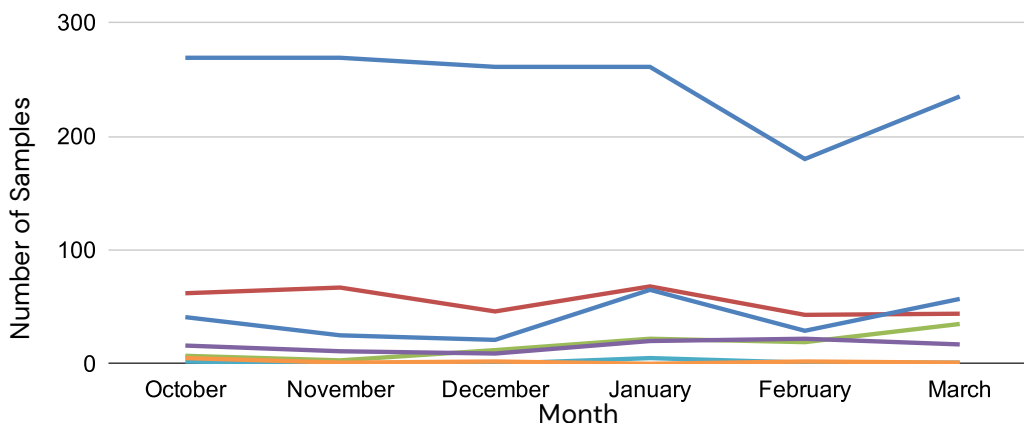




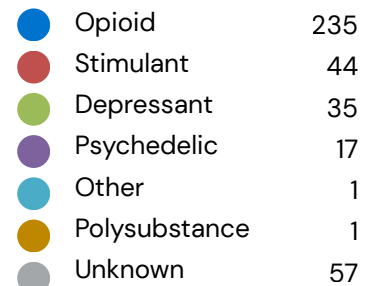
Key findings

- In March, **390** drug checks were performed by services offering FTIR drug checking in the Fraser Health region (**14 access points**).
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines by FTIR and/or test strip increased to **63.4%**. For the second month in a row, ethylbromazolam was most frequently identified by FTIR.
- We continue to monitor the emergence of novel benzodiazepines in unregulated opioids, which included ethylbromazolam, meclonazepam, and ethylflualprazolam in March.
- Drug checking services in the FH region are now using medetomidine test strips in response to the increase of medetomidine in the unregulated drug supply. Among opioid samples tested in March, **49.4%** were positive for medetomidine.
- Among opioids sent for **secondary testing** in March (**n=164**), medetomidine was detected in **70 samples**, and carfentanil in **8 samples**.

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



Number of samples by drug category in Mar.



Total: 390

Number of drug checks at each site

Location	# of Drugs Checked
Foxglove Housing (Surrey)	87
SafePoint (Surrey)	39
Mountainside (Abbotsford)	56
Mountainside (Chilliwack)	56
Mountainside (Hope)	10
Mountainside (Langley)	15
Mountainside (Maple Ridge)	27
Mountainside (Mission)	54
Progressive Housing (Burnaby)	9
Purpose Society (New Westminster)	37
Total	390

Number of samples with the expected drug detected

Expected Drug	Detected	Not Detected	N/A	Total
Opioid	224	11	0	235
Stimulant	41	3	0	44
Depressant	5	30	0	35
Psychedelic	17	0	0	17
Other	1	0	0	1
Polysubstance	1	0	0	1
Unknown	0	0	57	57
Total	289	44	57	390

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

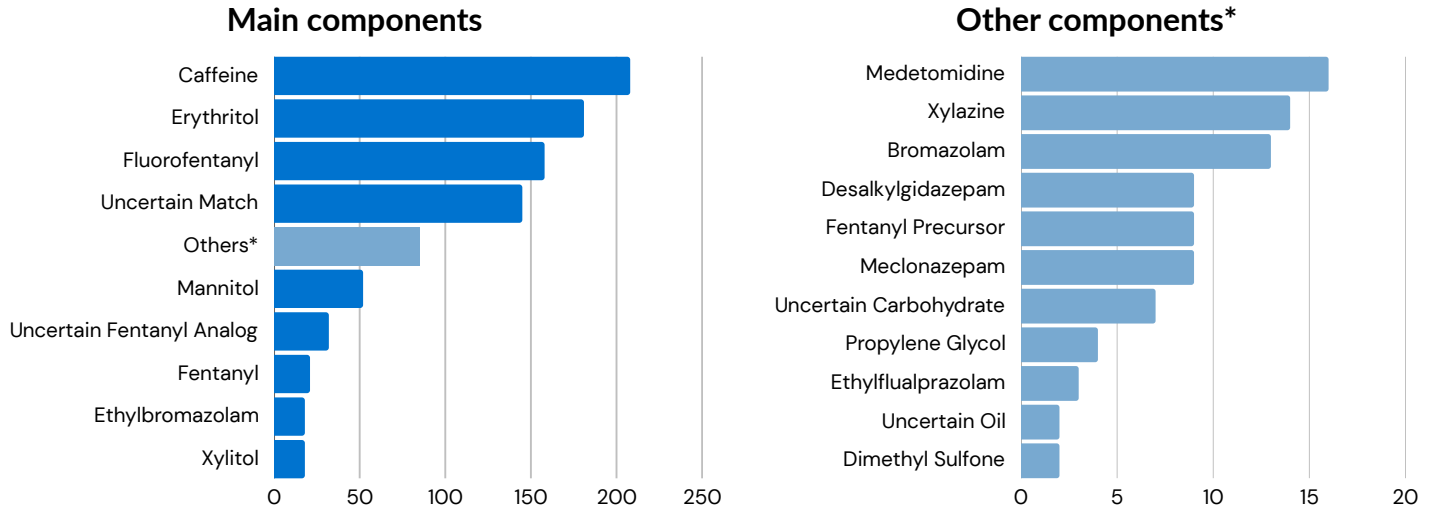
Opioids

Number of opioid samples with the expected drug detected

Expected Drug	Detected	Not Detected	N/A	Total
Fentanyl	7	1	0	8
Heroin	1	2	0	3
Down	211	3	0	214
Pharmaceutical	4	5	0	9
Opium	1	0	0	1
Total	224	11	0	235

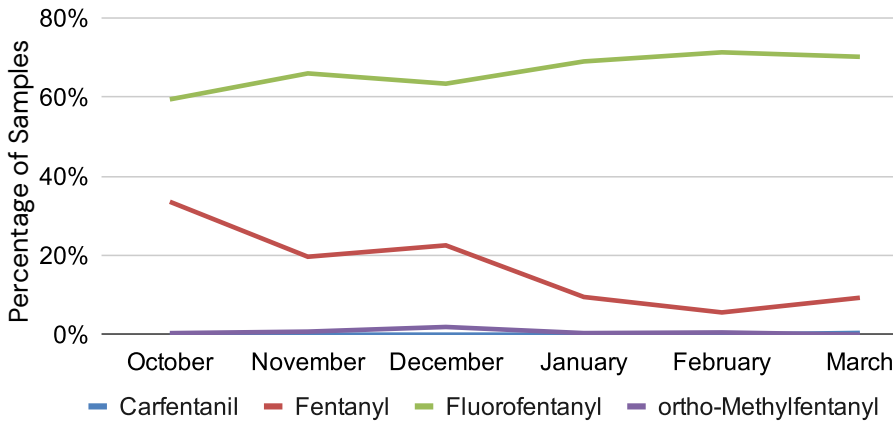
Please note that the presence of the expected substance does not imply purity, as samples frequently contain adulterating cutting agents. 'Down' can refer to any opioid drug present in any amount.

Components detected in unregulated opioids (N=225)



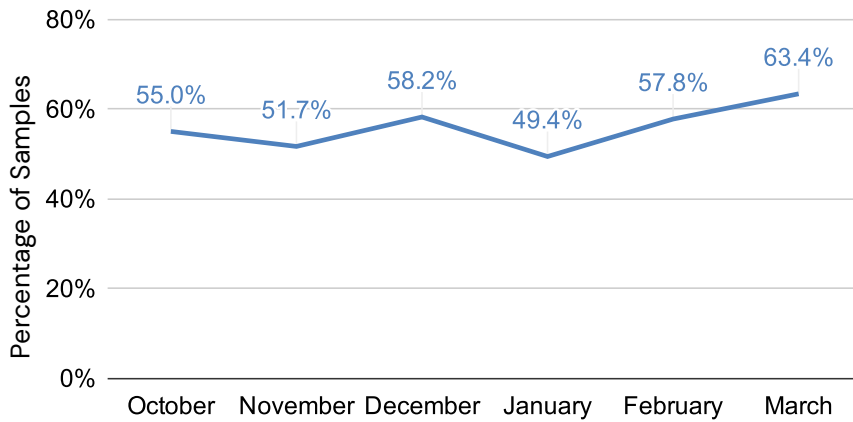
Additional components detected a single time have been omitted from these charts. All sample data can be found on the [BCCSU Drug Sense dashboard](#).

Fentanyl analogs detected in unregulated opioids, past 6 months



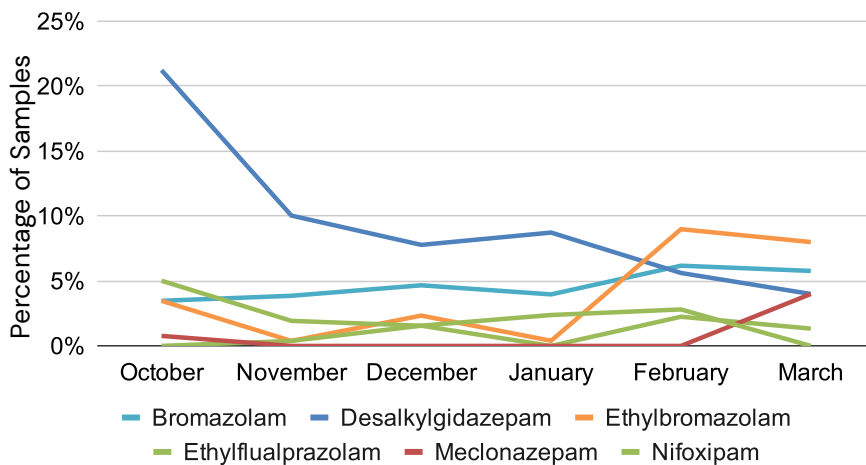
- In March, fluorofentanyl was detected in 70.2% of samples by FTIR (158 of 225 checked). Fluorofentanyl continues to be the most common fentanyl analog detected in unregulated opioids.
- Conversely, fentanyl was detected by FTIR in **9.3%** of opioids (**21 samples**). Decreased fentanyl detection may indicate that less fentanyl is circulating in the opioid supply, and/or that it is present in concentrations below the FTIR detection limit (<5%).
- Carfentanil was detected by FTIR in **1 sample** this month. The true number is expected to be higher, as it is usually present in concentrations below the FTIR detection limit (<5%). Please see the **Secondary Testing section** for more information.

Percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines, past 6 months



- During the month of March, **63.4%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines in the Fraser Health region (**149 samples of 235 checked**).
- Opioid samples are checked for benzodiazepine-positivity using BTNX test strips and the FTIR spectrometer. The true prevalence may be higher, as some benzodiazepines (e.g., etizolam, ethylflualprazolam) may be missed by test strip.

Types of benzodiazepines detected by FTIR, past 6 months



- In March, 23.1% of unregulated opioids (52 of 225 samples) contained benzodiazepines in concentrations detectable by FTIR (>5%).
- Ethylbromazolam was most frequently identified (8.0%; 18 samples), followed by bromazolam (5.8%), both surpassing desalkylgizazepam for the second month in a row.
- We continue to monitor the emergence of novel benzodiazepines. Meclonazepam, a novel benzodiazepine, increased in detection to 4% of unregulated opioids (9 samples).
- Alongside ethylbromazolam and meclonazepam, this included ethylflualprazolam (3 samples) in March.

Percentage of opioids testing positive for medetomidine, past 6 months

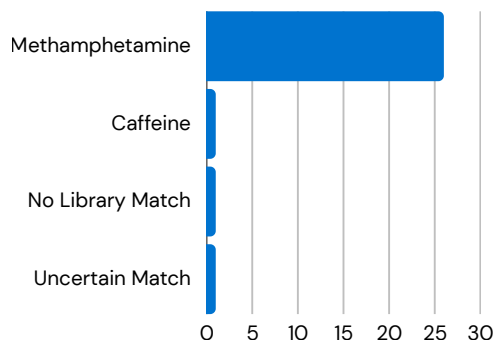


- Among opioid samples tested with medetomidine test strips in March, **49.4%** were positive for medetomidine (**40 of 81 samples**).
- There has been an increase in medetomidine in the unregulated drug supply. In the Fraser Health region, medetomidine test strips are now being used at drug checking sites, as medetomidine is typically present in concentrations below the detection limit of the FTIR (<5%).

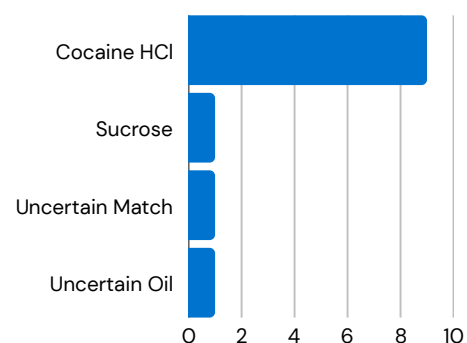
Non-Opioids

Components detected in stimulants

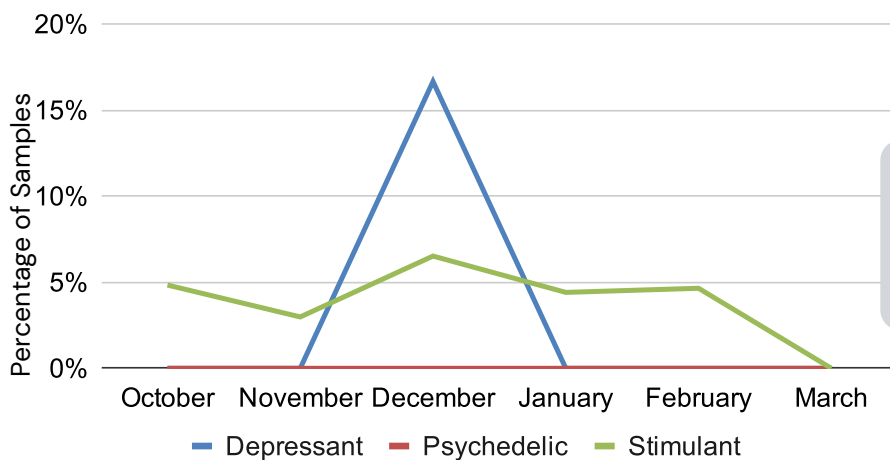
Components in methamphetamine (N=27)



Components in cocaine (N=10)



Fentanyl detected in non-opioids, past 6 months

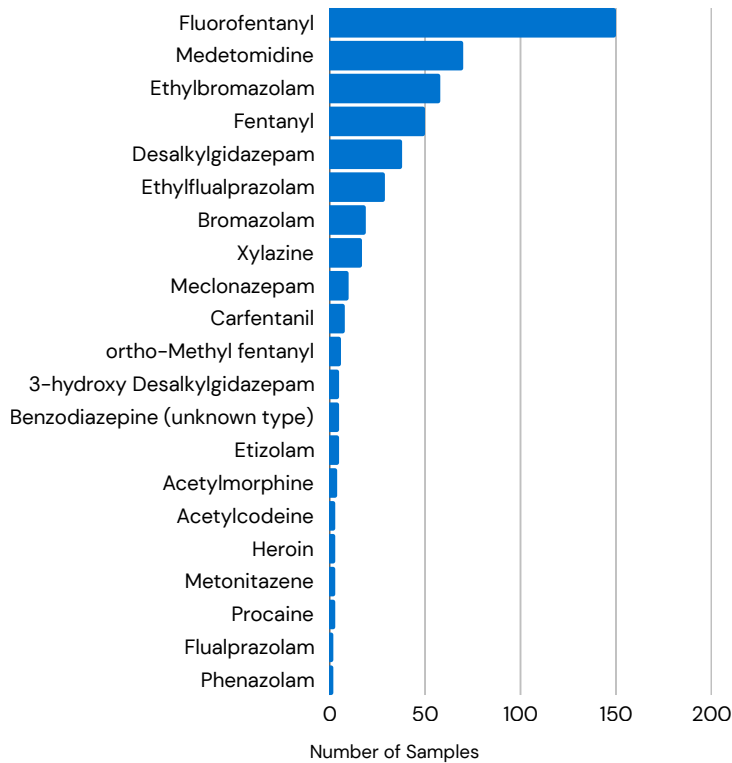


• In March, no non-opioid samples tested positive for fentanyl.

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=164)



To save space, additional components detected a single time have been omitted from this chart:
Cocaine Base, Codeine, Diclofenac, Heroin, Ketamine, MDMA, Methamphetamine

Public Health Notifications

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Spectrometry Results	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Alert Message
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In March, there were no alerts issued within the Fraser Health region pertaining to samples submitted for drug checking.

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](#).