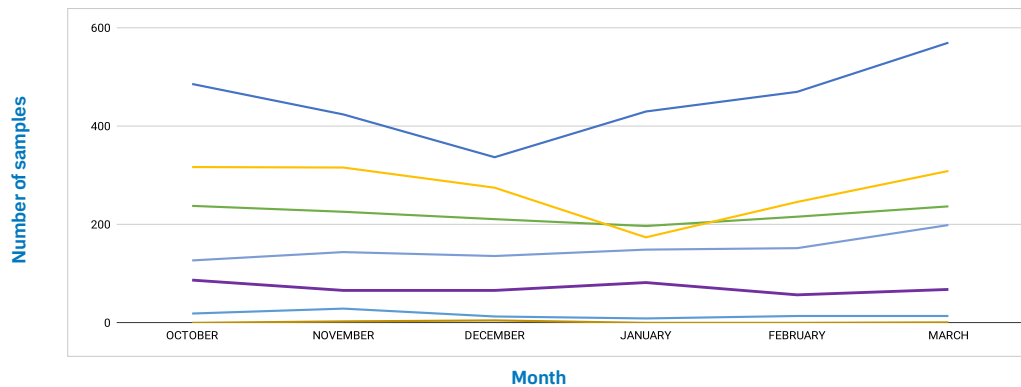


## Key Findings

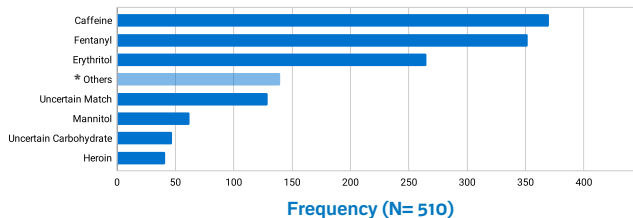
- The percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines (25.3%, 144 of 570 samples) remained high. The true rate may be higher than reported here because etizolam, the predominant benzodiazepine in expected opioids, may be missed by drug checking technologies.
- Nitazene opioids (benzimidazole) are increasingly being detected by point-of-care and confirmatory methods. Metonitazene, isotonitazene, etodesnitazene, and protonitazene have been identified in samples submitted as opioids.

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

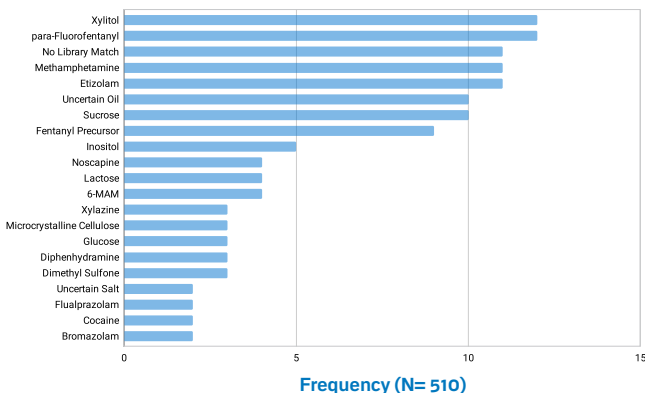


### Components found in drug samples in March

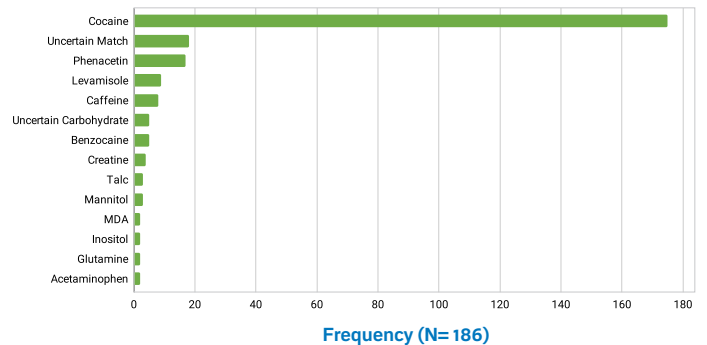
#### Components in opioids



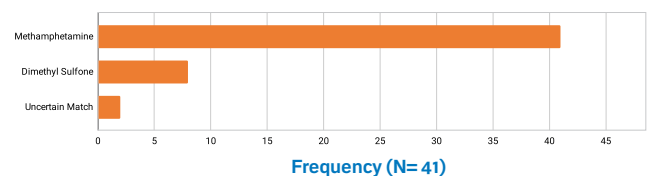
#### \* Other components found in opioids



#### Components in cocaine



#### Components in methamphetamine

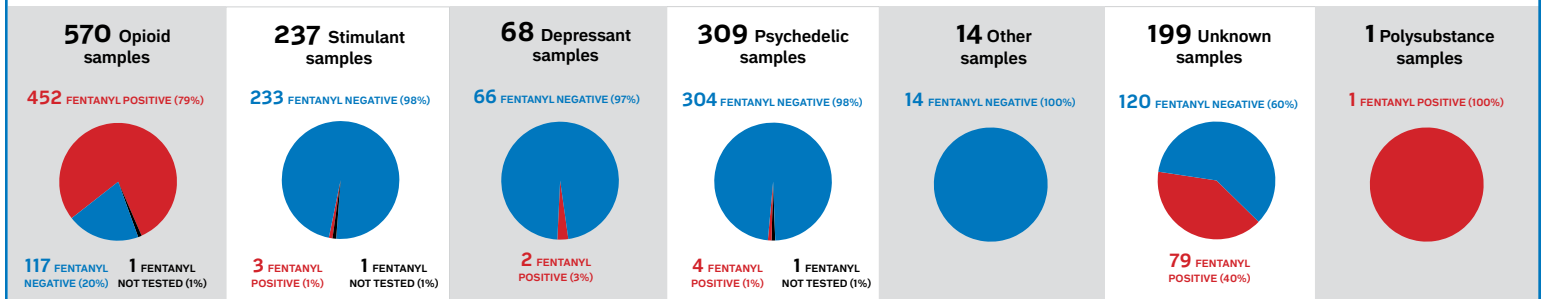


There were additional compounds detected a single time each. To save space, they have been omitted from these charts. For the full list of compounds detected, visit our data dashboard at [www.drugcheckingbc.ca/dashboard/](http://www.drugcheckingbc.ca/dashboard/)

March  
2022

# Drug Checking in Vancouver Coastal

## Number of samples tested with fentanyl present

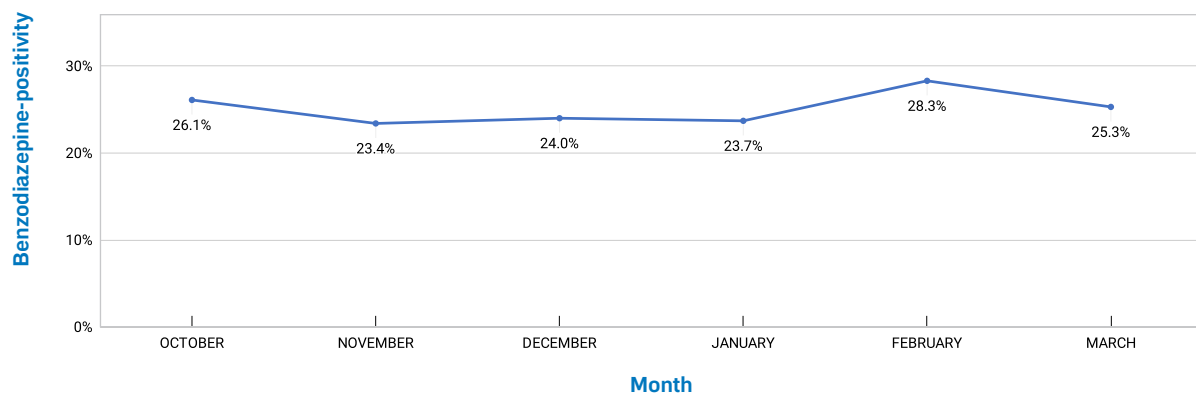


## PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Alert Message
No alerts from Vancouver Coastal Health partners this month					

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

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



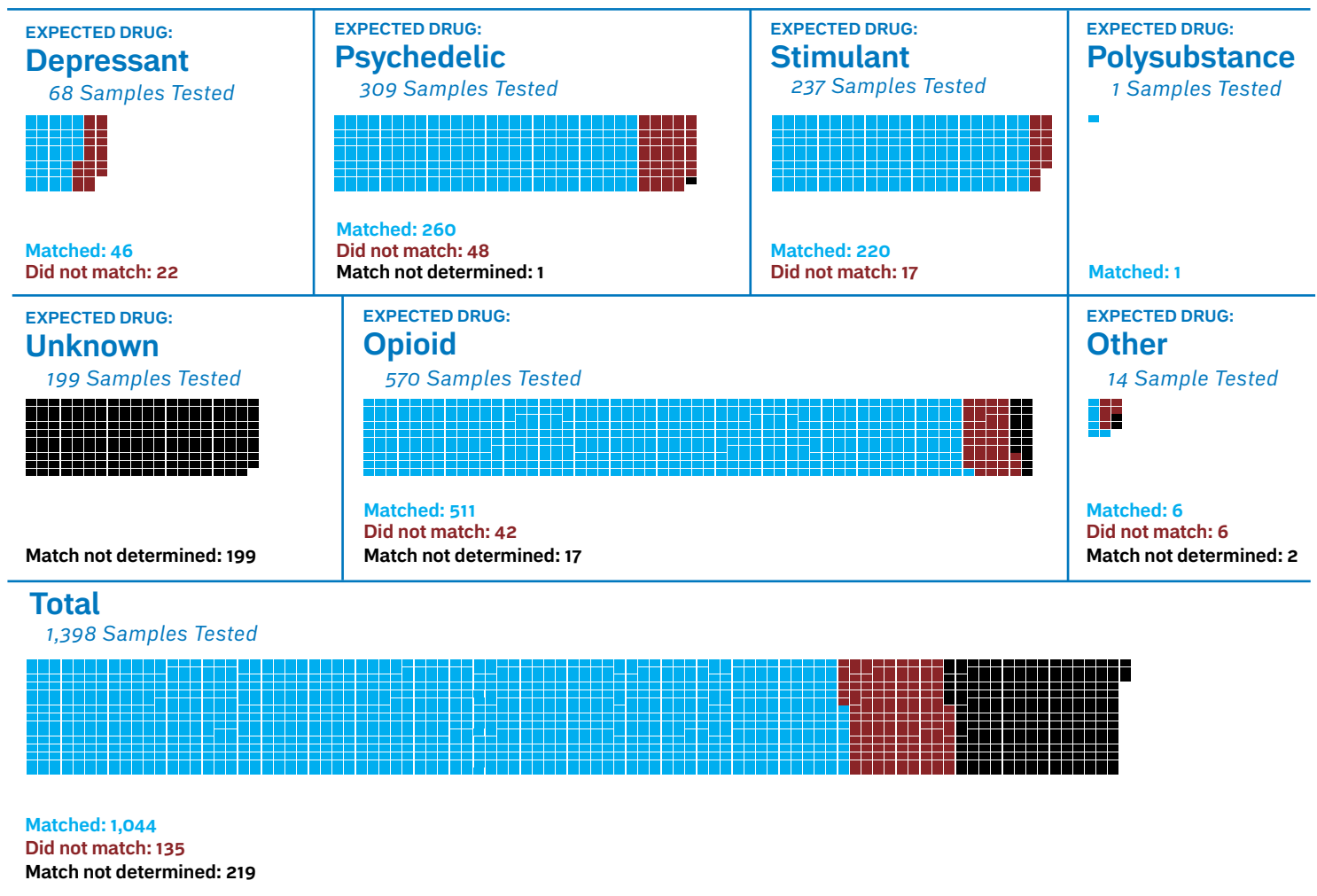
During the month of March, **25.3%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner sites in Vancouver Coastal Health (**144 samples of 570 checked**). Opioid samples are checked for benzodiazepine-positivity using BTNX test strips and the FTIR spectrometer. 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	1,193
Insite	126
Overdose Prevention Society	44
Molson OPS	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,398</b>

## 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.

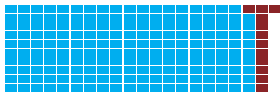
## Number of opioid samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG:

**Fentanyl**

201 Samples Tested



Matched: 189  
Did not match: 12

EXPECTED DRUG:

**Heroin**

39 Samples Tested



Matched: 32  
Did not match: 7

EXPECTED DRUG:

**Opium**

20 Samples Tested

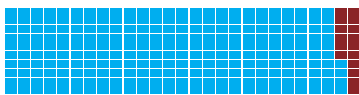


Matched: 20

EXPECTED DRUG:

**Down**

270 Samples Tested



Matched: 254  
Did not match: 16

EXPECTED DRUG:

**Pharmaceutical**

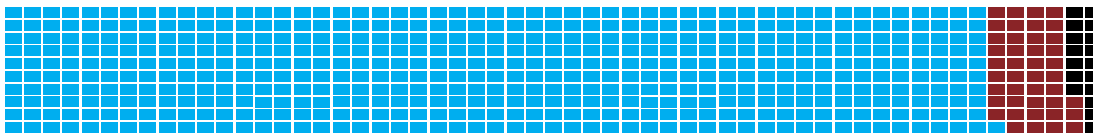
40 Samples Tested



Matched: 16  
Did not match: 7  
Match not determined: 17

### Total

570 Samples Tested



Matched: 511  
Did not match: 42  
Match not determined: 17

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:

