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(54) **TOOTH BRUSH**

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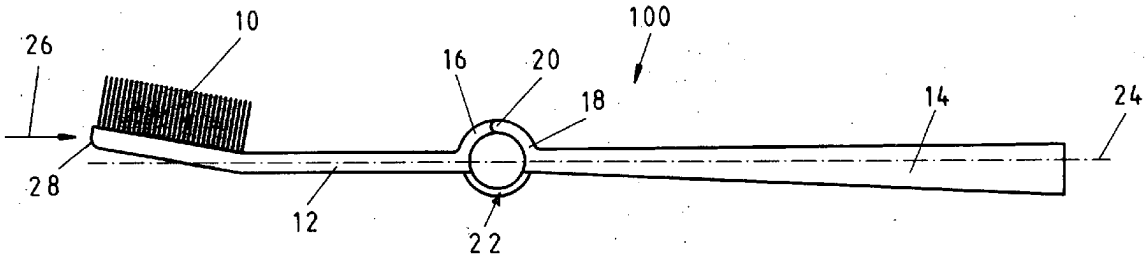
(57) **ABSTRACT**

The tooth brush with a head part **(12)** carrying bristles **(10)** and with a handle part **(14)**, the head part **(12)** being connected with the handle part **(14)** by means of a resilient device in such a way that the head part **(12)** is pivotable against the handle part **(14)**, is configured in such a way that the resilient device **(16)** is configured as a damping element, the head part **(12)** being additionally resiliently connected with the handle part **(14)** in direction of a longitudinal axis **(24)** of the tooth brush.



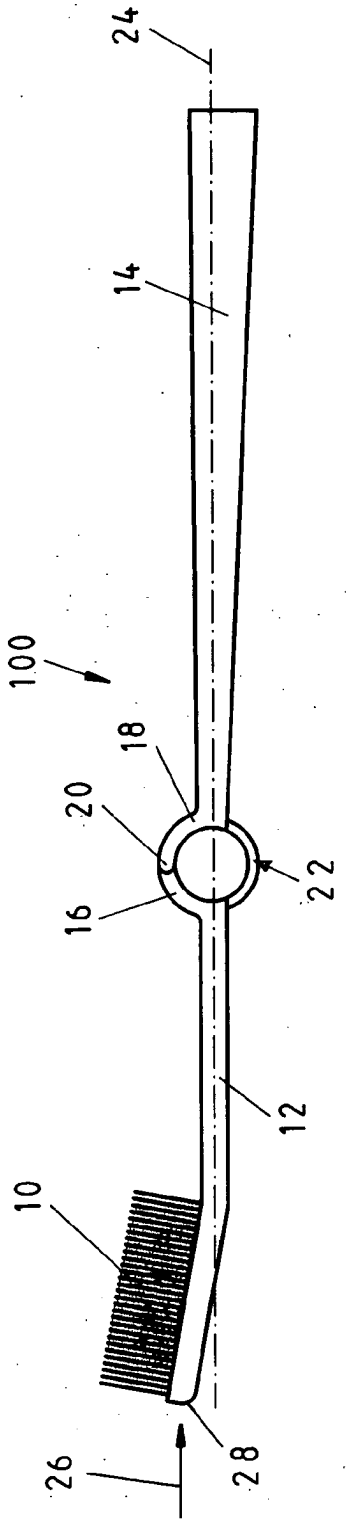


Fig.1

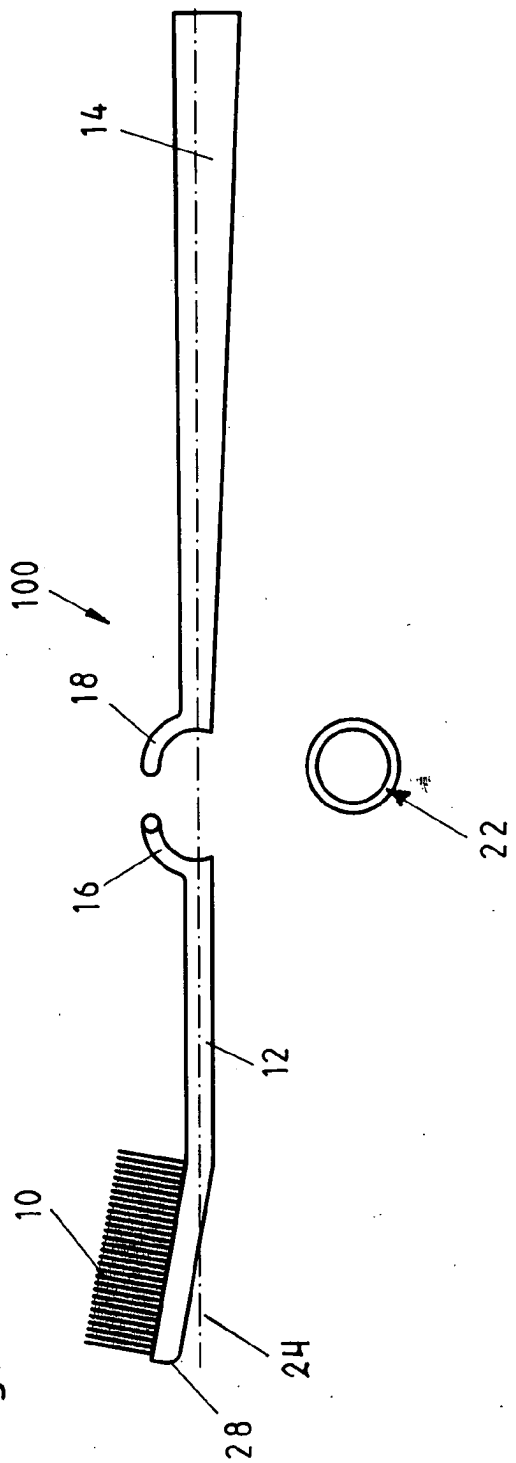


Fig.2

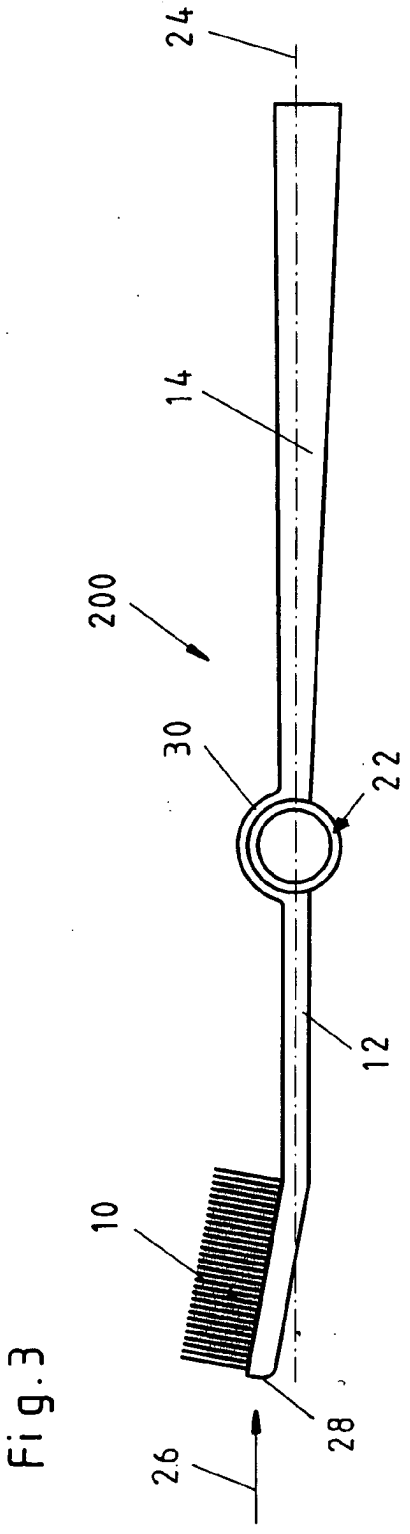


Fig. 3

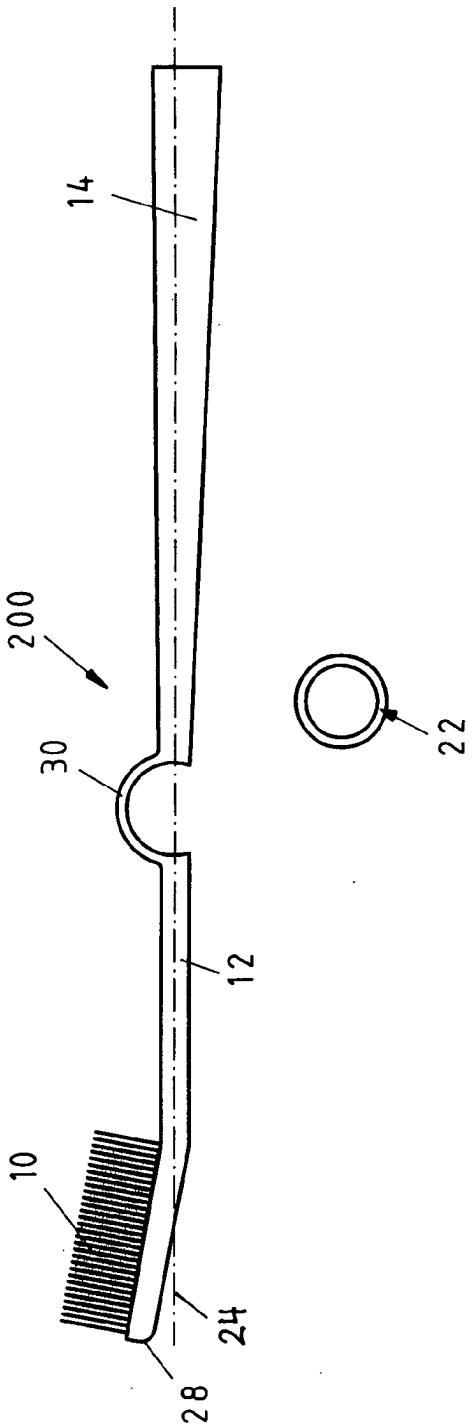


Fig. 4

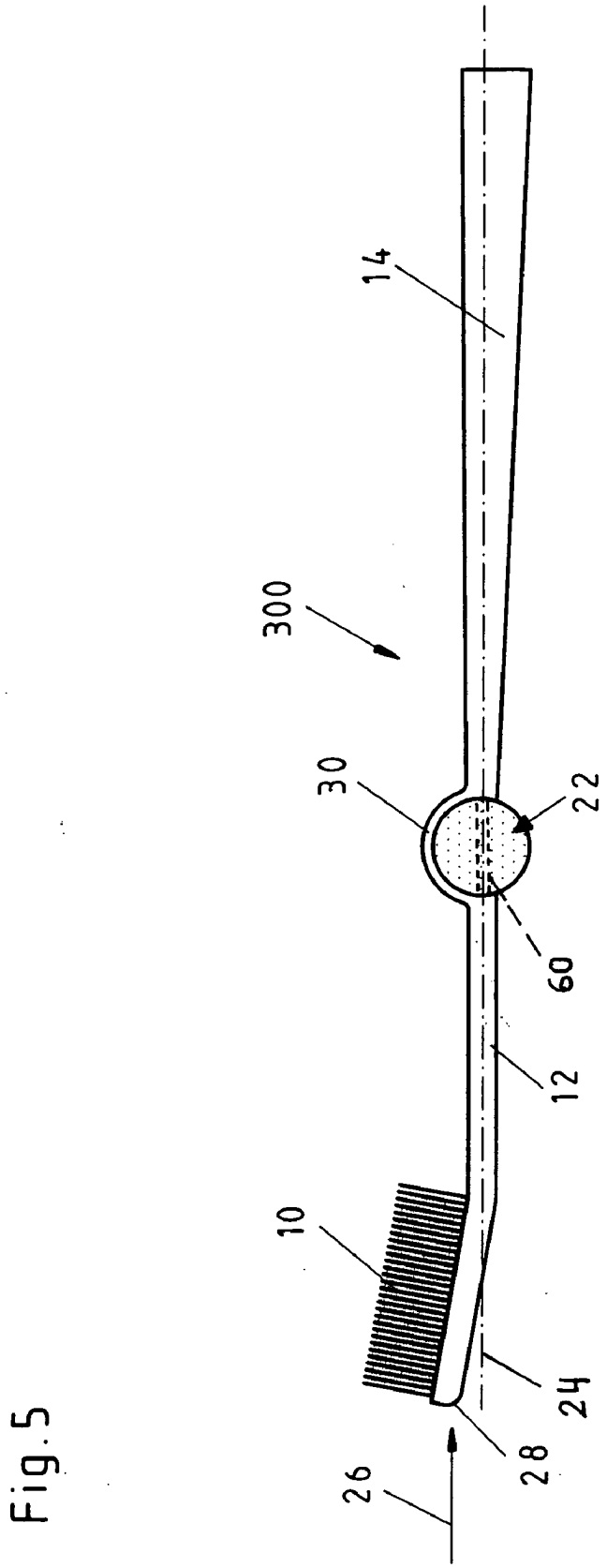


Fig.5

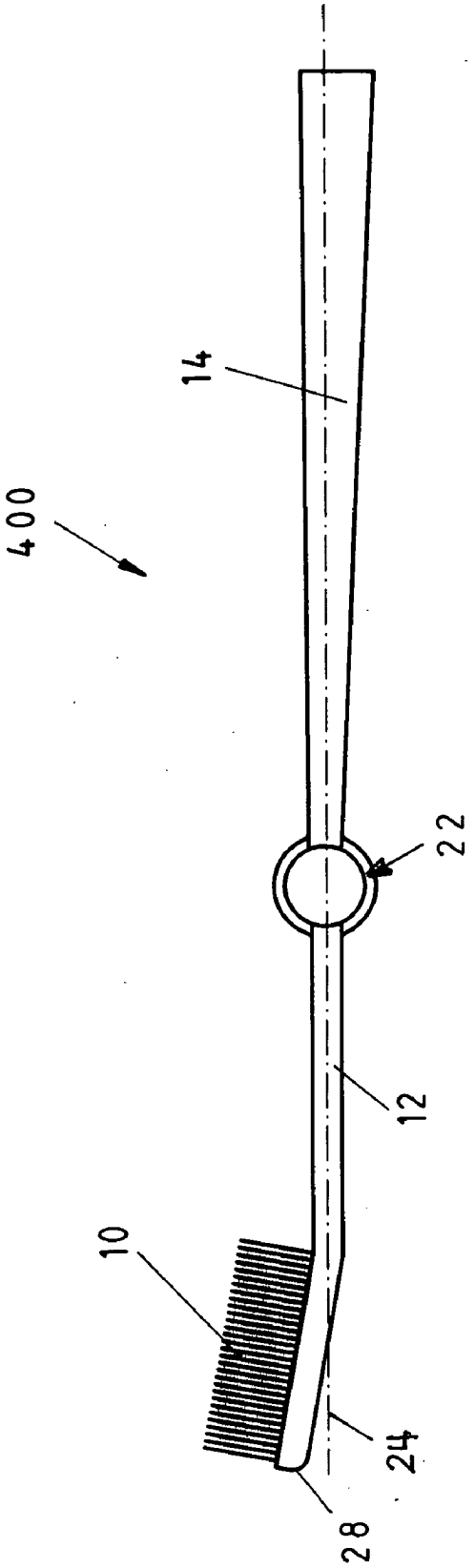


Fig.6

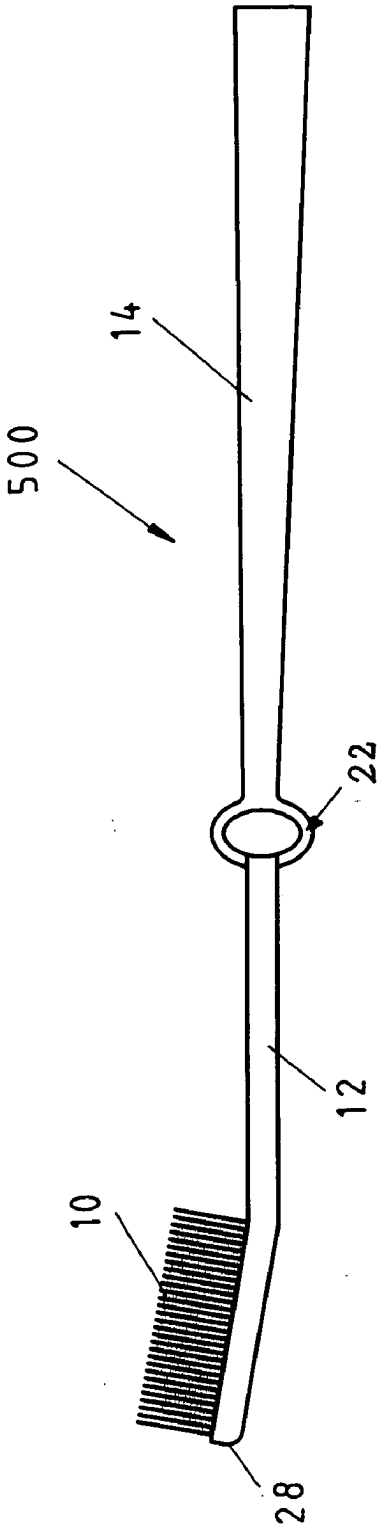


Fig.7

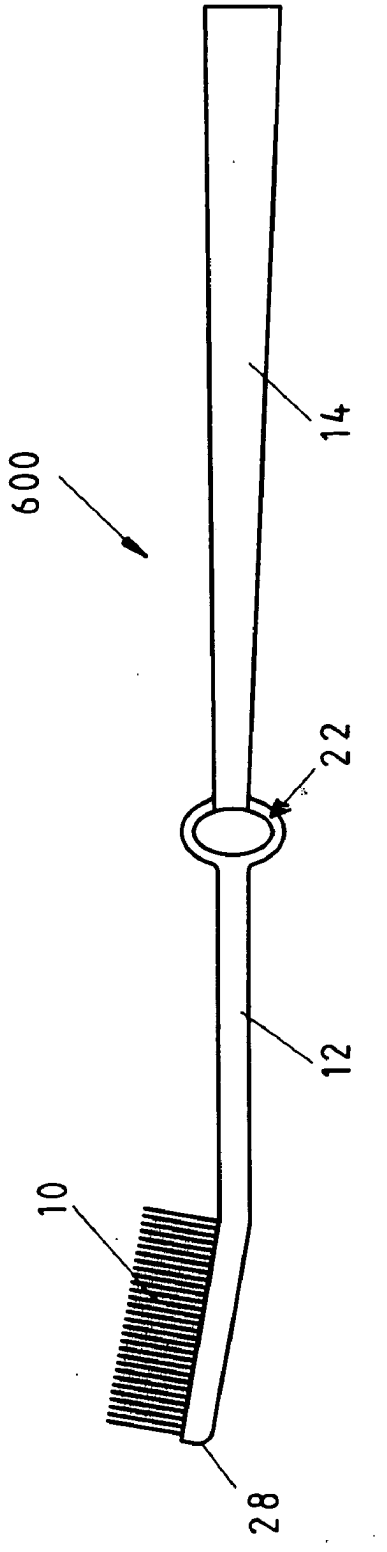


Fig.8

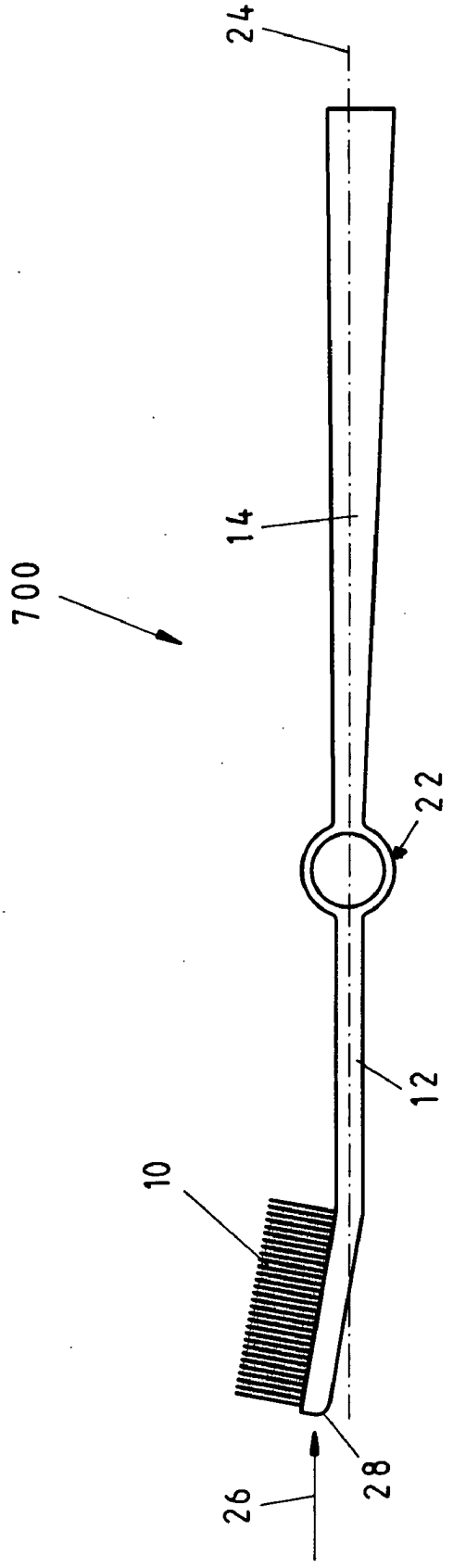


Fig.9

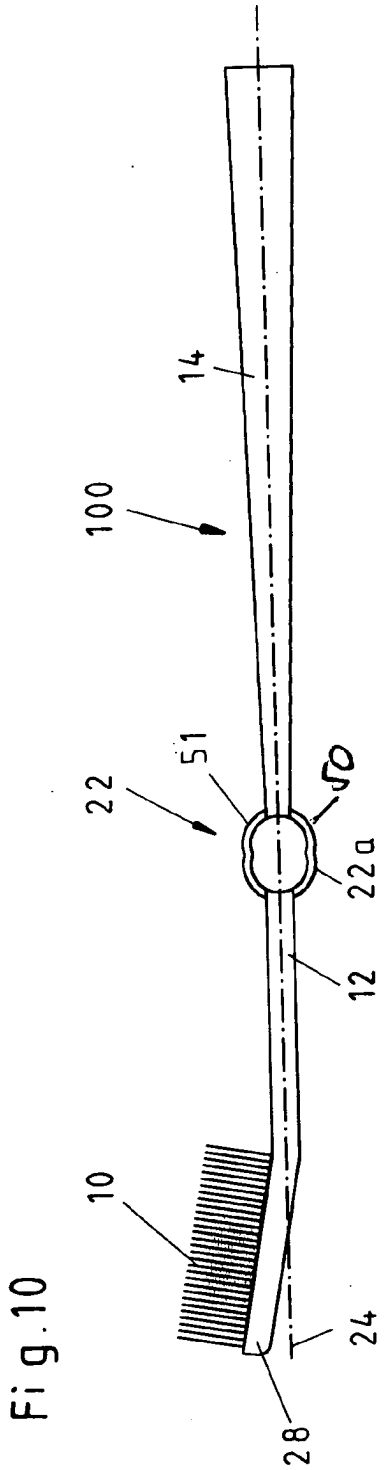


Fig.10

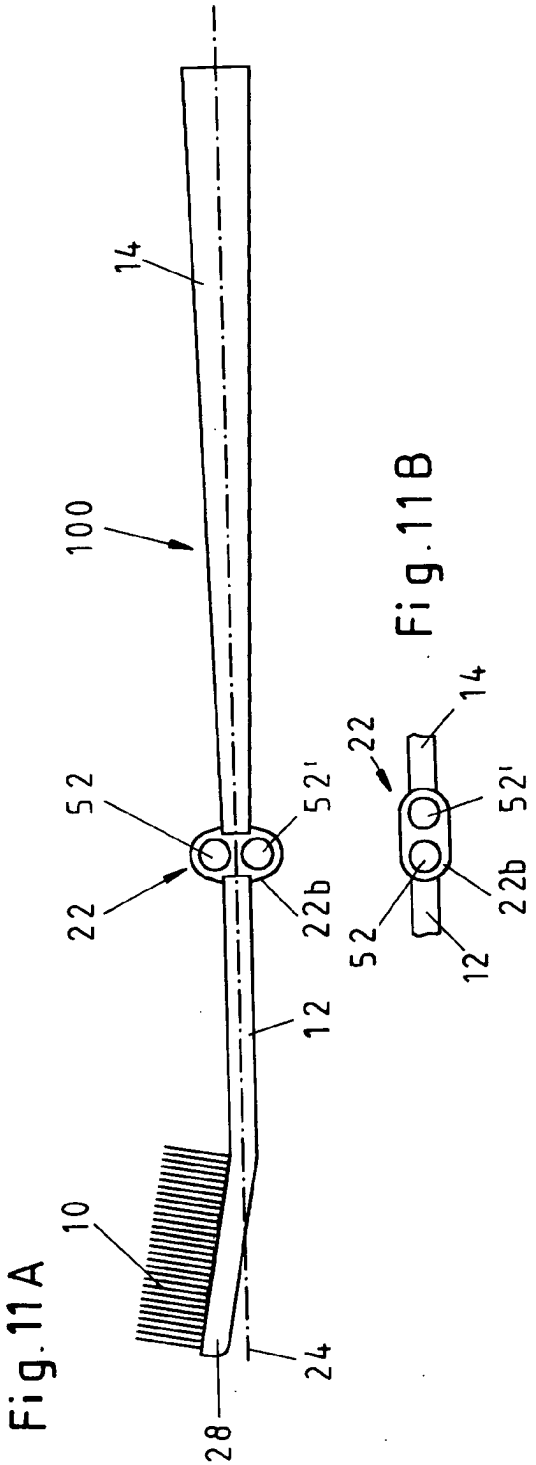


Fig.11A

Fig.11B

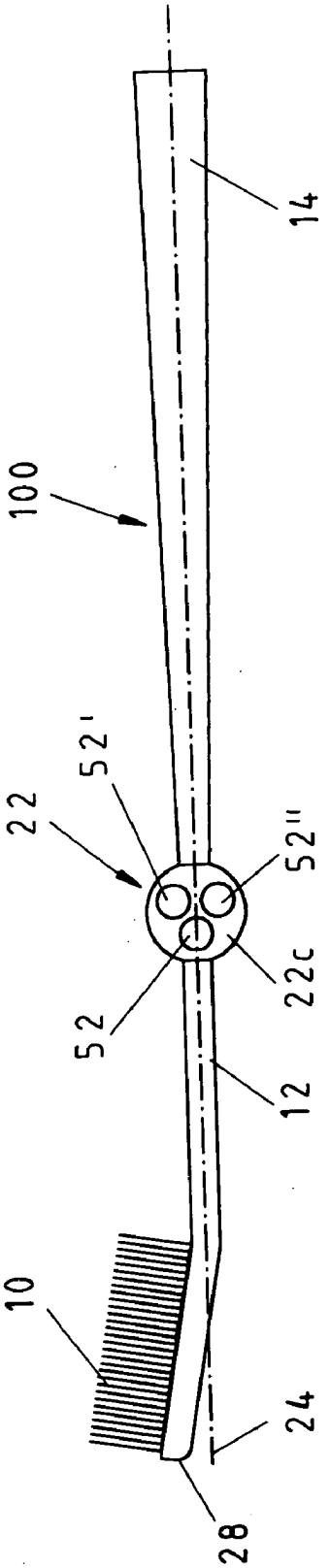


Fig.12

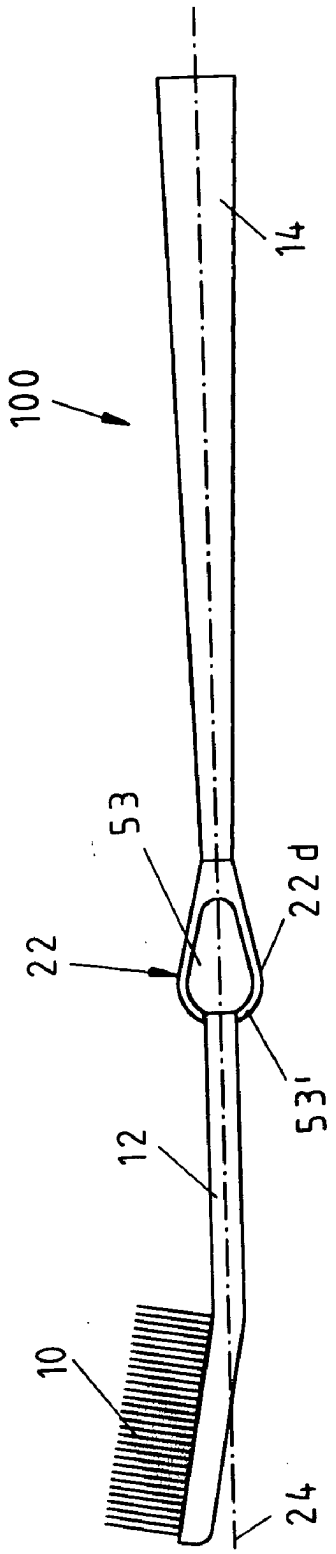


Fig.13

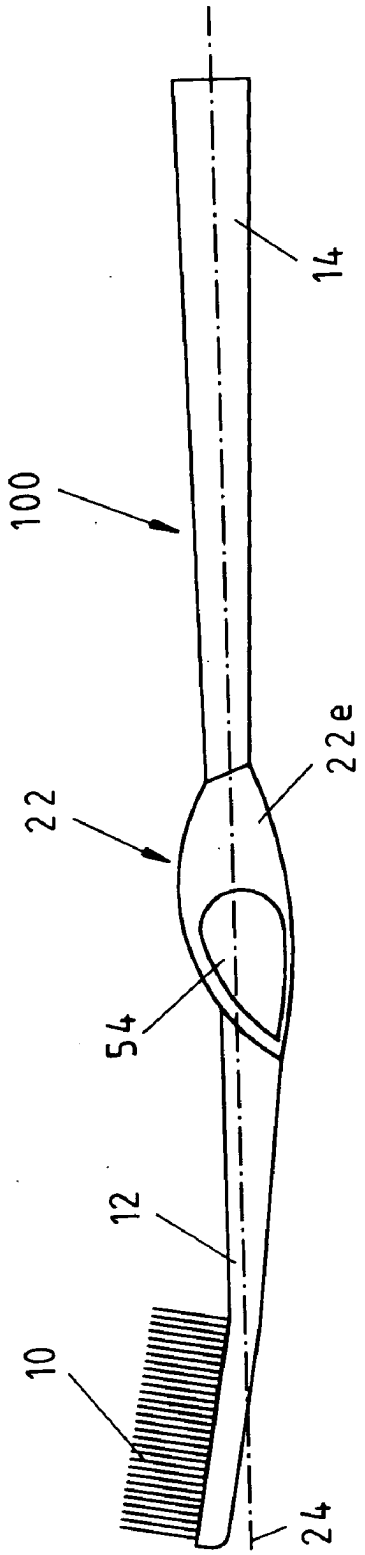


Fig.14

TOOTH BRUSH

[0001] This invention relates to a tooth brush with a head part carrying bristles and with a handle part, the head part being connected with the handle part by means of a resilient device in such a way that the head part is pivotable against the handle part, according to the preamble of claim **1**.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Tooth brushes for which the head can be resilient against the handle in a direction perpendicularly to a longitudinal axis of the tooth brush are already known. However, such tooth brush spring systems have the disadvantage that they cushion only into one direction namely against a pressure on the bristle side onto the head. A further disadvantage of traditional spring-loaded tooth brushes is that the equipment of such a tooth brush with an interchangeable head is extremely complicated, since the locking of the interchangeable head in a neck area of the tooth brush constitutes a partial stiffening of the tooth brush which undesirably counteracts the resiliency of the head against the handle. Thus, it has already been proposed to configure the interchangeable head in form of an interchangeable bristle zone. However, it comes here to a hygienically dangerous important dirt accumulation in the bristle zone at the corresponding butt points or surfaces. Add to this that in interchangeable head systems the cushioning of tooth brushes by head separations in the neck area often results in a release of the interchangeable head connection due to the arising lever forces.

[0003] The aim of this invention is to make available an improved tooth brush of the above mentioned type which eliminates the above mentioned disadvantages.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] This aim is achieved by a tooth brush of the above mentioned type with the characteristics indicated in claims **1** and **2**.

[0005] To this end, according to claim **1** of the invention, the resilient device is configured as an one-piece or a multipiece damping element made of an homogeneous material or of several different materials, the head part being additionally resiliently connected with the handle part in direction of a longitudinal axis of the tooth brush.

[0006] The further development of the invention consists, according to claim **2**, in that the resilient device is configured as a damping element, the head part being additionally resiliently connected with the handle part in direction of a longitudinal axis of the tooth brush and being made of a spring member which has any geometrical form with at least one opening and which is configured as a massive part.

[0007] This has the advantage that a pressure from above onto the head part in direction of the bristles arising because of the teeth brushing as well as a front pressure onto the head part in direction of the longitudinal axis of the tooth brush cause a cushioning of the head part with respect to the handle part so that injuries to the oral cavity are avoided still more efficiently.

[0008] Preferable further developments of the tooth brush are indicated in the subclaims.

[0009] The massive spring member or the spring member provided with at least one opening runs parallel or perpendicularly to the longitudinal axis of the tooth brush or in any other direction.

[0010] In a preferred embodiment, the resilient device comprises a juncture point between the head part and the handle part which shows a predetermined distance to the longitudinal axis of the tooth brush and is configured, for example, as an articulation or as a flexible junction.

[0011] Herewith, we obtain a particularly good spring characteristic when the juncture comprises a first elevation configured in one piece with the head part and a second elevation configured in one piece with the handle part which are hinged with each other.

[0012] In an appropriate way, the first and/other the second elevation is made of a flexible material and is configured for example arcuated, especially in form of a quarter circle.

[0013] In a preferred alternative embodiment, the juncture shows an arcuated especially a semicircular elevation made of a flexible material which is connected in one piece with the head part and the handle part.

[0014] In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the resilient device comprises a spring member made of a flexible material which is placed between the head part and the handle part.

[0015] Here, the spring member is configured in one piece with the handle part and/or the head part or is alternatively detachably connected with the handle part and the head part.

[0016] Appropriately, the spring member is configured ring-shaped, elliptical, disk-shaped or cylindrical.

[0017] The spring member between the handle part and the head part of the tooth brush preferably consists of a plate-shaped moulded body with two partial rings connected with each other which are placed horizontally or vertically to the longitudinal axis of the tooth brush. The spring member can also consist of a plate-shaped, square, circular, an oval moulded body or of a moulded body showing another geometrical two-dimensional or three-dimensional form with two openings placed superimposed or side by side, the plate-shaped moulded body being placed horizontally or vertically to the longitudinal axis of the tooth brush. The number of openings in the plate-shaped moulded body can be chosen at will and respectively depends on the springiness to be achieved.

[0018] According to another embodiment, the spring member consists of a plate-shaped, square, circular, an oval moulded body or of a moulded body showing another geometrical two-dimensional or three-dimensional form with three openings, the plate-shaped moulded body being placed horizontally or vertically to the longitudinal axis of the tooth brush.

[0019] The spring member can also consist of a plate-shaped moulded body moulded on the handle part of the tooth brush with an opening with an approximately arcuated triangular configuration on which the head part is moulded in the biggest arc area of the opening, the moulded body being also placed in this embodiment horizontally or vertically to the longitudinal axis of the tooth brush.

[0020] A further embodiment consists in that the spring member consists of a plate-shaped moulded body with a drop-shaped oppening which is placed horizontally or vertically to the longitudinal axis of the tooth brush, whereby the conformation of the moulded body can have any two-dimensional or three-dimensional configuration shaping.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0021] The invention will be explained in detail below with reference to the attached drawings.

[0022] **FIG. 1** is a side view of a tooth brush with a resilient device when mounted.

[0023] **FIG. 2** is a side view of the tooth brush according to **FIG. 1** when dismantled.

[0024] **FIG. 3** is a side view of a tooth brush with a further embodiment of the resilient device when mounted.

[0025] **FIG. 4** is a side view of the tooth brush according to **FIG. 3** when dismantled.

[0026] **FIG. 5** is a side view of a tooth brush with a full surface spring member.

[0027] **FIG. 6** is a side view of a tooth brush with a ring-shaped spring member.

[0028] **FIG. 7** is a side view of a tooth brush with an oval spring member.

[0029] **FIG. 8** is a side view of a further embodiment of a tooth brush with an oval spring member.

[0030] **FIG. 9** is a side view of a further embodiment of a tooth brush with an oval spring member.

[0031] **FIG. 10** is a side view of a tooth brush with a double ring-type configured spring member.

[0032] **FIG. 11A** is a side view of a tooth brush with a spring member with two superimposed openings.

[0033] **FIG. 11B** is a side view of a tooth brush with a spring member with two openings placed side by side.

[0034] **FIG. 12** is a side view of a tooth brush with a circular spring member with three openings.

[0035] **FIG. 13** is a side view of a tooth brush with a spring member with an arcuate triangular opening.

[0036] **FIG. 14** is a side view of a tooth brush with a spring member with a drop-shaped opening.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0037] **FIG. 1** and **2** show examples of different preferred embodiments of a tooth brush, the same parts in the figures and in the following description being designated respectively with the same reference numerals.

[0038] The embodiment of a tooth brush **100** represented in **FIGS. 1 and 2** comprises a head part **12** carrying bristles **10** and a handle part **14**. A first elevation **16** on the head part **12** and a second elevation **18** on the handle part **14** are configured in one piece, whereby both elevations act in connection with their articulation-type configuration as a damping element. Both arm-type elevations **16**, **18** are configured as quarters of a circle and are provided at their respectively open ends which are turned to each other with articulating means so that both elevations **16** and **18** can be detachably hinged together. The handle part **14** and the head part **12** are pivotable against each other about the resulting hinge-type joint **20**.

[0039] The handle part **14** and the head part **12** are detachably connected with each other over the joint **20** so that the head part **12** is replaceable after the bristles **10** having been correspondingly worn out. The head part **12** can then be replaced by a new head or an alternative health care part as illustrated in **FIG. 2**.

[0040] Moreover, a ring-shaped spring member **22** is provided in the area of the hinge **20**, this spring member causing a correspondingly resilient connection between the head part **12** and the handle part **14**, whereby the spring member can show different configurations, as will still be explained below. Here, a resilient relative movement between the handle part **14** and the head part **12** against each other does not take place only by pressure onto the bristles **10** but also along a longitudinal axis **24** (**FIG. 1**) of the tooth brush **100**, the spring member **22** being correspondingly compressed in case of a front pressure onto the head part **12**, for example in direction of the arrow **26** (**FIG. 1**).

[0041] Thus, as far as an user clinks in the mouth with the front side **28** of the head part **12** of the tooth brush **100** when brushing his teeth, the head part **12** springs elastically against the handle part **14** in direction of the longitudinal axis **24** so that an injury in the mouth area due to the clinking with the front area **28** is efficiently avoided. This elastic springiness in direction of the longitudinal axis **24** is still additionally supported by the fact that the hinge **20** is spaced from the longitudinal axis **24** by a predetermined length. Furthermore, the elevations **16** and **18** are appropriately made of a flexible or elastic material.

[0042] The spring member **22** is placed detachable between the head part **12** and the handle part **14** so that the spring member **22** can be replaced, depending on the user's wishes, if necessary, by a harder or by a softer spring member **22**.

[0043] **FIGS. 3 and 4** show a further embodiment of the tooth brush **200**, whereby here no separation of the handle part **14** and of the head part **12** is provided for. Instead of this, the head part **12** and the handle part **14** are connected with each other in one piece with an arcuated elevation **30**. This elevation is preferably made of a flexible or of an elastic material. The damping element **22** is also here preferably detachably inserted in the tooth brush **200** between the head part **12** and the handle part **14** and thus allows, by a corresponding choice of the material, a predetermined spring characteristic which can also be changed by a simple replacement of the spring member **22**. The bending-in of the head part **12** with respect to the handle part **14** is carried out by a warping of the elevation **30** which compresses the spring member **22**. As can directly be seen in **FIGS. 3 and 4**, due to the configuration of the tooth brush **200** according to the invention, there results a resilient movement of the head part **12** against the handle part **14** not only by pressure onto the bristles **10** but also by pressure onto the front side **28** of the head part **12** of the tooth brush **200**, for example in direction of the arrow **26**.

[0044] Here, a bending-in of the head part **12** also in direction of the longitudinal axis **24** is achieved which

correspondingly reduces the risk of an injury around the mouth area of an user when clinking with the front side **28** of the tooth brush **200**.

[**0045**] The embodiment of the tooth brush **300** represented in **FIG. 5** differs from the embodiment **200** described above with reference to **FIG. 3** and **4** in that, instead of a ring-shaped spring member, a disk-shaped spring member **22** is used, whereby the spring member **22** can also be configured as a resilient spherical body; other geometrical configurations are also possible. For a spherical configuration of the spring member, it is advantageous when, for example, the head part **12** and the handle part **14** of the tooth brush are directly connected with the spherical body without the elasticity getting lost thereby. The opposite ends of the head part **12** and of the handle part **14** can be configured for receiving the spherical body as a shell, for example in form of a spherical calotte. The connection and fixing of both parts **12** and **14** can then take place by means of a connecting wire, a spring steel bar or of a plastic rod or the like **60** (**FIG. 5**) so that both parts **12** and **14** are held together without the flexibility of the spring member getting lost.

[**0046**] For the embodiment of the tooth brush **400** represented in **FIG. 6**, no direct connection is provided for between the handle part **13** and the head part **12**. The handle part **14** and the head part **12** are connected with each other only by the spring member **22**. Hereby, the spring member **22** is detachably connected with the head part **12** as well as with the handle part **14**.

[**0047**] In alternative embodiments, the spring member **22** is fest connected with the handle part **14** and detachably with the head part **12** (**FIG. 7**), detachably with the handle part **14** and fest with the head part **12** (**FIG. 8**) or fest with the head part **12** as well as with the handle part **14** (**FIG. 9**).

[**0048**] The handle part **14** and/or the head part **12** of the tooth brush **100** to **700** are produced, for example, by one-part or two-part component fabrication. The spring member **22** is preferably made of a material specially selected for the purpose intended for. The spring member **22** is, for example, produced in a two-component method from one soft component. Alternatively, the spring member **22** is also produced from the same material as the handle part **14** and the head part **12**, as far as these are made of an appropriate resilient material.

[**0049**] For the embodiments for which the spring member **22** is configured individually and can be placed form-fitting detachable between the handle part **14** and the head part **12** (**FIG. 1** to **5**), there results the particular advantage consisting in that the spring member **22** is interchangeable and can be selected individually with respect to the property of its spring characteristic. A ring-type form of the spring member **22** is particularly advantageous. Thus, it is possible to trigger the spring effect practically on each place of the ring **22** and in any direction without the spring properties being changed. Different spring effects can be achieved depending on material hardness, ring thickness and cross-section type. This effect can also be achieved by multiple component production. A predetermined colour of the ring **22** can give information on its properties or only mark or individualize the respective tooth brush **100** to **700**. Both parts of the tooth brush—handle part **14** and head part **12**—are either hung up on the ring **22** or, for example, fit together above the ring. Due to pressure onto the bristles **10**, the head part **12** tends to clap in the art of scissors against the handle part **14** in the figure downwards which is however cushioned by the spring member **22**.

[**0050**] As far as the spring member **22** is configured fest or in one piece on the head part **12**, the replacement of the head part **12** always takes place completely with the spring member **22**. Since the spring member **22** also wears in the course of time, this type of replacement is particularly advantageous.

[**0051**] A further advantage of the head separation according to the invention in the area of the resilient device consists in that the point of separation remains outside the oral cavity during teeth brushing and is thus protected against coarse soiling. Furthermore, this point of separation is easy to clean due to the optimal thorough rinsing ability and also copes with strong permanent loads.

[**0052**] For the embodiment according to **FIG. 9**, due to the complete one-piece configuration of the tooth brush **700** with or without integrated spring member, there results a particularly efficient cushioning of pressure and shocks onto the head part **12** in direction of the longitudinal axis **24**, for example in direction of the arrow **26**.

[**0053**] Apart from the ring-shaped configuration of the spring member **22**, other geometry types are also possible which are adapted to the eventual specific requirements to the function of the tooth brush **100** to **700**. The spring members **22** can then be configured two-dimensional or three-dimensional. If the spring member is configured plate-shaped, it can be placed lying between the handle part **14** and the head part **12** horizontally or vertically to the longitudinal axis **24** of the tooth brush.

[**0054**] Moreover, the spring member **22** is for example additionally equipped with a "core" of full material to influence the spring characteristic. Alternatively, the spring member **22** is configured filled with one or two components.

[**0055**] The spring member **22** in a soft embodiment can totally be replaced without support by a harder plastic. This means, it is known that the spring members or damping elements in tooth brushes consist, for example, of tapers in the plastic material, when they are made of only one hard plastic material. But if the spring members or the damping elements are made of an elastomer, thus of a rather gummy plastic material, they will always be stiffened by means of the hard second component to a proportion necessary for the function, since the elastomer alone would be too soft. However, the ring-shaped spring member **22** can be made of the monomaterial appropriate for the function. This can be hard elastomer or another plastic material.

[**0056**] For the tooth brush **100** according to **FIG. 10**, a spring member **22** is placed between the head part **12** and the handle part **14**, this spring member consisting in a plate-shaped moulded body **22***a* made of two partial rings **50**, **51** connected with each other so that both ring openings merge. This plate-shaped moulded body can be placed lying horizontally or vertically to the longitudinal axis **24** of the tooth brush.

[**0057**] **FIG. 11A** shows an embodiment in which the spring member **22** consists of a plate-shaped moulded body **22***b* with two superimposed openings **52**, **52'**, whereby the plate-shaped moulded body **22***b* can also lie horizontally or

vertically to the longitudinal axis **24** of the tooth brush **100**. This moulded body **22***b* with its both openings **52**, **52**' can also be placed according to **FIG. 11***b* between the head part **12** and the handle part **14** of the tooth brush **100** in such a way that both openings **52**, **52**' lie side by side.

[**0058**] The number of the openings in the spring member **22** can be chosen arbitrarily. Moreover, the plate-shaped moulded body can show a square, a circular, an oval or another geometrical two-dimensional or three-dimensional form.

[**0059**] For the tooth brush **100** according to **FIG. 12**, the spring member **22** can consist of a plate-shaped, a square, a circular, an oval moulded body **22***c* or of a moulded body **22***c* showing another geometrical two-dimensional or three-dimensional form which consists of three openings **52**, **52**', **52**". If the moulded body **22***c* is configured plate-shaped, this moulded body can be placed between the head part **12** and the handle part **14** of the tooth brush **100** horizontally or vertically to the longitudinal axis **24** of the tooth brush.

[**0060**] For the embodiment according to **FIG. 13**, the spring member **22** consists of a plate-shaped moulded body **22***d* moulded on the handle part **14** of the tooth brush **100** with one opening **53** with an approximately arcuated triangular or a drop-shaped configuration, moulded body on which the head part **12** is moulded in the bigger arc area **53**' of the opening. For this embodiment, the plate-shaped moulded body **22***d* can also be placed horizontally or vertically to the longitudinal axis **24** of the tooth brush **100**.

[**0061**] A further configuration of the tooth brush **100** is represented in **FIG. 14**. Here, the spring member **22** consists of a plate-shaped moulded body **22***e* with a drop-shaped opening **54**, the moulded body being also placed for this embodiment horizontally or vertically to the longitudinal axis **24** of the tooth brush **100**.

[**0062**] The damping element **22** is preferably formed in one piece and consists of an homogeneous material, for example of an appropriate plastic. However, it is also possible to configure the damping element **22** in several pieces, the individual parts being then connected with each other form-fitted or by force. Then, this damping element made of several pieces preferably consists of various and/or different materials, for example of plastic materials with a different Shore hardness.

1. A tooth brush with a head part (**12**) carrying bristles (**10**) and with a handle part (**14**), the head part (**12**) being connected with the handle part (**14**) by means of a resilient device in such a way that the head part (**12**) is pivotable against the handle part (**14**), wherein the resilient device (**16**, **18**, **20**; **22**: **30**) is configured as an one-piece or a multipiece damping element (**22**) made of an homogeneous material or of several different materials, the head part (**12**) being additionally resiliently connected with the handle part (**14**) in direction of a longitudinal axis (**24**) of the tooth brush.

2. A tooth brush with a head part (**12**) carrying bristles (**10**) and with a handle part (**14**), the head part (**12**) being connected with the handle part (**14**) by means of a. resilient device in such a way that the head part (**12**) is pivotable against the handle part (**14**), wherein the resilient device (**16**, **18**, **20**; **22**: **30**) is configured as a damping element, the head part (**12**) being additionally resiliently connected with the handle part (**14**) in direction of a longitudinal axis (**24**) of the tooth brush and being made of a spring member (**22**) which shows any geometrical form with at least one opening or which is configured as a massive part.

3. A tooth brush according to claim 1, wherein the massive spring member (**22**) or the spring member (**22**) provided with at least one opening runs parallel or perpendicularly to the longitudinal axis (**24**) of the tooth brush or in any other direction.

4. A tooth brush according to claim 1, wherein the resilient device comprises a juncture point (**16**, **18**, **20**; **30**) between the head part (**12**) and the handle part (**14**) which shows a predetermined distance to the longitudinal axis (**24**) of the tooth brush.

5. A tooth brush according to claim 1, wherein the juncture point is configured, for example, as an articulation (**20**) or as a flexible junction (**30**).

6. A tooth brush (**100**) according to claim 1, wherein the juncture of the tooth brush (**100**) comprises a first elevation (**16**) configured in one piece with the head part (**12**) and a second elevation (**18**) configured in one piece with the handle part (**14**) which are hinged with each other.

7. A tooth brush according to claim 6, wherein the first and/or the second elevation (**16**, **18**) is made of a flexible material.

8. A tooth brush according to claim 6, wherein the first and/or the second elevation (**16**, **18**) is configured arcuated especially in form of a quarter circle.

9. A tooth brush (**200**, **300**) according to claim 1, wherein the juncture of the tooth brush (**200**; **300**) shows an arcuated or a semicircular elevation (**30**) made of a flexible material which is connected in one piece with the head part (**12**) and the handle part (**14**).

10. A tooth brush according to claim 1, wherein the resilient device comprises a spring member (**22**) made of a flexible material which is placed between the head part (**12**) and the handle part (**14**).

11. A tooth brush according to claim 10, wherein the spring member (**22**) is configured in one piece with the handle part (**14**) and/or the head part (**12**).

12. A tooth brush according to claim 10, wherein the spring member (**22**) is detachably connected with the handle part (**14**) and the head part (**12**).

13. A tooth brush according to claim 10, wherein the spring member (**22**) is configured ring-shaped, elliptical, disk-shaped or cylindrical.

14. A tooth brush according to claim 1, wherein the spring member (**22**) is made of a plate-shaped moulded body (**22***a*) with two partial rings (**50**, **51**) connected with each other which is placed horizontally or vertically to the longitudinal axis (**24**) of the tooth brush (**100**).

15. A tooth brush according to claim 1, wherein the spring member (**22**) consists of a plate-shaped, square, circular, an oval moulded body (**22***b*) or of a moulded body (**22***b*) showing another geometrical two-dimensional or three-dimensional form with two openings (**52**, **52**') placed superimposed or side by side, the plate-shaped moulded body (**22***b*) being placed horizontally or vertically to the longitudinal axis (**24**) of the tooth brush (**100**).

16. A tooth brush according to claim 1, wherein the spring member (**22**) consists of a plate-shaped, square, circular, an oval moulded body (**22***c*) or of a moulded body (**22***c*) showing another geometrical two-dimensional or three-dimensional form with three openings (**52**, **52**', **52**"), the

plate-shaped moulded body (**22***c*) being placed horizontally or vertically to the longitudinal axis (**24**) of the tooth brush (**100**).

17. A tooth brush according to claim 1, wherein the spring member (**22**) consists of a plate-shaped moulded body (**22***d*) moulded on the handle part (**14**) of the tooth brush (**100**) with an opening (**53**) with an approximately arcuated triangular configuration on which the head part (**12**) is moulded in the biggest arc area (**53'**) of the opening, the plate-shaped moulded body (**22***d*) being placed horizontally or vertically to the longitudinal axis (**24**) of the tooth brush (**100**).

18. A tooth brush according to claim 1, wherein the spring member (**22**) consists of a plate-shaped moulded body (**22***e*) with a drop-shaped oppening (**54**) which is placed horizontally or vertically to the longitudinal axis (**24**) of the tooth brush (**100**).

19. A tooth brush according to claim 1, wherein the spring member (**22**) is configured as a spherical body made of a resilient material with restoring ability.

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