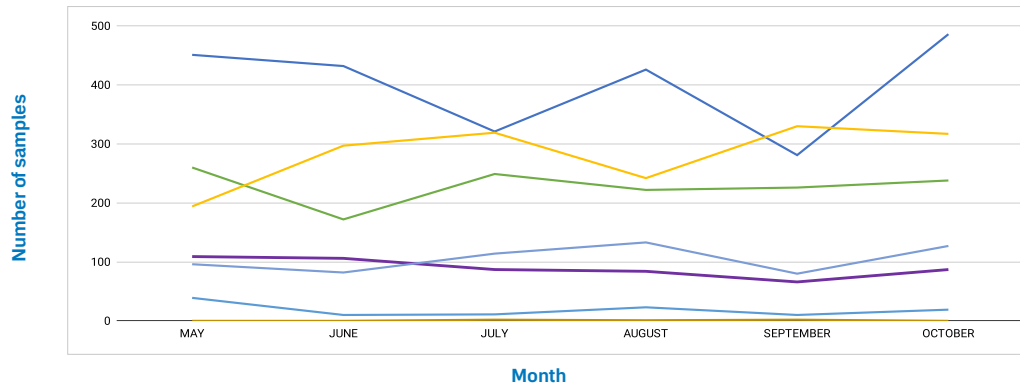


## Key Findings

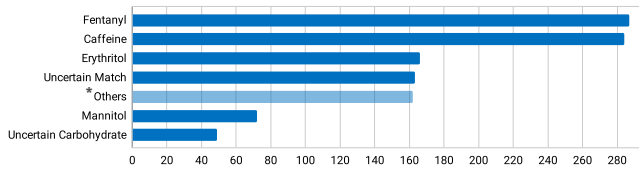
- The percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines (26%, 127 of 486 samples) increased dramatically to its highest point since the start of this project. Etizolam, the predominant benzodiazepine in expected opioids, may be missed by drug checking technologies. This means that the true rate may be higher than reported here.
- October 2021 was the month with the highest number of samples checked (1,274) since the start of our project. The previous highest month was May 2021 (1,149).
- No stimulants or psychedelic samples tested positive for fentanyl this month, but 5 expected depressants (all benzodiazepines) tested positive for fentanyl.
- Benzodiazepines confirmed in expected opioid samples in the last 3 months included etizolam, flualprazolam, and clonazepam. Both clonazepam and flualprazolam are potent unregulated benzodiazepines. Benzodiazepine-adulterated opioids increase the risk of overdose and can cause prolonged sedation.

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



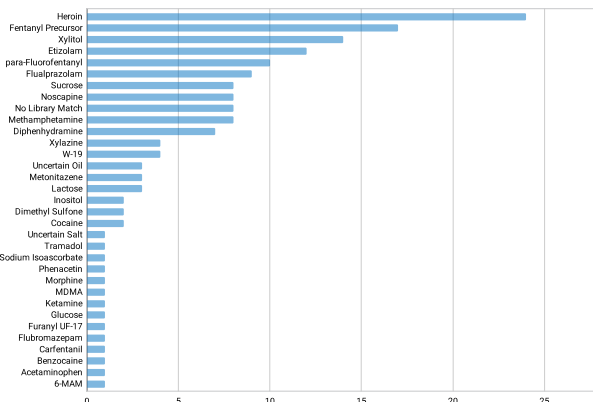
## Components found in drug samples in October

### Components in opioids



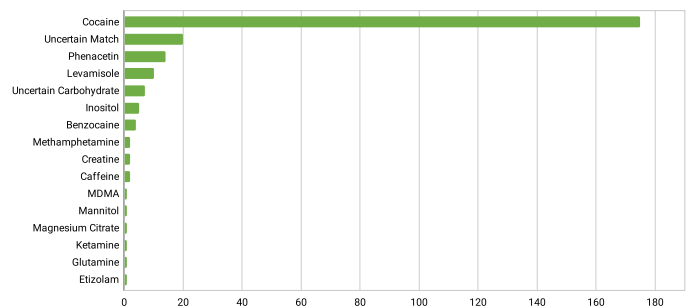
Frequency (N=443)

### \* Other components found in opioids



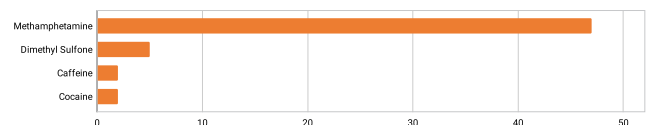
Frequency (N=443)

### Components in cocaine



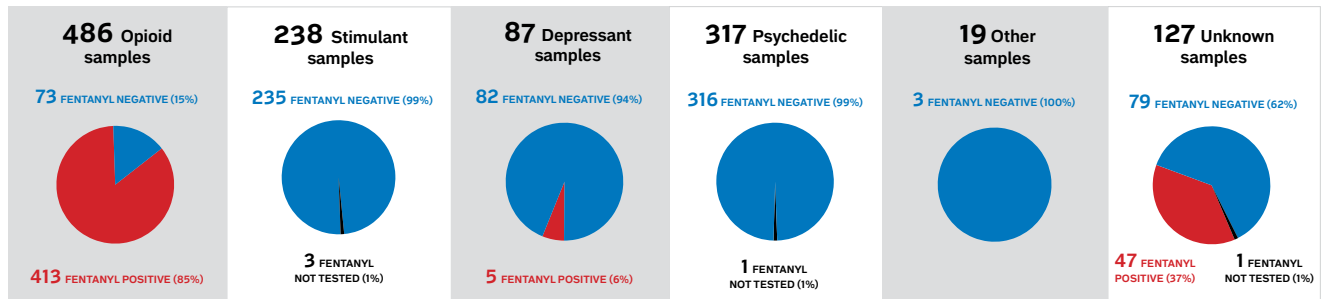
Frequency (N=176)

### Components in methamphetamine



Frequency (N=48)

## Number of samples tested with fentanyl present

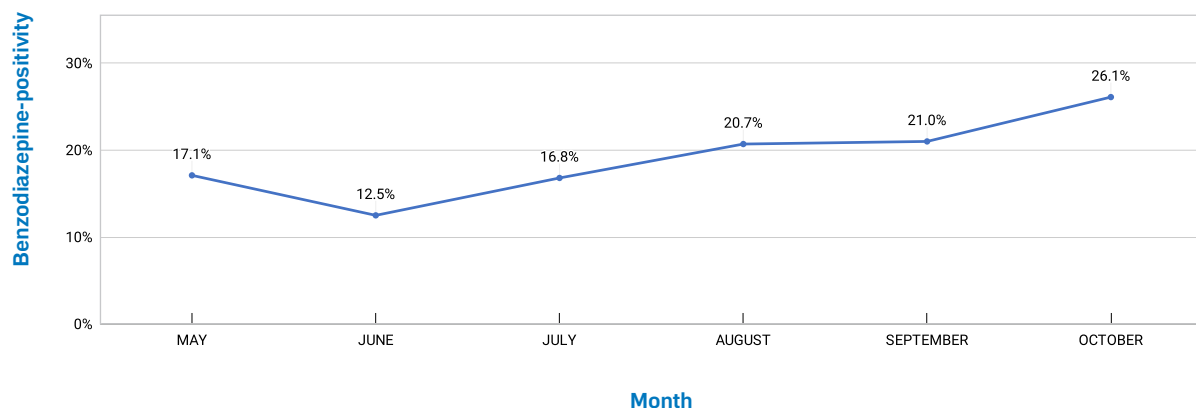


## PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Area Purchased	Alert Message
October 20, 2021 Overdose Prevention Society Vancouver	Fentanyl	Metonitazene	Positive	Negative	Unknown	Metonitazene is a new opioid with limited information on its toxicity and effects.

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

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



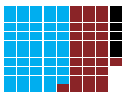
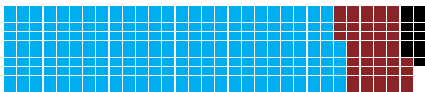
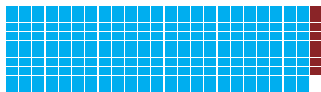
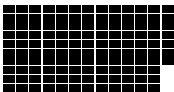
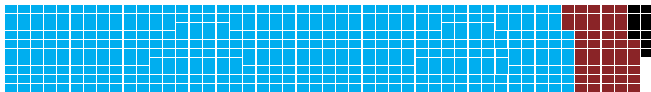

During the month of October, **26%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner sites in Vancouver Coastal Health (**127 samples of 486 checked**). Opioid samples are checked for benzodiazepine-positivity using BTNX test strips and the FTIR spectrometer. The results presented here are derived from both of these technologies and are presumptive until confirmed by a laboratory.

## Number of drugs checks and hours at each site

Location	# of Drugs Checked
Get Your Drugs Tested	1158
Insite	59
Overdose Prevention Society OPS	57
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,274</b>

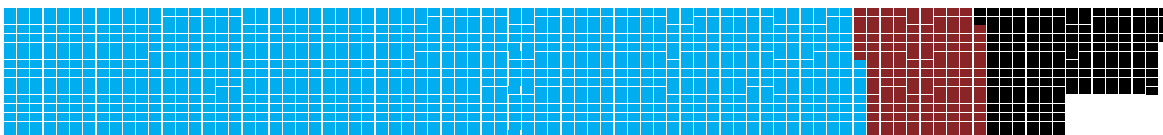
## Number of samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Depressant</b> 87 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 49 Did not match: 32 Match not determined: 6</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Psychedelic</b> 317 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 256 Did not match: 48 Match not determined: 13</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Stimulant</b> 238 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 230 Did not match: 8</p>
<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Unknown</b> 127 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Match not determined: 127</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Opioid</b> 486 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 427 Did not match: 49 Match not determined: 10</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: <b>Other</b> 19 Sample Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 7 Did not match: 2 Match not determined: 10</p>

### Total

1,274 Samples Tested



Matched: 969  
Did not match: 139  
Match not determined: 166

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.

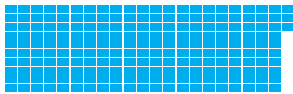
## Number of opioid samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG:

**Fentanyl**

213 Samples Tested



Matched: 201

Did not match: 11

Match not determined: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:

**Heroin**

30 Samples Tested



Matched: 15

Did not match: 15

EXPECTED DRUG:

**Fentanyl and Heroin**

5 Samples Tested

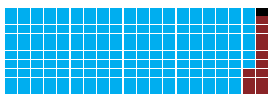


Matched: 5

EXPECTED DRUG:

**Down**

200 Samples Tested



Matched: 187

Did not match: 12

Match not determined: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:

**Other Opioid**

38 Samples Tested



Matched: 19

Did not match: 11

Match not determined: 8

### Total

486 Samples Tested



Matched: 427

Did not match: 49

Match not determined: 10

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:

