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(54) Title: EXPANDABLE INTRODUCER SHEATH FOR MEDICAL DEVICE

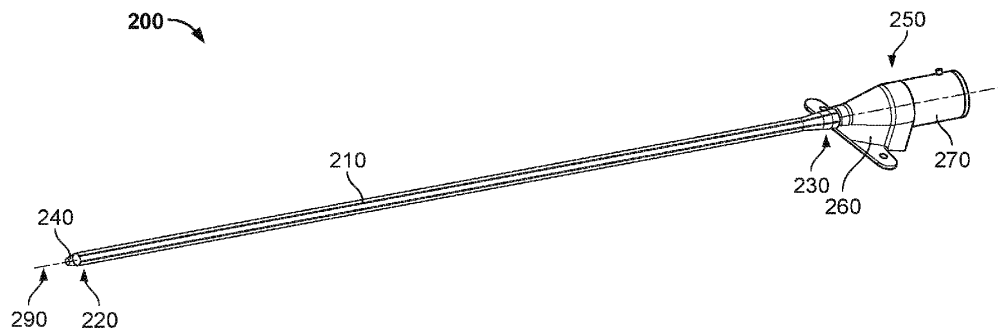


FIG. 2

(57) Abstract: An expandable medical sheath can include a sheath body having a lumen that extends between proximal and distal ends of the sheath. The sheath can have first and second members where the first member has a different elastic modulus than the second member such that one provides elasticity to the sheath and the other provides column strength. The first and second members can be coupled together in alternating sections to form the tubular sheath or the stiffer members can be embedded in the elastic member along all or a portion of the longitudinal length of the sheath. The sheath can automatically move to an expanded state to allow a larger diameter medical device to pass through the lumen, and once through the sheath can automatically return to its initial diameter.

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