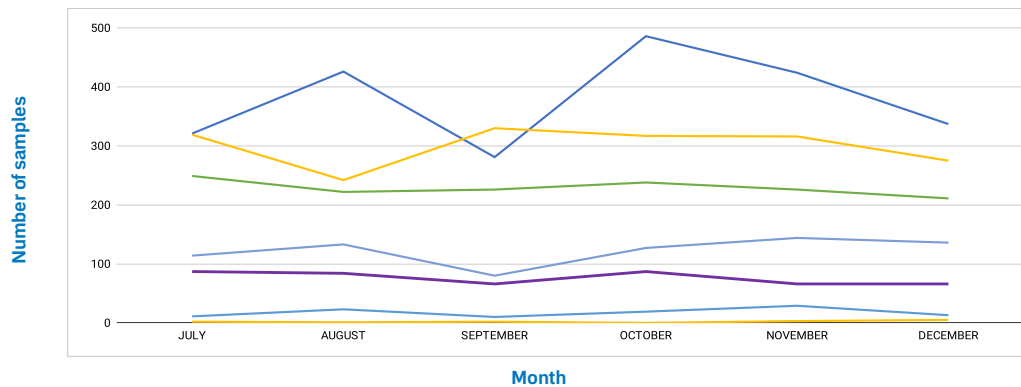


Key Findings

- The percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines (24%, 81 of 337 samples) rose slightly from last month to the second highest level since the start of the 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.
- 7 depressant samples (5 alprazolam/Xanax, 1 flubromazepam, 1 xylazine) and 3 stimulant samples (1 cocaine & 2 methamphetamine) tested positive for fentanyl this month.
- A large number of MDMA samples were checked leading up to New Year's Eve—two of which tested positive for fentanyl. One of these samples also appeared to contain shards of glass. It cannot be determined if these adulterants were added in before purchase or were result of accidental cross contamination or other factors.
- Benzodiazepines confirmed in expected opioid samples in the last 3 months included etizolam, flualprazolam, flubromazolam, norfludiazepam, and clonazolam. These are all potent unregulated benzodiazepines.
- Novel opioids detected by confirmatory testing in November include para-fluorofentanyl, para-bromofentanyl, carfentanil, and metonitazene.

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



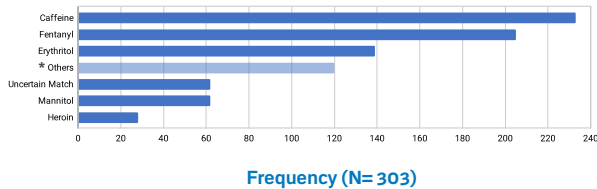
Number of samples by drug category in December

Opioid	337
Stimulant	211
Depressant	66
Psychedelic	275
Other	13
Polysubstance	5
Unknown	136

TOTAL: 1043

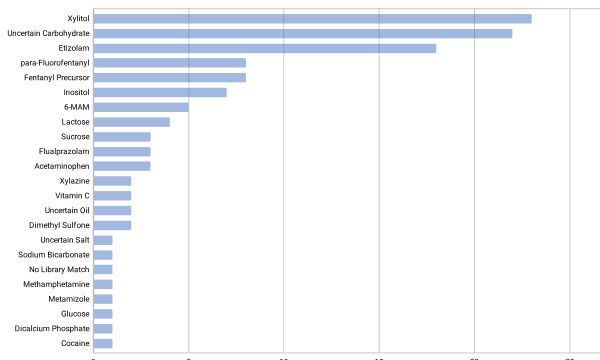
Components found in drug samples in December

Components in opioids



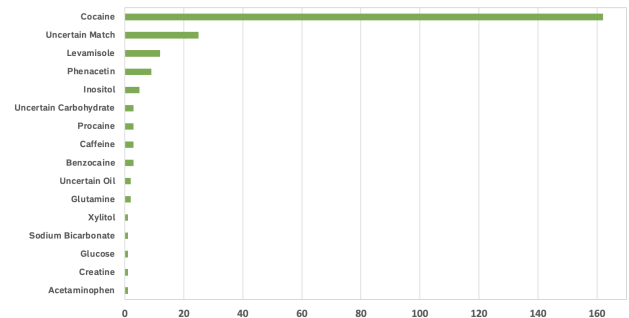
Frequency (N= 303)

* Other components found in opioids



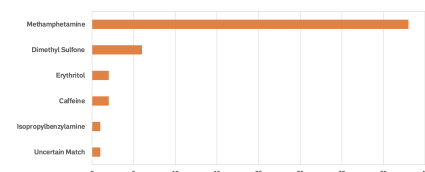
Frequency (N= 303)

