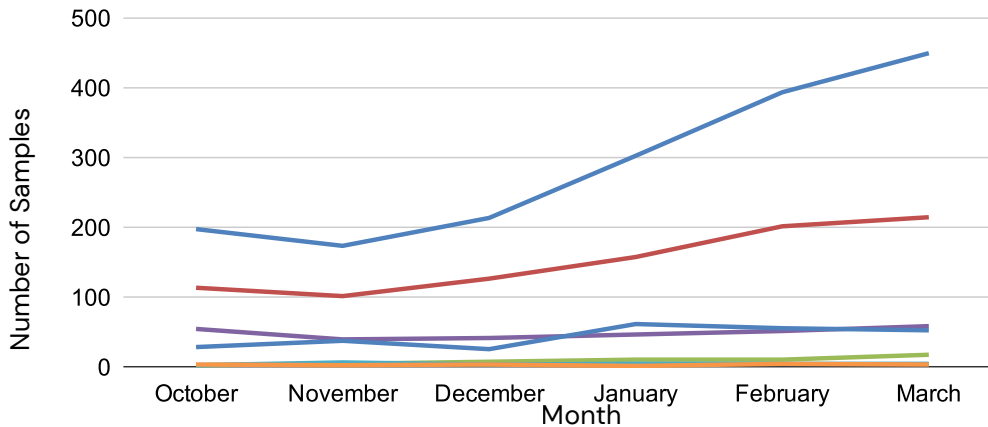




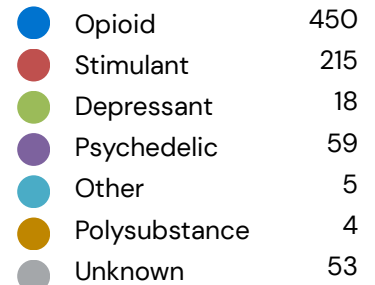
### Key findings

- The number of samples checked in the Interior Health region has increased over the past 4 months as services expanded. In March, **804 samples** were tested by services offering FTIR drug checking (**32 access points**).
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines by FTIR/test strip decreased to **55.1%**. Of these, bromazolam was the most common detected by FTIR.
- We continue to monitor the emergence of novel benzodiazepines in unregulated opioids. In March, ethylbromazolam and clobromazolam were detected by FTIR, and others were detected via secondary testing.
- Drug checking services in the IH 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, **35.8%** were positive for medetomidine.
- Among opioids sent for **secondary testing** in March (n=113), medetomidine was detected in **35 samples**, carfentanil in **4 samples**, xylazine in **1 sample**.

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



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



**Total: 804**

### Number of drug checks at each site

Location	# of Drugs Checked
ANKORS (Cranbrook)	91
ANKORS (Nelson)	62
ASK (Kamloops)	80
ASK (Kelowna)	105
ASK (Penticton)	279
Interior Health (Kelowna)	115
Medicine Shoppe (Vernon)	70
<b>Total</b>	<b>804</b>

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

### Number of samples with the expected drug detected

Expected Drug	Detected	Not Detected	N/A	Total
Opioid	439	7	4	450
Stimulant	206	9	0	215
Depressant	7	10	1	18
Psychedelic	50	7	2	59
Other	4	0	1	5
Polysubstance	4	0	0	4
Unknown	0	0	53	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>804</b>

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

## Opioids

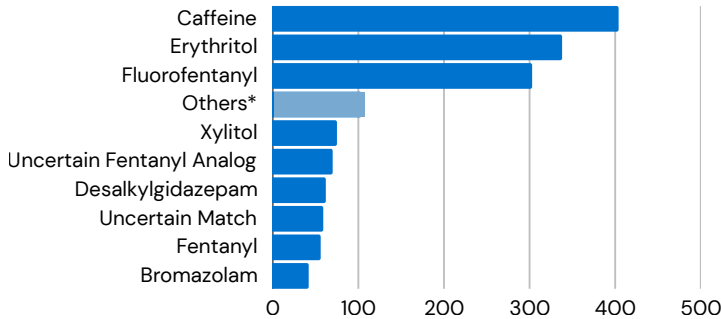
### Number of opioid samples with the expected drug detected

Expected Drug	Detected	Not Detected	N/A	Total
Fentanyl	15	0	0	15
Heroin	1	2	0	3
Other Opioid	3	0	1	4
Down	415	2	0	417
Pharmaceutical	5	3	3	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>450</b>

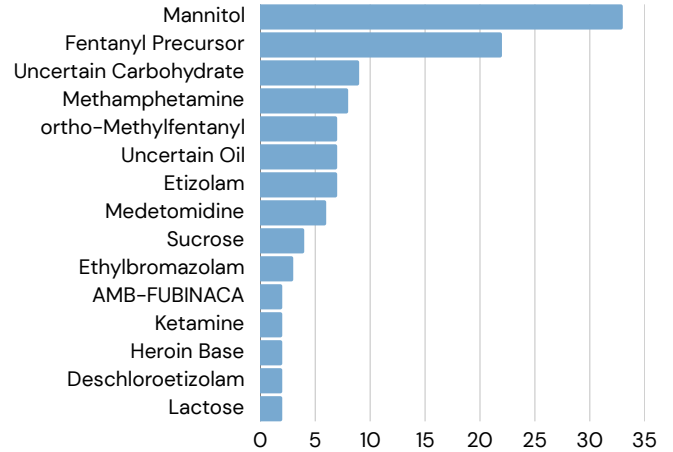
Please note that the presence of the expected substance does not imply purity, as samples frequently contain adulterating cutting agents. 'Down' can refer to any opioid drug present in any amount.

## Components detected in unregulated opioids (N=435)

### Main components

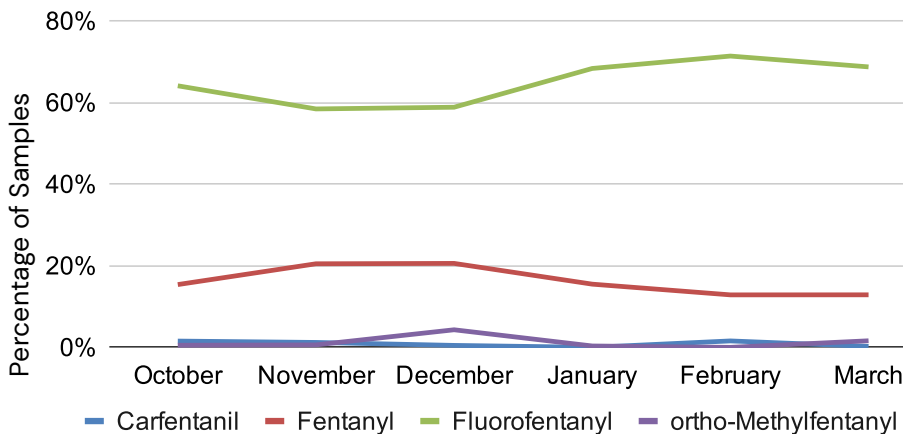


### Other components\*



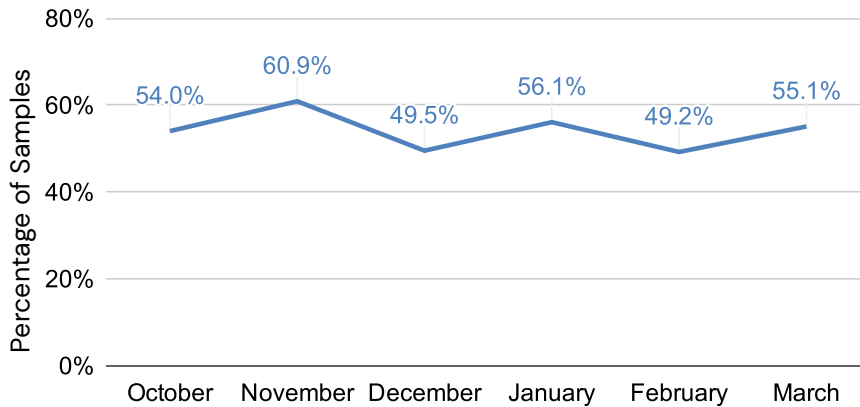
Additional components detected a single time have been omitted from these charts. All sample data can be found on the [BCCSU Drug Sense dashboard](#).

