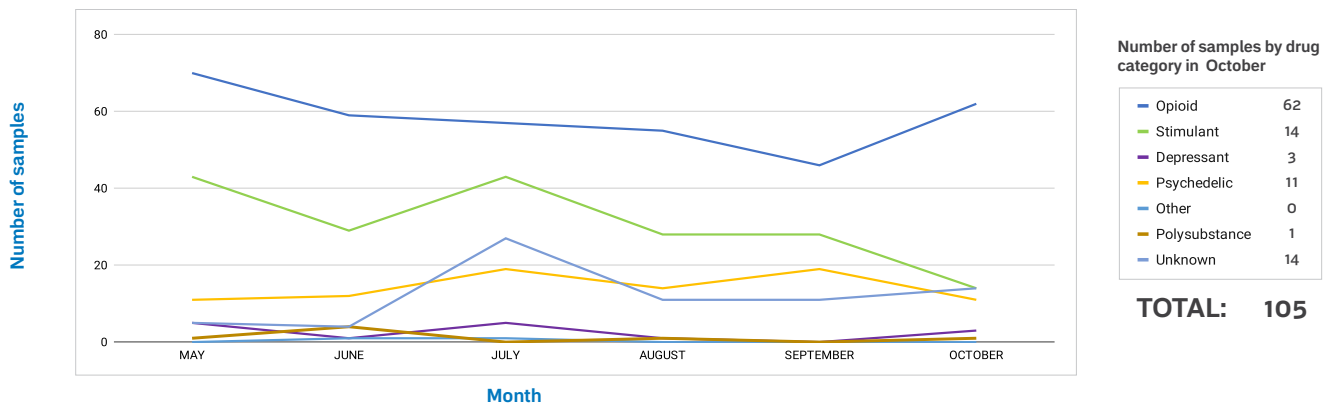


Key Findings

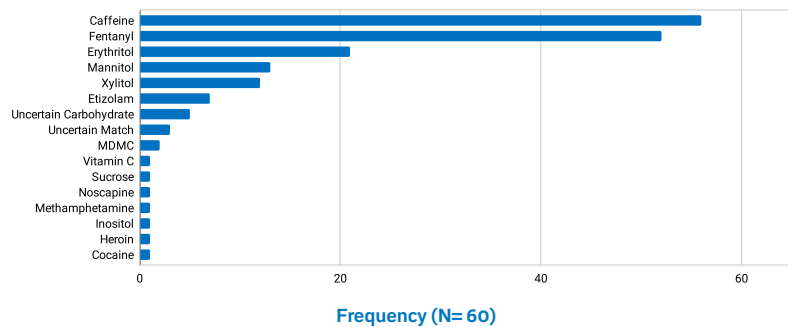
- The percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines in the region rose sharply (68%, 42 of 62 samples) from last month, but trends may be hard to infer due to the small number of samples over a large region. Etizolam, the predominant benzodiazepine in expected opioids, may be missed by drug checking technologies. This means that the true rate may be higher than reported here.
- Heroin was detected in 17.7% of *down* samples in the Interior Health region in 2018 and 2019, but only 1.8% of *down* samples in 2021.
- Drug checking is available in many different communities in the Interior Health region. For updated times and locations, visit the Interior Health drug checking [website](#).

Number of drug samples checked in the past 6 months

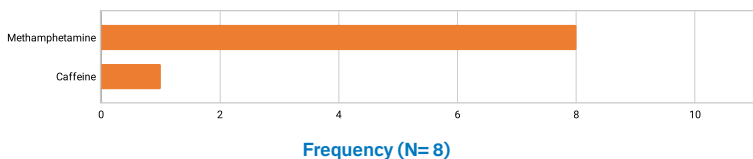


Components found in drug samples in October

Components in opioids

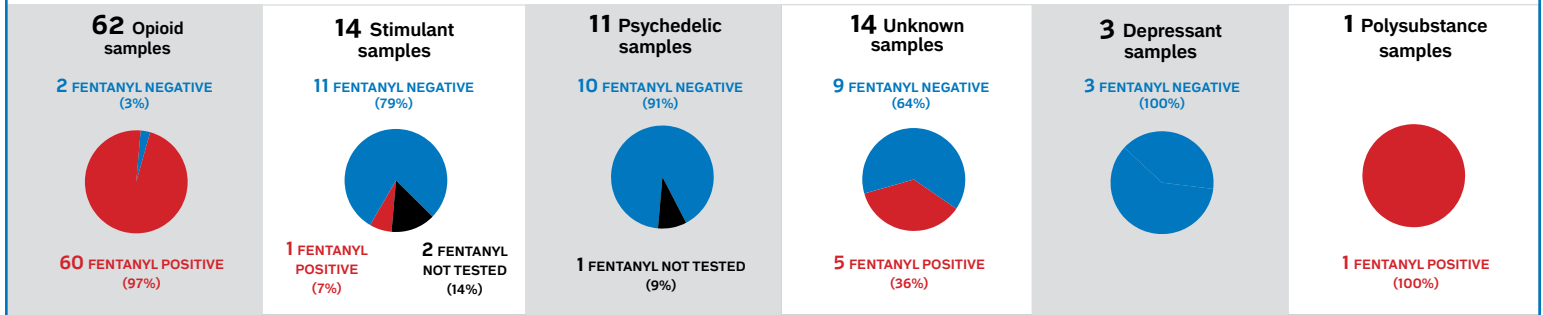


Components in methamphetamine



6 samples of cocaine contained only cocaine

Number of samples tested with fentanyl present

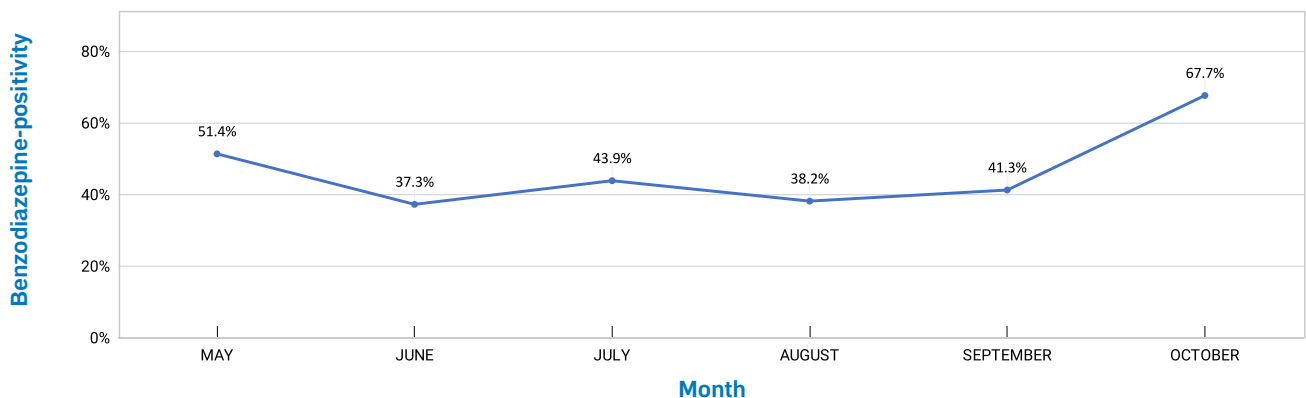


PUBLIC HEALTH NOTIFICATIONS

Date & Location	Expected Drug	Drugs Detected	Fentanyl Strip	Benzo Strip	Area Purchased	Alert Message
October 14, 2021 ASK Wellness Kamloops	Methamphetamine	Methamphetamine, Caffeine	Positive	N/A	Kamloops	The unexpected presence of fentanyl poses significant risk of opioid toxicity, especially for opioid-naïve individuals.
October 28, 2021 Vernon MHSU Vernon	Fentanyl	Caffeine, Fentanyl	Positive	Positive	Vernon	Benzodiazepines combined with opioids can cause prolonged sedation and increases the risk of overdose.

For information about public health alerts in the Interior Health region, please visit:
<https://www.interiorhealth.ca/AboutUs/Leadership/MHQ/Pages/PHEmergency.aspx>

Percentage of opioids testing positive for benzodiazepines in the past 6 months










During the month of October, **67.7%** of expected opioid samples tested positive for benzodiazepines using test strips in our partner sites in Interior Health (**42 samples of 62 checked**). Opioid samples are checked for benzodiazepine-positivity using BTNX test strips and the FTIR spectrometer. The results presented here are derived from both of these technologies and are presumptive until confirmed by a laboratory.

Number of drugs checks at each site

Organization	City/Town	# of Drugs Checked
ANKORS	Nelson	10
	Trail	15
ASK Wellness	Kamloops	9
	Merritt	4
	Penticton	3
UBC Okanagan	Kelowna	17
	Penticton	10
	Vernon	14
Total		105

Number of samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Psychedelic</p> <p>11 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 9 Did not match: 1 Match not determined: 1</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Stimulant</p> <p>14 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 14</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Polysubstance</p> <p>1 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Did not match: 1</p>
<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Opioid</p> <p>62 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 60 Did not match: 1 Match not determined: 1</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Unknown</p> <p>14 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Match not determined: 14</p>	<p>EXPECTED DRUG: Depressant</p> <p>3 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 1 Did not match: 2</p>
<p>Total</p> <p>105 Samples Tested</p>  <p>Matched: 84 Did not match: 5 Match not determined: 16</p>		

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

Depressant may include:
benzodiazepines, etizolam,
GHB, hypnotics

Opioid may include:
"down," heroin, fentanyl,
pharmaceutical opioids

Polysubstance includes:
cross-category mixtures

Psychedelic may include:
MDMA and related,
2C-family, tryptamines,
ketamine, LSD

Stimulant may include:
methamphetamine,
"speed," cocaine and crack
cocaine, cathinones

Unknown includes:
samples where the individual
was unable to identify an
expected substance - this
includes found samples.

Number of opioid samples that matched expectation

using FTIR/test strip drug checking

EXPECTED DRUG:

Fentanyl

27 Samples Tested



Matched: 26

Did not match: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:

Heroin

1 Samples Tested



Matched: 1

EXPECTED DRUG:

Down

32 Samples Tested



Matched: 32

EXPECTED DRUG:

Pharmaceutical

2 Samples Tested



Matched: 1

Match not determined: 1

Total

62 Samples Tested



Matched: 60

Did not match: 1

Match not determined: 1

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.

Data represented here are collected from our partner sites across the province. Drug samples are tested using the Fourier Transform Infrared (FTIR) spectrometer in combination with fentanyl test strips and benzodiazepine test strips.

There is 5% fentanyl detection limit on the FTIR spectrometer (McCrae, 2019), and a drug check on any given sample consists of both the FTIR and BTNX fentanyl immunoassay test strip testing done in combination. When applicable, BTNX benzodiazepine immunoassay test strips are also used.

BCCSU gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the following partners: