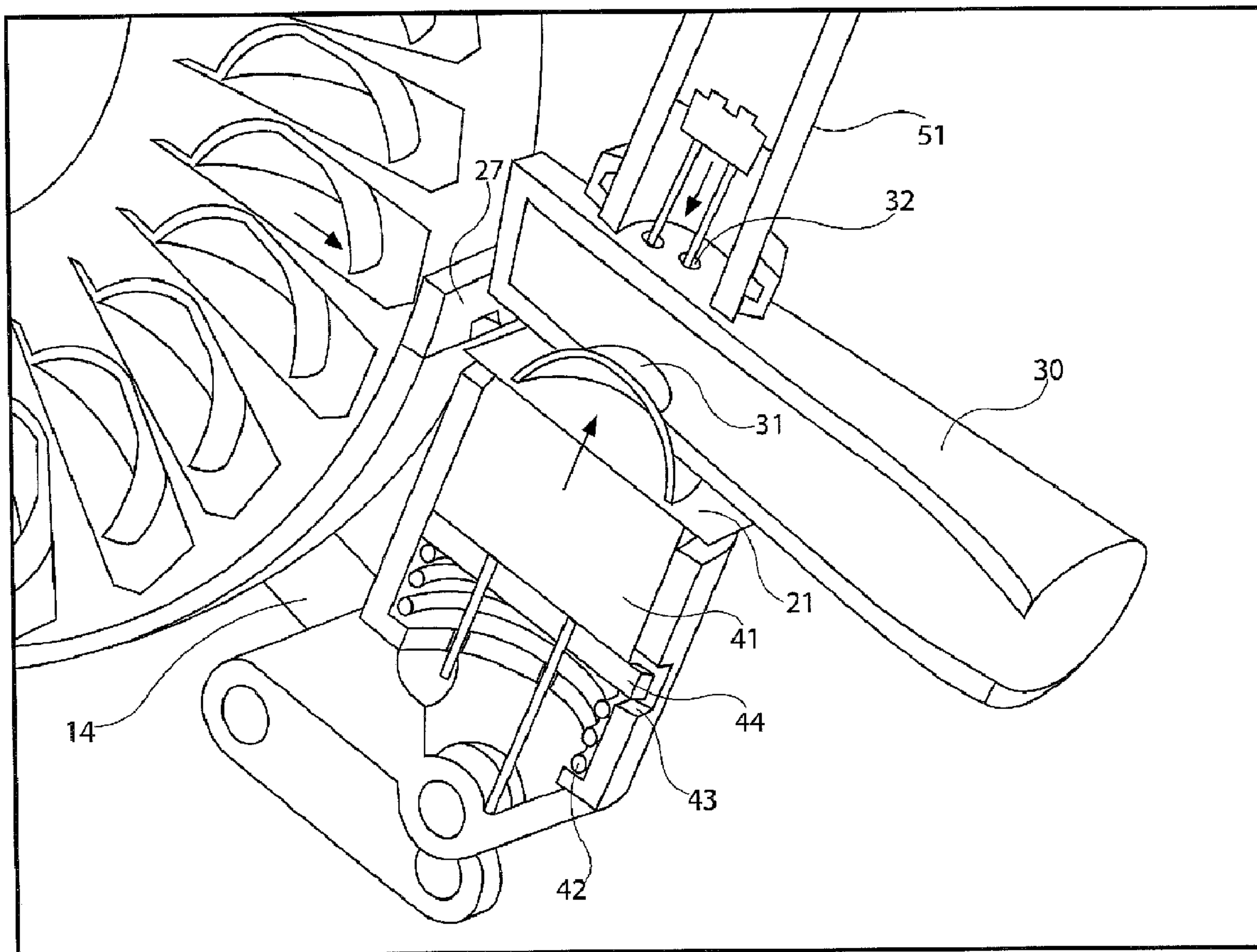




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(54) **Titre : SYSTEME DE CASSETTE ROTATIVE POUR INHALATEUR DE POUDRE SECHE**
 (54) **Title: ROTARY CASSETTE SYSTEM FOR DRY POWDER INHALER**



(57) **Abrégé/Abstract:**

The present disclosure provides an inhaler having a vibration element for aerosolizing medicament contained in a blister pack, wherein a plurality of individual blister packs are arranged in a rotary cassette that fits within a housing, and wherein the individual

(57) Abrégé(suite)/Abstract(continued):

blister packs are dragged up into a clamping position between the vibration element and a piercing element. The motion of the blister pack is controlled by a rotary disk within the housing which further coordinates the movement of the piercing and vibrating elements for the piercing and deaggregation, respectively, of the individual blister packs.

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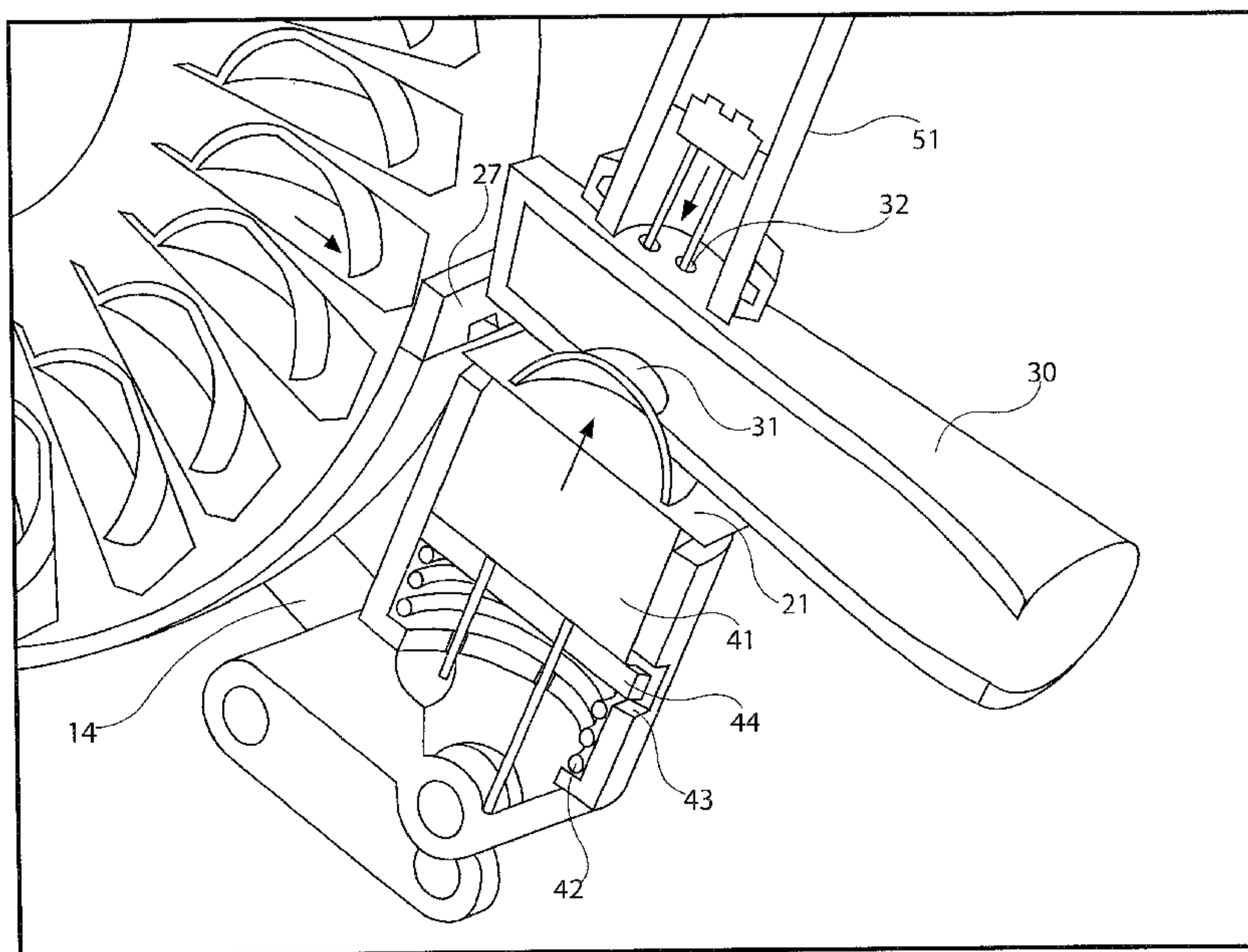


Fig. 8A

(57) Abstract: The present disclosure provides an inhaler having a vibration element for aerosolizing medicament contained in a blister pack, wherein a plurality of individual blister packs are arranged in a rotary cassette that fits within a housing, and wherein the individual blister packs are dragged up into a clamping position between the vibration element and a piercing element. The motion of the blister pack is controlled by a rotary disk within the housing which further coordinates the movement of the piercing and vibrating elements for the piercing and deaggregation, respectively, of the individual blister packs.

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ROTARY CASSETTE SYSTEM FOR DRY POWDER INHALER

The present disclosure relates generally to the field of inhalation devices. The disclosure has particular utility in connection with the delivery of powdered medications to a patient, and will be described in connection with such utility, although other utilities
5 are contemplated.

Certain diseases of the respiratory tract are known to respond to treatment by the direct application of therapeutic agents. As these agents are most readily available in dry powdered form, their application is most conveniently accomplished by inhaling the powdered material through the nose or mouth. This powdered form results in the better
10 utilization of the medicament in that the drug is deposited exactly at the site desired and where its action may be required; hence, very minute doses of the drug are often equally as efficacious as larger doses administered by other means, with a consequent marked reduction in the incidence of undesired side effects and medicament cost. Alternatively, the drug in this form may be used for treatment of diseases other than those of the
15 respiratory system. When the drug is deposited on the very large surface areas of the lungs, it may be very rapidly absorbed into the blood stream; hence, this method of application may take the place of administration by injection, tablet, or other conventional means.

It is the opinion of the pharmaceutical industry that the bioavailability of the drug
20 is optimum when the drug particles delivered to the respiratory tract are between 1 to 5 microns in size. When the drug particles need to be in this size range the dry powder delivery system needs to address a number of issues:

(1) Small size particles may develop an electrostatic charge on themselves during manufacturing and storage. This may cause the particles to agglomerate or aggregate,
25 resulting in clusters of particles which have an effective size greater than 5 microns. The probability of these large clusters making it to the deep lungs then decreases. This in turn results in a lower percentage of the packaged drug being available to the patient for absorption.

(2) The amount of active drug that needs to be delivered to the patient may be of
30 the order of 10s of micrograms. For example, in the case of albuterol, a drug used in asthma, this is usually 25 to 50 micrograms. Current manufacturing equipment can effectively deliver aliquots of drugs in milligram dose range with acceptable accuracy. So the standard practice is to mix the active drug with a filler or bulking agent such as

lactose. This additive also makes the drug "easy to flow". This filler is also called a carrier since the drug particles also stick to these particles through electrostatic or chemical bonds. These carrier particles are very much larger than the drug particles in size. The ability of the dry powder inhaler to separate drug from the carrier is an important performance parameter in the effectiveness of the design.

(3) Active drug particles with sizes greater than 5 microns will be deposited either in the mouth or throat. This introduces another level of uncertainty since the bioavailability and absorption of the drug in these locations is different from the lungs. Dry powder inhalers need to minimize the drug deposited in these locations to reduce the uncertainty associated with the bioavailability of the drug.

Prior art dry powder inhalers (DPIs) usually have a means for introducing the drug (active drug plus carrier) into a high velocity air stream. The high velocity air stream is used as the primary mechanism for breaking up the cluster of micronized particles or separating the drug particles from the carrier. Several inhalation devices useful for dispensing this powder form of medicament are known in the prior art. For example, in U.S. Pat. Nos. 3,507,277; 3,518,992; 3,635,219; 3,795,244; and 3,807,400, inhalation devices are disclosed having means for piercing of a capsule containing a powdered medicament, which upon inhalation is drawn out of the pierced capsule and into the user's mouth. Several of these patents disclose propeller means, which upon inhalation aid in dispensing the powder out of the capsule, so that it is not necessary to rely solely on the inhaled air to suction powder from the capsule. For example, in U.S. Pat. No. 2,517,482, a device is disclosed having a powder containing capsule placed in a lower chamber before inhalation, where it is pierced by manual depression of a piercing pin by the user. After piercing, inhalation is begun and the capsule is drawn into an upper chamber of the device where it moves about in all directions to cause a dispensing of powder through the pierced holes and into the inhaled air stream. U.S. Pat. No. 3,831,606 discloses an inhalation device having multiple piercing pins, propeller means, and a self-contained power source for operating the propeller means via external manual manipulation, so that upon inhalation the propeller means aids in dispensing the powder into the stream of inhaled air. See also U.S. Pat. Nos. 3,948,264 and 5,458,135.

In prior U.S. Patent Nos. 7,318,434 and 7,334,577 and assigned to the common assignee MicroDose Technologies, Inc., there is provided an improvement over prior art inhalers that utilize vibration to facilitate

suspension of powder into an inhaled gas stream and which utilizes synthetic jetting to aerosolize drug powder from a blister pack or the like. As taught in the aforesaid U.S. Patent No. 7,318,434 and 7,334,577 there is provided a dry powder inhaler having a first chamber such as a blister pack or other container, for and holding a dry powder, and a second chamber connected to the first chamber via a passageway for receiving an aerosolized form of the dry powder from the first chamber and for delivering the aerosolized dry powder to a user. A vibrator is coupled to the dry powder in the first chamber. The vibrator is energized and coupled to the first chamber and drives the powder from the chamber by synthetic jetting.

As described in U.S. Patent No. 7,080,644 also assigned to common assignee MicroDose Technologies, Inc., controlled aliquots or doses of a medication or drug are pre-packaged in a blister pack, which includes a frangible crowned top element which may be conical, conical with a rounded point, rounded, or other raised shape configuration, and a bottom element which may be a flat web or membrane, or which itself may be of shaped configuration, e.g. conical, round, dish shaped, etc. for closely engaging with an underlying vibrating element, the shape and size of which is chosen to provide optimum controlled delivery of a given medication or drug. The top element of the blister pack is pierced with a piercing device such as a sharp needle to form one or more apertures for delivery of the medication or drug contained within the blister pack. The hole pattern and hole size is selected to provide optimization of delivery of the particular medication or drug packaged therein.

The present disclosure provides an improvement over the prior art devices such as discussed above by providing an inhaler having a vibration element for aerosolizing medicament contained in a blister pack, wherein the inhaler is adapted to hold a plurality of individual blister packs which can be individually accessed and moved into an operative or dispensing position between the vibration element and a piercing element. The advantages of this construction include: simpler, more compact assembly for an inhaler containing a plurality of blister packs; and the ability to isolate and shield individual blister packs from the piercing element prior to use.

In accordance with an aspect of the present invention there is provided a medication inhaler, comprising:

a housing;

a mouthpiece affixed to the housing; a vibrating element and a piercing element contained within the housing;

a plurality of individually addressable blister packs detachably carried on a cassette within the housing, wherein each of the plurality of individually addressable blister packs contains a specified amount of a medicament;

a blister-carrying mechanism disposed to move a selected blister pack between a stowed position and a detached dispensing position; and

a blister-clamping mechanism disposed to secure the selected blister pack in spring urged contact with the vibrating element.

In accordance with a further aspect of the present invention there is provided a dry powder inhaler, comprising;

a vibrating element;

a piercing element;

a cartridge carrying a plurality of individually addressable blister packs, wherein each of the plurality of individually addressable blister packs is detachable from the cartridge and contains a specified amount of powdered medicament, the blister packs being arranged in a circular formation on the cartridge; and

a lever arm, the movement of which causes a blister-carrying mechanism to move a selected blister pack from the cartridge to the piercing element and a blister-clamping mechanism to secure the selected blister pack in spring urged contact with the vibrating element, to be opened, deaggregated and the powder inhaled by a user.

Further features and advantages of the present disclosure will be seen from the following detailed description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein

Figs. 1A and 1B are top views of an inhaler according to the present disclosure,

displaying different positions of the lever arm;

Figs. 2A , 2B, and 2C are sectioned views of an inhaler with a rotary cassette activated by a lever arm in accordance with the present disclosure;

Fig. 3 is an exploded view of a cartridge assembly in accordance with the present
5 disclosure;

Fig. 4 is an illustration of a cartridge assembly being loaded into the housing of an inhaler of the present disclosure;

Fig. 5 is an illustration showing the bottom of an inhaler in accordance with the present disclosure;

Fig. 6A is an illustration of a blister pack in accordance with the present
10 disclosure;

Fig. 6B is an illustration showing the operation of a blister pack carrier in accordance with the present disclosure;

Fig. 7 is a partial view of the internal elements of the dry powder inhaler of the
15 present disclosure;

Figs. 8a and 8b are detailed sectional views of the blister pack carrier and piercing mechanism in accordance with the present disclosure;

Figs. 9A and 9B are detailed section views of the flow channel and the vibrating and piercing elements of the present disclosure;

Fig. 10 is a block diagram showing the operation of the electronics associated
20 with the dry powder inhaler of the present disclosure;

Fig. 11 is an illustration of a printed circuit carrier in accordance with the present disclosure;

Fig. 12 is a sectioned side view of a dry powder inhaler in accordance with the
25 present disclosure; and

Fig. 13 is an exploded view of a dry powder inhaler in accordance with the present disclosure.

In the following description, reference is made to the accompanying drawings, which form a part hereof, and in which is shown, by way of illustration, various
30 embodiments of the present disclosure. It is understood that other embodiments may be utilized and changes may be made without departing from the scope of the present disclosure.

The present disclosure provides a device for delivering medicament to the airway of a user, wherein the device generally comprises a housing with a mouthpiece affixed and a cover for the mouthpiece. The housing is adapted to hold a plurality of individual blister packs containing, for example, powdered medicament. However, the medication
5 could be a liquid form medication. The blisters are arranged such that individual blisters may be loaded into a clamping position, whereupon the blister is pierced and a vibrating device is used to aggregate the contents of the blister, which is subsequently inhaled by the user. Preferably the blisters are carried in a cartridge which in a preferred form comprises a rotary cassette containing a plurality of individually addressable blister
10 packs. The device also includes a mechanism for moving selected blister packs between a stowed position and an operative position. The mechanism may also be used to activate the piercing and vibrating elements.

Referring to Figs. 1A and 1B, the inhaler of the present disclosure comprises a housing 1 having a mouthpiece 2, and a retractable cover 3. The device may also include
15 a lever arm 11, the movement of which opens the retractable cover and activates other elements of the device, as will be described in detail below. The retractable cover may also be opened manually, such as when the user desires to clean the mouthpiece, but may not be closed when the lever arm 11 has been moved to an open position.

Referring to Figs. 2A-2C, the lever arm 11 is connected to a cam disk 10
20 contained within the housing which translates the rotational motion of the lever arm to translational or rotational motion of other internal elements of the device. The device as shown is configured to allow the lever arm to turn 120°, which is a convention range of motion for operating the device with one hand, but other ranges are also possible. As the lever arm progresses from one position to another (see Figs. 2A-2C), cam disk 10 is
25 turned and retractable cover 3 uncovers the mouthpiece 2. The rotation of the cam disk is shown by reference line 110.

The distal end of the lever arm (relative to the cam disk) forms a button area 11A that is configured to allow a user to easily grip and move the lever arm. For example, the surface area of the button should be large enough to allow easy pulling of the lever arm
30 and the surface of the button may also be comprised of a material that enhances the grip of the user. At either end of the motion of the lever arm, the device may include a sequence lock that allows the lever arm and cam disk to remain in a fixed position until the user moves the lever arm again.

Alternatively, other motions may be used to activate the device. For example, the cover of the device may be connected to the cam disk by a linkage that turns the cam disk when the cover is opened.

Referring to Figs. 1A and 1B and 2A-2C, the device also includes an indicator that communicates information to the user that may include, for example, a reminder when a new dose is to be administered, an indication of when the user should inhale, an indication of when the user should be done inhaling, and a warning, for example, when the device is empty, the medication is out of date, or the device was subject to environmental extremes, e.g. heating or cooling, beyond its design range. The device should indicate the inhale signal to the user when a blister pack has been opened and can no longer be stored. A ratcheting feature may also be incorporated into the cam disk 10 to prevent partial or accidental activation of the device.

Fig. 3 shows the different pieces of the cartridge assembly of the present disclosure. The cartridge 20 containing the rotary cassette is generally arranged such that the plurality of individual blister packs 21 are fanned out in a radial pattern relative to the plane of the rotary cassette. Fig. 3 shows one cartridge comprising an upper housing 23 and a lower housing 24. The cartridge contains a blister carousel 22 that separates each of the blister packs 21. The cartridge also includes a blister carrier 27 that is used to move one blister pack at a time along a radial path into an operating position. The cartridge can be configured to carry a wide range of number of blister packs.

As shown in Fig. 4, the cartridge may be removed and reloaded or replaced so that the device may continue to be used. Fig. 5 shows that the cartridge may also include a dose counter 25 for tracking the number of doses, and a release tab 26 to facilitate removal of the cartridge.

Fig. 6A shows a typical blister pack. Other blister pack designs are also possible. For examples of other blister pack designs that may be compatible with the device of the present disclosure, see, for example, U.S. Published Application Nos. 2006/0174869 A1, 2008/0202514 A1, and 2009/0314288 A1, all assigned to a common assignee. Alternatively, the blister packs may comprise a divided package or blister pack containing two or more medicaments or drugs, e.g. of the same or different article size, for co-delivery to a user as disclosed, e.g. in U.S. Published Application No. 2005/0147566 A1, also assigned to a common assignee.

As described above, the medicament or drug contained in the blister pack is delivered to the patient by pushing a fresh blister pack 21 into position using blister carrier 27. The motion of the blister carrier is in a radial direction, as indicated by the arrows in Fig. 6B.

5 Motion of the blister carrier, as well as the retractable cover is initiated by the movement of the lever arm 11, the rotational motion of which is transferred to other respective elements using cam disk 10, which includes a series of slots, cams, and/or pins that control the movement of linkages connected to other elements of the device. These connections are demonstrated by Fig. 7, which shows the disposition of the various
10 linkages in connection with the cartridge assembly 20, the vibrator assembly 40, and the piercing assembly 50. (The cam disk is not shown in this view). The cam disk connects to a cartridge index linkage 13 that turns the cartridge making the next blister pack available after each time the device is used; a blister transport linkage 18 that is connected to blister transport sled 28, which in turn is connected to blister carrier 27; and
15 a vibrator linkage 14; a piercing linkage 15. The cartridge assembly further includes ratchet teeth 12 that enable the indexing feature. The linkages as shown here are merely exemplary. Several other configurations are also possible. For instance, the length and number of linkages may be changed while still achieving a similar result.

Where cams, slots and follower pins, rotating pins, or other pieces conflict with
20 one another, the cam disk 10 may comprise of two flat inner and outer disks joined together, such as for example, being joined at a hub. In this manner, the disk may include overlapping slots or cams.

Referring to Figs. 8A, 8B, 9A, and 9B, the blister carrier 27 moves a selected blister pack 21 into position between the piercing assembly 50 and the vibrating
25 assembly 40. The top of the blister extends through opening 31 into flow channel 30, which is connected to mouthpiece 2. The blister pack is clamped in place by the vibrator assembly 40 which includes spring 42 for placing piezoelectric transducer 41 against blister pack and holding the blister pack in place. Posts 45 may be provided to ensure that proper contact between the vibrating element and the blister pack is maintained.
30 Alternatively, the opening 31 in the flow channel 30 may be made large enough to allow the blister pack to extend further into the flow channel, wherein flange area of blister pack 21 is clamped between the piezoelectric transducer and the flow channel. Slot 43 is aligned with protrusion 44, limiting the range of motion of the spring 42.

The piercing assembly is aligned with the blister pack on the opposite side of the flow channel with the piercer 51 extending through holes 32 when used to puncture the blister pack. The piercer may comprise a needle or plurality of needles to adequately puncture the blister pack.

The vibrating assembly 40 may include a piezoelectric transducer 41 as a vibrating element, but other vibrating elements are also within the scope of the present disclosure, such for example as a microphone providing a sonic vibration. The vibrating element causes the powdered medicament within the blister pack to be aerosolized in the surrounding air and may create a synthetic jet that distributes the medicament into the flow channel 30. The medicament is then transported into the patient's inhalation air stream drawn through the mouthpiece 2.

The vibrating element may be activated by flow sensor 60 which senses the breath of the patient as described in U.S. Patent No. 6,152,130 and in co-pending US Application Serial No. 11/064, 201, both of which are commonly owned. Referring to Figs. 10-12, flow element 60 is comprised of flow sensor 61, the signal of which is conditioned 201 and send to a microprocessor 203. The control logic within the microprocessor, in connection with the system clock circuit 202, controls the vibrating element such as piezoelectric transducer 41 through driver circuit 206. Power to the vibrating element is supplied by battery 81 which is adjusted by circuit 205. The microprocessor also sends a signal to LEDs 71 of user interface 70 when inhalation is complete. As mentioned above, the microprocessor may also send a signal to user interface 70 when a prescribed time has passed since the previous dose.

Once a blister pack has been emptied, it may be disposed of by extracting the empty blister through the top of the housing next to the mouthpiece 2. Alternatively, it may be stored in the cartridge or otherwise out of the way until all the blister packs are depleted, at which time a fresh cassette may be loaded into the inhaler after the emptied cassette is removed.

Fig. 13 shows the elements of the present invention in an exploded view. The housing 1 may be comprised of multiple pieces, including device cover 4 and chassis 5 he printed circuit board assembly 82, which includes the microprocessor and various circuits, is connected to the flow sensor by flex wire 62. The assembly shown in Fig. 13 may be modified without departing from the principles of the present disclosure. For

example, the cam disk may be reduced in size and take a form other than that of a flat disk, and still provide the same function.

It should be emphasized that the above-described embodiments of the present device and process, particularly, and "preferred" embodiments, are merely possible examples of implementations and merely set forth for a clear understanding of the principles of the disclosure. Many different embodiments of the rotary cassette system for a dry powder inhaler described herein may be designed and/or fabricated without departing from the spirit and scope of the disclosure. For example, the effective delivery of the medicament may be optimized by manipulating the waveform of the piezoelectric vibrator. All these and other such modifications and variations are intended to be included herein within the spirit of this disclosure and protected by the following claims. Therefore the scope of the disclosure is not intended to be limited except as indicated in the appended claims.

The invention claimed is:

1. A medication inhaler, comprising;
a housing;
a mouthpiece affixed to the housing; a vibrating element and a piercing element contained within the housing;
a plurality of individually addressable blister packs detachably carried on a cassette within the housing, wherein each of the plurality of individually addressable blister packs contains a specified amount of a medicament;
a blister-carrying mechanism disposed to move a selected blister pack between a stowed position and a detached dispensing position; and
a blister-clamping mechanism disposed to secure the selected blister pack in spring urged contact with the vibrating element.
2. The inhaler of claim 1 wherein the cassette is rotatably mounted within the housing.
3. The inhaler of claim 1 or 2, further comprising a rotatably mounted disk that coordinates movement of one of said plurality of individual blister packs into the dispensing position where an individual blister pack is clamped in between the vibrating element and the piercing element, in contact with the vibrating element.
4. The inhaler of claim 3, wherein the rotary disk further coordinates the movement of the piercing element, whereby the piercing element pierces the blister pack in the dispensing position.
5. The inhaler of claim 3, wherein the rotary disk further coordinates movement of the vibrating element whereupon the vibrating element comes into contact with the blister pack in the dispensing position.
6. The inhaler of claim 3, wherein the rotation of the disk is controlled by a user by using a lever arm that protrudes from the housing.

7. The inhaler of any one of claims 1 to 6, further comprising a cover for covering the mouthpiece pivotally connected to the housing.
8. The inhaler of claim 7, further comprising a linkage connecting the cover with the rotary disk, wherein the pivotal movement of the disk turns the rotatably mounted disk cover.
9. The inhaler of any one of claims 1 to 8, wherein the vibrating element is a piezoelectric transducer.
10. The inhaler of any one of claims 1 to 9, further comprising a battery and a printed circuit board.
11. The inhaler of any one of claims 1 to 10, wherein the plurality of individual blister packs are arranged in a circular plan, and wherein a plane of the blister pack is substantially perpendicular to a plane of the cassette.
12. The inhaler of claim 3, wherein the disk further coordinates the movement of the rotatably mounted cassette.
13. The inhaler of any one of claims 1 to 12, wherein the medication comprises a dry powder.
14. The inhaler of any one of claims 1 to 12, wherein the medication comprises a liquid.
15. A dry powder inhaler, comprising;
 - a vibrating element;
 - a piercing element;
 - a cartridge carrying a plurality of individually addressable blister packs, wherein each of the plurality of individually addressable blister packs is detachable from the cartridge and contains a specified amount of powdered medicament, the blister packs being arranged in a circular formation on the cartridge; and

a lever arm, the movement of which causes a blister-carrying mechanism to move a selected blister pack from the cartridge to the piercing element and a blister-clamping mechanism to secure the selected blister pack in spring urged contact with the vibrating element, to be opened, deaggregated and the powder inhaled by a user.

16. The dry powder inhaler of claim 15, further comprising a disk that coordinates movement of the lever arm with the movement of one of said plurality of individual blister packs into an operative position.

17. The dry powder inhaler of claim 15 or 16, further comprising a flow channel connected at one end to a mouthpiece, the flow channel having an opening through which the top of a selected blister pack fits, the blister pack being held in place against the flow channel by the vibrating element, wherein the piercing element is located on the opposite side of the flow channel.

18. The dry powder inhaler of any one of claims 15 to 17, further comprising a spring that urges the vibrating element against the selected blister pack.

19. The dry powder inhaler of any one of claims 15 to 18, wherein the selected blister pack is dragged by a blister carrier which moves the selected blister pack in a radial direction.

20. The dry powder inhaler of any one of claims 15 to 19, further comprising a flow sensor that senses the breath of the user.

21. The dry powder inhaler of claim 20, further comprising a battery and a microprocessor, wherein the microprocessor receives a signal from the flow sensor and controls the activation of the vibrating element.

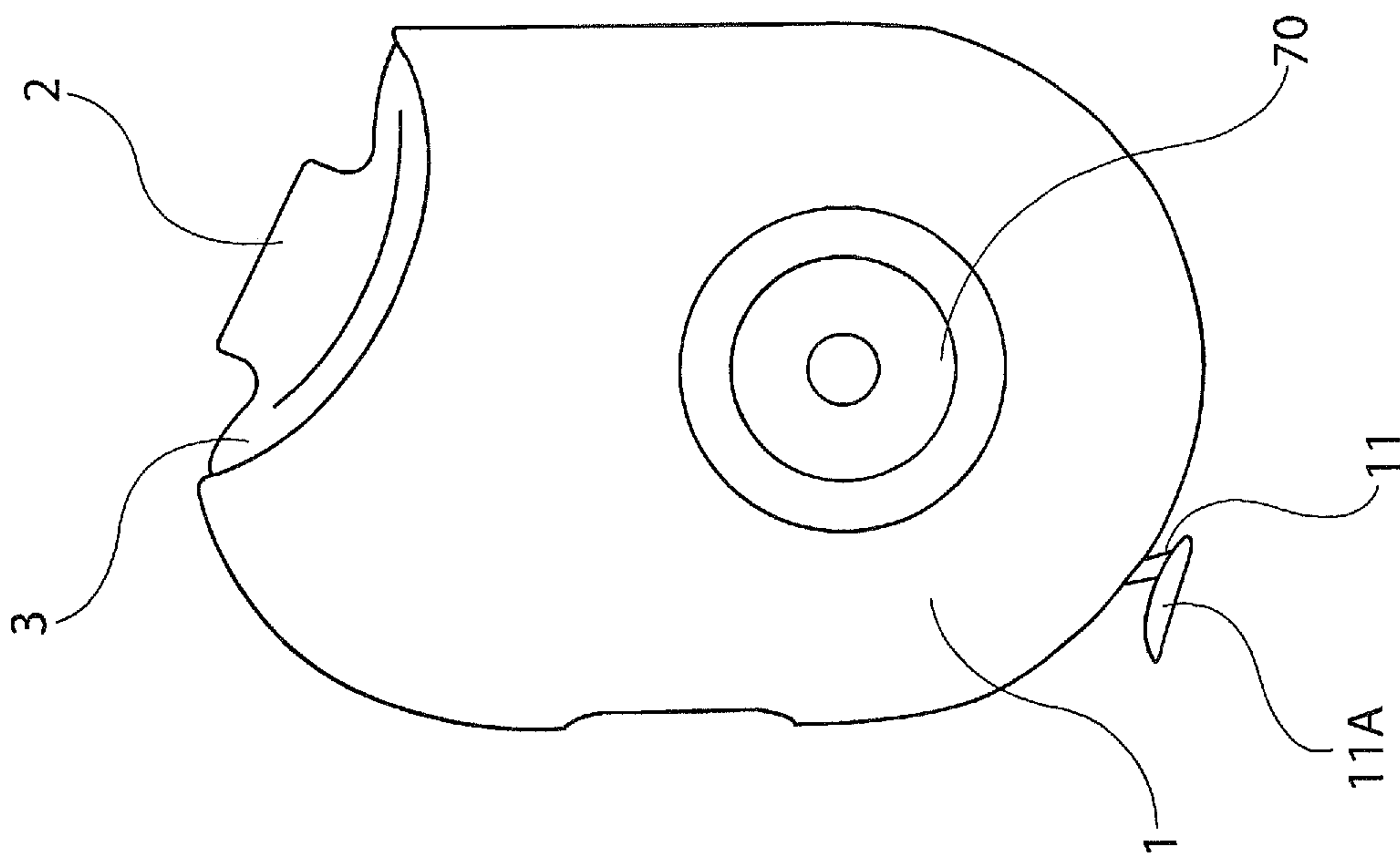


Fig. 1B

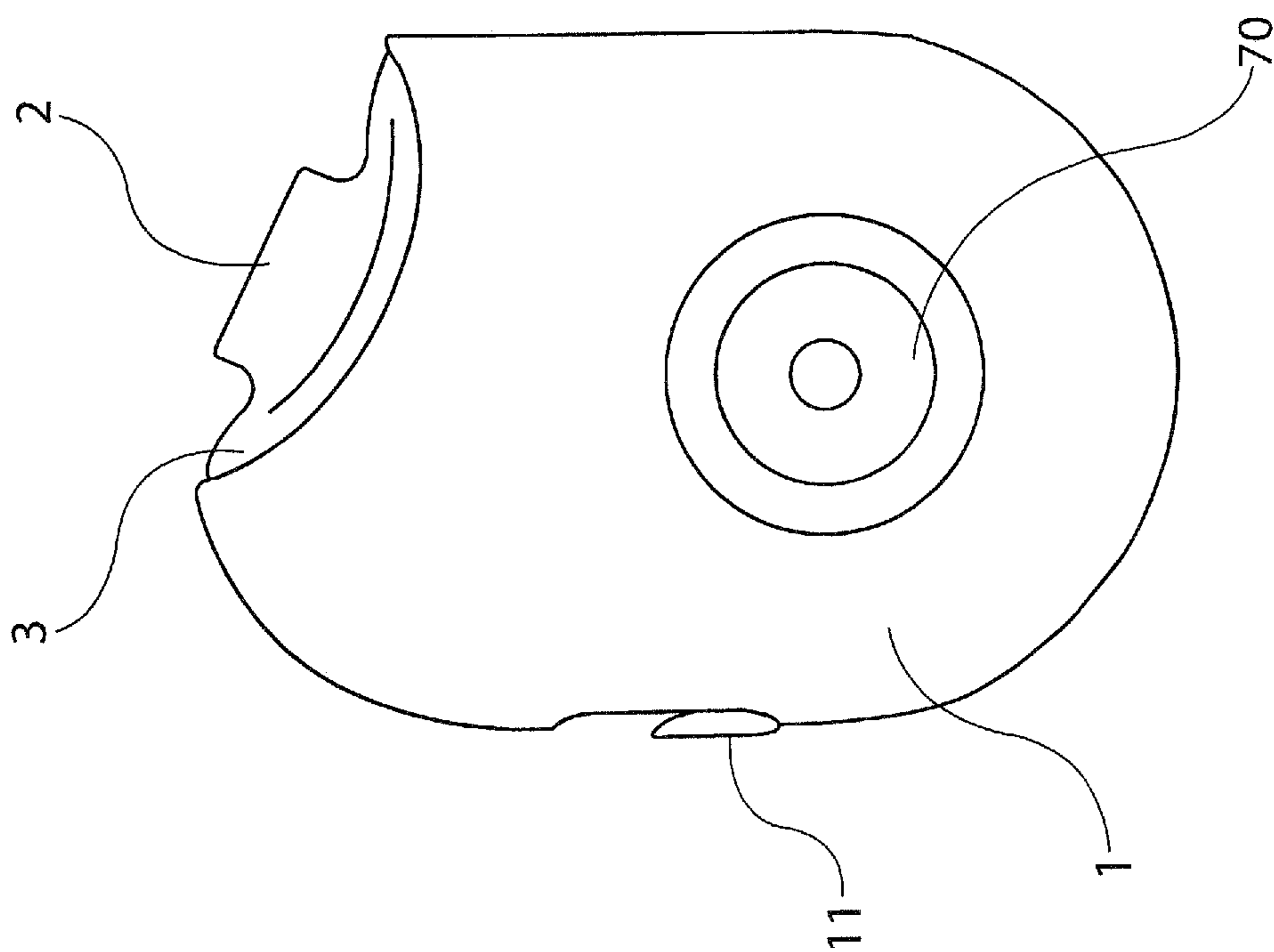


Fig. 1A

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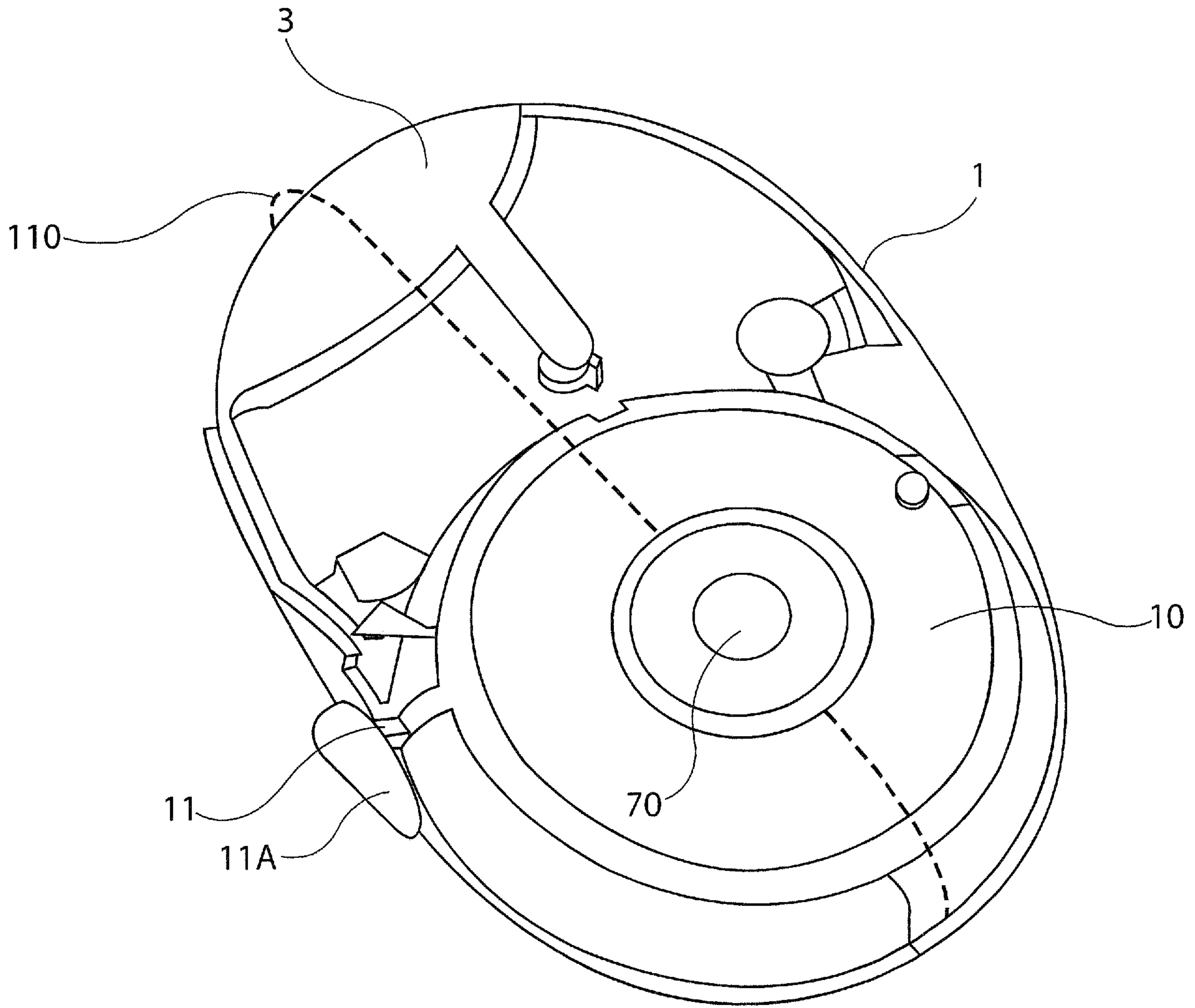


Fig. 2A

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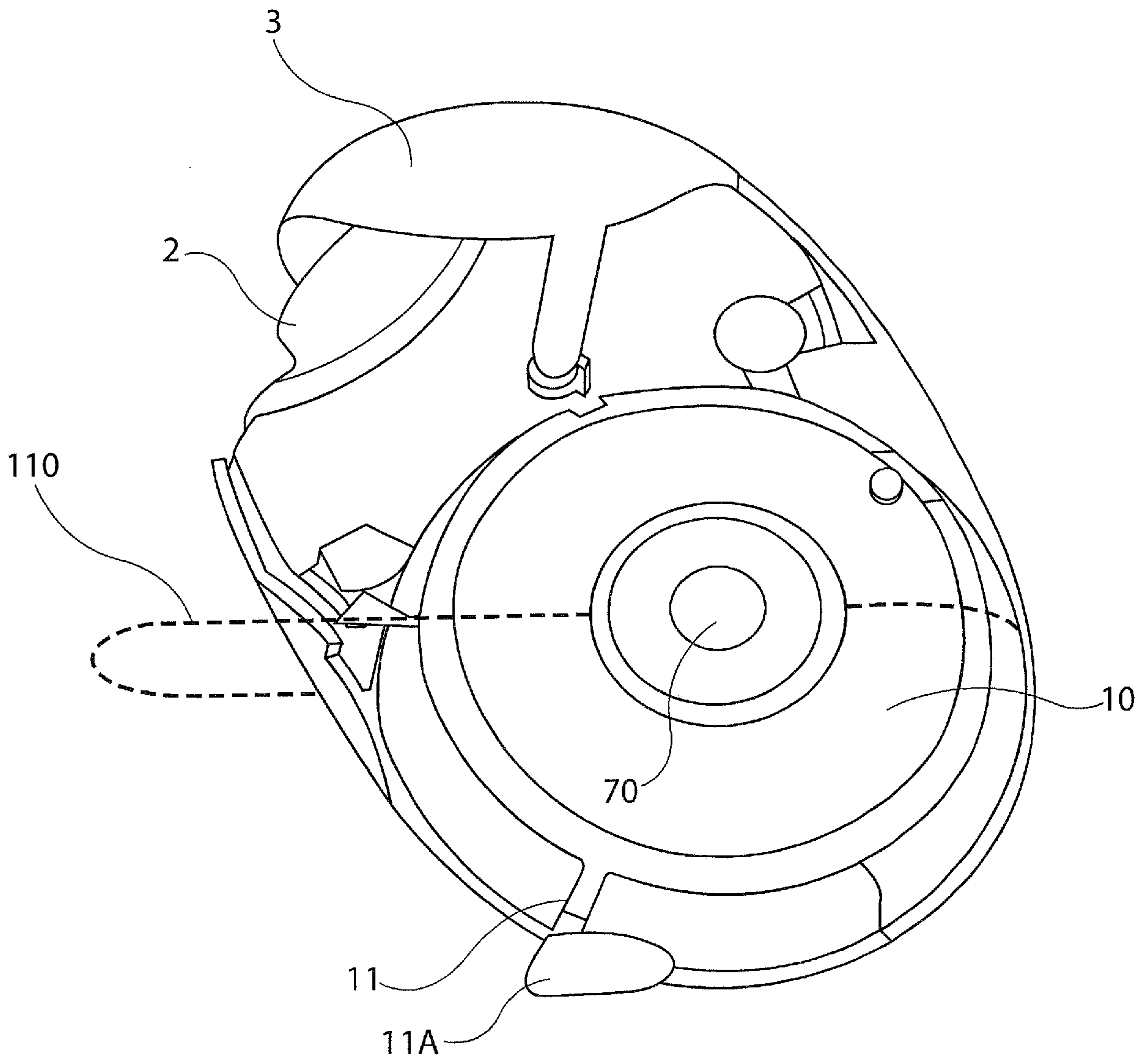
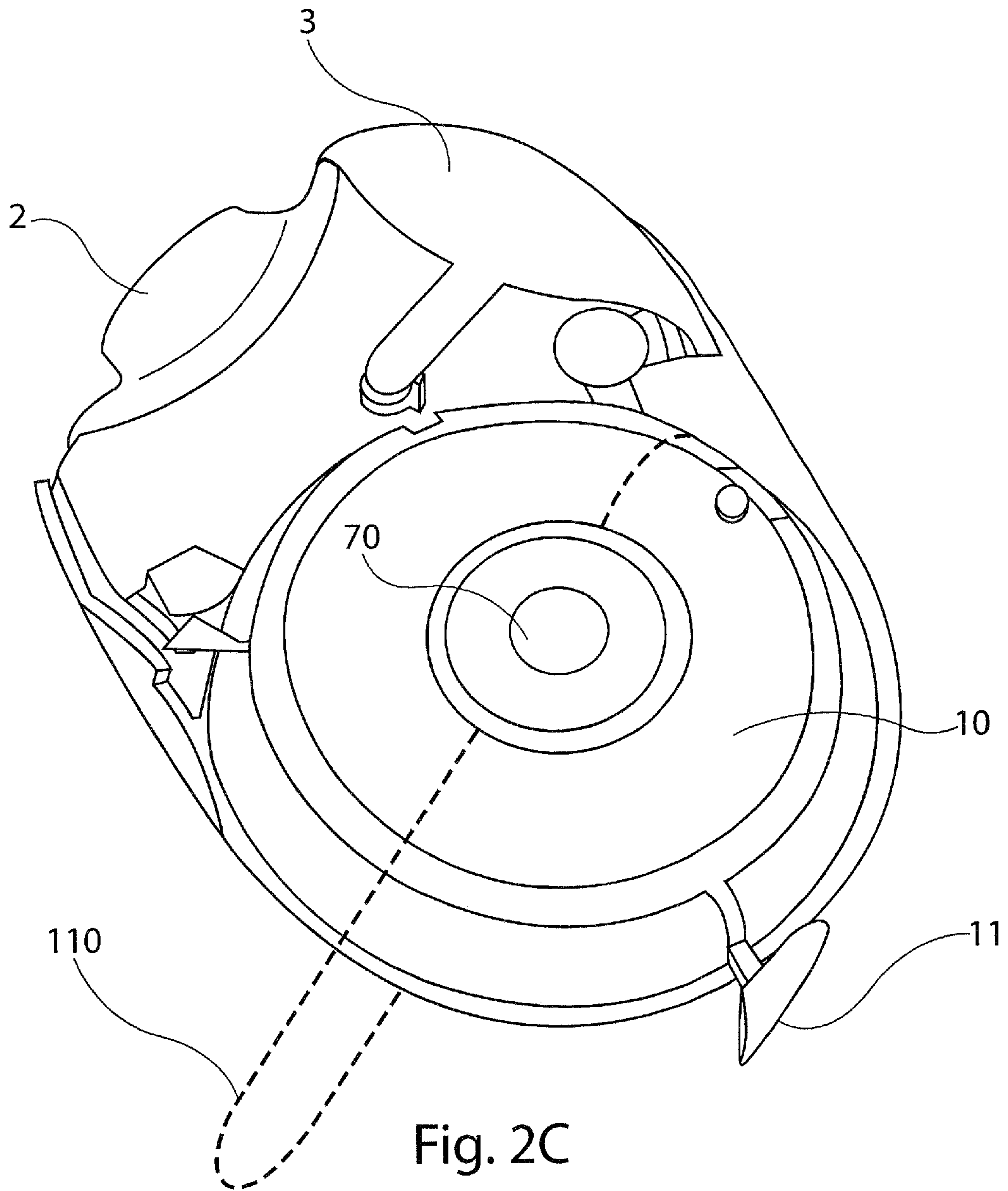


Fig. 2B

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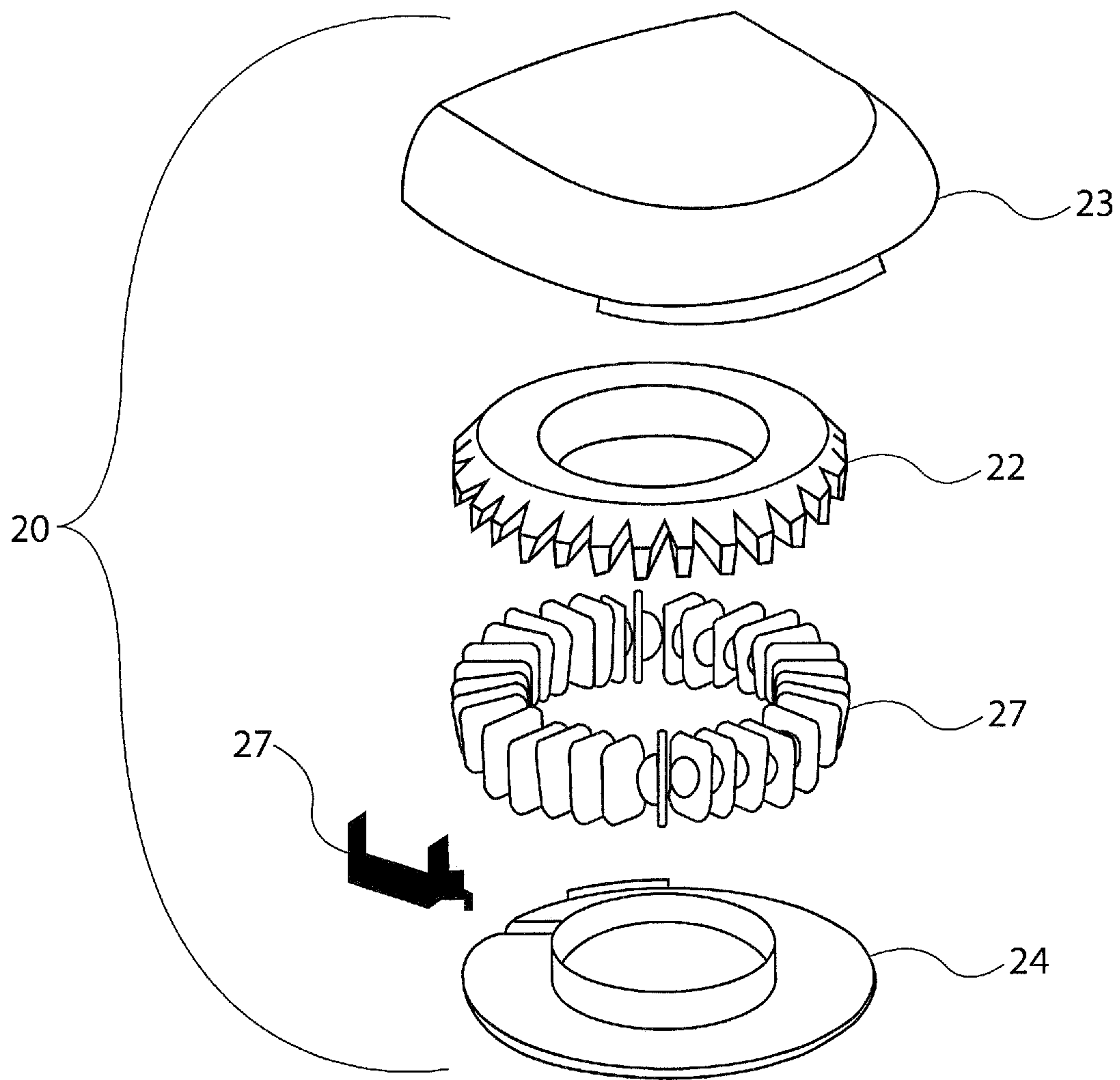


Fig. 3

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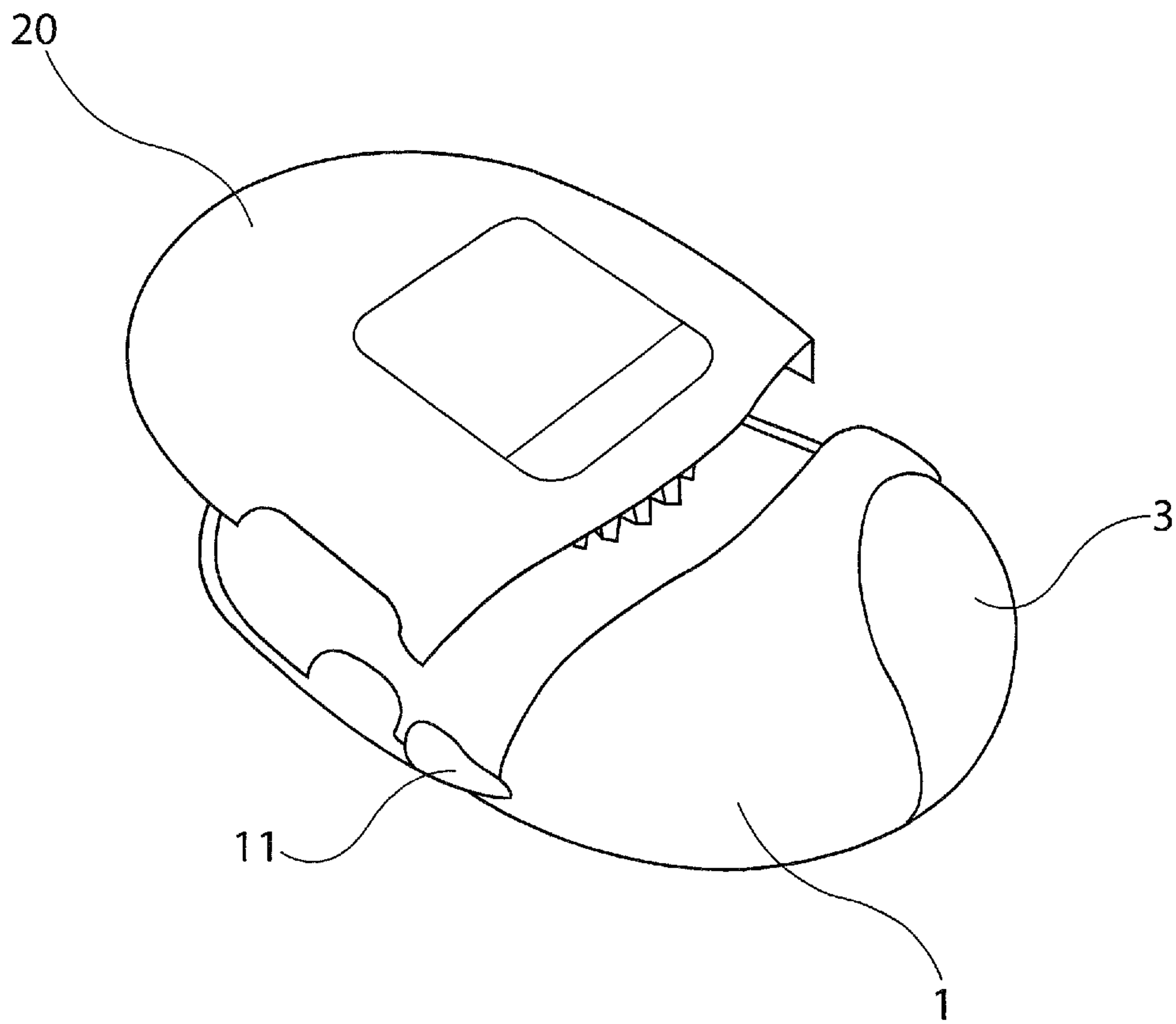


Fig. 4

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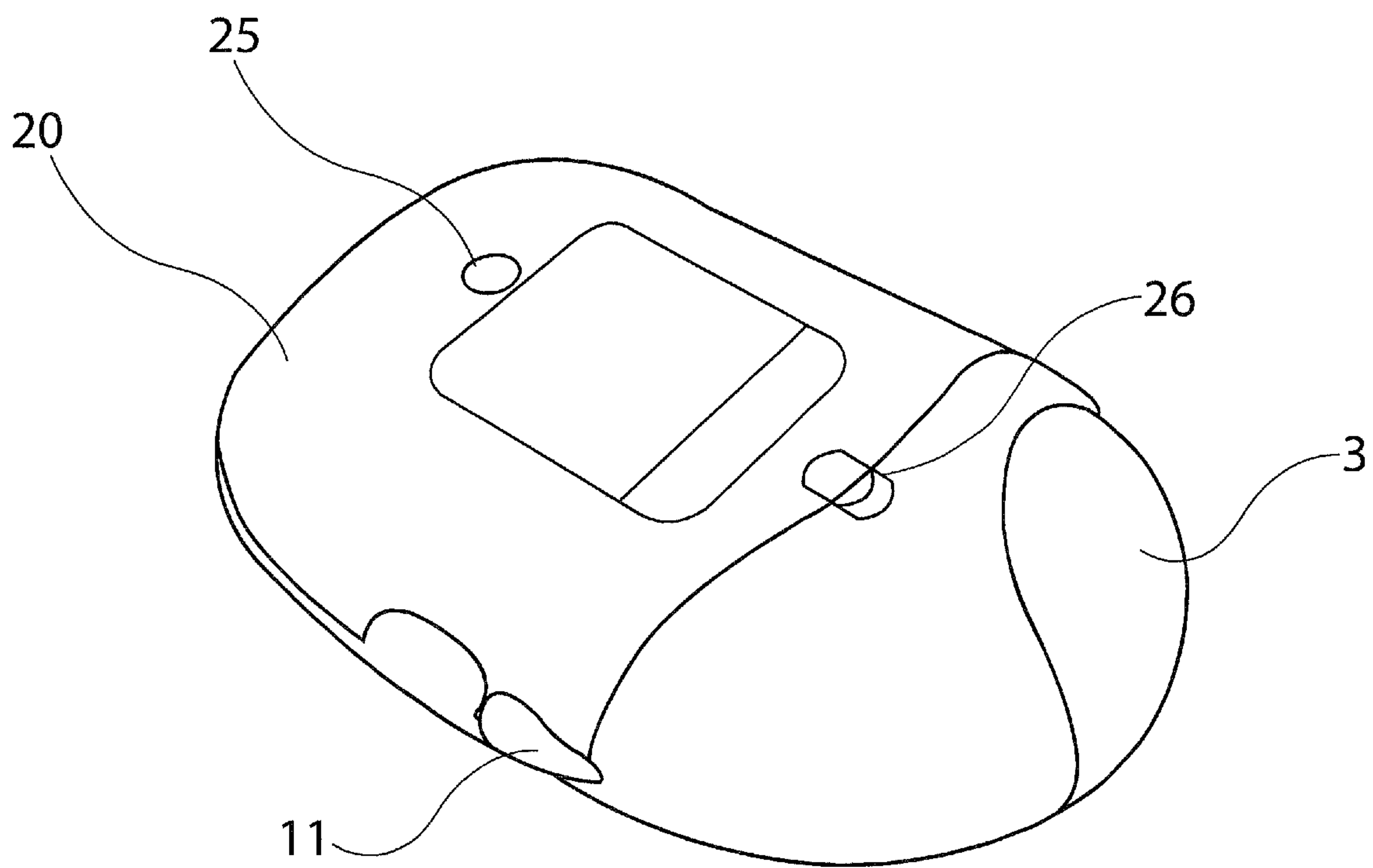


Fig. 5

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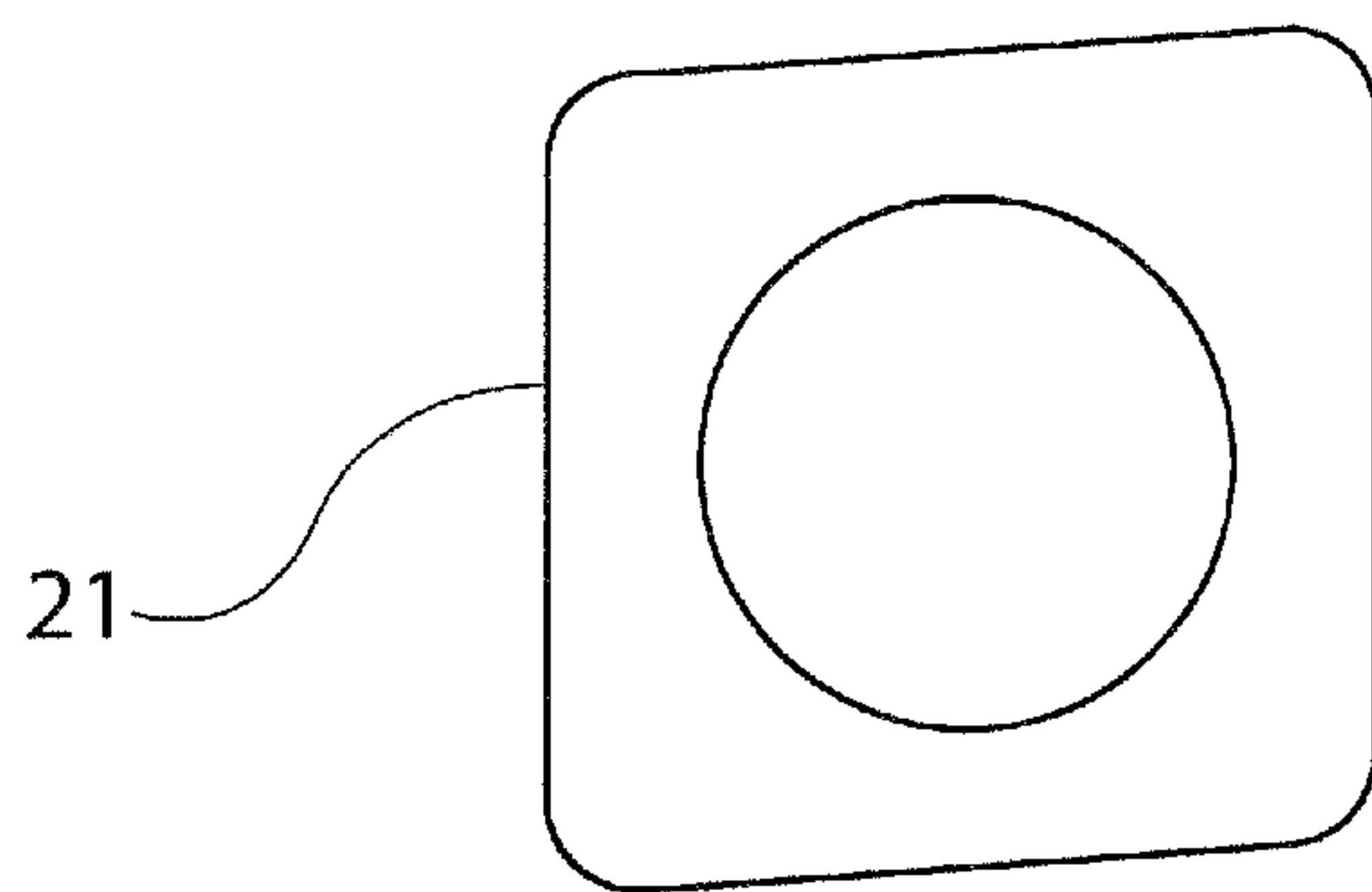


Fig. 6A

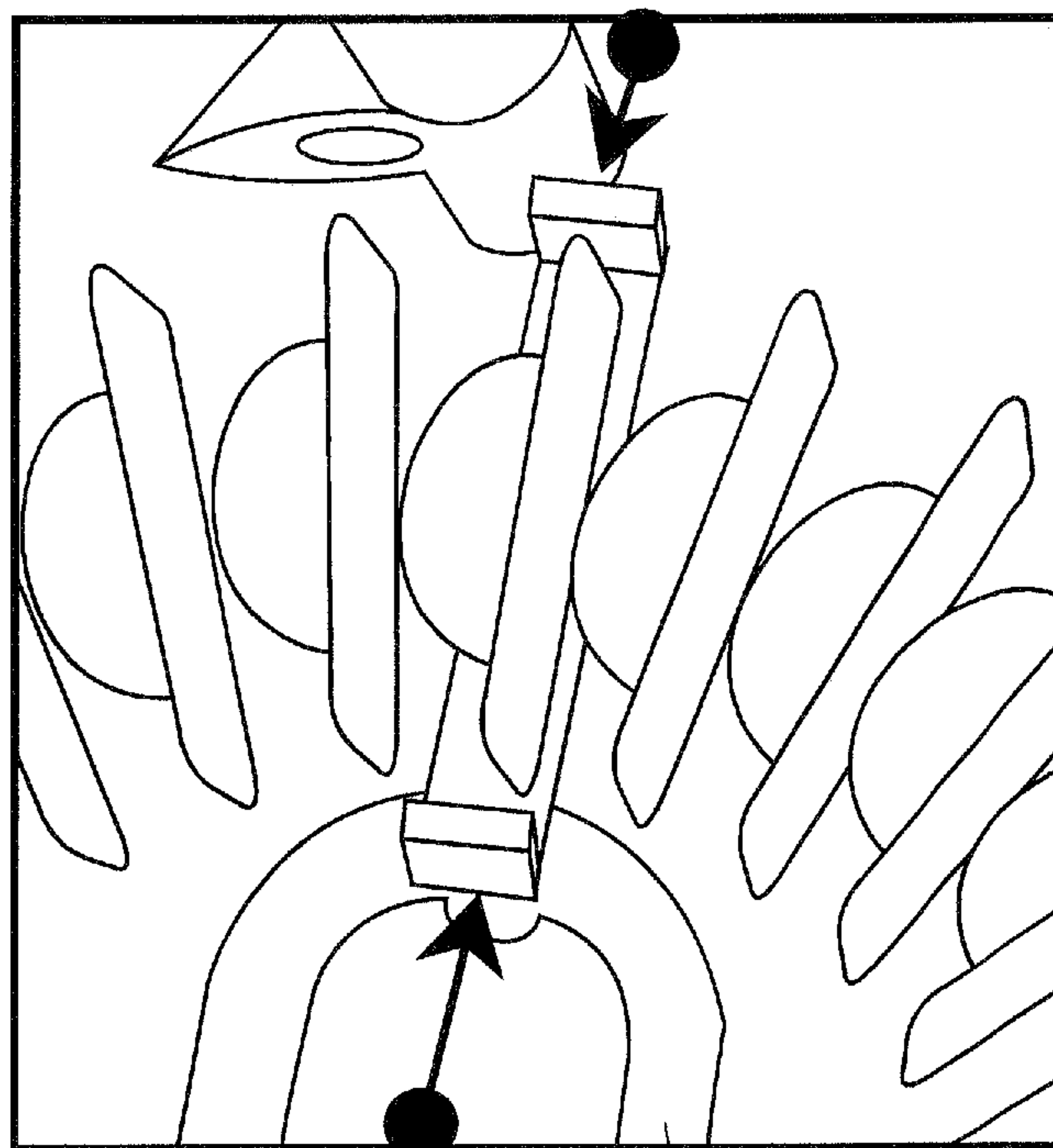


Fig. 6B

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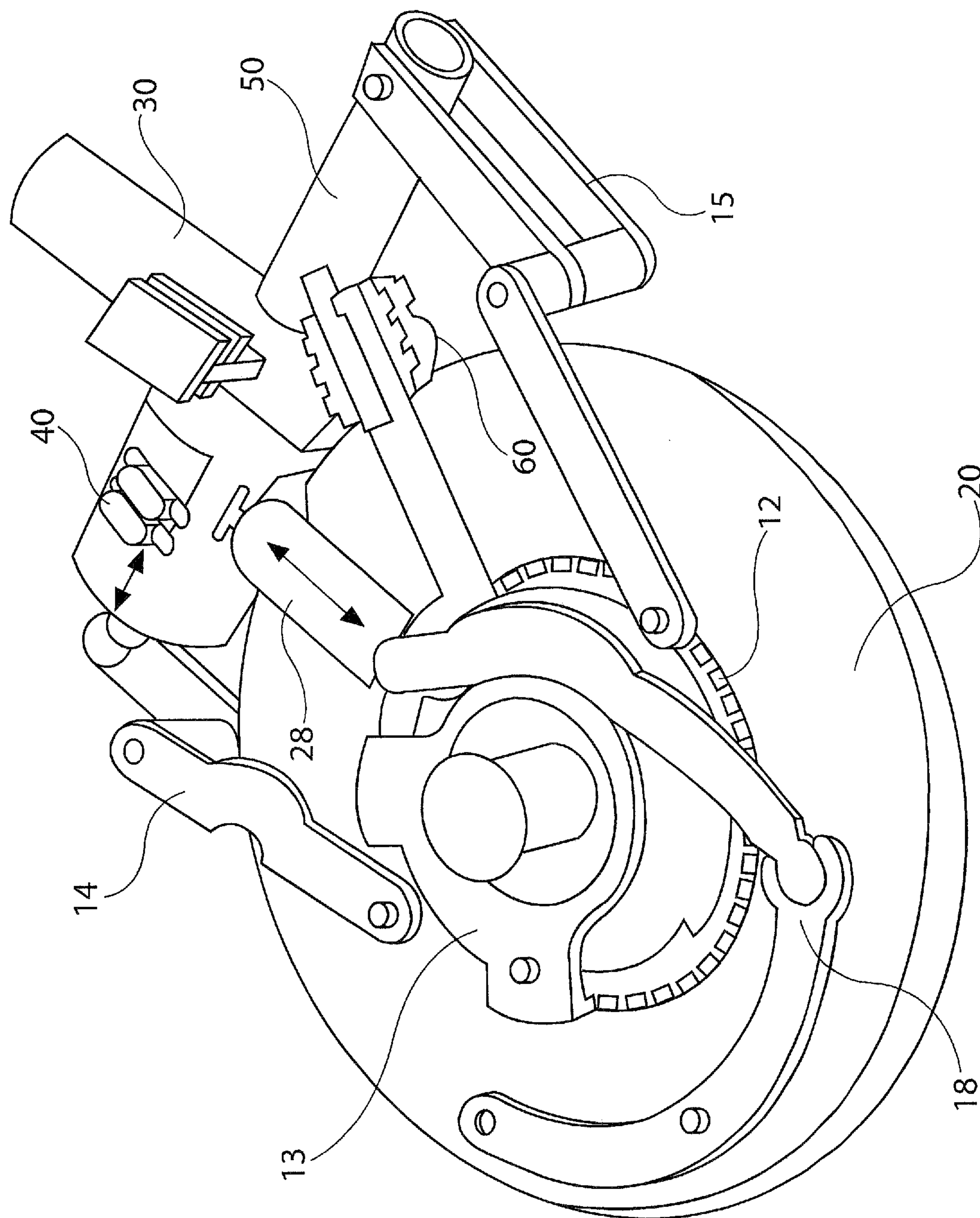


Fig. 7

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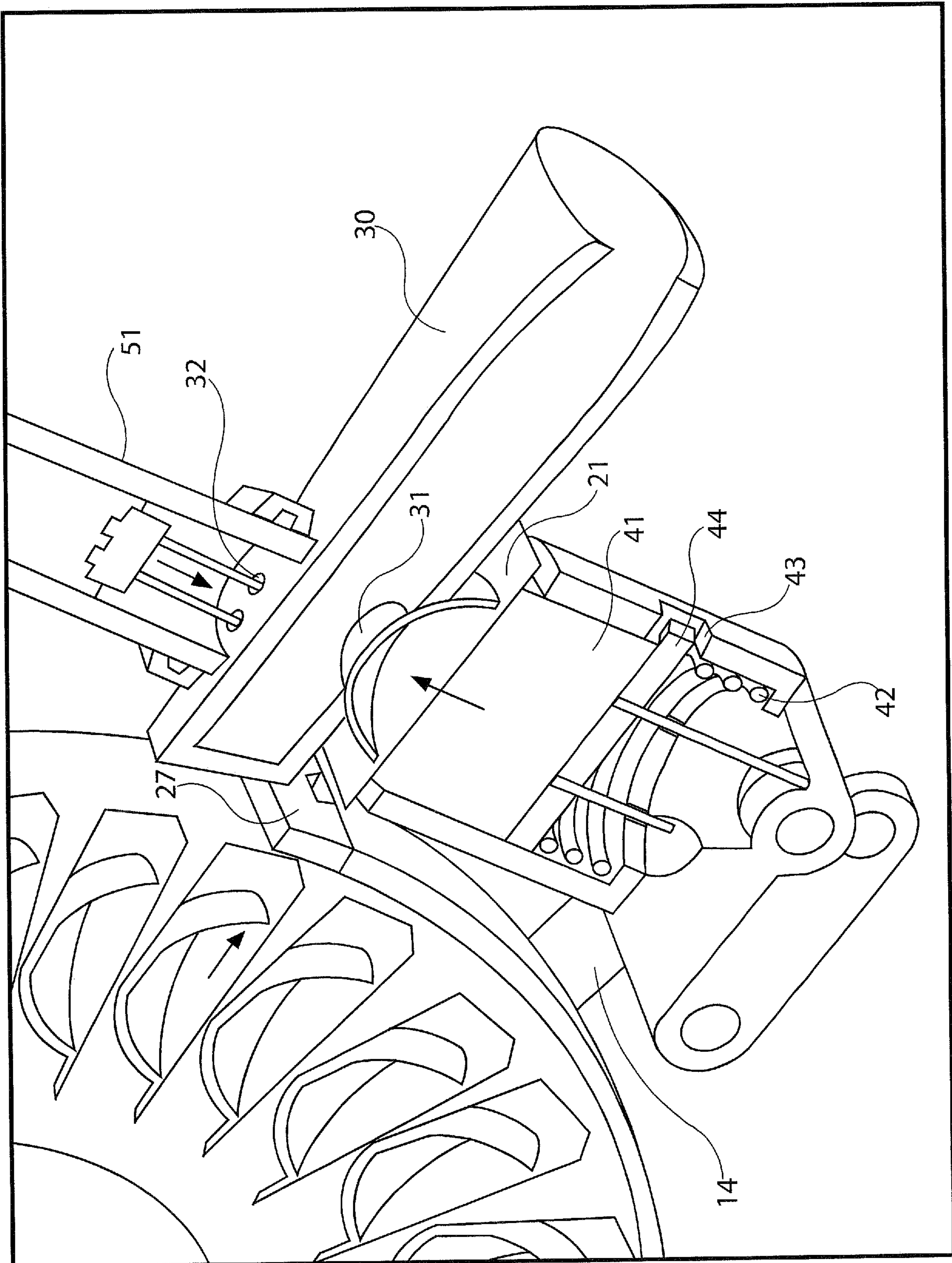


Fig. 8A

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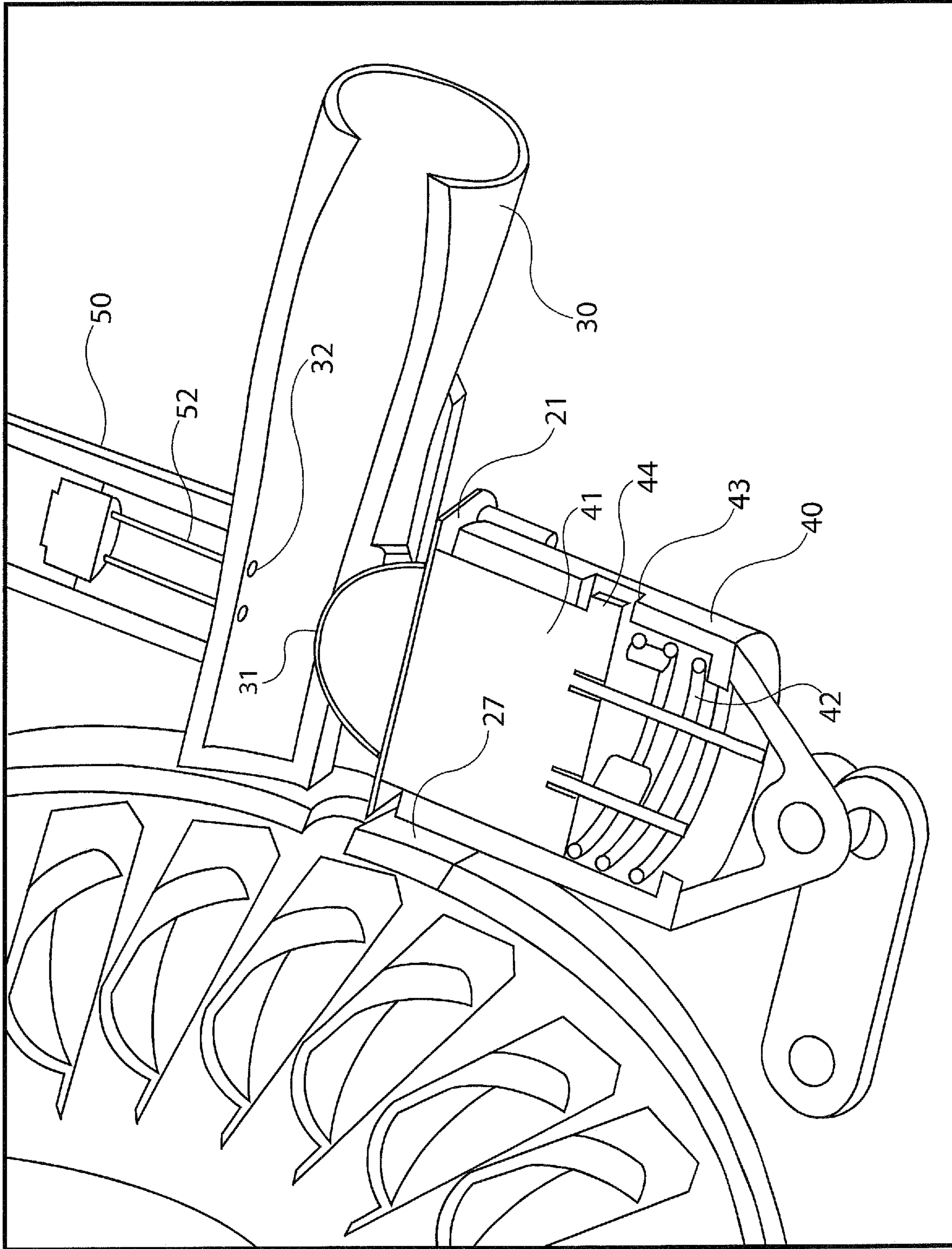


Fig. 8B

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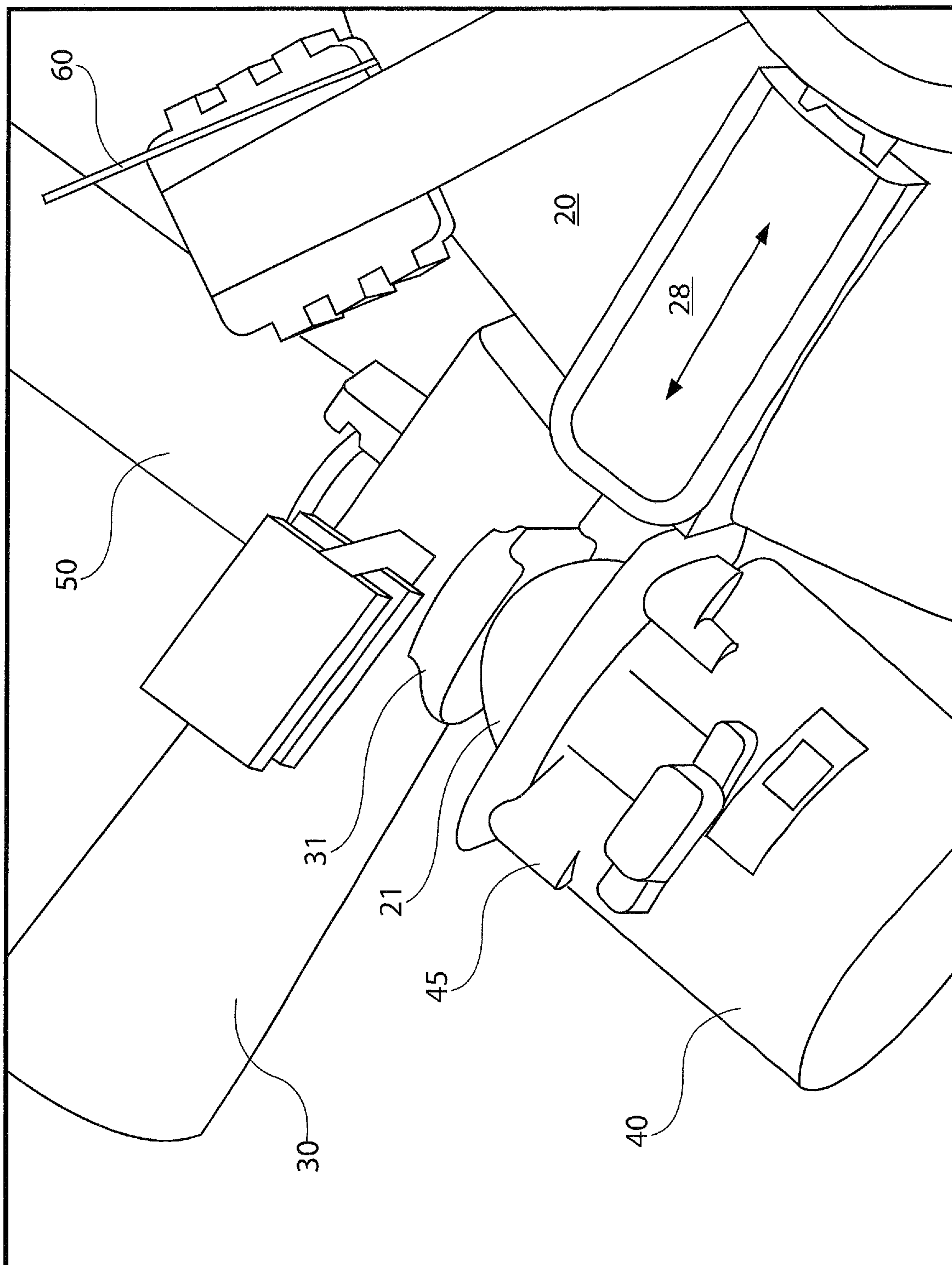


Fig. 9A

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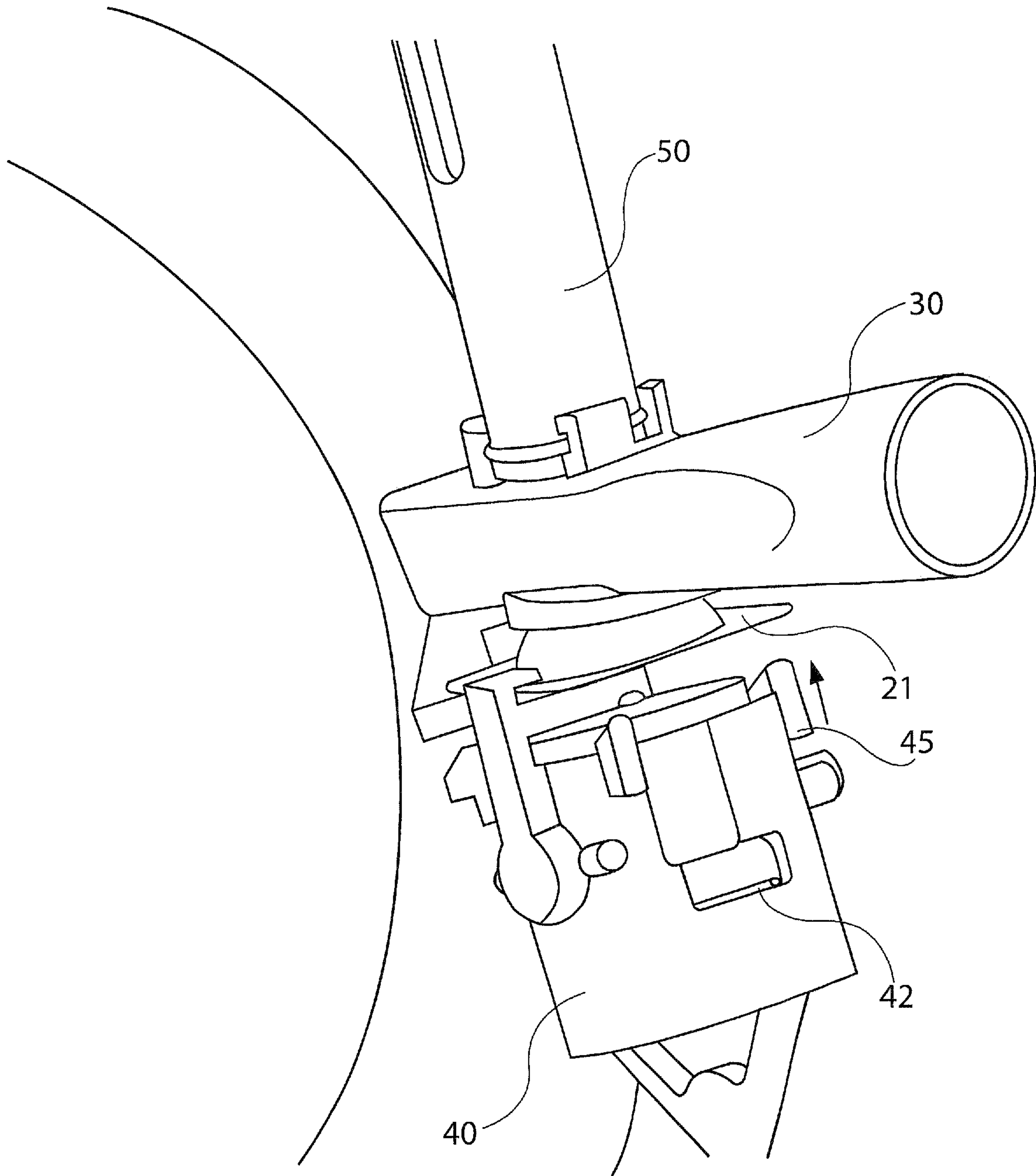


Fig. 9B

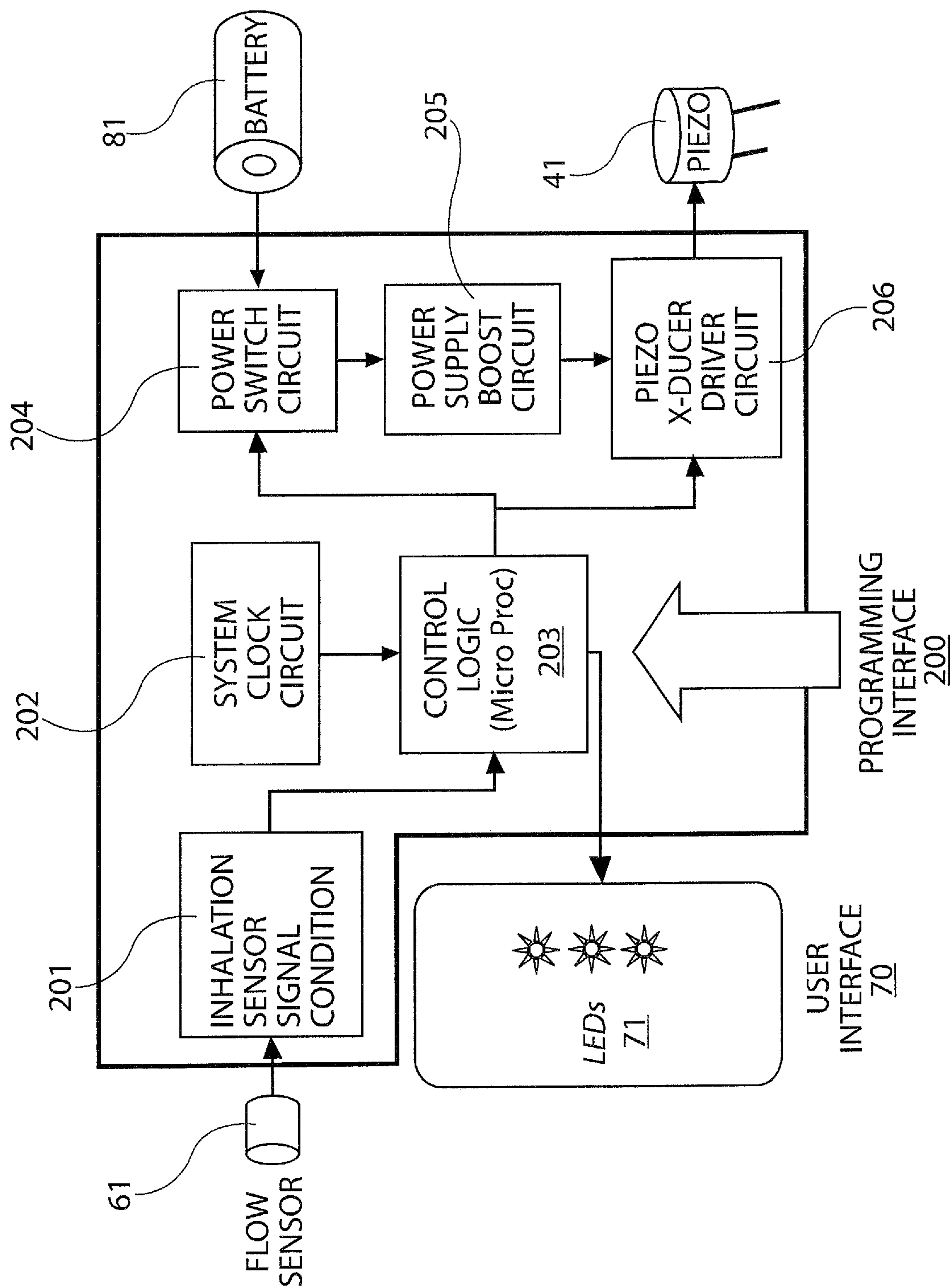


Fig. 10

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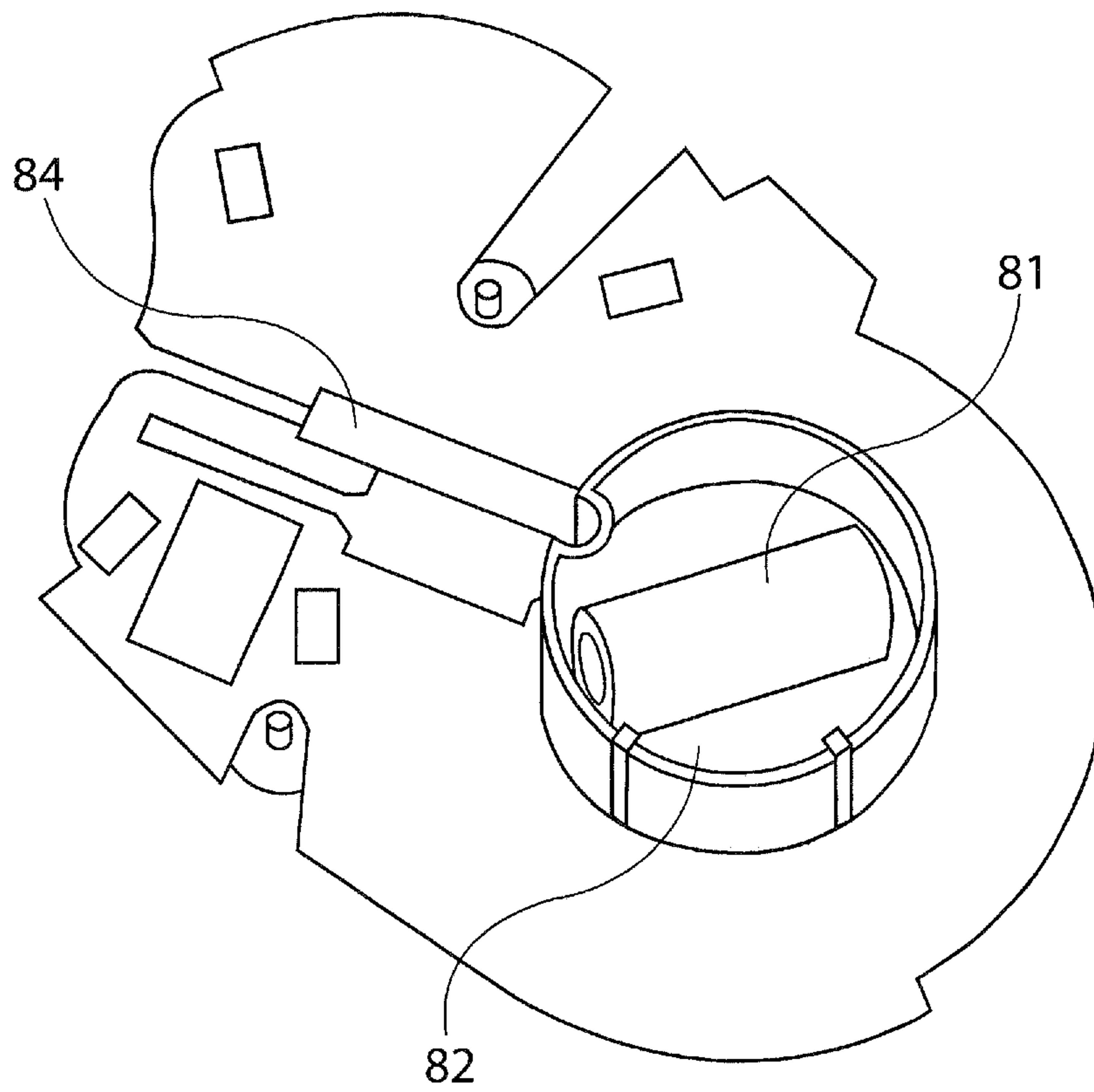


Fig. 11

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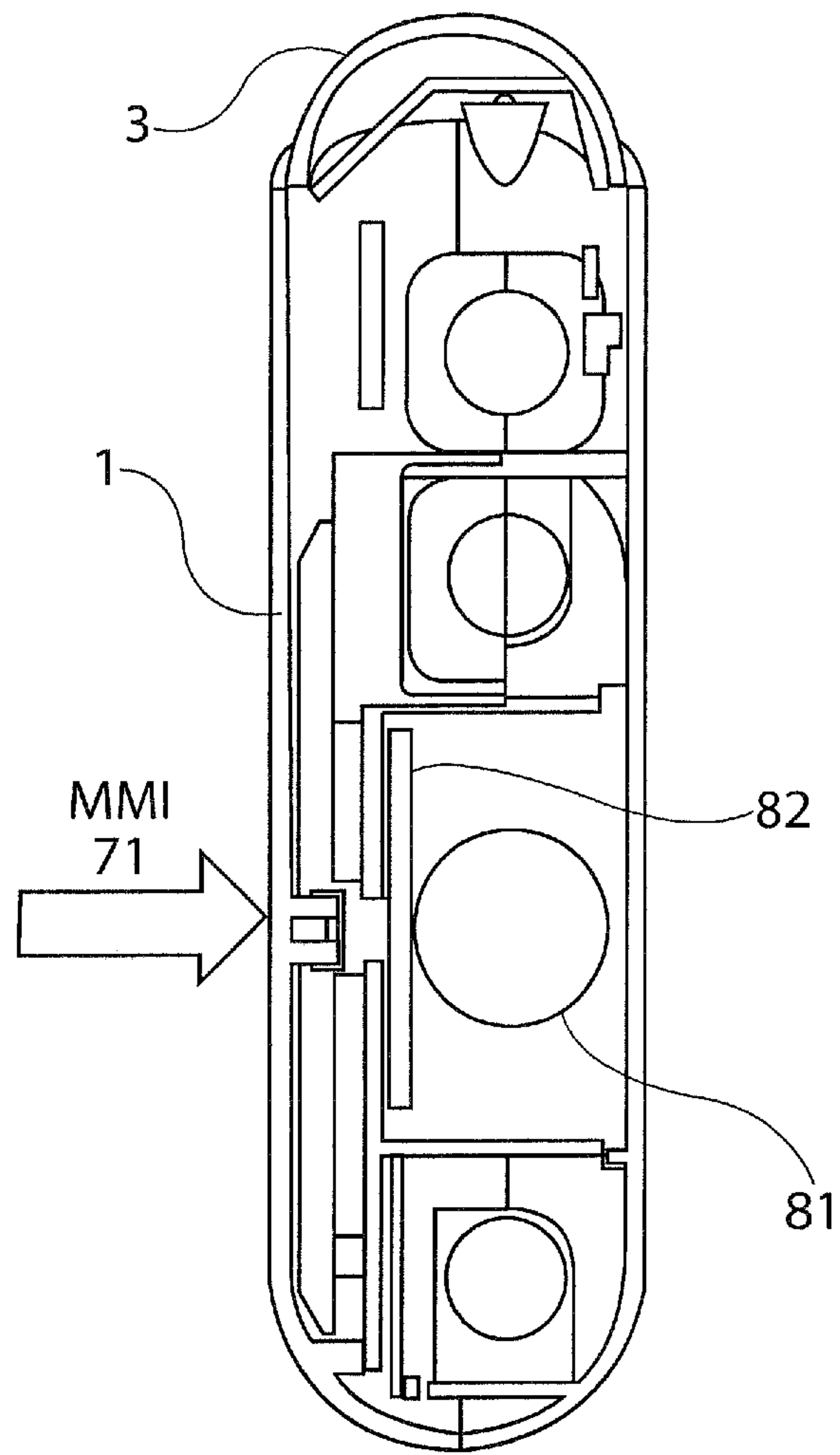


Fig. 12

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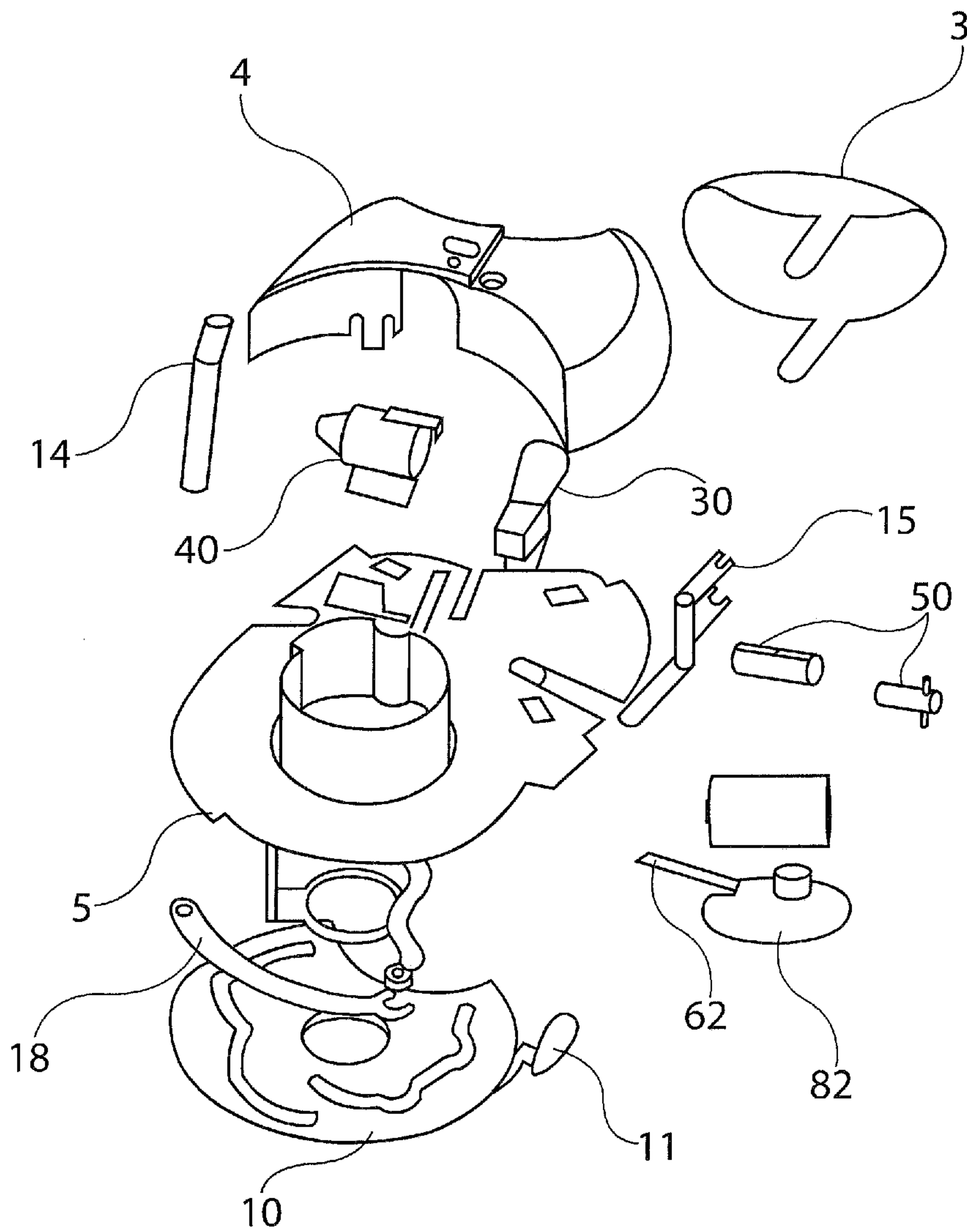


Fig. 13

