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(54) **METHOD AND SYSTEM TO ADDRESS MULTIPLE ELECTRODES FOR SENSING AND STIMULATION IN BRAIN AND HEART**

(76) Inventors: **Chong Il Lee**, Stanton, CA (US); **Sergio Lara Pereira Monteiro**, Los Angeles, CA (US)

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**A61N 1/08** (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**  
USPC ..... 607/2; 607/60

(58) **Field of Classification Search**  
USPC ..... 607/2, 4, 5, 9, 30, 31, 32, 60, 61, 607/62, 116

See application file for complete search history.

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*Primary Examiner* — Christopher D Koharski

*Assistant Examiner* — Frances Oropeza

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A device for conveying information related to address, control, stimulation and measurement to and from a large number of electrodes selected from a larger set of available electrodes.

**7 Claims, 8 Drawing Sheets**

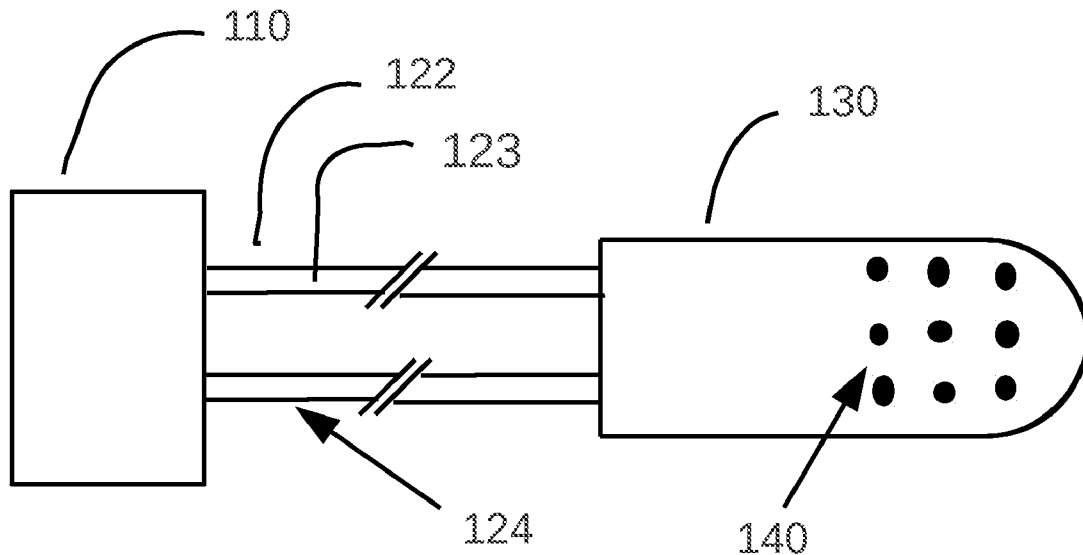


FIG. 1

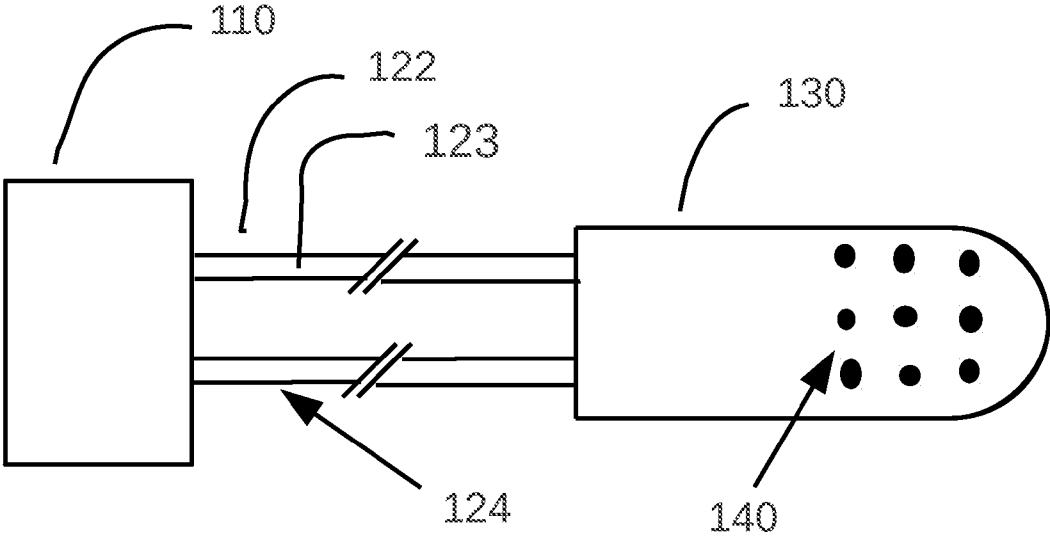


FIG. 2

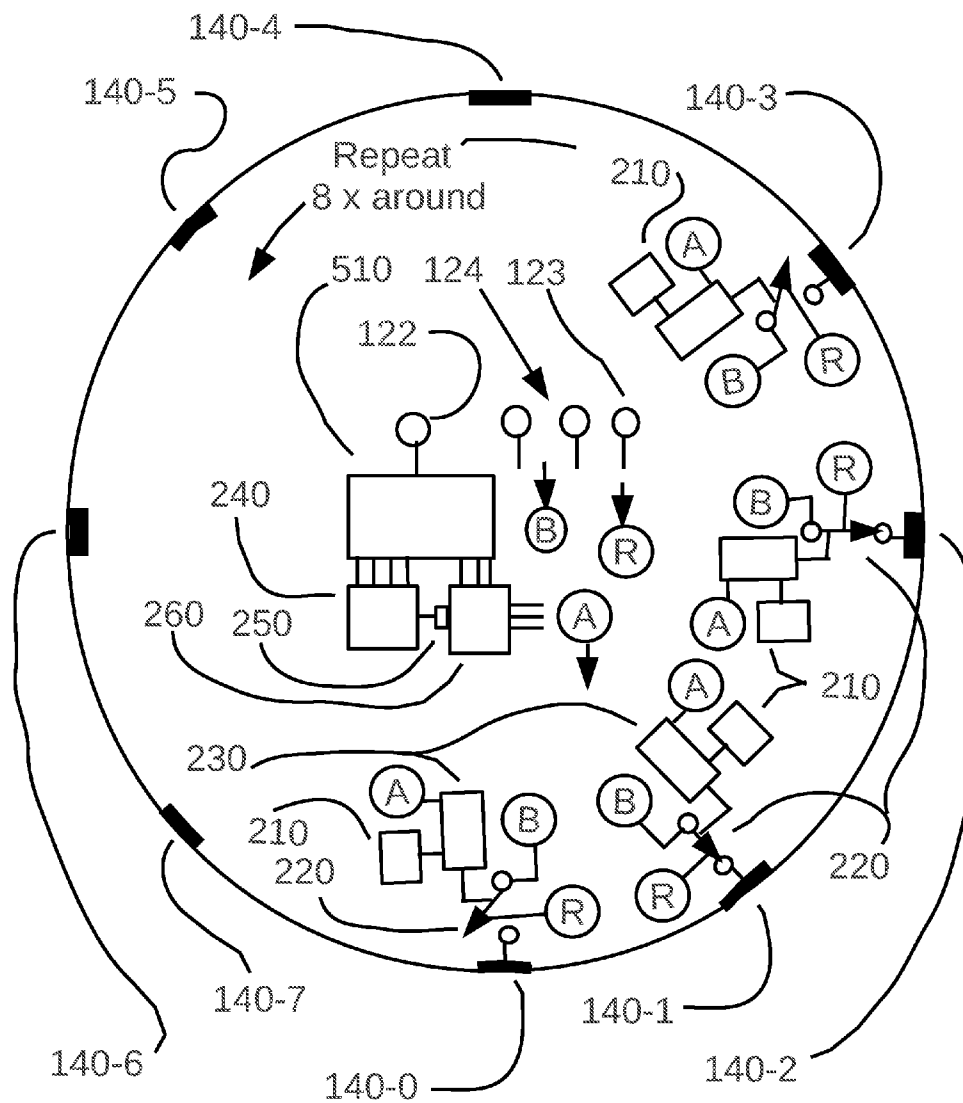


FIG. 3

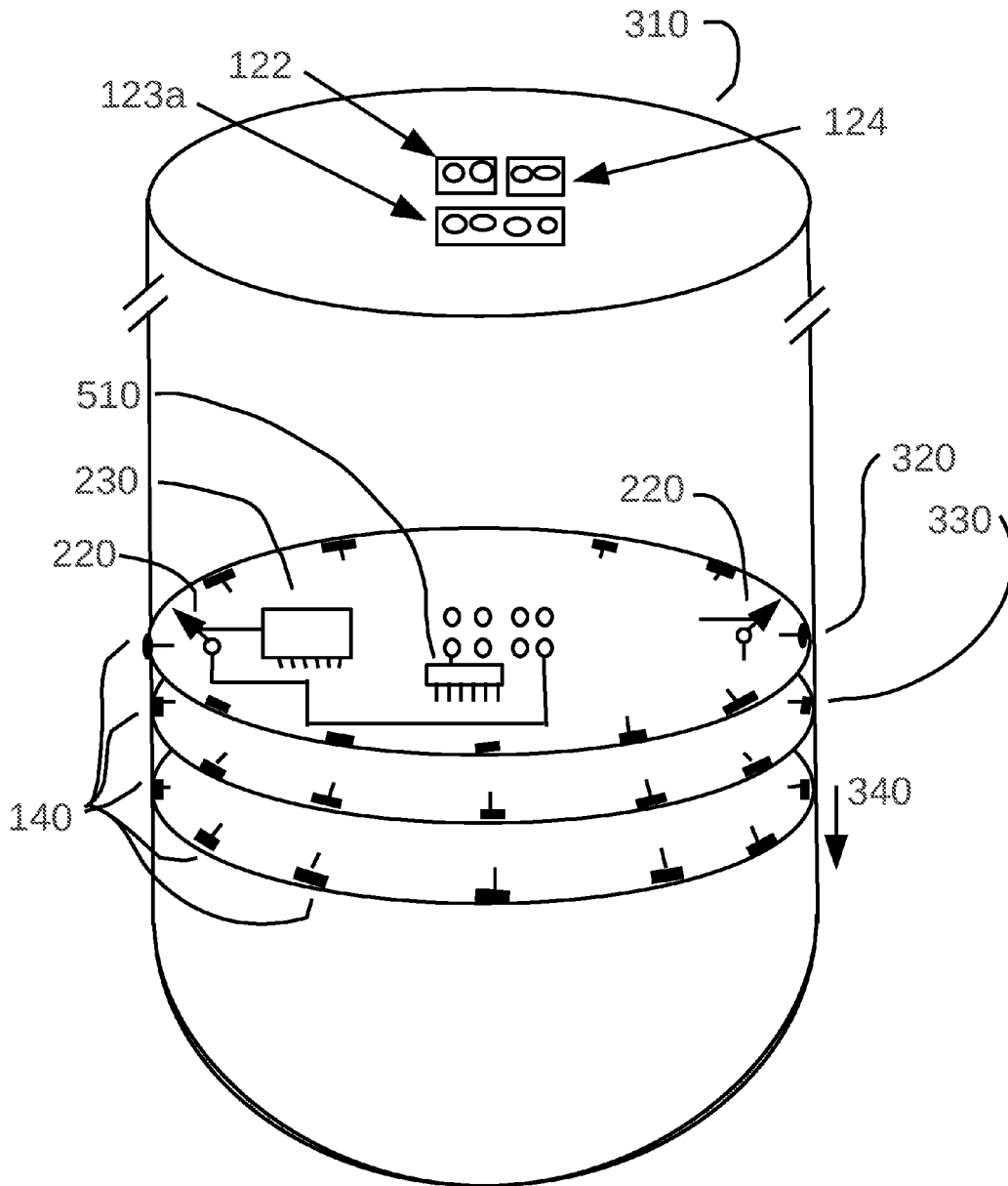


FIG. 4

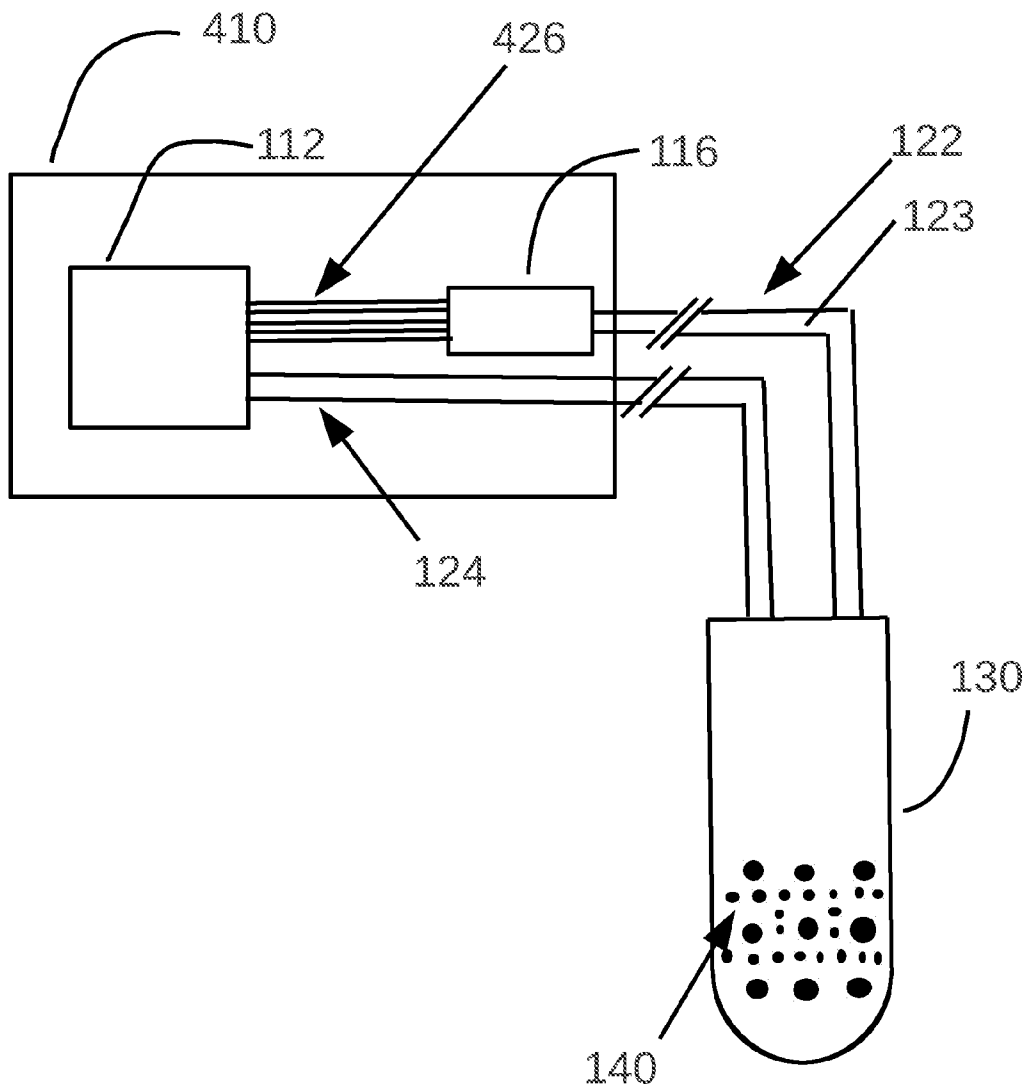


FIG. 5

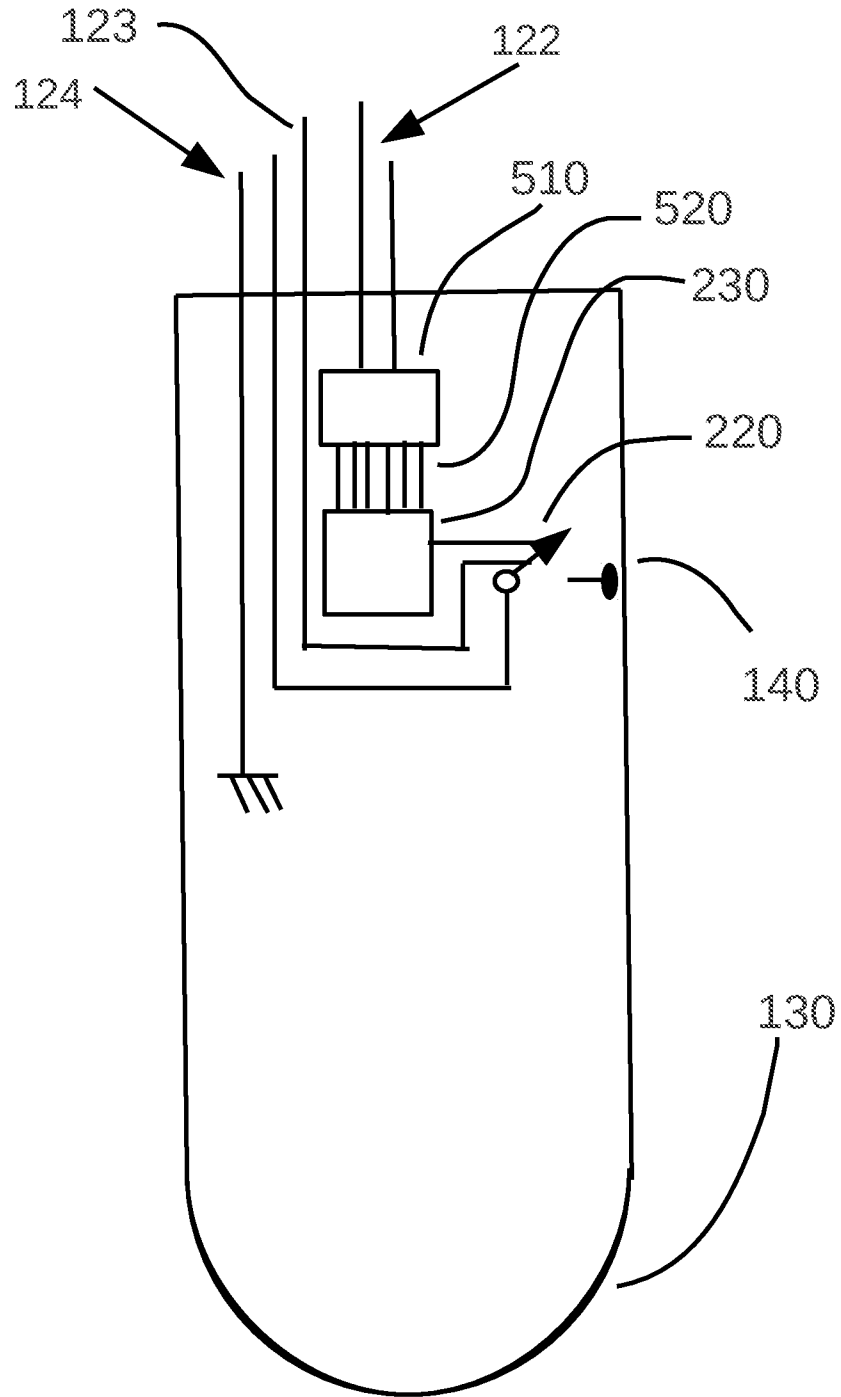


FIG. 6

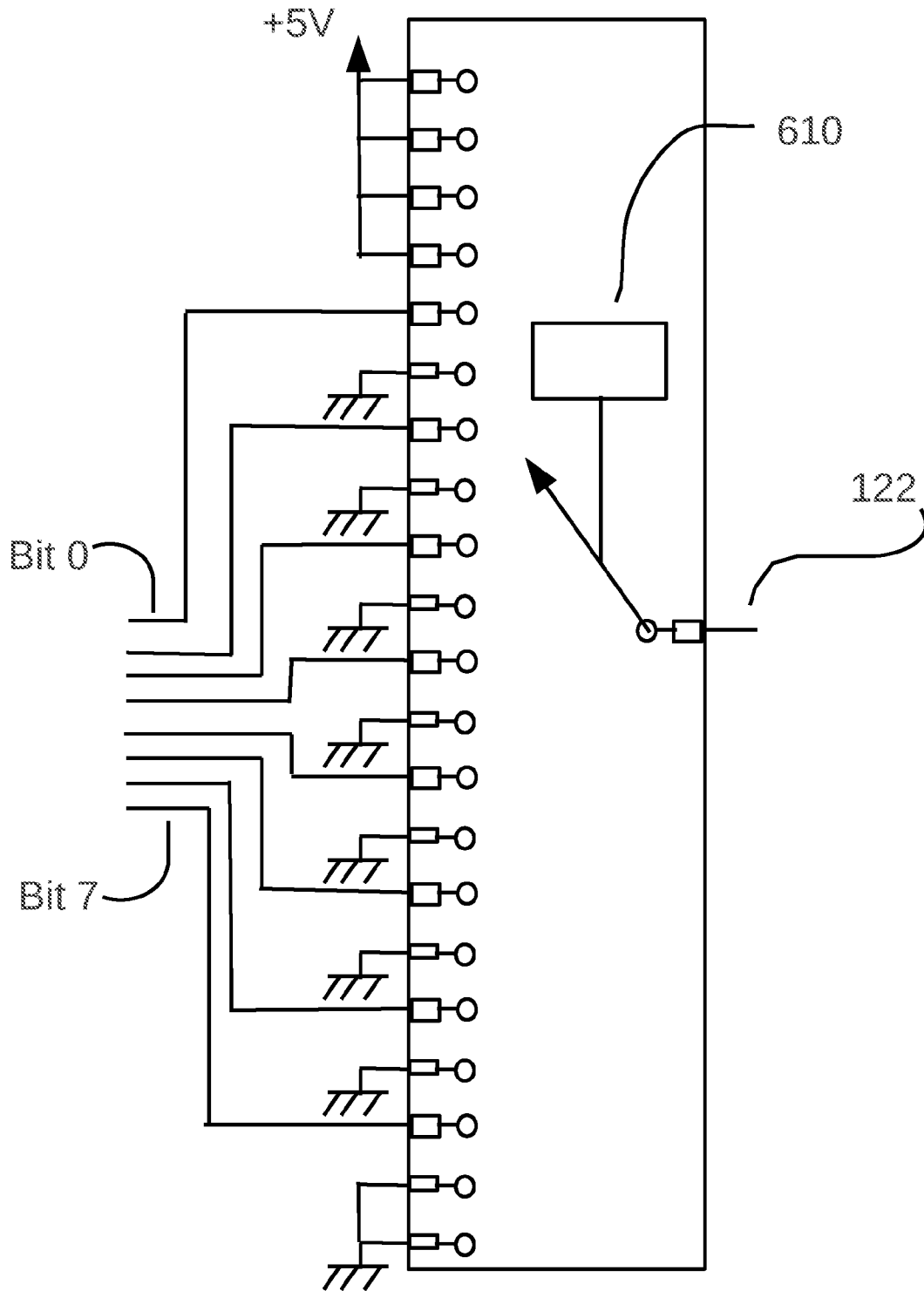


FIG. 7

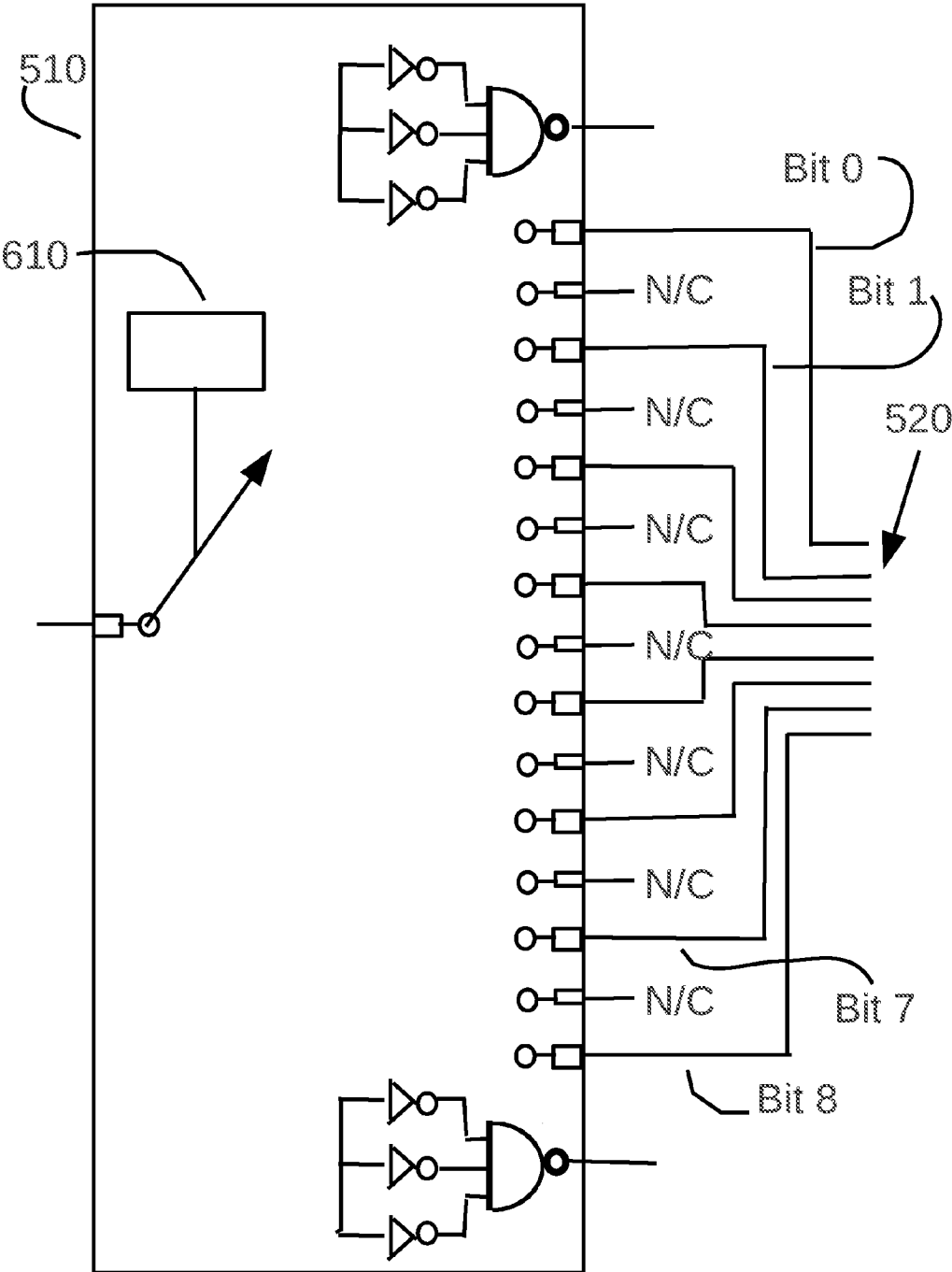
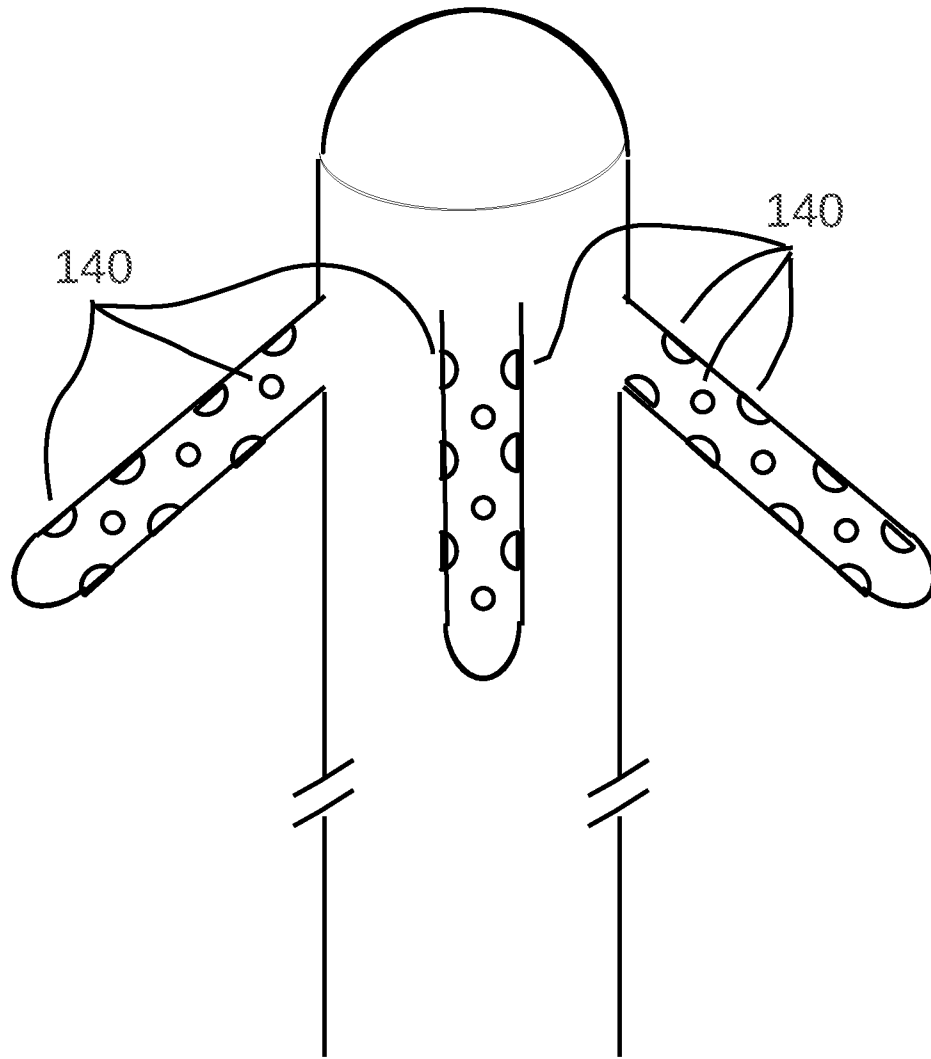




FIG. 8



1 mm.

**METHOD AND SYSTEM TO ADDRESS  
MULTIPLE ELECTRODES FOR SENSING  
AND STIMULATION IN BRAIN AND HEART**

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED  
APPLICATIONS

This application claims the benefit and priority of Provisional Patent Application No. 61/340,920, filing date Mar. 24, 2010 by the present inventors. This application is related to and uses the disclosure of multiple points DBS and heart stimulator and measuring probes of our U.S. patent pending application Ser. No. 12/586,763, entitled "Method and means for connecting and controlling a large number of contacts for electrical cell stimulation in living organisms", filing date Sep. 28, 2009, published Apr. 1, 2010, and application Ser. No. 12/586,562, entitled "Method and means for connecting a large number of electrodes to a measuring device" filing date Sep. 24, 2009, published Apr. 1, 2010, now issued U.S. Pat. No. 8,355,551, which are incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to cellular electrical stimulation in general, for animals and other life forms, as fish and plants, including humans, and neuron, heart muscle, other muscles and organs electrical stimulation in particular, including in particular brain, spine and heart. It also relates to electrical measurements of cells in general, and of neurons in particular.

It is well established in the field of neurological science that neurons work by propagating electrical signals. This is known to be true whether the neurons are transmitting an order from the brain or other initiating point to another body part, as an order to move the leg forward, which is a complex set of commands, or for a heart beat, that is simpler than a leg movement, delivered to the sinus, or on the other direction, transmitting a sensation from some body part to the central nervous system, as temperature or pain somewhere, or simply thinking, as pondering about the meaning of this very patent disclosure, which is an electrical activity that is completely inside the brain.

It turns out that the brain is divided in parts dedicated to special tasks that are in relative position to each other in the same way in all animals of a particular species and even approximately the same across species. These parts are three dimensional but are called areas by the neurologists. Accordingly, the areas that are used to detect and process vision are located very much the same way in all *H. sapiens*, with little difference to chimpanzees and more differences to cats, which is a consequence of biological speciation and relatedness. The internal parts of an animal are variable in size from individual to individual as much as the external parts are, as size of nose, mouth or hand, but as much as in humans the nose is always above the mouth, each specialized part of the brain has a slightly different absolute size in each individual, but is relatively positioned to each other in the same way in all humans. These brain parts are known by neurologists as areas, as Broca area, Wernicke area, etc. It is also known that constant use can enlarge areas that are requested constantly, as shown by the work with London cab drivers. So, what the neurologists call area is really a volume in standard parlance, the place that contains all the neurons involved in a part or in the totality of some particular neurological activity occurs. So, Broca area, as the neurologists call it, is really the Broca volume, as a lay person would, because it is a 3-dimensional arrangement, etc. In the disclosure we most often use the

word "volume" because it is a better descriptor, but in established uses, as named regions of the brain, as the Broca area, we use "area".

The brain of *Homo sapiens* is now all mapped, that is, the function of all areas is known to the neurologists. Accordingly, the Broca area is responsible for speech and its position is known, the Wernicke area is responsible for hearing, also at a known location, and so forth, and their position in the brain is well known to the neurologists. Yet, though their relative position is the same, their absolute position with respect to some external mark is not the same in all humans, among other reasons because humans come in different sizes, but also because even two humans of the same height have noses, hands, hearts, livers and Broca and Wernicke areas of not exactly the same size, and even the same exact shape. Eric R. Kandel (Eric R. Kandel et al., "Principles of Neuroscience" (2000), several editions.) gives a good overview of the current state of the art from the academic point-of-view.

Accordingly, two fields have been developing: neurological research and correction of neurological disorders. These have advanced to the point that it is now common, ordinary, daily practice, to measure electrical signals in neurons, and also to add electrical stimulation to them to change their actions. The former, neuron measurements, are only rarely done in humans, and done in experimental animals under close monitored conditions, after receiving approval of some internal reviewing board that oversees animal research. Naturally that in mammals, experiments are under closer control than in fish, and more loosely control on insects and the like, because few humans care much about the *Drosophila melanogaster*, a feeling that is reciprocated, the inventors believe.

The latter, electrical stimulation, is a common surgery practiced today, mostly to control Parkinson's disease, but in smaller numbers for other neurological malfunctions too, as epilepsy, and other disorders. Electrical stimulation is also done for pain control and for organ stimulation (including increasing and decreasing organ activity), as for appetite control, bladder control and the like.

We introduce here an important terminology, crucial to our invention: electrode. It means the ending portion of the stimulating device, from which electrical current is injected into the cells, as neurons, muscle, etc. Also known as pad. Accordingly, electrodes for both neuron measurements and stimulation have been developed and are commercially manufactured by a number of companies. Electrical neuron measurements are not widely known to be done in the lab, though they are, but electrical stimulation is widely known in its incarnation as heart pacemakers, that are designed to stimulate the heart muscle by adding an electrical pulse to the one delivered at the sinus node. A pacemaker is used when the electrical pulses to the sinus node becomes defective.

Therefore for both neuron measurements and for neuron stimulation, there exists a need to reach a number of neurons, the position of which is difficult to determine with respect to some external feature, as the top of the head or the mammary gland, from which to go to the hypothalamus in the brain from a 1 cm. hole on top of the head, or the sinus node in the heart, from a vein in the clavicle. This is so because, though the relative position of the neurons and cells responsible for each task is generally the same in animals of the same species, the absolute distances is not the same from animal to animal. It follows that it is very difficult for a neurologist to know exactly where the inserted electrode is, whether he/she is interested in making an electric measurement in the brain of a laboratory animal, or in implanting an electrode on a *Homo sapiens* to control Parkinson's disease. To counter this difficulty, electrode arrays have been introduced both for mea-

surements and stimulation. For measurements there exists arrays composed of several dozen electrodes separated by 50, 100, 250 micrometers, and for neuron excitation, generally larger distances, but details depend on the particular situation. Neither of these have been able to make use of a very large number of electrodes because of the difficulty in passing a large number of wires to connect them to the outside world. Our inventions U.S. patent pending application Ser. No. 12/586,763, filing date Sep. 28, 2009 and application Ser. No. 12/586,562, filing date Sep. 24, 2009 which are incorporated herein by reference in its entirety, as well as the Provisional Patent Application associated with each of these, disclosed methods and means to connect a much larger number of electrodes, in one case to measure, on the other case to stimulate. With the addressing method disclosed in these patents, instead of having  $n$  wires to activate each electrode separately, the same  $n$  wires used as an address bus can generate  $2^n$  ( $2$ -super- $n$ ) addresses, which in turn can select that many electrodes. Bus here is used in the digital electronics meaning: a set of wires grouped according to its function. For example, the address bus is the set of wires which carries the address value for something, the data bus is the set of wires which carries the data, or numerical value for some information. For example, one commonly used brain stimulator marketed by Medtronic uses 4 connecting wires to stimulate any one of a set of 4 electrodes at the end of the lead. Using the same 4 wires as an address bus, there is the possibility of selecting  $2$ -super- $4=16$  separate electrodes, which allows for a much larger selection of points to start electrical stimulation. Yet if these inventions substantially decreased the number of wires to make the necessary connections to a large number of electrodes, it is possible to decrease the number of wires even further, which is very important in an implanted device which must be as little intrusive as possible to make.

#### OBJECTS AND ADVANTAGES

Former devices for electrical stimulation, whether used for brain (as DBS), heart (as in pacemakers), chronic pain control, muscle, organs and others, used a very limited number of electrodes as initiation points of the electrical stimulation. Similar observation applies to electrodes used to measure electrical cell activity. This was a consequence of the limited space available to pass wires between the battery and control electronics and the actual stimulating devices (of measuring devices). Our inventions disclosed in U.S. patent pending application Ser. Nos. 12/586,763, filing date Sep. 28, 2009 and U.S. application Ser. No. 12/586,562, filing date Sep. 24, 2009, this later now issued U.S. Pat. No. 8,355,551, disclose methods to increase the number of available stimulating electrodes for both electrical stimulation and for electrical activity measurements as well, while still keeping the number of wires relatively small. These patents disclose the use of an addressing system to select one electrode or a set of electrodes to be the origin of electrical stimulation, or to be the origin of electrical measurements, from a large number of available electrodes, while the addressing wires are in smaller number than the electrodes themselves. Indeed, with  $n$  wires it is possible to generate  $2$ -super- $n$  addresses. For example, with 4 wires it is possible to create  $2$ -super- $4=16$  different addresses that uniquely identify 16 different electrodes. The addressing system disclosed in our patents become more impressive as the number of bits in the address bus increases. Indeed, with 10 bits (that is, with 10 addressing wires), it is possible to generate  $2$ -super- $10=1024$  different addresses, identifying 1,024 different electrodes. In other words, with 10 bit-wide address bus, not much many more wires than existing stimu-

lators have, it is possible to have 1024 separately controllable electrodes, a number that, given the small size of the devices is virtually infinite.

Yet the addressing system still suffered from the use of too many wires to create the necessary addresses for each individual or group of electrodes or pads, because of the extremely small available space available in devices implanted inside the body of animals. This invention discloses an improvement on the earlier method of addressing with a bus composed of a plurality of wires, using instead a serial method to exchange digital information from the microcontroller housed in **410** and the electrical stimulating electrodes **140**, thus reducing the number of wires to two (counting the return wire), or even one, if the power return is also used for serial return, or if the body of the animal is used as ground or return. Accordingly, with the system described in this patent disclosure, three wires (address/data digital transfer, electrical power and ground) or even two, if the body of the animal is used as ground or return wire, suffices for a working electrical stimulator with as many electrodes as one wishes to have—an unbounded number of electrodes. Extra wires are also possible, for example, to allow the possibility of measurements simultaneous with stimulation, or for stimulation at different voltage (or current) levels.

Accordingly, several objects or advantages of our invention are obviating the difficulties of running multiple wires in the supporting structure to reach the electrode points at the distal end of the inserting/supporting structure for both cell measurement and stimulation (neurons, as in brain, spinal cord and elsewhere, muscles, as in heart and others, organs, as in stomach, bladder and others).

Another object and advantage of our invention is to cut down on the number of address wires that run through the supporting structures to the cell stimulator or to the cell measurement pads, which are needed to select which electrodes are to be used in the particular case.

Another object and advantage of our invention is to decrease the manufacturing difficulties and consequently manufacture costs of addressable electrodes for neuronal measurement and stimulation.

Another object and advantage of our invention is to decrease the number of wires used to address the electrodes used for either measure or to stimulate, therefore decreasing the possibility of malfunction and the cost of the device as well.

Further objects and advantages of our invention will become apparent from a consideration of the drawings and ensuing description.

#### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Our invention is a simplification of the addressing method to select which electrode tips are chosen to read electrical neuronal activity or to deliver a stimulating current to the neurons. It describes a single serial line, instead of a plurality of parallel addressing lines, which substantially decreases the number of wires necessary for the operation or stimulating and measuring electrodes implanted in living organisms, wires that have to be passed through a very small space which may not have enough space for many of them. We also disclose the possibility of a small number of wires to function as a parallel-serial mixture, in which data is transferred serially over more than one wire at a time, which decreases the depth of serialization by the same factor as the number of wires that carries the data.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 depicts a complete schematic view of the main embodiment of our invention while omitting the details.

FIG. 2. This figure displays a cross section of the main embodiment of the DBS-type picafina of our invention, a cross section perpendicular to the picafina's main longer, vertical axis. The circle is on the outside surface of the picafina, at a fixed distance to each end of it.

FIG. 3 A perspective view of a DBS picafina, one of the possible embodiments of our invention, showing the top or the picafina with the entrance points for the wires, and one of the layers 320 of pads, at a fixed distance from the picafina's ends. This figure is similar to FIG. 2, adding to FIG. 2 the visual positioning of the layer of pads within the whole device. FIG. 3 shows less details of the circuitry in the layer while showing where it is within the whole device.

FIG. 4. Serial address generation. The microcontroller (or one of its equivalents) generates the addresses of the stimulating points to be used, then these binary addresses are conveyed from the battery/electronics box in serial format (two wires or one wire only) to the picafina, where the serial is converted back in parallel binary for use.

FIG. 5. The picafina receives two wires with the addresses in serial format. Inside the picafina there are a multiplicity of serial-to-parallel converters 510 that create the binary addresses to select the electrical contacts 140 to be used. FIG. 5 displays the case for a dedicated serial-to-parallel converter for each electrode tip, or pad. A more typical application would have one serial-to-parallel converter at each planar group of electrodes at a fixed distance from the picafina's extremity (or in a circular arrangement on the picafina).

FIG. 6 A possible implementation of a parallel-to-serial conversion. This is shown as an exemplary case only. Many others exist in textbooks, manuals, etc. this being a mature field in electronics which is not part of our invention. Note that following electronics practice there is an implied ground which is not shown in this drawing for simplicity.

FIG. 7 A possible implementation of a serial-to-parallel conversion. This is shown as an exemplary case only. Many others exist in textbooks, manuals, etc., this being a mature field in electronics, which is not part of our invention. Note that following electronics practice, there is an implied ground which is not shown in this drawing for simplicity.

FIG. 8. A heart stimulator of the type of current art with added multiple electrodes which add the capability of directing the stimulating electrical pulse along particular directions to create the best heart contraction sequence.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION

FIG. 1 depicts a complete schematic view of the main embodiment of our invention, while omitting the details. The reader is encouraged to study it carefully, as it embodies the basic principle of our invention. We call "picafina" the multiple electrode supporting structure of our invention. The picafina is labeled as 130 in FIG. 1. It is a supporting structure used by the main embodiment of our invention, generally similar to the devices used in Deep Brain Stimulation but potentially with far more tips or electrodes 140 than DBS devices of current art, which is strong enough to allow it to be inserted in the brain or other body structures, and which contains the necessary wires for connecting the measuring tips and the address decoders with the controlling and measuring instruments. For use in human animals, the dimension of a type I picafina is approximately the diameter of a drinking straw (1.5 mm.), its length being the necessary to reach the desired depth in the body. For smaller animals (as a mouse), the picafinas would be accordingly smaller, both in diameter and length, while for larger animals (as a whale or an elephant), the picafinas would be accordingly larger. The

main embodiment assumes a brain stimulation, of the type generally known in neurology as DBS (Deep Brain Stimulation), but other applications are possible, as described in the sequel, particularly for other brain and neuronal stimulation (pain, epilepsy, and others), and for heart stimulation, or pacemaker, or for organ stimulation, as stomach, bladder and the like, or for artificial limb motion, or to induce motion on limbs that lost neural activation, all with the necessary adaptations for each particular application. In this FIG. 1 one sees a box indicated as 110, usually housed in the patient's chest, which contains the battery and the electronics. In this case the electronics, besides the current art electronics, also contains an address generator, as described in our U.S. patent pending application Ser. Nos. 12/586,763, filing date Sep. 28, 2009 and U.S. application Ser. No. 12/586,562, filing date Sep. 24, 2009, now issued U.S. Pat. No. 8,335,551, and also a parallel-to-serial converter 116, which is not disclosed in these two patent applications, which is disclosed in this patent application, which is capable to serialize the binary address required to select a particular electrode 140 on the surface of the DBS picafina (130), and then send the information in serial form in just two wires 122, as shown. From the battery/electronics box 110 also leaves the power wire and its return 124, that is, the wires that carry the stimulating pulses. Some versions may use more than one power wire 124 to accommodate several levels of voltage (current) at the electrodes 140, or simultaneous measurements at different sites. In this embodiment a total of just five wires are used from the battery/electronics box 410 until the brain stimulator 130 on the head. In the brain implant there exists, in the main embodiment of our invention one serial-to-parallel decoder 510 for each set of radially distributed electrode set, that is, electrodes at a fixed z-distance from either end of the picafina, around its perimeter. These serial-to-parallel converters 510 may serve more than one z-distance (more than one circle on the brain picafina), or else less than one.

From the battery/electronics box 410 also leaves the power wire and its return (sometimes referred as ground) 124, that is, the wires that carry the stimulating pulses. In this embodiment a minimum of just four wires are used from the battery/electronics box until the brain stimulator on the head, with the possibility of more wires for control 123a, but not used in the minimal embodiment of our invention. In this main embodiment control signals are also sent via the same serial connection as the addresses. In a variation with separate control wires 123a, the total number of non-power wires would be three or more, instead of 2. It is also possible to use a common return (ground) wire for both digital and analog lines, further reducing the number of wires to three (power, serial addressing+control and return common to both), and it is also possible to use the body as a common ground, or return, further reducing the number of wires to two (power and serial addressing+control). In the brain implant there exists, in the main embodiment of our invention, one serial-to-parallel decoder 510 for each set of electrodes at the same distance from the picafina 130 endings, as shown in FIGS. 2 and 3. FIG. 2. This figure displays a cross section of the main embodiment of the DBS-type picafina 130 of our invention, a cross section perpendicular to the picafina's main longer, vertical axis. The circle is on the outside surface of the picafina, at a fixed distance to each end of it. On its outside surface there are a number of pads 140, or points from which the electrical stimulation originates. Each of these pads may or may not be energized, depending on whether the switch 220 is closed or open. Switches 220 are closed or open depending on the address written on A is equal or not equal to the local address 210 of the particular address decoder 230. Writing

different addresses, different switches are closed, energizing the corresponding pads. Switch **220** may have a time delay, which keep it closed for a predetermined time after address matching at **230**. Alternatively, switch **220** may become permanently closed after an address match on **230**, until a different pulse comes, from a different circuit (not shown), which deselects it (SEL/SEL-bar are common digital electronics jargon, the bar being the standard logical indication of negation, so SEL/SEL-bar means Select/not select). Within the plane of the displayed cross-section, the wires running along the picafina, which are perpendicular to the cross-section shown, connect to the parts as shown, then are printed circuits made by any of the existing technologies, as PC boards, or as die manufacturing, or a combination of these. These wires can occupy more than one layer, including vias for crossing, connecting the incoming the two serial wires to the serial-to-parallel converter **510**, connecting the decoded parallel wires to each **230** and the power wires to each of the switches **220**. SEL-bar, or deselect wires are not shown. The two serialized address wires **122** and the two power wires **124** run down the middle of the picafina **130**, one serial-to-parallel converter **510** for all the pads on that cross section, and FIG. **3** is a perspective view of our invention. Part of the connections shown in FIG. **2** are seen at the top layer **320** of FIG. **3**. There are many other layers similar to the top, as indicated **330**, **340**. FIG. **2** is an alternative implementation of the addressing system, in which the serial-to-parallel converter **510** is also associated with an address decoder to select or not select a particular group of pads **250**. In the situation depicted, 5 lines are used to select each of the 32 (2 power 5=32) group of planar pads **240**, and 3 lines are used to select one of the 8 pads (2 power 3=8) on the periphery of the group. Such an arrangement has the advantage of decreasing the number of wires running inside each planar group. The planar geometry is particular to a possible arrangement, it being possible to have other geometries too. One serial-to-parallel converter **510** for all the pads on that cross section. (A) parallel wires from the output of the serial-to-parallel converter go to each (A) at each address decoder **230**. FIGS. **4** and **5** elaborate on this main embodiment, showing details of the box **410** containing the battery/electronics **110** and of the picafina **130**, or device implanted in the brain.

In the main embodiment the serialization of the pad address is made with a circuit as shown in FIG. **6** or any of its equivalents. FIG. **6** A possible implementation for the serial transmission of pad address. BIT0 through BIT7 form an 8-bit address (maximum 256 addresses) which is generated by the microcontroller in battery pack/electronics box. Address **610** is a circuit that continuously scans 0, 1, 2, . . . 20, 21 then repeat, connecting the switch to the indicated 22 inputs.

This is shown as an exemplary case only, omitting the details of the necessary logic and the transistor connection necessary to implement the indicated circuit. It is not necessary to show the details because these are part of the standard art of digital electronics, the art of constructing semiconductor switches, and the art of digital logic, which are not part of this invention and are known to the persons familiar with the appropriate branches of the art of electronics. Moreover, this particular exemplary method of data serialization is not necessary altogether, because there are many existing off-the-shelf technologies to implement this function, as described in the sequel. When using one of the existing off-the-shelf technologies, it is expected that the actual die will be used, integrated within the structure of the electronics. The use of the die, as opposed to the packaged chip, is particularly important in the stimulation extremity of the device (the picafina **130**, or DBS electrode wand), because the picafina is necessarily of

small diameter, offering little space, current art being 1.3 mm diameter. The particular implementation shown in FIG. **6** is shown only as an example of the main idea, omitting the details, not intended for real use, parallel-to-serial converters being a mature art in electronics and not part of this invention. FIG. **7** displays a possible implementation of the serial-to-parallel conversion but omitting the USB type of serial hardware.

In this main embodiment, it is envisaged that the cycle could start with a RESET signal **123**, turning off all switches (no power in all electrodes or pads **140**), which would be followed by a sequence of addresses sent on the serial line, which are decoded at the picafina **130** end, which in turn would turn on the appropriate switches, connecting the corresponding pads to the power wire through a latch which in turn would keep the pad on until a RESET signal **123** is sent. Latch. Latch is a term used in digital electronics meaning the capability to keep some particular configuration, or output, or logic, or selection, even after the selecting source, etc., is no longer active, or even if the selecting source is changed to a different value. Another way to look at it is that a latched device has memory to keep a configuration when instructed to do so. A standard wall light switch is an example of a latch because it keeps the last state it was set by a human being, either on or off, until it is again changed to a new state by another human. A plurality of pads can be on at the same time, as disclosed on our two regular patent applications referred above.

The main embodiment uses an USB type of serial hardware, but adapted to the use of the two digital lines only, the analog (or power) lines of it being separate from the USB serial connection.

The main embodiment is constructed from a multiplicity of layered planar circuits at varying distances from one of the DBS extremities as shown in FIG. **2**. Each of these circuits is constructed with printed circuit (PC) technology, as developed for the printed circuits that form the backbone of computer technology, as motherboards and expansion cards as video cards, extra USB cards, and the like.

#### Some Examples of Intended Use

One example of intended use is an electrode for DBS (deep brain stimulator), of the type currently manufactured by Medtronic or by St. Jude Medical.

Another example of intended use is any of the brains stimulators used for epilepsy control.

Another example of intended use is a cortical brain stimulator, of the type used for stroke rehabilitation.

Another example of intended use is the heart pacemaker, of which there are many models and many manufacturers, for example Medtronic, St. Jude Medical.

Another example of intended use is a stomach stimulator used for appetite control.

Another example of intended use is a bladder stimulator used for bladder control.

Another example of intended use is a chronic pain control stimulator device.

Another example of intended use is for research, in which one or a plurality of small electrodes **140** can be selected by telemetry to measure electrical activity at various points near the surface of the device. When measuring more than one electrode using a single transmitting wire, the addressing system would rotate among the several desired electrodes. A typical electronic measurement, including analog-to-digital conversion is of the order of microseconds, much faster than the typical neuronal activity that occurs in a time of milliseconds.

Another example of intended use is a mixed-use device, which uses some electrodes **140** for electrical stimulation and other electrodes for neuronal activity measurements. This mixed use has possibilities in both clinical and research environments as well. In clinical situations, measurements of the prevailing neuronal activity can be interpreted by the microcontroller MC1 then used to determine, according to some programming, which of several possible electrical stimulations is the best for the existing situation. In research situations, instead of just measuring neuronal activity at some site, at most correlating it with external inputs, as light/dark, sound/no-sound, cold/hot, different types of emotions, etc, the researcher can induce electrical stimulation in some neurons then observe the consequence in other neurons.

Another example of intended use is a three-type mixed-use device, which uses some electrodes for electrical stimulation, other electrodes for neuronal or other cell activity measurements, and still other electrodes that are electrically isolated, which functions only as field shaping surfaces.

#### Operation of Invention

The operation of our invention is the conversion, preferably still in the chest's battery/electronics box **110**, of binary, parallel addressing lines to serial form, then the transport of this information from the battery pack/electronics **110** to the picafina **130** in serial form, than its reconversion to parallel form near the point-of-use inside the picafina. This is accomplished with a parallel-to-serial converter **116** at the battery pack/electronics box **410**, shown on FIG. **4**. The data, which usually is the addresses of the electrodes **140** that will be injecting current in the patient's brain, therefore selecting the positions in the brain to receive electrical stimulation, which in turn select the neurons that will be electrically stimulated, is then sent in a smaller number of wires to pass over the limited space available. The operation is completed inside the brain picafina **130**, preferably, but not necessarily only, at each planar layer that serves a group of electrodes **140** at the same distance from the picafina's extremities, as shown in FIGS. **5**, **2**, **3** and **7**. FIG. **5** displays a general arrangement for the brain-type picafina **130**, while FIGS. **2** and **3** display the general lay-out on one of the several planar connectors that receive the electrical connections from **110** then distributes them to the appropriate electrodes **140** at the surface of the picafina. The surface of the picafina **130** is the external surface seen in FIGS. **5** and **3**, which are in perspective, and is the perimeter of the circle shown in FIG. **2**, which is a cross-section of it perpendicular to its main axis along which the main wires run through it.

The main embodiment uses a software code which sends bits of 1 microsecond width (whether high or low) and indicates the initiation of a data transfer with an attention sign composed of a sequence of 10 shorter bits alternating high and low, of pulse-width 0.25 microseconds each, which clearly differentiates the attention sign from the data bits. After each address is sent from the microcontroller MC1 in **110** to the stimulator device **110**, this latter sends back a confirmation of data/address received, including its value, for confirmation. Upon confirming that the data/address value the microcontroller MC1 continues with the next byte, or else re-sends the previous byte. This particular method of data/address transfer should not be taken as a limitation on the invention, many other type existing, this being a mature topic in the field of data transfer in digital electronics, any other being acceptable and this particular one being used as an exemplary case only.

In the main embodiment of my invention the microcontroller MC1, acting on instructions received by telemetry, sent by the patient, or a nurse, or a medical doctor, or any other trained

medical practitioner generates the addresses of the pads that have been chosen to originate the electric pulses (see FIGS. **1** and **9**) then, still inside the battery-electronics box **110** a parallel-to-serial converter **116** (see further description below) converts the parallel binary address lines to serial form using a specially designed hardware based on semiconductor technology. FIG. **6** shows the operation method of such a serial-to-parallel converter. Note that this invention is not the serial-to-parallel converter, which is existing art, part of the established art of digital electronics, but its combined use in a synergetic way to improve the results of deep brain stimulation (DBS). At the picafina-type **130** electrical brain stimulator DBS, this serial information is then reconverted to parallel form **510** which is then used to select which pads will be energized. The serial address line may be also used to carry control information from the microcontroller MC1 to the picafina **130**.

#### Description and Operation of Alternative Embodiments

The main embodiment described a device used for deep brain stimulation (DBS), but persons familiar with the art will recognize that many other types of electrical stimulations are also used. Cardiac electrical stimulators, known as pacemakers is the most common application. In such a case the physical structure of the stimulating structure would be different, adapted to the heart pacemaking function, yet a heart pacemaker can also be fitted with a large number of stimulating electrodes **140**, each designated by a particular address which can be selected to be, or not to be a point of initiation of the electrical stimulation, or to be a point for measurement of electrical activity in the heart.

The main embodiment is described using a specially designed technology and protocol, but any other serial communication system is acceptable for the device of our invention, as, for example, the standard RS-232 used by older computers, or the more recent USB and FireWire, and any other standard serial communication or even one specially designed for this application. My invention is not bound to the use of a particular serial standard or technology, but rather it is based on the use of a single wire (or a small number of wires) to transmit the addresses needed to chose the electrodes **140** within the confined space available in the supporting structure leading to the neuron, together with the standard, prior-art methods of serial-to-parallel conversion and parallel-to-serial conversion, as the persons familiar with the art of electronics and with the art of data transfer understand. The change between using a specially designed electronics to a USB technology an RS-232 technology, etc., are trivial, their differences being only speed, distance of data transmission, and the like, but using the same principle of serially transmitting the information, one bit after the other, instead of at the same time along parallel wires. Our invention is the decrease in the number of wires needed to transmit the information from the controlling device to the stimulator end of it, as a DBS picafina **130**, superficial brain cortex stimulator, a heart pacemaker, and the likes, not the invention of serial communication, which is an old art.

Instead of having one serial-to-parallel converter associated with each plane of pads around a circle at the same distance to the ends of the picafina **130** device, it is possible to have a serial-to-parallel converter associated with each pad. In this alternative embodiment, the number of wires in each planar cross-section, is also small, one address for each pad or electrode **140** sent still in serial form, at the expense of having a larger number of serial-to-parallel converters: one for each pad or electrode, in this case. This alternative embodiment is possible because the actual size of the electronics is very small so the whole circuit can be made in an area of approxi-

mately 100 by 100 micrometers, which is small enough to accommodate one for each pad or electrode. These and other variations are included in the spirit of the invention, which is to have a large number of pads/electrodes **140**, which are selected by digital addressing, while the addresses themselves are sent in serial form to accommodate the small size available for wiring from the battery pack/electronics until the actual pads/electrodes.

Another alternative embodiment is to have a small number of address lines to select for which flat, planar cross section (as in FIGS. **2** and **3**) then, out of the serial-to-parallel converter only comes as many parallel lines as to select one out of the plurality of pads existing in that particular planar arrangement. For example, a picafina **130** may contain 32 planar groupings as the planar arrangements of FIGS. **2** and **3**, which are addressed with 5 digital lines ( $2^5=32$ ), and 8 electrodes **140** around its periphery, which are addressed with 3 digital lines ( $2^3=8$ ). In this hypothetical arrangement the parallel address lines (the address bus) are 8 bits wide ( $5+3$ ), the serial is as many as the particular choice is implemented, say one line only, then, at each planar group of FIGS. **2** and **3**, besides the serial-to-parallel converter there exists an address decoder that decides if the particular group (on a circular cross-section on the device) is selected **250** by the 5 lines capable of addressing the 32 planar groups. In the positive case the 3 digital lines that makes the bus A will be activated and one or more of the 8 pads in that group selected for use. In the negative case nothing is asserted in the 3 digital lines that makes the bus A for that group. This possible optional system is shown in FIG. **7**. This is only another of the many possible variations that are within the scope of the invention. We are here using "to assert" in the usual meaning of digital electronics which means to make a wire on or off, as defined in each case, or a set of wires to be in any combination on and off, as needed. In this context "on" an "off" generally mean one of the two possibilities of a binary representation, as on=5V, off=0V, on=magnetic field up, off=magnetic field down, on=light, off=dark, etc. Most people use "to assert" in a more specific way, meaning to make the line H, or the bit "1".

Another possible variation of the invention to solve the difficult part of bringing wires down the body of the picafina **130**, or in any other variation to bring many wires from the battery pack/electronics all the way to the large number of stimulating electrodes **140**, is dealt with a small number of wires (one serial wire, or one wire plus ground, on a total of two wires), which are then connected to a printed circuit at each planar set of pads at fixed distance to the ends, which are connected using printed circuit (PC) technology, or chip manufacturing technology, or nanowires, or any of its equivalents, to the proximity of each pad, where a dedicated serial-to-parallel decoder decodes the serial signal is converted back to its parallel form and it is used as an address for that particular electrode pad **140**. In this case there are a larger number of serial-to-parallel converters, but there are less parallel wires running inside the planar PC. Semiconductor electronics is inexpensive, so the price of this larger number of converters could, in certain situation be superior.

Instead of having one serial-to-parallel converter associated with each pad (with each electrode tip **140**), or with each group of pads at a fixed distance to each end, it is possible to have a serial-to-parallel converter at the entrance of the picafina **130**, from where multiple address wires (parallel) are distributed to each pad.

Instead of having one serial-to-parallel converter associated with each pad (with each electrode tip **140**), it is possible to have a serial-to-parallel converter associated with each group of two pads.

Instead of having one serial-to-parallel converter associated with each pad (with each electrode tip **140**), it is possible to have a serial-to-parallel converter associated with each group of three pads.

FIG. **8** displays a current art heart pacemaker with the added improvement of this invention, which is the possibility of multiple individually addressable electrodes **140**, from which a better electrical current distribution can cause a better heart muscle contraction sequence, with the final objective of improving heart pumping efficiency.

The group of electrodes (pads) **140** that is at a fixed distance to the ends of the picafina **130**, which may be manufactured on a single monolithic die, on which the wires are printed using one of the available technologies to make PC boards (large, or wide wires), or to make chips (smaller, or narrower wires) or a combination of these, perhaps including the technology used for nanowires.

One skilled in the relevant art, however, will readily recognize that the invention can be practiced without one or more of the specific details, or with other methods, etc. In other instances, well known structures or operations are not shown in detail to avoid obscuring the features of the invention. In particular, the details of the electronics necessary for the implementation of the necessary circuits is not detailed in this patent disclosure because the actual implementation is standard use of the old art of circuit fabrication (fab) and of analog and digital electronics design.

#### CONCLUSION, RAMIFICATIONS, AND SCOPE OF INVENTION

The parallel-to-serial electronics and logic conversion can be an RS-232-type, using any of the existing electronics chips (or the die of them), as, for example, the old Intersil HD-6402 UART chip, or the Maxim MAX3110E/MAX3111E, just to cite two examples, as this function is manufactured by many companies. Note that it is envisaged that what would be used would be the die and not the packaged chip that most consumers buy and use, due to space limitations, particularly in the picafina **130** itself, that is in the electrode **140** end of the device. Note that while most microcomputer implementation of the RS-232 use up to 9 lines (or wires), including multiple ground wires, not all of these are needed for serial data transfer, some computer implementations using less lines, it being possible to send data in just one wire plus ground. In our implementation of data transfer a data-wire+ground is sufficient, and a transfer of address can be made with an address-wire+ground. Such a choice minimizes development work, but our invention is not limited to it in any form. Moreover, some implementations of the electrical stimulation use the body of the wearer as ground, in which case only one wire is needed.

The serial-to-parallel and parallel-to-serial electronics and logic can be any of the many available in the market, as RS-232, RS-422, RS-423, RS-449, RS-485, USB, firewire, etc., just to mention a few examples. These are standard serial standards, which can be purchased off-the-shelf and included as part of the device, our invention being independent of the serial implementation used. It is worth mentioning that some of these standards, particularly USB, the device address is particularly easy to implement.

Another possibility is to use a reset function **123** which, at the command of the electronics/control unit inside box **410**, is

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capable of setting the electrodes or pads **140** to a standard, initial state. Typically such a reset function would set all electrodes **140** to the disconnected state, but this is only one of the available choices. The reset function **123** could be included in the serial transmission line, in which case the serial-to-parallel converter at the stimulator side of the device **130** would also contain logic to separate control signals from address signals.

Another possibility is to have a combination of serial and parallel connection between **110** and **130**. In this variation, there may exist 2 wires to transfer 2 bits at a time, in a smaller number of serial steps, or 3 wires, etc.

While my above description contains many specificities, these should not be construed as limitations on the scope of the invention, but rather as an exemplification of one preferred embodiment thereof, and a few of the many possible variations of the main embodiment that still keeps its character. Many other variations are possible.

Accordingly, the scope of the invention should be determined not by the embodiments illustrated, but by the appended claims, their legal equivalents and any extensions or variations that are obvious to the ones familiar with the art, as well as by the figures and drawings.

In order to avoid obscuring the features of the present invention, the main embodiment description was provided with reference to a particular parallel-to-serial and serial-to-parallel implementations. The extension to other serial transmission standard circuits will be apparent to one skilled in the relevant arts by reading the disclosure provided herein, and such implementations are contemplated to be covered by various aspects of the present invention.

One skilled in the relevant art, however, will readily recognize that the invention can be practiced without one or more of the specific details, or with other methods, etc. In other instances, well known structures or operations are not shown in detail to avoid obscuring the features of the invention.

Other possible implementations of our invention use other types of serial data transmission, as RS-232, USB, and etc. The pad address leaves the battery/electronics box in serial form using only two wires in our main embodiment (signal

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and return or ground), entering the picafina **130** in this form: two wires. Inside the picafina a serial-to-parallel converter **510** regenerates the initial binary parallel addresses (see FIGS. **5**, **2**, **3** and **7**), which are then compared with the addresses written at each pad, to activate only the selected pads.

What is claimed is:

1. An implanted stimulating and measuring device comprising:
  - a battery pack;
  - an electrical storage unit;
  - a plurality of electrodes; and
  - control and communication electronics configured to:
    - select one or a set of stimulating and/or measuring electrodes from the plurality of electrodes,
    - convert address, control, measurement and stimulation information associated with each of the selected electrodes into serial form,
    - send the serialized information using serial to parallel and parallel to serial electronics and logic including one wire plus a ground to the selected electrodes, and
    - convert said serialized information back to its parallel form.
2. The device of claim **1**, comprising a plurality of pads connected to said controlling electronics, each of said plurality of pads being located at the same axial distance from said device.
3. The device of claim **1**, wherein the body of the animal or plant is adapted to be said ground.
4. The device of claim **1**, wherein said serialized information is transmitted using optical fibers.
5. The device of claim **1**, wherein said serialized information is exclusively used by said selected electrodes for measuring purposes.
6. The device of claim **1**, wherein said selected electrodes are associated with amplifiers.
7. The device of claim **1**, wherein said selected electrodes are exclusively used for electrical stimulation.

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