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(54) **SMART BREAST PUMP SYSTEM**

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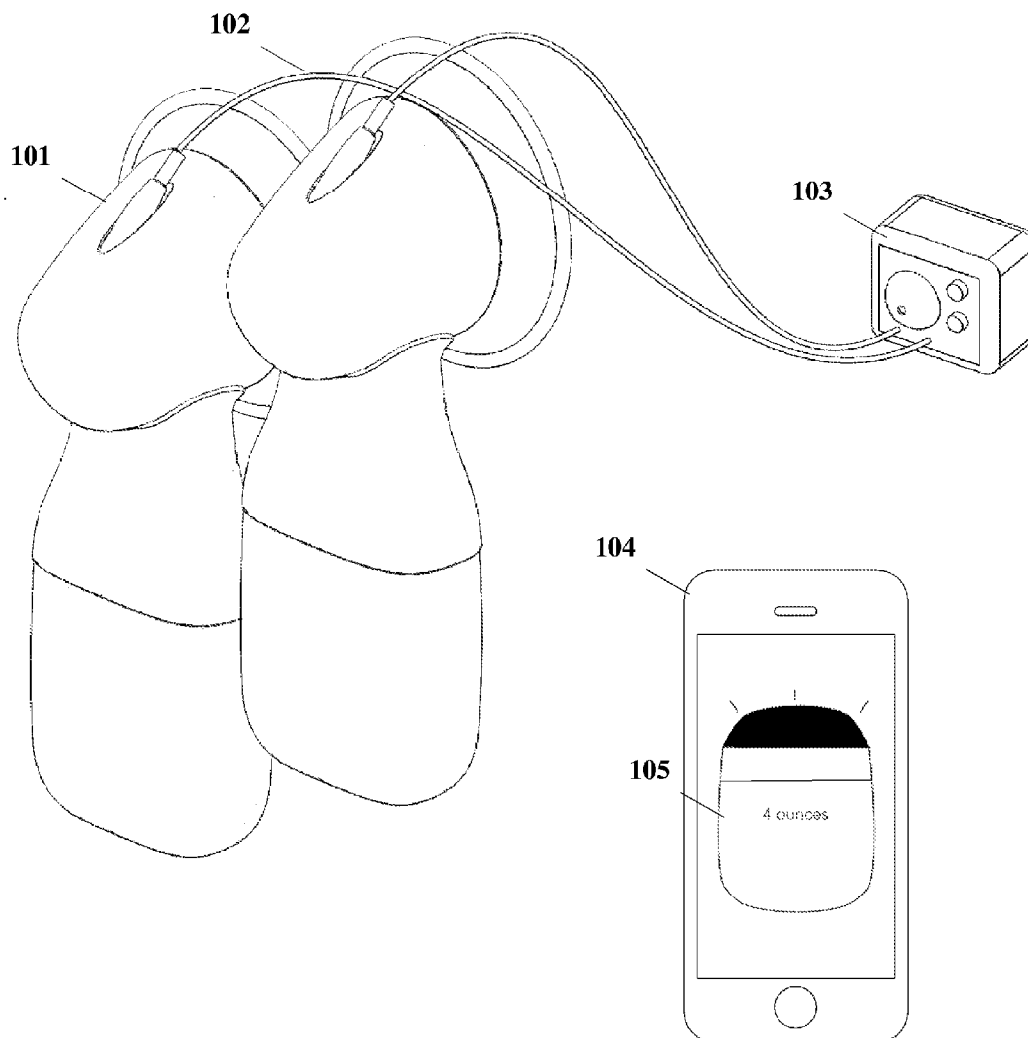
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

This disclosure generally relates to a smart breast pump system that includes at least one sensor to monitor the expression of breast milk. The smart breast pump system may further include a mobile device which wirelessly receives sensor data from the at least one sensor. Additionally, the smart breast pump system may further include at least one server device, which wirelessly receives sensor data from the at least one mobile device.



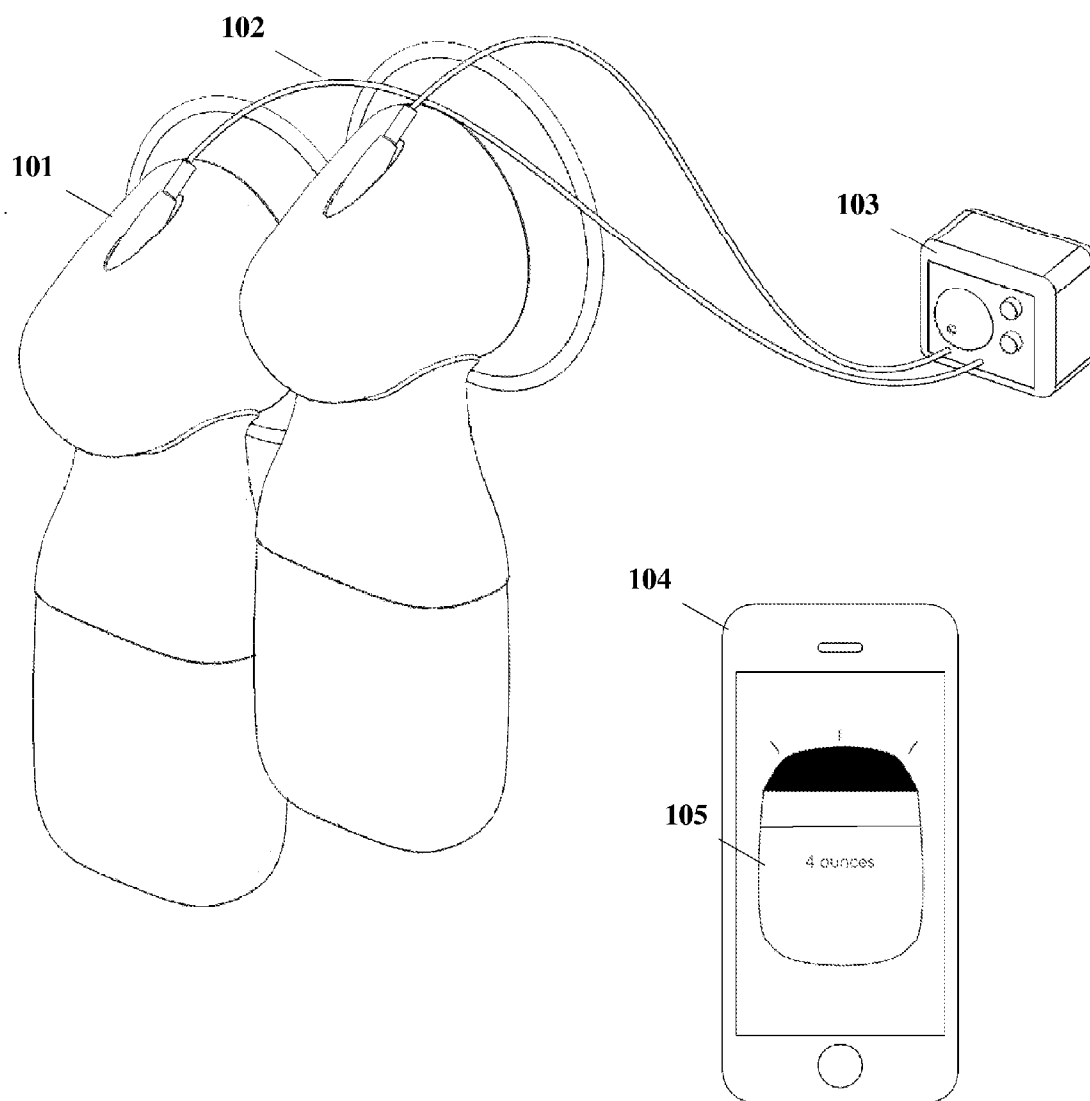


FIG. 1

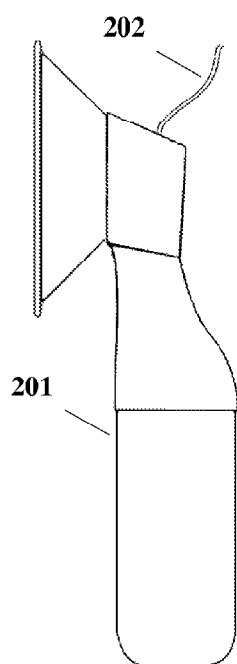


FIG. 2A

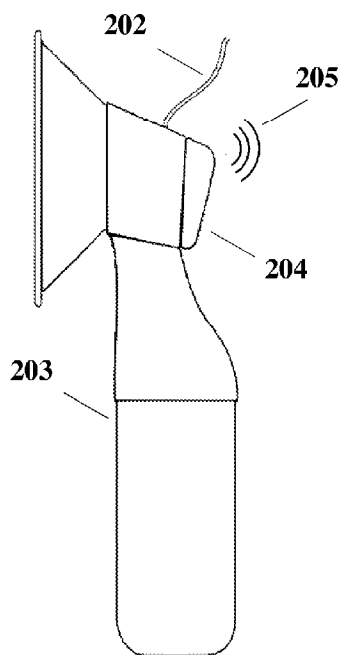


FIG. 2B

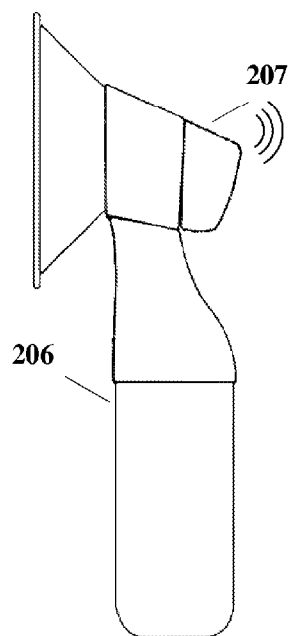


FIG. 2C

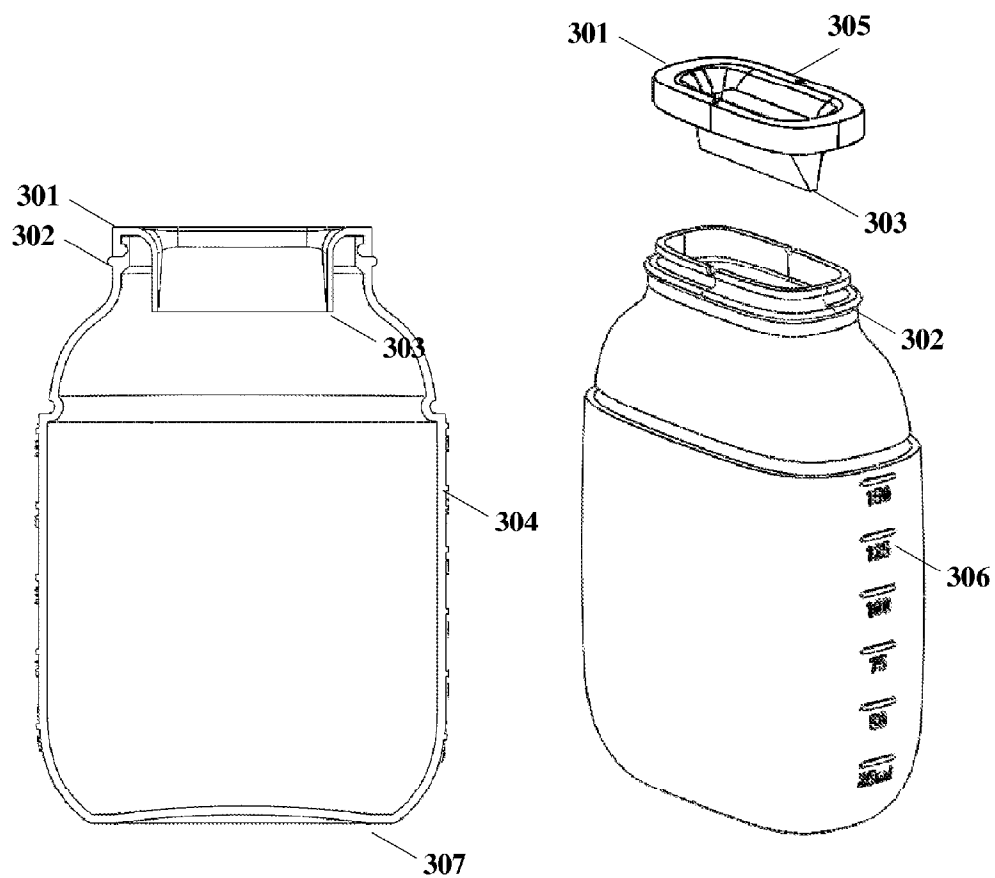


FIG. 3A

FIG. 3B

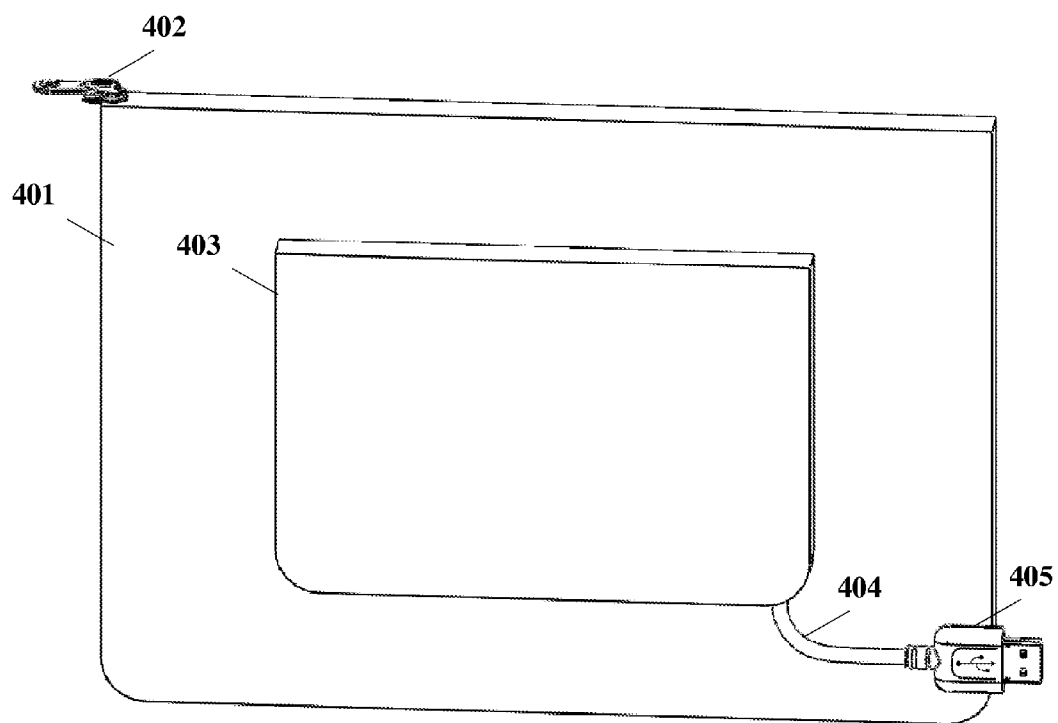


FIG. 4

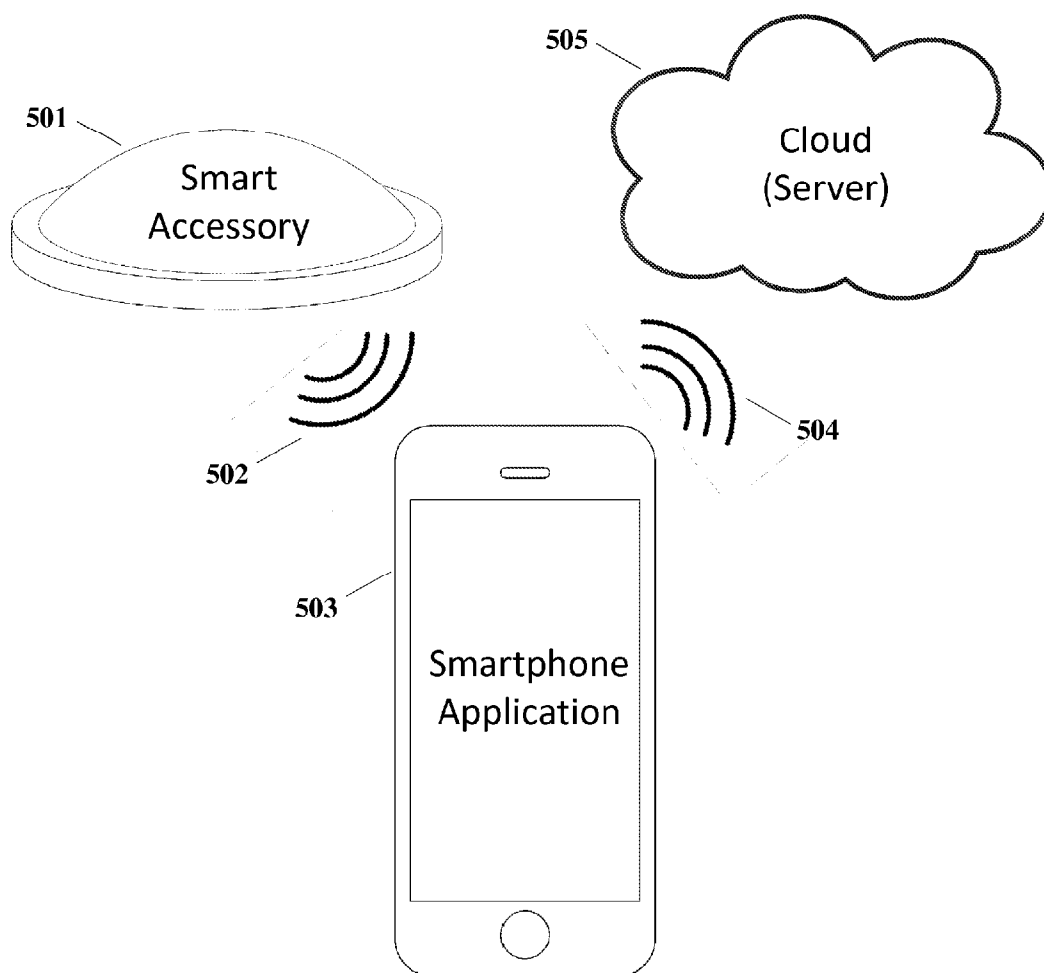


FIG. 5

SMART BREAST PUMP SYSTEM

BACKGROUND

[0001] 1. Technical Field

[0002] This disclosure relates generally to a smart breast pump system. More specifically, the smart breast pump system disclosed herein relates to a system that provides women a discrete low profile breast pump that may be worn underneath regular clothing which also monitors and tracks a woman's milk production and supply.

