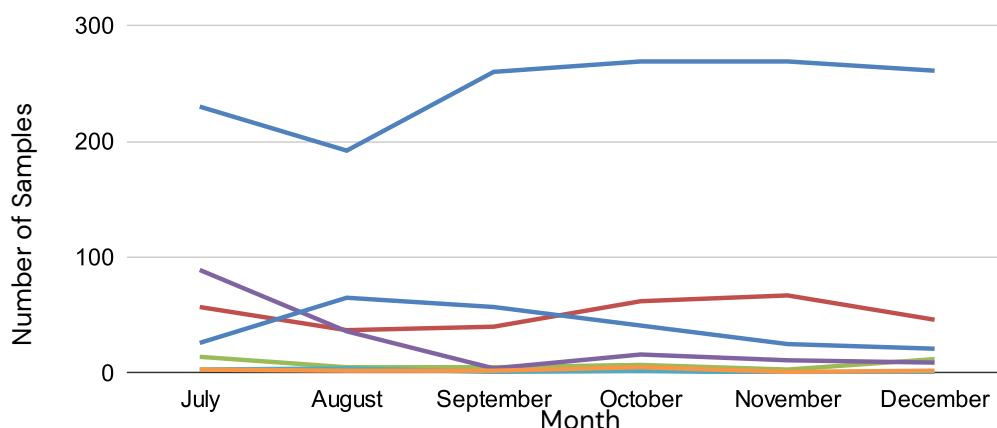




Key findings

- In December, **351** drug checks were performed by services offering FTIR drug checking in the Fraser Health region (**15 access points**).
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines by FTIR and/or test strip increased to **58.2%**. Of these, desalkylgizapam was the most common detected by FTIR.
- There has been an influx of novel benzodiazepines detected in unregulated opioids over the past several months. In December, this included nifoxipam, ethylbromazolam, clobromazolam, and ethylflualprazolam. We note that ethylflualprazolam may not reliably be detected by test strip.
- We continue to monitor an increase in carfentanil and tranquilizers (primarily medetomidine) detected in opioids this year. Among samples sent for secondary testing in December (**n=180**), medetomidine was detected in **99** samples, xylazine in **5** samples, and carfentanil in **8** samples.

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



Number of samples by drug category in Dec.

Opioid	261
Stimulant	46
Depressant	12
Psychedelic	9
Other	0
Polysubstance	2
Unknown	21

Total: 351

Number of drug checks at each site

Location	# of Drugs Checked
Foxglove Housing (Surrey)	82
SafePoint (Surrey)	20
Mountainside (Abbotsford)	86
Mountainside (Chilliwack)	62
Mountainside (Langley)	8
Mountainside (Maple Ridge)	11
Mountainside (Mission)	34
Purpose Society (New Westminster)	11
SOURCES (White Rock)	32
Total	351

Less than 5 samples were tested at the following location, which has been included in the total: Mountainside (Hope), Purpose Society (Burnaby)

Number of samples with the expected drug detected

Expected Drug	Detected	Not Detected	N/A	Total
Opioid	255	6	0	261
Stimulant	43	3	0	46
Depressant	1	11	0	12
Psychedelic	9	0	0	9
Polysubstance	2	0	0	2
Unknown	0	0	21	21
Total	310	20	21	351

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

Opioids

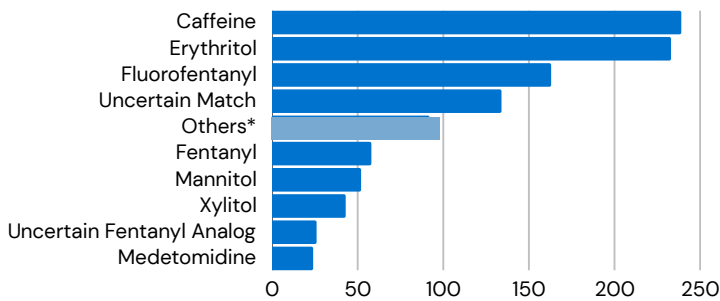
Number of opioid samples with the expected drug detected

Expected Drug	Detected	Not Detected	N/A	Total
Fentanyl	7	1	0	8
Down	248	1	0	249
Pharmaceutical	0	3	0	3
Opioid	0	1	0	1
Total	255	6	0	261

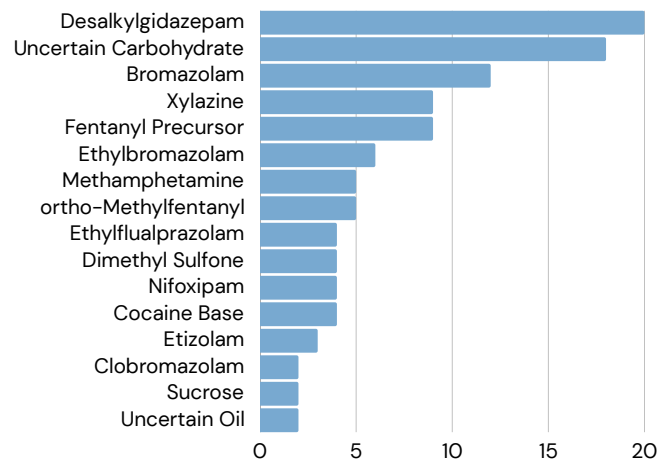
Please note that the presence of the expected substance does not imply purity, as samples frequently contain adulterating cutting agents.
'Down' can refer to any opioid drug present in any amount.

