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(54) **MOISTURE ABSORBING SEAL**

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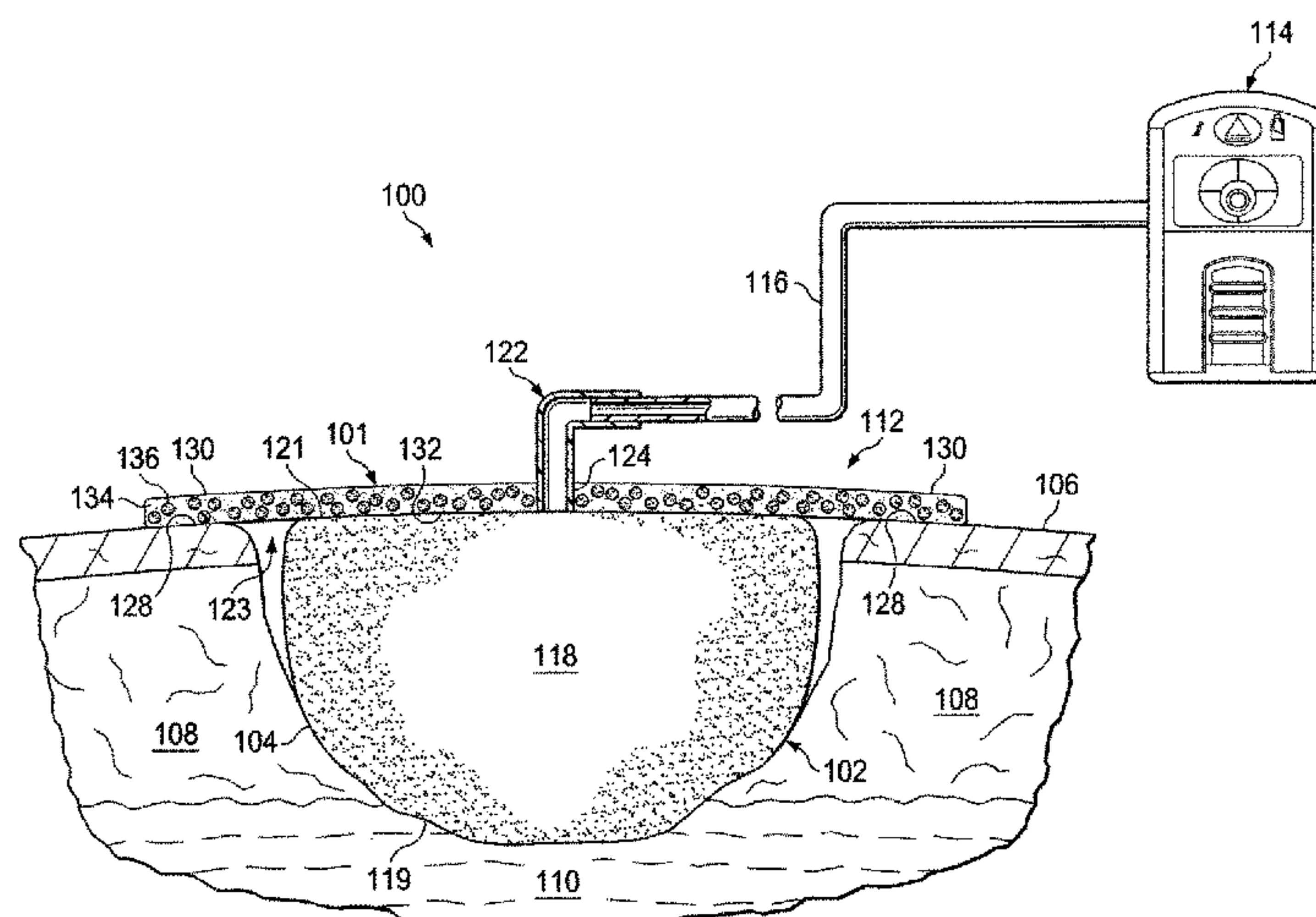
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ABSTRACT

A sealing drape may be suitable for use with a reduced-
pressure treatment system for treating a tissue site. The
sealing drape may have an interior surface adapted for
positioning adjacent to a peripheral surface of the tissue site.
The sealing drape may include a sealing material and an
absorbent material. The sealing material may be hydropho-
bic and substantially free of hydrophilic components. Fur-
ther, the sealing material may be positioned between the
interior surface of the sealing drape and the absorbent
material. The sealing drape may be used with a manifold for
positioning at the tissue site, a reduced-pressure interface,
and a reduced-pressure source. Methods of manufacture and
treatment are also disclosed.

16 Claims, 5 Drawing Sheets



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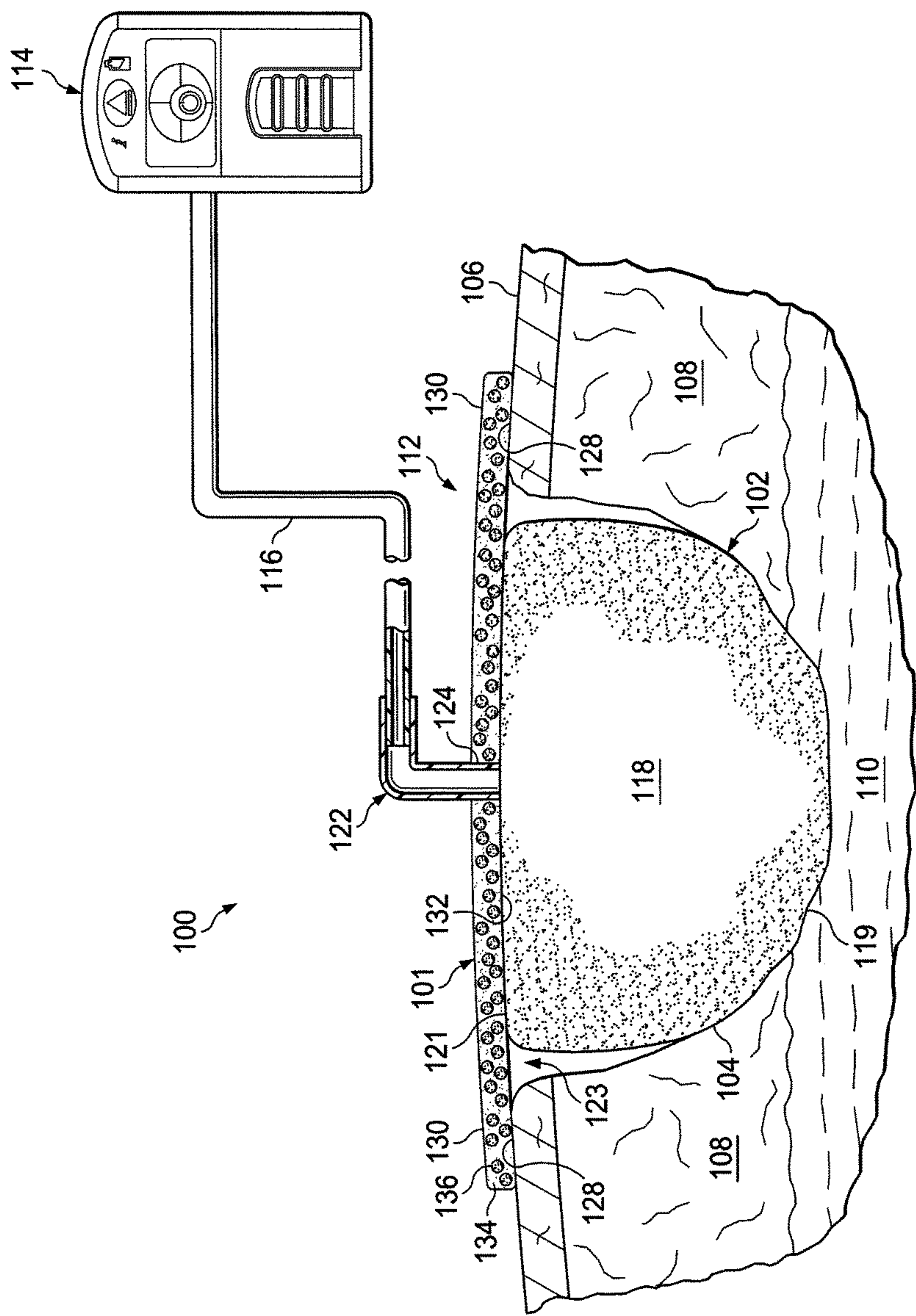


FIG. 1

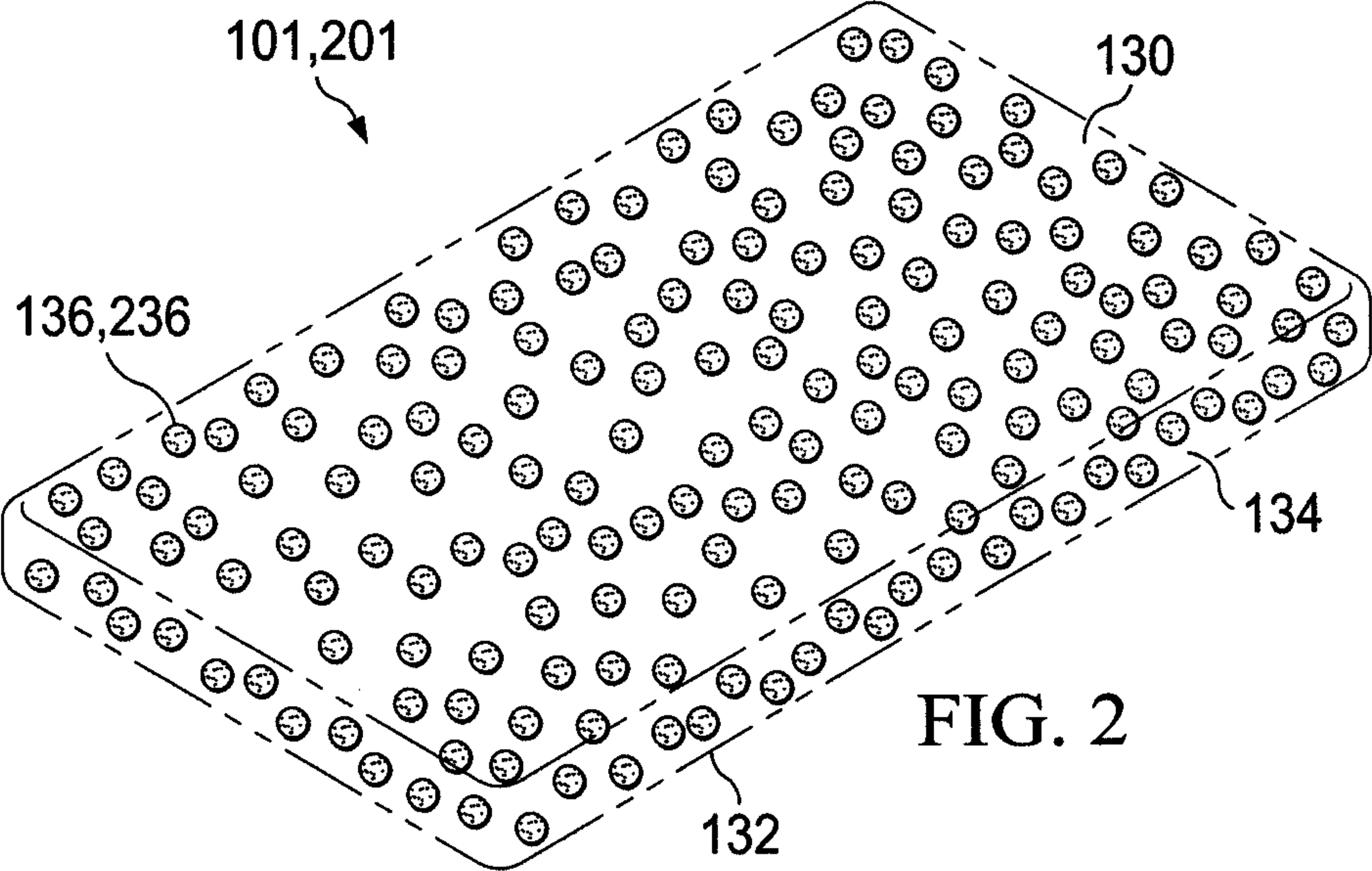


FIG. 2

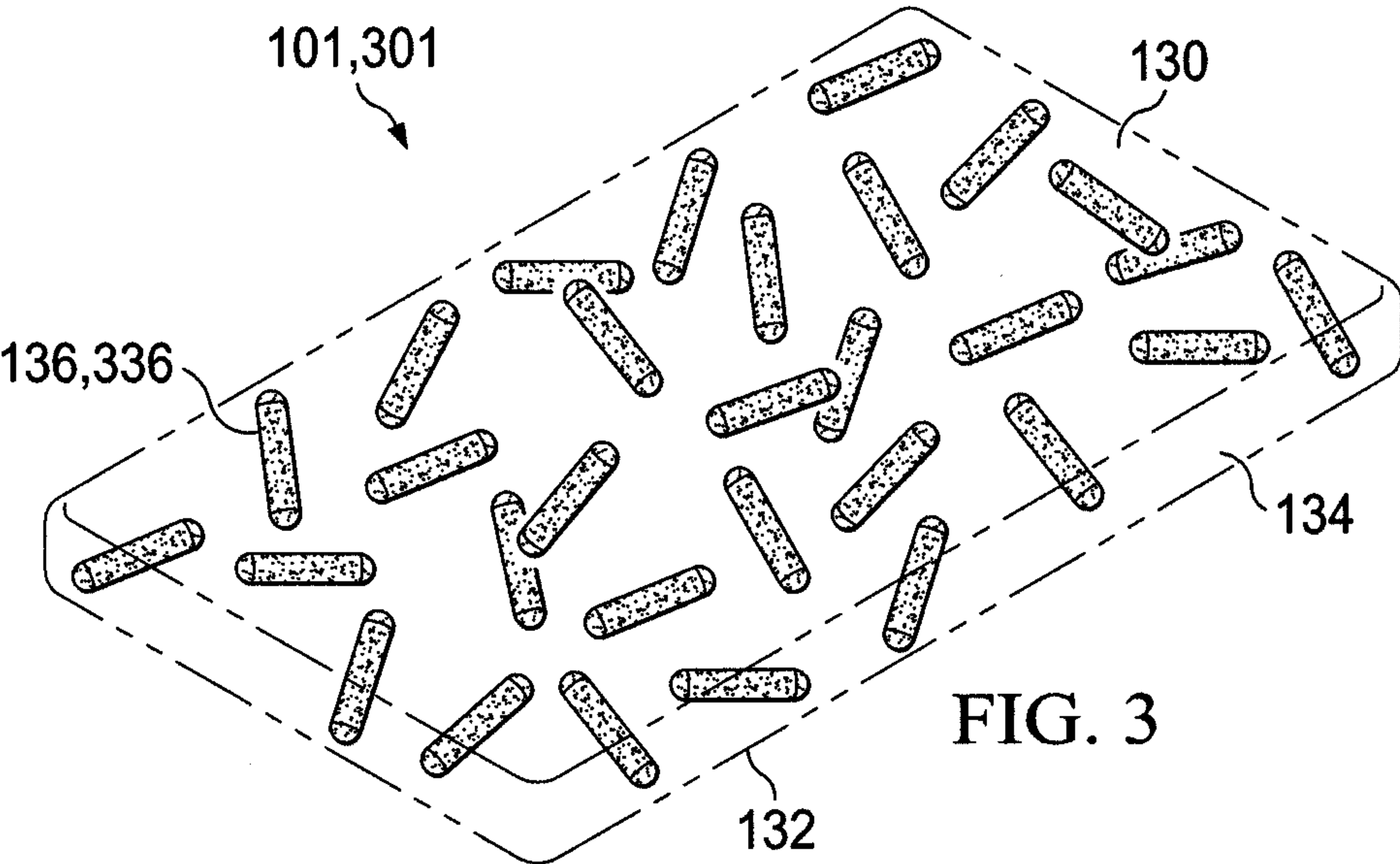


FIG. 3

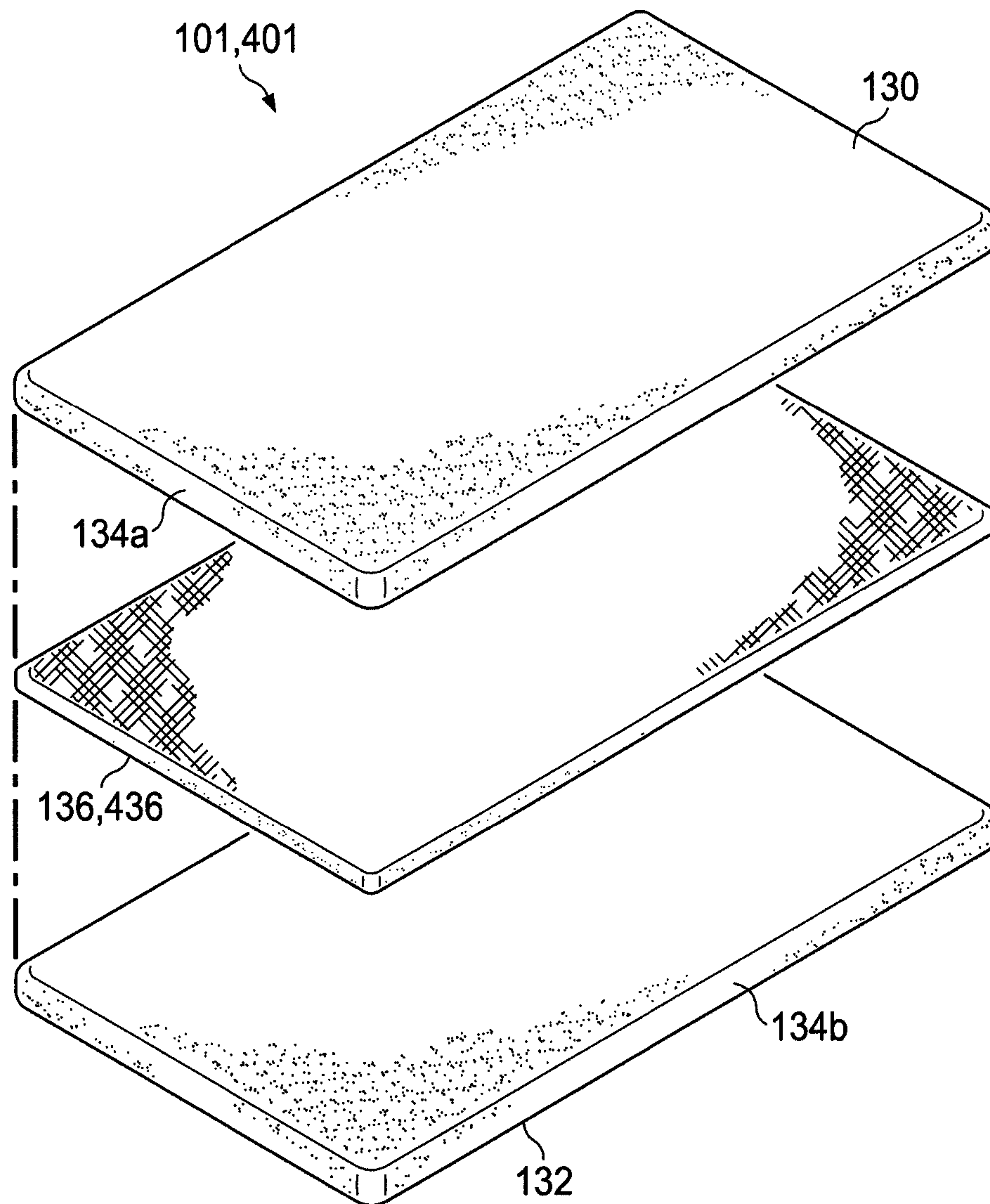


FIG. 4

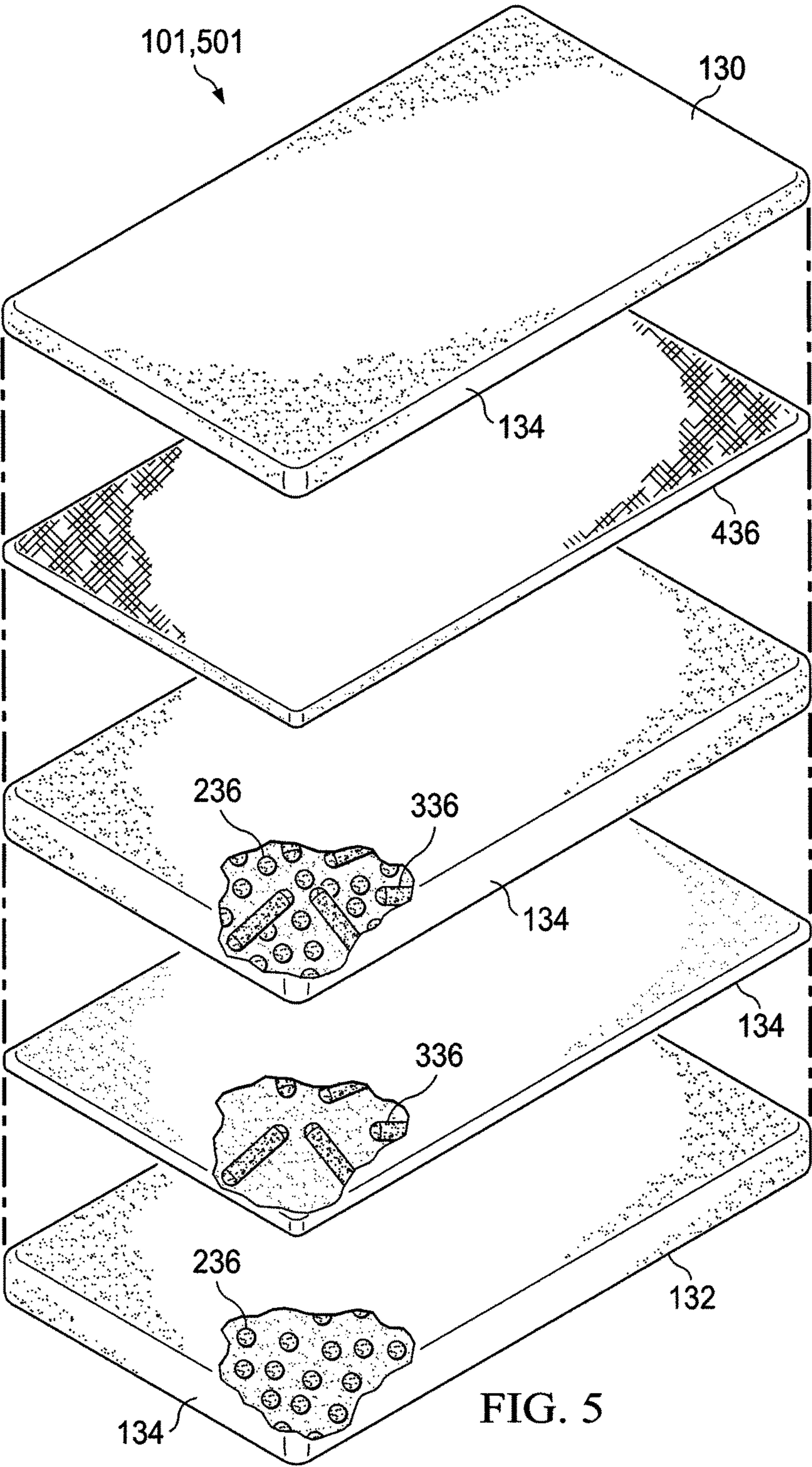


FIG. 5

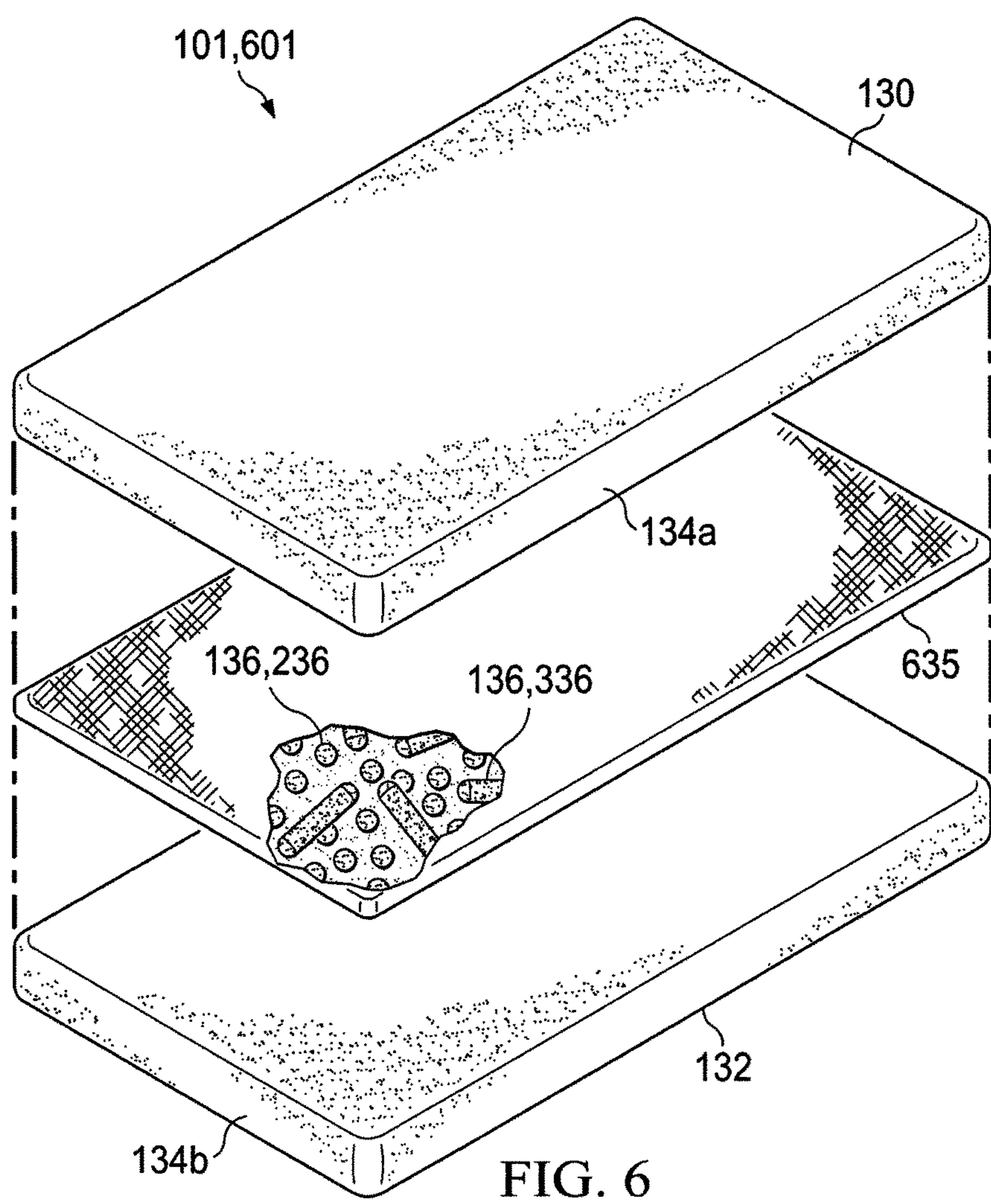


FIG. 6

MOISTURE ABSORBING SEAL**RELATED APPLICATION**

This application claims the benefit, under 35 USC §119 (e), of the filing of U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/748,711, entitled "Moisture Absorbing Seal," filed Jan. 3, 2013, which is incorporated herein by reference for all purposes.

TECHNICAL FIELD

The following subject matter relates generally to tissue treatment systems and, more particularly, but not by way of limitation, to medical sealing drapes and systems including medical sealing drapes.

BACKGROUND

Known tissue treatment systems may use a sealing drape to provide a fluid seal about a tissue site requiring treatment. Sealing around particular anatomical areas of the tissue site can be complicated and a leak-free seal is often difficult to achieve and maintain. Typical sealing drape materials may lack a sufficiently conformable adhesive capable of flowing into creases and cracks around the tissue site to achieve a good seal. Current materials may also suffer from being unable to transfer moisture away from the tissue site. Thus, if the sealing drape remains in place for an extended period of time, moisture present near the tissue site can cause maceration of the tissue and the formation of leaks between the tissue site and the sealing drape. Accordingly, improvements to sealing and moisture transfer capabilities for sealing drapes are desirable.

SUMMARY

Shortcomings with certain aspects of known tissue treatment systems and methods utilizing sealing drapes are addressed as shown and described in a variety of illustrative, non-limiting embodiments herein. Other features and advantages of the illustrative embodiments will become apparent with reference to the drawings and detailed description that follow.

In some embodiments, a reduced-pressure system for treating a tissue site may include a manifold, a sealing drape, and a reduced-pressure interface. The manifold may be adapted to be positioned adjacent the tissue site and to distribute reduced pressure to the tissue site. The sealing drape may have an interior surface and an external surface. The interior surface of the sealing drape may be adapted to cover the manifold and the tissue site to provide a sealed space between the interior surface of the sealing drape and the tissue site. Additionally, the sealing drape may include a sealing material and an absorbent material. The sealing material may be hydrophobic and substantially free of hydrophilic components. The absorbent material may be associated with the sealing material such that the sealing material may be positioned between the interior surface of the sealing drape and the absorbent material. The reduced-pressure interface may be adapted to deliver reduced-pressure. The reduced-pressure interface may be in fluid communication with the sealed space and the manifold.

In some embodiments, a sealing drape for treating a tissue site may include an interior surface, an external surface, a sealing material, and an absorbent material. The interior surface may be adapted to be positioned adjacent a peripheral

eral surface surrounding the tissue site and to overlap the peripheral surface to provide a sealed space between the sealing drape and the tissue site. The sealing material may include a fluid permeable, hydrophobic material substantially free of hydrophilic components. The absorbent material may be disposed in the sealing material such that the sealing material may be positioned between the interior surface of the sealing drape and the absorbent material. The absorbent material may be adapted to absorb fluid communicated through the sealing material.

In some embodiments, a method of manufacturing a sealing drape for treating a tissue site may include the steps of: providing a sealing material; providing an absorbent material; and disposing the absorbent material in the sealing material. The sealing material may be hydrophobic and substantially free of hydrophilic components.

In some embodiments, a reduced-pressure system for treating a tissue site may include a manifold, a sealing drape, and a reduced-pressure interface. The manifold may be adapted to be positioned adjacent the tissue site and to distribute reduced pressure to the tissue site. The sealing drape may have an interior surface and an external surface. The interior surface of the sealing drape may be adapted to be positioned adjacent a peripheral surface surrounding the tissue site and to cover the manifold and the tissue site to provide a sealed space between the interior surface and the tissue site. Further, the sealing drape may be adapted to extend beyond the tissue site and to overlap the peripheral surface. Additionally, the sealing drape may include a sealing material and an absorbent material. The sealing material may be hydrophobic and substantially free of hydrophilic components. The absorbent material may be associated with the sealing material such that the sealing material may be positioned between the interior surface of the sealing drape and the absorbent material. The reduced-pressure interface may be adapted to deliver reduced-pressure. The reduced-pressure interface may be in fluid communication with the sealed space and the manifold.

In some embodiments, a method for treating a tissue site may include the steps of positioning a sealing drape adjacent a peripheral surface surrounding the tissue site, the sealing drape extending beyond the tissue site and overlapping the peripheral surface; and transferring moisture away from the peripheral surface through the sealing drape.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

A more complete understanding of this specification may be obtained by reference to the following detailed description when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings wherein:

FIG. 1 is a side view, with a portion shown in cross section, of an illustrative embodiment of a reduced-pressure treatment system depicting an illustrative embodiment of a sealing drape;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of another illustrative embodiment of a sealing drape suitable for use with the reduced-pressure treatment system of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of another illustrative embodiment of a sealing drape suitable for use with the reduced-pressure treatment system of FIG. 1;