[0003] 2. Description of the Related Art

[0004] Upon the birth of a child, one of the first natural instincts of a new mother is to feed the new baby by nursing. Many new mothers describe their first nursing experience with a new baby as forming an unbreakable emotional bond between the new baby and the new mother. Accordingly, nursing can be a tremendously emotional experience for women who give birth to new babies. Unfortunately, many women experience difficulty in nursing infants, for a variety of reasons. This difficulty may leave some women feeling inadequate, depressed, and otherwise distraught about their inability to participate in a natural process of nursing a new infant. Further, a crying hungry infant only exacerbates its mother's emotional condition and feelings of inadequacy in being unable to feed her baby.

[0005] Many solutions have been proposed for solving a mother's inability to express milk in sufficient quantity to provide adequate nourishment for a baby. Supplements, such as baby formula, have been developed as an alternative source of food for a baby, thereby reducing or eliminating the need for a mother to nurse her baby. However, most medical experts currently agree that breast milk is superior to manufactured supplements. Thus, supplements are a non-ideal choice for overcoming nursing difficulties. Another solution to increase a woman's breast milk production has been the advent of a breast pump. Conventional breast pumps require a woman to completely or nearly completely remove all clothing covering her breasts in order to attach the pump to a breast. Some breast pumps require that a woman hold the pump to her breast while it suctions milk from the breast. Other breast pumps are implemented by harnesses that constrict a woman's breast into a position suitable to create suction between the pump and the breast to produce milk. Further, in order to use a harness, a woman must remove her shirt and undergarments each time she intends to use a breast pump, making the use of the harness not only uncomfortable, but also inconvenient. Many of these breast pumps are so difficult to use, painful to the woman, and so intrusive on the woman's other obligations, that even though breast milk is produced, a woman may still emotionally be traumatized by the breast pumping experience.

[0006] Further, many women who are not available to feed an infant during certain periods of the day may use a breast pump to pump milk to store and use to feed an infant at a later time. However, while mandated by law in some cases, many places lack a convenient or discrete place to allow a woman to operate a breast pump. Thus, lactating women are relegated to empty offices, bathroom stalls, empty conference rooms, or other makeshift areas in which women can discretely pump milk to store for an infant's later use. Moreover, because conventional breast pumps have been so difficult to use, many women experience significant inconvenience in their daily schedules and devote a substantial portion of a work day to operating the breast pump. While many employers, for

example, accommodate women and their need to pump, the women themselves find that pumping makes them less productive and interrupts progress they are making on other projects.

[0007] Accordingly, it is one object of this disclosure to provide a simple to use smart breast pump system. It is another object of this disclosure to provide a smart breast pump system that may be continuously worn as a low profile discrete pump system. It is another object of this disclosure to reduce the emotional toll pumping takes on a woman by monitoring milk expression and tracking an amount of breast milk stored for future use.

[0008] It is a further object of this disclosure to provide a mobile device that provides wireless control over the smart breast pump system. Yet another object of this disclosure is to transmit information collected by remote device to a remote server for access by other concerned parties, such as another parent or guardian of the child for whom the woman is pumping milk.

SUMMARY

[0009] Disclosed herein is a smart breast pump system. In one embodiment, the smart breast pump system comprises at least one sensor to monitor the expression of breast milk. The smart breast pump system may further include a mobile device which wirelessly receives sensor data from the at least one sensor.

[0010] Also disclosed herein is a smart breast pump system, which comprises at least one sensor to monitor the expression of breast milk. The smart breast pump system may further include a mobile device which wirelessly receives sensor data from the at least one sensor. Further, the smart breast pump system may further include at least one server device, wirelessly receiving the sensor data from the at least one mobile device.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] The accompanying drawings illustrate an embodiment of a smart breast pump system.

[0012] FIG. 1 illustrates an exemplary smart breast pump system.

[0013] FIG. 2A illustrates a side view of an exemplary discrete breast pump element of the smart breast pump system.

[0014] FIG. 2B illustrates a side view of an alternate embodiment of the exemplary discrete breast pump element of the smart breast pump system.

[0015] FIG. 2C illustrates a side view of a second alternate embodiment of the exemplary discrete breast pump element of the smart breast pump system.

[0016] FIG. 3A illustrates a cross-sectional front view of a milk collection element of the smart breast pump system.

[0017] FIG. 3B illustrates a perspective view of the milk collection element including a one-way valve and a milk collection bottle.

[0018] FIG. 4 illustrates a storage element of the smart breast pump system.

[0019] FIG. 5 illustrates an exemplary communication flow between various elements of the smart breast pump system.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0020] In the following description, for purposes of explanation and not limitation, specific techniques and embodiments are set forth, such as particular techniques and configurations, in order to provide a thorough understanding of the device disclosed herein. While the techniques and embodiments will primarily be described in context with the accompanying drawings, those skilled in the art will further appreciate that the techniques and embodiments may also be practiced in other similar devices.

[0021] Reference will now be made in detail to the exemplary embodiments, examples of which are illustrated in the accompanying drawings. Wherever possible, the same reference numbers are used throughout the drawings to refer to the same or like parts. It is further noted that elements disclosed with respect to particular embodiments are not restricted to only those embodiments in which they are described. For example, an element described in reference to one embodiment or figure, may be alternatively included in another embodiment or figure regardless of whether or not those elements are shown or described in another embodiment or figure. In other words, elements in the figures may be interchangeable between various embodiments disclosed herein, whether shown or not.

[0022] FIG. 1 illustrates an exemplary smart breast pump system. The smart breast pump system includes a milk capture and collection element **101**. Milk capture and collection element **101** includes a cup portion that substantially matches the curve of a woman's breast. The cup portions may be interchangeable and replaceable to accommodate various different sized breasts, areolas, and nipples or may be configured in a "one size fits all" fashion. Preferably, however, women with larger areola and nipple regions may choose to use a cup portion with a larger diameter while women with smaller areola and nipple regions may choose to use a cup portion with a smaller diameter cup portion. Because an appropriately sized cup portion increases the degree of contact between the woman's breast and the cup portion, the cup portion is more comfortable for a woman to wear while at the same time creating a more substantial air tight seal between the woman's breast and the cup portion. The cup portion is naturally centered over a woman's nipples as the cup portion is applied by the woman to her breast. Further because the cup portions substantially match the curve of the woman's breast, milk capture and collection element **101** is comfortable for a woman to wear which results in reduced pain, reduced anxiety, reduced stress, and a more emotionally satisfying experience than conventional pumping systems. Accordingly, breast pumping with the smart breast pump system disclosed herein provides a more natural massaging sensation to a woman, further reducing anxiety and stress with the breast pumping experience.

[0023] Cup portions may range from approximately 3 to 5 inches in diameter and are less than approximately one centimeter in thickness. The cup portion may advantageously be held to a woman's breasts by a standard nursing bra. Given the relative small size of a particular cup portion, milk capture and collection element **101** may be persistently and comfortably held in place by a nursing bra for a substantial period of time. Because milk capture and collection element **101** may be worn for a substantial period of time, such as an entire

work day, a woman may pump her breasts at any time without disrobing and, therefore, without needing to find a private place to pump.

[0024] Cup portions may attach to a pump portion of milk capture and collection element **101**. A pump portion of milk capture and collection element **101** comprises a vacuum pump and a vacuum chamber through which milk can flow uninterrupted as it is expressed into a milk collection portion of milk capture and collection element **101**, which will be discussed in detail below. The pump portion of milk capture and collection element **101** may be implemented as a single unit or may be implemented as, for example, an external vacuum pump configured to apply vacuum pressure to a woman's breast via the vacuum chamber. The pump portion of the milk capture and collection element **101** receives a funnel end of the cup portions and attaches, using, for example, a friction based connection, the cup portion to the pump portion. Other types of connections between various portions of milk capture and collection element **101** may include snaps, quick connects, or twist (threaded) attachments. Milk capture and collection element **101** may be substantially leak-proof. For example, connections between various portions of milk capture and collection element **101** may prevent milk leaks. Accordingly, the cup portions funnel milk into the pump portion as it pumped from a woman's breast. The pump portion allows the milk to drain into a milk collection portion of milk capture and collection element **101**. The milk collection portion will be discussed in further detail below, particularly with respect to FIG. 3A and FIG. 3B.

[0025] Milk capture and collection element **101** may further include a sensor portion for detecting and measuring an amount of milk expressed during a particular breast pumping session. The sensor portion may include sensors that rely on optical, electrical, or mechanical drop by drop counting, including Hall Effect sensors, phototransistors, force sensors, or capacitive liquid level sensing to detect an amount of milk that has been collected during a breast pumping session. In one embodiment, sensors may begin to operate when other portions of milk capture and collection element **101** are installed. For example, a sensor may be triggered to begin operation when the cup portion of a milk capture and collection element **101** is installed on a pump portion of the milk capture and collection element **101**. Alternatively, a sensor may be triggered to begin operation when the milk collection portion of the milk capture and collection element **101** is installed on the pump portion of the milk capture device. Alternatively, a sensor may be triggered to begin operation based on a magnetic sensor sensing one or more magnets placed within cup portion of milk capture and collection element **101** or within the milk collection portion of the milk capture and collection element **101**. Other technologies for triggering the sensor to begin operation include push button switches, snap domes, proximity sensors, pressure sensors, and other similar techniques known in the art. The milk capture and collection element **101** may provide a visual cue to the operator that the sensors have begun operation and are ready to measure data directly, or via mobile device **104**, as discussed below. The sensor portion may have access to power from a battery contained within milk capture and collection element **101**, include a microprocessor, and include a memory device in order to store data derived over up to ten pumping sessions with a duration averaging approximately 30 minutes per session. Data stored within a memory device

may include, for example, a real-time flow rate in ounces per minute gathered every 5 seconds and total volume of milk pumped per pumping session.

[0026] Milk capture and collection element **101** connects via pneumatic tubing **102** to an external vacuum pump **103**, in one embodiment. In this embodiment, external vacuum pump **103** may operate by either battery power or by alternating current (“AC”) power supplied through a standard electrical outlet. External vacuum pump **103** creates vacuum pressure within the pump portion of milk capture and collection element **101** by drawing air away from the pump portion of milk capture and collection element **101**. The pump portion of milk capture and collection element **101** directs the vacuum pressure through the cup portion of milk capture and collection element **101** where the vacuum pressure is applied to a woman’s breast. As vacuum pressure is applied to the woman’s breast, an air-tight seal is formed between the cup portion of milk capture and collection element **101** and the skin on the woman’s breast. Once the air-tight seal has been created, vacuum pressure is applied to a nipple on the woman’s breast, causing the breast to express milk through the nipple. As shown in FIG. 1, pneumatic tubing **102** may connect to the milk capture and collection element **101** in a manner that allows milk to flow through the vacuum chamber of the pump portion of milk capture and collection element **101** without drawing milk into pneumatic tubing **102**. In this embodiment, milk is allowed to flow freely from the nipple, through the vacuum chamber of the pump portion of milk capture and collection element **101** and into the milk collection portion of milk capture and collection element **101**.

