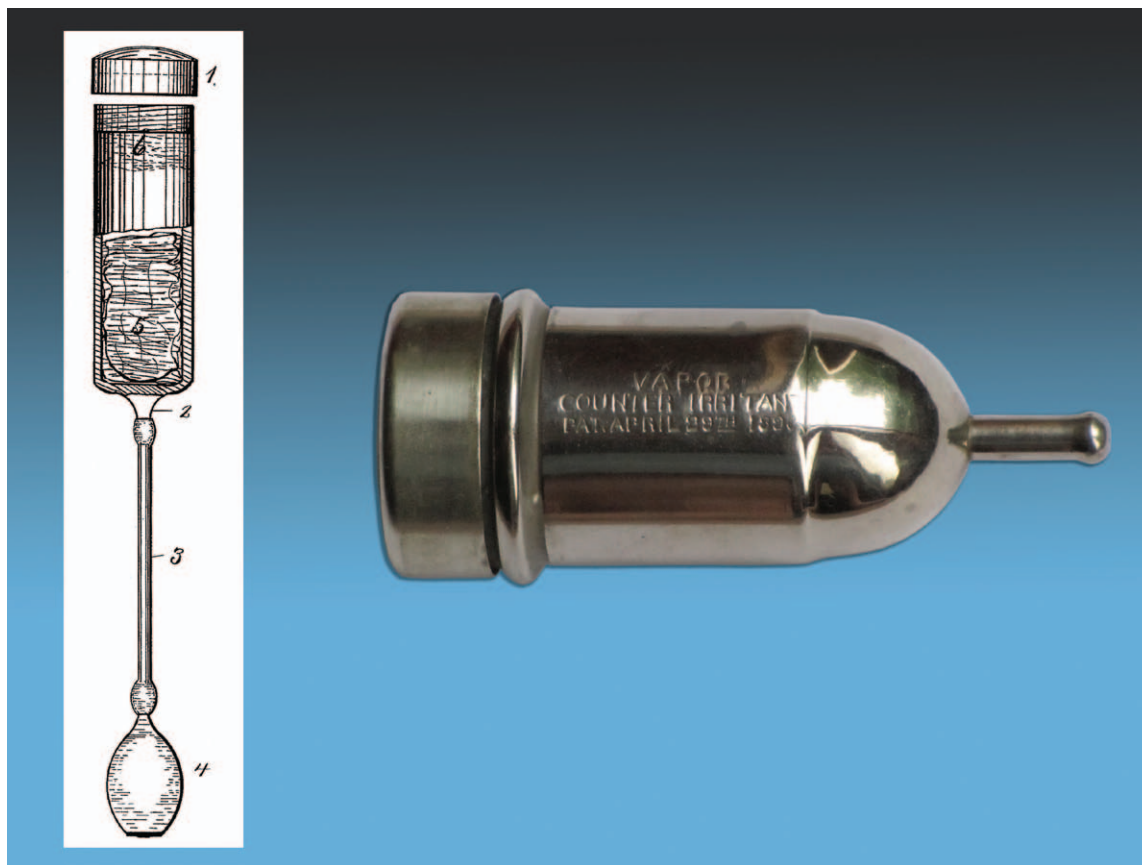


Tucker Apparatus for Counterirritation



From Syracuse, New York, on July 26, 1889, William L. Tucker applied for a U.S. Patent for counterirritation, applying an inflammatory irritant (e.g., camphor or menthol) at one site to reduce inflammation or pain at another. Tucker described his technique as follows using most of the numbers on his patent diagram (*left*): after unscrewing the removable “cap [1] from the tube, I insert the non-medicated sponge [6] into the mouth of the tube, leaving a portion of it protruding from the top. I then force air through the mouth-piece [4] and [flexible] tube 3, causing a [vapor] current to pass through the medicated sponge [5], thereby charging it with the irritant. This protruding part of the sponge I apply to the flesh or skin.” Just over 9 months after submitting his (patent) application for (irritant) application, Tucker was granted U.S. Patent No. 426,609 for his “Apparatus for Applying Irritants.” The Wood Library-Museum’s example (*right*) is marked with “VAPOR / COUNTER IRRITANT / PAT. APRIL 29TH 1890.” (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc.)

George S. Bause, M.D., M.P.H., Honorary Curator, ASA’s Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology, Park Ridge, Illinois, and Clinical Associate Professor, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio. UJYC@aol.com.