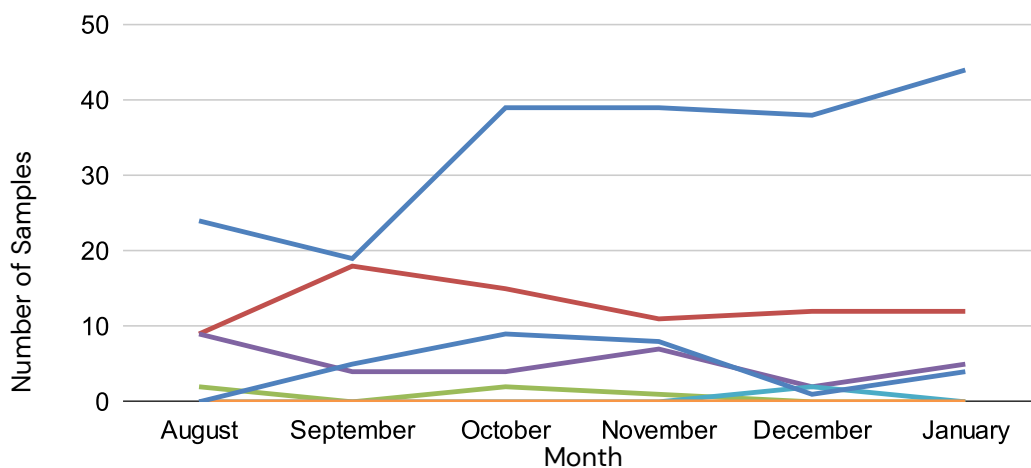




### Key findings

- In January, **65** drug checks were performed by services offering FTIR drug checking in the Northern Health region (**6 access points**).
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines by FTIR and/or test strip decreased to **52.3%**. Of these, bromazolam was the most common detected by FTIR.
- There has been an increase in medetomidine in the unregulated drug supply, coinciding with an uptick in drug alerts issued in January. Of the total **12 alerts**, **4** were related to medetomidine, including a province-wide alert issued by the BCCDC.
- Among opioid samples sent for secondary testing in January (**n=48**), medetomidine was detected in **21 samples**, carfentanil in **1 sample**.
- Note that trends may be difficult to infer due to the smaller number of samples tested over a large geographic region.

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



#### Number of samples by drug category in Jan.

Opioid	44
Stimulant	12
Depressant	0
Psychedelic	5
Other	0
Polysubstance	0
Unknown	4

**Total: 65**

### Number of drug checks at each site

Location	# of Drugs Checked
POUNDS (Prince George)	51
Terrace ICMT (Terrace)	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>

Less than 5 samples were tested at the following location, which has been included in the total:  
POUNDS (Quesnel).

### Number of samples with the expected drug detected

Expected Drug	Detected	Not Detected	N/A	Total
Opioid	39	4	1	44
Stimulant	12	0	0	12
Psychedelic	3	2	0	5
Unknown	0	0	4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>65</b>

