Box 1

Calculate the dose of diamorphine for 24 hours' continuous SC infusion (CSCI)

Formula: Oral morphine dose over 24 hours / 3 = SC diamorphine dose

Step 1: Convert previous 24-hour morphine breakthrough requirements into equivalent SC diamorphine dose

example:

Oral morphine (normal release) taken as breakthrough analgesia in past 24 hours = 80mg
Equivalent 24-hour SC diamorphine dose = 80mg / 3 = 25mg (approx)

Step 2: Increase the dose by 30 per cent to improve pain control

example:

30 per cent of 25mg = 8mg (approx)
25mg + 8mg = 33mg

Diamorphine dose for 24-hour CSCI = 33mg (rounded up to 35mg for safety and ease of drawing up)