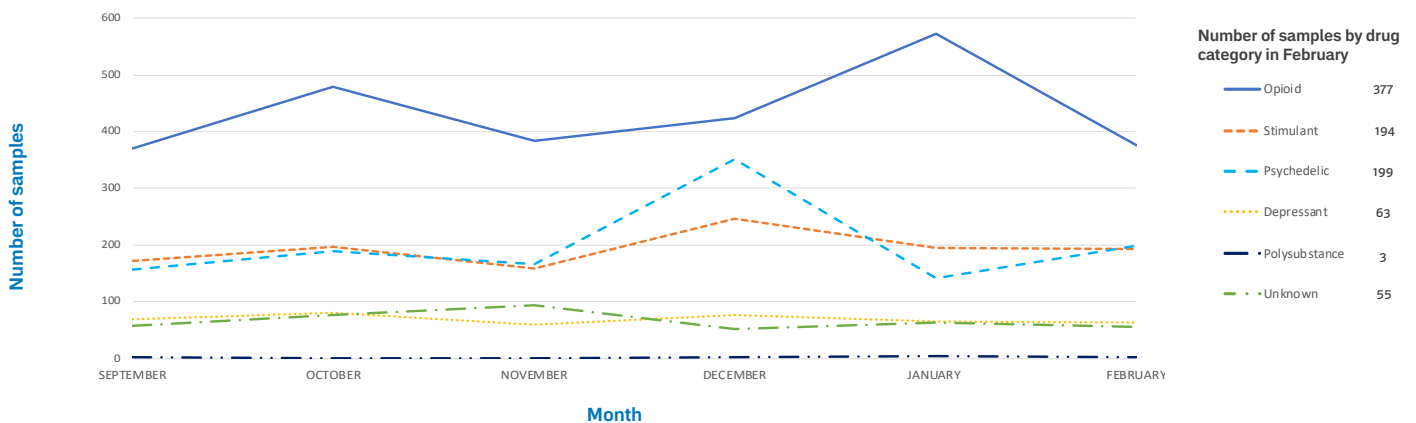


## Key Findings

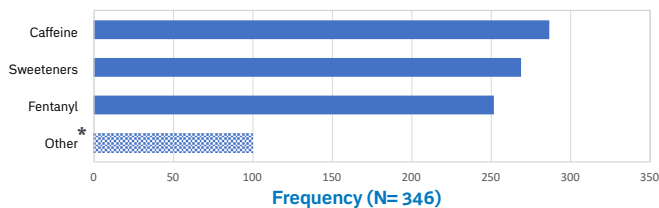
- The percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines (22.9%) has continued on an upward trend since August.
- Etizolam, the predominant benzodiazepine in expected opioids, may be missed by drug checking technologies. This means that the true rate may be higher than reported. Always complement drug checking with other harm reduction measures like using at an OPS/SCS or with a buddy, doing a tester shot, and having and knowing how to use naloxone.
- Pharmaceutical opioids can be difficult to detect with FTIR because of their small dosage in relation to inert fillers. For that reason, a large portion of pharmaceutical opioids cannot be matched to their expectation.

## Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months

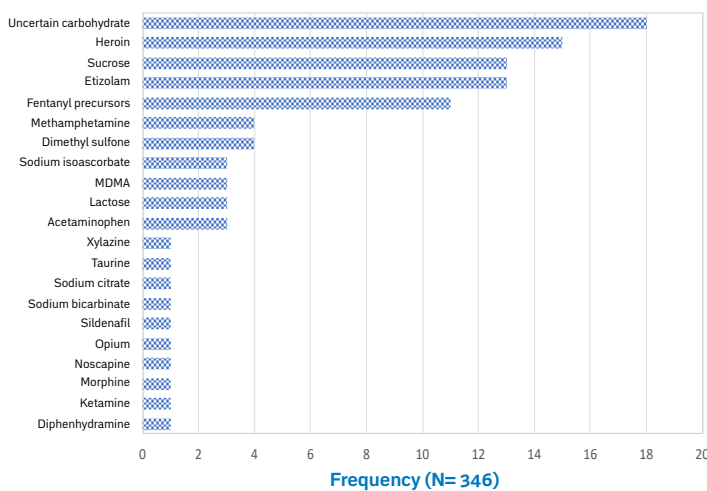


## Components found in drug samples in February

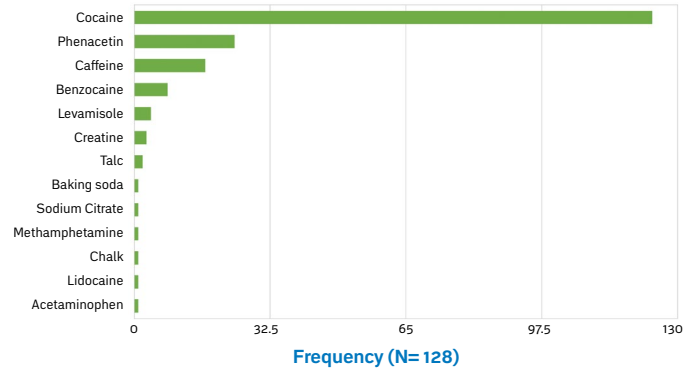
### Components in opioids



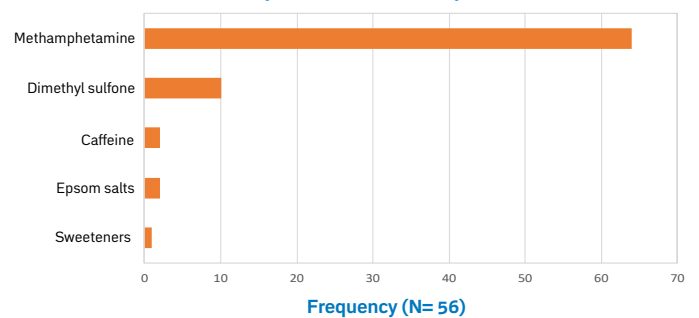
### \* Other components found in opioids



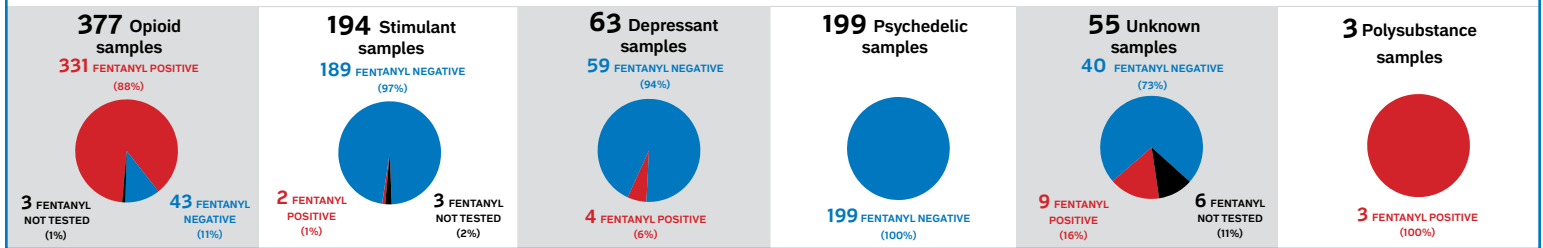
### Components in cocaine



### Components in methamphetamine



## Number of samples tested with fentanyl present



## PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Area Purchased	Alert Message
17 February 2021- ASK Wellness, Kamloops	Percocet	Acetaminophen and fentanyl	Positive	N/A	Kamloops	Unknown consumption of fentanyl poses a high risk for opioid overdose! Check your drugs at any local SCS/OPS!
6 February 2021- UBCO Kelowna/West Kelowna	Fentanyl	Contains benzodiazepines and fentanyl	Positive	Positive	Kelowna	Check your drugs for benzodiazepines at any local SCS/OPS.
5 February 2021- ANKORS, Cranbrook	Down	Contains benzodiazepines and fentanyl	Positive	Positive	Cranbrook	High risk of prolonged sedation and overdose-Check your drugs for benzodiazepines at any local SCS/OPS.
5 February 2021- ANKORS, Cranbrook	Down	Fentanyl and benzodiazepines	Positive	Positive	Cranbrook	Continue to give breaths and seek medical attention.
5 February 2021- ASK Wellness, Kamloops	Cocaine	Methamphetamine, cocaine, levamisole	N/A	N/A	Kamloops	Meth is a powerful stimulant that has longer lasting effects than cocaine. Check your drugs for unexpected substances!
4 February 2021- UBCO Kelowna/West Kelowna	Fentanyl	Benzodiazepines and fentanyl	Positive	Positive	Kelowna	High risk of overdose with prolonged sedation. Check your drugs!
3 February 2021- ANKORS, Castlegar	Fentanyl	Fentanyl and benzodiazepines	Positive	Positive	Castlegar	Check for benzos in your drugs at any SCS or OPS!
2 February 2021- IHA Penticton	Down	Fentanyl and benzodiazepines	Positive	Positive	Penticton	High risk of overdose with prolonged sedation

