Claims

1. An intracanalicular plug inserter device, comprising:

(a) an elongate body having a longitudinal axis, the elongate body having:

an inserter end, the inserter end having an opening therein; and

a distal end, the distal end longitudinally opposing the inserter end; and

(b) a plug ejector, wherein the plug ~~injector~~ ejector comprises:

a slider; and

a rod coupled to a first end of the slider,

wherein the plug ejector is configured to be moveable between a first position adjacent ~~an~~ to the opening in the inserter end and a second position that is further from the opening,

wherein ~~the~~ a plug is mounted within the elongate body, ~~and~~ wherein the plug abuts a first end of the rod adjacent the opening in the inserter end~~,~~

wherein the plug ejector further includes a depressible button having a first side protruding outside of the elongate body and a second side mounted on the slider, and wherein a second side of the button comprises a pair of legs which are clipped to a first arm of the slider, and

wherein the button is substantially locked in a first position by a locking means on the first arm of the slider, wherein the locking means comprises a protrusion and an indentation.

2. The device of claim 1, wherein the rod is configured to eject the plug from the opening in the inserter end when the first end of the slider is moved toward the inserter end.

~~3. The device of claim 1, wherein the plug ejector further includes a depressible button having a first side protruding outside of the body and a second side mounted on the slider.~~

~~4. The device of claim 3, wherein the second side of the button comprises a pair of legs which are clipped to a first arm of the slider.~~

~~5. The device of claim 4, wherein the button is substantially locked in a first position by a locking means on the first arm of the slider, wherein the locking means comprises a protrusion and an indentation.~~

~~6~~3. The device of claim ~~5~~1, wherein the button is flanked by a first sidewall and a second sidewall.

~~7~~4. The device of claim ~~6~~3, wherein the protrusion and indentation are adjacent the first sidewall.

~~8~~5. The device of claim ~~7~~4, wherein the button is configured to be moved along the longitudinal axis of the elongate body from its first position adjacent the first sidewall to a second position adjacent the second sidewall by depressing the

button to release it from the indentation and then sliding it along the slide toward the second position.

~~9~~6. The device of claim 1, further comprising a removable cap fitted to cover the plug and mounted at the inserter end of the elongate body.

~~10~~7. The device of claim 1, further comprising a means for dilating a lacrimal punctum disposed at the distal end of the elongate body.

~~11~~8. The device of claim ~~5~~1, wherein the means for dilating the punctum comprises a fine tip.

~~12~~9. A kit comprising:

the intracanalicular plug inserter device of claim 1;

a tray for receiving the device; and

instructions for using the device.

~~13~~10. A method of assembling an intracanalicular plug inserter device, comprising:

providing an intracanalicular plug;

mounting the intracanalicular plug within the intracanalicular plug inserter device according to claim 1; and

compressing a cap over the inserter end to hold the intracanalicular plug securely in position on the device.

~~14~~11. The method of claim ~~13~~10, further comprising sealing the device in a pre-molded tray with a sterile barrier lid.

~~15~~12. The method of claim ~~14~~11, further comprising subjecting the tray to sterilization.

~~16. A method of treating dry eyes, comprising:~~

~~providing the intracanalicular plug inserter device of claim 1;~~

~~inserting the inserter end into a patient's canaliculus; and~~

~~actuating the plug ejector to cause the plug to be ejected out of the opening at the inserter end.~~

~~17. The method of claim 16, further comprising dilating the patient's punctum prior to inserting the plug.~~

~~18. The method of claim 17, further comprising using the distal end of the device to push the plug further into the canaliculus.~~