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



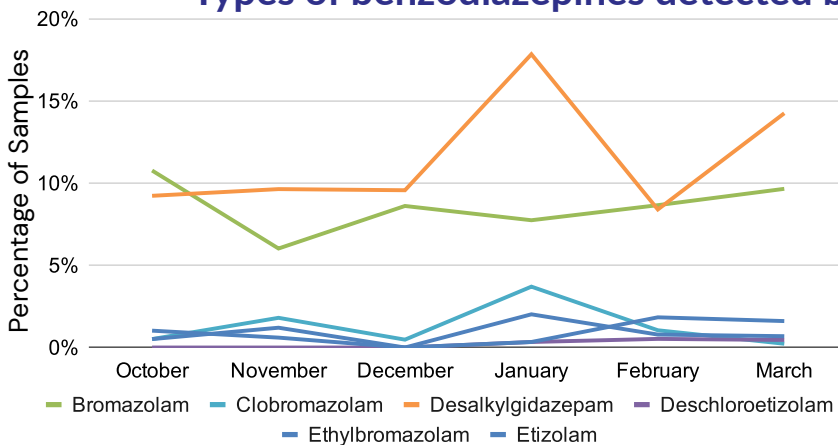
- In March, fluorofentanyl was detected in **68.7%** of samples by FTIR (**303 of 435 checked**). Fluorofentanyl continues to be the most common fentanyl analog detected in unregulated opioids.
- Conversely, fentanyl was detected by FTIR in **12.9%** of opioids, the lowest level to-date (**56 samples**). This 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 of this report for more information.

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



- During the month of March, **55.1%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines in the Interior Health region (**248 samples of 450 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, **25.5%** of unregulated opioids (**111 of 435 samples**) contained benzodiazepines in concentrations detectable by FTIR (>5%).
- Desalkylgidazepam was most common (**14.3%; 62 samples**), followed by bromazolam (**9.7%; 42 samples**).
- We continue to monitor the emergence of novel benzodiazepines. In March, FTIR detected ethylbromazolam (**3 samples**), and clobromazolam (**1 sample**). Others were detected via secondary testing. See the Secondary Testing section for more information.

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

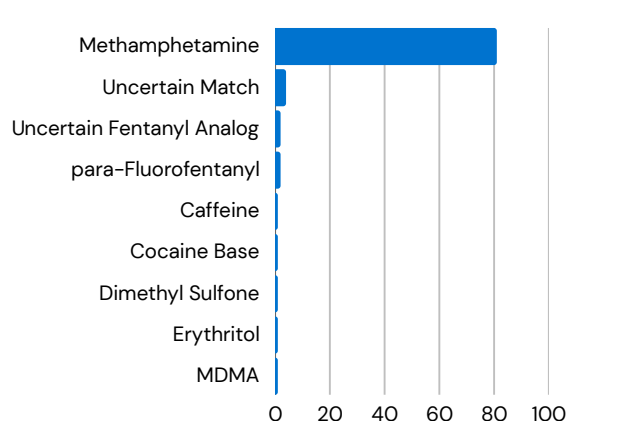


- Among opioid samples tested with medetomidine test strips in March, **35.8%** were positive for medetomidine (**156 of 280 samples**).
- There has been an increase in medetomidine in the unregulated drug supply. In the Interior Health region, medetomidine test strips are now being used at drug checking sites, as medetomidine is typically present in concentrations below the detection limit of the FTIR (<5%).

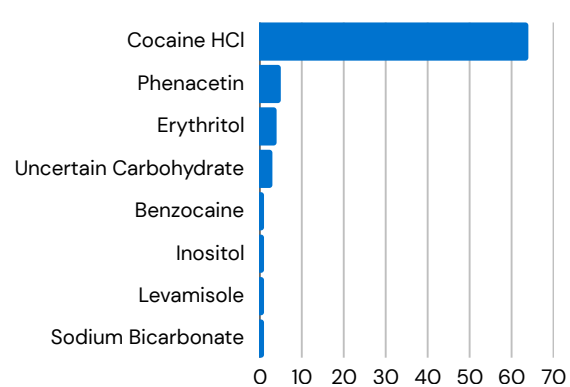
### Non-Opioids

#### Components detected in stimulants

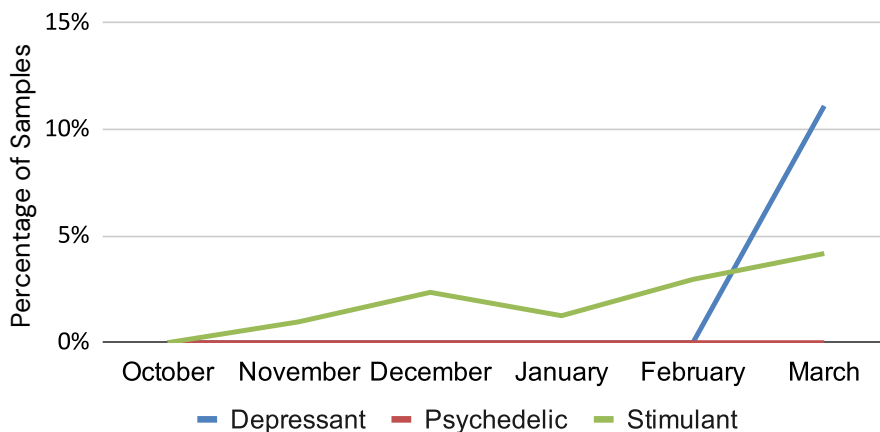
Components in methamphetamine (N=84)



Components in cocaine (N=65)



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

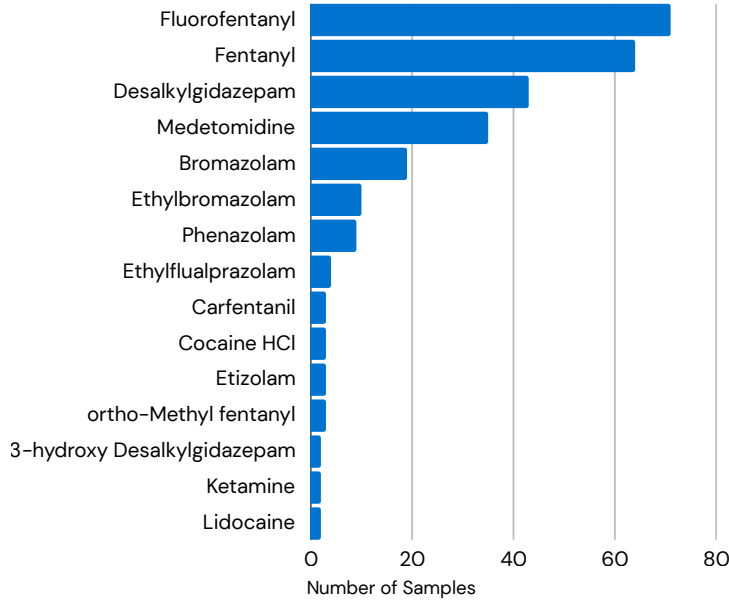


- In March, **11.1%** of all depressants, and **4.2%** of all stimulant samples checked tested positive for fentanyl by FTIR/test strip. This included samples expected to be medetomidine (**1 sample**), an unknown benzodiazepine (**1 sample**), crack cocaine (4 samples), and methamphetamine (**4 samples**).
- Of these, **1 sample (10.0%)** were expected to be cross-contaminated by the service user, noting they had been stored with opioids prior to submitting the sample 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 = 113)



To save space, additional components detected a single time have been omitted from this chart: Acetylmorphine, Benzodiazepine (unknown type), Despropionyl para-fluorofentanyl, Flubromazepam, Morphine, Xylazine.

## 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 Interior 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).

<b>Depressant includes:</b> benzodiazepines, etizolam, GHB, hypnotics	<b>Opioid includes:</b> "down", heroin, fentanyl (unregulated opioids), and pharmaceutical opioids	<b>Polysubstance includes:</b> cross-category mixtures	<b>Psychedelic includes:</b> MDMA and related, 2C-family, tryptamines, ketamine, LSD	<b>Stimulant includes:</b> methamphetamine, "speed," cocaine and crack cocaine, cathinones	<b>Unknown includes:</b> samples where the individual was unable to identify an expected substance - this includes found samples.
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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](#).