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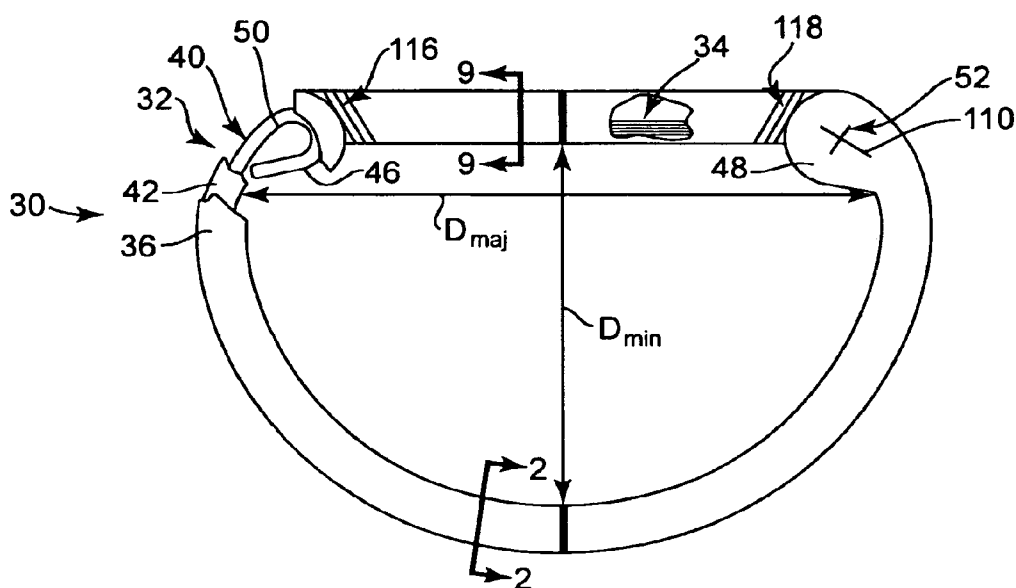
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(54) Title: ANNULOPLASTY RING AND METHOD



(57) Abstract: An annuloplasty ring including a sheath, an arcuate stiffening element, and a tensioning member. The stiffening element is disposed within the sheath and defines discrete, first and second ends separated by a lateral spacing. The tensioning member extends between the stiffening element ends. The tensioning member is characterized as being more flexible than the stiffening element and is configured to provide a taut state in which the tensioning member is substantially non-extensible and impedes expansion of the lateral spacing. With this configuration, the stiffening element serves to remodel the valve annulus to a desired shape, while the tensioning member exhibits sufficient flexibility to allow for natural movement of the valve annulus while limiting (in the taut state) the extent of annular dilatation (e.g., overt lateral separation of the first and second ends of the stiffening member) due to in vivo forces.

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B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
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Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

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C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

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Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

See patent family annex.

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