FIG. 4 is a perspective, exploded view of another illustrative embodiment of a sealing drape suitable for use with the reduced-pressure treatment system of FIG. 1;

FIG. 5 is a perspective, exploded view of another illustrative embodiment of a sealing drape suitable for use with the reduced-pressure treatment system of FIG. 1; and

FIG. 6 is a perspective, exploded view of another illustrative embodiment of a sealing drape suitable for use with the reduced-pressure treatment system of FIG. 1.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF ILLUSTRATIVE EMBODIMENTS

In the following detailed description of the illustrative, non-limiting embodiments, reference is made to the accompanying drawings that form a part hereof. Other embodiments may be utilized, and logical, structural, mechanical, electrical, and chemical changes may be made without departing from the scope of this specification. To avoid detail not necessary to enable those skilled in the art to practice the embodiments described herein, the detailed description may omit certain information known to those skilled in the art. The following detailed description is provided without limitation, and with the scope of the illustrative embodiments being defined by the appended claims.

Referring generally to the drawings, this specification provides a reduced-pressure treatment system **100** utilizing a sealing drape **101** for treating a tissue site **102**. The reduced-pressure treatment system **100** is presented in the context of a tissue site **102** that may include, without limitation, a wound **104** extending through the epidermis **106**, the dermis **108**, and reaching into a hypodermis, or subcutaneous tissue **110**. The reduced-pressure treatment system **100** may include a reduced-pressure dressing **112**, a reduced-pressure source **114**, and a reduced-pressure delivery conduit **116**. The reduced-pressure delivery conduit **116** may provide reduced pressure from the reduced-pressure source **114** to the reduced-pressure dressing **112**. As will be described below, the sealing drape **101** may be a component of the reduced-pressure dressing **112** that will provide a fluid seal with the tissue site **102** while preventing the surface of the tissue site **102** from becoming saturated with moisture.

The term “tissue site” in this context, for example, may refer to a wound or defect located on or within any tissue, including but not limited to, bone tissue, adipose tissue, muscle tissue, neural tissue, dermal tissue, vascular tissue, connective tissue, cartilage, tendons, or ligaments. A wound may include, without limitation, any irregularity with a tissue, such as an open wound, surgical incision, or diseased tissue. For example, the wound may include chronic, acute, traumatic, subacute, and dehiscent wounds, partial-thickness burns, ulcers (such as diabetic, pressure, or venous insufficiency ulcers), flaps, and grafts. The term “tissue site” may also refer to areas of any tissue that are not necessarily wounded or defective, but are instead areas in which it is desired to add or promote the growth of additional tissue. For example, reduced pressure may be used in certain tissue areas to grow additional tissue that may be harvested and transplanted to another location.

In general, components of the reduced-pressure treatment system **100** may be coupled directly or indirectly. For example, the reduced-pressure source **114** may be directly coupled to the reduced-pressure dressing **112** or indirectly coupled to the reduced-pressure dressing **112** through the reduced-pressure delivery conduit **116**. Components may be fluidly coupled to each other to provide a path for transferring fluids, such as liquid or gas, between the components. In some embodiments, components may be fluidly coupled with a tube. A “tube,” as used herein, may refer to any tube, pipe, hose, conduit, or other structure with one or more lumina adapted to convey fluids between two ends. In some embodiments, components may be coupled by virtue of

physical proximity, being integral to a single structure, or being formed from the same piece of material. Coupling may also include mechanical, thermal, electrical, or chemical coupling, such as a chemical bond.

“Reduced pressure” may refer to a pressure less than the ambient pressure at a tissue site being subjected to treatment. The reduced pressure may be less than the atmospheric pressure. The reduced pressure may also be less than a hydrostatic pressure at a tissue site. Unless otherwise indicated, values of pressure stated herein are gauge pressures. Consistent with the use herein, an increase in reduced pressure or vacuum pressure may refer to a relative reduction in absolute pressure.

The reduced-pressure source **114** may provide reduced pressure as a part of the reduced-pressure treatment system **100**. The reduced-pressure source **114** may be any device for supplying a reduced pressure, such as a vacuum pump, wall suction, micro-pump, or other source. While the amount and nature of reduced pressure applied to a tissue site may vary according to the treatment application, the reduced pressure may be between about -5 mm Hg (-667 Pa) to about -500 mm Hg (-66.7 kPa). In some embodiments, the reduced pressure may be between about -75 mm Hg (-9.9 kPa) to about -300 mm Hg (-39.9 kPa).

As shown in FIG. 1, in some embodiments, the reduced-pressure dressing **112** may include a manifold **118**, the sealing drape **101**, and a reduced-pressure interface **122**. The manifold **118** may have a first side **119** and a second side **121**. The first side **119** of the manifold **118** may be placed within, over, proximate, adjacent, or in direct contact with the tissue site **102**.

The manifold **118** may be a substance or structure capable of applying reduced pressure to, delivering fluids to, or removing fluids from the tissue site **102**. The manifold **118** may be positioned between the sealing drape **101** and the tissue site **102**. The manifold **118** may be partially or fully in contact with the tissue site **102**. The manifold **118** may partially or completely fill the tissue site **102**, or the manifold **118** may be placed over the tissue site **102**. The manifold **118** may take many forms, and may be any size, shape, or thickness depending on a variety of factors, such as the type of treatment being implemented or the nature and size of a particular tissue site. For example, the size and shape of the manifold **118** may be adapted to the contours of deep and irregular shaped tissue sites.

The manifold **118** may include a plurality of flow channels or pathways configured to distribute fluids to and remove fluids from the tissue site **102**. In some embodiments, the flow channels or pathways may be interconnected to improve distribution of fluids provided to or removed from the tissue site **102**. The manifold **118** may be a biocompatible material that is capable of being placed in contact with the tissue site **102** and distributing reduced pressure to the tissue site **102**. For example, the manifold **118** may include, without limitation, devices that have structural elements arranged to form flow channels, such as cellular foam, open-cell foam, porous tissue collections, liquids, gels, and foams that include, or cure to include, flow channels. Additionally, the manifold **118** may be a gauze, felted mat, or any other material suited to a particular biological application.

In some embodiments, the manifold **118** may be a porous foam having interconnected cells or pores that act as flow channels. The porous foam may be, for example, a hydrophobic material, such as a polyurethane, open-cell reticulated foam manufactured under the trade name Granu-Foam® by Kinetic Concepts, Inc. of San Antonio, Tex. In

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some embodiments, the manifold **118** may also be used to distribute fluids such as medications, antibacterials, growth factors, and various solutions to the tissue site **102**. Other layers may be included in or on the manifold **118**, such as absorptive materials, wicking materials, hydrophobic materials, and hydrophilic materials.

In some embodiments, the manifold **118** may be made from a hydrophilic material capable of wicking fluid away from the tissue site **102** while continuing to distribute reduced pressure to the tissue site **102**. The wicking properties of the manifold **118** may draw fluid away from the tissue site **102** by capillary flow or other wicking mechanisms. An example of a hydrophilic foam may be a polyvinyl alcohol, open-cell foam such as V.A.C. WhiteFoam® dressing available from Kinetic Concepts, Inc. of San Antonio, Tex. Other hydrophilic foams may include those made from polyether. Other foams that may exhibit hydrophilic characteristics may include hydrophobic foams that have been treated or coated to provide hydrophilicity.

The manifold **118** may promote granulation at a tissue site when reduced-pressure is present within the reduced-pressure dressing **112**. For example, any or all of the surfaces of the manifold **118** may have an uneven, coarse, or jagged profile that induce microstrains and stresses at the tissue site **102** when reduced pressure is applied through the manifold **118**.

In some embodiments, the manifold **118** may be constructed from a bioresorbable material that may remain in a patient's body following use of the reduced-pressure dressing **112**. Suitable bioresorbable materials may include, without limitation, a polymeric blend of polylactic acid (PLA) and polyglycolic acid (PGA). The polymeric blend may also include, without limitation, polycarbonates, polyfumarates, and caprolactones. The manifold **118** may further serve as a scaffold for new cell-growth, or a scaffold material may be used in conjunction with the manifold **118** to promote cell-growth. A scaffold may be a substance or structure used to enhance or promote the growth of cells or formation of tissue, such as a three-dimensional porous structure that provides a template for cell growth. Illustrative examples of scaffold materials may include calcium phosphate, collagen, PLA/PGA, coral hydroxy apatites, carbonates, or processed allograft materials.

The sealing drape **101** may be adapted to cover the second side **121** of the manifold **118** and to seal to a peripheral surface **128** proximate the tissue site **102**. Thus, the sealing drape **101** may provide a fluid seal between the reduced-pressure dressing **112** and the tissue site **102**. "Fluid seal," or "seal," may refer to a seal adequate to maintain reduced pressure at a desired tissue site given the particular reduced-pressure source involved.

The peripheral surface **128** may be undamaged epidermis **106** peripheral to the tissue site **102**. Thus, the sealing drape **101** may provide a sealed space **123** proximate to the tissue site **102** that is substantially isolated from the external environment, and capable of maintaining a reduced pressure provided by the reduced-pressure source **114**. Reduced pressure applied through the manifold **118** in the sealed space **123** can promote healing by inducing macrostrain and microstrain in the tissue site **102**, as well as by removing exudates and other fluids from the tissue site **102**. Fluids from the tissue site **102** may be collected for disposal by a fluid canister (not shown) associated with the reduced-pressure source **114**.

The sealing drape **101** may comprise an elastomeric material. "Elastomeric" may refer to the properties of an elastomer, such as a polymeric material that has rubber-like

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properties. More specifically, some elastomers have elongation rates greater than 100% and a significant amount of resilience. The resilience of a material may refer to the ability of the material to recover from an elastic deformation.

In some embodiments, the reduced-pressure dressing **112** may also include additional layers (not shown) positioned between the tissue site **102** and the sealing drape **101**. For example, the reduced-pressure dressing **112** may further include an absorption layer, tissue-interface layer, or additional manifold layers. The reduced-pressure dressing **112** may also include an attachment device (not shown) capable of adhering or otherwise sealing the sealing drape **101** to the peripheral surface **128**. Materials suitable for use as attachment devices for adhering the sealing drape **101** about a tissue site, may include, for example, silicones and hot-melt adhesives. Other attachment devices may include, for example, hydrogels and hydrocolloids.

Reduced pressure may be applied to the reduced-pressure dressing **112** through the reduced-pressure interface **122**. The reduced-pressure interface **122** may be fluidly coupled to the sealing drape **101** through an aperture **124** in the sealing drape **101**. In the illustrative example of FIG. 1, the aperture **124** is shown centrally located on the sealing drape **101**. However, the aperture **124** may be located anywhere on the sealing drape **101**, including without limitation, a peripheral portion of the sealing drape **101** that may be adjacent to an edge of the sealing drape **101**. Although the aperture **124** is shown to be circular, the aperture **124** may have any shape. The shape of the aperture **124** may also be adapted to contour or substantially coordinate with the shape of the reduced-pressure delivery conduit **116**. The reduced-pressure interface **122** may provide fluid communication between the sealed space **123** and the reduced-pressure delivery conduit **116** through the aperture **124**.

The reduced pressure provided by the reduced-pressure source **114** may be delivered through the reduced-pressure delivery conduit **116** to the reduced-pressure interface **122**. Thus, the reduced-pressure source **114** may be fluidly coupled to the reduced-pressure interface **122** by the reduced-pressure delivery conduit **116**. In some embodiments, the reduced-pressure interface **122** may be a T.R.A.C.® Pad or Sensa T.R.A.C.® Pad available from Kinetic Concepts, Inc. of San Antonio, Tex. The reduced-pressure interface **122** may allow the reduced pressure to be delivered to the sealing drape **101** and realized within the sealed space **123** formed between the sealing drape **101** and the tissue site **102**. In some embodiments, the reduced-pressure interface **122** may extend through the sealing drape **101** to the manifold **118**, but numerous arrangements are possible. The reduced-pressure interface **122** may deliver the reduced pressure through the aperture **124** of the sealing drape **101** to the manifold **118** and the tissue site **102**.

Upon application of the reduced pressure to the reduced-pressure dressing **112**, fluids such as exudates from the tissue site **102** may be drawn into the manifold **118**. Some amount of fluid as a consequence may also be brought into contact with the sealing drape **101**, including portions of the sealing drape **101** that may be adjacent the peripheral surface **128** surrounding the tissue site **102**. Moisture at the interface between the peripheral surface **128** and the sealing drape **101** may adversely affect the seal between the sealing drape **101** and the peripheral surface **128**, and may increase the risk of maceration. "Maceration" or "macerating" may refer to the softening or breaking down of tissue as a result of prolonged exposure to moisture.

The sealing drape **101** of the reduced-pressure treatment system **100** can overcome these shortcomings and others by maintaining a fluid seal with the tissue site **102**, while also preventing the peripheral surface **128** from becoming saturated with moisture. The sealing drape **101** may adhere to the tissue site **102** when wet or dry, may transmit and manage low levels of skin moisture to avoid maceration, and may be left in place for extended time periods.

Continuing with the embodiment of FIG. 1, the sealing drape **101** may have an external surface **130** and an interior surface **132**. The interior surface **132** may be adapted to face the tissue site **102**. As previously described, the sealing drape **101** may be adapted to sealingly engage the peripheral surface **128** to provide a sealed space **123** with the tissue site **102**. The interior surface **132** of the sealing drape **101** may contact the peripheral surface **128** surrounding the tissue site **102** to provide the sealed space **123**. The sealing drape **101** may also be stretchable or elastic in nature. The stretchable properties of the sealing drape **101** may facilitate placement of the sealing drape **101** proximate to tissue sites having a variety of shapes, topologies, or flexibility requirements. The sealing drape **101** may be sized to extend beyond the tissue site **102** to overlap the peripheral surface **128** surrounding the tissue site **102**.

The sealing drape **101** may include a sealing material **134** and an absorbent material **136**. The sealing material **134** may be fluid permeable, may provide a substantially sheet-like structure for the sealing drape **101**, and may form a part of the interior surface **132** of the sealing drape **101**. The absorbent material **136** may, for example, be contained within the sealing material **134**, dispersed throughout the sealing material **134**, or embedded as a sheet-like layer within the sealing material **134**. The absorbent material **136** may be adapted to absorb moisture, such as exudate, from the tissue site **102** by drawing or wicking the fluid from the peripheral surface **128** of the tissue site **102**.

The sealing material **134** may be comprised of any substantially pure hydrophobic material, and may have a variety of structures, including materials and structures that allow fluid, such as liquid or gas, to pass through the sealing material **134** without being absorbed by the sealing material **134**. Herein, a substantially pure hydrophobic material may be substantially free of hydrophilic components due to the tendency for hydrophilic materials to retain fluid. For example, the substantially pure hydrophobic material of the sealing material **134** may not be a copolymer incorporating a hydrophilic component, such as a hydrophilic monomer. The sealing material **134**, for example, may comprise a hydrophobic elastomer, such as a hydrophobic silicone elastomer. The hydrophobic characteristics of the sealing material **134** may prevent the sealing material **134** from directly absorbing fluid, such as exudate, from the tissue site **102**, but may allow the fluid to pass through. Thus, the sealing material **134** may permit the passage of fluid away from the peripheral surface **128** and the tissue site **102** to substantially preclude any adverse affect on the seal being maintained with the tissue site **102**. In this manner, the sealing material **134** may enhance the management of fluid in the reduced-pressure dressing **112** to allow for a continued fluid seal with the tissue site **102**, while also protecting the tissue site **102** and surrounding areas from maceration.

The absorbent material **136** may be a hydrophilic material capable of absorbing fluid. The absorbent material **136** may be a separate and distinct component coupled with the sealing material **134** as described herein to provide the sealing drape **101**. In some embodiments, the absorbent material **136** may comprise a super-absorbent material. For

example, the absorbent material **136** may comprise one or more super-absorbent materials, such as, for example, carboxymethyl cellulose (CMC) or a carboxymethylcellulose salt, a cross-linked hydrophilic acrylic or a cross-linked hydrophilic acrylic salt, or an acrylamide.

When coupled with the sealing material **134**, the absorbent material **136** may provide an absorption gradient to draw or otherwise wick fluid away from the tissue site **102**. Fluid from the tissue site **102** may be drawn by the absorption gradient through the sealing material **134** and then be absorbed by the absorbent material **136**. The absorbent material **136** may retain or bond to the fluid in conjunction with a physical or chemical change to the absorbent material **136**. The absorbent material **136** may, for example, gel, increase in viscosity, or otherwise thicken upon contact with fluid from the tissue site **102**, thereby trapping the fluid. The wicking properties of the absorbent material **136** may quickly draw fluid away from the tissue site **102**, and thus, may prevent the accumulation of fluid at or near the tissue site **102**. In a similar manner, the sealing material **134** may facilitate the evaporation of fluid absorbed by the absorbent material **136** or otherwise transferred through the sealing material **134** towards the external surface **130** of the sealing drape **101**. Since fluid from the tissue site **102** may pass through the sealing material **134** to reach the absorbent material **136** as described above, the sealing material **134** may provide a separation between the tissue site **102** and the absorbent material **136**. Thus, the sealing material **134** may be positioned between the interior surface **132** of the sealing drape **101** and the absorbent material **136**. Further, the sealing material **134** may substantially preclude fluid that has been absorbed by the absorbent material **136** from contacting the tissue site **102** and the peripheral surface **128**.

The sealing material **134** may have any size, shape, or thickness depending on a variety of factors, such as the type of treatment being implemented, the nature of the tissue site **102**, or the peripheral surface **128**. The thickness of the sealing material **134** may be increased or decreased to optimize the effectiveness of the sealing material **134** as a separator between the tissue site **102** and the absorbent material **136**. For example, in applications in which the tissue site **102** is expected to release a large amount of fluid, a thicker sealing material **134** may be desirable to restrain or prevent the fluid from contacting the tissue site **102** or the peripheral surface **128**. Conversely, a thinner sealing material **134** may be desirable in applications in which a lower amount of fluid is present. For example, the sealing material **134** may be between about 100 micrometers to about 200 micrometers in thickness. The thickness of the sealing material **134** may also be adjusted according to a desired ratio of the sealing material **134** to the absorbent material **136** comprising the sealing drape **101** depending on the application. In some embodiments, the overall thickness of the sealing drape **101** including the sealing material **134** and the absorbent material **136** may be about 250 micrometers.

The absorbent material **136** may be dispersed throughout and/or embedded as a sheet-like layer within the sealing material **134**. FIG. 2 illustrates an embodiment of a sealing drape **201** that may include the sealing material **134** having absorbent particles **236** dispersed throughout the sealing drape **201**. The absorbent particles **236** may provide the previously described absorbent material **136**. The absorbent particles **236** may have any size or shape, depending on a variety of factors, such as the nature of the tissue site **102** or the amount of fluid anticipated to be released by the tissue site **102**. In applications in which the tissue site **102** releases

a large amount of fluid, larger absorbent particles **236** may be desirable to provide adequate absorptive capacity for the fluid.

FIG. 3 illustrates another embodiment of a sealing drape **301** in which absorbent fibers **336**, such as elongate tubes, are dispersed throughout the sealing material **134**. The absorbent fibers **336** may provide the previously described absorbent material **136**. The absorbent fibers **336** may have any size or shape, depending on a variety of factors including the amount of fluid anticipated to be released by the tissue site **102**. This specification contemplates embodiments including a mixture of absorbent particles **236** and absorbent fibers **336** dispersed within the sealing material **134** as described herein.

FIG. 4 illustrates another embodiment of a sealing drape **401** in which the absorbent material **136** comprises an absorbent layer **436** positioned within the sealing material **134**. The sealing drape **401** may include a first layer **134a** of the sealing material **134** and a second layer **134b** of the sealing material **134**. The absorbent layer **436** may be positioned between the first layer **134a** and the second layer **134b**. The first layer **134a**, the second layer **134b**, and the absorbent layer **436** may each have the same or a different thickness. Thus, the absorbent layer **436** may be disposed at varying distances from the external surface **130** of the sealing drape **401** and the interior surface **132** of the sealing drape **401** depending on the thickness of each of the first and the second layer **134a**, **134b**.

The absorbent layer **436** may be provided as a nonwoven or a woven structure. For example, the absorbent layer **436** may comprise a nonwoven or a woven sheet of CMC fibers. Spaces or voids in the absorbent layer **436** may allow a reduced pressure that is applied to the reduced-pressure dressing **112** to be transferred within and through the absorbent layer **436**.

Further, the absorbent layer **436** may have any size, shape, or thickness, depending on a variety of factors, such as the type of treatment being implemented or the nature of the tissue site **102**. The size and shape of the absorbent layer **436** may be customized by a user to extend through a particular portion of the sealing drape **401**. Thus, the absorbent layer **436** may be designed to cover a particular portion of the tissue site **102** or nearby tissue. For example, the width or thickness of the absorbent layer **436** may be increased to cause a corresponding increase in fluid storage capacity of the absorbent layer **436**.

Referring to FIGS. 2-3, in some embodiments, the absorbent particles **236** and/or the absorbent fibers **336** may be dispersed or otherwise disposed throughout the sealing material **134** in a substantially uniform manner. A substantially uniform dispersion of the absorbent particles **236** and/or the absorbent fibers **336** may reduce the distance fluid must travel from the interior surface **132** before being absorbed. As described below, in some embodiments, utilizing a configuration for the sealing drape **101** that employs the absorbent particles **236** and/or the absorbent fibers **336** and/or the absorbent layer **436** may allow a user to customize the absorption gradient through the cross section of the sealing drape **101** for a desired application. Further, in some embodiments, the absorbent particles **236** and/or the absorbent fibers **336** may be dispersed or otherwise disposed within the sealing material **134** at a desired concentration and location within the sealing drape **101** to suit a particular application.

FIG. 5 illustrates another embodiment of a sealing drape **501** that may have a plurality of the previously described absorbent materials **236**, **336**, **436** configured as described

above with the sealing material **134**. The absorbent materials **236**, **336**, **436** may be configured with the sealing member **134** as described, and positioned in layers relative to one another within the sealing drape **501**. Further, the absorbent materials **236**, **336**, **436** may have the same or different dimensions and include the same or different absorbent properties. In some embodiments, the plurality of absorbent materials **236**, **336**, **436** may increase in concentration with increasing distance from the interior surface **132** of the sealing drape **501** through the cross section of the sealing drape **501**, such as, for example, from the interior surface **132** toward the external surface **130**. Similarly, the sealing drape **501** may have a higher ratio of the absorbent material **236**, **336**, **436** to the sealing material **134** with increasing distance from the interior surface **132**. In some embodiments, the absorbent materials **236**, **336**, **436** may exhibit increasing hydrophilicity or absorbency with increasing distance from the interior surface **132**. Further, in some embodiments, the plurality of absorbent materials **236**, **336**, **436** may be disposed within the sealing drape **501** such that the absorbent materials **236**, **336**, **436** positioned farthest from the interior surface **132** absorb more fluid than those closer to the interior surface **132**. For example, the absorbent layer **436** positioned furthest away from the interior surface **132**, as shown in FIG. 5, may have a higher fluid storage capacity than the absorbent materials **336**, **236** positioned successively closer to the interior surface **132**. In this manner, the plurality of absorbent materials **236**, **336**, **436** may provide a 3-dimensional network of absorbent material to enhance the transfer of moisture away from the tissue site **102** and to retain the moisture at a maximum distance away from the tissue site **102**. This configuration may be customized as described to provide a desired absorptive gradient, Moisture Vapor Transmission Rate (MVTR), and fluid storage capacity to suit a particular application.

FIG. 6 illustrates another embodiment of a sealing drape **601** that may include the absorbent material **136** carried by a carrier **635**. The carrier **635** including the absorbent material **136** may be positioned within the sealing material **134**. For example, similar to the sealing drape **401**, the sealing drape **601** may include the first layer **134a** and the second layer **134b** of the sealing material **134**. The carrier **635** may be positioned as a layer between the first layer **134a** and the second layer **134b**. Thus, the carrier **635** may provide a support structure that carries the absorbent material **136**. The carrier **635** may comprise any of a variety of shapes and sizes, and may comprise any suitable nonwoven or woven material. In some embodiments, the carrier **635** may comprise a nonwoven hydrophobic polypropylene material that is formed into a sheet-like structure. The carrier **635** may provide support and strength for the absorbent material **136**. In some embodiments, the absorbent material **136** may be dispersed within the carrier **635** as absorbent particles **236** and/or absorbent fibers **336**.

The sealing drape **101**, **201**, **301**, **401**, **501**, and **601** may be self-sealing to the tissue site **102**, or may require an additional sealing device. As discussed above, in one embodiment, the sealing material **134** of the sealing drape **101**, **201**, **301**, **401**, **501**, and **601** may comprise a hydrophobic silicone elastomer, which may function as a silicone adhesive and form a direct bond with the peripheral surface **128** of the tissue site **102**, the epidermis **106**, or the manifold **118**.

In some embodiments, the reduced-pressure dressing **112** may include an additional attachment device (not shown) to fluidly seal the sealing drape **101**, **201**, **301**, **401**, **501**, and **601** around the tissue site **102**. The attachment device may

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be affixed to the interior surface 132 of the sealing drape 101, 201, 301, 401, 501, and 601 and may fluidly seal the sealing drape 101, 201, 301, 401, 501, and 601 to the epidermis 106 to provide the sealed space 123 surrounding the tissue site 102. The attachment device may cover at least a portion of the interior surface 132 of the sealing drape 101, 201, 301, 401, 501, and 601. Attachment devices may include, without limitation, a medically acceptable, pressure-sensitive adhesive that extends about a periphery, a portion of, or the entire sealing drape 101, 201, 301, 401, 501, and 601, a double-sided drape tape, paste, hydrocolloid, hydrogel, or similar sealing device. In this manner, the sealing drape 101, 201, 301, 401, 501, and 601 may be adapted to adhere to the peripheral surface 128 to secure the reduced-pressure dressing 112 to the tissue site 102.

In an illustrative embodiment of operation, the reduced-pressure treatment system 100 may be applied to a patient in the operating room after a surgical procedure or elsewhere. For example, the manifold 118 may be placed proximate to, within, overlying, or in contact with the tissue site 102. The sealing drape 101, 201, 301, 401, 501, and 601 may be placed over or otherwise covering the manifold 118 such that a portion of the sealing drape 101, 201, 301, 401, 501, and 601 overlays the peripheral surface 128 around the tissue site 102. The sealing drape 101, 201, 301, 401, 501, and 601 may be secured to the peripheral surface 128 in order to form a fluid seal between the tissue site 102 and the sealing drape 101, 201, 301, 401, 501, and 601. The fluid seal need only be adequate to allow the reduced-pressure treatment system 100 to maintain a reduced pressure on the tissue site 102 for a desired treatment time. The individual components of the reduced-pressure dressing 112 may be sized according to the particular application or the procedure being performed by a healthcare provider. For example, the components of the reduced-pressure dressing 112 may be sized, shaped, and configured to work in different anatomical applications such as the abdomen, chest, thighs, hip, and other locations.

The reduced-pressure interface 122 may be fluidly coupled to the sealing drape 101, 201, 301, 401, 501, and 601 before or after the installation of the sealing drape 101, 201, 301, 401, 501, and 601. The reduced-pressure conduit 116 may be fluidly coupled to the reduced-pressure interface 122. The reduced-pressure interface 122 may also be omitted and the reduced-pressure conduit 116 may be directly inserted into the sealing drape 101, 201, 301, 401, 501, and 601 in fluid communication with the sealed space 123. The reduced-pressure conduit 116 may be fluidly coupled to the reduced-pressure source 114. The reduced-pressure source 114 may be activated to deliver reduced pressure to the sealed space 123 provided by the sealing drape 101, 201, 301, 401, 501, and 601 surrounding the tissue site 102. In some embodiments, the reduced-pressure source 114 may be a micro-pump in or on the reduced-pressure dressing 112.

