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(54) **Title**: PROBE HOLDER

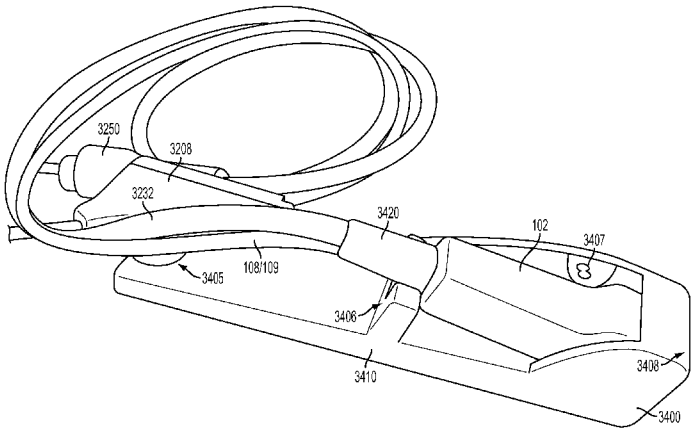


FIG. 34

(57) **Abstract**: A holder for an optoacoustic probe includes a probe-end enclosing portion formed from material that is substantially opaque to light emanating from an optical window of a probe. The probe-end enclosing portion is sized to enclose the active end of the probe and have a snug fit therewith when the optoacoustic probe is inserted therein, and has minimal or no contact with the optical window and acoustic lens of the probe. The probe holder further includes a cutaway adapted to support the probe's strain relief under the downward force of gravity, thereby supporting the probe at an angle that provides for easy manual grasping and removal. The probe support also blocks an in-holder probe from sliding away from the probe-enclosing end. A cable guide is spaced from the probe support to accept a connecting cable exiting from the proximal end of the probe, and thus reduce pressure on the strain relief and soften the angle of curvature of the connecting cable.

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