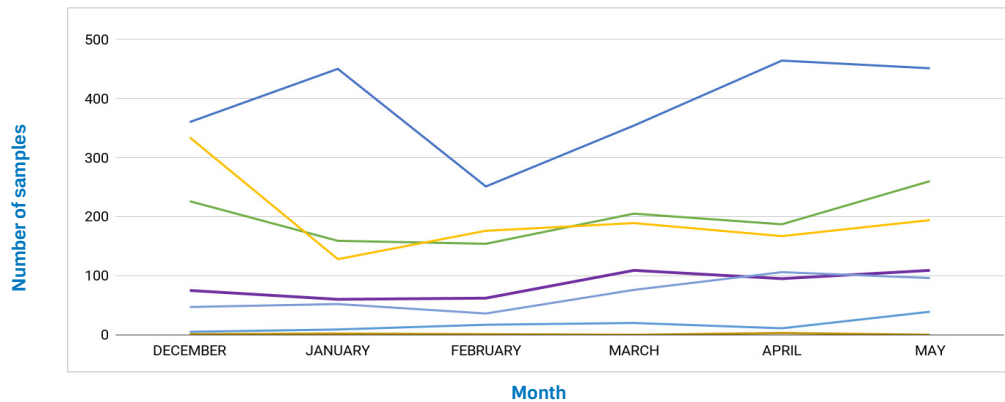


Key Findings

- May 2021 saw the most drug samples ever checked in Vancouver Coastal Health (1,149). December 2020 was the previous highest volume month for the region.
- The percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines (17%) has remained consistent for the past several months. 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 analogues have been detected in samples sold as fentanyl or down: carfentanil and para-fluorofentanyl. While carfentanil is known to be highly potent, not much information is available about para-fluorofentanyl.
- Carfentanil is increasingly being detected by point-of-care and confirmatory drug checking in Vancouver Coastal Health. When carfentanil is detected, fentanyl is detected alongside it over half of the time. Fentanyl test strips may detect carfentanil if the concentration is high enough, but cannot differentiate it from regular fentanyl.

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



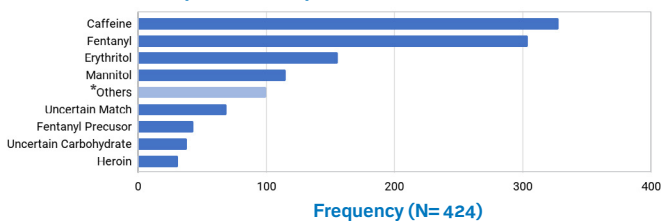
Number of samples by drug category in May

Opioid	451
Stimulant	260
Depressant	109
Psychedelic	194
Polysubstance	39
Other	0
Unknown	96

