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(54) Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR DETECTING THE PRESENCE OF A FLUID ON A TEST STRIP

(57) Abstract: Methods and devices are provided for detecting the application of a fluid sample onto a test strip surface when the test strip is inserted into an optical meter. In the subject methods, reflectance data is obtained from a portion of the optical meter in which the sample application region of the test strip is located, where the reflectance data covers a period of time ranging from a point at least prior to application of the sample to the strip to a point following application of the sample to the strip. The presence of the fluid sample on the test strip is then determined from the reflectance data. Also provided are optical meters that include optical means for obtaining reflectance data, where these optical means include at least an irradiation source and a light detector. The subject methods and devices find use with a variety of test strips, and are particularly suited for use with test strips that include a fluid movement means, such as a compressible bladder.