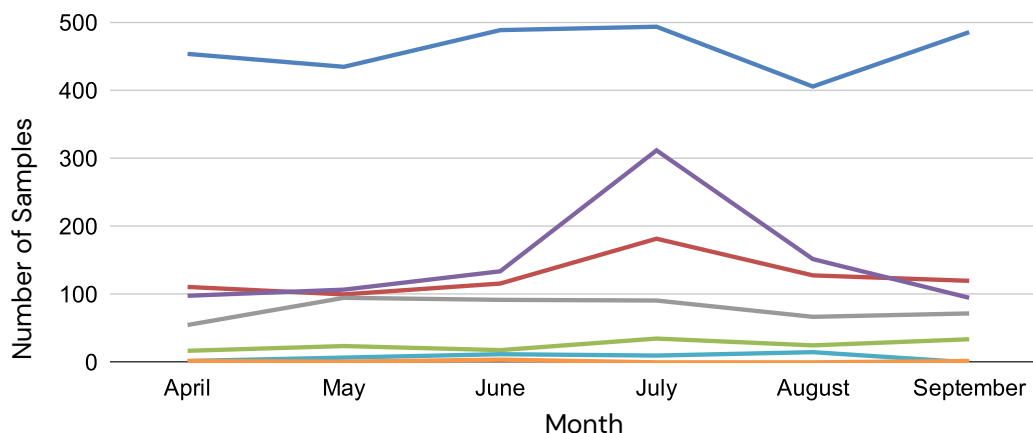




Key findings

- In September, **809** drug checks were performed by community FTIR drug checking sites in the Vancouver Coastal region (**10** access points).
- The percentage of all opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines increased to **33.1%**. The true percentage may be higher, as some benzodiazepines (e.g., ethylflualprazolam) may be missed by test strip.
- Ethylbromazolam, a novel benzodiazepine, was the most common benzodiazepine detected by FTIR in unregulated opioids overall.
- The percentage of unregulated opioids testing positive for medetomidine increased to **16.6%**.

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months



Number of samples by drug category in Sept.

Opioid	486
Stimulant	120
Depressant	34
Psychedelic	95
Other	0
Polysubstance	2
Unknown	72

Total: 809

Number of drug checks at each site

Location	# of Drugs Checked
Get Your Drugs Tested (Vancouver)	10
Insite (Vancouver)	752
Insite (Richmond)	6
LIFT Community Services (Powell River)	23
Whistler Community Service Society (Squamish)	14
Total	809

Less than 5 samples were tested at the following location, which has been included in the total: Whistler Community Service Society (Whistler)

Number of samples with the expected drug detected

Expected Drug	Detected	Not Detected	N/A	Total
Opioid	468	11	7	486
Stimulant	112	7	1	120
Depressant	26	7	1	34
Psychedelic	89	3	3	95
Other	0	0	0	0
Polysubstance	1	1	0	2
Unknown	0	0	72	72
Total	696	29	84	809

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

Opioids

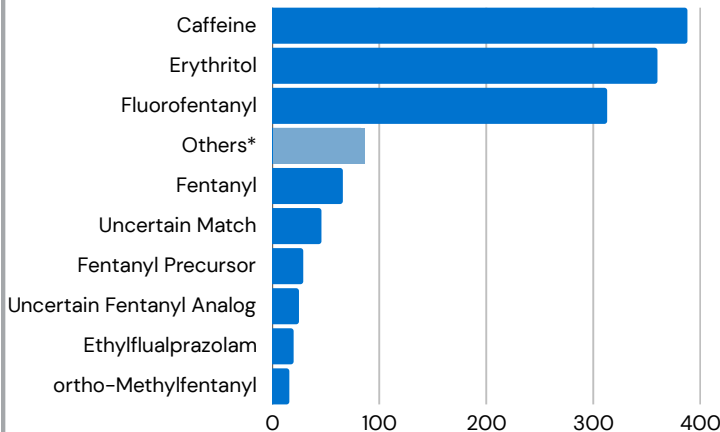
Number of opioid samples with the expected drug present

Expected Drug	Detected	Not Detected	N/A	Total
Fentanyl	30	1	0	31
Heroin	6	0	0	6
Down	423	9	0	432
Pharmaceutical	6	1	7	14
Opium	3	0	0	3
Total	468	11	7	486

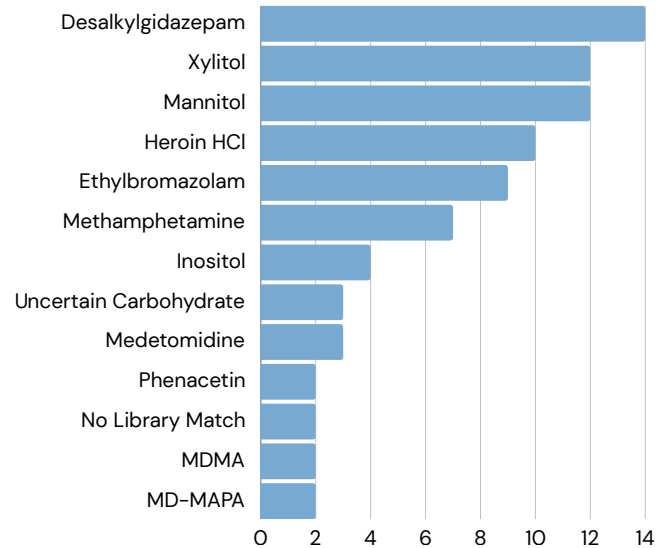
Please note that the presence of the expected substance does not imply purity, as samples frequently contain adulterating cutting agents.
'Down' can refer to any opioid drug present in any amount.

Components detected in unregulated opioids (N=469)

Main components

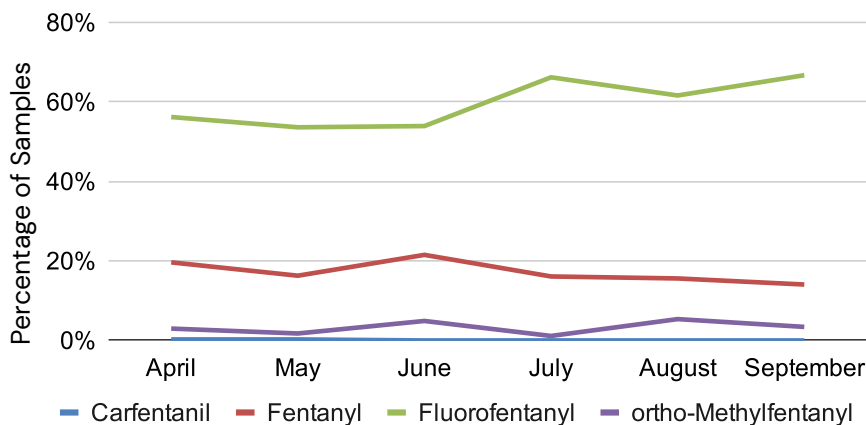


Other components*



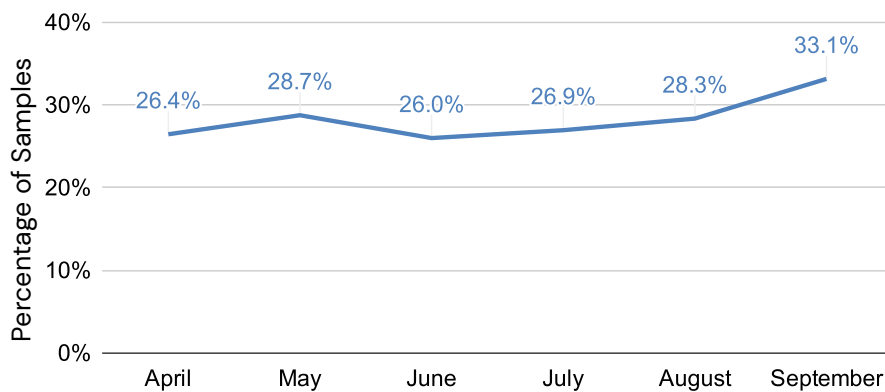
Additional components detected a single time have been omitted from these charts. All sample data can be found on the [BCCSU Drug Sense dashboard](#).

Fentanyl analogs detected in unregulated opioids, past 6 months



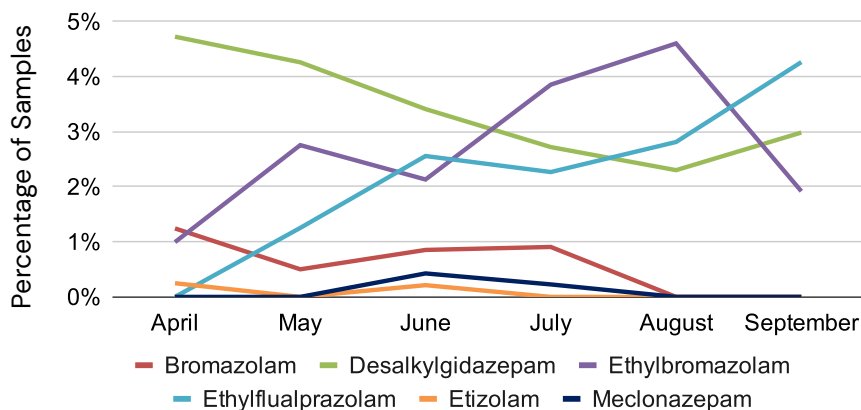
- In September, fentanyl detections by FTIR fell to a low of **14.1% (66 of 469 unregulated opioids checked)**. This decline may reflect that less fentanyl is circulating in the opioid supply, and/or that it is present in concentrations below the FTIR detection limit (<5%).
- Conversely, fluorofentanyl was detected in **66.7% of unregulated opioids checked (313 samples)**, the highest level to-date.
- Carfentanil was not detected by FTIR this month. Its true prevalence is expected to be higher, as carfentanil is typically present at concentrations below the FTIR detection limit. See the **Secondary Testing** section for more information.

Percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines, past 6 months



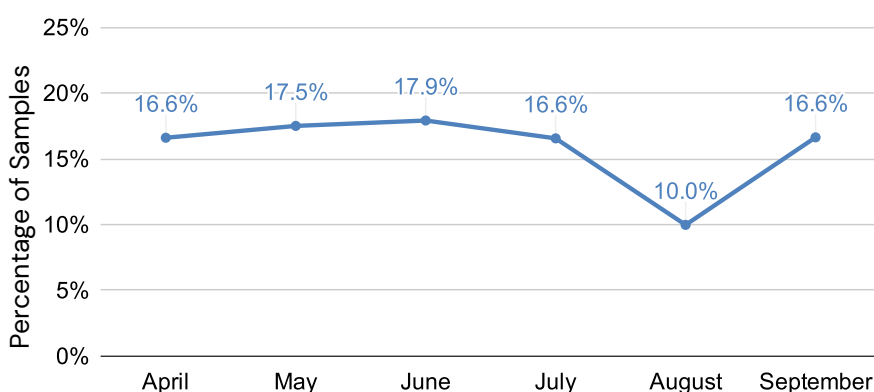
- For the third month in the row, the percentage of opioid samples testing positive for benzodiazepines increased, up to **33.1%** in September (**161** samples of **486** checked).
- Opioid samples are checked for benzodiazepine-positivity using BTNX test strips and the FTIR spectrometer. The true percentage 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 September, ethylflualprazolam was the most common benzodiazepine detected by FTIR in unregulated opioids (**4.3%**, **20** samples), followed by desalkylgidazepam (**3.0%**; **14** samples), and ethylbromazolam (**1.9%**, **9** samples).
- The increase in novel benzodiazepines marks a shift over the past 6 months, with desalkylgidazepam and bromazolam no longer being the predominant benzodiazepines in the region.

Percentage of opioids testing positive for medetomidine, past 6 months

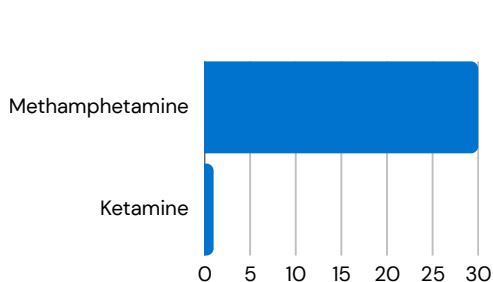


- During the month of September, the percentage of unregulated opioids testing positive for medetomidine increased to **16.6%** (**78** of **469**).
- The majority of samples containing medetomidine were also positive for benzodiazepines (**51** of **78**).
- Unregulated opioids are checked for medetomidine-positivity using BTNX test strips and the FTIR spectrometer. 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%).

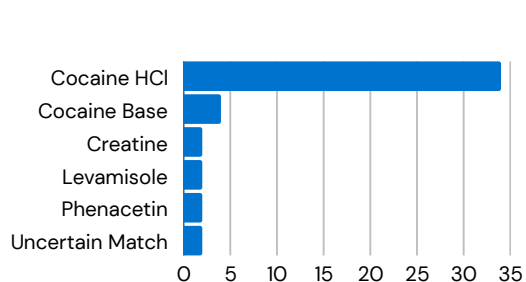
Non-Opioids

Components detected in stimulants

Components in methamphetamine (N=31)

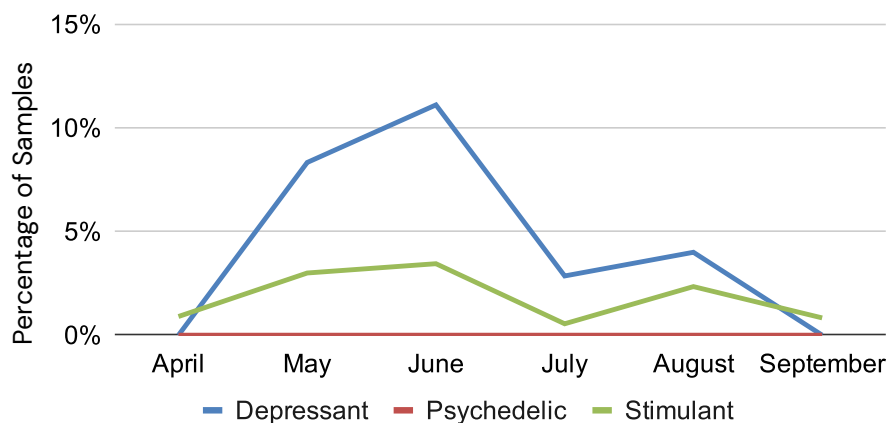


Components in cocaine (N=40)



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 detected in non-opioids, past 6 months

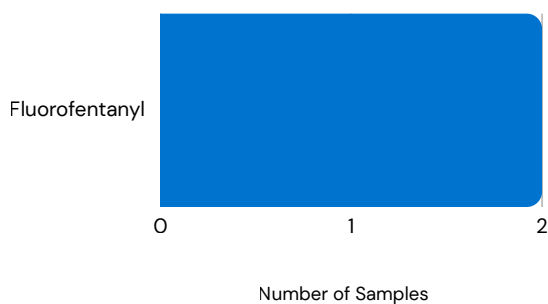


- In September, **0.8%** of all stimulants (1 methamphetamine sample) tested positive for fentanyl by FTIR/test strip.

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=2)



Public Health Notifications

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Alert Message
September 15, 2026 Vancouver	Unknown	White powder in Vancouver tested positive for N-propionitrile 5-chloro desmethyl buprenorphine, a novel orphine analog.

Alerts are issued based on FTIR and test strip results determined at point-of-care, or results from samples sent for further secondary testing by [Substance](#), or [Health Canada Drug Analysis Service](#)

Health authorities and community organizations issue further toxic drug alerts from sources other than drug checking. See their respective websites or social media accounts for more alerts.

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.
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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](#).