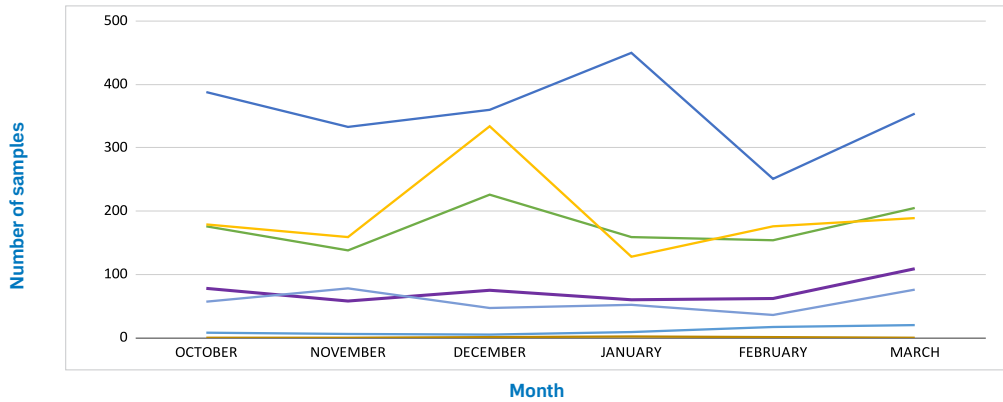


Key Findings

- Benzodiazepine-positivity of opioids has increased to 19.4% (15.5% last month). 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 here. 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.
- An alert of etizolam in ketamine was issued March 10th. Etizolam was previously detected in crack cocaine in October 2020. Although rare, etizolam may be adulterated into substances other than opioids or benzodiazepines.
- Two methamphetamine samples, two benzodiazepine tablets, and one crack cocaine sample tested positive for fentanyl this month with fentanyl test strips.
- Xylazine was detected in four samples of expected down in Vancouver. Xylazine is a veterinary sedative that may cause skin lesions when injected.

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



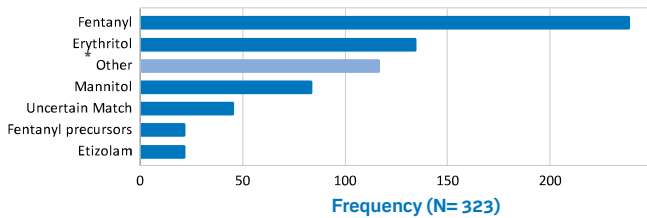
Number of samples by drug category in March

Opioid	354
Stimulant	205
Depressant	109
Psychedelic	189
Polysubstance	20
Other	0
Unknown	76

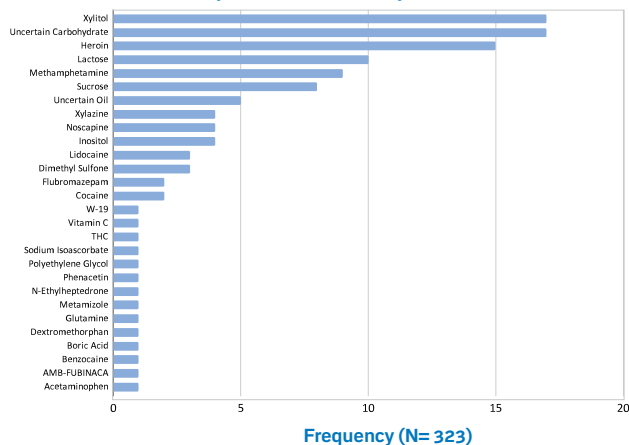
TOTAL: 953

Components found in drug samples in March

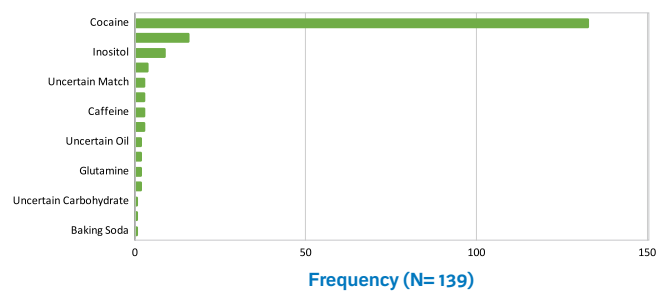
Components in opioids



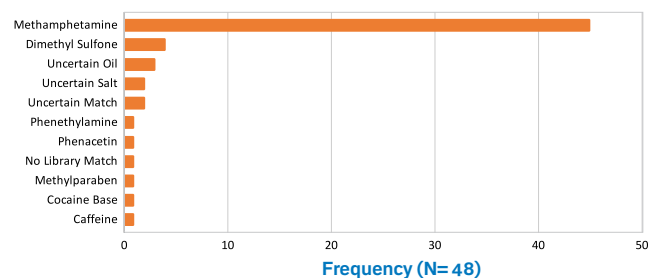
* Other components found in opioids



Components in cocaine



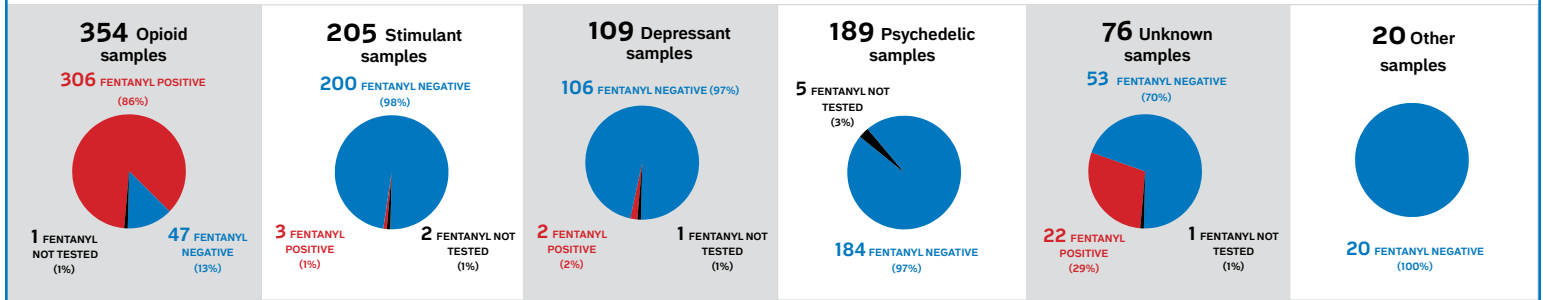
Components in methamphetamine



March
2021

Drug Checking in Vancouver Coastal

Number of samples tested with fentanyl present

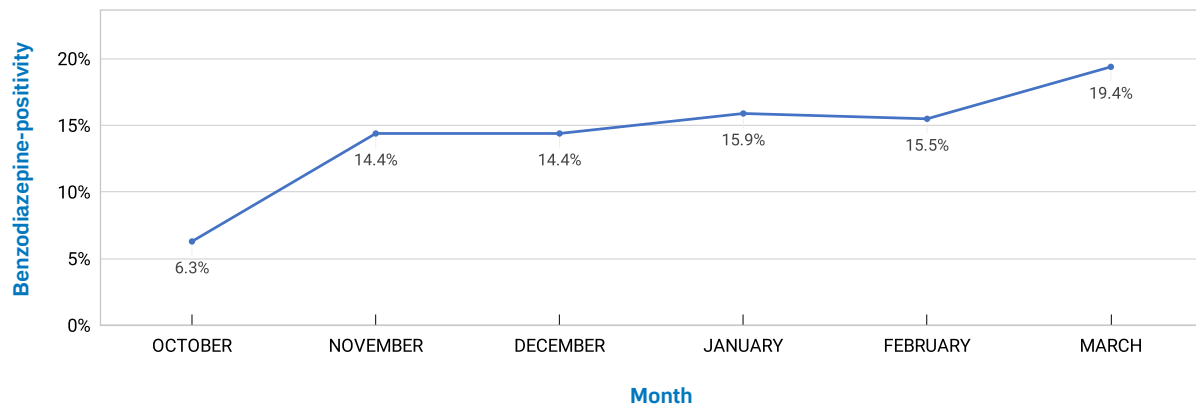


PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Area Purchased	Alert Message
10 March 2021- Get Your Drugs Tested, Vancouver	Ketamine	Ketamine, etizolam	Negative	Positive	Unknown	Etizolam is a benzodiazepine that can cause extreme sedation and blackouts, especially when consumed unexpectedly in high amounts. Check your drugs before consuming them.

To receive drug contamination alerts, text "alert" to (236) 999-DOPE (3673)

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



During the month of March, **19.4%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner sites in the Vancouver Coastal Health region (**58 samples of 299 tested**).

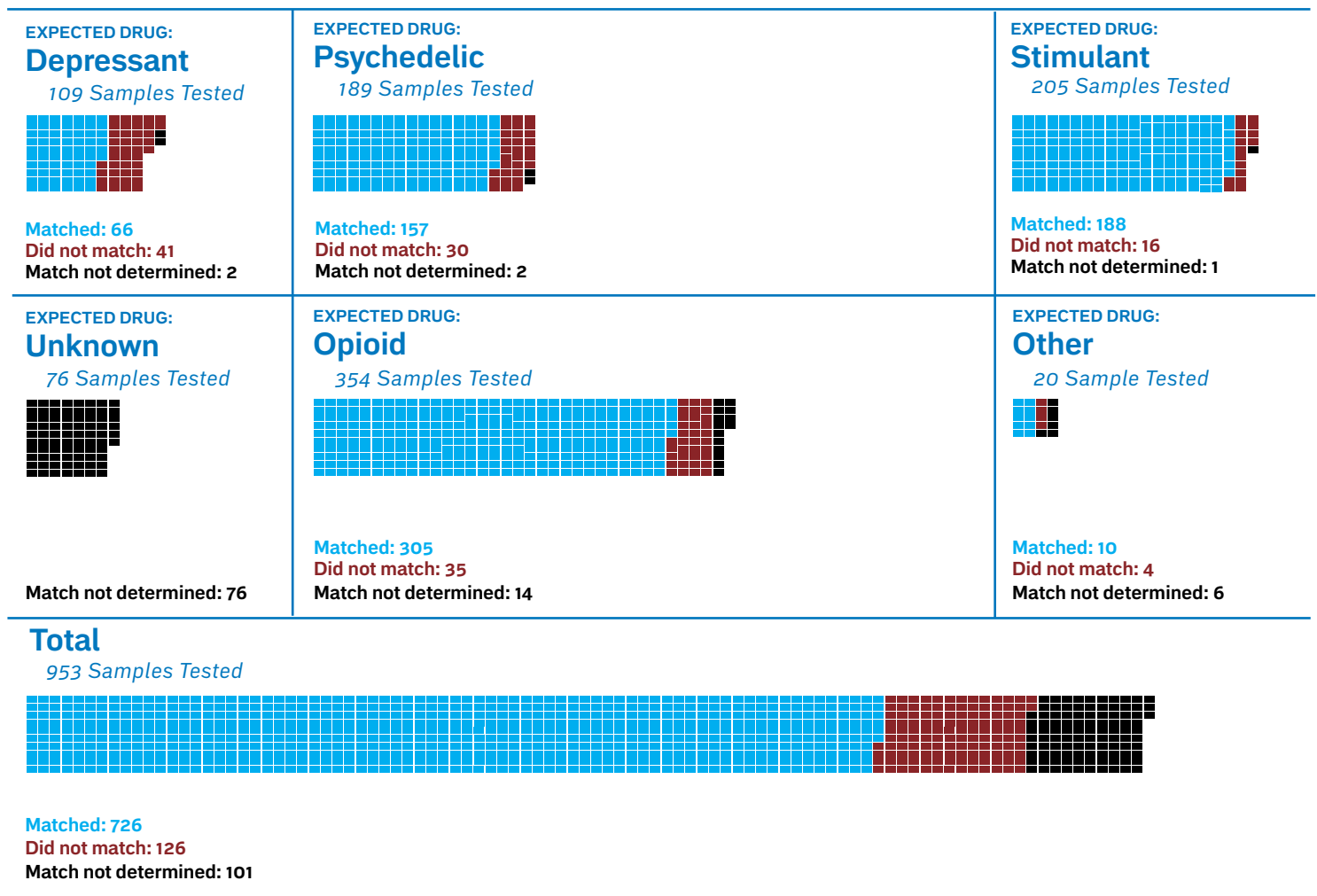
Opioid samples are tested for benzodiazepine-positivity using BTNX test strips. The results presented above are presumptive and tentative until confirmed by a laboratory.

Number of drugs checks and hours at each site

Location	# of Drugs Checked
Get Your Drugs Tested	801
Insite	42
Overdose Prevention Society OPS	110
Total	953

Number of samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking



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.

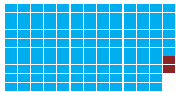
Number of opioid samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG:

Fentanyl

128 Samples Tested



Matched: 126
Did not match: 2

EXPECTED DRUG:

Heroin

18 Samples Tested



Matched: 10
Did not match: 7
Match not determined: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:

Fentanyl and Heroin

1 Samples Tested

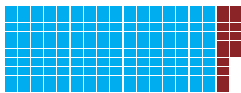


Matched: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:

Down

176 Samples Tested



Matched: 160
Did not match: 16

EXPECTED DRUG:

Pharmaceutical

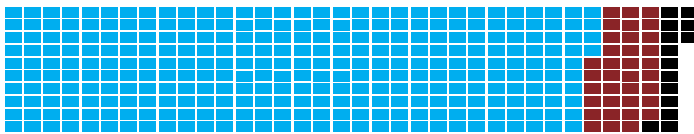
30 Samples Tested



Matched: 7
Did not match: 10
Match not determined: 13

Total

353 Samples Tested



Matched: 304
Did not match: 35
Match not determined: 14

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:

