

only a quantity of the starting sheet material from which any given desired member can be cut (by a trephine or the like) and/or formed (by a mold or the like) to the required shape and configuration by the surgeon (or an associated technician) as needed preparatory to its being used in a surgical procedure, or it could mean that in anticipation of an upcoming need for any such member the surgeon can obtain the same at that time piecemeal from a manufacturer or other commercial source thereof.

In summary, therefore, it will be seen that in its broadest sense the present invention provides, for use by a surgeon in connection with an ophthalmic surgical procedure, a "spare part" adapted to be surgically introduced into an eye for repair or reinforcement or replacement of a component of the eye, with such "spare part" comprising a member made of a cohesive sheet material of a cross-linked biocompatible substance, and with such member further being preformed into a shape and configuration adapted to the manner in which the involved eye component is to be repaired or reinforced or replaced thereby. Moreover, although various embodiments of structures within the ambit of this invention have been disclosed herein by way of illustration, it is not intended to so limit the invention, since other structures (e.g., sleeves in lieu of disks and strips in appropriate cases, structures which are not merely circular or rectangular but which are differently configured even to the point of being not geometrically regular in shape, etc.) which are equivalent to the disclosed embodiments and which do not entail any departure from the spirit and scope of the present invention as defined in the hereto appended claims, will readily suggest themselves to those skilled in the art.

I claim:

1. For use in connection with ophthalmic surgical procedures; a "spare part" adapted to be surgically introduced into an eye for the purpose of repair or reinforcement or replacement of a component of the eye, said "spare part" comprising a member of a cohesive sheet material of a cross-linked biocompatible substance, said member being preformed into the shape of an anteriorly incomplete capsular bag-like structure which includes a peripherally curved posterior wall defining a posterior capsule portion and a curved strip-like anterior wall defining an anterior capsular flap portion, with said anterior capsular flap portion and said posterior capsule portion being connected to each other along their respective curved outer peripheries, and with said anteriorly incomplete capsular bag-like structure having predetermined physical or optical properties, or both, and being adapted to the manner in which the endogenous posterior capsule of the eye is to be repaired or reinforced or replaced following an intracapsular or extracapsular cataract extraction.

2. A "spare part" according to claim 1, wherein said cross-linked biocompatible substance comprises hyaluronic acid or sodium hyaluronate.

3. A "spare part" according to claim 1, wherein said cross-linked biocompatible substance comprises hydrogel.

4. A "spare part" according to claim 1, wherein said cross-linked biocompatible substance comprises silicone.

5. A "spare part" according to claim 1, wherein said cross-linked biocompatible substance comprises polymethylmethacrylate.

6. A "spare part" according to claim 1, wherein said cross-linked biocompatible substance comprises polysulfone.

7. A "spare part" according to claim 1, wherein said cross-linked biocompatible substance comprises a combination of chondroitin sulfate and hyaluronic acid.

8. A "spare part" according to claim 1, wherein said cross-linked biocompatible substance comprises fibronectin.

9. For use in connection with ophthalmic surgical procedures; a "spare part" adapted to be surgically introduced into an eye for the purpose of repair or reinforcement or replacement of a component of the eye, said "spare part" comprising a member made of a cohesive sheet material of a cross-linked biocompatible substance, said member being preformed to have the shape of an anteriorly incomplete capsular bag which includes a generally circular posterior wall defining a posterior capsule portion and a generally circular substantially centrally apertured anterior wall defining an annular anterior capsular flap portion, with said anterior capsular flap portion and said posterior capsule portion being connected to each other along their respective outer peripheries, and with said anteriorly incomplete capsular bag having predetermined physical or optical properties, or both, said member thereby being adapted, when implanted into the part of the endogenous capsular bag of the eye that remains following an extracapsular cataract extraction, to constitute a patch for covering and sealing a tear or rent in the endogenous posterior capsule and to provide a receptacle for an intraocular lens.

10. For use in connection with ophthalmic surgical procedures; a "spare part" adapted to be surgically introduced into an eye for the purpose of repair or reinforcement or replacement of a component of the eye, said "spare part" comprising a member of a cohesive sheet material of a cross-linked biocompatible substance, said member being preformed to have the shape of an anteriorly incomplete capsular bag which includes a generally circular posterior wall defining a posterior capsule portion and a generally circular substantially centrally apertured anterior wall defining an annular anterior capsular flap portion, with said anterior capsular flap portion and said posterior capsule portion being connected to each other along their respective outer peripheries, and with said anteriorly incomplete capsular bag having predetermined physical or optical properties, or both, and said member further including a plurality of circumferentially distributed artificial zonular fibers made of a biocompatible cross-linked substance and each being attached at one end region thereof to a respective one of said anterior capsular flap portion and said posterior capsule portion in the outer peripheral regions thereof and extending generally radially outwardly of said anteriorly incomplete capsular bag, said artificial zonular fibers being adapted for connection at their other end regions to the ciliary body of the eye, said member thereby being adapted, when implanted into the eye following an intracapsular cataract extraction, to constitute a replacement for the endogenous capsular bag of the eye and to provide a receptacle for an intraocular lens.

11. For use in connection with ophthalmic surgical procedures; a "spare part" adapted to be surgically introduced into an eye for the purpose of repair or reinforcement or replacement of a component of the eye, said "spare part" comprising a member made of a