

Updates:

- Medetomidine test strips have been implemented at all drug checking sites in BC, allowing for more accurate monitoring in the unregulated opioid supply
- There has been an influx of novel benzodiazepines detected in unregulated opioids over the past year
- Cychlorphine, a novel synthetic opioid, continues to be detected sporadically across BC, most frequently in counterfeit pharmaceutical opioid tablets

Medetomidine-positivity:

- Detected in ~30% of opioids in past 3 months
- Median concentrations have increased over past year*
- 200x more potent than xylazine. Associated with [prolonged sedation](#), [bradycardia](#), and severe withdrawal¹
- For managing clinical challenges of medetomidine intoxication and withdrawal, see [BCCSU clinical resources for medetomidine](#). Refer clients to inpatient settings for withdrawal treatment
- Medetomidine often co-occurs with benzodiazepines, increasing risk of prolonged sedation²
- [Sedatives and heat can increase risk of harms](#)

Influx of novel benzodiazepines:

- 40-50% of opioids contain benzos, often multiple present in a sample
- Several novel benzos have emerged over past year, ethylbromazolam now 3rd most common overall
- Novel benzo effects/potencies are unknown. Some may not be detectable by test strip (e.g., ethylflualprazolam)
- Clinical challenges to [recognizing and managing benzo vs. opioid withdrawal, or co-withdrawal](#)

Fentanyl/fluorofentanyl concentrations:

- Fluorofentanyl is now more common than fentanyl in opioid samples
- These substances have similar potencies. Graph shows the combined total concentration
- Median concentrations have remained relatively stable since Nov 2024, down from a high of 14.2% in Aug 2024
- Concentrations typically range from 5-15%, but small fluctuations can still lead to overdose even with opioid tolerance³

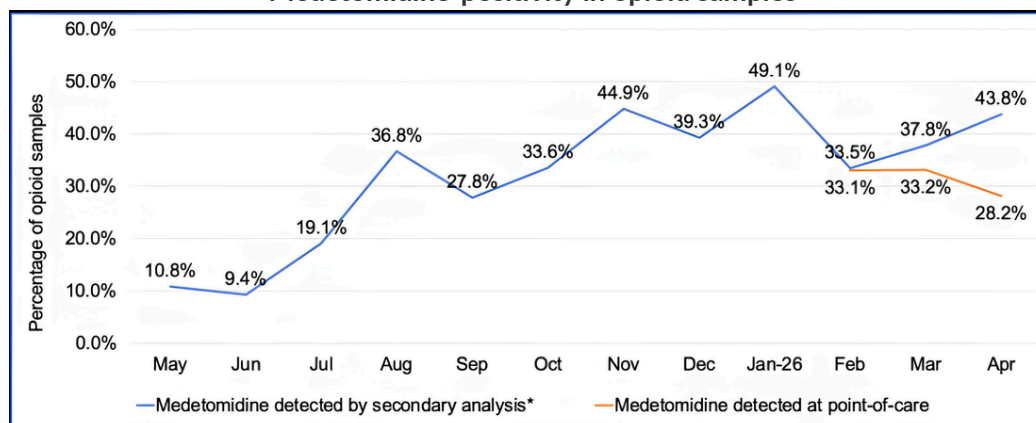
Key takeaways:

- Drug poisoning response:** Provide naloxone and ventilation, give CPR if no pulse (see [SAVE ME](#) steps)
- Withdrawal presentations are increasingly complex:** Consult the 24/7 Line for support managing

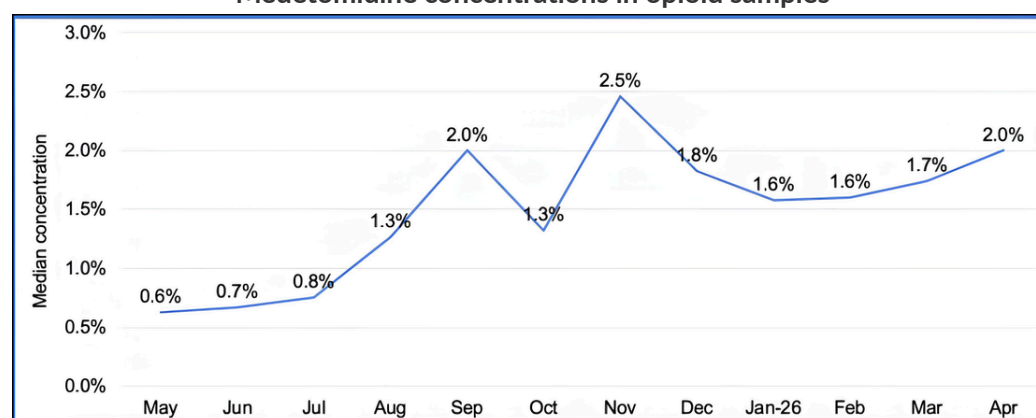
Emerging Adulterants: Cychlorphine Update

- [Novel synthetic opioid](#) considered up to 10x more potent than fentanyl; not detectable by test strip
- Sporadically found in counterfeit oxycodone and hydromorphone tablets across BC. Patients who may be exposed to counterfeits should be made aware of cychlorphine
- Recently found in an expected-down sample, alongside fentanyl analogs, benzos, and medetomidine in the Interior Health region
- Naloxone will reverse the effects of cychlorphine, though more doses may be needed

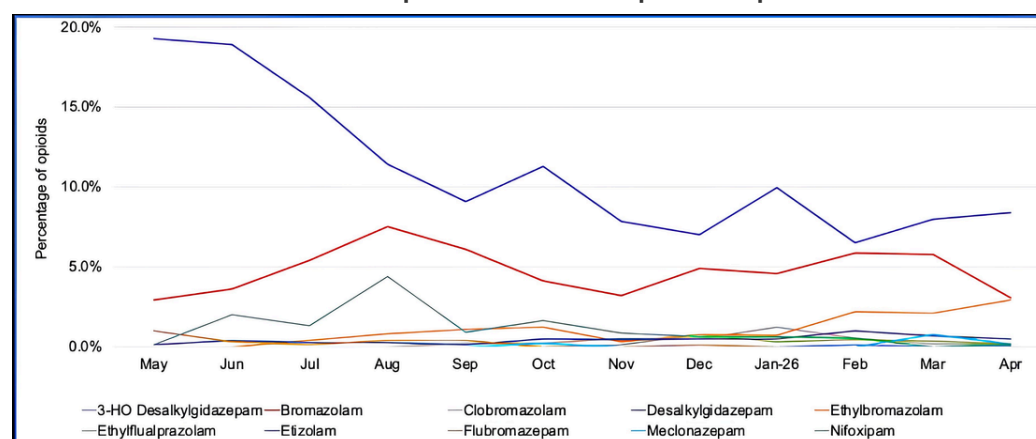
Medetomidine-positivity in opioid samples



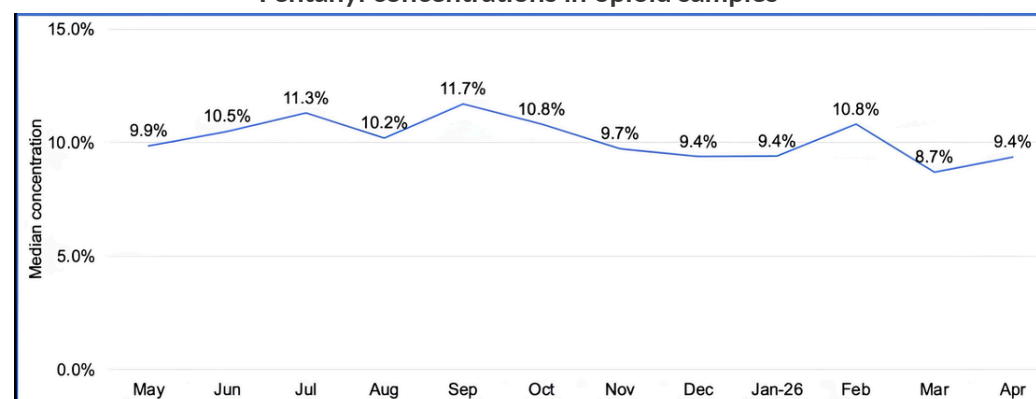
Medetomidine concentrations in opioid samples



Benzodiazepines detected in opioid samples



Fentanyl concentrations in opioid samples



About this report:

The data presented here is derived from results obtained from FTIR analysis at community drug checking services.

*A subset of samples are sent for confirmatory testing with more sensitive technologies (PSMS/GCMS). These samples are more complex, or associated with adverse events. While this subset may not be representative of the overall drug supply in BC, it does provide important information about what is changing.

Contact:

[BCCSU Drug Checking Program](#)
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Clinician Questions?

24/7 Addiction Medicine Clinician Support Line
778-945-7619

[Find a Drug Checking Service](#)

¹Lynch et al., 2026: <https://tinyurl.com/Scbatnwy>

²BCCSU, 2026: <https://tinyurl.com/y6skyad8>

³Tobias et al., 2026: <https://tinyurl.com/3bd9txwe>