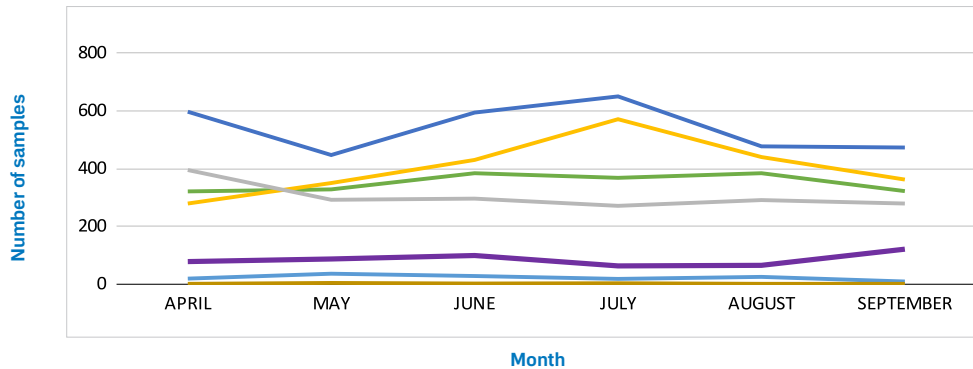


Key Findings

- In September, a total of 1,567 drug checks were performed by services offering FTIR drug checking in the Vancouver Coastal region. An increase in the number of depressants checked was observed compared to the previous month.
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines by FTIR and test strip decreased from 30.6% to 27.1% in September (128 of 473 samples).
- Benzodiazepines were found in concentrations high enough to be detected by FTIR in 7.4% of unregulated opioid samples checked (31 of 419 samples), with bromazolam most frequently detected (26 samples).
- Fluorofentanyl was detected in 26.5% of unregulated opioid samples (111 of 419 samples), whereas fentanyl was detected in 50.4% (211 samples).
- Xylazine was detected in 0.7% of unregulated opioid samples (3 of 419 samples).
- Drug checking services are now available at Whistler Community Services Society (8000 Nesters Rd, Whistler), LIFT Community Services (4752 Joyce Ave, Powell River), and at the Tla'amin Health Centre (5160 Highway 101, Powell River).

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



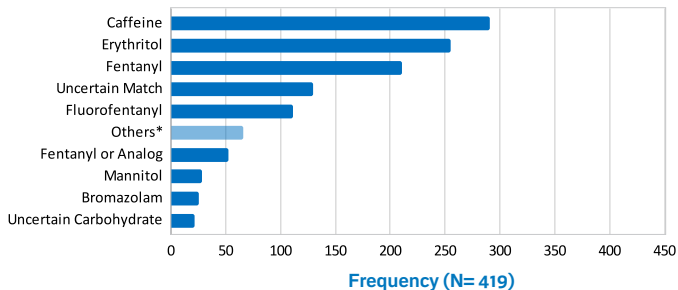
Number of samples by drug category in September

Opioid	473
Stimulant	322
Depressant	121
Psychedelic	362
Other	9
Polysubstance	1
Unknown	279

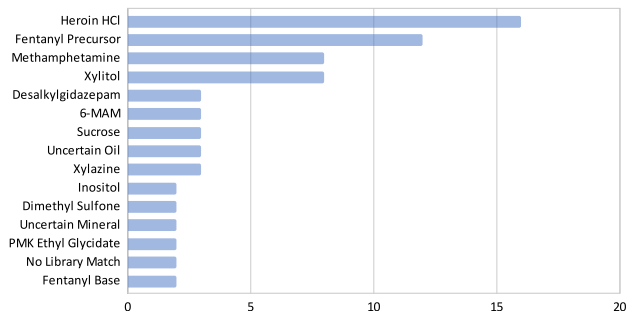
TOTAL: 1,567

Components found in drug samples in September

Components in unregulated opioids

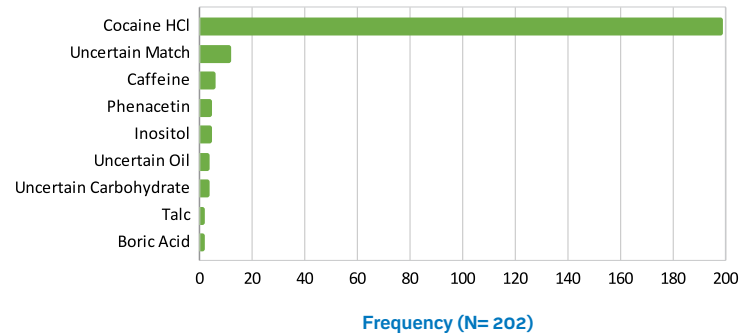


Other components in unregulated opioids



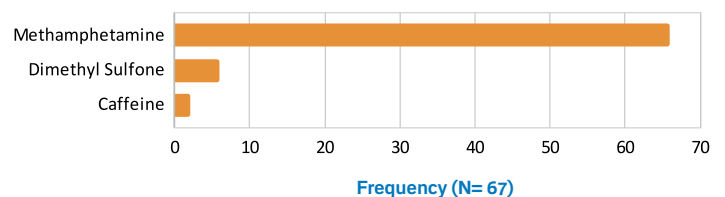
Additional compounds that were detected a single time each have been excluded from this graph, which include: fructose, glutamine, flualprazolam, cocaine base, phenacetin, etodesnitazene, etizolam.

Components in cocaine



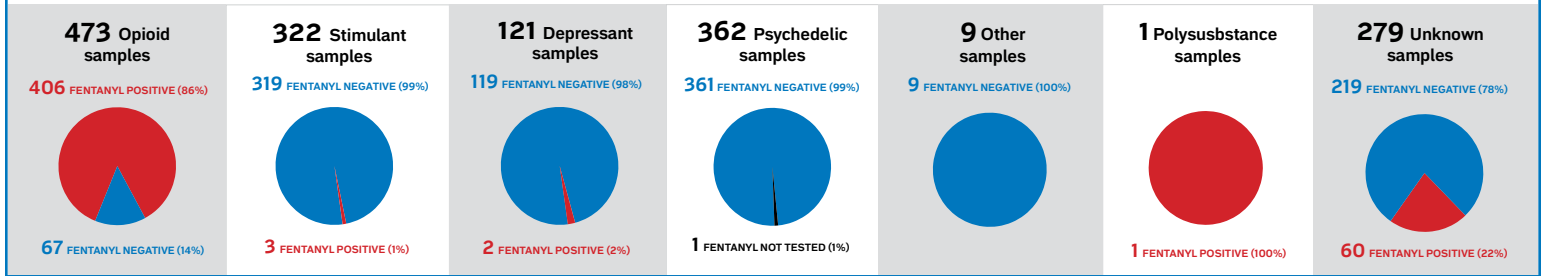
Additional compounds that were detected a single time each have been excluded from this graph, which include: cocaine base, creatine, glutamine, oleamide.

Components in methamphetamine



Additional compounds that were detected a single time each have been excluded from this graph, which include: erythritol, uncertain carbohydrate, uncertain match.

Number of samples tested with fentanyl present



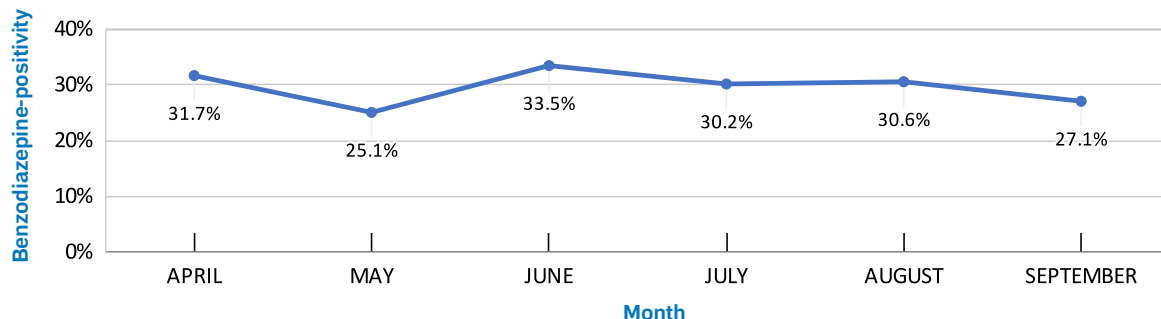
PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Area Purchased	Alert Message
September 11, 2023 Vancouver	Down	Fentanyl, Bromazolam, Xylazine	Positive	Positive	Vancouver	Dark red/brown pebbles sold as down in the DTES of Vancouver tested positive for fentanyl, bromazolam, a benzo analogue, and xylazine. Substance has caused OD.
September 18, 2023 Vancouver	Heroin	Para-Fluorofentanyl, Caffeine, Bromazolam, Erythritol	Positive	Positive	Vancouver	Light brown powder sold as heroin in the DTES of Vancouver tested positive for para-fluorofentanyl and bromazolam, a benzo analogue.

Health authorities and community organizations issue further toxic drug alerts from sources other than drug checking. See their respective websites or social media accounts for more alerts.

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 September, **27.1%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner sites in Vancouver Coastal Health (**128 samples of 473 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 at each site

Location	# of Drugs Checked
Get Your Drugs Tested (Vancouver)	1504
LIFT Community Services (Powell River)	50
Tla'amin Nation (Powell River)	8
WCSS (Whistler)	5
Total:	1567

Number of samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG	Matched	Did Not Match	Match Not Determined	Samples Tested
Opioid	441	19	13	473
Stimulant	311	10	1	322
Depressant	88	29	4	121
Psychedelic	341	14	7	362
Other	3	2	4	9
Polysubstance	0	0	1	1
Unknown	0	0	279	279
Total	1184	74	309	1567

Please note that the presence of the expected substance does not imply purity, as samples frequently contain adulterating cutting agents

Depressant include:
benzodiazepines, etizolam,
GHB, hypnotics

Opioid include:
"down", heroin, fentanyl
(unregulated opioids), and
pharmaceutical opioids

Polysubstance includes:
cross-category mixtures

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

Stimulant 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	Matched	Did Not Match	Match Not Determined	Samples Tested
Fentanyl	105	2	0	107
Heroin	7	6	0	13
Down	294	5	0	299
Pharmaceutical	32	6	13	51
Opium	3	0	0	3
Total	441	19	13	473

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:

