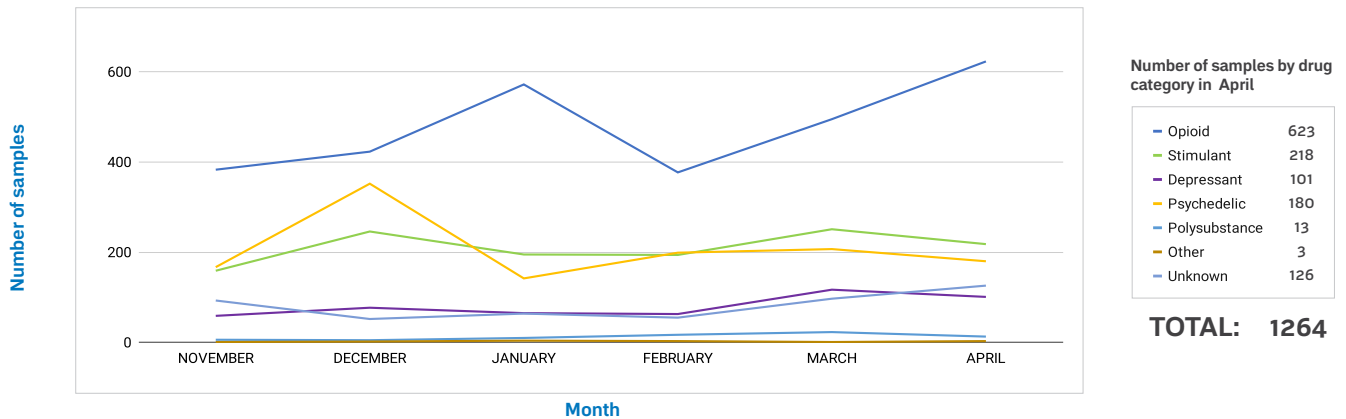


Key Findings

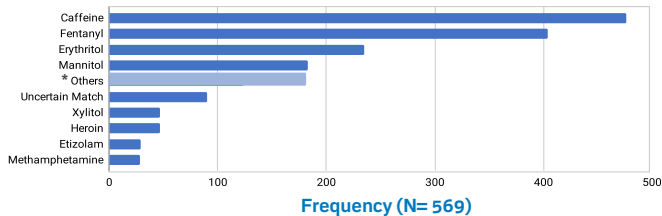
- April 2021 saw the most drug samples ever checked in one month (1,264) since the start of the BCCSU Drug Checking Project. March 2021 was the previous highest volume month.
- The percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines (25%) has continued on an upward trend since August. 51% of opioid samples checked in Interior Health contained benzodiazepines. 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.
- Fentanyl was detected in seven non-opioid drug samples in Vancouver Coastal (4) and Interior Health (3) authority regions. Two samples of expected cocaine and one of methamphetamine were actually *down*.
- Three novel opioids have been detected in samples sold as fentanyl or *down*: carfentanil, para-fluorofentanyl, and isotonitazene. While carfentanil is known to be highly potent, limited information is available about the other two.

