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Intravenous Alcohol In 1945 and Beyond

To the Editor—1 reflected on the correspondence from Bergman.1
"Intravenous Alcohol in 1831," particularly the statement, "One
can speculate that, if Dupuy had used a larger dose of alcohol and
achieved unconsciousness in his horses, some perceptive reader of
the report might have attempted to mitigate surgical pain with this
technique."

Although I was not aware of Dupuy's investigation in horses,2 sur-
gical pain in humans has been "mitigated" with alcohol.3 The sum-
mary of this article3 states, "1. Five per cent and 10 per cent alcohol
intravenously increases the caloric intake and has special value in
those cases with inanition. 2. It is a potent sedative and analgesic,
and can be substituted for the opiates and other forms of sedation.
3. Sedation is not attended with depressed respiration. 4. It may be
used in cardiac patients with relative safety because of its vasodilatory
effect and minimal effect on the blood pressure. 5. It has a definite
place in regional anesthesia as a supplement during the operative
procedure. 6. It has proved its value in alcoholic patients who cannot
be controlled with the usual doses of narcotics."

Using a metered infusion device to avoid "overshoot" and inebri-
ation, acute and chronic pain services might find intravenous alcohol

a replacement for patient-controlled analgesia or even continuous
epidural block using opioids and/or local anesthetics.

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Anesthesiology, V 83, No 6, Dec 1995