Upon application of the reduced pressure to the reduced-pressure dressing 112, exudates or other fluids from the tissue site 102 may be drawn into the manifold 118, the sealing drape 101, 201, 301, 401, 501, and 601, and through the reduced-pressure interface 122. As fluids are drawn from the tissue site 102, the peripheral surface 128 as well the components of the reduced-pressure dressing 112 may become moist, including the interior surface 132 of the sealing drape 101, 201, 301, 401, 501, and 601 where the sealing drape 101, 201, 301, 401, 501, and 601 contacts the peripheral surface 128 around the tissue site 102. Because of the ability of the sealing drape 101, 201, 301, 401, 501, and 601 to transfer moisture away from the peripheral surface

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128 of the tissue site 102, the sealing drape 101, 201, 301, 401, 501, and 601 may maintain a fluid seal with the tissue site 102. The sealing drape 101, 201, 301, 401, 501, and 601 may allow fluid to pass through the interior surface 132 of the sealing drape 101, 201, 301, 401, 501, and 601 to reach the absorbent material 136 contained within the sealing material 134 of the sealing drape 101, 201, 301, 401, 501, and 601, thus helping to prevent saturation of the tissue site 102 and possible maceration.

This specification also provides methods of manufacturing the sealing drape 101, 201, 301, 401, 501, and 601 for use with the reduced-pressure treatment system 100. In some embodiments, the method may include the steps of providing the sealing material 134, and disposing the absorbent material 136 within the sealing material 134. The absorbent material 136 may be the previously described absorbent particles 236, the absorbent fibers 336, the absorbent layer 436, or any combination thereof.

In embodiments utilizing the absorbent particles 236 and the absorbent fibers 336, such as the sealing drape 201, 301, the method may include the step of mixing the absorbent particles 236 and/or the absorbent fibers 336 within the sealing material 134 prior to curing or otherwise solidifying the sealing material 134. The method may further include the steps of forming the mixture of the absorbent particles 236 and/or the absorbent fibers 336 into a desired shape, such as a sheet, and curing or otherwise solidifying the mixture. In some embodiments, the absorbent particles 236 and/or the absorbent fibers 336 may be mixed within the sealing material 134 to provide a substantially uniform dispersion of the absorbent particles 236 and/or the absorbent fibers 336 within the sealing material 134. In some embodiments, the absorbent particles 236 and/or the absorbent fibers 336 may be mixed within the sealing material 134 to provide a desired concentration of the absorbent particles 236 and/or the absorbent fibers 336 within the sealing material 134 at desired location therein.

In embodiments utilizing the absorbent layer 436, such as the sealing drape 401, the method may include the steps of providing the first layer 134a of the sealing material 134 and providing the second layer 134b of the sealing material 134. The method may additionally include the steps of providing the absorbent layer 436, positioning the absorbent layer 436 between the first and the second layer 134a, 134b, and enclosing the first and the second layer 134a, 134b about the absorbent layer 436. In other embodiments, multiple layers of the sealing material 134 and the absorbent layers 436 may be utilized to suit a particular application.

In embodiments utilizing the carrier 635, such as the sealing drape 601, the method may include the step of carrying the absorbent material 136, such as the absorbent particles 236 and/or the absorbent fibers 336, with the carrier 635. For example, the absorbent particles 236 and/or the absorbent fibers 336 may be applied to the carrier 635 for support and retention by the previously described non-woven or woven structure of the carrier 635. The method may additionally include the steps of providing the first layer 134a of the sealing material 134, and providing the second layer 134b of the sealing material 134. Further, the method may include the steps of positioning the carrier 635, including the absorbent material 136, between the first and the second layer 134a, 134b, and enclosing the first and the second layer 134a, 134b about the carrier 635. In some embodiments, multiple layers of the sealing material 134 and the carrier 635, including the absorbent material 136, may be utilized to suit a particular application.

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Although the treatment system 100 has been disclosed in the context of certain illustrative, non-limiting embodiments, various changes, substitutions, permutations, and alterations can be made without departing from the scope of this specification as defined by the appended claims. Any feature described in connection to any one embodiment may also be applicable to any other embodiment.

We claim:

1. A reduced-pressure system for treating a tissue site, the system comprising:

a manifold comprising a first side and a second side opposite the first side and configured to have the first side be positioned over and adjacent to the tissue site and distribute reduced pressure via a reduced-pressure interface to the tissue site; and

a sealing drape configured to have an aperture for applying the reduced pressure from the reduced-pressure interface and including an interior surface and an external surface, the interior surface configured to cover the second side of the manifold, provide a seal between the interior surface and a peripheral surface surrounding the tissue site, and provide a sealed space over the manifold and proximate the tissue site, the sealing drape further comprising:

at least one layer of sealing material, the sealing material being hydrophobic and substantially free of hydrophilic components, wherein at least a portion of the sealing material forms a part of the interior surface and is configured to provide the seal between the interior surface and the peripheral surface surrounding the tissue site, and

an absorbent material contained within the sealing material;

wherein the absorbent material is configured to absorb liquid from an interface between the interior surface and the peripheral surface surrounding the tissue site, such that the seal is provided while preventing the peripheral surface surrounding the tissue site from becoming saturated with moisture; and

wherein the reduced-pressure interface is configured to be in fluid communication with the sealed space and the manifold to provide the reduced pressure to the sealed space.

2. The system of claim 1, further comprising a reduced-pressure source in fluid communication with the reduced-pressure interface.

3. The system of claim 1, the absorbent material disposed substantially uniformly within the sealing material.

4. The system of claim 1, the absorbent material comprising a plurality of absorbent particles.

5. The system of claim 1, the absorbent material comprising a plurality of absorbent fibers.

6. The system of claim 1, the absorbent material comprising a sheet-like absorbent layer disposed between a first layer and a second layer of the sealing material.

7. The system of claim 1, the absorbent material configured to provide an absorptive gradient through the sealing drape.

8. The system of claim 1, further comprising a carrier that carries the absorbent material, the carrier and the absorbent material being disposed between a first layer and a second layer of the sealing material.

9. The system of claim 8, the carrier comprising a hydrophobic polypropylene sheet.

10. The system of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of absorbent materials associated with the sealing material of the sealing drape, the plurality of absorbent materials

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having an absorptive capacity that increases with increasing distance through a cross section of the sealing drape from the interior surface of the sealing drape.

11. The system of claim 1, wherein the absorbent material comprises a three-dimensional structure of interconnected absorbent fibers, absorbent particles, and sheet-like absorbent layers.

12. The system of claim 1, wherein the sealing material comprises an elastomeric material.

13. The system of claim 1, wherein the sealing material comprises a hydrophobic silicone elastomer.

14. The system of claim 1, wherein the sealing material of the sealing drape is adapted to provide evaporation of fluid retained in the absorbent material through the external surface of the sealing drape.

15. A reduced-pressure system for treating a tissue site, the system comprising:

a manifold comprising a first side and a second side opposite the first side and configured to have the first side be positioned over and adjacent to the tissue site and distribute reduced pressure via a reduced-pressure interface to the tissue site; and

a sealing drape configured to have an aperture for applying the reduced pressure from the reduced-pressure interface and including an interior surface and an external surface, the interior surface configured to provide a seal between the interior surface and a peripheral surface surrounding the tissue site and to cover the second side of the manifold, the sealing drape further comprising:

at least one layer of sealing material forming at least a portion of the interior surface of the sealing drape and configured to provide the seal between the interior surface and the peripheral surface surrounding the tissue site and to provide a sealed space, and an absorbent material contained within the sealing material;

wherein at least a portion of the sealing material is configured to be positioned between the interior surface of the sealing drape and the absorbent material to prevent the peripheral surface surrounding the tissue site from becoming saturated with moisture; and

wherein the reduced-pressure interface is configured to be in fluid communication with the sealed space and the manifold to provide the reduced pressure to the sealed space.

16. A reduced-pressure system for treating a tissue site, the system comprising:

a manifold adapted to be positioned adjacent the tissue site and to distribute reduced pressure to the tissue site; a sealing drape having an interior surface and an external surface, the interior surface adapted to cover the manifold and the tissue site, the sealing drape further comprising:

a sealing material, the sealing material being hydrophobic and substantially free of hydrophilic components and adapted to provide a sealed space around the manifold and the tissue site, wherein at least a portion of the sealing material is configured to be positioned adjacent a peripheral surface surrounding the tissue site; and

an absorbent material contained within the sealing material;

wherein the sealing drape is configured to absorb liquid at an interface between the sealing drape and the peripheral surface surrounding the tissue site; and

a reduced-pressure interface adapted to deliver reduced-pressure, the reduced-pressure interface in fluid communication with the sealed space and the manifold.

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