Components in cocaine



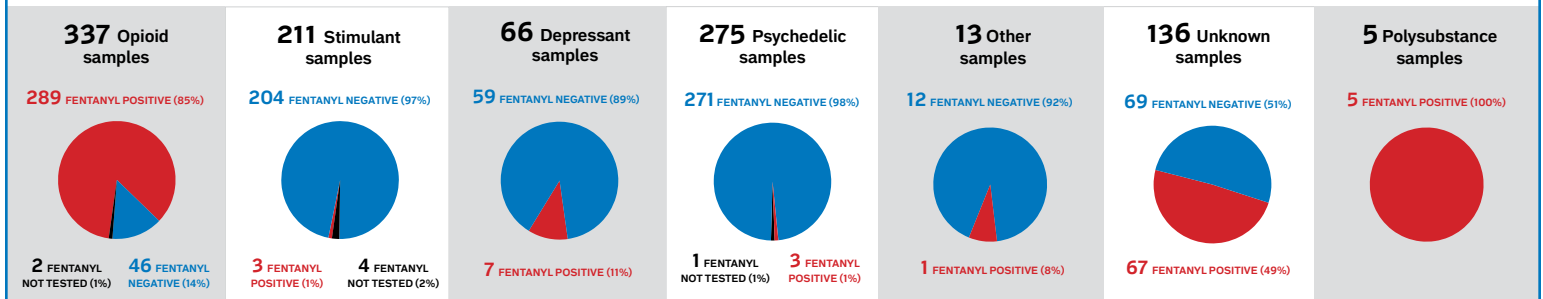
Frequency (N= 164)

Components in methamphetamine



Frequency (N= 39)

Number of samples tested with fentanyl present

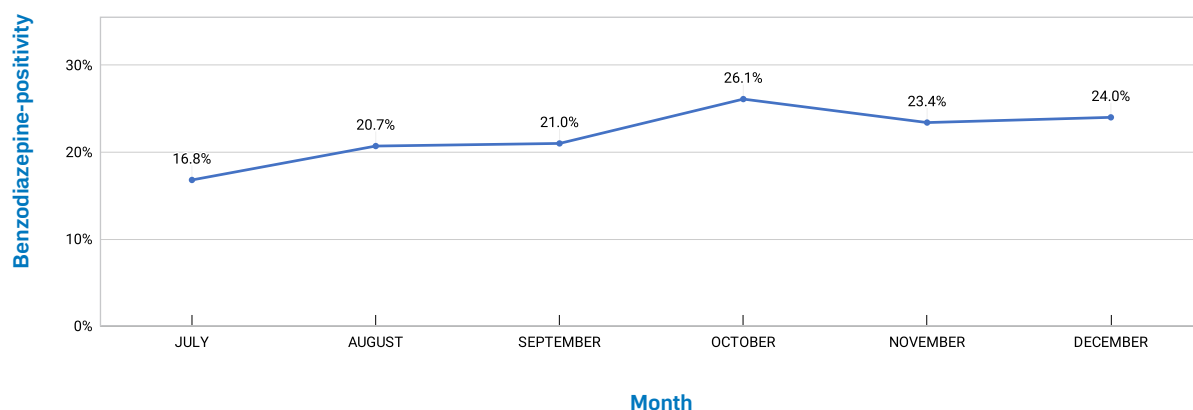


PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Area Purchased	Alert Message
December 10, 2021 Get Your Drugs Tested Vancouver	Xanax (alprazolam)	Microcrystalline cellulose	Positive	Negative	Vancouver	Fentanyl is a potent opioid that can cause opioid toxicity (overdose) especially in people with little opioid tolerance.