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months

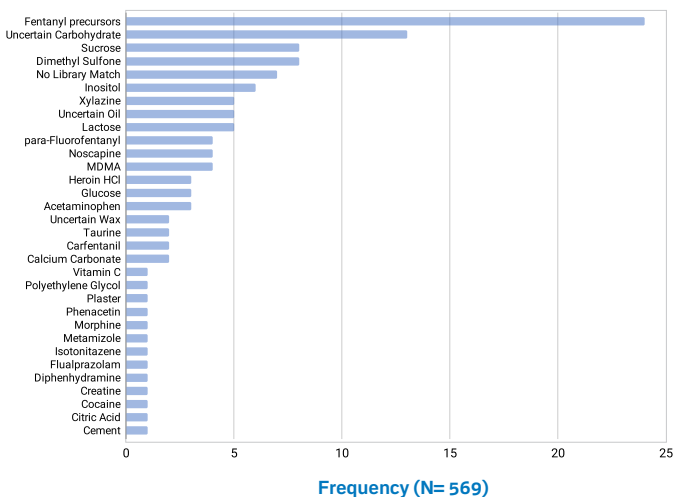


Components found in drug samples in April

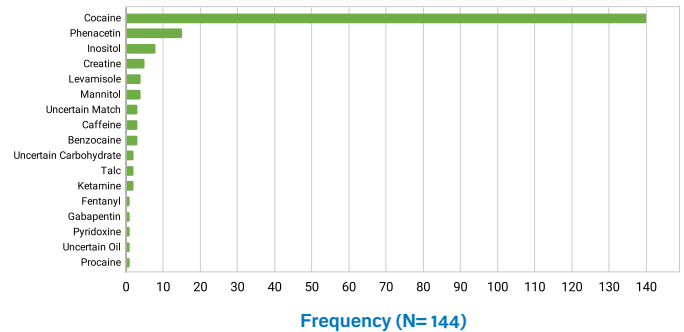
Components in opioids



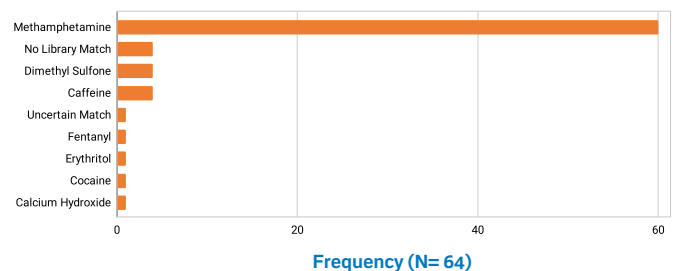
* Other components found in opioids



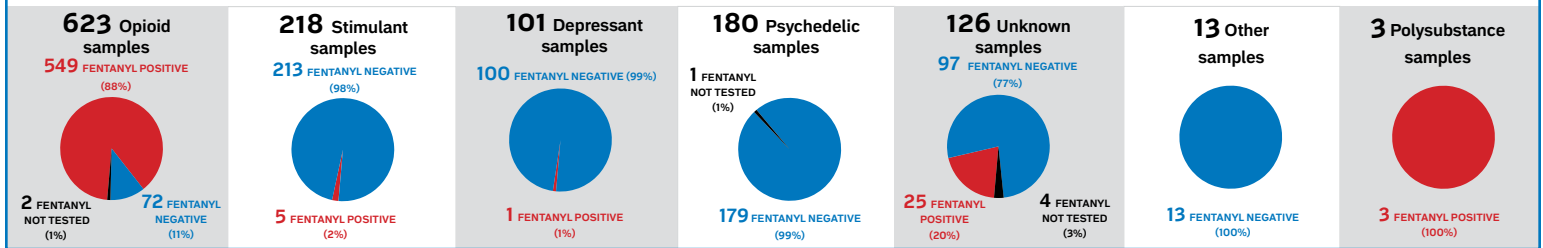
Components in cocaine



Components in methamphetamine



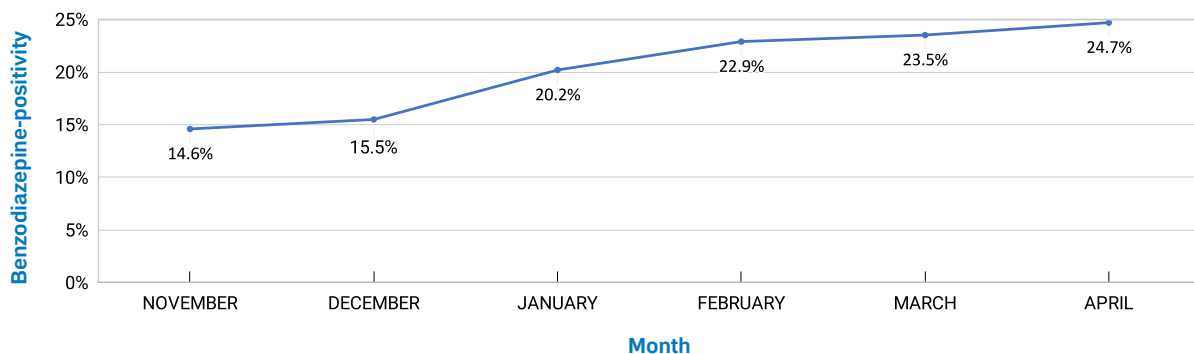
Number of samples tested with fentanyl present



PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Area Purchased	Alert Message
24 April 2021 UBCO Harm Reduction (HaRT) Penticton	Crack cocaine	Cocaine base, Phenacetin	Positive	N/A	Penticton	Unexpected fentanyl presence can lead to overdose, even when smoking.
18 April 2021 UBCO Harm Reduction (HaRT) Penticton	Crack cocaine	Mannitol, Fentanyl	Positive	Negative	Penticton	Drugs may not contain any of the drug they are sold as. Drug checking can help confirm you have what you think you have!
12 April 2021 Get Your Drugs Tested, Vancouver	Down/Fentanyl	Fentanyl, Etizolam, Xylazine	Positive	Positive	Unknown	Xylazine is a veterinary tranquilizer that may complicate overdoses and is linked to skin lesions and ulcers after injecting. Ingesting multiple depressants further increases the risk of overdose.
8 April 2021 Get Your Drugs Tested, Vancouver	Crack cocaine	Fentanyl	Positive	N/A	Unknown	This substance was found and based on appearance was thought to be crack. Only after drug checking was it found to contain fentanyl with no cuts or buffs. Many drugs look alike, so get them checked to make sure!

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

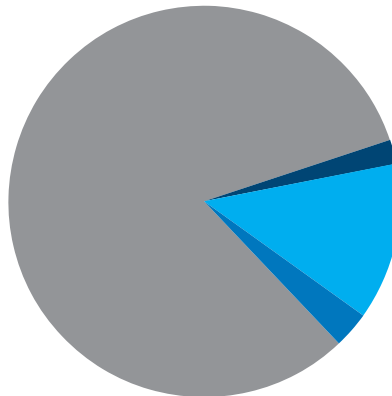


During the month of April, **24.7%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner sites around BC (**142 samples of 574 tested**). Opioid samples are tested for benzodiazepine-positivity using BTNX test strips. The results presented above are presumptive and tentative until confirmed by a laboratory.

Number of samples tested by region:

Total #: 1,264

1033: Vancouver Coastal Health region (82%)



26: Fraser Health region (2%)

165: Interior Health region (13%)

40: Vancouver Island Health Region (3%)

Number of samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Depressant 101 Samples Tested</p> <p>Matched: 62 Did not match: 38 Match not determined: 1</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Psychedelic 180 Samples Tested</p> <p>Matched: 154 Did not match: 25 Match not determined: 1</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Stimulant 218 Samples Tested</p> <p>Matched: 203 Did not match: 15</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Other 13 Samples Tested</p> <p>Matched: 11 Match not determined: 2</p>
<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Unknown 126 Samples Tested</p> <p>Match not determined: 126</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Opioid 623 Samples Tested</p> <p>Matched: 547 Did not match: 46 Match not determined: 30</p>		<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Polysubstance 3 Samples Tested</p> <p>Matched: 3</p>

Total

1,264 Samples Tested



Matched: 980
Did not match: 124
Match not determined: 160

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.

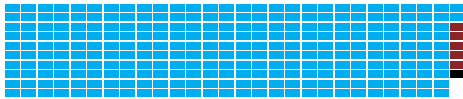
Number of opioid samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG:

Fentanyl

278 Samples Tested



Matched: 272

Did not match: 5

Match not determined: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:

Heroin

53 Samples Tested



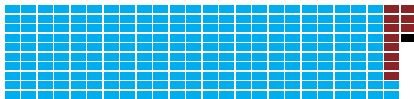
Matched: 30

Did not match: 23

EXPECTED DRUG:

Down

244 Samples Tested



Matched: 232

Did not match: 11

Match not determined: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:

Pharmaceutical

48 Samples Tested



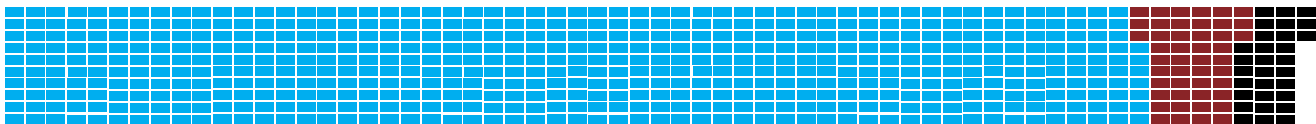
Matched: 13

Did not match: 7

Match not determined: 28

Total

623 Samples Tested



Matched: 547

Did not match: 46

Match not determined: 30

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:

