

We claim:

1. A prosthetic valve delivery assembly, comprising:
a storage tube;
a prosthetic heart valve comprising a frame, the frame having a distal end and a proximal end, the prosthetic heart valve at least partially disposed within the storage tube;
a nose cone disposed about an elongated shaft, the elongated shaft extending through the storage tube, the nose cone having a distal end and a proximal end; and
a removable tab disposed between the distal end of the frame and the nose cone;
wherein the tab assists in maintaining the position of the nose cone relative to the distal end of the frame.
2. The assembly of claim 1, wherein the nose cone comprises a distal conical portion extending from a distal apex to a base and an intermediate portion extending proximally from the base, the diameter of the intermediate portion proximate the base being smaller than a diameter of the base of the distal portion, wherein the tab is configured to be disposed about the intermediate nose cone portion proximate the base of the distal nose cone portion.
3. The assembly of claim 2, wherein the tab defines a pair of arms disposed about the intermediate nose cone portion.
4. The assembly of claim 3, wherein the arms comprise inner arms and the tab further defines a pair of outer arms, the outer arms extending about the inner arms.
5. The assembly of claim 4, wherein the outer arms engage an outer surface of the storage tube.

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6. The assembly of claim 4, further comprising a nose cone cap extending over the distal end of the nose cone, wherein the outer arms of the tab engage an outer surface of the nose cone cap.

7. The assembly of any of claims 1-6, wherein the tab comprises a gripping surface.

8. The assembly of any of claims 1-5 and 7, further comprising a nose cone cap extending over at least a distal portion of the nose cone and releasably coupled to a distal end of the storage tube.

9. The assembly of claim 8, wherein the nose cone cap has an inner surface defining a plurality of axially and radially extending fins, defining a cavity for receiving at least the distal end portion of the nose cone.

10. The assembly of claims 8 or 9, further comprising a stylet having an elongated shaft and a loop at the distal end of the elongated shaft, wherein the loop is disposed within the nose cone cap.

11. The assembly of any of claims 1, 2, and 7, wherein the tab defines a pair of arms, the assembly further comprising a nose cone cap extending over at least a distal end portion of the nose cone, the nose cone cap having a distal end and a proximal end, the proximal end of the cap defining a proximally extending tab arm configured to be received between the arms of the tab.

12. A method for securing the position of a nose cone relative to a prosthetic valve, comprising:

placing the prosthetic valve at least partially within a storage tube;

positioning a nose cone relative to the valve; and

inserting a tab about the nose cone and the valve such that the nose cone is restrained from proximal movement relative to the tab.

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13. The method of claim 12, further comprising placing a nose cone cap over a distal end portion of the nose cone and securing the nose cone cap to the storage tube, wherein the nose cone is restrained from moving distally relative to the storage tube by the nose cone cap.

14. The method of claim 12 or claim 13, further comprising securing arms of the tab about an exterior surface of the cap.

15. The method of any of claims 12-14, further comprising inserting a stylet proximally through a distal end of the nose cone.