

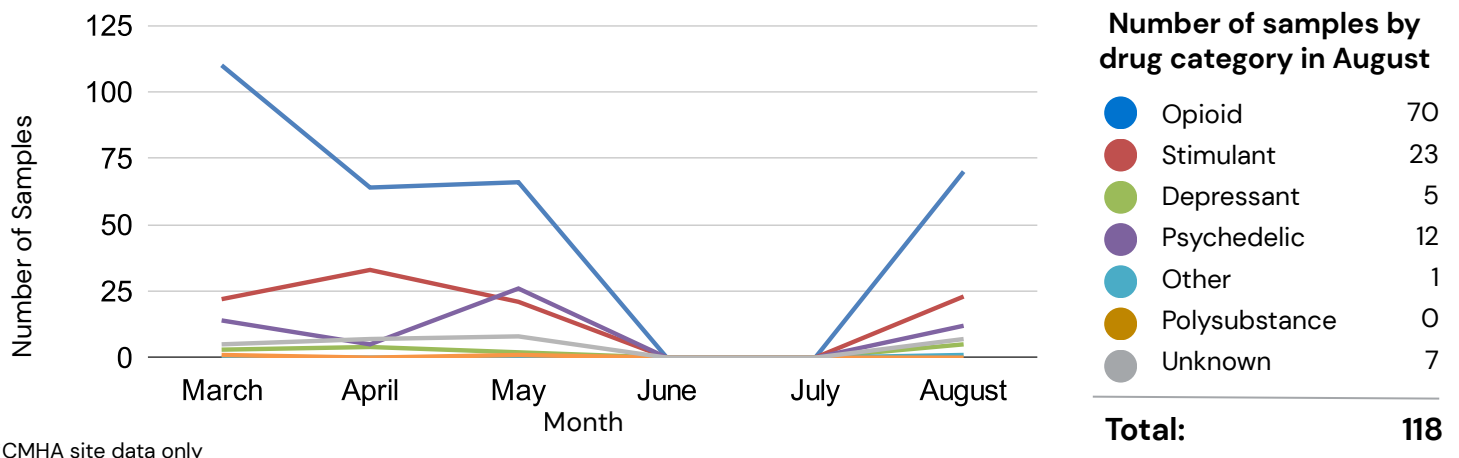


Key findings

We are in the process of including data from Substance (University of Victoria) in this report. In the interim, we provide the number of samples tested at Substance and the BCCSU-partnered CMHA Mid-Island locations to show the total samples tested in the region. The remainder of this report details results only from the CMHA Mid-Island site. For more information on Substance sites, please visit their [website](#).

- In August, a total of **782** drug checks were performed in the Island Health region: **118** by the CMHA Mid-Island Albert Street site in Nanaimo, and **644** by Substance (University of Victoria).
- The percentage of opioid samples testing positive for benzodiazepines by FTIR and/or test strip was **55.7%** in August. Of these, desalkylidazepam was most frequently identified.
- We note there has been an uptick in samples containing carfentanil since the beginning of the year. The true number is expected to be higher than what is observed by FTIR, as it is usually found in concentrations below the detection limit (<5%) via secondary testing.
- Among the subset of opioids sent for secondary testing with Paper-Spray Mass Spectrometry (n=5), medetomidine and xylazine were detected in **1 sample** each.

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months*



Number of drug checks at each site

BCCSU-Partnered Locations	# of Drugs Checked
Albert St. OPS (CMHA Nanaimo)	118
Substance (UVic) Locations	# of Drugs Checked
Substance	311
Outreach	245
Comox Valley	56
Campbell River	32
Duncan	11
Port Alberni	9
Island Health Region Total	782

Number of samples with expected drug present*

Expected Drug	Present	Not Present	N/A	Total
Opioid	67	3	0	70
Stimulant	22	1	0	23
Depressant	4	1	0	5
Psychedelic	11	1	0	12
Other	1	0	0	1
Unknown	0	0	7	7
Total	105	6	7	118

*CMHA site data only

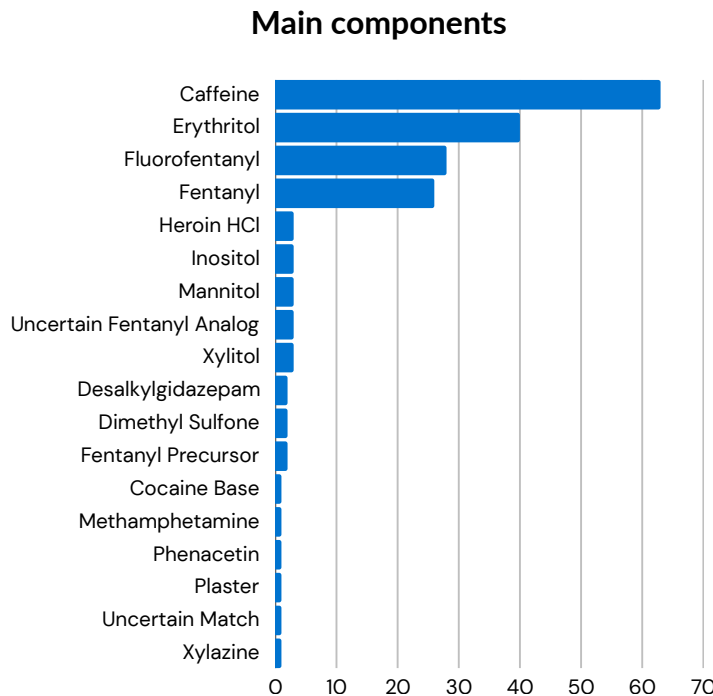
Opioids

Number of opioid samples with expected drug present*

Expected Drug	Present	Not Present	N/A	Total
Fentanyl	12	2	0	14
Heroin	2	0	0	2
Down	53	1	0	54
Total	67	3	0	70

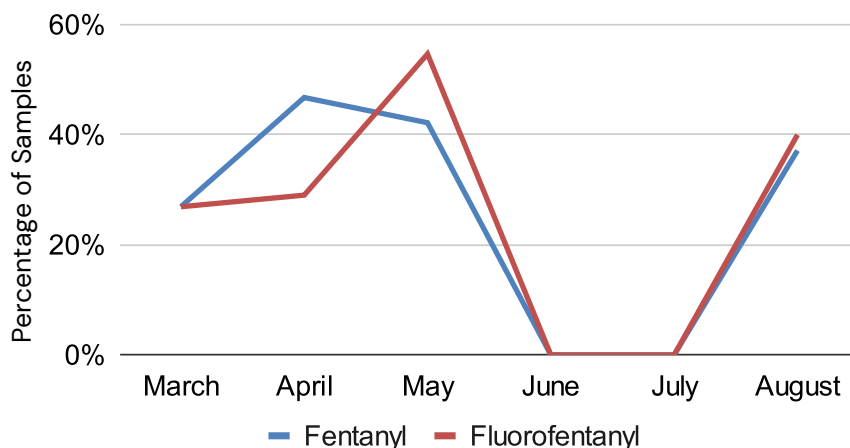
*CMHA site data only

Components detected in unregulated opioids (N=70)*



*CMHA site data only

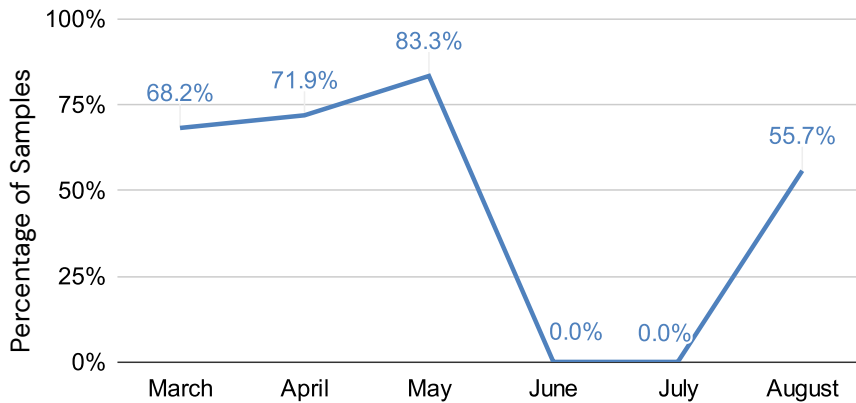
Fentanyl analogs detected in unregulated opioids, past 6 months*



- In August, the number of unregulated opioids found to contain fentanyl by FTIR was nearly on par with the number of samples found to contain fluorofentanyl (~40%; 26 vs 28 samples, respectively).
- We note there has been an uptick in samples containing carfentanyl since the beginning of the year. The true number of samples containing carfentanyl is expected to be higher than what is observed by FTIR, as it is usually contained in concentrations below the detection limit (<5%). Please see the Secondary Testing section of this report for more information.

*CMHA site data only

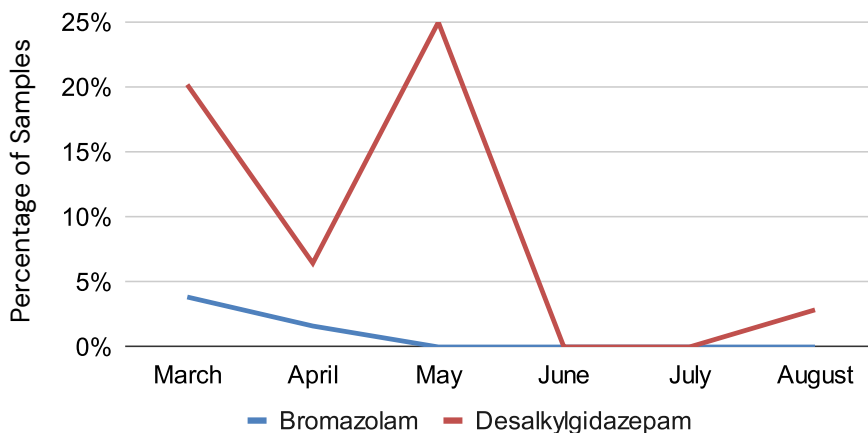
Percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines, past 6 months*



*CMHA site data only

- During the month of August, **55.7%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines at the CMHA Nanaimo Albert St. OPS (**39 samples of 70 checked**).
- Opioid samples are checked for benzodiazepine-positivity using BTNX test strips and the FTIR spectrometer.

Benzodiazepines detected in unregulated opioids, past 6 months*



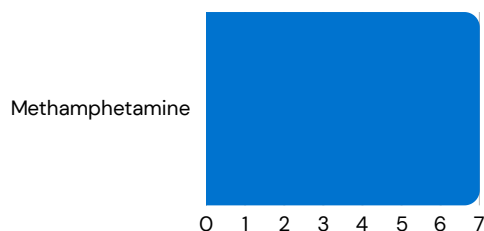
*CMHA site data only

- In August, **2.9%** of all unregulated opioid samples (**2 of 70 samples**) contained desalkylgidazepam in concentrations high enough to be detectable by FTIR (>5%).

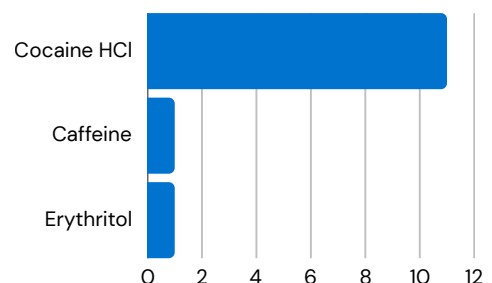
Non-Opioids

Components detected in stimulants*

Components in methamphetamine (N=7)

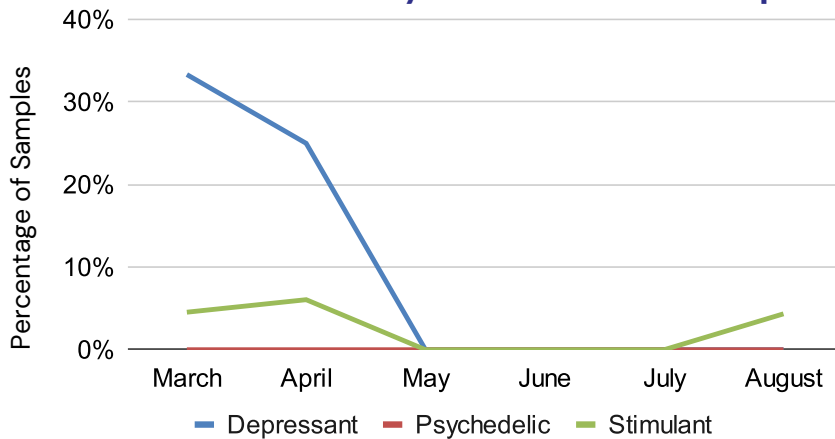


Components in cocaine (N=11)



*CMHA site data only

Fentanyl detected in non-opioids, past 6 months*



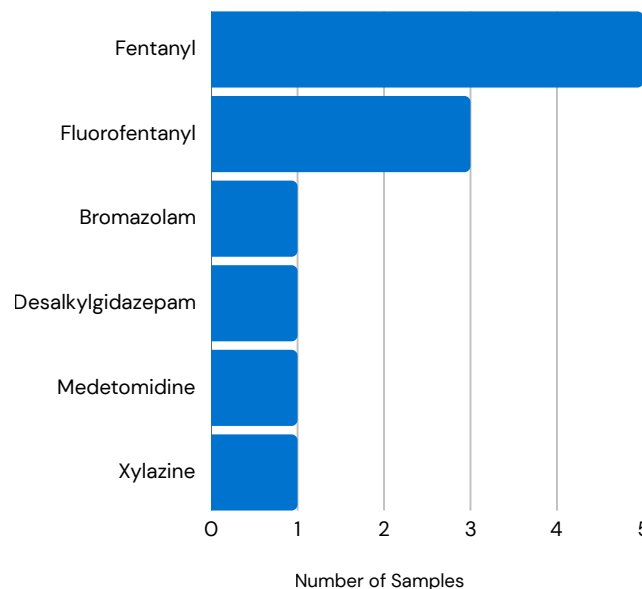
- In August, a total of **1 stimulant (cocaine)** sample tested positive for fentanyl by FTIR and/or test strip.

*CMHA site data only

PSMS Secondary Testing Results Summary

A subset of samples were sent for secondary testing provided by Substance at the University of Victoria, using Paper-Spray Mass Spectrometry (PSMS). PSMS is a highly sensitive technology, and can detect components in samples below the detection limit of the FTIR (<5%). Below is a summary of all active components detected in opioid samples sent in confirmatory testing. For more information about Substance please visit their [website](#).

Active components in opioids submitted (N=5)



Public Health Notifications

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Spectrometry Results	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Alert Message
No alerts for Island Health this month.					

To subscribe to the provincial drug alert and response system, text the word JOIN to 253787 (ALERTS).

About this data

Data represented in this report is collected from our partner sites across the province using Fourier Transform Infrared (FTIR) spectrometry in combination with BTNX fentanyl test strips and benzodiazepine test strips when applicable. We note the FTIR spectrometer has a detection limit of approximately 5% concentration (McCrae, 2019).

Depressant includes:
benzodiazepines,
etizolam, GHB, hypnotics

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

Polysubstance includes:
cross-category mixtures

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

Stimulant includes:
methamphetamine,
"speed," cocaine and
crack cocaine,
cathinones

Unknown includes:
samples where the individual
was unable to identify an
expected substance - this
includes found samples.

We gratefully acknowledge the contribution of [our partners](#) to collect this data.

To find drug checking services in your area please visit our [site locator](#).