Components detected in unregulated opioids (N=257)

Main components

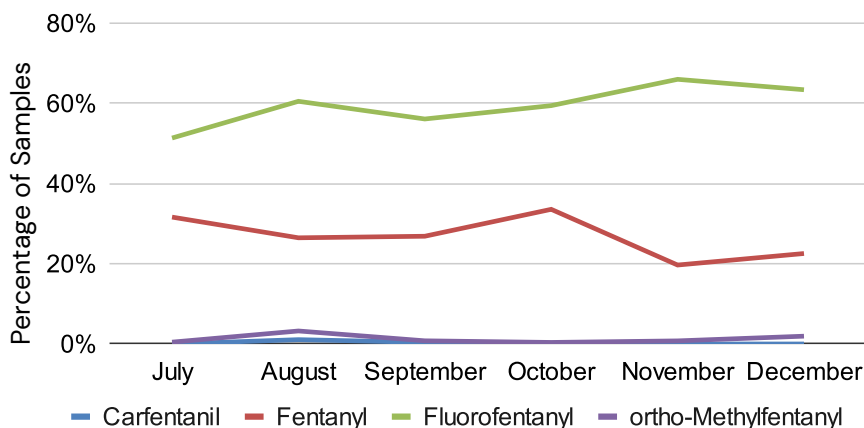


Other components*



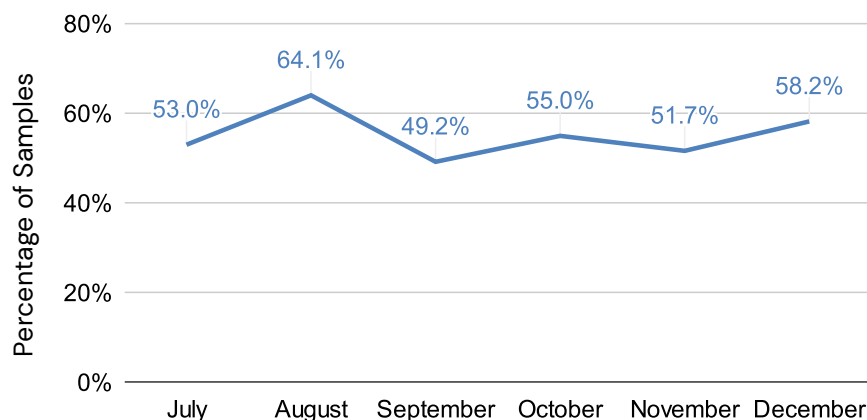
Additional components detected a single time have been omitted from these charts. All sample data can be found on the [BCCSU Drug Sense dashboard](#).

Fentanyl analogs detected in unregulated opioids, past 6 months



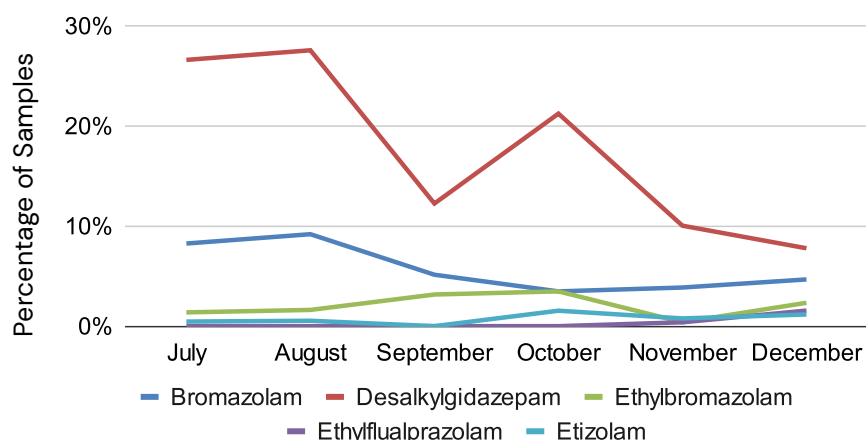
- In December, fluorofentanyl detection by FTIR decreased slightly to **63.4%** of unregulated opioids (**163 of 257 samples**), while fentanyl detection increased to **22.6% (58 samples)** from the previous month.
- The true prevalence of carfentanil is expected to be higher than what is observed by FTIR as it is usually present in concentrations lower than the detection limit (5%). Please see **secondary testing section** for more information.

Percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines, past 6 months



- During the month of December, **58.2%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines in the Fraser Health region (**152 samples of 261 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

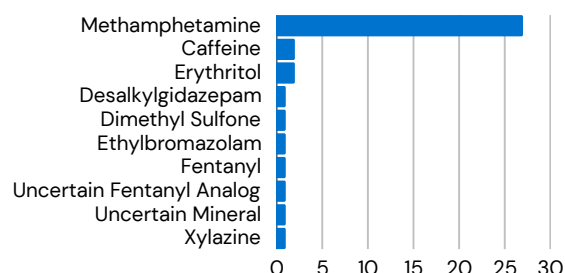


- In December, **18.7%** of unregulated opioids (**48 of 257 samples**) contained benzodiazepines in concentrations high enough to be detectable by FTIR (>5%).
- While desalkylgidazepam remained the most common, detection declined to **7.8%** of unregulated opioids tested (**20 samples**).
- We are continuing to monitor the emergence of novel benzodiazepines. In December, this included ethylbromazepam (**6 samples**), nifoxipam (**4 samples**), ethylflualprazolam (**4 samples**), and clobromazepam (**2 samples**).

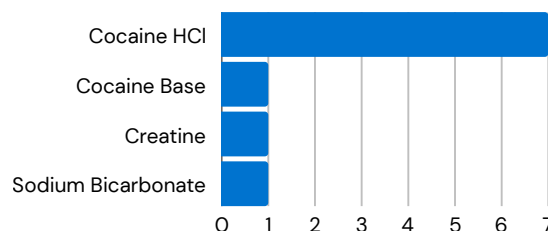
Non-Opioids

Components detected in stimulants

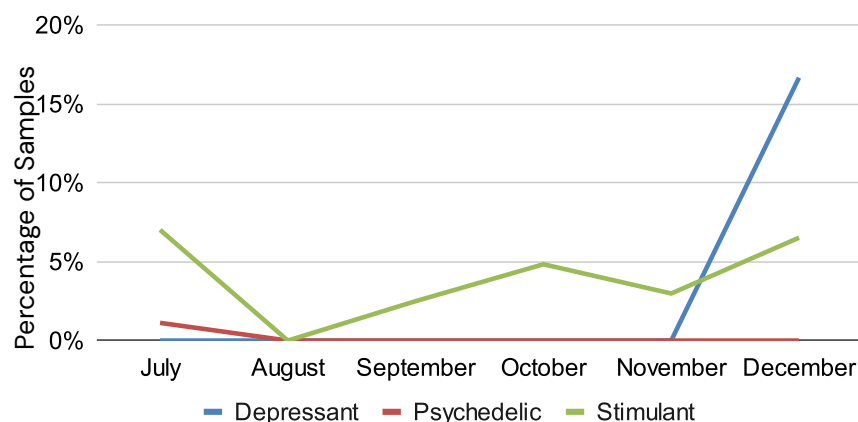
Components in methamphetamine (N=30)



Components in cocaine (N=8)



Fentanyl detected in non-opioids, past 6 months

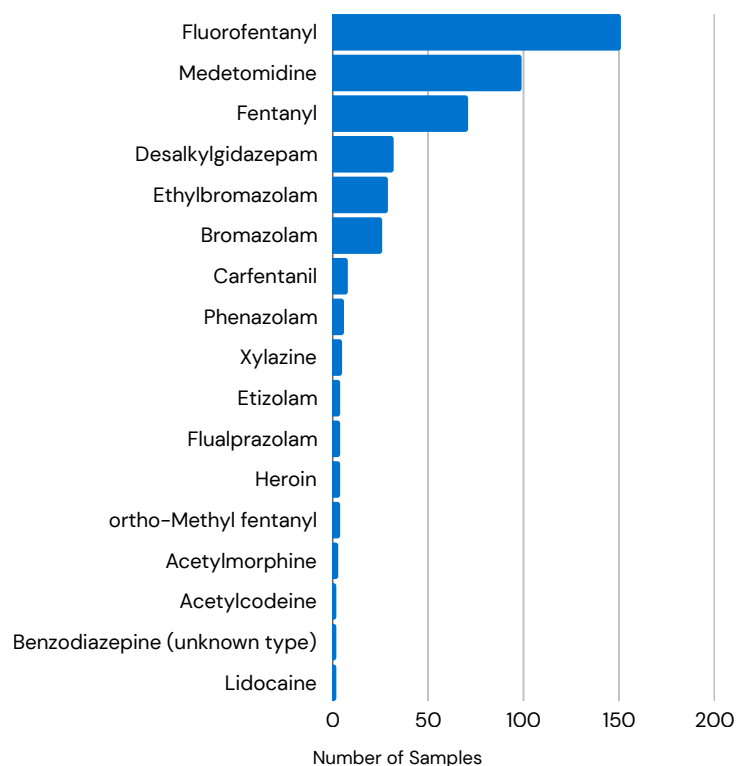


- In December, a total of **5 non-opioid samples** tested positive for fentanyl by FTIR and/or test strip. This included **3 stimulants** (3 methamphetamine), and **2 depressants** (1 unknown benzodiazepine, 1 alprazolam).

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=180)



To save space, additional components detected a single time have been omitted from this chart:
Cocaine HCl, Fentanyl or analogue, Furanyl UF-17, Methamphetamine, Norfentanyl.

Public Health Notifications

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Spectrometry Results	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Alert Message
No alerts for Fraser 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](#).