about 30 μg and about 3,000 μg of alfentanil or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein said administration gives rise to a plasma concentration-time curve after said administration that possesses:

(I) a t_{max} (time to maximum plasma concentration) that is between about 10 and about 25 minutes after said administration; and/or

(II) a t_{last} (time to last measurable plasma concentration) that is not more than about 300 minutes after said administration; and, optionally,

(III) a C_{max} (maximum plasma concentration) that is between about 10 and about 100 ng per mL of plasma.

Alfentanil and pharmaceutically-acceptable salts thereof are presented in the compositions of the invention in the form of microparticles. Microparticles preferably possess a weight based mean diameter, number based mean diameter and/or a volume based mean diameter of between about 0.5 μm and about 30 μm, e.g. about 15 μm, such as between about 1 μm and about 10 μm. As used herein, the term "weight based mean diameter" will be understood by the skilled person to include that the average particle size is characterised and defined from a particle size distribution by weight, i.e. a distribution where the existing fraction (relative amount) in each size class is defined as the weight fraction, as obtained by e.g. sieving (e.g. wet sieving). As used herein, the term "number based mean diameter" will be understood by the skilled person to include that the average particle size is characterised and defined from a particle size distribution by number, i.e. a distribution where the existing fraction (relative amount) in each size class is defined as the number fraction, as measured by e.g. microscopy. As used herein, the term "volume based mean diameter" will be understood by the skilled person to include that the average particle size is characterised and defined from a particle size distribution by volume, i.e. a distribution where the existing fraction (relative amount) in each size class is defined as the volume fraction, as measured by e.g. laser diffraction.

Microparticles of active ingredient may be prepared by standard micronisation techniques, such as grinding, jet milling, dry milling, wet milling, precipitation, etc. An air elutriation process may be utilised subsequently to prepare specific size fractions, if required.

Preferred salts of alfentanil include hydrochloride salts.

Weakly acidic materials that may be mentioned include those that, when dissolved in water and/or saliva, enable the provision (at the site of

10. A process for the preparation of a composition as defined in Claim 8, which comprises directly compressing or compacting a composition as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 6.

11. A composition as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 8 for use in the treatment of pain.

12. The use of a composition as defined in any one of Claims 1 to 8 for the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment of pain.

13 A composition as claimed in Claim 11, or a use as claimed in Claim 12, wherein the pain is moderate to severe pain.

14. A composition or use as claimed in Claim 13, wherein the treatment is short term.

15. A composition or use as claimed in Claim 13 or Claim 14, wherein the pain is associated with a diagnostic, a surgical or a care-related procedure.

16. A composition or use as claimed in Claim 15 wherein the composition is administered not more than about 20 minutes prior to the procedure.

17. A composition or use as defined in any one of Claims 11 to 16, wherein the treatment of pain comprises sublingual administration to a human patient in need of treatment of a pharmaceutical composition comprising between about 30 µg and about 3,000 µg of alfentanil or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, wherein said administration gives rise to a plasma concentration-time curve after said administration that ~~possesespossesses~~:

(I) a t_{max} (time to maximum plasma concentration) that is between about 10 and about 25 minutes after said administration; and/or

(II) a t_{last} (time to last measurable plasma concentration) that is not more than about 300 minutes after said administration; and, optionally,