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Amended claims in accordance with Rule 137(2) EPC.

(54) **MOUTH MASK**

(57) Mouth mask (1) containing a facial part (2) to cover a user's (3) mouth and nose when in use, characterised in that the facial part (2) is provided with an aperture (5) to take in food and/or beverages or the like in

the vicinity of the mouth, whereby the mouth mask (1) is provided with means (6) to close and open said aperture (5).

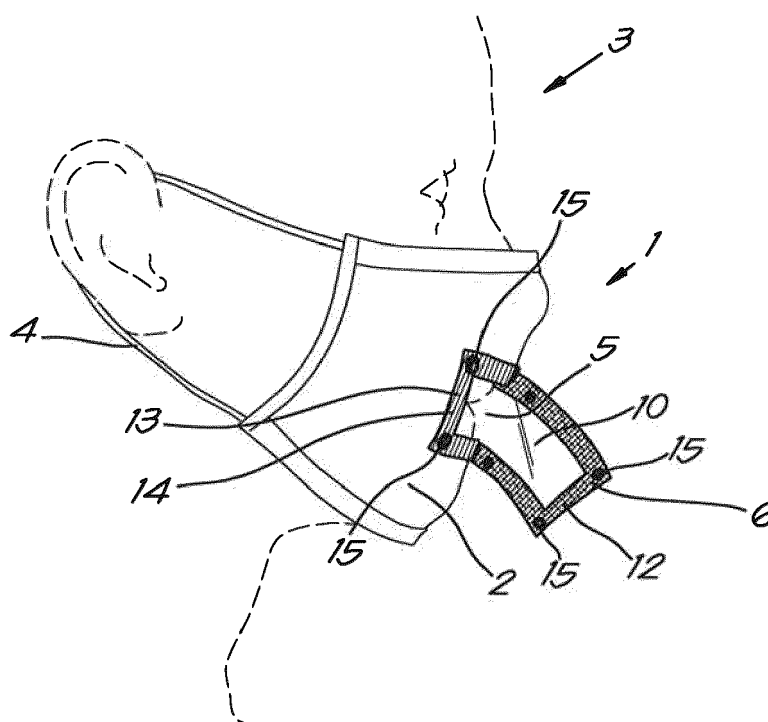


Fig.5

Description

[0001] The current invention relates to a mouth mask.

[0002] It is commonly accepted that different types of mouth masks exist, such as disposable mouth masks, respirators and reusable mouth masks, which contain a facial part to cover the nose and the mouth of the user and the means to apply the facial part to the user's face.

[0003] A disadvantage of disposable mouth masks is that they strongly contribute to the increase of the dump and are therefore not very ecological.

[0004] The currently available mouth masks, disposable or not, have a facial part which functions as an air filter for filtering the air to be inhaled and prevents droplets from spreading during sneezing and/or coughing and also inversely holding back droplets from other individuals.

[0005] In circumstances where wearing the mouth mask is necessary or preferable, for example during a pandemic and/or in crowded places and/or in polluted areas, it is impossible to eat and/or drink whilst wearing a mouth mask to protect an individual.

[0006] The purpose of the current invention is to provide a solution to the aforementioned and other disadvantages.

[0007] The current invention relates to a mouth mask containing a facial part to cover a user's mouth and nose when in use, whereby the facial part is provided with an aperture to take in food and/or beverages and/or the like in the vicinity of the mouth, whereby the mouth mask is provided with means to close and open said aperture.

[0008] An advantage of a mouth mask according to the invention is that it enables individuals to wear a mouth mask whilst being able to take in food and/or beverages and/or medicines by opening the aperture temporarily when needed and closing it again after taking in the food and/or beverages and/or medicines.

[0009] Therefore individuals do not have to remove or pull down their mouth mask in order to eat or drink and are still protected whilst doing so, which keeps risks to a minimal level.

[0010] The size of the aperture can be adapted to a user's wishes or needs, for example the size of the aperture can be at least as big as the diameter of a straw.

[0011] An advantage of this is that in polluted areas like some eastern countries as China, individuals can drink whilst wearing the protective mask and keep their exposure to pollution to a minimum.

[0012] Another possibility is to provide a mask with the size of the aperture allowing that at least a spoon and/or fork and/or spork can pass through the aperture to enable a user to eat whilst wearing the mouth mask.

[0013] This is in particular very advantageous for the catering industry or for use whilst travelling during a pandemic or in polluted areas as mentioned before, because it provides a safer environment for individuals.

[0014] In a preferred embodiment, the means to close and open the aperture can be a zipper or a flap which can be attached over the aperture by means of hook-

and-loop fasteners such as Velcro®.

[0015] An advantage is that it is very user friendly and relatively cheap.

[0016] The before mentioned flap is by preference permanently attached to the facial area with one side.

[0017] This is a very useful feature especially because the flap can be pulled away from the aperture very quickly without having to fully remove the flap with the risk of losing it.

[0018] With the intention of better showing the characteristics of the invention, a mouth mask is described hereinafter, by way of an example without any limiting nature, with reference to the accompanying drawings wherein:

figure 1 demonstrates a schematic representation of a mouth mask according to the invention;

figure 2 shows a side view of mouth mask according to figure 1;

figure 3 demonstrates an alternative embodiment of figure 1;

figure 4 demonstrates an alternative embodiment of figure 1;

figure 5 shows a side view of mouth mask according to figure 4;

figure 6 demonstrates an alternative embodiment according to figure 4.

[0019] A mouth mask 1, according to the figures, contains a facial part 2 which is intended to be attached in front of the mouth and nose of the user 3 by means of fasteners 4, which in the example shown are realized by ribbons 4 which can be tied together behind the user's 3 head but which also exist in the form of elastic bands which can be applied behind the ears.

[0020] The mouth mask 1 according to the invention is meant to only cover the nose and the mouth of the user 3.

[0021] The facial part 2 of the mouth mask 1 is provided with an aperture 5 in the vicinity of the mouth to enable a user 3 to eat and/or drink and/or take in medicines or the like.

[0022] Preferably, referring to figures 2 and 5, the size of the aperture 5 is at least as big as the size of a spoon and/or fork and/or spork to enable a user to consume food and/or drinks and/or medicines and/or the like.

[0023] Moreover, the facial part is provided with means to close said aperture 5 as shown in figures 1, 3 and 4 and to open them again when necessary.

[0024] The said means 6 to close and open the aperture 5 can be a zipper 7 in which a user 3 can unzip the aperture 5 to eat or drink, as shown in figure 2, and afterwards close the zipper 7 again.

[0025] The zipper 7 preferably stretches along a curved line 8 which is symmetric to the center line of the nose and mouth of the user 5, generally corresponding to the center line of the mouth mask 1.

[0026] In a preferable embodiment, the curved line 8 is U shaped with its legs 9 pointing upwards, like in figure

1, or downwards, such as in figure 3, resulting in a U shaped aperture 5 with sufficient height to introduce a spoon for example without smudging the mask 1 or spilling the food and/or beverage.

[0027] As demonstrated in figure 4, the means 6 to close and open the aperture 5 can also be realized by using a flap 10 being attached over the aperture 5.

[0028] The before mentioned flap 10 can be attached over the aperture 5 by hook-and-loop fasteners 11 with a male 12 and female part 13, one of them being attached to the facial part 2 and the other part being attached to the flap 10. Preferably, one side 14 of the flap 10 is permanently attached to the facial part 2, for example by sewing one side 14 of the flap 10 to the facial part 2 as shown in figure 5. This ensures that the flap 10 will not easily be lost which would destroy the functionality of the mouth mask.

[0029] Additionally, the flap 10 and corresponding facial part 2 can be provided with extra press buttons 15 besides the hook-and-loop fasteners 11, to fasten the hook-and-loop fasteners 11 to the facial part 2 to ensure that the aperture 5 can still be effectively closed even when the hook-and-loop fasteners 11 inevitably wear out due to excessive use.

[0030] Figure 6 demonstrates an alternative embodiment of a mouth mask 1 according to the invention.

[0031] In this alternative embodiment, the size of the aperture 5 is similar to that of the diameter of a straw and the flap 10 is executed in such a way that it covers the aperture 5.

[0032] In case of the figure, the top of the flap 10 is permanently attached to the facial part 2. However, it is also possible that the bottom or one side 14 of the flap 10 is permanently attached to the facial part 2.

[0033] Such a small aperture 5 for a straw or for medicine tablets can be provided in the facial part 2 either alone, or for example integrated in the flap 10 of figure 5, so that the user 3 can choose an appropriate aperture 5 according to the need.

[0034] The mouth mask 1 is preferably manufactured from a fabric which is cleanable for at least a minimal number of cleanings or washes without reducing the effectiveness of the mouth mask 1.

[0035] Furthermore, the fabric from which the mouth mask 1 is manufactured is preferably suitable to be printed on with wash resistant and indelible ink to allow companies and/or users 3 to customize their mouth masks 1.

[0036] The facial part 2 is preferably manufactured from filter material to filter the air before breathing it in even with the aperture 5 closed.

[0037] The current invention is by no means limited to the embodiments described as an example and shown in the drawings, but a mouth mask according to the invention as described above can be realized in all kind of variants without departing from the scope of the invention.

Claims

1. Mouth mask (1) containing a facial part (2) to cover a user's (3) mouth and nose when in use, **characterised in that** the facial part (2) is provided with an aperture (5) to take in food and/or beverages or the like in the vicinity of the mouth, whereby the mouth mask (1) is provided with means (6) to close and open said aperture (5).

2. Mouth mask according to claim 1, **characterised in that** the size of the aperture (5) is at least as big as the diameter of a straw.

3. Mouth mask according to claims 1 or 2, **characterised in that** the size of the aperture (5) is at least as big as the size of a spoon and/or fork and/or spork.

4. Mouth mask according to any of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the means (6) to close and open the aperture (5) is a zipper (7).

5. Mouth mask according to any of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the zipper (7) stretches along a curved line (8).

6. Mouth mask according to any of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the curved line (8) is symmetric to the center line of face when the mouth mask (1) is worn.

7. Mouth mask according to any of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the curved line (8) contains a U-shape.

8. Mouth mask according to any of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the means (6) to close and open the aperture (5) is a flap (10) being attached over the aperture (5) by means of hook-and-loop fasteners (11) with a male (12) and female part (13), one of them being attached to the facial part (2) and the other part being attached to the flap (10).

9. Mouth mask according to any of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the means (6) to close and open the aperture (5) are hook-and-loop fasteners (11) with extra press buttons (15) to fasten the hook-and-loop fasteners (11) to the facial part (2).

10. Mouth mask according to claims 6 and 7, **characterised in that** one side (14) of the flap (10) is permanently attached to the facial part (2).

13. Mouth mask according to any of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the facial part (2) is manufactured from filter material to filter the air before breathing it in.

14. Mouth mask according to any of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the facial part (2) is composed of two pieces, respectively a basic part predominantly with the shape of the facial part (2) and provided with an opening in the vicinity of the mouth and an insert part to cover the opening and provided with the aperture (5) and the means (6) to close and open the aperture (5).

15. Mouth mask according to any of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the mouth mask (1) is manufactured from a cleanable fabric.

16. Mouth mask according to any of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the fabric from which the mouth mask (1) is manufactured is suitable to be printed on.

17. Mouth mask according to any of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the mouth mask (1) is meant to only cover the nose and the mouth of the user (3).

Amended claims in accordance with Rule 137(2) EPC.

1. Mouth mask (1) containing a facial part (2) to cover a user's (3) mouth and nose when in use, **characterised in that** the facial part (2) is provided with an aperture (5) to take in food and/or beverages or the like in the vicinity of the mouth, whereby the mouth mask (1) is provided with means (6) to close and open said aperture (5) .

2. Mouth mask according to claim 1, **characterised in that** the size of the aperture (5) is at least as big as the diameter of a straw.

3. Mouth mask according to claims 1 or 2, **characterised in that** the size of the aperture (5) is at least as big as the size of a spoon and/or fork and/or spork.

4. Mouth mask according to any of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the means (6) to close and open the aperture (5) is a zipper (7).

5. Mouth mask according to any of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the zipper (7) stretches along a curved line (8).

6. Mouth mask according to any of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the curved line (8) is symmetric to the center line of face when the mouth mask (1) is worn.

7. Mouth mask according to any of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the curved line (8) contains a U-shape.

8. Mouth mask according to any of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the means (6) to close and open the aperture (5) is a flap (10) being attached over the aperture (5) by means of hook-and-loop fasteners (11) with a male (12) and female part (13), one of them being attached to the facial part (2) and the other part being attached to the flap (10).

9. Mouth mask according to any of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the means (6) to close and open the aperture (5) are hook-and-loop fasteners (11) with extra press buttons (15) to fasten the hook-and-loop fasteners (11) to the facial part (2).

10. Mouth mask according to claims 6 and 7, **characterised in that** one side (14) of the flap (10) is permanently attached to the facial part (2).

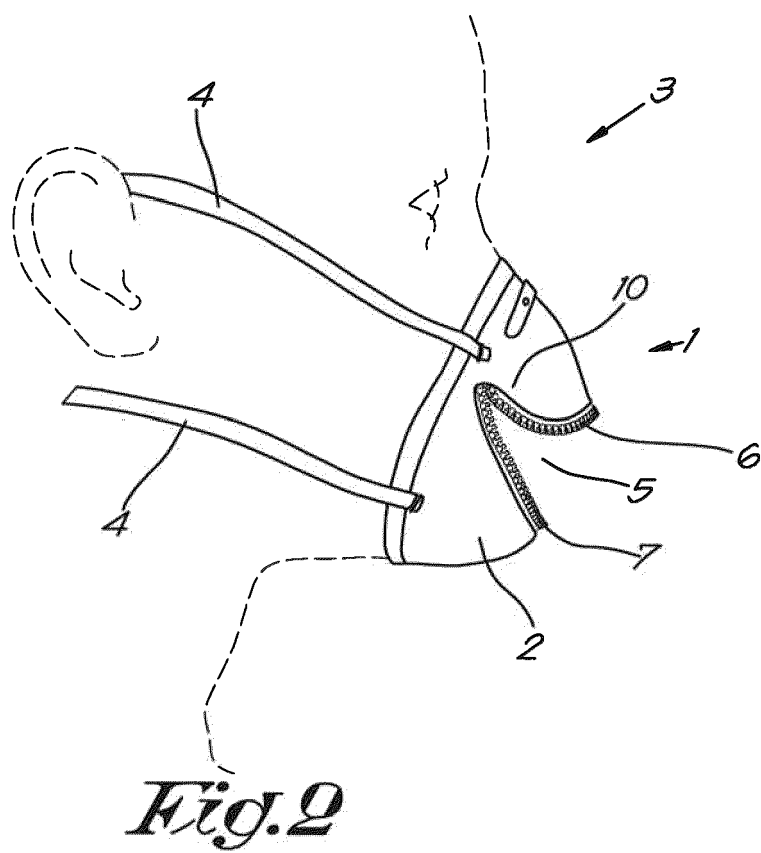
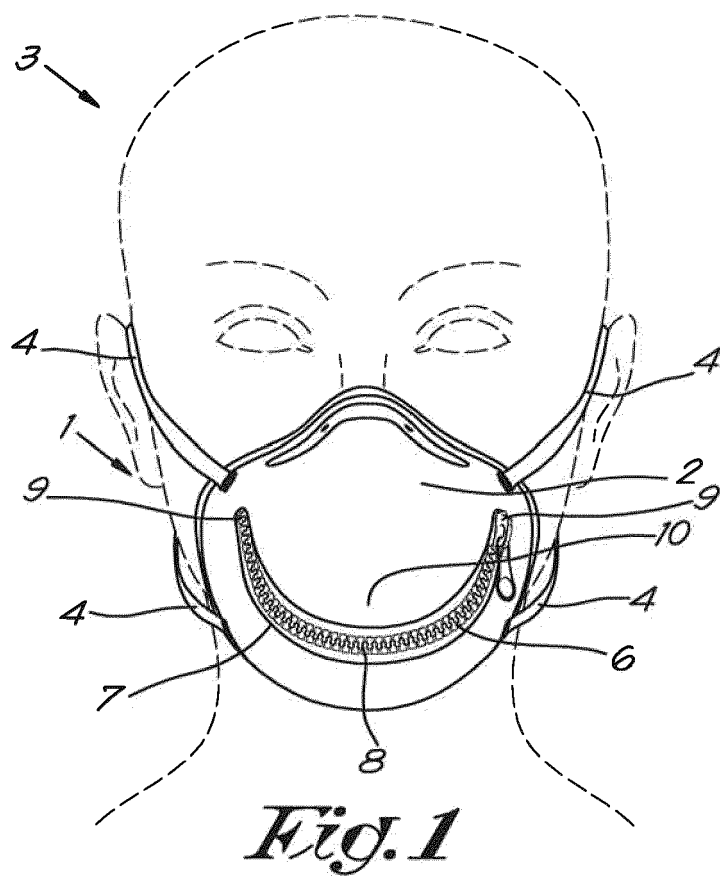
11. Mouth mask according to any of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the facial part (2) is manufactured from filter material to filter the air before breathing it in.

12. Mouth mask according to any of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the facial part (2) is composed of two pieces, respectively a basic part predominantly with the shape of the facial part (2) and provided with an opening in the vicinity of the mouth and an insert part to cover the opening and provided with the aperture (5) and the means (6) to close and open the aperture (5).

13. Mouth mask according to any of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the mouth mask (1) is manufactured from a cleanable fabric.

14. Mouth mask according to any of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the fabric from which the mouth mask (1) is manufactured is suitable to be printed on.

15. Mouth mask according to any of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the mouth mask (1) is meant to only cover the nose and the mouth of the user (3).



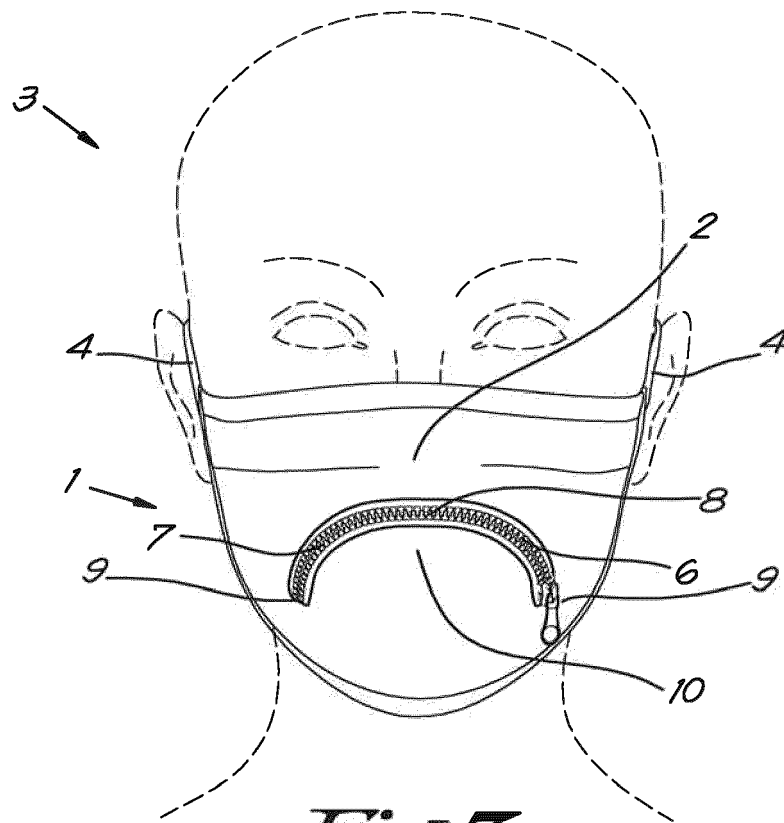


Fig. 3

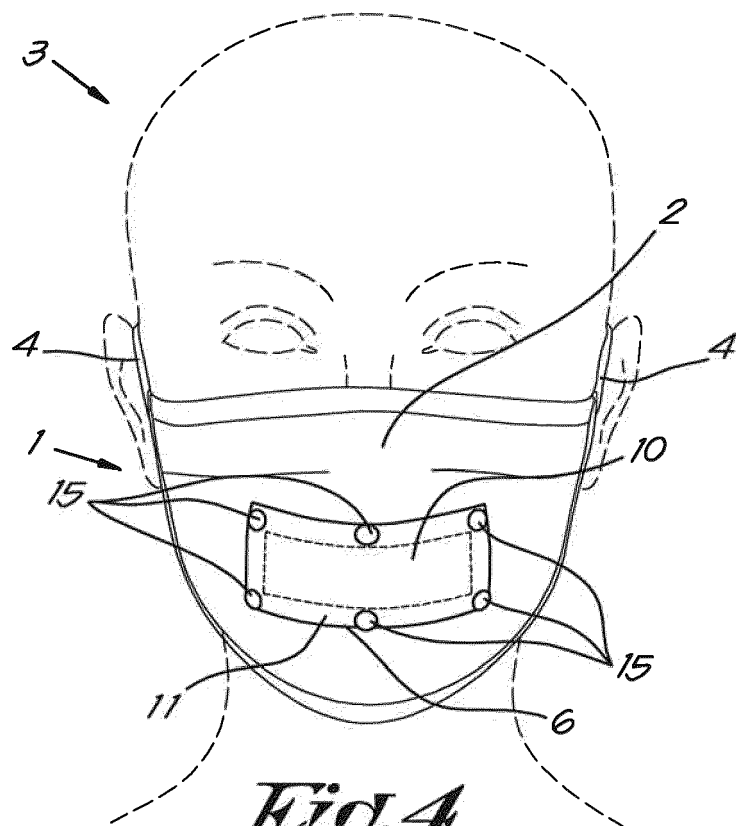


Fig. 4

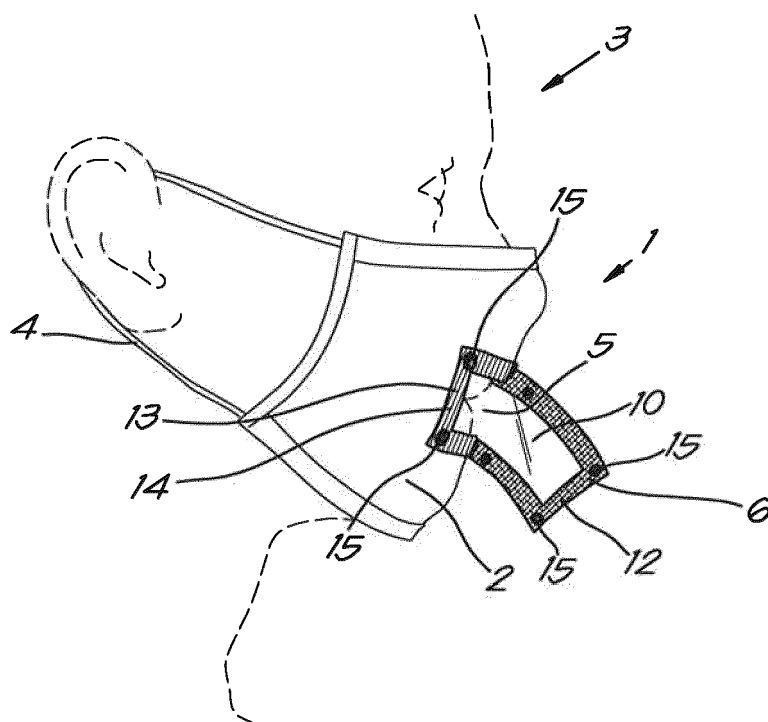


Fig. 5

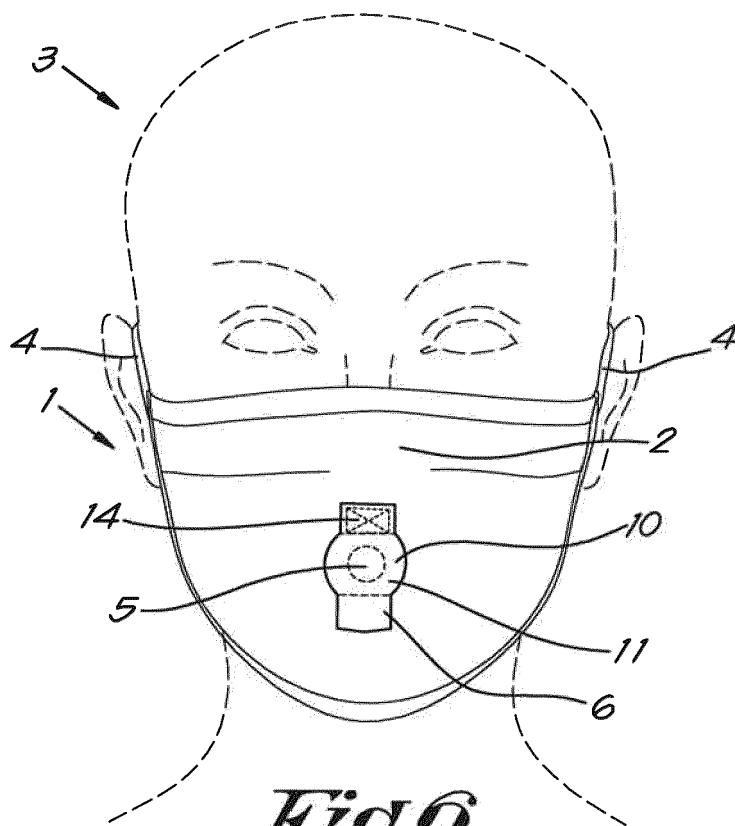


Fig. 6



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Application Number
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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search The Hague		Date of completion of the search 2 October 2020	Examiner Debard, Michel
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			

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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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EP 20 17 3853

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This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.
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