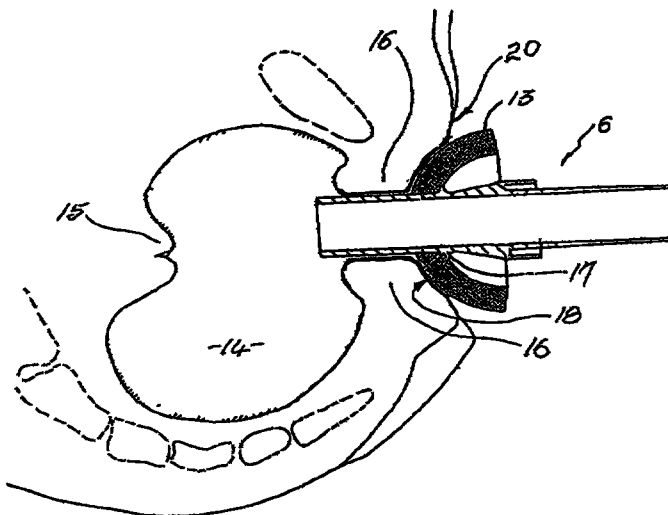




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(54) Title: VAGINAL SPECULUM WITH SEAL



(57) Abstract

A vaginal speculum of the kind including a tubular probe (6) for penetrating the vagina wherein the probe is encircled by an annular sealing element (13), in the form of a thick walled, domed shell of polyethylene foam, spaced from the leading end of the probe and which seals only against a circumferential zone of the internal tissue defining the vaginal orifice. The external surface of the sealing element is shaped as a surface of revolution wherein the diameter of the sealing surface increases progressively with axial distance from the leading end of the sealing element and wherein the rate of increase diminishes progressively with said axial distance. The seal therefore provides a low-pressure seal over a limited range of depths of penetration of the probe into the vagina and over a range of angular alignments of the probe.