

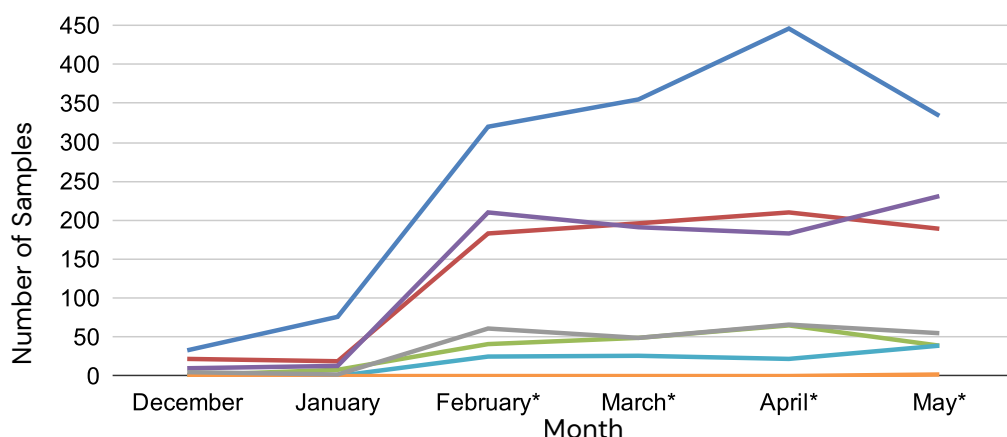


Key findings

As of February, we have integrated data from the BCCSU-partnered CMHA Mid-Island Albert St. site and from Substance (University of Victoria). For more information on Substance, please visit their [website](#).

- In May, a total of **889** drug checks were performed in the Island Health region: **107** by the CMHA Mid-Island Albert Street site, and **782** by Substance.
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines increased to **38.0%**. For the first time, ethylbromazolam, a novel benzodiazepine, was most frequently identified.
- We continue to monitor the emergence of novel benzodiazepines in unregulated opioids. Alongside ethylbromazolam, in May this included phenazolam (clobromazolam), ethylflualprazolam, an unknown benzodiazepine, and 3-HO-desalkylgizepam.
- The percentage of unregulated opioids testing positive for medetomidine increased to **26.7%**. In response to emergence of medetomidine in the drug supply, Island Health has implemented medetomidine test strips at all drug checking sites.
- Among opioids sent for secondary testing from the CMHA Mid-Island Albert St. site in May (**n=29**), medetomidine was detected in **19** samples, carfentanil in **14** samples, and xylazine in **3** samples.

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



*Combines samples tested at the CMHA Mid-Island Albert Street and Substance sites. Previous months include only samples tested at the Albert Street site.

Number of drug checks at each site

BCCSU-Partnered Locations	# of Drugs Checked
CMHA Mid-Island Albert St.	107
Substance (UVic) Locations	# of Drugs Checked
Substance	336
Outreach	333
Comox Valley	48
Port Alberni	26
Duncan	25
Campbell River	11
Port Hardy	3
Total	889

Number of samples with the expected drug detected

Expected Drug	Detected	Not Detected	N/A	Total
Opioid	242	81	11	334
Stimulant	175	10	4	189
Depressant	21	16	2	39
Psychedelic	212	11	7	231
Other	16	6	17	39
Polysubstance	2	0	0	2
Unknown	0	0	0	55
Total	668	124	41	889

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

Opioids

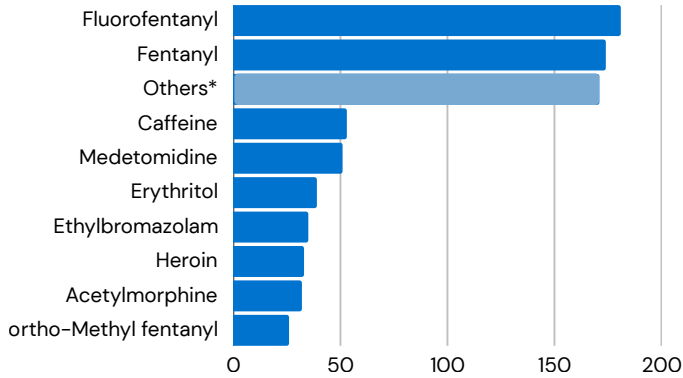
Number of opioid samples with the expected drug present

Expected Drug	Present	Not Present	N/A	Total
Other Opioid	14	3	0	17
Down	315	0	0	315
Pharmaceutical	0	1	1	2
Total	329	4	1	334

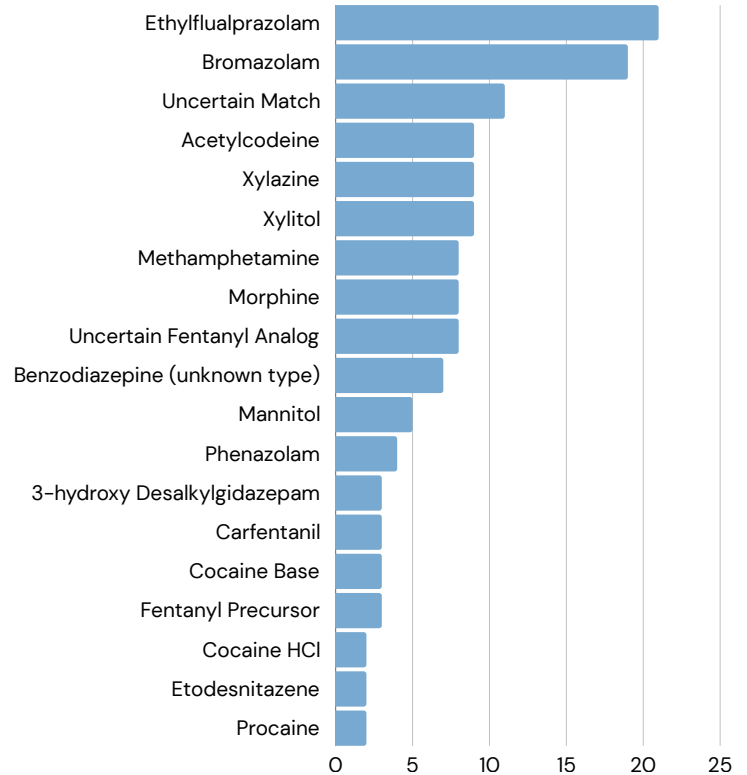
Please note that the presence of the expected substance does not imply purity, as samples frequently contain adulterating cutting agents.
'Down' can refer to any opioid drug present in any amount.

Components detected in unregulated opioids (N=315)

Main components



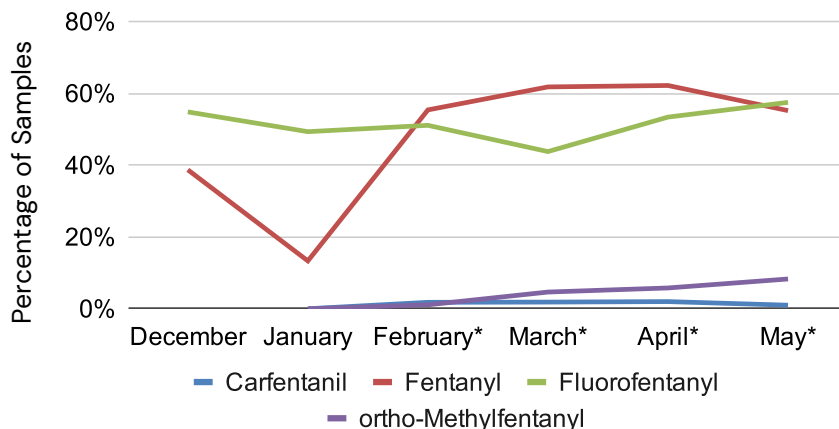
Other components*



Please note that components are detected with different technologies, which have been combined in these charts. The CMHA Mid-Island Albert St. site uses FTIR, and Substance uses PSMS, which is more sensitive.

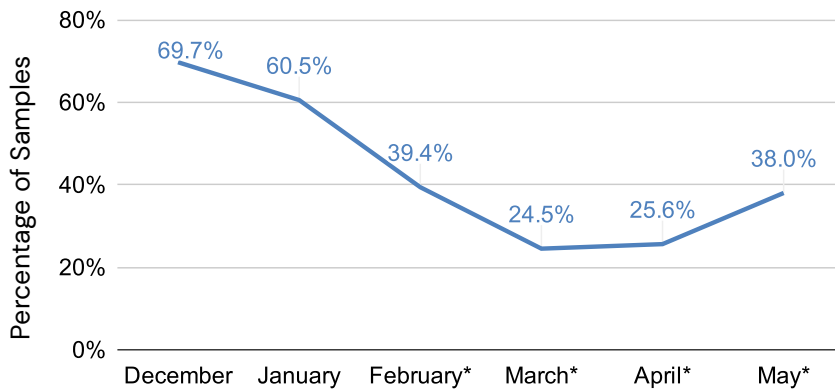
Components detected a single time have been omitted. Substance data can be found on their website, and all CMHA Albert St. site sample data can be found on our dashboard.

