

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

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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.

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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,

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

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REFERENCE

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should in fact be only 1.1:1; in other words, and for practical reasons, they cost about the same.

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