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

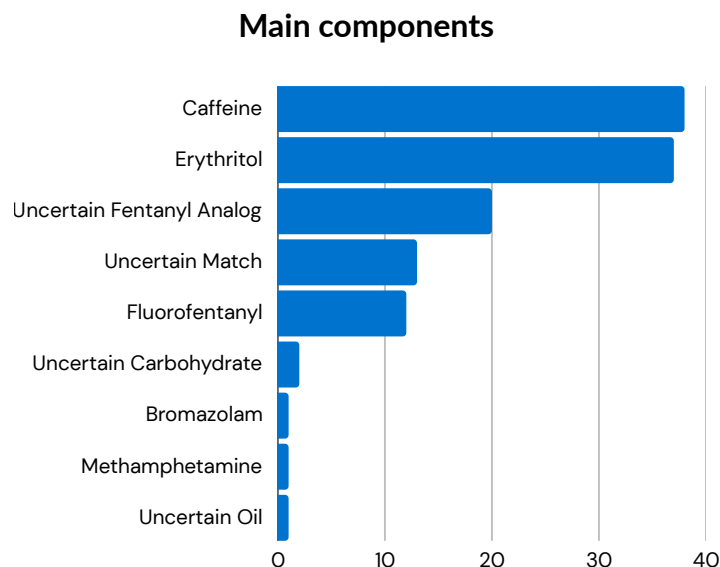
## Opioids

### Number of opioid samples with the expected drug detected

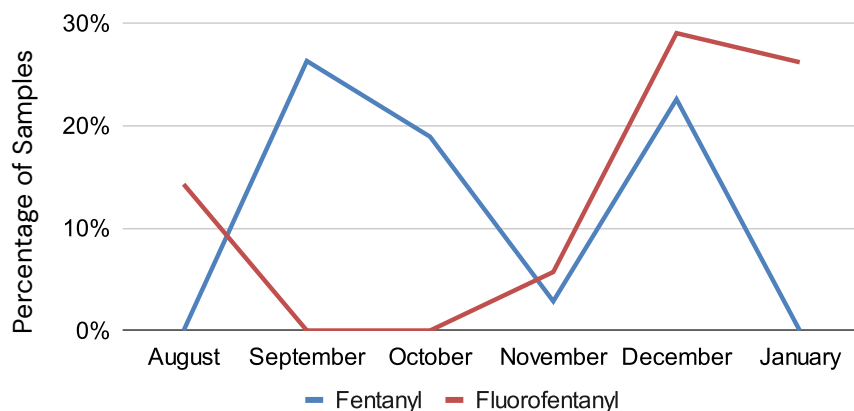
Expected Drug	Detected	Not Detected	N/A	Total
Fentanyl	2	0	0	2
Heroin	0	2	0	2
Other Opioid	0	1	0	1
Down	37	1	0	38
Pharmaceutical	0	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>44</b>

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.

### Components detected in unregulated opioids (N=42)

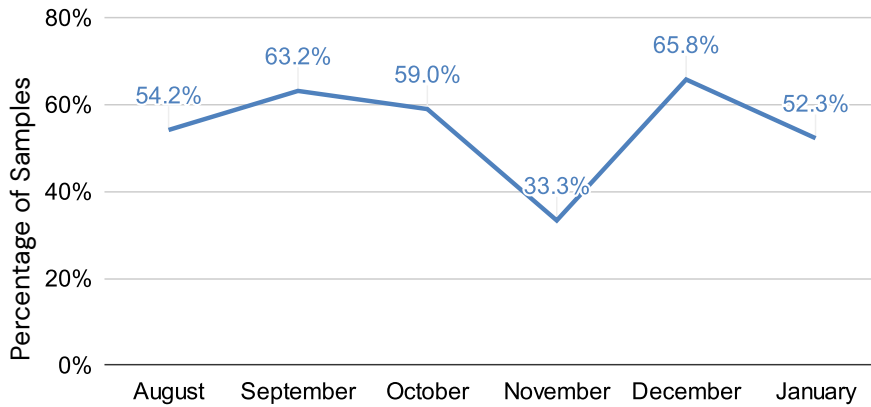


### Fentanyl analogs detected in unregulated opioids, past 6 months



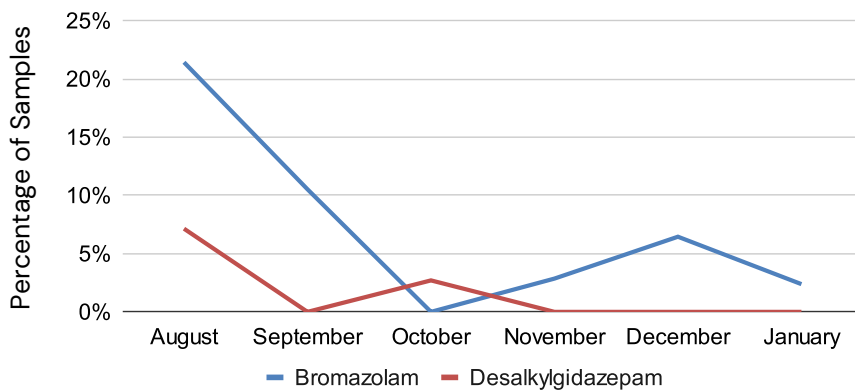
- In January, approximately half of unregulated opioid samples were found to contain an "uncertain fentanyl analog", meaning the specific analog could not be determined by FTIR (20 of 42 samples).
- Of the samples in which an analog could be identified, fluorofentanyl was detected by FTIR in 26.2% (12 of 42 samples).
- We note that 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.

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



- During the month of January, **52.3%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines in the Northern Health region (**23 samples of 44 checked**).
- Opioid samples are checked for benzodiazepine-positivity using BTNX test strips and the FTIR spectrometer. The true number may be higher, as some benzodiazepines may be missed by test strip.

### Types of benzodiazepines detected by FTIR, past 6 months

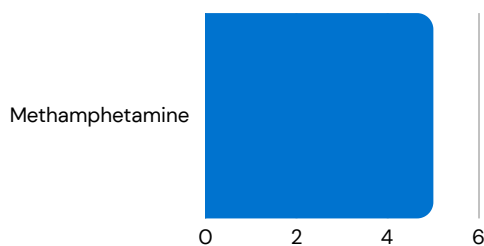


- In January, **2.4%** of unregulated opioids (**1 of 42 samples**) contained bromazolam in concentrations high enough to be detectable by FTIR (>5%).

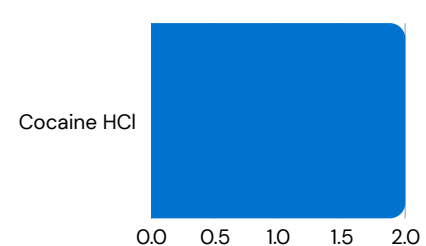
## Non-Opioids

### Components detected in stimulants

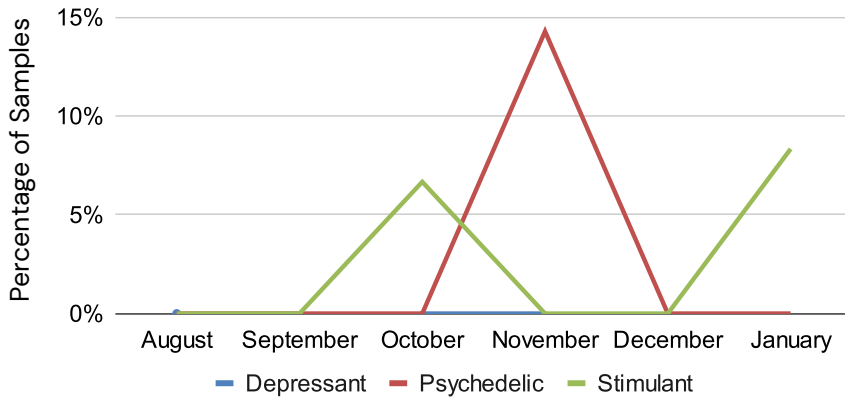
#### Components in methamphetamine (N=5)



#### Components in cocaine (N=2)



### Fentanyl detected in non-opioids, past 6 months

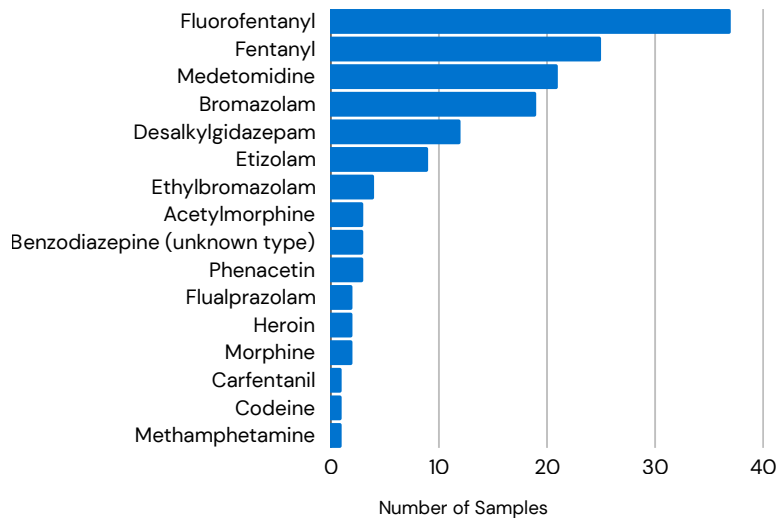


- In January, **1 stimulant sample** (methamphetamine) tested positive for fentanyl by FTIR and/or test strip. This sample was expected to be cross-contaminated by the service user, noting it had been stored with opioids, and submitted alongside opioids for drug checking.

### 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 = 48)



### Public Health Notifications

There has been an increase in medetomidine in the unregulated drug supply, coinciding with an uptick in alerts issued in January. Out of the total 12 alerts, 4 were related to medetomidine, including a province-wide alert issued by the BCCDC.

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Spectrometry Results	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Alert Message
<p>In January, there were no alerts issued within the Northern Health region pertaining to samples submitted for drug checking.</p>					

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](#).