tency ratio to be 1:10. Only a cost comparison taking into account this potency difference would be valid.

TONI MARINA
Product Director
Anesthesia Products
Janssen Pharmaceutica
40 Kingsbridge Road
Piscataway, New Jersey 08854

REFERENCES

1. Aldrete JA: Narcotic anesthesia: Do the benefits justify the cost? ANESTHESIOLOGY 63:565–566, 1985
2. Flacke JW, Bloor BC, Kripke BJ, Flacke WE, Warneck CM, Van Etten AP, Wong DH, Katz RL: Comparison of morphine, meperidine, fentanyl and sufentanil in balanced anesthesia: A double-blind study. Anesth Analg 44:897–910, 1985
3. Smith NT, Quinn M, Dec-Silver H, Sanford TJ: Aperiodic analysis of EEG response to fentanyl and sufentanil anesthesia during open heart surgery (abstract). Anesth Analg 62:284, 1983

(Accepted for publication January 22, 1986.)

Anesthesiology
64:843, 1986

Cost of Different Narcotics

To the Editor:—After reading Dr. Aldrete's letter,[1] I reviewed the cost to our hospital of both fentanyl and sufentanil. The issue is important because we use large doses of narcotic for anesthetizing cardiac surgery patients.

A 20-ml ampul of fentanyl (Sublimaze®) costs the hospital $10.59. A 5-ml ampul of sufentanil (Sufenta®) costs $12.61. Simple arithmetic shows that 100 μg of fentanyl costs $1.059. An equivalent dose of sufentanil (15 μg) costs $0.7566.

I fail to comprehend Dr. Aldrete's assertion that sufentanil is 3.2 times as expensive as fentanyl.

THOMAS A. POLTA, M.D.
Staff Anesthesiologist
Veterans Administration Medical Center
54th Street and 48th Avenue South
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55417

REFERENCE

1. Aldrete JA: Narcotic anesthesia: Do the benefits justify the cost? ANESTHESIOLOGY 63:565–566, 1985

(Accepted for publication January 22, 1986.)

Anesthesiology
64:843, 1986

In reply:—A clarification is in order concerning the calculated costs of fentanyl and sufentanil published as "Correspondence" in ANESTHESIOLOGY 63:656, 1985.

Because of the supposed ratio of potency of 1:5 between sufentanil and fentanyl, if one ampul of 5 ml of fentanyl (250 μg) costs $3.37, the equivalent dose of sufentanil would be 50 μg, which costs $3.72. Thus, the stated 3.2:1 times ratio, the latter allegedly being more expensive, should in fact be only 1.1:1; in other words, and for practical reasons, they cost about the same.

J. ANTONIO ALDRETE
Department of Anesthesiology
The University of Alabama at Birmingham
University Station
Birmingham, Alabama 35294

(Accepted for publication January 22, 1986.)