[0027] In another embodiment, a vacuum pump similar to external vacuum pump **103** may be disposed within the pump portion of milk capture and collection element **101**. Accordingly, a battery may be included within the vacuum pump such that the vacuum pump has sufficient power to create enough vacuum pressure to cause a breast to express milk. A vacuum pump disposed within the pump portion of milk capture and collection element **101** may be disposed in such a manner as to allow the vacuum pump to apply vacuum pressure to a woman’s breast, while simultaneously allowing milk to flow into the milk collection portion of milk capture and collection element **101**. Regardless, a vacuum pump used in conjunction with the smart breast pump system disclosed herein are relatively small and substantially silent.

[0028] Each portion of the milk capture and collection element **101** that is exposed to either the user’s skin or to milk is constructed using a flexible, soft, medical and food grade silicone. For example, medical grade silicone may be used to construct portions of milk capture and collection element **101** that may come into contact with the user’s skin while food grade silicone may be used to construct portions of milk capture and collection element **101** that come into contact with milk. Each portion of the milk capture and collection element **101** may be independently sanitized and may also be constructed in a way to facilitate washing by automatic dishwasher.

[0029] Because the milk capture and collection element **101** is designed to maintain a low profile and fit discretely under a woman’s clothes, a woman may not be able to easily interact with the milk capture and collection element **101**. For example, since any user interface elements of the milk capture and collection element **101** would be covered by the woman’s clothes, the woman may not be able to conveniently access milk capture and collection element **101** or receive informa-

tion from milk capture and collection element **101** during use. Accordingly, mobile device **104** may be provided in the smart breast pump system as a solution to provide both control of the milk capture and collection element **101** and information from milk capture and collection element **101**.

[0030] For example, mobile device **104** may be implemented as a smart phone, a tablet, a laptop computer, a desktop computer, a music storage and playback device, a personal digital assistant, or any other device capable of implementing a software application that may interact with, control, and provide information from milk capture and collection element **101**. These exemplary devices may include a combination of one or more application programs and one or more hardware components. For example, application programs may include software modules, sequences of instructions, routines, data structures, display interfaces, and other types of structures that execute operation. Further, hardware components implementing modules and other means disclosed herein may include a combination of processors, microcontrollers, busses, volatile and non-volatile memory devices, non-transitory computer readable memory device and media, data processors, control devices, transmitters, receivers, antennas, transceivers, input devices, output devices, network interface devices, and other types of components that are apparent to those skilled in the art. While examples herein use a smart phone as an exemplary mobile device for controlling, interacting with, and receiving information from milk capture and collection element **101**, any device capable of executing an application program may be similarly used in place of a smart phone.

[0031] Mobile device **104** may interface with a sensor portion of milk capture and collection element **101** using, for example, a Bluetooth low energy radio connection. Accordingly, mobile device **104** may receive information in real-time from a sensor within the sensor portion of milk capture and collection element **101**, such as whether or not milk is flowing, how much milk has been collected during a particular pumping session, and the duration of a pump session. Further, mobile device **104** may interface with external vacuum pump **103** or a pump disposed within milk capture and collection element **101** to turn the pump on or off or otherwise control a pumping session. As information is received from the sensors in the sensor portion of milk capture and collection element **101**, the data may be viewed in real-time via user interface **105** of mobile device **104**. As shown in FIG. 1, user interface **105** shows that a woman has pumped four ounces of milk during a pumping session. Data displayed on user interface **105** of mobile device **104** may be updated in real-time, for example, by updating the interface every second. In one embodiment, a sensor within the sensor portion of milk capture and collection element **101** may detect new data every ten milliseconds which may be transmitted to/received by mobile device **104**. Mobile device **104** may aggregate and use this data to update user interface **105** every second. A woman may use this information to determine whether or not she has completed pumping, should continue pumping, or should discontinue pumping.

[0032] A software application operating on mobile device **104** may provide further analysis. For example, mobile device **104** may calculate a volume of milk pumped per session, session times, session durations, pumping trends over time, and milk inventory information (i.e., milk that has been pumped and frozen, refrigerated, fed to a baby, or disposed of). Mobile device **104** may provide suggestions regarding

pumping strategies. For example, mobile device **104** may suggest pumping at a certain time of day, suggest pumping for a certain duration of time, or suggest actions to take regarding milk inventory (i.e., freeze, refrigerate, feed to the baby, dispose, donate). In another example, mobile device **104** may receive information from the sensor portion of milk capture and collection element **101** passively. In other words, mobile device **104** may receive information from the sensor portion of milk capture and collection element **101** whether or not the software application is actively executing on the mobile device.

[0033] FIG. 2A illustrates a side view of an exemplary discrete breast pump element of the smart breast pump system. In one embodiment, the exemplary discrete breast pump element of the smart breast pump system comprises a milk capture and collection element **201**, similar to milk capture and collection element **101**, shown in FIG. 1. In this embodiment, milk capture and collection element **201** includes a pneumatic tube **202** which is connected to an external vacuum pump, such as external vacuum pump **103**, shown in FIG. 1. In this example, the smart breast pump system may forgo a sensor in the smart breast pump system and instead implement external vacuum pump **103** which may be controlled by mobile device **104**, shown in FIG. 1. Accordingly, smart breast pump system may be used with or without a sensor in combination with a vacuum pump that may send data to and receive data from mobile device **104**, shown in FIG. 1.

[0034] FIG. 2B illustrates a side view of an alternate embodiment of the discrete breast pump element of the smart breast pump system shown in FIG. 2A. In this embodiment, the discrete breast pump element of the smart breast pump system comprises a milk capture and collection element **203** and a pneumatic tube **202**, as shown in FIG. 2A. However, in the embodiment of the milk capture and collection element **203** shown in FIG. 2B, milk capture and collection element **203** includes a smart sensor **204** which includes wireless communication circuitry **205** to communicate with, for example, mobile device **104**, shown in FIG. 1. Smart sensor **204** operates similarly to the sensor portion of milk capture and collection element **101**, discussed above with respect to FIG. 1. Essentially, smart sensor **204** includes a sensor for monitoring milk production and communicates milk production information via wireless communication circuitry **205** within smart sensor **204** to, for example, mobile device **104**, shown in FIG. 1. Smart sensor **204** may further receive control instructions via wireless communication circuitry **205** from, for example, mobile device **104** shown in FIG. 1, that asserts control over milk capture and collection element **203**. Smart sensor **204** may further communicate with an external vacuum pump directly or via a mobile device, such as mobile device **104** shown in FIG. 1, to create a closed feedback loop in which pump settings can be adjusted based on a woman's milk expression in real-time.

