



[54] OROESOPHAGEAL, INSTRUMENT INTRODUCER ASSEMBLY AND METHOD OF USE

[75] Inventors: Sang C. Park, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Edwin E. Macatangay, Bloomington, Ind.

[73] Assignee: Cook Incorporated, Bloomington, Ind.

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Primary Examiner—Tamara L. Graysay
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Richard J. Godlewski

[57] ABSTRACT

An oesophageal introducer assembly for atraumatically introducing a relatively large instrument such as an echotransducer positioned on the distal end of a gastroscope for performing an echocardiographic procedure. The introducer assembly includes an outer sheath having a tapered distal end and a passageway extending therethrough for passing the large instrument therethrough. The assembly further includes a dilator extending from the tapered distal end of the outer sheath for atraumatically dilating the esophagus during introduction. The assembly further includes an introducer guide for initial oral introduction into the esophagus and stomach of the patient. The outer sheath and dilator are interconnected at the proximal ends thereof for extending the tapered distal end of the dilator from the tapered distal end of the outer sheath. The interconnected outer sheath and dilator are then introduced atraumatically into the esophagus over the introducer guide. When positioned in the esophagus, the dilator is disconnected from the outer sheath, and the dilator and introducer guide are removed from the outer sheath and patient. A relatively large diagnostic instrument is introduced through the outer sheath for performing various diagnostic or treatment procedures. The inner and outer sheaths are comprised of a flexible material, with the outer diameter of the inner sheath being substantially less than the inner diameter of the outer sheath to maintain flexibility of the assembly during introduction into the esophagus.

18 Claims, 4 Drawing Sheets