\* Alerts were only made in the Interior Health region for the month of February

## Percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines in the past 6 months

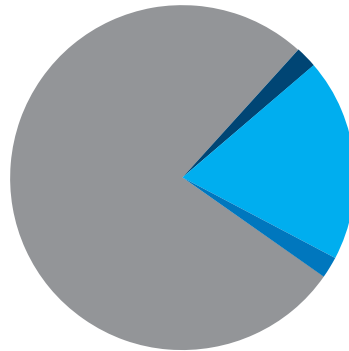


During the month of February, **22.9%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner sites around BC (**77 samples of 336 tested**). Opioid samples are tested for benzodiazepine-positivity using BTNX test strips. The results presented above are presumptive and tentative until confirmed by a laboratory.

## Number of samples tested by region:

Total #: 908

697: Vancouver Coastal  
Health region (77%)



15: Fraser Health region (2%)

177: Interior Health region (19%)

19: Vancouver Island  
Health Region (2%)

## Number of samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Depressant</b> 63 Samples Tested</p> <p>Matched: 43 Did not match: 20</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Psychedelic</b> 199 Samples Tested</p> <p>Matched: 182 Did not match: 15 Match not determined: 2</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Stimulant</b> 194 Samples Tested</p> <p>Matched: 183 Did not match: 9 Match not determined: 2</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Polysubstance</b> 3 Samples Tested</p> <p>Matched: 3</p>
<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Unknown</b> 55 Samples Tested</p> <p>Match not determined: 55</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Opioid</b> 377 Samples Tested</p> <p>Matched: 336 Did not match: 28 Match not determined: 13</p>		

### Total

908 Samples Tested



Matched: 758

Did not match: 75

Match not determined: 75

Please note that the presence of the expected substance does not imply purity, as samples frequently contain adulterating cutting agents

**Depressant may include:**  
benzodiazepines, etizolam,  
GHB, hypnotics

**Opioid may include:**  
"down," heroin, fentanyl,  
pharmaceutical opioids

**Polysubstance includes:**  
cross-category mixtures


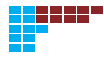

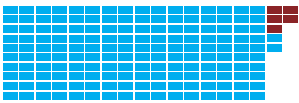
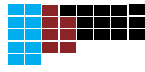

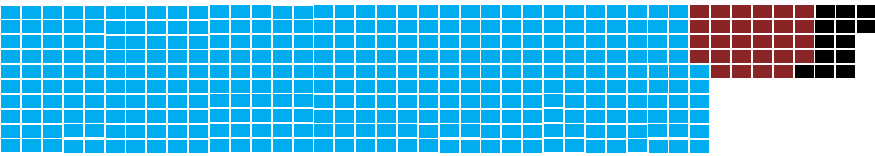
**Psychedelic may include:**  
MDMA and related,  
2C-family, tryptamines,  
ketamine, LSD

**Stimulant may include:**  
methamphetamine,  
"speed," cocaine and crack  
cocaine, cathinones

**Unknown includes:**  
samples where the individual  
was unable to identify an  
expected substance - this  
includes found samples.

## Number of opioid samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Fentanyl</b> 156 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 151 Did not match: 5</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Heroin</b> 20 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 11 Did not match: 9</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Fentanyl and Heroin</b> 3 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 1 Did not match: 2</p>
<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Down</b> 167 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 162 Did not match: 5</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Pharmaceutical</b> 30 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 10 Did not match: 7 Match not determined: 13</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Other Opioid</b> 1 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 1</p>
<p><b>Total</b> 377 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 336 Did not match: 28 Match not determined: 13</p>		

Please note that the presence of the expected substance does not imply purity, as samples frequently contain adulterating cutting agents. 'Down' can refer to any opioid drug present in any amount.

Data represented here are collected from our partner sites across the province. Drug samples are tested using the Fourier Transform Infrared (FTIR) spectrometer in combination with fentanyl test strips and benzodiazepine test strips.

There is 5% fentanyl detection limit on the FTIR spectrometer (McCrae, 2019), and a drug check on any given sample consists of both the FTIR and BTNX fentanyl immunoassay test strip testing done in combination. When applicable, BTNX benzodiazepine immunoassay test strips are also used.

BCCSU gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the following partners:

