (and deflection in additional directions when two adjacent control wires are pulled, as previously described). The second flexure zone alternatively may comprise a centrally positioned spine 66 configured for deflection in any number of additional directions, as desired. For example, additional ribbon sections may be provided at additional angular offsets and connected by spinal connector sections having additional sides (e.g., as seen in FIG. 16H, for six-directional bending, three alternating spinal ribbon sections may be provided at 60° angular offsets, connected by spinal connector sections having six sides or extensions whose radial-most points extend to the circumference of the third tubular structure 62 in angular alignment with the edges of the spinal ribbon sections, such that six voids are created that are offset by about 30° from the width of any spinal ribbon section). When combined with appropriate ribs 68 and control wires 40, controlled deflection in any number of directions may be achieved. However, it is expected that the second flexure zone 34 may become increasingly stiff as the number of alternating ribbon sections increases, which may place a practical limit on the attainable number of controlled deflection directions.

[0262] Referring now to FIGS. 16I and 16J, as an alternative to a second flexure zone 34 with a third tubular structure 62 comprising a centrally positioned spine in combination with a laser-cut pattern that forms connecting ribs, the second flexure zone 34 may comprise a centrally positioned spine 66 that is surrounded by a coiling third tubular structure 62. A coiling third tubular structure may increase flexibility of the second flexure zone 34. The coiling third tubular structure may comprise a laser-cut hypo tube, a hollow coil, a hollow cable, a braided shaft, etc. The spine may be connected to the coiling third tubular structure 62 along its length, may be connected to the structure at only one or a few locations (e.g., at its distal end), or may float or be friction fit within the coiling third tubular structure.

[0263] The spine 66 may comprise any of the spines seen in FIG. 14B to 16H (e.g., may be flat or ribbon-like, as in FIGS. 14B and 14C; or may comprise angularly offset, alternating ribbons, as in FIGS. 16D to 16H), or may comprise any additional number of alternating ribbons, as desired, to facilitate controlled deflection in any number of directions, as desired. The spine may be fabricated, for example, via EDM, micromachining and/or extrusion and may comprise a laser-cut pattern along its length that increases flexibility. The spine may alternate along its length, e.g., in a spiraling laser-cut pattern.

[0264] In FIGS. 16I and 16J, second flexure zone 34 illustratively is configured for controlled, bi-directional deflection. The spine 66 comprises a flat or ribbon-shaped spine, and the coiling third tubular structure 62 surrounds the spine. Control wires 40a and 40b are attached to a distal end of the second flexure zone with solder 130 on opposing sides of the spine 66. As in the embodiment of FIGS. 14B and 14C, pulling on the control wire 40a while the control wire 40b is not under significant tension (see FIG. 16J) deflects the second flexure zone 34 in a first direction. The second flexure zone deflects in a second, opposing direction in response to pulling on the control wire 40b while the control wire 40a is not under significant tension.

[0265] 4. Third Flexure Zone

[0266] As shown in FIGS. 18A to 18H, the third or distal flexure zone 44 comprises a flexible structure 74. The flexible structure 74 can comprise a metal, a polymer, or a metal/polymer composite. The material and physical features of the flexible structure 74 could optionally be selected so that the axial stiffness and torsional stiffness of the flexible structure 74 is not greater than the axial stiffness and torsional stiffness of the third tubular structure 62. The overall flexibility of the flexible structure 74 could optionally be at least equal to and desirably greater than the flexibility of third tubular structure 62 when the third tubular structure has not been deflected by the control wire 40.

[0267] The material and physical features of the flexible structure 74 are selected so that the distal flexure zone 44 has (1) sufficient flexibility to elastically deform when an thermal heating element 24 applies a pressure to an inner wall of a renal artery that is less than a pressure that is at high risk of causing trauma; but (2) sufficient stiffness to create contact force or pressure between the thermal heating element 24 and inner wall of the renal artery that allows for energy delivery and stable contact. The flexibility of the distal flexure zone 44 dampens the force applied by the thermal heating element 24 to the artery wall so that the force remains in this suitable range as the second flexure zone 34 is deflected over a wide usable range. Furthermore, by elastically deforming, a third

flexure zone 44 aligns a thermal heating element 24 so that its side is in contact with the artery wall as previously discussed.

[0268] The flexible structure 74, as a part of the third flexure zone 44, can be coupled to the second flexure zone as described above. As shown in FIG. 18B, the thermal heating element 24 is carried at the distal end of the flexible structure 74 for placement in contact with tissue along a vessel wall of a respective renal artery.

[0269] The material selected for the flexible structure 74 can be radiopaque or non-radiopaque. For example, a radiopaque material, e.g., stainless steel, platinum, platinum iridium, or gold, can be used to enable visualization and image guidance. When using a non-radiopaque material, the material optionally may be doped with a radiopaque substance, such as barium sulfate, to facilitate visualization and image guidance.

[0270] The configuration of the flexible structure 74 can vary. For example, in the embodiment depicted in FIGS. 18B and 18C, the flexible structure 74 comprises a thread 104 encased in, or covered with, a polymer coating or wrapping 110. The thread 104 is routed through a proximal anchor 108, which is attached to the distal end of the second flexure zone 34, and a distal anchor 106, which is fixed within or integrated into the heating element 24/electrode 46. The distal anchor 106 may be fixed within the heating element 24/electrode 46 using, e.g., solder. Alternatively, the distal anchor 106 and heating element 24/electrode 46 may be fabricated as a single piece or unitary structure.

[0271] Although various types of materials can be used to construct the aforementioned structures, in order to have a flexible structure 74 that securely connects to the second flexure zone 34 and the thermal heating element 24, it is desirable for thread 104 to be comprised of Kevlar or similar polymer thread and for the proximal anchor 108 and distal anchor 106 to be comprised of stainless steel. While the coating 110 can be comprised of any electrically insulative material, and particularly those listed later with respect to sheath 80, it is desirable for the structures of the flexible structure 74 to be encased/coated/covered by a low-durometer polymer such as carbothane laminate 110. As shown in FIG. 18C, one or more supply wires 29 may run alongside or within the flexible structure 74. As previously mentioned these wires may provide the thermal heating element 24 with electrical current/energy from the generator 26 and also convey data signals acquired by sensor 52. As depicted in FIG. 18C, the control wire 40 extending from the handle actuator 260 can be formed into the proximal anchor 108 and attached to the elongated shaft using solder 130.

[0272] One advantage of the above-described configuration of the flexible structure 74 is that the flexible structure 74 creates a region of electrical isolation between the thermal heating element and the rest of the elongated shaft. Both the Kevlar thread 104 and laminate 110 are electrically insulative, thereby providing the supply wire(s) 29 as the sole means for electrical connectivity. Accordingly, the external surface of the flexible structure 74 and third flexure zone 44 is electrically inactive.

[0273] As shown in FIGS. 18D through 18F, the flexible structure 74 allows considerable passive deflection of the third flexure zone 44 when the thermal heating element 24 is put into contact with the vessel wall. As already described, this flexibility has several potential benefits. One such benefit may be the ability of the third flexure zone 44 to reduce force or stress applied between the thermal heating element 24 and

the vessel wall when or as the second flexure zone **34** is deflected, relative to the force or stress that would be applied to the vessel wall during second flexure zone **34** deflection if the third flexure zone **44** were to be removed and the thermal heating element were to be coupled directly to the distal end of the second flexure zone **34**. This may reduce a risk of trauma. Furthermore, the force or stress applied by the thermal heating element **24** to the vessel wall may be maintained in a consistent range during second flexure zone **34** deflection, particularly during movement caused by respiration and/or pulsatile flow, which may facilitate consistent and/or controlled lesion creation.

[0274] The size and configuration of the flexible structure **74** enables the thermal heating element to deflect in many directions because the third flexure zone may bend by angle Θ in any plane through the axis of the distal end region. For treatments within a peripheral blood vessel such as the renal artery, it is desirable that angle $\Theta \leq 90$ degrees. Optionally, the flexible structure **74** is not very resilient, i.e., does not provide a significant restoring or straightening moment when deflected.

[0275] The thermal heating element **24** desirably may provide omni-directional delivery of energy in substantially any or all directions. As the third flexure zone **44** passively deflects at a treatment site about an angle Θ appropriate to a given patient's anatomical geometry, any portion of the thermal heating element **24** may be aligned with an interior wall of the renal artery for energy delivery to target renal nerves. Blood flow may remove heat during such energy delivery, thereby reducing or mitigating a need for shielding or other preferential directing of the energy delivered to the target renal nerves that could make the third flexure zone **44** undesirably stiffer or bulkier. Such omni-directional energy delivery without shielding/preferential directing may facilitate simpler or safer positioning of the thermal heating element **24** at a treatment site, as compared to shielded or directed thermal heating elements, e.g. thermal heating elements comprising a microwave or radioactive power source.

[0276] In alternative embodiments of the third flexure zone **44**, the flexible structure **74** can take the form of a tubular metal coil, cable, braid, polymer or metal/polymer composite, as FIG. 18H shows. Alternatively, the flexible structure **74** can take the form of an oval, or rectangular, or flattened metal coil or polymer, as FIG. 18G shows. In alternate embodiments, the flexible structure **74** may comprise other mechanical structures or systems that allow the thermal heating element **24** to pivot in at least one plane of movement. For example, the flexible structure **74** may comprise a hinge or ball/socket combination.

[0277] If the flexible member comprises, in whole or in part, an electrically conductive material, the third flexure zone **44** desirably includes an outer sheath **80** (see FIGS. 18G and 18H) or covering over the flexible structure **74** made from an electrically insulating polymer material. The polymer material also possesses a desired durometer for flexibility of the flexible member (e.g., 25 D to 55 D).

[0278] Candidate materials for the polymer material include polyethylene terephthalate (PET); Pebax; polyurethane; urethane, carbothane, tecothane, low density polyethylene (LDPE); silicone; or combinations thereof. The polymer material can be laminated, dip-coated, spray-coated, or otherwise deposited/applied over the flexible structure **74**. Alternatively, a thin film of the polymer material (e.g., PTFE) can be wrapped about the flexible structure **74**. Alternatively,

the flexible structure **74** can be inherently insulated, and not require a separate sheath **80** or covering. For example, the flexible structure can comprise a polymer-coated coiled wire.

[0279] Optionally, third flexure zone **44** can include a sensor **42** that indicates an amount of deflection of third flexure zone **44** as shown in FIG. 19A. The sensor **42** can be, for example, a piezo-resistive element that is a full or partial length of the third flexure zone **44** and can be mounted to a side of the third flexure zone. A pair of conductors (not shown) running through the elongated shaft **16** would connect the sensor **42** to an electrical supply and sensing circuit (not shown). When the third flexure zone **44** is deflected in response to a force applied to the thermal heating element **24** or a portion of the third flexure zone **44** by an inner wall of a renal artery, the sensor **42** will deliver a signal that quantifies the amount of deflection. When the sensor **42** is a piezo-resistive element its resistance will change proportional to its strain. The amount of deflection of third flexure zone **44** is an indication of contact force with the inner wall of the renal artery.

[0280] 5. Handle Actuator for Controlled, Multi-Directional Deflection

[0281] In one representative embodiment, as shown in FIG. 17A, the actuator **260** of handle assembly **200** comprises a ball-and socket joint for controlled multi-directional deflection of the second flexure zone **34** via controlled pulling on one or more control wires **40** that proximally terminate at the actuator and distally terminate in the second flexure zone. FIG. 17A illustratively shows four control wires **40** circumferentially spaced about the handle assembly **200** and that extend circumferentially to the second flexure zone. The actuator **260** can swivel in all directions relative to the handle assembly, allowing any wire (or wires) to be pulled in tension, as desired, to deflect the second flexure zone **34** in multiple directions in a controlled manner.

[0282] An alternative multi-directional actuator **260** may comprise a multidirectional joystick coupled to multiple control wires, as in FIG. 17B. Alternatively, one or more bi-directional actuators, each for actuation in two directions in a given plane, may be provided.

[0283] B. Second Representative Embodiment (First Flexure Zone, Second Flexure Zone with a Circumferentially Positioned Spine, and Third Flexure Zone with Distally Carried Thermal Heating Element)

[0284] FIGS. 21A to 21F show representative embodiments of the second embodiment with an elongated shaft **16** that includes a proximal force transmitting section **30**, a first or proximal flexure zone **32**, a second or intermediate flexure zone **34**, and an optional third or distal flexure zone **44**. In these embodiments, the materials, size, and configuration of the proximal force transmitting section **30**, first flexure zone **32**, and optional third flexure zone **44** are comparable to their respective counterparts described in any of the previous embodiments.

[0285] In these embodiments, however, the second flexure zone **34** may comprise a third tubular structure **62** with two or more circumferentially positioned spines **66**. As discussed in greater detail above, preferential deflection of the second flexure zone in multiple directions is desirable. This can be achieved by making the third tubular structure **62** compressible in the desired direction of deflection and resilient to compression along a plane perpendicular to the deflection. In this embodiment such variable compressibility is achieved with two or more circumferentially positioned spines that are

resilient to compression yet are sufficiently flexible to bend in a direction of biased compressibility. Two circumferentially positioned spines that are resilient to compression form a plane that is resilient to compression and that passes through the two circumferentially positioned spines. FIGS. 21A to 21F illustrate representative embodiments of the second embodiment with a second flexure zone 34 having multiple circumferentially positioned spines and control wires 40 configured for controlled, multi-directional bending.

[0286] In the embodiment of FIGS. 21A and 21B, the second flexure zone 34 is configured for controlled, bi-directional bending. As seen in the cross-section of FIG. 21A, the third tubular structure 62 of the second flexure zone 34 comprises a laser-cut pattern that forms angularly opposed (i.e., about 180° angularly offset), circumferentially positioned spines 66a and 66b that divide the circumference of the third tubular structure into two halves that are connected by connecting ribs 68a and 68b, respectively, positioned on either side of the third tubular structure about its circumference. The connecting ribs 68a and 68b may each span an arcuate segment of about 180° about the circumference of the third tubular structure. Control wires 40a and 40b are attached to a distal end of the second flexure zone with solder 130a and 130b, respectively on opposing sides of third tubular structure 62, angularly offset from spines 66a and 66b.

[0287] The width of each spine 66a and 66b is not significantly greater than the depth of each spine, respectively (e.g., the width of each spine may be less than, or equal to, its depth), in order to facilitate bi-directional deflection of the third tubular structure 62 in the directions of the ribs 68a and 68b, while restricting deflection in the directions of the spines (i.e., restricting deflection in the plane including the two spines). Optionally, ribs 68a on a first side of the third tubular structure 62 may alternate with ribs 68b on the opposite side of the third tubular structure along the length of the structure, which may increase flexibility and/or facilitate controlled deflection of the second flexure zone 34.

[0288] The geometry of spines 66a and 66b, as well as of ribs 68a and 68b, in combination with the distal, angularly offset attachment locations of control wires 40a and 40b, facilitate controlled, bi-directional bending of the second flexure zone 34. The second flexure zone deflects in a first direction in response to pulling on the control wire 40a while the control wire 40b is not under significant tension (see FIG. 21B). The second flexure zone deflects in a second, opposing direction in response to pulling on the control wire 40b while the control wire 40a is not under significant tension.

[0289] While FIGS. 21A and 21B illustrate a bi-directional bending embodiment of the second flexure zone 34, the third tubular structure 62 may be fabricated to facilitate bending in any number of directions, as desired, by adding additional circumferentially positioned spines connected by ribs, and by adding additional control wires. For example, FIGS. 21C and 21D illustrate an embodiment of the second flexure zone configured for controlled, tri-directional deflection. In FIGS. 21C and 21D, the third tubular structure 62 of the second flexure zone 34 comprises a laser-cut pattern that forms angularly offset, circumferentially positioned spines 66a, 66b and 66c that divide the circumference of the third tubular structure into thirds that are connected by connecting ribs 68a, 68b and 68c, respectively, positioned about the circumference of the third tubular structure. The spines may be angularly offset by about 120° from one another about the circumference of the third tubular structure.

[0290] The spines comprise longitudinally spaced expansion elements 67, such as undulating or S-shaped elements, which resist compression of the spines during compressive bending while facilitating moderate elongation of the spines during tensile bending. When a spine 66 is bent in a manner that elongates the spine (e.g., places the spine in tension), the expansion elements 67 at least partially straighten to accommodate such spinal elongation. Conversely, when a spine 66 is bent in a manner that shortens the spine (e.g., places the spine in compression), the expansion elements 67 have a geometry that resists such spinal compression. In this manner, the expansion elements 67 allow spines 66 to accommodate controlled deflection in desired directions, while resisting deflection in other directions. Optionally, expansion elements 67 (as well as the spines 66 or the third tubular structure 62) may be fabricated from a shape memory alloy, such as Nitinol, so that the expansion elements resume their undulating shape after removal of tension from a spine 66.

[0291] In each one third arc segment of the circumference of the third tubular structure 62 positioned between the spines, a control wire 40a, 40b or 40c is attached to a distal end of the second flexure zone with solder 130. The control wires 40a, 40b, and 40c can be held in position relative to the spines 66a, 66b, and 66c by a spacing element (not shown) which could be, for example, a flexible extruded polymer tube comprising lumens for the control wires. Pulling on any one of the control wires while the other two control wires are not under significant tension may provide controlled deflection of the second flexure zone 34 in the direction of the wire being pulled. For example, when control wire 40c is pulled the two adjacent spines 66c and 66b resist compression and provide a bending moment. The third tubular structure 62 compresses on the side of the bending moment where the control wire 40c is being pulled, and expands on the opposing side of the bending moment. The expansion elements 67 of the spine 66a that is positioned substantially in angular opposition to the control wire 40c being pulled, at least partially expand (at least temporarily) to accommodate the bending of third tubular structure. In this manner, the second flexure zone 34 may be configured for controlled, tri-directional bending in three directions that are about 120° offset or out of phase from one another.

[0292] FIGS. 21E and 21F illustrate an embodiment of the second flexure zone configured for controlled, quad-directional deflection. In FIGS. 21E and 21F, the third tubular structure 62 of the second flexure zone 34 comprises a laser-cut pattern that forms angularly offset, circumferentially positioned spines 66a, 66b, 66c and 66d having expansion elements 67 and that divide the circumference of the third tubular structure into quartiles that are connected by connecting ribs 68a, 68b, 68c and 68d, respectively, positioned about the circumference of the third tubular structure. The spines may be angularly offset by about 90° about the circumference of the third tubular structure.

[0293] In each quartile arc segment of the circumference of the third tubular structure 62 positioned between the spines, a control wire 40a, 40b, 40c or 40d is attached to a distal end of the second flexure zone with solder 130. Pulling on any one of the control wires while the other three control wires are not under significant tension may provide controlled deflection of the second flexure zone 34 in the direction of the wire being pulled. In this manner, the second flexure zone 34 may be

configured for controlled, quad-directional bending in four directions that are about 90° offset or out of phase from one another.

[0294] FIGS. 21A-21F illustrate a second flexure zone 34 with circumferentially positioned spines configured for bi-, tri-, or quad-directional controlled deflection. As will be apparent to those of skill in the art, the laser-cut pattern of third tubular structure 62 may comprise any number of circumferentially positioned spines 66 having expansion elements 67 and connected by connecting ribs 68 about the structure's circumference to divide the circumference into any number of arc segments (e.g., halves, thirds, quartiles, quintiles, sextiles, septiles, octiles, noniles, deciles, etc.), as desired. When combined with appropriate control wires, controlled deflection in any number of directions may be achieved. However, it is expected that the second flexure zone 34 will become increasingly stiff as the number of arc segments about its circumference (i.e., as the number of circumferentially positioned spines) increases, which may place a practical limit on the attainable number of controlled deflection directions.

[0295] C. Third Representative Embodiment (Second Flexure Zone Includes a Pre-Formed Shape)

[0296] FIGS. 22A-22F show representative embodiments of the third embodiment with an elongated shaft 16 that includes a proximal force transmitting section 30, a first or proximal flexure zone 32, a second or intermediate flexure zone 34, and an optional third or distal flexure zone 44. In these embodiments, the materials, size, and configuration of the proximal force transmitting section 30, first flexure zone 32, and optional third flexure zone 44 are comparable to their respective counterparts described in any of the previous embodiments.

[0297] In these embodiments, however, the second flexure zone 34 may comprise a third tubular structure 62 with a pre-formed shape that, in an unrestrained configuration, is off-axis or deflected from the longitudinal axis of the elongated shaft 16 (see, e.g., FIGS. 22A and 22B), which may facilitate locating of the thermal heating element 24 into contact with a treatment site within a renal artery. The length and diameter of second flexure zone 34 may be comparable to those described in any of the previous embodiments of the second flexure zone 34. Furthermore, the pre-formed shape of the third tubular structure 62 may be specified to provide the second flexure zone 34 with a desired radius of curvature RoC_2 and angle α_2 (see FIG. 8C), such as those described previously. The third tubular structure 62 may be fabricated, for example, from a shape memory material, such as a nickel-titanium alloy (i.e., Nitinol) or from spring steel, to provide the pre-formed shape.

[0298] When advanced within, and retrieved from, a renal artery via an intravascular path, the second flexure zone 34 may be positioned within a guide catheter, such as guide catheter 96, which may substantially straighten or constrain the third tubular structure 62 during such intravascular delivery and retrieval. After advancement of the second flexure zone 34 distal of the guide catheter, the third tubular structure 62 may re-assume its off-axis, pre-formed shape, e.g., to bring the thermal heating element 24 into contact with a wall of the renal artery. The second flexure zone 34 optionally may be actively deflected (e.g., as described previously via wire 40 attached to handle actuator 260), in addition to the passive deflection provided by the pre-formed shape of the third tubular structure 62.

[0299] When the second flexure zone 34 is configured for both active and passive deflection, the third tubular structure 62 may be configured such that active deflection of the second flexure zone is biased in an opposite direction of the third tubular structure's pre-formed shape. This can be achieved by making the third tubular structure 62 compressible in the opposite direction of the structure's pre-formed shape and resilient to compression in the direction of the structure's pre-formed shape. In such a configuration, active deflection reduces or reverses the passive deflection provided by the third tubular structure's pre-formed shape.

[0300] FIG. 22C provides a representative embodiment of a second flexure zone 34 that has a pre-formed shape and that is configured for active deflection in the opposite direction of the pre-formed shape. In FIG. 22C, the third tubular structure 62 again comprises a laser-cut pattern that includes spine 66 with connecting ribs 68. The spine 66 comprises a pre-formed shape that positions the second flexure zone 34 off-axis or deflected from the longitudinal axis of the elongated shaft 16 in an unrestrained configuration. The direction of the pre-formed shape is such that the laser-cut pattern biases active deflection of the third tubular structure 62, in response to pulling on the control wire 40 coupled to the distal end of the third tubular structure 62, away from the direction of the pre-formed shape.

[0301] As seen in FIGS. 22D-22F, when the second flexure zone 34 has a pre-formed shape and is configured for active deflection in the opposite direction of the pre-formed shape, the second flexure zone desirably may achieve bi-directional bending via a single control wire 40. As seen in FIG. 22D, in the unrestrained configuration of the second flexure zone 34 without active deflection (e.g., when the control wire 40 is not being pulled in tension), the second flexure zone 34 assumes the pre-formed shape of its third tubular structure 62. As seen in FIG. 22E, tension applied to control wire 40 partially or completely straightens the bend in the second flexure zone 34. As seen in FIG. 22F, in some embodiments additional proximal tension (i.e. via pulling/proximal retraction) of control wire 40 may deflect the second flexure zone in the opposite direction of its pre-formed shape, thereby providing bi-directional bending of the second flexure zone with a single control wire 40.

[0302] Optionally, the control wire 40 may be under partial tension, as in FIG. 22E, during delivery and/or retrieval of the thermal element 24 within a renal artery, in order to at least partially straighten the pre-formed shape of the second flexure zone 34 during such delivery/retrieval. When positioned within the renal artery, tension may be removed from the control wire 40 to deflect the second flexure zone in the direction of its pre-formed shape, as in FIG. 22D, in order to bring the thermal element 24 into contact with a wall of the renal artery. Additionally or alternatively, the control wire 40 may be pulled more proximally to deflect the second flexure zone in the opposite direction of its pre-formed shape, as in FIG. 22F, in order to bring the thermal element 24 into contact with an opposing wall of the renal artery without necessitating rotation of the elongated shaft 16. As discussed previously, the third flexure zone 44 desirably accommodates contact with any wall of the renal artery and passively deflects to bring the thermal element 24 into at least partial alignment with the contacted wall of the artery, thereby accommodating bi-directional deflection of the second flexure zone 34.

[0303] D. Fourth Representative Embodiment (Second Flexure Zone Configured for Deflection at a Joint)

[0304] FIGS. 23A-23E show representative embodiments of the fourth embodiment having an elongated shaft 16 that includes a proximal force transmitting section 30, a first or proximal flexure zone 32, a joint 35, and an optional third or distal flexure zone 44 (see FIG. 23A). In these embodiments, the materials, size, and configuration of the proximal force transmitting section 30, first flexure zone 32, and optional third flexure zone 44 are comparable to their respective counterparts described in any of the previous embodiments.

[0305] However, in the fourth embodiment of the present invention, the second flexure zone 34 is replaced by one or more joints 35 to facilitate deflection of the third flexure zone 44. Joints 35 may provide precise deflection control, as the joints may exhibit consistent deflection dynamics. Furthermore, joints may provide a sharper bend than would be achievable with some of the previously described embodiments of the second flexure zone since joint bends have a Radius of Curvature RoC of about zero. Thus, the length of a jointed second flexure zone may be less than the length of a previously described biased spine second flexure zone. This may facilitate thermal neuromodulation in shorter renal arteries, and/or may facilitate use of a longer third flexure zone 44 as shown in FIG. 23E. A longer third flexure zone may dissipate vessel contact force over its longer length and resiliently apply pressure to the vessel wall to provide stable electrode contact during pulsatile blood flow and respiratory motion. Also, a longer third flexure zone may be easier to visualize with fluoroscopy. The third flexure zone 44 may be between about 6 mm and 16 mm long, for example about less than or equal to 9.5 mm, which could be suitable to provide sufficient flexure in renal arteries.

[0306] With reference to FIG. 23B, in one representative embodiment of the fourth embodiment, hinge joint 35 that connects the proximal flexure zone 32 to the distal flexure zone 44. Control wires 40a and 40b are attached to either side of the joint 35, for example distal to the Axis of Rotation R, for rotating the distal flexure zone 44 about the Axis of Rotation R of the hinge joint. Alternatively, one control wire is attached to a side of a joint 35, for example distal to the Axis of Rotation R, for rotating the third flexure zone 44 about the Axis of Rotation R of the hinge joint and a spring rotates the third flexure zone 44 back to its unactuated state when tension in the control wire is relieved. The unactuated state can be deflected in a second direction, providing multiple direction deflection with one control wire and a spring. A handle assembly 200 with an actuator 260 configured for actuating multiple wires may be provided (see, for example, FIG. 17A).

[0307] Alternatively, multiple distal flexure zones can be connected to the proximal flexure zone via one or more joints. Each distal flexure zone can be attached to or comprise an electrode. Each distal flexure zone can be actuated to rotate about the joint independently or together with a single control wire. Alternatively, a spring can be positioned in the joint to push the distal flexure zones open and they can be closed by being retracted into a delivery sheath. When the distal flexure zones are open the electrodes are moved away from one another and placed in contact with a vessel wall.

[0308] With reference to FIG. 23C, in one representative embodiment of the fourth embodiment, the second flexure zone 34 comprises first hinge joint 35 and second hinge joint 35'. Control wires 40a and 40b are attached to either side of the joint 35 for rotating the distal flexure zone about the Axis

of Rotation R of the hinge joint 35, while control wires 40c and 40d are attached to either side of the second joint 35' for rotating the third flexure zone about the Axis of Rotation R' of the hinge joint 35'. The Axis of Rotation R' of hinge joint 35' preferably is orthogonal to the Axis of Rotation R of hinge joint 35 to provide deflection of the distal flexure zone 44 in two orthogonal planes.

[0309] With reference to FIG. 23D, in one representative embodiment of the fourth embodiment, the second flexure zone 34 comprises ball-and-socket joint 35 that joins proximal and distal flexure zones and that facilitates rotation in any plane with a Radius of Curvature RoC of about zero. Any number of control wires 40 (illustratively four control wires) may be provided for deflecting the second flexure zone 34.

[0310] An alternative representation of the fourth embodiment (shown in FIG. 23F) comprises multiple distal flexure zones 44a and 44b, each attached to or comprising an electrode 24a and 24b respectively. The multiple distal flexure zones are connected to the first flexure zone with a joint 35. The distal flexure zones can be held in a closed position with a spring placed in the joint. In a closed position the multiple e

IV. Use of the System

[0311] A. Intravascular Delivery, Deflection and Placement of the Treatment Device

[0312] Any one of the embodiments of the treatment devices 12 described herein can be delivered over a guide wire using conventional over-the-wire techniques. When delivered in this manner (not shown), the elongated shaft 16 includes a passage or lumen accommodating passage of a guide wire.

[0313] Alternatively, any one of the treatment devices 12 described herein can be deployed using a conventional guide catheter or pre-curved renal guide catheter 94.

[0314] When using a guide catheter 94 (see FIG. 6A), the femoral artery is exposed and cannulated at the base of the femoral triangle, using conventional techniques. In one exemplary approach, a guide wire (not shown) is inserted through the access site and passed using image guidance through the femoral artery, into the iliac artery and aorta, and into either the left or right renal artery. A guide catheter can be passed over the guide wire into the accessed renal artery. The guide wire is then removed. Alternatively, a renal guide catheter (shown in FIG. 24A), which is specifically shaped and configured to access a renal artery, can be used to avoid using a guide wire. Still alternatively, the treatment device can be routed from the femoral artery to the renal artery using angiographic guidance and without the need of a guide catheter.

[0315] When a guide catheter is used, at least three delivery approaches can be implemented. In one exemplary approach, one or more of the aforementioned delivery techniques can be used to position a guide catheter within the renal artery just distal to the entrance of the renal artery. The treatment device is then routed via the guide catheter into the renal artery. Once the treatment device is properly positioned within the renal artery, the guide catheter is retracted from the renal artery into the abdominal aorta. In this approach, the guide catheter should be sized and configured to accommodate passage of the treatment device. For example, a 6 French guide catheter can be used.

[0316] In a second exemplary approach, a first guide catheter is placed at the entrance of the renal artery (with or without a guide wire). A second guide catheter is passed via the first guide catheter (with or without the assistance of a

guide wire) into the renal artery. The treatment device is then routed via the second guide catheter into the renal artery. Once the treatment device is properly positioned within the renal artery the second guide catheter is retracted, leaving the first guide catheter at the entrance to the renal artery. In this approach the first and second guide catheters should be sized and configured to accommodate passage of the second guide catheter within the first guide catheter (i.e., the inner diameter of the first guide catheter should be greater than the outer diameter of the second guide catheter). For example, the first guide catheter could be 8 French in size and the second guide catheter could be 5 French in size.

[0317] In a third exemplary approach, and as shown in FIG. 24A, a renal guide catheter 94 is positioned within the abdominal aorta, just proximal to the entrance of the renal artery. As now shown in FIG. 24B, the treatment device 12 as described herein is passed through the guide catheter 94 and into the accessed renal artery. The elongated shaft makes atraumatic passage through the guide catheter 94, in response to forces applied to the force transmitting section 30 through the handle assembly 200. The first or proximal flexure zone 32 accommodates significant flexure at the junction of the left/right renal arteries and aorta to gain entry into the respective left or right renal artery through the guide catheter 94 (as FIG. 24B shows).

[0318] As FIG. 24C shows, the second or intermediate flexure zone 34 on the distal end portion of the elongated shaft 16 can now be axially translated into the respective renal artery, remotely deflected (illustratively, planar deflection or bending, but alternatively any other previously described deflection, such as helical deflection, may be provided) and/or rotated in a controlled fashion within the respective renal artery to attain proximity to and a desired alignment with an interior wall of the respective renal artery. As FIG. 24C further shows, the optional third or distal flexure zone 44 bends to place the thermal heating element 24 into contact with tissue on the interior wall (alternatively or additionally, one or more thermal elements 24 may be positioned along the length of the second flexure zone 34 and brought into contact with tissue on the interior wall during remote deflection of the second flexure zone).

[0319] As FIG. 24D shows a representative embodiment of a complex, multi-bend structure formed by the first, second and third flexure zones 32, 34, and 44 of the distal end region 20 of the elongated shaft 16. The multi-bend structure creates a consistent and reliable active surface area of contact between the thermal heating element(s) 24 and tissue within the respective renal artery (refer back to FIG. 9C). Thermal energy can now be applied through the thermal heating element 24 to induce one or more thermal heating effects on localized regions of tissue along the respective renal artery.

[0320] If upon deflection of second flexure zone 34 the thermal heating element 24 does not make sufficient contact with tissue on the interior wall of the artery, as indicated for example by radiographic visualization or by a measurement of a sensor such as an impedance sensor, the distal assembly can be further manipulated until sufficient contact can be made. Further manipulation can be accomplished by translation, rotation, deflection of the second flexure zone 34 in another direction, changing the amount of deflection of the second flexure zone 34, or a combination of the above. For example, if deflection of the second flexure zone 34 in one direction, as shown in FIG. 24C does not result in sufficient contact, second flexure zone 34 can be deflected in another

direction as seen in FIG. 25A. Multiple-direction deflection provides more options to the operator of the treatment device to obtain contact between the thermal element 24 and renal artery wall.

[0321] B. Creation of Thermally Affected Tissue Regions

[0322] As previously described (and as FIG. 24B shows), the thermal heating element 24 can be positioned by bending along the first flexure zone 32 at a first desired axial location within the respective renal artery. As FIG. 24C shows, the thermal heating element 24 can be radially positioned by deflection of second flexure zone 34 toward the vessel wall. As FIG. 24C also shows, the thermal heating element 24 can be placed into a condition of optimal surface area contact with the vessel wall by further deflection of the third flexure zone 44.

[0323] Once the thermal heating element 24 is positioned in the desired location by a combination of deflection of the second flexure zone 34, deflection of the third flexure zone 44 and/or rotation of the catheter, treatment can be administered. Optionally, infusate, such as saline, may be delivered (e.g., may be infused through the thermal heating element, as in FIG. 11A) in the vicinity of the treatment site before, during and/or after treatment to provide conductive and/or convective cooling in excess of that provided by blood flow. By applying energy through the thermal heating element 24, a first thermally affected tissue region 98(a) can be formed, as FIG. 24D shows. In the illustrated embodiment, the thermally affected region 98(a) takes the form of a lesion on the vessel wall of the respective renal artery.

[0324] After forming the first thermally affected tissue region 98(a), the catheter optionally may be repositioned for another thermal treatment. As described above in greater detail, it is desirable to create multiple focal lesions that are circumferentially spaced along the longitudinal axis of the renal artery. To achieve this result, the catheter optionally may be retracted and, optionally, rotated to position the thermal heating element proximally along the longitudinal axis of the blood vessel. Rotation of the elongated shaft 16 from outside the access site (see FIG. 24E) may circumferentially reposition the thermal heating element 24 about the renal artery. Once the thermal heating element 24 is positioned at a second axial and circumferential location within the renal artery spaced from the first-described axial position, as shown in FIG. 24E (e.g., 98(b)), another focal treatment can be administered (with or without saline infusion). By repeating the manipulative steps just described (as shown in FIGS. 24F through 24K), the caregiver can create several thermally affected tissue regions 98(a), 98(b), 98(c) and 98(d) on the vessel wall that are axially and circumferentially spaced apart, with the first thermally affected tissue region 98(a) being the most distal and the subsequent thermally affected tissue regions being more proximal. FIG. 24I provides a cross-sectional view of the lesions formed in several layers of the treated renal artery. This figure shows that several circumferentially and axially spaced-apart treatments (e.g., 98(a)-98(d)) can provide substantial circumferential coverage and, accordingly, cause a neuromodulatory effect to the renal plexus. Clinical investigation indicates that each lesion will cover approximately 30 percent of the circumferential area surrounding the renal artery. In other embodiments, the circumferential coverage of each lesion can be as much as 60 percent.

[0325] In an alternative treatment approach, the treatment device can be administered to create a complex pattern/array

of thermally affected tissue regions along the vessel wall of the renal artery. As FIG. 24L shows, this alternative treatment approach provides for multiple circumferential treatments at each axial site (e.g., 98, 99 and 101) along the renal artery. Increasing the density of thermally affected tissue regions along the vessel wall of the renal artery using this approach might increase the probability of thermally-blocking the neural fibers within the renal plexus.

[0326] The rotation of the thermal heating element 24 within the renal artery as shown in FIG. 24G may improve the reliability and consistency of the treatment. Since angiographic guidance such as fluoroscopy only provides visualization in two dimensions, it is generally only possible in the anterior/posterior view to obtain visual confirmation of wall contact at the superior (vertex) and inferior (bottom) of the renal artery. For anterior and posterior treatments, it may be desirable to first obtain confirmation of contact at a superior or inferior location and then rotate the catheter such that the thermal heating element travels circumferentially along the vessel wall until the desired treatment location is reached. Physiologic data such as impedance can be concurrently monitored to ensure that wall contact is maintained or optimized during catheter rotation. Alternatively, the C-arm of the fluoroscope can be rotated to achieve a better angle for determining wall contact.

[0327] FIG. 24 illustrate multiple longitudinally and circumferentially spaced focal lesions that are created by repositioning thermal element 24 through a combination of second flexure zone deflection, and elongated shaft rotation and/or translation. In some of the previously described embodiments of the treatment device, such multiple focal lesions may be created with multiple thermal elements 24 positioned along the length of the distal end region 20. Additionally or alternatively, in some of the previously described embodiments of the treatment device, such multiple focal lesions may be created by repositioning thermal element(s) 24 solely through second flexure zone deflection in multiple planes, solely through elongated shaft translation, solely through elongated shaft rotation, or solely through any subset of second flexure zone deflection, elongated shaft translation and elongated shaft rotation.

[0328] Another alternative treatment approach that reduces the amount of rotation required is to create a first thermally affected tissue region 98(a), for example as shown in FIG. 24D and instead of rotating the elongated shaft 16 as shown in FIG. 24E, the second flexure zone 34 can be deflected in a second direction as shown in FIG. 25A to create a second thermally affected tissue region 98(b). By combining translation, rotation and deflection of second flexure zone 34 in multiple directions to manipulate the distal assembly 20 the caregiver can create several thermally affected tissue regions 98(a), 98(b), 98(c) and 98(d) on the vessel wall as shown in FIGS. 25A to 25F

[0329] FIGS. 28A to 28C provide fluoroscopic images of a treatment device, similar to the one shown in FIG. 5 but without a second flexure zone capable of multi-directional deflection, within a renal artery during an animal study. FIG. 28A shows positioning of the treatment device and thermal heating element 24 at a distal treatment location. The second flexure zone 34 has been deflected to position the thermal heating element 24 in contact with the vessel wall and to cause flexure in the third flexure zone 44. FIG. 28A also shows contact region 124 where the apex of the bend of the second flexure zone 34 is in contact with the vessel wall in

radial or angular opposition to contact between the thermal heating element and vessel wall. FIG. 28B shows the placement of the treatment device at a more proximal treatment location following circumferential rotation and axial retraction. FIG. 28C shows the placement of the treatment device at a proximal treatment location just distal to the junction of the aorta and renal artery. FIGS. 28D and 28E provide analogous fluoroscopic images depicting the treatment device positioned for treatment within a human renal artery. FIG. 28D shows the treatment device, similar to the one shown in FIG. 5 but without a second flexure zone capable of multi-directional deflection, advanced to a distal treatment location similar to that described above with respect to FIG. 28A. FIG. 28E shows the treatment device in a proximal treatment position similar to that described above with respect to FIG. 28C.

[0330] Experience using the treatment device of FIGS. 28A to 28E revealed that the treatment device preformed the desired functions of for (i) percutaneous introduction into a femoral, radial, or brachial artery through a small-diameter access site; (ii) atraumatic passage through the tortuous intravascular path through an iliac artery, into the aorta, and into a respective left/right renal artery, including (iii) accommodating significant flexure at the junction of the left/right renal arteries and aorta to gain entry into the respective left or right renal artery; (iv) accommodating controlled translation, deflection, and/or rotation within the respective renal artery to attain proximity to and a desired alignment with an interior wall of the respective renal artery; (v) allowing the placement of at least one energy delivery element into contact with tissue on the interior wall in an orientation that optimizes the active surface area of the energy delivery element; and (vi) allowing substantially stable contact force between the at least one energy delivery element and the interior wall during motion of the renal artery with respect to the aorta due to respiration and/or blood flow pulsatility.

[0331] However, experience using the treatment device of FIGS. 28A to 28E also revealed that the functions of (v), and (vi) could be improved by modifying the treatment device to have a second flexure zone configured for multiple direction deflection as described in the present application. In addition, a second flexure zone configured for multiple direction deflection is expected to reduce the need for rotation of the treatment device within the renal artery by facilitating the ability to attain proximity to and a desired alignment with an interior wall of the respective renal artery, particularly when used in renal arteries with greater degrees of tortuosity.

[0332] Since both the thermal heating element 24 and solder 130 at the distal end of the second flexure zone 34 can be radiopaque, as shown in FIGS. 28A to 28C, the operator using angiographic visualization can use the image corresponding to the first treatment location to relatively position the treatment device for the second treatment. For example, in renal arteries of average length, it is desirable for the clinical operator to treat at about every 5 mm along the length of the main artery. In embodiments where the length of the third flexure zone 44 is 5 mm, the operator can simply retract the device such that the current position of the thermal heating element 24 is longitudinally aligned with the position of the solder 130 in the previous treatment.

[0333] In another embodiment, a different type of radiopaque marker can replace solder 130. For example, a band of platinum can be attached to the distal end of the second flexure zone to serve as a radiopaque marker.

[0334] Since angiographic visualization of the vasculature generally requires contrast agent to be infused into the renal artery, it may be desirable to incorporate within or alongside the treatment device a lumen and/or port for infusing contrast agent into the blood stream. Alternatively, the contrast agent can be delivered into the blood alongside the treatment device within the annular space between the treatment device and the guide catheter through which the device is delivered.

[0335] Exposure to thermal energy (heat) in excess of a body temperature of about 37° C., but below a temperature of about 45° C., may induce thermal alteration via moderate heating of the target neural fibers or of vascular structures that perfuse the target fibers. In cases where vascular structures are affected, the target neural fibers are denied perfusion resulting in necrosis of the neural tissue. For example, this may induce non-ablative thermal alteration in the fibers or structures. Exposure to heat above a temperature of about 45° C., or above about 60° C., may induce thermal alteration via substantial heating of the fibers or structures. For example, such higher temperatures may thermally ablate the target neural fibers or the vascular structures. In some patients, it may be desirable to achieve temperatures that thermally ablate the target neural fibers or the vascular structures, but that are less than about 90° C., or less than about 85° C., or less than about 80° C., and/or less than about 75° C. Regardless of the type of heat exposure utilized to induce the thermal neuromodulation, a reduction in renal sympathetic nerve activity ("RSNA") is expected.

[0336] D. Rotation Controller

[0337] As will be discussed later in greater detail, it is desirable to rotate the device within the renal artery after the thermal heating element is in contact with the vessel wall. However, it may be cumbersome and awkward for a clinical practitioner to rotate the entire handle assembly at the proximal end of the device, particularly given the dimensions of the renal anatomy. In one representative embodiment, as shown in FIGS. 19A and 19B, the proximal end of the shaft 16 is coupled to the handle assembly 200 by a rotator 230.

[0338] The proximal end of the force transmitting section 30 is attached to a stationary coupling 88 on the rotator 230. Rotation of the rotator 230 (as FIG. 19A shows) thereby rotates the force transmitting section 30, and, with it, the entire elongated shaft 16, without rotation of the handle assembly 200. As FIG. 19A shows, a caregiver is thereby able to hold the proximal portion of the handle assembly 200 rotationally stationary in one hand and, with the same or different hand, apply a torsional force to the rotator 230 to rotate the elongated shaft 16. This allows the actuator to remain easily accessed for controlled deflection.

[0339] Since there are cables and wires running from the handle assembly through the shaft of the device (e.g., control 40, electrical transmission wire and/or sensor/thermocouple wire(s) 29, etc.), it is desirable to limit rotation of the shaft relative to these wires in order to avoid unnecessary entanglement and twisting of these wires. A rotational limiting element can be incorporated into the handle assembly and rotator to address this issue. The rotator 230 and handle assembly can be configured to allow for the optimal number of revolutions for the shaft, given such structural or dimensional constraints (e.g., wires). The components of the handle assembly may be configured, for example to allow for a finite number of revolutions of the shaft (e.g., two) independent of the handle

assembly. Limiting rotation of the shaft to the optimal number of revolutions may be achieved by any number of commonly known mechanical features.

[0340] As has been described and will be described in greater detail later, by intravascular access, the caregiver can manipulate the handle assembly 200 to locate the distal end region 20 of the elongated shaft 16 within the respective renal artery. The caregiver can then operate the actuator 260 on the handle assembly 200 (see FIGS. 19A and 16B) to deflect the thermal heating element 24 about the second flexure zone 34. The caregiver can then operate the rotator 230 on the handle assembly 200 (see FIGS. 19A and 19B) to apply a rotational force along the elongated shaft 16. The rotation of the elongated shaft 16 when the second flexure zone 34 is deflected within the respective renal artery rotates the thermal heating element 24 within the respective renal artery, making it easier to achieve contact with the vessel wall and determine whether there is wall contact, particularly in planes where there is poor angiographic visualization.

[0341] In an additional aspect of the disclosed technology, the handle assembly 200 may be configured to minimize operator/caregiver handling of the device while it is within the patient. As shown, for example, in FIG. 19B, the handle assembly also comprises one or more surfaces 243 that substantially conform to the surface beneath (e.g., operating table). This surface 243, which is shown to be substantially flat in FIG. 19B, can alternatively be curved, shaped or angled depending on the configuration and/or geometry of the beneath surface. The conforming surface 243 enables the clinical operator to keep the handle assembly 200 stable when the treatment device 12 is within the patient. In order to rotate the device when it is inside the patient, the operator can simply dial the rotator 230 without any need to lift the handle assembly. When the operator desires to retract the device for subsequent treatments, the operator can simply slide the handle assembly along the beneath surface to the next position. Again, this mitigates the risk of injury due to operator error or over handling of the treatment device. Additionally or alternatively, the lower surface can engage the surface underneath using clips, texture, adhesive, etc.

[0342] Additional enhancements to the rotation mechanism disclosed herein include providing tactile and/or visual feedback on the rotational fitting so that the operator can exercise greater control and care in rotating the device. The rotator 230 can also be selectively locked to the handle assembly, thereby preventing further rotation, if the operator wishes to hold the treatment device in a particular angular position. Another optional enhancement includes providing distance markers along the shaft/handle assembly to enable the operator to gauge distance when retracting the treatment device.

[0343] E. Control of Applied Energy

[0344] With the treatments disclosed herein for delivering therapy to target tissue, it may be beneficial for energy to be delivered to the target neural structures in a controlled manner. The controlled delivery of energy will allow the zone of thermal treatment to extend into the renal fascia while reducing undesirable energy delivery or thermal effects to the vessel wall. A controlled delivery of energy may also result in a more consistent, predictable and efficient overall treatment. Accordingly, the generator 26 desirably includes programmed instructions comprising an algorithm 102 (see FIG. 5) for controlling the delivery of power and energy to the thermal heating device. The algorithm 102, a representative embodiment of which is shown in FIG. 26, can be imple-

mented as a conventional computer program for execution by a processor coupled to the generator 26. A caregiver using step-by-step instructions can also implement the algorithm 102 manually.

[0345] The operating parameters monitored in accordance with the algorithm may include, for example, temperature, time, impedance, power, flow velocity, volumetric flow rate, blood pressure, heart rate, etc. Discrete values in temperature may be used to trigger changes in power or energy delivery. For example, high values in temperature (e.g. 85 degrees C.) could indicate tissue desiccation in which case the algorithm may decrease or stop the power and energy delivery to prevent undesirable thermal effects to target or non-target tissue. Time additionally or alternatively may be used to prevent undesirable thermal alteration to non-target tissue. For each treatment, a set time (e.g., 2 minutes) is checked to prevent indefinite delivery of power.

[0346] Impedance may be used to measure tissue changes. Impedance indicates the electrical property of the treatment site. If a thermal inductive, electric field is applied to the treatment site the impedance will decrease as the tissue cells become less resistive to current flow. If too much energy is applied, tissue desiccation or coagulation may occur near the electrode, which would increase the impedance as the cells lose water retention and/or the electrode surface area decreases (e.g., via the accumulation of coagulum). Thus, an increase in tissue impedance may be indicative or predictive of undesirable thermal alteration to target or non-target tissue.

[0347] Additionally or alternatively, power is an effective parameter to monitor in controlling the delivery of therapy. Power is a function of voltage and current. The algorithm may tailor the voltage and/or current to achieve a desired power.

[0348] Derivatives of the aforementioned parameters (e.g., rates of change) also may be used to trigger changes in power or energy delivery. For example, the rate of change in temperature could be monitored such that power output is reduced in the event that a sudden rise in temperature is detected. Likewise, the rate of change of impedance could be monitored such that power output is reduced in the event that a sudden rise in impedance is detected.

[0349] As seen in FIG. 26, when a caregiver initiates treatment (e.g., via the foot pedal), the algorithm 102 commands the generator 26 to gradually adjust its power output to a first power level P_1 (e.g., 5 watts) over a first time period t_1 (e.g., 15 seconds). The power increase during the first time period is generally linear. As a result, the generator 26 increases its power output at a generally constant rate of P_1/t_1 . Alternatively, the power increase can be non-linear (e.g., exponential or parabolic) with a variable rate of increase. Once P_1 and t_1 are achieved, the algorithm can hold at P_1 until a new time t_2 for a predetermined period of time t_2-t_1 (e.g., 3 seconds). At t_2 power is increased by a predetermined increment (e.g., 1 watt) to P_2 over a predetermined period of time, t_3-t_2 (e.g., 1 second). This power ramp in predetermined increments of about 1 watt over predetermined periods of time can continue until a maximum power P_{MAX} is achieved or some other condition is satisfied. In one embodiment, P_{MAX} is 8 watts. In another embodiment P_{MAX} is 10 watts. Optionally, the power may be maintained at the maximum power P_{MAX} for a desired period of time or up to the desired total treatment time (e.g., up to about 120 seconds).

[0350] In FIG. 26, algorithm 102 illustratively comprises a power-control algorithm. However, it should be understood that algorithm 102 alternatively may comprise a temperature-

control algorithm. For example, power may be gradually increased until a desired temperature (or temperatures) is obtained for a desired duration (durations). In another embodiment, a combination power-control and temperature-control algorithm may be provided.

[0351] As discussed, the algorithm 102 includes monitoring certain operating parameters (e.g., temperature, time, impedance, power, flow velocity, volumetric flow rate, blood pressure, heart rate, etc.). The operating parameters can be monitored continuously or periodically. The algorithm 102 checks the monitored parameters against predetermined parameter profiles to determine whether the parameters individually or in combination fall within the ranges set by the predetermined parameter profiles. If the monitored parameters fall within the ranges set by the predetermined parameter profiles, then treatment can continue at the commanded power output. If monitored parameters fall outside the ranges set by the predetermined parameter profiles, the algorithm 102 adjusts the commanded power output accordingly. For example, if a target temperature (e.g., 65 degrees C.) is achieved, then power delivery is kept constant until the total treatment time (e.g., 120 seconds) has expired. If a first temperature threshold (e.g., 70 degrees C.) is achieved or exceeded, then power is reduced in predetermined increments (e.g., 0.5 watts, 1.0 watts, etc.) until a target temperature is achieved. If a second power threshold (e.g., 85 degrees C.) is achieved or exceeded, thereby indicating an undesirable condition, then power delivery can be terminated. The system can be equipped with various audible and visual alarms to alert the operator of certain conditions.

[0352] The following is a non-exhaustive list of events under which algorithm 102 may adjust and/or terminate/discontinue the commanded power output:

[0353] (1) The measured temperature exceeds a maximum temperature threshold (e.g., about 70 degrees to about 85 degrees C.).

[0354] (2) The average temperature derived from the measured temperature exceeds an average temperature threshold (e.g., about 65 degrees C.).

[0355] (3) The rate of change of the measured temperature exceeds a rate of change threshold.

[0356] (4) The temperature rise over a period of time is below a minimum temperature change threshold while the generator 26 has non-zero output. Poor contact between the thermal heating element 24 and the arterial wall can cause such a condition.

[0357] (5) A measured impedance exceeds an impedance threshold (e.g., <20 Ohms, or >500 Ohms).

[0358] (6) A measured impedance exceeds a relative threshold (e.g., impedance decreases from a starting or baseline value and then rises above this baseline value)

[0359] (7) A measured power exceeds a power threshold (e.g., >8 Watts or >10 Watts).

[0360] (8) A measured duration of power delivery exceeds a time threshold (e.g., >120 seconds).

[0361] E. Control of Active Cooling and Applied Energy

[0362] With the treatments disclosed herein for delivering therapy to target tissue, it may be beneficial to actively cool the thermal heating element and/or non-target tissue in the vicinity of the thermal heating element. For example, infusate, such as a thermal fluid (e.g., room temperature or chilled saline), may be injected (open circuit system) into the patient's blood stream in the vicinity of the treatment site during power or energy delivery to act as a conductive and/or

convective heat sink that removes thermal energy (see, e.g., FIG. 9C). Infusate injection (e.g., continuous infusate injection) may provide more—or more rapid—heat transfer, as well as more uniform and/or predictable heat transfer dynamics, as compared to the passive cooling provided by pulsatile blood flow (see, e.g., FIGS. 9A and 9B). Infusate injection also may remove blood proteins from the thermal heating element, thereby reducing a risk of coagulum formation. In addition or as an alternative to infusate injection, active cooling may comprise a closed circuit system with a circulating or stationary coolant (e.g., a cryogenic fluid, chilled saline, etc.) that removes heat from the thermal heating element, and indirectly from non-target tissue, during power or energy delivery.

[0363] Energy is defined as $\text{Power} \times \text{Time}$. When closed or open circuit active cooling is provided, if the power and time over which energy is delivered are not altered as compared to when active cooling is not provided, then the energy delivered also is not altered. Thus, the active cooling may further protect non-target tissue at the vessel wall from injury, e.g., may lower the surface temperature of the vessel wall during power delivery.

[0364] If, however, active cooling is provided in combination with increased power but consistent duration of power delivery, the energy delivered is increased, which may facilitate the safe creation of a deeper or larger lesion than would be feasible without active cooling that protects non-target tissue at the vessel wall. Likewise, providing active cooling in combination with increased duration of power delivery but consistent magnitude of power level would increase the energy delivered, again potentially facilitating the safe creation of a deeper or larger lesion than would be feasible absent active cooling.

[0365] Active cooling also may facilitate delivery of energy via an increased power level in combination with decreased power delivery duration. This may facilitate more rapid lesion creation, which could shorten the treatment time. Depending on the relative magnitudes of power magnitude increase and power duration decrease, it also may facilitate the delivery of more energy in less time, which may facilitate the safe creation of a deeper or larger lesion in less time.

[0366] When active cooling is achieved via an open circuit system utilizing intravascular infusate (e.g., saline) infusion, the volume and rate of infusate infusion are of note. Intravascular infusate infusion may, for example, be provided in the vicinity of a treatment site from between about 0-10 seconds (e.g., about 5 seconds) prior to power delivery, then during power delivery, and for about 0-10 seconds (e.g., about 5 seconds) after power delivery. In some patients, intravascular infusion of a significant saline volume may induce pulmonary edema or heart failure, and some patient groups may be at higher risk of such complications. These higher risk patient groups may include patient groups that are therapeutically indicated for renal neuromodulation, including, for example, those with a history of heart failure or heart disease, renal insufficiency and/or diabetes mellitus.

[0367] Advantageously, the magnitude of maximum power delivered during renal neuromodulation treatment in accordance with the present invention may be relatively low (e.g., less than about 15 Watts, for example, less than about 10 Watts or less than about 8 Watts) as compared, for example, to the power levels utilized in electrophysiology treatments to achieve cardiac tissue ablation (e.g., power levels greater than about 15 Watts, for example, greater than about 30 Watts).

Since relatively low power levels may be utilized to achieve such renal neuromodulation, the flow rate and/or total volume of intravascular infusate injection needed to maintain the thermal heating element and/or non-target tissue at or below a desired temperature during power delivery (e.g., at or below about 50° C., for example, at or below about 45° C.) also may be relatively lower than would be required at the higher power levels used, for example, in electrophysiology treatments (e.g., power levels above about 15 Watts). This relative reduction in flow rate and/or total volume of intravascular infusate infusion advantageously may facilitate the use of intravascular infusate in higher risk patient groups that would be contraindicated were higher power levels and, thus, correspondingly higher infusate rates/volumes utilized (e.g., patients with heart disease, heart failure, renal insufficiency and/or diabetes mellitus).

[0368] When the intravascular infusate comprises saline, one liter of the saline may comprise about 9 grams of sodium chloride, which includes about 3.6 grams of sodium. 3.6 grams of sodium is about 150% of the recommended daily allowance for patients with heart failure or hypertension. Each liter of saline also may contain about 1,000 Units of the anti-coagulant heparin. Furthermore, saline injection increases venous pressure, and thereby capillary pressure, which increases the amount of fluid leaving the vasculature. If lymphatic drainage and renal excretion (urine output) are not able to maintain homeostasis, fluid accumulates and may cause pulmonary edema or heart failure.

[0369] Based on the foregoing, it may be desirable to limit saline (e.g., room temperature saline) infusion to less than about 1 Liter, for example, less than about 500 mL, less than about 250 mL or less than about 100 mL. Such limitation of saline infusion volume may facilitate infusion in higher risk patient groups, for example, those with heart disease, heart failure, diabetes mellitus and/or renal insufficiency. When the maximum power level does not exceed about 15 Watts, e.g., does not exceed about 10 Watts, it is expected that an infusion rate less than or equal to about 15 mL/minute, e.g., less than or equal to about 10 mL/minute, would be sufficient to maintain the thermal heating element at or below a desired temperature, e.g., at or below about 50° C., for example, at or below about 45° C. For treatment times of two minutes or less, these infusion rates facilitate treatment at multiple sites while maintaining a total infusion volume below about 1 Liter, 500 mL, 250 mL and/or 100 mL. A control algorithm, such as algorithm 102 or a manual controller, may be provided to control the infusion rate and/or total infusion volume, while a fluid pump may be provided to propel the infusate through the elongated shaft 16 at the desired (e.g., controlled) rate. Optionally, the infusate infusion rate may be increased as power is increased, which may further reduce the total infusion volume as compared to providing a consistent infusion rate tailored to the maximum power level delivered.

[0370] As an example, were saline to be injected for 5 seconds pre- and post-treatment, as well as during 2 minutes of treatment (i.e., were saline to be injected for about 130 seconds per treatment site), each treatment at an infusion rate of 15 mL/minute would result in a total infusion volume of about 32.5 mL. Thus, treatment may be performed at about 3 treatment sites while maintaining a total infusion volume below about 100 mL, at over 7 treatment sites while maintaining a total infusion volume below about 250 mL, at about 15 treatment sites while maintaining a total infusion volume below about 500 mL, and at over 30 treatment sites while

maintaining a total infusion volume below about 1 Liter. Treatments of less than 2 minutes may facilitate total infusion volumes that are even lower for a given number of treatment sites and/or may facilitate treatment at more sites while maintaining total infusion volume below a desired threshold.

[0371] Likewise, were saline to be injected for 5 seconds pre- and post-treatment, as well as during 2 minutes of treatment (i.e., were saline to be injected for about 130 seconds per treatment site), each treatment at an infusion rate of 10 mL/minute would result in a total infusion volume of about 21.7 mL. Thus, treatment may be performed at over 4 treatment sites while maintaining a total infusion volume below about 100 mL, at over 11 treatment sites while maintaining a total infusion volume below about 250 mL, at about 23 treatment sites while maintaining a total infusion volume below about 500 mL, and at about 46 treatment sites while maintaining a total infusion volume below about 1 Liter. Treatments of less than 2 minutes may facilitate total infusion volumes that are even lower for a given number of treatment sites (and/or may facilitate treatment at more sites while maintaining total infusion volume below a desired threshold).

V. Prepackaged Kit for Distribution, Transport and Sale of the Disclosed Apparatuses and Systems

[0372] As shown in FIG. 27, one or more components of the system 10 shown in FIG. 5 can be packaged together for convenient delivery to and use by the customer/clinical operator. Components suitable for packaging include, the treatment device 12, the cable 28 for connecting the treatment device 12 to the generator 26, the neutral or dispersive electrode 38, and one or more guide catheters 94 (e.g., a renal guide catheter). Cable 28 can also be integrated into the treatment device 12 such that both components are packaged together. Each component may have its own sterile packaging (for components requiring sterilization) or the components may have dedicated sterilized compartments within the kit packaging. This kit may also include step-by-step instructions for use 126 that provide the operator with technical product features and operating instructions for using the system 10 and treatment device 12, including all methods of insertion, delivery, placement and use of the treatment device disclosed herein.

VI. Additional Clinical Uses of the Disclosed Apparatuses, Methods and Systems

[0373] Although much of the disclosure in this Specification relates to at least partially denervating a kidney of a patient to block afferent and/or efferent neural communication from within a renal blood vessel (e.g., renal artery), the apparatuses, methods and systems described herein may also be used for other intravascular treatments. For example, the aforementioned catheter system, or select aspects of such system, can be placed in other peripheral blood vessels to deliver energy and/or electric fields to achieve a neuromodulatory effect by altering nerves proximate to these other peripheral blood vessels. There are a number of arterial vessels arising from the aorta which travel alongside a rich collection of nerves to target organs. Utilizing the arteries to access and modulate these nerves may have clear therapeutic potential in a number of disease states. Some examples include the nerves encircling the celiac trunk, superior mesenteric artery, and inferior mesenteric artery.

[0374] Sympathetic nerves proximate to or encircling the arterial blood vessel known as the celiac trunk may pass

through the celiac ganglion and follow branches of the celiac trunk to innervate the stomach, small intestine, abdominal blood vessels, liver, bile ducts, gallbladder, pancreas, adrenal glands, and kidneys. Modulating these nerves either in whole (or in part via selective modulation) may enable treatment of conditions including (but not limited to) diabetes, pancreatitis, obesity, hypertension, obesity related hypertension, hepatitis, hepatorenal syndrome, gastric ulcers, gastric motility disorders, irritable bowel syndrome, and autoimmune disorders such as Chron's disease.

[0375] Sympathetic nerves proximate to or encircling the arterial blood vessel known as the inferior mesenteric artery may pass through the inferior mesenteric ganglion and follow branches of the inferior mesenteric artery to innervate the colon, rectum, bladder, sex organs, and external genitalia. Modulating these nerves either in whole (or in part via selective modulation) may enable treatment of conditions including (but not limited to) GI motility disorders, colitis, urinary retention, hyperactive bladder, incontinence, infertility, polycystic ovarian syndrome, premature ejaculation, erectile dysfunction, dyspareunia, and vaginismus.

[0376] While arterial access and treatments have received attention in this Specification, the disclosed apparatuses, methods and systems can also be used to deliver treatment from within a peripheral vein or lymphatic vessel.

VII. Conclusion

[0377] The above detailed descriptions of embodiments of the invention are not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise form disclosed above. Although specific embodiments of, and examples for, the invention are described above for illustrative purposes, various equivalent modifications are possible within the scope of the invention, as those skilled in the relevant art will recognize. For example, while steps are presented in a given order, alternative embodiments may perform steps in a different order. The various embodiments described herein can also be combined to provide further embodiments.

[0378] From the foregoing, it will be appreciated that specific embodiments of the invention have been described herein for purposes of illustration, but well-known structures and functions have not been shown or described in detail to avoid unnecessarily obscuring the description of the embodiments of the invention. Where the context permits, singular or plural terms may also include the plural or singular term, respectively. For example, much of the disclosure herein describes a thermal heating element 24 or electrode 46 in the singular. It should be understood that this application does not exclude two or more thermal heating elements or electrodes

[0379] Moreover, unless the word "or" is expressly limited to mean only a single item exclusive from the other items in reference to a list of two or more items, then the use of "or" in such a list is to be interpreted as including (a) any single item in the list, (b) all of the items in the list, or (c) any combination of the items in the list. Additionally, the term "comprising" is used throughout to mean including at least the recited feature(s) such that any greater number of the same feature and/or additional types of other features are not precluded. It will also be appreciated that specific embodiments have been described herein for purposes of illustration, but that various modifications may be made without deviating from the invention. Accordingly, the invention is not limited except as by the appended claims.

I/We claim:

1. A multi-directional deflectable catheter apparatus for thermally modulating renal nerves from within a renal artery of a patient, the catheter apparatus comprising:

- an elongated tubular shaft extending along an axis, the elongated tubular shaft having a proximal end and a distal end;
- a handle proximal to the proximal end of the elongated tubular shaft;
- a flexible tubular structure distal from the distal end of the elongated tubular shaft, the flexible tubular structure adapted to make a transitional bend from the aorta of the patient to the renal artery;
- a multi-directional deflectable assembly distal from the flexible tubular structure;
- a flexure control element coupled to the multi-directional deflectable assembly;
- a flexure controller carried by the handle and coupled to the flexure control element, the flexure controller adapted to apply a force via the flexure control element to the multi-directional deflectable assembly; and
- a thermal element carried by or distal from the multi-directional deflectable assembly;

wherein the multi-directional deflectable assembly is adapted for flexure in at least two radial directions in a common plane through the axis of the elongated tubular shaft upon application of force via the flexure control element;

wherein the multi-directional deflectable assembly is adapted upon flexure to position the thermal element in contact with an inner wall of the renal artery.

2. The catheter apparatus of claim 1 wherein the multi-directional deflectable assembly comprises a centrally-positioned spine.

3. The catheter apparatus of claim 2 wherein the centrally-positioned spine comprises a spinal flexure element.

4. The catheter apparatus of claim 3 wherein the spinal flexure element comprises a ribbon, and wherein the flexure control element comprises a first control wire coupled to the multi-directional deflectable assembly on a first side of the ribbon and a second control wire coupled to the multi-directional deflectable assembly on a second side of the ribbon.

5. The catheter apparatus of claim 4 wherein the ribbon is configured for flexure towards the first control wire in response to tension applied by the first control wire and towards the second control wire in response to tension applied by the second control wire.

6. The catheter apparatus of claim 2 wherein the centrally-positioned spine comprises a first spinal flexure element and a second spinal flexure element, each spinal flexure element adapted for bi-directional movement.

7. The catheter apparatus of claim 6 wherein the first spinal flexure element is angularly offset from the second spinal flexure element about the axis of the elongated tubular shaft.

8. The catheter apparatus of claim 1 wherein the multi-directional deflectable assembly has a length from about 5 mm to about 15 mm.

9. The catheter apparatus of claim 1 wherein the thermal element is configured to apply thermal treatment using at least one of radiofrequency energy, cooled radiofrequency energy, microwave energy, ultrasound energy, laser/light energy, thermal fluid, resistive heating, and cryogenic fluid.

10. The catheter apparatus of claim 1 wherein the thermal element comprises a single electrode.

11. The catheter apparatus of claim 1 wherein the thermal element comprises multiple electrodes.

12. The catheter apparatus of claim 1 wherein the multi-directional deflectable assembly is configured for a state of maximum flexure, and wherein the state of maximum flexure is achieved when the multi-directional deflectable assembly comprises a transitional bend having a radius of curvature.

13. The catheter apparatus of claim 12 wherein the radius of curvature is no greater than about 25 mm.

14. The catheter apparatus of claim 1 wherein the flexible tubular structure is more flexible than the elongated tubular shaft, and wherein the multi-directional deflectable assembly is more flexible than the flexible tubular structure.

15. The catheter apparatus of claim 14 wherein the elongated tubular shaft, the flexible tubular structure and the multi-directional deflectable assembly comprise a single piece tubular structure.

16. The catheter apparatus of claim 15 wherein the increased flexibility of the flexible tubular structure and the multi-directional deflectable assembly result from laser cutting of the single piece tubular structure.

17. The catheter apparatus of claim 1 wherein the thermal element is configured to create a thermal lesion comprising at least 30% circumferential coverage of the renal artery wall.

18. The catheter apparatus of claim 1 wherein the elongated tubular shaft, the multi-directional deflectable assembly and the thermal element are sized and configured for intravascular delivery into the renal artery via a 6 French guide catheter.

19. The catheter apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a sensor adjacent to, on, or within the thermal element, the sensor configured to monitor a parameter of at least one of the apparatus and the renal artery wall.

20. The catheter apparatus of claim 19 wherein the sensor comprises at least one of a temperature sensor, impedance sensor, optical sensor, force sensor, strain sensor or micro sensor.

21. A system comprising the catheter apparatus of claim 19, an energy generator and a feedback control system configured to alter thermal treatment applied by the thermal element in response to the monitored parameter.

22. The system of claim 21 wherein the feedback control system comprises an algorithm for controlling thermal treatment applied by the thermal element.

23. The system of claim 22 wherein the algorithm for controlling thermal treatment applied by the thermal element comprises instructions that limit thermal treatment to no greater than 8 watts.

24. The system of claim 22 wherein the algorithm for controlling thermal treatment applied by the thermal element comprises instructions that limit thermal treatment to no greater than 10 watts.

25. The catheter apparatus of claim 1 wherein the multi-directional deflectable assembly is adapted upon flexure in a first direction to position the thermal element in contact with a first inner wall of the renal artery and adapted upon flexure in a second direction to position the thermal element in contact with a second inner wall of the renal artery, and wherein the first inner wall and the second inner wall are generally opposite one another.

26. The catheter apparatus of claim 1 wherein the flexure control element comprises a first control wire and a second control wire, and wherein the first control wire and second

control wire are connected to the multi-directional deflectable assembly on radial opposite sides.

27. The catheter apparatus of claim 26 wherein the first control wire and second control wire comprise electrically connected control wires, and wherein the multi-directional deflectable assembly is configured for electrically initiated deflection via the electrically connected control wires.

28. The catheter apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a distal flexure zone attached to and distal from the multi-directional deflectable assembly, wherein the thermal element is coupled to the distal flexure zone.

29. The catheter apparatus of claim 28 wherein the distal flexure zone comprises a force dampening section.

30. The catheter apparatus of claim 28 wherein the distal flexure zone comprises a force redirecting element.

31. The catheter apparatus of claim 28 wherein the distal flexure zone comprises a sensor configured to monitor contact force between the thermal element and renal artery wall.

32. The catheter apparatus of claim 28 wherein the distal flexure zone has a length of about 3 mm to 6 mm, the multi-directional deflectable assembly has a length of about 8 mm to 15 mm and has a maximum flexure displacing the energy delivery element a predetermined distance of about 10 to 15 mm.

33. The catheter apparatus of claim 28 wherein the multi-directional deflectable assembly comprises a hinge joint and the distal flexure zone is less than about 16 mm long.

34. The catheter apparatus of claim 1 wherein the multi-directional deflectable assembly comprises a pre-formed shape.

35. The catheter apparatus of claim 1 wherein the multi-directional deflectable assembly comprises a circumferentially positioned spine.

36. A multi-directional deflectable catheter apparatus for thermally modulating renal nerves from within a renal artery of a patient, the catheter apparatus comprising:

- an elongated tubular shaft extending along an axis, the elongated tubular shaft having a proximal end and a distal end;
- a handle proximal to the proximal end of the elongated tubular shaft;
- a flexible tubular structure distal from the distal end of the elongated tubular shaft, the flexible tubular structure adapted to make a transitional bend from the aorta of the patient to the renal artery;
- a multi-directional deflectable assembly distal from the flexible tubular structure, the multi-directional deflectable assembly having a circumferentially-positioned spine;
- a flexure control element coupled to the multi-directional deflectable assembly;
- a flexure controller carried by the handle and coupled to the flexure control element, the flexure controller adapted to apply a force via the flexure control element to the multi-directional deflectable assembly; and
- a thermal element carried by or distal from the multi-directional deflectable assembly;

wherein the multi-directional deflectable assembly is adapted for flexure in at least two radial directions in a plane through the axis of the elongated tubular shaft upon application of force via the flexure control element;

wherein the multi-directional deflectable assembly is adapted upon flexure to position the thermal element in contact with an inner wall of the renal artery.

37. The catheter apparatus of claim 36 wherein the multi-directional deflectable assembly comprises a laser cut tube comprising a first circumferentially-positioned spine and a second circumferentially-positioned spine, the first circumferentially-positioned spine and a second circumferentially-positioned spine separated by a plane.

38. The catheter apparatus of claim 37 wherein the flexure control element comprises a first control wire coupled to the first circumferentially-positioned spine on a first side of the plane and a second control wire coupled to the second circumferentially-positioned spine on a second side of the plane.

39. The catheter apparatus of claim 38 wherein the multi-directional deflectable assembly is configured for flexure towards the first control wire in response to tension applied by the first control wire and towards the second control wire in response to tension applied by the second control wire.

40. The catheter apparatus of claim 36 wherein the multi-directional deflectable assembly has a length from about 5 mm to about 15 mm.

41. The catheter apparatus of claim 36 wherein the multi-directional deflectable assembly is configured for a state of maximum flexure, and wherein the state of maximum flexure is achieved when the multi-directional deflectable assembly comprises a transitional bend having a radius of curvature.

42. The catheter apparatus of claim 41 wherein the radius of curvature is no greater than about 25 mm.

43. The catheter apparatus of claim 36 wherein the elongated tubular shaft, the multi-directional deflectable assembly and the thermal element are sized and configured for intravascular delivery into the renal artery via a 6 French guide catheter.

44. The catheter apparatus of claim 36 wherein the multi-directional deflectable assembly is adapted upon flexure in a first direction to position the thermal element in contact with a first inner wall of the renal artery and adapted upon flexure in a second direction to position the thermal element in contact with a second inner wall of the renal artery, and wherein the first inner wall and the second inner wall are generally opposite one another.

45. The catheter apparatus of claim 36 further comprising a distal flexure zone attached to and distal from the multi-directional deflectable assembly, wherein the thermal element is coupled to the distal flexure zone.

46. The catheter apparatus of claim 45 wherein the distal flexure zone comprises a force dampening section.

47. The catheter apparatus of claim 45 wherein the distal flexure zone comprises a force redirecting element.

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专利名称(译)	用于肾神经调节的多向可偏转导管装置，系统和方法		
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摘要(译)

本文公开了用于通过血管内通路实现肾神经调节的多向可偏转导管装置，系统和方法。例如，本申请的一个方面涉及结合包括细长轴的导管治疗装置的装置，系统和方法。细长轴的尺寸和构造设计成通过血管内路径将热元件输送到肾动脉。热或电肾神经调节可以通过直接和/或间接施加热和/或电能来加热或冷却或以其他方式电调节有助于肾功能的神经纤维或供给或灌注的神经纤维来实现。神经纤维。