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

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



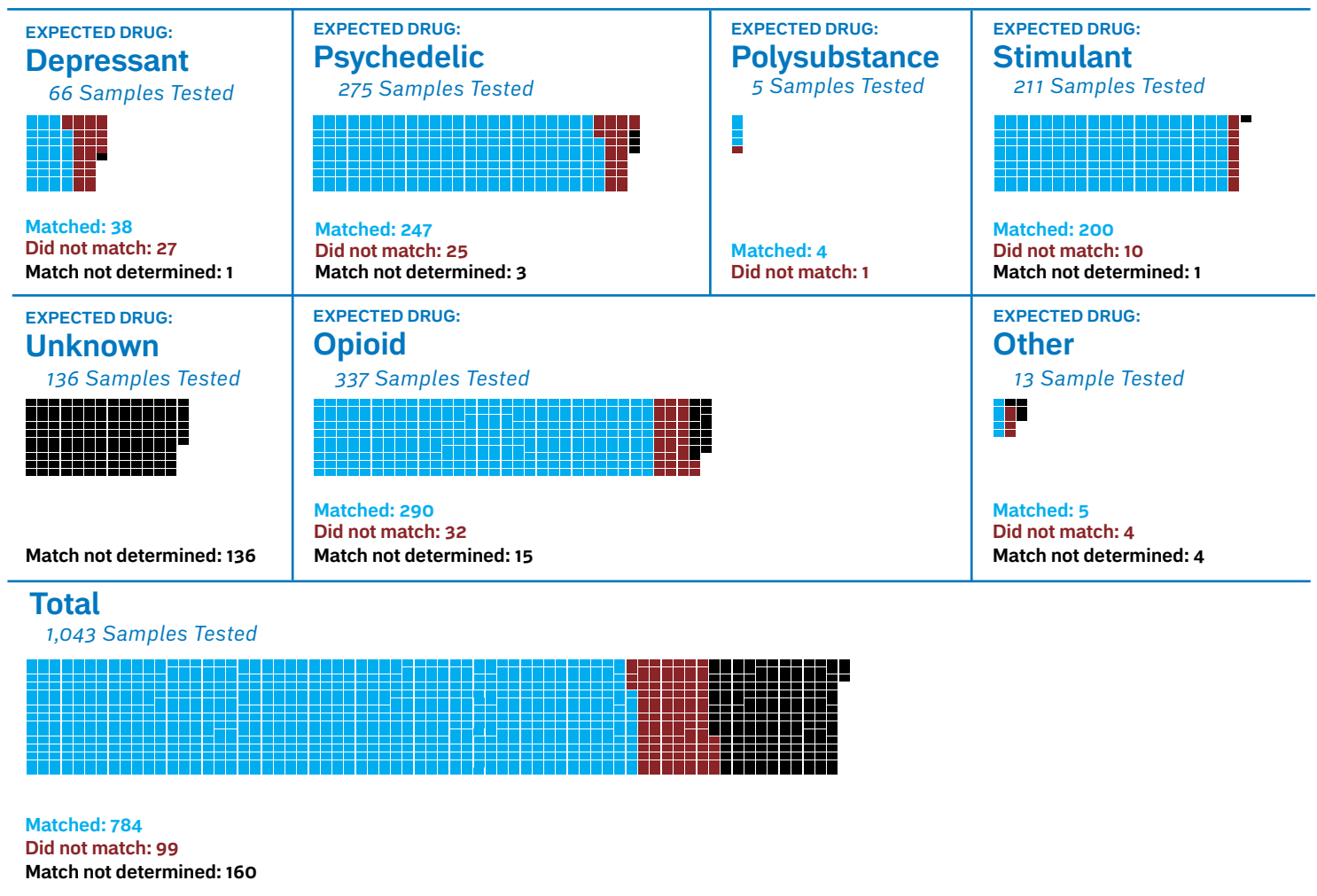
During the month of December, **24.0%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner sites in Vancouver Coastal Health (**81 samples of 337 checked**). Opioid samples are checked for benzodiazepine-positivity using BTNX test strips and the FTIR spectrometer. 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	868
Insite	91
Overdose Prevention Society	30
Molson OPS	54
Total	1,043

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

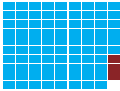


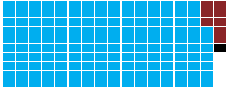


Psychedelic may include:
MDMA and related,
2C-family, tryptamines,
ketamine, LSD

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.

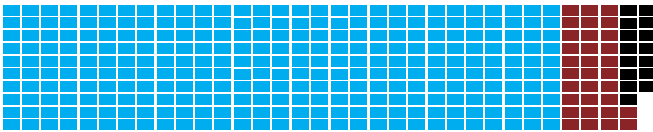
Number of opioid samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Fentanyl 89 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 86 Did not match: 3</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Heroin 42 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 19 Did not match: 23</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Opium 5 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 5</p>
<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Down 172 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 169 Did not match: 2 Match not determined: 1</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Other Opioid 2 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 1 Did not match: 1</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Pharmaceutical 27 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 10 Did not match: 3 Match not determined: 14</p>

Total

337 Samples Tested



Matched: 290
Did not match: 32
Match not determined: 15

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:

