Table 3

Detecting opioid toxicity

Signs of opioid toxicity	What to look for
Reduced level of consciousness	Drowsiness – unrousable
Subtle restlessness/agitation	
Vivid dreams	May get confused with actual events
Hallucinations	Peripheral shadows; a sense of someone at their shoulder; seeing animals/people/insects; voices in room
Myoclonus (coarse jerking)	May spill drinks
Pinpoint pupils	Not inevitable in opioid-tolerant patients
Seizures	
Hyperalgesia/allodynia	'Sore all over', 'sore skin'
Respiratory depression	Apnoeic episodes Cheyne–Stokes type respiration