Fentanyl analogs detected in unregulated opioids, past 6 months



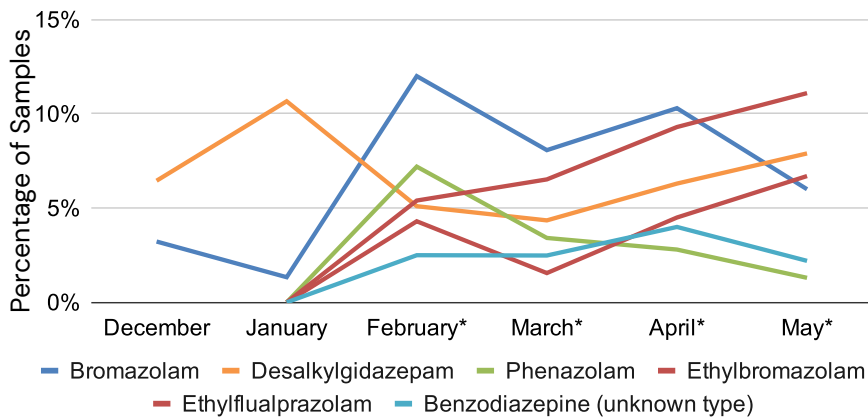
- In May, fluorofentanyl was the most common fentanyl analog, detected by FTIR/PSMS in 57.7% of unregulated opioids checked (181 of 315 samples). Conversely, fentanyl was detected in 55.2% (174 samples)
- Carfentanil was detected 3 samples by PSMS this month. The true number is expected to be higher, as carfentanil is usually contained in concentrations below the FTIR detection limit (<5%). See the Secondary Testing section of this report for more information.
- *Combines samples tested at the CMHA Mid-Island Albert Street and Substance sites. Previous months include only samples tested at the Albert Street site.

Percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines, past 6 months



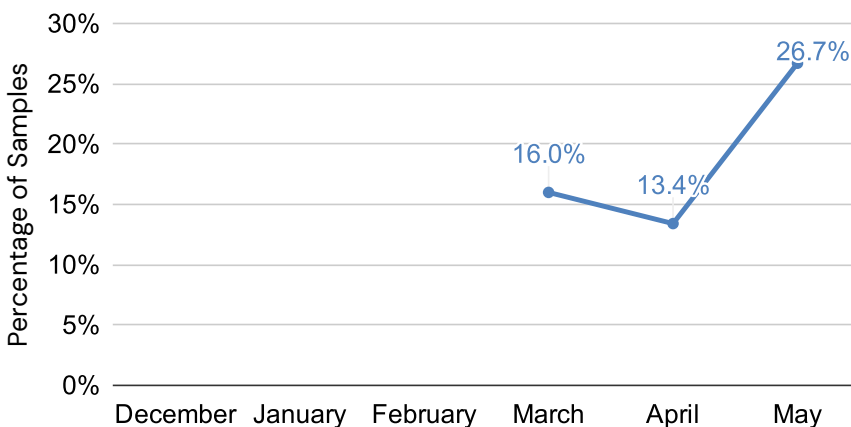
- During the month of May, the percentage of opioid samples testing positive for benzodiazepines increased to **38.0%** (127 samples of **334** checked).
- Opioid samples are checked for benzodiazepine-positivity using BTNX test strips, FTIR spectrometer, and/or PSMS. The true percentage may be higher, as some benzodiazepines (e.g., etizolam, ethylflualprazolam) may be missed by test strip.
- *Combines samples tested at the CMHA Mid-Island Albert Street and Substance sites. Previous months include only samples tested at the Albert Street site.

Types of benzodiazepines detected in unregulated opioids, past 6 months



- In May, ethylbromazepam surpassed both desalkylgidazepam and bromazepam for the first time as the most common benzodiazepine detected in unregulated opioids (**11.1%**; **35** of **315** samples).
- We are continuing to monitor the emergence of novel benzodiazepines. In addition to ethylbromazepam, in May this included phenazepam, ethylflualprazolam, an unknown benzodiazepine, and 3-HO-desalkylgidazepam.
- *Combines samples tested at the CMHA Mid-Island Albert Street and Substance sites. Previous months include only samples tested at the Albert Street site.

Percentage of opioids testing positive for medetomidine, past 6 months

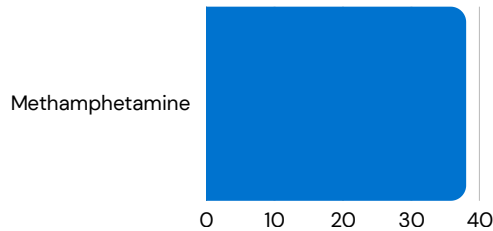


- During the month of May, the percentage of unregulated opioid samples testing positive for medetomidine increased to **26.7%** (84 of **315** samples checked).
- Unregulated opioids are checked for medetomidine-positivity using BTNX test strips, FTIR spectrometer, and/or PSMS. As of March, test strips have been implemented at all drug checking sites in response to the emergence of medetomidine, as it is typically present in concentrations below the FTIR detection limit (<5%).

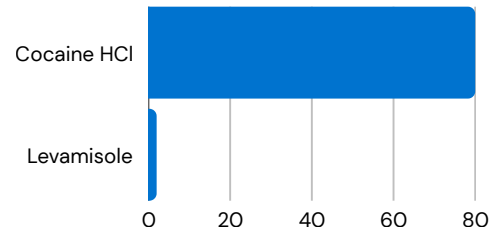
Non-Opioids

Components detected in stimulants

Components in methamphetamine (N=42)



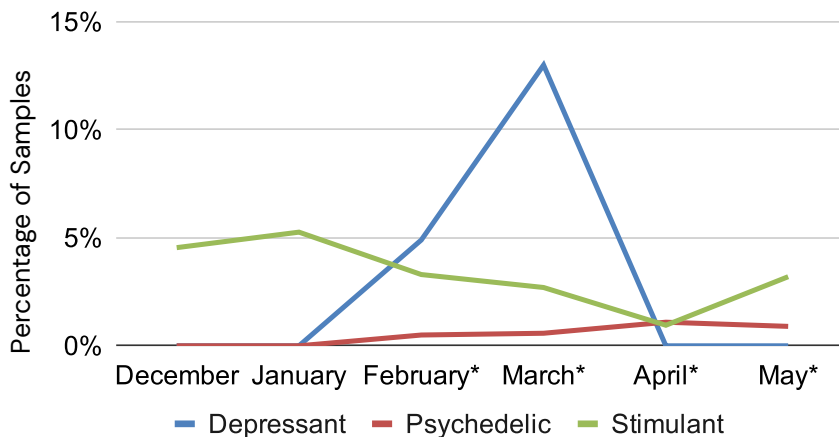
Components in cocaine (N=81)



Please note that components are detected with different technologies, which have been combined in these charts. The CMHA Mid-Island Albert St. site uses FTIR, and Substance uses PSMS, which is more sensitive.

Components detected a single time have been omitted. Substance data can be found on their website, and all CMHA Albert St. site sample data can be found on our dashboard.

Fentanyl detected in non-opioids, past 6 months

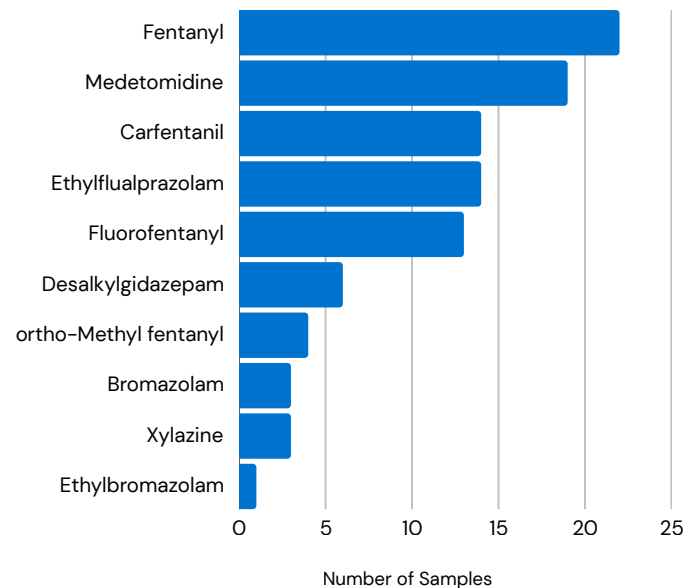


- In May, **3.2%** of all stimulants (**4** methamphetamine, **2** cocaine), and **0.9%** of all psychedelics (**2** MDMA samples) tested positive for fentanyl by test strip and/or FTIR/PSMS.
- *Combines samples tested at the CMHA Mid-Island Albert Street and Substance sites. Previous months include only samples tested at the Albert Street site.

PSMS Secondary Testing Results Summary

A subset of samples were sent from the CMHA Mid-Island Albert St. site for secondary testing at Substance (University of Victoria) using Paper Spray Mass Spectrometry (PSMS). PSMS is a highly sensitive technology, and can detect components below the detection limit of the FTIR (<5%). Below is a summary of all active components detected by PSMS in opioid samples. For more information about Substance please visit their website.

Active components in opioids submitted (N=29)



Public Health Notifications

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Spectrometry Results	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Alert Message
In May, there were no alerts issued within the Island 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 partnered CMHA Mid-Island Albert St. site and Substance at the University of Victoria. Both services utilize Fourier Transform Infrared (FTIR) spectrometry in combination with BTNX fentanyl test strips, and benzodiazepine test strips when applicable. In addition, Substance utilizes Paper Spray Mass Spectrometry, which is highly sensitive, and can detect components in concentrations in below the FTIR detection limit.

We note the FTIR spectrometer has a detection limit of approximately 5% concentration (McCrae, 2019). For more information on Substance, please visit their [website](#).

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.
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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](#).