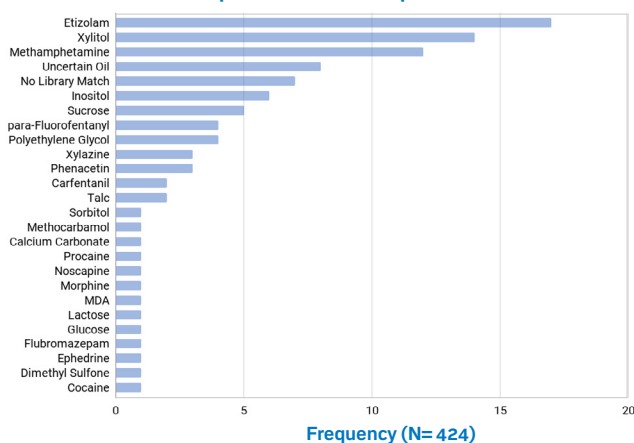
TOTAL: 1149

Components found in drug samples in May

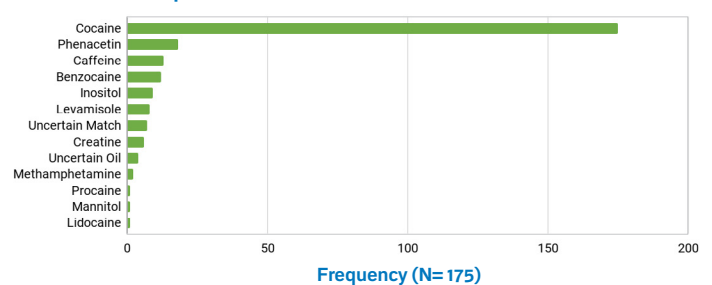
Components in opioids



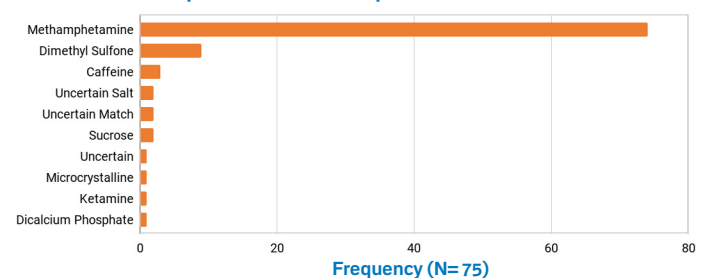
* Other components found in opioids



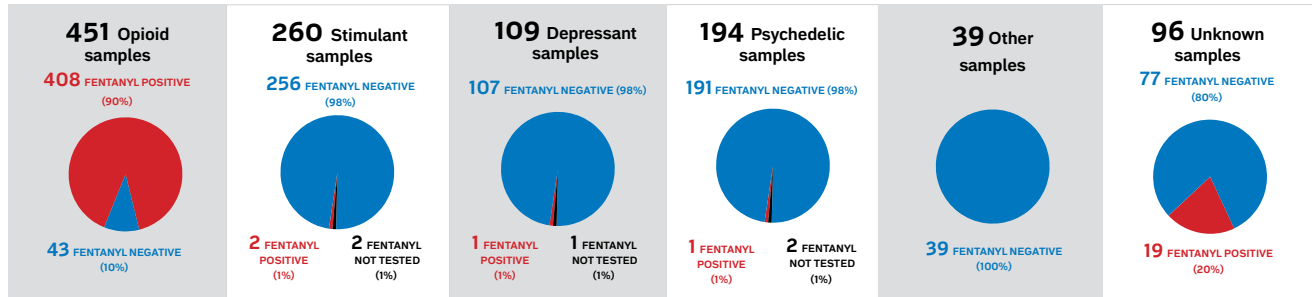
Components in cocaine



Components in methamphetamine



Number of samples tested with fentanyl present

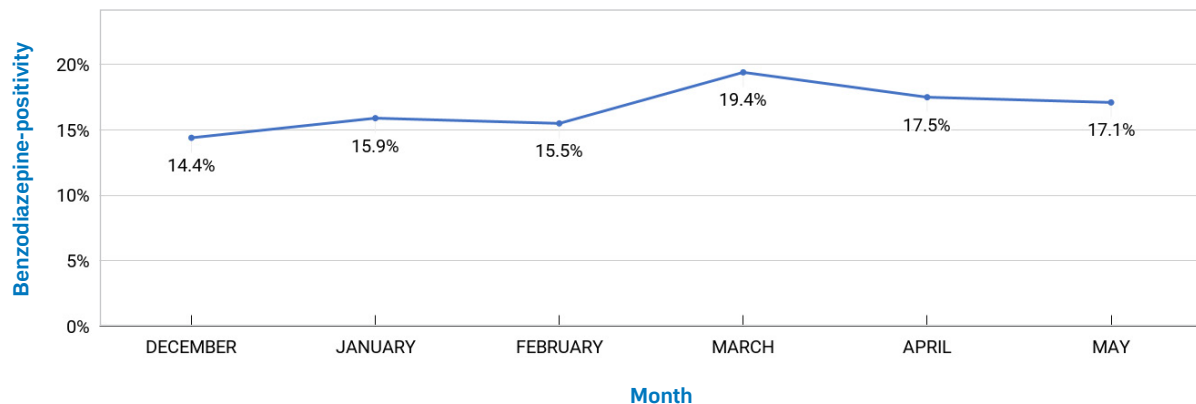


PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Area Purchased	Alert Message
19 May 2021 Get Your Drugs Tested, Vancouver	Cocaine	Cocaine, Caffeine	Positive	N/A	Unknown	A good harm reduction tip is to be cautious when white-coloured drugs have coloured flecks. In this case, the purple flecks were caffeine and fentanyl, typical ingredients in down.
4 May 2021 Get Your Drugs Tested, Vancouver	Down/Fentanyl	Caffeine, Fentanyl, Xylazine	Positive	Positive	Unknown	Xylazine is a veterinary tranquilizer that may complicate overdoses and is linked to skin lesions and ulcers after injecting. A sample containing three different depressants poses a high risk for overdose.

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 May, **17.1%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips or FTIR in our partner sites in the Vancouver Coastal Health region (**74 samples of 422 checked**).

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

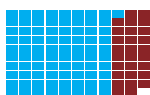
Location	# of Drugs Checked
Get Your Drugs Tested	997
Insite	12
Overdose Prevention Society OPS	102
Molson OPS	38
Total	1149

Number of samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG: Depressant

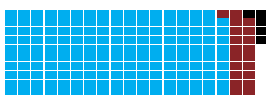
109 Samples Tested



Matched: 81
Did not match: 28

EXPECTED DRUG: Psychedelic

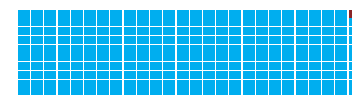
194 Samples Tested



Matched: 169
Did not match: 20
Match not determined: 5

EXPECTED DRUG: Stimulant

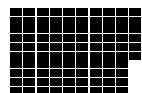
260 Samples Tested



Matched: 259
Did not match: 1

EXPECTED DRUG: Unknown

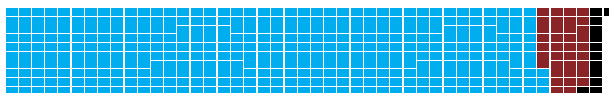
96 Samples Tested



Match not determined: 96

EXPECTED DRUG: Opioid

451 Samples Tested



Matched: 403
Did not match: 36
Match not determined: 12

EXPECTED DRUG: Other

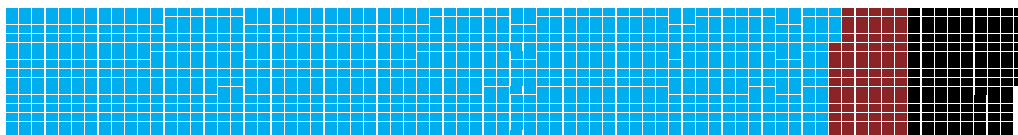
39 Sample Tested



Matched: 22
Did not match: 1
Match not determined: 16

Total

1149 Samples Tested



Matched: 934
Did not match: 86
Match not determined: 129

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

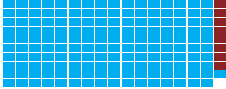





Psychedelic may include:
MDMA and related,
2C-family, tryptamines,
ketamine, LSD

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.

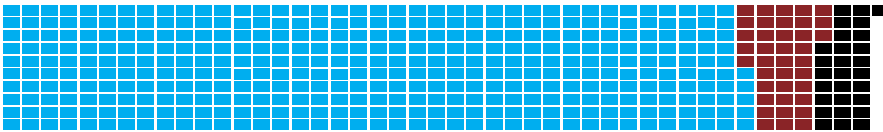
Number of opioid samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Fentanyl 169 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 162 Did not match: 7</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Heroin 40 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 26 Did not match: 14</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Pharmaceutical 25 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 6 Did not match: 8 Match not determined: 11</p>
<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Down 215 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 209 Did not match: 6</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Opium 1 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Match not determined: 1</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Fentanyl analogue 1 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Did not match: 1</p>

Total

451 Samples Tested



Matched: 398
Did not match: 38
Match not determined: 28

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:

