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Simpson et al.

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(54) **MEDICAL MALE LUER CONNECTOR WITH INCREASED CLOSING VOLUME**

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(52) **U.S. Cl.** **604/537**

(58) **Field of Classification Search** 604/246,
604/247, 249, 256, 533-537, 905; 251/149.1,
251/149.6

See application file for complete search history.

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Primary Examiner — Kevin C Sirmons

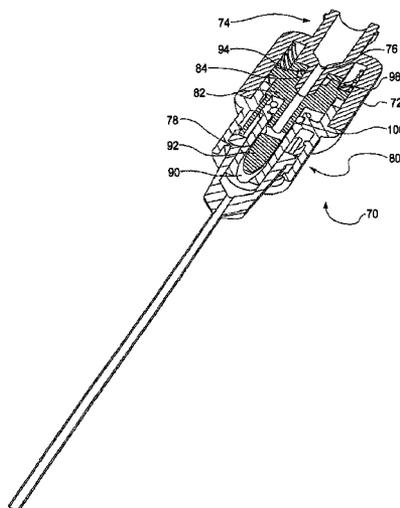
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

Disclosed herein is a valve assembly comprising a male luer end portion and a female luer end portion and a passage for the transfer of fluids extending between the male and female luer end portions, valve means movable between a first position, in which the passage is closed, and a second position, in which the passage is open, biasing means for biasing the valve means toward the first position, and actuating means extending into the male luer end portion and coupled to the valve means to actuate the valve means when a female luer end portion of a medical accessory is engaged with the male luer end portion.

21 Claims, 15 Drawing Sheets



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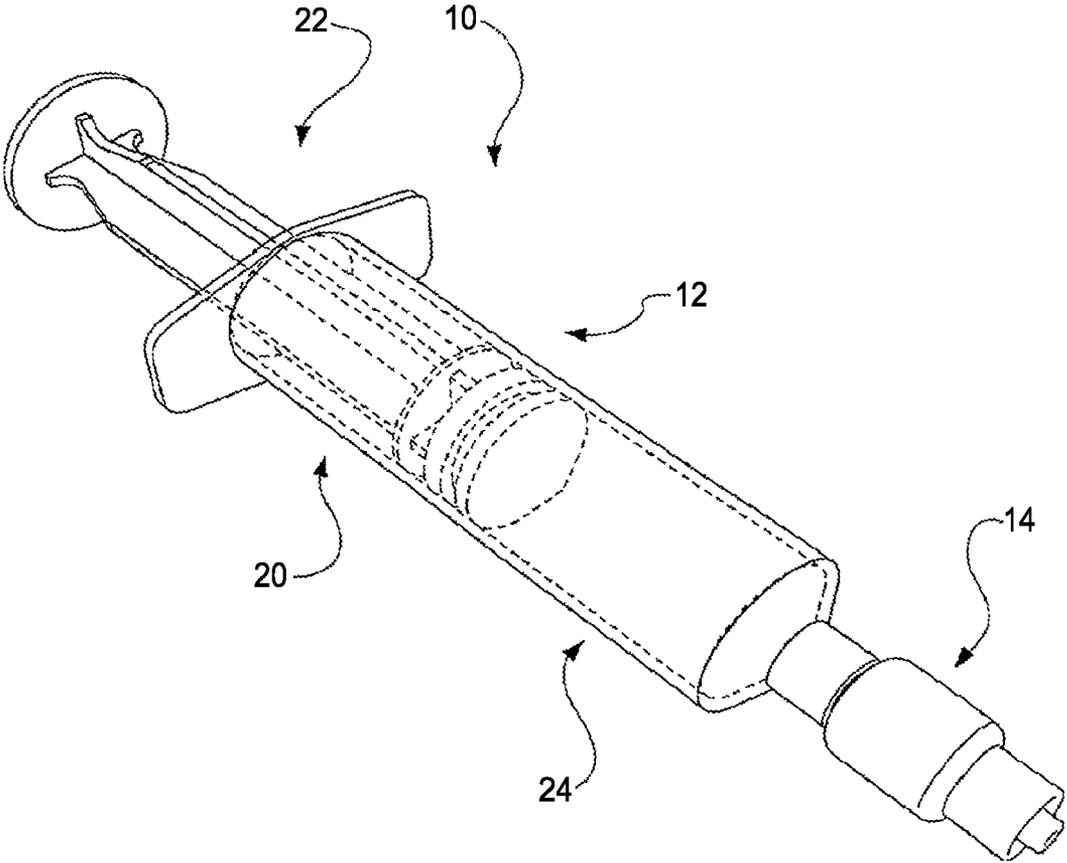


FIG. 1

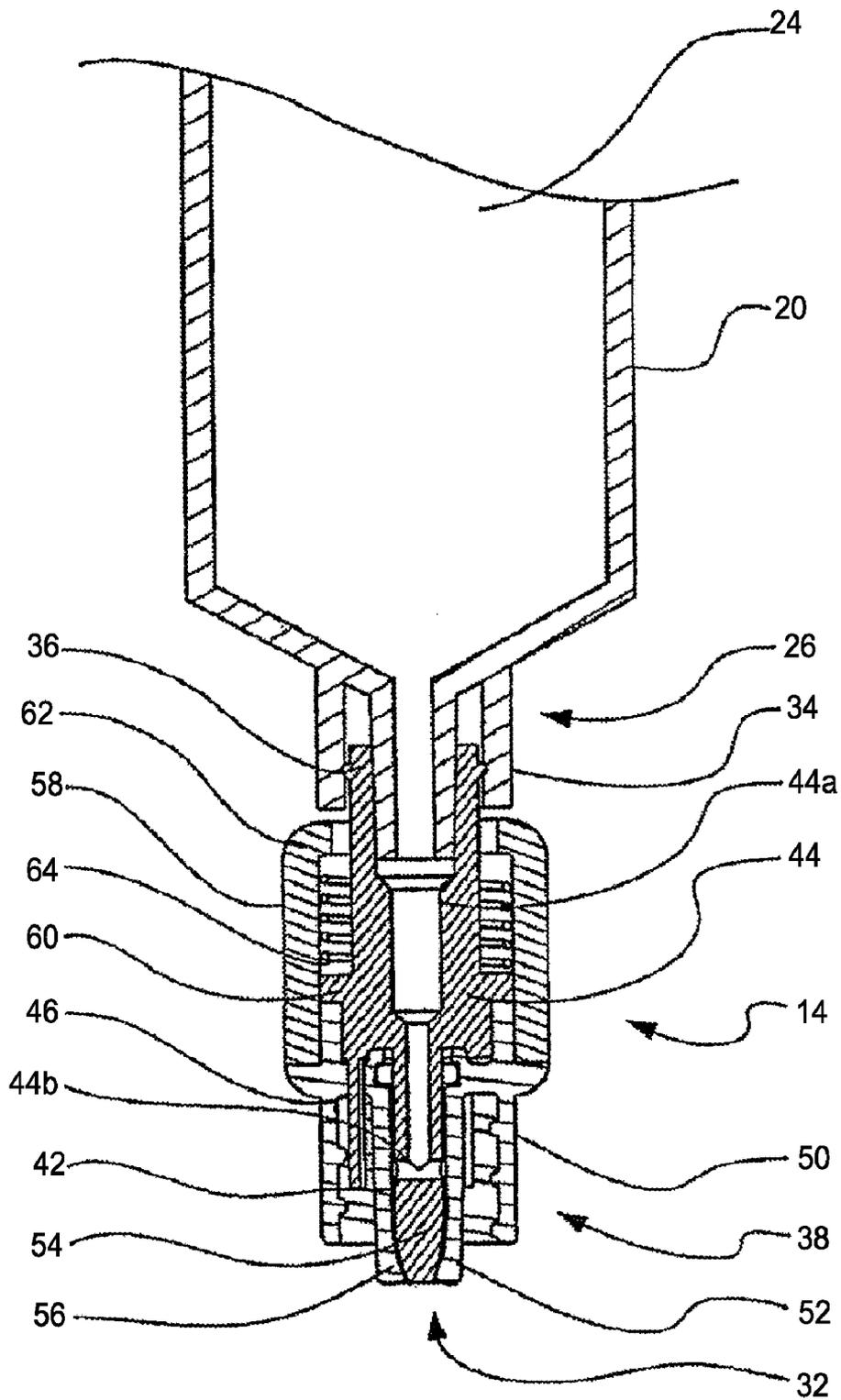


FIG. 2

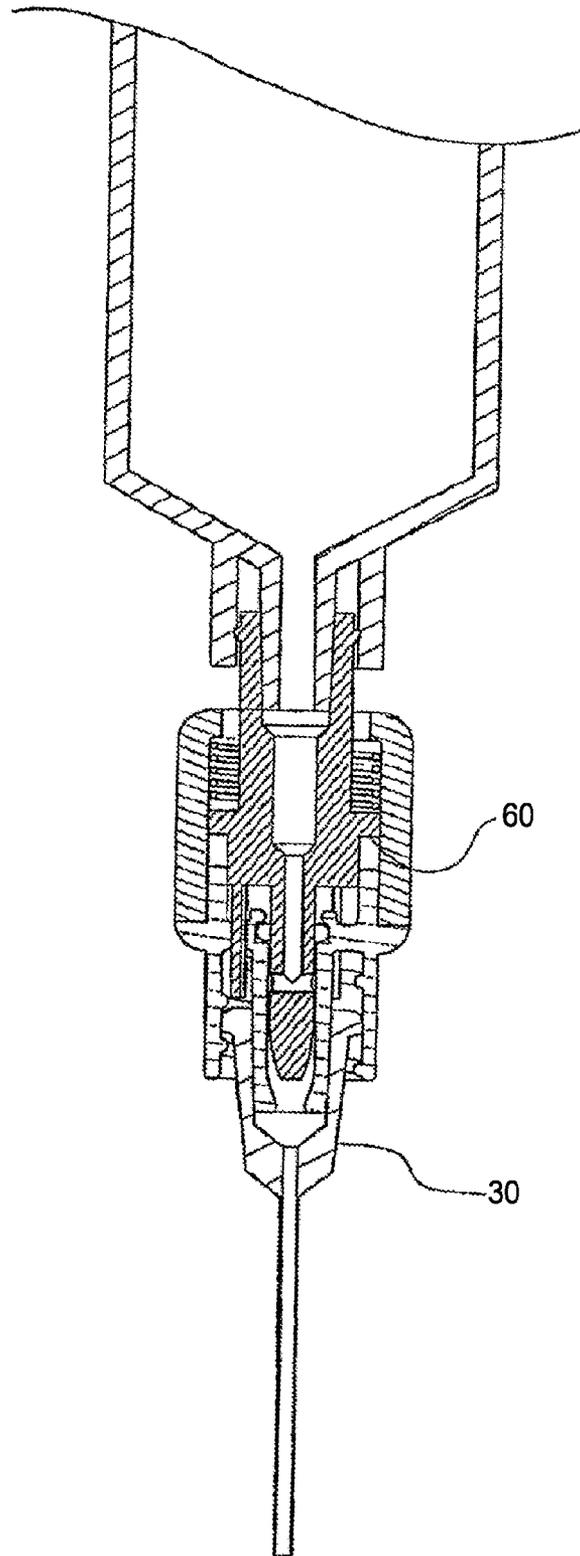


FIG. 3

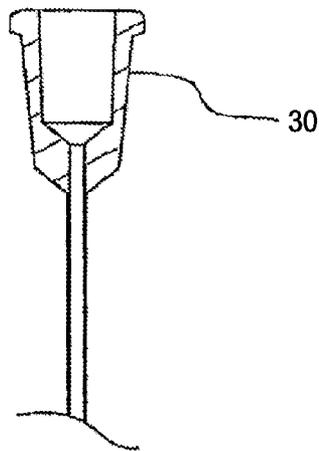
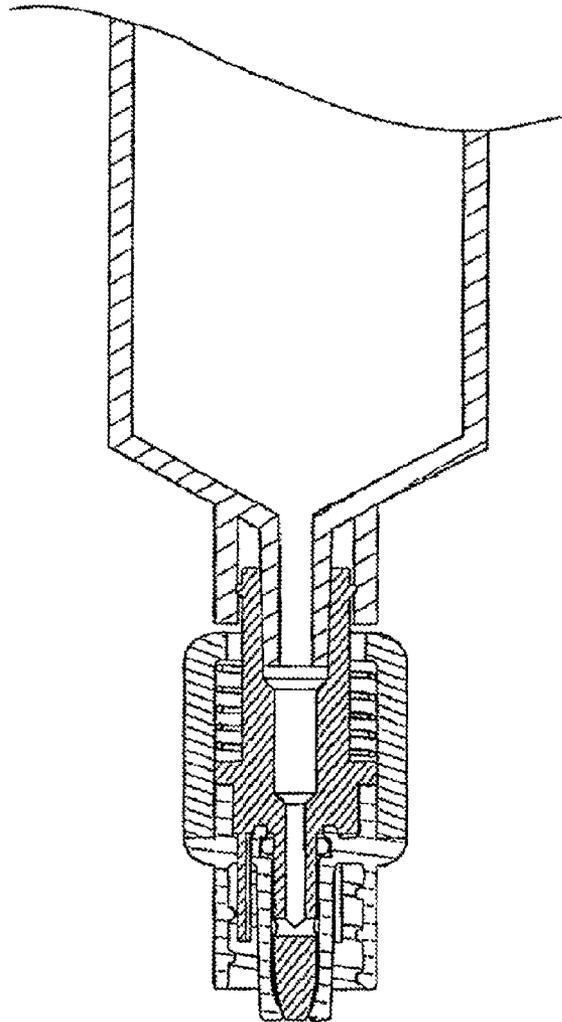


FIG. 4

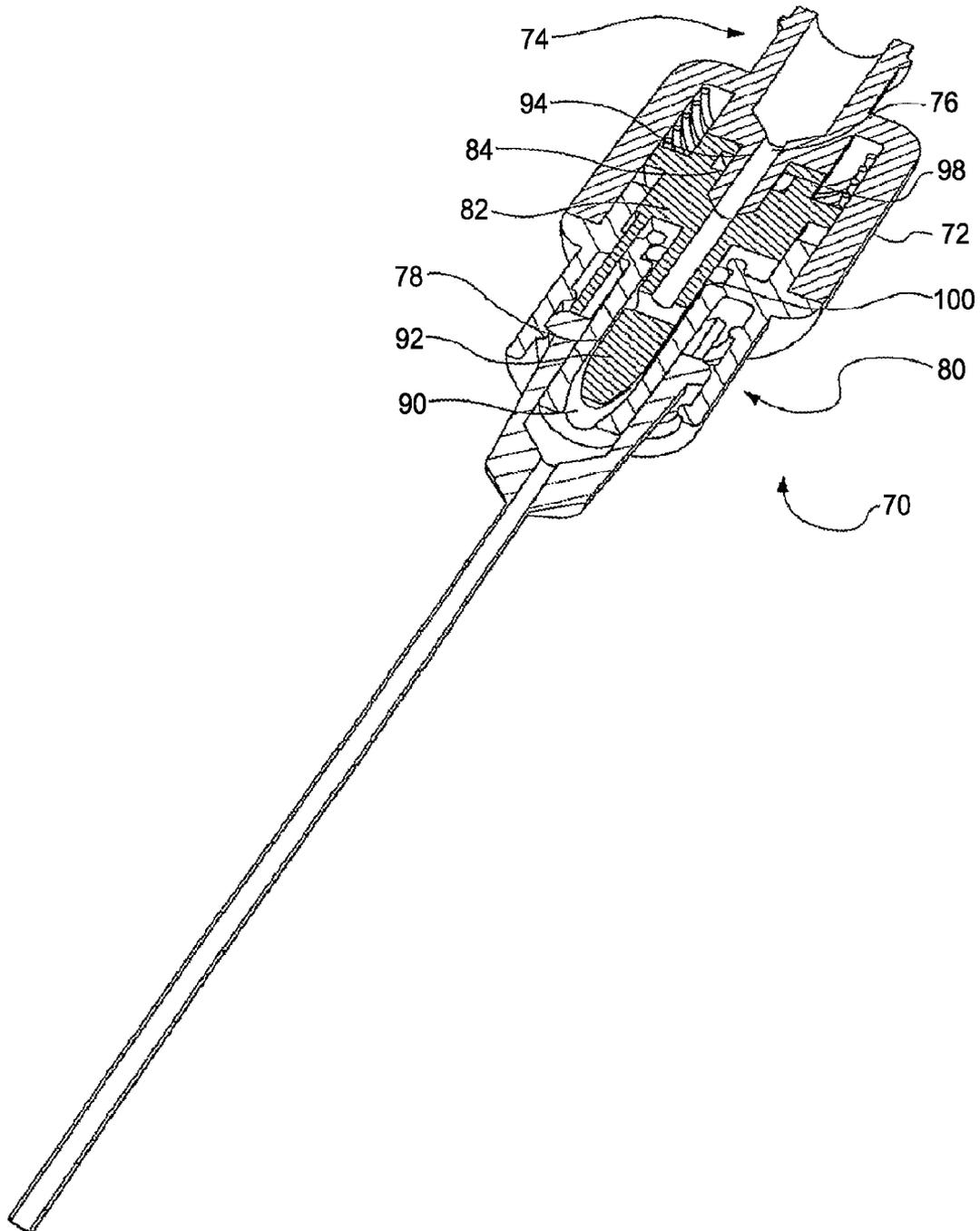


FIG. 5

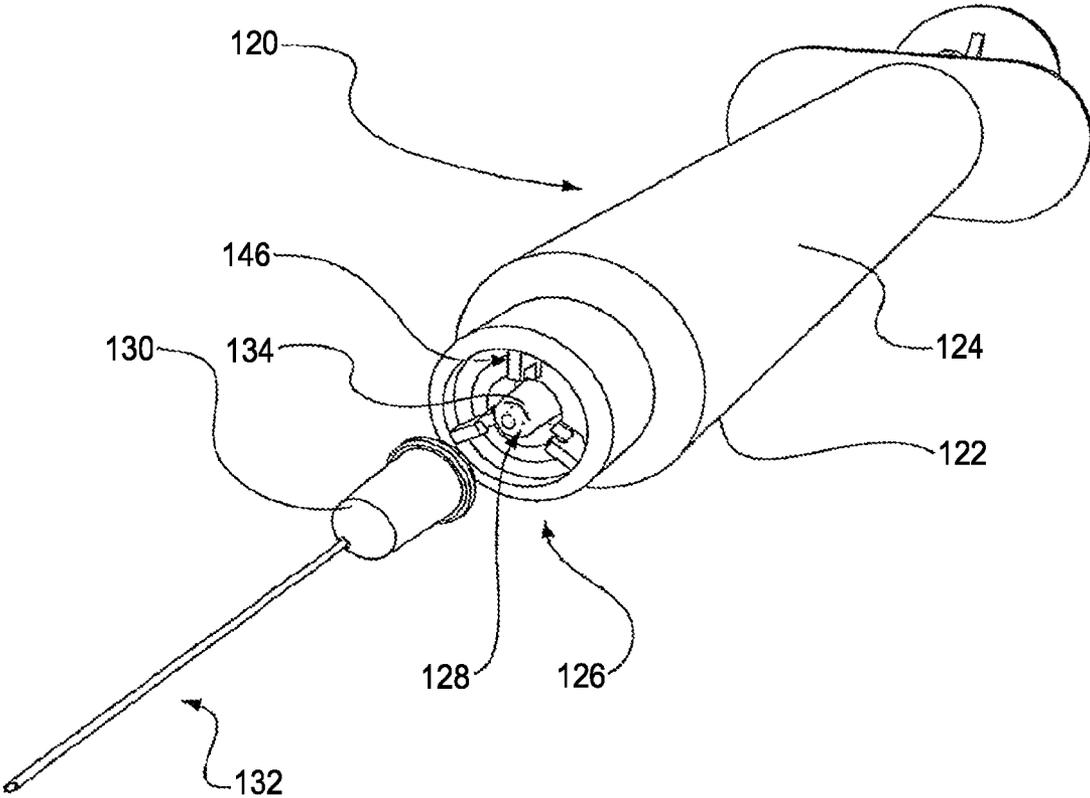


FIG. 6

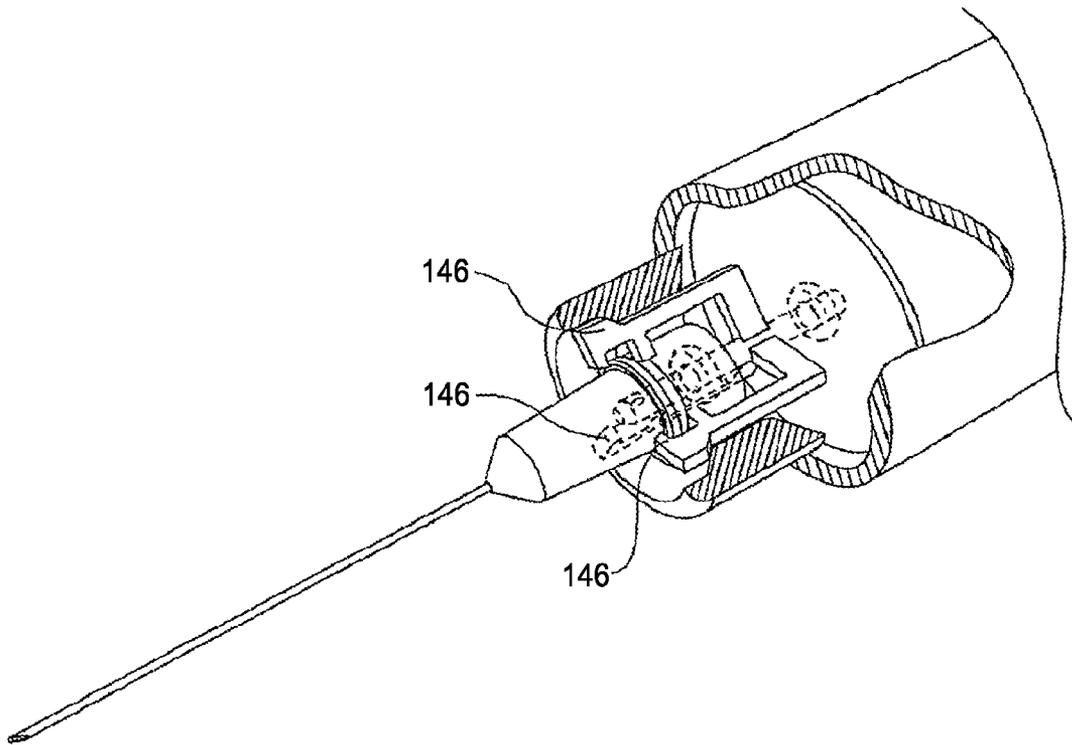


FIG. 7

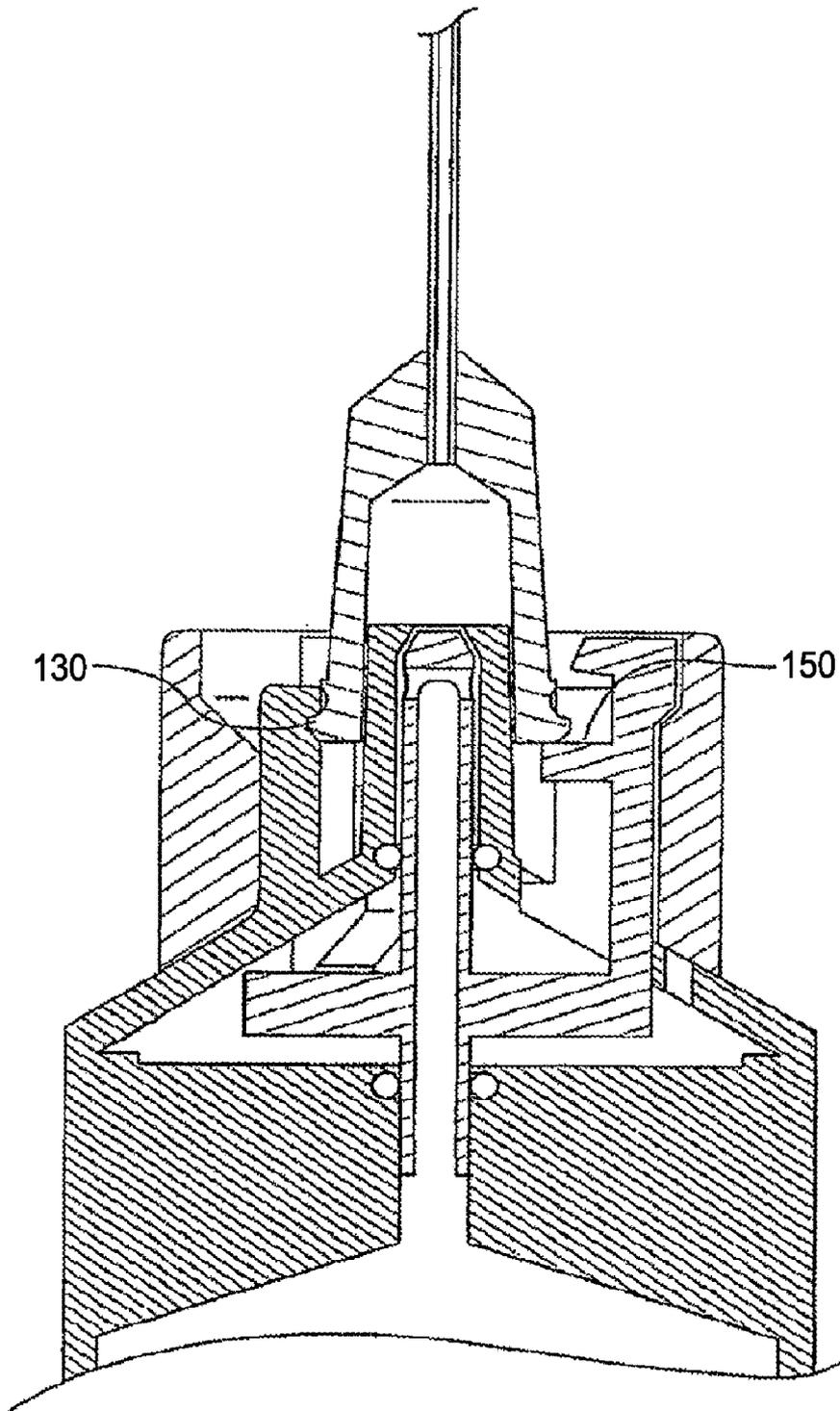


FIG. 9

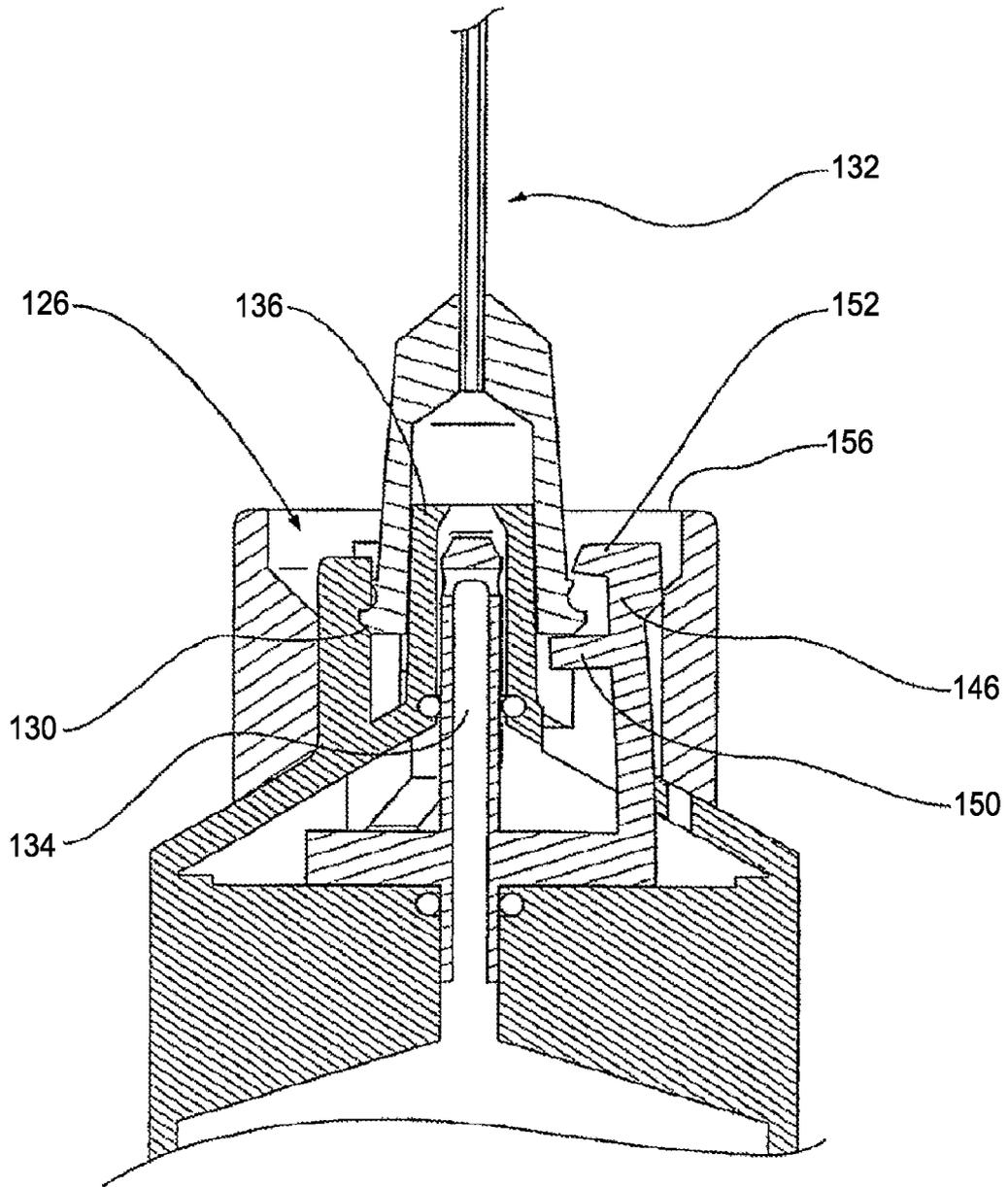


FIG. 10

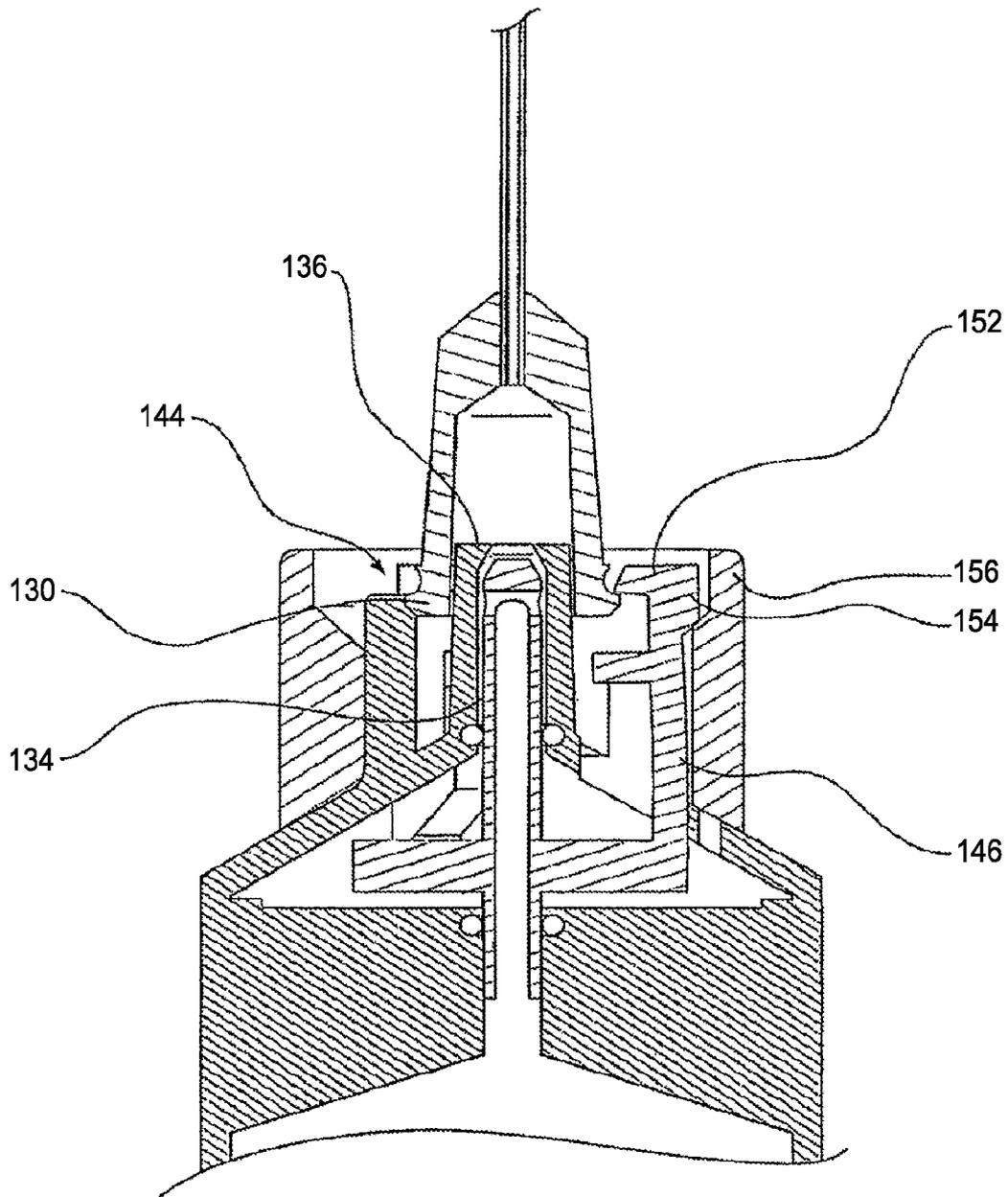


FIG. 11

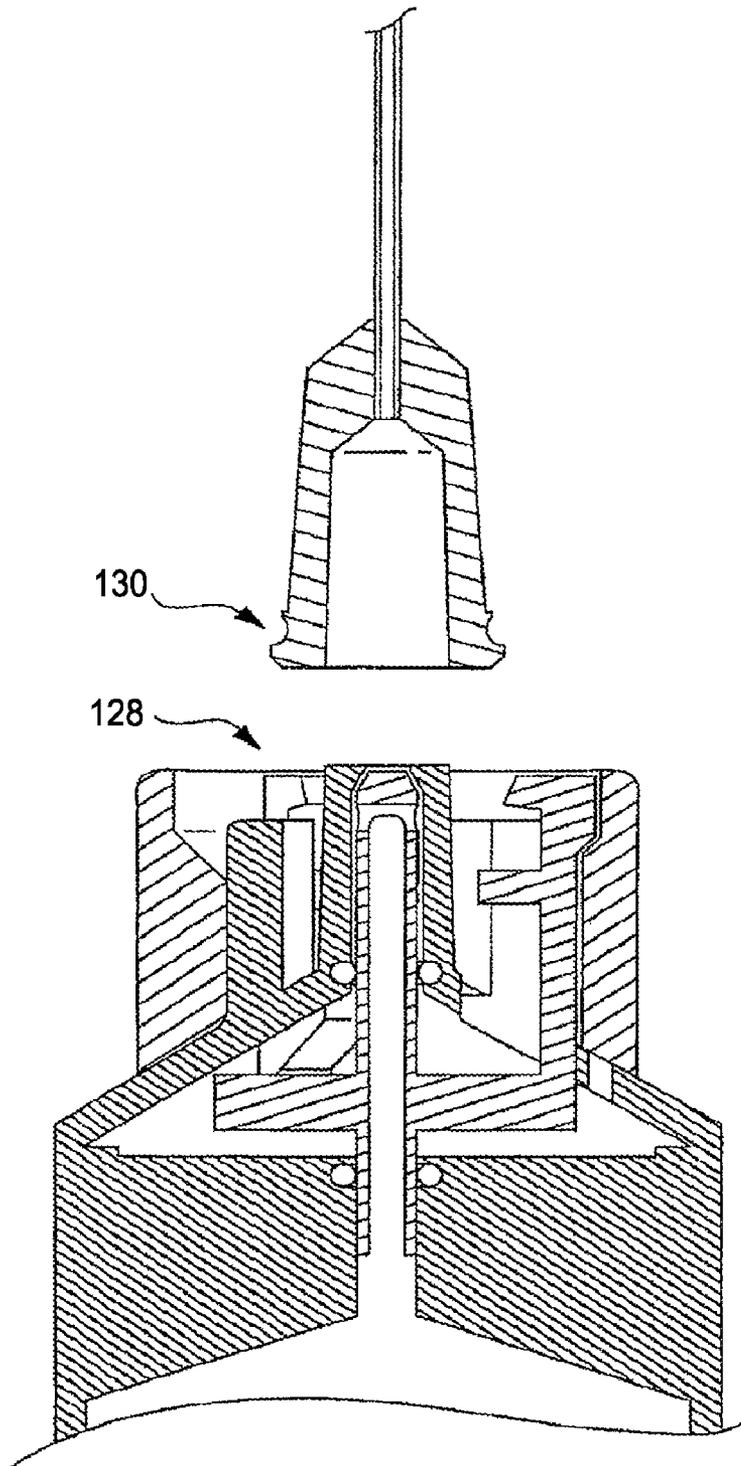


FIG. 12

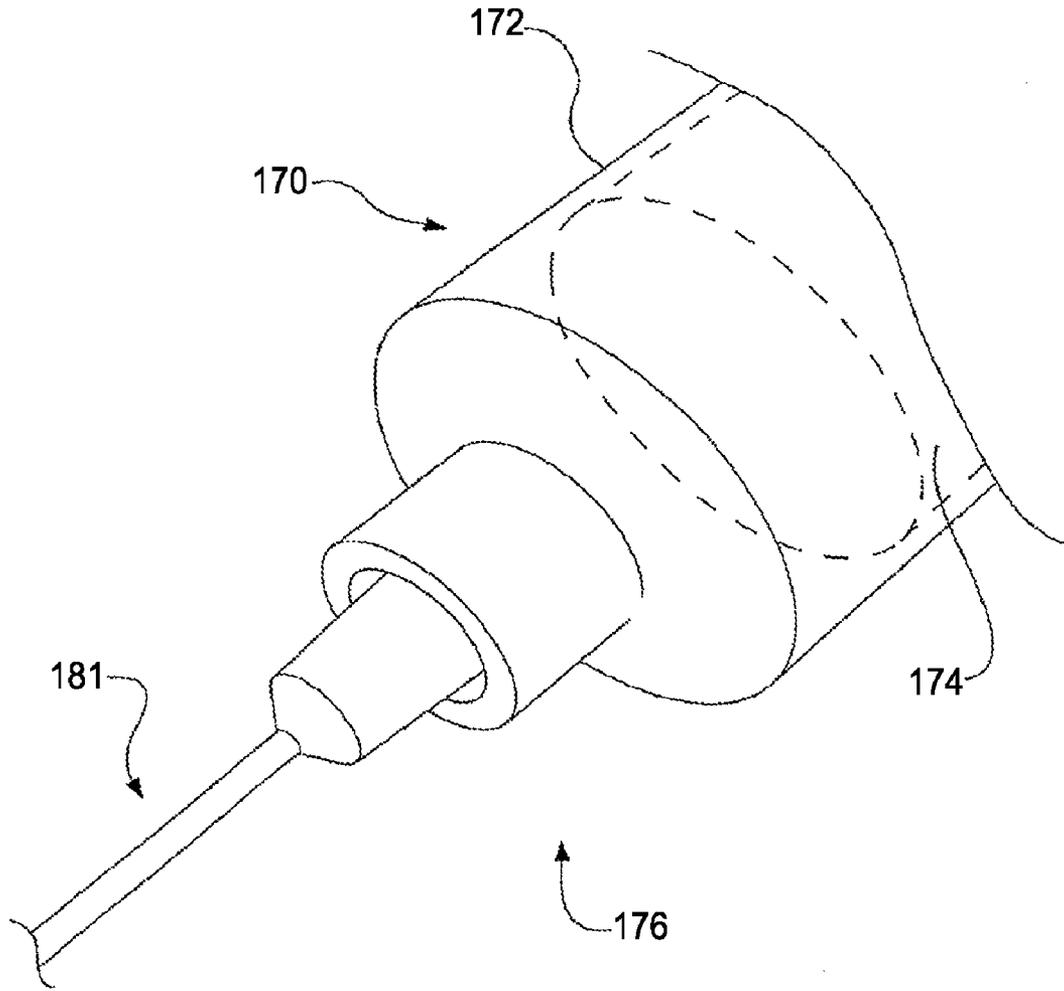


FIG. 13

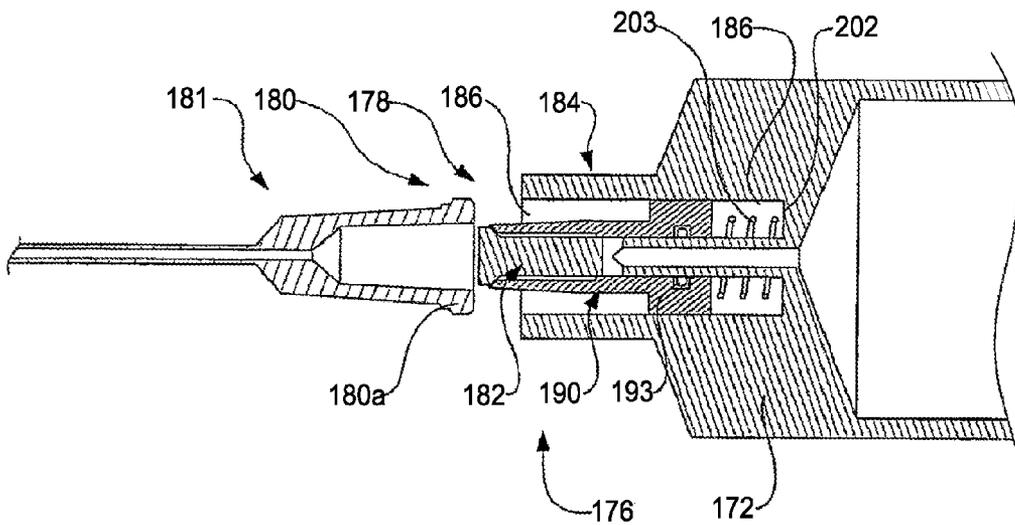


FIG. 14

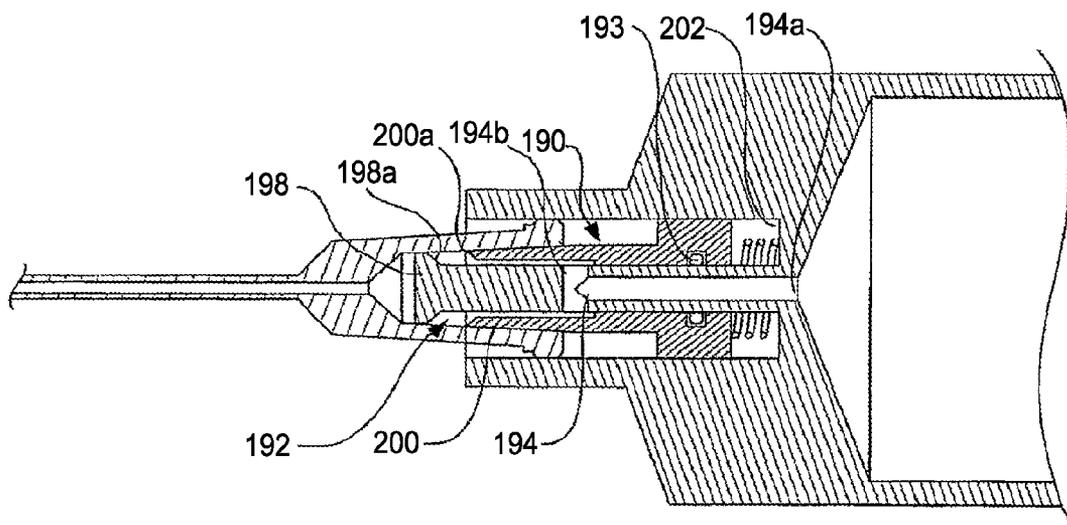


FIG. 15

MEDICAL MALE LUER CONNECTOR WITH INCREASED CLOSING VOLUME

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation of application Ser. No. 10/584,920, filed Dec. 28, 2006, U.S. Pat. No. 7,758,566, issued Jul. 20, 2010, which is the National Stage Entry of International Application No. PCT/US04/42723, filed Dec. 21, 2004, which claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/532,916, filed Dec. 30, 2003; the entire contents of each of which are hereby incorporated by reference herein and made a part of this specification.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to medical fluid delivery valves and more particularly to valve assemblies for use with syringes or other medical dispensing devices.

2. Description of the Related Art

Syringes are commonly used to deliver medications and other biological fluids to a patient. The syringe typically has a plunger which is sealingly engaged with an outer cylindrical chamber to form an inner fluid-receiving chamber. A 'male' luer fitting is usually provided at a delivery end of the chamber which receives a female luer fitting with a needle assembly or the like. The fluid channel joining the cavity to the luer fitting is usually open, so that when the needle is removed, the cavity is open to the environment. This is problematic since many medications and biological fluids are sensitive (or can degrade when exposed) to the environment.

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a novel valve assembly for use with a syringe or other medical dispensing devices, enabling the latter to be closed to the environment when in an unattached condition.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In one of its aspects, the present invention provides a valve assembly comprising a male luer end portion, a female luer end portion and a channel for the transfer of fluids between the male and female luer end portions, valve means movable between a closed position and an open position, biasing means for biasing the valve means toward the closed position, and actuating means extending into the male luer end portion and coupled to the valve means to actuate the valve means when a female luer end portion of a medical accessory is coupled with the male luer end portion.

In an embodiment the male luer end portion has an inner projection and outer threaded sheath which is spaced therefrom to receive the female luer end portion therebetween. The actuating means includes an actuating member positioned between the outer threaded sheath and the inner projection.

In an embodiment, the valve means includes a valve seat and a valve member moveable relative thereto. The channel includes a first channel portion adjacent the female luer end portion and the inner projection includes a second channel portion. The valve member has a valve channel portion in fluid communication with the first and second channel portions. The valve seat is formed in the second channel portion and the valve member is integrally formed with the female luer end portion.

In one embodiment, the valve member includes an anchor flange extending outwardly toward an inner surface of the housing portion. In this case, the housing portion is coupled to

the male luer end portion for movement therewith relative to the valve member. The male luer end portion engages the anchor flange when the valve means is in the closed position and the male luer end portion is spaced from said anchor flange when the valve means is in the open position. The housing portion terminates at an end region adjacent the female luer end portion, the biasing means includes a compression spring located within the housing between the end region and the outer anchor flange.

In another of its aspects, the present invention provides a medical dispensing device comprising a body having a chamber therein to contain a fluid material, a valve assembly in fluid communication with the chamber, the valve assembly having a male coupling member for engaging a female coupling member on a medical accessory to form a fluid coupling between the medical dispensing device and the medical accessory, the valve assembly further comprising flow control means operable to control fluid flow through the male coupling member, the flow control means being operable to be displaced by the female coupling member to open the male coupling member when female coupling member is operatively connected therewith, the flow control means being operable to be displaced by the female coupling member to close the male coupling member when the female coupling member is disconnected therefrom.

In one embodiment, the male coupling member includes an inner male portion and an outer sheath portion spaced therefrom to form a passage there between for receiving the female coupling member, the flow control means including at least one valve actuating portion positioned in the passage to abut the female coupling member and to displace the valve member during the travel of the female coupling member along the passage. The valve assembly includes a valve member and a valve seat, wherein the valve member is positioned against the seat to close the male coupling member. The valve actuating portion includes a pair of abutment elements which are spaced from one another along the passage to receive the female coupling member there between, wherein the pair of abutment elements are operable to travel with the female coupling member along the passage.

In one embodiment, the actuating portion is longitudinally oriented relative to the passage and the abutment elements are positioned along the actuating portion.

The valve member includes a back plate and a plurality of actuating portions equally spaced on the back plate, each of the actuating portions having first and second abutment elements.

In one embodiment, the valve actuating portion includes a locking flange which is adjacent one of the abutment elements. The valve assembly includes a locking seat to receive the locking flange when the male coupling member is in the closed position. The actuating portion has a distal end region, the locking flange being located adjacent the distal end region and the locking seat is formed in the outer sheath portion. The actuating portion is thus arranged to flex in order to displace the locking flange from the locking seat.

In yet another aspect, the present invention provides a medical dispensing device comprising a body having a chamber therein to contain a fluid material, a valve assembly in fluid communication with the chamber, the valve assembly having a male coupling member for engaging a female coupling member on a medical accessory to form a fluid coupling between the medical dispensing device and the medical accessory, the male coupling member including a projection and an outer valve member movable relative to the projection, the projection and the outer valve member forming a fluid channel there between, a sheath portion encircling the pro-

jection and spaced therefrom to form a passage to receive the female coupling member, the valve member being engageable with the female coupling member and movable relative to the projection to open the fluid channel when the female coupling member is connected with the male coupling member.

In one embodiment, the valve member forms an outer surface of the male coupling portion.

In an embodiment, biasing means is provided to bias the valve member toward an engaged position with the projection to close the fluid channel. In this particular case, the passage ends at an inner wall and the biasing means includes a spring located between the inner wall and the valve member.

In one embodiment, the projection is fixed to the body and includes an inner passage, the inner passage having one end which is open to the chamber and another end which is open to the fluid channel. The projection also includes an enlarged end portion, the valve member including an outer portion arranged to engage the enlarged end portion to close the fluid channel. In this case the enlarged end portion and the outer end portion on the valve member have mating bevelled surfaces.

In one embodiment, the female coupling member has a leading segment, the valve member being dimensioned to fit within the leading segment.

Preferably, the medical dispensing device includes such items as a syringe, an IV bottle, an IV line, a powder and/or atomized fluid and/or gas inhalant dispenser, an implant delivery dispenser, a ventilator, a syringe pump, an intubation tube, a gastrointestinal feeding tube or a plurality and/or a combination thereof.

Preferably, the medical material is in solid, liquid or gaseous form or a combination thereof and has beneficial properties to enhance life, to promote health, to cure and/or treat a disease, condition or ailment, to monitor and/or indicate a bodily function or a combination thereof. For example, the medical material may be useful for, among others, IV therapy, implantation, stem cell therapy, oncology therapy, blood transfusion and/or organ transplantation.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Several preferred embodiments of the present invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the appended drawings in which:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a syringe assembly;

FIG. 2 is a sectional view of a portion of the assembly of FIG. 1;

FIGS. 3 and 4 are sectional views of the assembly of FIG. 1 in two alternate operative positions;

FIG. 5 is a fragmentary sectional perspective view of a portion of another syringe assembly;

FIGS. 6 and 7 are fragmentary perspective views of another syringe assembly;

FIGS. 8 to 12 are fragmentary sectional views of the syringe assembly of FIG. 6;

FIG. 13 is a fragmentary perspective view of yet another syringe assembly; and

FIGS. 14 and 15 are fragmentary sectional views of the syringe assembly of FIG. 13 or portions thereof.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring to the figures, and in particular FIG. 1, there is provided a syringe assembly 10 comprising a syringe 12 and a valve unit 14. The syringe 12 has a chamber 20 containing

a plunger 22 to form a cavity 24. Referring to FIG. 2, the cavity has an outlet 26 and the valve unit 14 is located downstream of the outlet 26 for coupling the cavity 24 with a medical accessory such as a needle 30 (as shown in FIGS. 3 and 4). The valve unit 14 has an outlet 32 and flow control means, as will be described, to control fluid flow through the outlet, the flow control means being operable to open the outlet when the coupling section is operatively connected with the medical accessory, the flow control means being operable to close the outlet when the valve unit is disconnected from the medical accessory and to remain closed until connected once again with a medical accessory.

In this case, the chamber 20 includes a first male luer end portion 34 adjacent the outlet 26 and the valve unit 14 includes a first female luer end portion 36 which is engageable with the male luer end portion 34. The valve unit 14 also includes a second male luer end portion 38 for coupling with the medical accessory 30.

Although the chamber 20 and the valve unit 14 are separate from one another in this case, it will be understood that they may, alternatively, be integrally formed, for example by combining the first male luer end portion 34 with the female luer end portion 36.

The valve unit 14 has a channel 42 for the transfer of fluids between the female and male luer end portions 36, 38. A valve means, in the form of a valve member 44 is located in the valve unit 14 and is movable between a first position (as shown in FIG. 2), in which the channel is closed, and a second position (as shown in FIG. 3), in which the channel is open. An actuating means, in the form of an actuating member 46 (shown in FIG. 2), extends outwardly from the valve member 44 and into the male luer end portion 38. The actuating member 46 is coupled to the valve member 44 to actuate it when a female luer end portion of the medical accessory 30 is engaged with the male luer end portion 38.

In the embodiment of FIGS. 1 to 4, the male luer end portion 38 has an outer threaded sheath 50 which is spaced from an inner projection 52. In this case, the actuating member 46 is positioned between the outer threaded sheath 50 and the inner projection 52. The valve member 44 includes a valve plug portion 54 moveable relative to a valve seat portion 56. The valve member 44 has an upper end which is integrally formed with the female luer end portion 36. An outer housing member 58 is slidably mounted on the valve member 44. In this case, the outer housing member 58 is joined to the male luer end portion 38. The valve member 44 also has a valve channel 44a extending from the female luer end portion 36 to the valve plug portion 54 where it terminates at one or more transverse flow openings 44b to join with the channel 42.

The valve member 44 includes an anchor flange 60, and the male luer end portion 38 seats, directly or indirectly, against the anchor flange 60 when the valve is in the closed position as viewed in FIG. 2. Conversely, the male luer end portion 38 is spaced from said anchor flange when the valve is in the open position as shown in FIG. 3.

The outer housing 58 terminates at a radially inwardly directed end region 62 adjacent the female luer end portion 34 and a biasing means in the form of a compression spring 64 is located within the outer housing between the end region 62 and the anchor flange 60 to bias the valve member toward the first position to close the valve unit.

An alternative arrangement is shown in FIG. 5. In this case, the valve unit 70 has a housing 72 which is integrally formed with the female luer end portion 74. A first channel portion 76 is adjacent the female luer end portion 74 and a second channel portion 78 is adjacent a male luer end portion 80. In this case, the valve means includes a valve member 82 having a

valve channel **84** in fluid communication with the first and second channel portions **76** and **78**. In this case, the valve seat portion is formed at **90** in the second channel portion **78**.

The valve member **82** includes a plug portion **92** which is movable relative to and within the second channel portion **78** for engaging the seat portion **90** to close the second channel portion **78**. The first channel portion **76** includes a tubular projection **94** extending from the female luer end portion **74**. In this case, the valve channel **84** in the valve member **82** is coextensive with the first and second channel portions **76**, **78**. In this case, the tubular projection **94** is slidably engaged with the valve member **82** within the valve channel **84** and sealed therein by way of seal **98**. Likewise, the valve member **84** is sealed within the second channel portion **78** by way of seal **100**.

The syringe assembly **10** is used as follows. First, the valve unit **14** is joined to the syringe **12** by engaging the corresponding first male luer end portion **34** with the female luer end portion **36**. In this condition, the second male luer end portion **38** is unattached with a medical accessory such as the needle **30** and the actuator **46** is fully extended into the second male luer end portion **38** as shown in FIG. 2. Consequently, the valve member **44** is biased to its closed position, thereby engaging the valve plug portion **54** against the valve seat **56**.

The needle **30** is then attached to the syringe by engaging the female luer end portion on the needle **30** with the second male luer end portion **38**. Doing so causes the female luer end portion on the needle **30** to abut and displace the actuating member **46**, thereby causing the valve member **44** to be displaced upwardly (as viewed in FIG. 2) thereby releasing the valve plug portion **54** from its sealed abutment with the valve seat **56** to open the valve channel. The plunger **22** may then be displaced outwardly to cause fluids in the proximity of the pointed end of the needle **30** to be drawn into the cavity **24**, by a path starting at the valve seat **56** through the channel **42** to the transverse flow openings **44b**, to the valve channel **44a** and on through the female luer end portion and into the cavity **24**. The needle **30** may then be removed causing the actuating member **46** to be displaced downwardly (as viewed in FIG. 2) causing the immediate displacement of the valve plug portion to abut the seat **56** and thereby close the valve.

Another device is shown at **120** FIGS. 6 to 12, having a body **122** forming an inner chamber **124** therein to contain a fluid material. A valve assembly **126** is in fluid communication with the chamber **124** and has a male coupling member **128** for engaging a female coupling member **130** on a medical accessory (in this case a needle **132**) to form a fluid coupling between the device **120** and the needle **132**.

The valve assembly **126** is operable to control fluid flow through the male coupling member **128** and more particularly to be in an open position when the male coupling member **128** is operatively connected with the female coupling member **130** and, conversely, to be in a closed position when the male coupling member **128** is disconnected from the female coupling member **130**.

In this case, the body **122** and the valve assembly **126** are integrally formed and, as seen in FIG. 8, the latter includes a valve member **134** and a valve seat **136**. The valve member **134** is shown in its position against the valve seat **136** to close the male coupling member **128**, but for a very minor gap there between for illustrative purposes only.

The male coupling member **128** includes an inner male portion **140** having an inner fluid channel **140a** and an outer sheath portion **142** spaced from the inner male portion **140** to form a passage **144** there between for receiving the female coupling member **130**. At least one, in this case three, valve actuating portions **146** (two being shown in FIG. 7) are posi-

tioned in the passage **144** to abut the female coupling member **130** and to displace the valve member during the travel of the female coupling member **130** along the passage **144**. In this case, each valve actuating portion **146** is integrally formed with the valve member **134**.

Each valve actuating portion **146** includes a pair of abutment elements **150**, **152** which are spaced from one another along the passage **144** to receive the female coupling member **130** there between and to travel with the female coupling member along the passage **144**. The abutment element **152** has a bevelled outer surface **152a** for reasons to be described. Each actuating portion **146** is longitudinally oriented relative to the passage **144** and the abutment elements **150**, **152** are positioned along the actuating portion **146**.

Each valve actuating portion **146** includes a locking flange **154** and the valve assembly includes a locking seat **156** to receive the locking flange **154** when the valve member **134** is in the closed position. In this case, the actuating portion **146** has a distal end region and the locking flange **154** is located in the distal end region, while the locking seat **156** is formed in the outer sheath portion **142**.

It will be seen in FIG. 10 that each actuating portion **146** is arranged to flex in order to displace the locking flange **154** out of the locking seat **156**.

Referring to FIG. 8, the valve member **134** includes a back plate **160** and the actuating portions **146** are equally spaced on the back plate **160**: The back plate **160** has a central fluid channel **162** which is in fluid communication with the chamber **124** and the valve member **134** has a fluid channel **163** therein in fluid communication with the central fluid channel **162** and hence the chamber **124**. In addition, the fluid channel **163** has a lateral portion **163a** which establishes fluid communication between the fluid channel **163** and an inner fluid channel **140a** in the inner male portion.

The device **120** is thus used as follows. The valve assembly is set with the valve member in its closed position, that is with the valve member **134** in its position against the valve seat **136** as shown in FIG. 8. The female coupling member **130** on the needle **132** is aligned with the passage **144** and brought toward the male coupling member **128**. The bevelled leading surface **152a** on the abutment member **152** aids to centre the female coupling member on the mouth of the passage **144**. With the locking flange **154** in the locking seat **156**, the female coupling member **130** is able to pass the lowermost edge of the abutment element **152** and continue into the passage **144** until the female coupling member makes contact with the abutment element **150** as seen in FIG. 9. As seen in FIG. 10, continued inward force on the female coupling member is transferred to the abutment element **150** causing the abutment portion **146** to move inwardly along the passage and thus to draw the locking flange **154** from this locked position in the locking seat **156**, causing the abutment portion **146** to flex, until the locking flange **154** is removed from the locking seat **156**. At this position, it can be seen that the valve member **134** has moved from the valve seat **136** to open the fluid channel **163** to the needle **132**.

Referring to FIG. 11, as the female coupling member **130** is removed from the passage **144**, it makes contact with the abutment element **152** and causes the abutment portion **146** to move outwardly along the passage **144** and thus cause the valve member **134** to move toward the valve seat **136**. The locking flange **154** approaches, and finally enters, the locking seat **156** to coincide with the closure of the valve assembly.

Thus, the device **120** does not make use of a valve member which is biased to its closed position as with the earlier embodiment, but rather relies on the displacement of the

female coupling member **130** to draw the valve assembly to its closed position when it is removed from the male coupling member **128**.

Another device is shown at **170** in FIGS. **13** to **15**, having a body **172** providing a chamber **174** therein to contain a fluid material. A valve assembly **176** is in fluid communication with the chamber **174** and has a male coupling member **178** for engaging a female coupling member **180**, again on a needle **181**, to form a fluid coupling between the medical dispensing device **170** and the needle **181**.

The valve assembly **176** is operable to control fluid flow through the male coupling member and more particularly to actuate or open the male coupling member **178** when operatively connected with the female coupling member **180** and, conversely, to close the male coupling member **178** when disconnected from the female coupling member **180**.

In this case, the male coupling member **178** includes a projection **182** which is fixed to the body **172**. A sheath portion **184** encircles the projection **182** and is also fixed to the body **172**. The sheath portion **184** and is spaced from the projection **182** to form a passage **186** to receive the female coupling member **180**.

A valve member **190** is movable relative to the projection **182** and forms a fluid channel **192** there between and sealed by an inner seal **193**. The projection **182** includes an inner passage **194** which has one end **194a** open to the chamber **174** and another end **194b** which is open to the fluid channel **192**.

Referring to FIGS. **14** and **15**, the projection includes an enlarged end portion **198** and the valve member **190** has an outer portion **200** arranged to engage the enlarged end portion **198** to close the fluid channel **192**. In this case, the passage **186** ends at an inner wall **202** and the valve member **190** is movable relative to the inner wall **202** under the action of a spring **203** which is positioned in the passage **186** between the valve member **190** and the inner wall **202** to bias the outer end portion **200** of the valve member **190** toward an engaged position with the enlarged end portion **198**.

As can be seen in FIG. **15**, the enlarged end portion **198** and the outer end portion **200** on the valve member **190** have mating bevelled surfaces **198a** and **200a** respectively.

The valve member **190** is operable to engage the female coupling member **180** and to travel with the female coupling member **180** along the passage **186**. In this case, the female coupling member **180** has a leading segment **180a** and the outer end portion **200** of the valve member **190** is dimensioned to fit within the leading segment **180a**.

In contrast to the device **120** of FIG. **6**, the device **170** has a valve member **190** which is biased to the closed position. As the female coupling member **180** passes over the projection **182**, the leading segment **180a** of the female coupling member **180** rides over the outer end portion **200** of the valve element **190**. Continued inward displacement of the female coupling member **180** into the passage **186** thus causes the valve member to move relative to the projection **182** until the mating bevelled surfaces **198a**, **202a** separate to open the fluid channel **192** to the needle. The fluid coupling is thus fully operational when the female and male coupling members are tightly engaged. When the female coupling member **180** is removed from the male coupling member **178**, the valve member **190** is returned to its closed position against the projection **198** under the biasing action of the spring **203**, to close the male coupling member.

While the present invention has been described for what are presently considered the preferred embodiments, the invention is not so limited. To the contrary, the invention is intended to cover various modifications and equivalent arrangements included within the spirit and scope of the

appended claims. The scope of the following claims is to be accorded the broadest interpretation so as to encompass all such modifications and equivalent structures and functions.

The valve unit may be used with other medical fluid delivery devices, such as IV lines, catheters, infusion pumps and the like. The valve unit may also be used on syringes and other medical devices which do not employ the ubiquitous luer coupling arrangement.

The following is claimed:

1. A medical connector comprising:

a housing with proximal and distal ends;

a male luer projection in a distal region of the housing, the male luer projection comprising interior and exterior surfaces, and proximal and distal ends;

an intermediate region of the housing positioned between the male luer projection and the proximal end of the housing;

a fluid flow path extending between the male luer projection and the proximal end of the housing, the fluid flow path being configured to be opened and closed to permit passage of fluids through the connector;

a valve member movable between a closed position and an open position, the valve member comprising a proximal first portion and a second portion distal from the first portion, the first and second portions of the valve member being configured to move generally longitudinally between the closed and open positions such that a proximal end of the first portion is positioned closer to the proximal end of the housing in the open position than in the closed position such that, when the medical connector transitions from the open position to the closed position, an increased volume is created within the intermediate region of the housing and near the first portion of the valve member;

the first portion of the valve member being positioned within the intermediate region and outside of the male luer projection in the closed position, and the second portion being positioned at least partially within the male luer projection in the closed position;

the valve member further comprising a fluid pathway passing therethrough and a distal plug portion that is closed in both the open and closed positions, the plug portion being positioned distally from the second portion and configured to selectively obstruct the distal end of the male luer projection, the plug portion being generally flush with a distal end of the exterior surface of the male luer projection in the closed position to impede fluid communication between an interior region of the male luer projection and a region exterior to the connector;

a seal contacting the valve member, the seal extending generally around a portion of the valve member in both the open and closed positions and the seal being made of a different material than the first portion of the valve member;

a biasing member separate from the seal, the biasing member being configured to bias the valve member toward the closed position; and

an actuating member positioned at least partially within the intermediate region of the housing in the open position, the actuating member being connected to and movable with the valve member as the valve member moves from the closed position to the open position, the actuating member being configured to actuate the valve member from the closed to the open position, such that fluid is permitted to flow through the fluid pathway.

2. The medical connector of claim **1**, wherein the proximal end of the housing comprises a female luer.

3. The medical connector of claim 1, further comprising a generally cylindrical portion contained within the housing and positioned near the proximal end of the housing.

4. The medical connector of claim 3, wherein the first portion of the valve member is configured to engage the generally cylindrical portion.

5. The medical connector of claim 4, wherein the first portion of the valve member is configured to engage an exterior surface of the generally cylindrical portion.

6. The medical connector of claim 3, wherein the generally cylindrical portion comprises a tubular projection.

7. The medical connector of claim 6, wherein the tubular projection extends distally within the housing from the proximal end of the housing.

8. The medical connector of claim 1, wherein the fluid pathway of the valve member further comprises a generally longitudinal section and a transverse section, wherein the generally longitudinal section is in fluid communication with the transverse section.

9. The medical connector of claim 8, wherein the transverse section is between the plug portion and the generally longitudinal section.

10. The medical connector of claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the actuating member extends along the exterior surface of the male luer projection in the closed position.

11. The medical connector of claim 1, further comprising a threaded sheath at least partially surrounding the male luer projection.

12. The medical connector of claim 1, wherein the biasing member is configured to engage the first portion of the valve member.

13. The medical connector of claim 1, wherein the plug portion is solid.

14. The medical connector of claim 1, wherein the plug portion is made of a single monolithic material.

15. The medical connector of claim 1, wherein the plug portion is made of a different material than the seal.

16. The medical connector of claim 1, wherein the seal is not attached to the valve member.

17. The medical connector of claim 1, wherein the seal does not move with the valve member.

18. The medical connector of claim 1, wherein the fluid flow path is constantly open and unimpeded between the intermediate region of the housing and the proximal end of the housing in both the open and closed positions.

19. The medical connector of claim 1, wherein the valve member is positioned between the proximal end and the distal end of the housing.

20. The medical connector of claim 1, wherein the fluid pathway passes through the first and second portions of the valve member.

21. The medical connector of claim 1, wherein the valve member including the plug portion is configured to move generally longitudinally between the closed and open positions such that the plug portion is positioned closer to the proximal end of the housing in the open position than in the closed position.

* * * * *