[0035] FIG. 2C illustrates a side view of an alternate embodiment of the exemplary discrete breast pump element of the smart breast pump system. In this embodiment, the discrete breast pump element of the smart breast pump system comprises a milk capture and collection element **206** which is similar to milk capture and collection elements **201** shown in FIG. 2A, **203** shown in FIG. 2B, and **101** shown in FIG. 1. However, in this embodiment, milk capture and collection element **206** includes an integral smart sensor and internal pump **207**. A smart sensor portion of smart sensor and internal pump **207** operates in a fashion similar to that

described above with respect to smart sensor **204** shown in FIG. 2B and sensor portion of milk capture and collection element **101** shown in FIG. 1. In FIG. 2C, however, smart sensor and internal pump **207** includes a vacuum pump portion that is integral to milk capture and collection element **206**. Here, again, smart sensor and internal pump **207** may further communicate directly or via a mobile device, such as mobile device **104** shown in FIG. 1, to create a closed feedback loop in which pump settings can be adjusted based on a woman's milk expression in real-time.

[0036] FIG. 3A illustrates a cross-sectional front view of a milk collection element of the smart breast pump system. The milk collection element shown in FIG. 3A comprises a valve **301** which can be inserted into bottle **304** and mate in a leak proof fashion with a stop **302** to ensure that valve **301** attaches firmly to bottle **304**. Valve **301** may be implemented as a duckbill valve, a check valve, or any other one-way valve known in the art. Valve **301** further includes valve leaflets **303** that prevent the bottle from leaking or spilling whether the bottle **304** is currently in use or not. Valve leaflets **303** are configured to open and close as either an internal or external vacuum pump, such as vacuum pump **103** shown in FIG. 1, cycles during regular use. Accordingly, while suction is present during a pump cycle, valve leaflets **303** close. While suction is not present (or reduced) during a pump cycle, valve leaflets **303** open to allow milk to flow into bottle **304**. While only a single pair of valve leaflets **303** are shown, multiple pairs of leaflets can be employed within the milk collection element of the smart breast pump system shown in FIG. 3A. For example, two pairs of valve leaflets **303** may be implemented side by side of each other in a manner such that valve **301** is pliable enough to allow for opening and closing as a vacuum pump cycles. Any number of valve leaflets **303** may be implemented to suit any particular desired implementation.

[0037] In one embodiment, the milk collection element shown in FIG. 3A may correspond to the milk collection portion of milk capture and collection element **101**, discussed above. Accordingly, the milk collection element shown in FIG. 3A may attach to milk capture and collection element **101** in a manner that is substantially leak proof. The milk collection element shown in FIG. 3A further receives and collects milk as milk is pumped from a woman's breast. Advantageously, valve **301** is removable which allows a rubber nipple to be attached to bottle **304** for feeding a baby. Bottle **304** fits discretely under a woman's clothing and may collect between 3 and 8 ounces of milk. In the case where two milk capture and collection elements **101** are employed, one attached to each breast, the smart breast pump system is capable of collecting between 6 and 16 ounces of milk total before bottle or bottles **304** must be drained or replaced. Bottle **304** further includes a flat base **307** to allow bottle **304** to stably stand whether or not it contains milk, ensuring that bottle **304** does not tip or spill milk that has been collected.

[0038] FIG. 3B illustrates a perspective view of the milk collection element including a one-way valve and a milk collection bottle. The milk collection element shown in FIG. 3B is similar to the milk collection element shown in FIG. 3A, although from a different perspective. The milk collection element shown in FIG. 3B, like the milk collection element shown in FIG. 3A, includes a valve **301**, a stop **302**, and one or more pairs of valve leaflets **303**. The milk collection element shown in FIG. 3B includes a sloped region **305** disposed within valve **301** to direct milk through valve **301** without

catching and drying on the inside surface of valve **301**. The milk collection element shown in FIG. 3B may further include indicia **306** of fluid levels. In this example, indicia **306** represents a graduated scale of fluid levels marked in, for example, ounces, milliliters, or any other fluidic measurement. By comparing the fluid level seen through a translucent wall of the milk collection element shown in FIG. 3B with indicia **306**, a user may ascertain the amount of milk contained within the milk collection element shown in FIG. 3B.

[0039] FIG. 4 illustrates a storage element of the smart breast pump system. The storage element in FIG. 4 may be implemented as a carrying case **401** to store various elements of the smart breast pump system when not in use. Carrying case **401** may take any form, including a purse, a clutch, and a bag. Carrying case **401** may be held closed by, for example, a zipper **402**, as shown in FIG. 4, one or more buttons, one or more snaps, one or more magnetic attachments, or any other means for enclosing a carrying case known in the art. Carrying case **401** may be configured to contain one or more bottles of milk, such as bottle **304**, shown in FIG. 3A.

[0040] Carrying case **401** may further include an additional compartment **403** configured to store electrical components of the smart breast pump system. For example, the sensor portion of milk capture and collection element **101** or external vacuum pump **103**, each shown in FIG. 1, or a vacuum pump that is an integral component of milk capture and collection element **101** may be stored within additional compartment **403**. Additional compartment **403** may include a charging cable **404** that may charge batteries associated with any of the electrical components of the milk capture and collection element **101** shown in FIG. 1 including mobile device **104**. Charging cable may connect directly to the electrical components of milk capture and collection element **101**, shown in FIG. 1, or, alternatively, may provide inductive charging technology to charge batteries using electrical induction. Charging cable **404** may be implemented with any type of connector known in the art. However, in a preferable embodiment, charging cable **404** includes a USB-A style adapter **405** that may be connected to a power source for charging batteries associated with any of the electrical components of the milk capture and collection element **101**, shown in FIG. 1. Accordingly, adapter **405** may connect directly or indirectly to a source of power, such as a standard home electrical outlet, in order to charge the electrical components of the milk capture and collection element **101** shown in FIG. 1. Examples of indirect connections between adapter **405** and a source of power include connections to power adapters, transformers, or other devices meant to output power at a level appropriate for the electrical components of the milk capture and collection element **101** and the smart breast pump system disclosed herein.

[0041] FIG. 5 illustrates an exemplary communication flow between various elements of the smart breast pump system. A smart accessory **501**, such as one or more sensors within the sensor portion of milk capture and collection element **101**, shown in FIG. 1, may monitor milk expression in real time. For example, smart accessory **501** may monitor a flow rate of milk as it is expressed and/or a volume of milk contained within a milk collection portion of milk capture and collection element **101**, shown in FIG. 1. As this information is collected by smart accessory **501**, smart accessory **501** may transmit the information to mobile device **503** by a mobile device interface connection **502**. In this configuration, mobile device interface connection **502** may be implemented using a

short-range radio frequency technology, such as Bluetooth or Bluetooth low energy protocol. In many situations, it is likely that smart accessory **501** may be in relatively close proximity to mobile device **503** and therefore take advantage of short range communication protocols.

[0042] Mobile device **503**, which is similar to mobile device **104** shown in FIG. 1, may implement an application that controls a user interface. Accordingly, information obtained from smart accessory **501** can be received by mobile device **503** and displayed on a user interface to provide a user with real-time feedback about a pumping session, including flow rate tracking, and the volume of milk contained within a milk collection portion of milk capture and collection element **101**, shown in FIG. 1. The user interface device displayed on a display screen of mobile device **503** may provide any information, suggestion, or display disclosed herein with respect to other figures.

[0043] As shown in FIG. 5, mobile device **503** may transmit information derived from smart accessory **501** to a server **505** by means of a network interface connection **504**. In this example, mobile device **503** implements a communication interface protocol suitable for transmission of data over distances greater than those implemented by mobile device interface connection **502**. For example, Network interface connection **504** may be implemented using Wi-Fi, ZigBee, Z-Wave, RF4CE, Ethernet, telephone line, cellular channels, or others that operate in accordance with protocols defined in IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) 802.11, 801.11a, 801.11b, 801.11e, 802.11g, 802.11h, 802.11i, 802.11n, 802.16, 802.16d, 802.16e, or 802.16m using any network type including a wide-area network ("WAN"), a local-area network ("LAN"), a 2G network, a 3G network, a 4G network, a Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access (WiMAX) network, a Long Term Evolution (LTE) network, Code-Division Multiple Access (CDMA) network, Wideband CDMA (WCDMA) network, any type of satellite or cellular network, or any other appropriate protocol to facilitate communication between mobile device **503** and server **505**.

[0044] Server **505** may be implemented as a cloud based server. For example, a cloud based server may be implemented as several servers connected in a fashion to perform server functions in a partitioned series of processing steps in order to produce faster results as a function of the combined processing power of many servers working together to accomplish a particular end. Further, data received by server **505** may be accessed via web browser by any allowed user. Accordingly, another parent, guardian, health care professional, doctor, counselor, or any other allowed person may monitor, download, and backup data in real time via the web browser.

[0045] The foregoing description has been presented for purposes of illustration. It is not exhaustive and does not limit the invention to the precise forms or embodiments disclosed. Modifications and adaptations will be apparent to those skilled in the art from consideration of the specification and practice of the disclosed embodiments. For example, components described herein may be removed and other components added without departing from the scope or spirit of the embodiments disclosed herein or the appended claims.

[0046] Other embodiments will be apparent to those skilled in the art from consideration of the specification and practice of the disclosure disclosed herein. It is intended that the

specification and examples be considered as exemplary only, with a true scope and spirit of the invention being indicated by the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A smart breast pump system, comprising:
at least one sensor to monitor the expression of breast milk,
and
a mobile device, wirelessly receiving sensor data from the
at least one sensor.
2. The smart breast pump system of claim 1, further comprising:
a milk capture and collection element, comprising:
a cup portion.
3. The smart breast pump system of claim 2, wherein the milk capture and collection element further comprises:
a pump portion.
4. The smart breast pump system of claim 2, wherein the milk capture and collection element further comprises:
a milk collection portion.
5. The system of claim 1, wherein sensor data includes a flow rate for breast milk expression.
6. The system of claim 4, wherein sensor data includes a volume of milk contained within a milk collection portion of the milk capture and collection element.
7. The system of claim 3, wherein the mobile device transmits one or more control instructions to the at least one sensor or to a pump associated with the pump portion of the milk capture and control element.
8. The system of claim 7, wherein the pump associated with the pump portion of the milk capture and control element is external to the milk capture and control element.

9. The system of claim 7, wherein the pump associated with the pump portion of the milk capture and control element is integrated into the milk capture and control element.

10. The system of claim 2, wherein the cup portion of the milk capture and control element comprises a cup configured to form an air tight seal between a breast and the cup upon application of vacuum pressure to the breast.

11. The system of claim 4, wherein the milk collection portion further comprises a valve and a bottle.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein the valve comprises one or more pairs of valve leaflets.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein the one or more pairs of valve leaflets create a one-way valve through which milk is able to flow into the milk collection portion.

14. The system of claim 13, wherein the one or more pairs of valve leaflets open and close as a vacuum pump cycles.

15. The system of claim 9, wherein at least one of the sensor and the pump are configured to be inductively charged.

16. The system of claim 8, wherein the pump is connected to the milk capture and control element by pneumatic tubing.

17. A smart breast pump system, comprising:

at least one sensor to monitor the expression of breast milk;
a mobile device, wirelessly receiving sensor data from the
at least one sensor; and

at least one server device, wirelessly receiving the sensor data from the at least one mobile device.

18. The system of claim 17, wherein the sensor data is displayed in a user interface on a display screen of the mobile device.

19. The system of claim 17, wherein the sensor data is accessible through the server device via a web browser.

20. The system of claim 17, wherein the sensor data is provided to the mobile device in real time.

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