

# Vancouver Island Drug Checking Project

Preliminary Results for January 2021

The Vancouver Island Drug Checking Project delivers drug checking services in Victoria, BC. Our service has been operating in partnership with SOLID Outreach, AVI Health and Community Services, Lantern Services, Dr. Chris Gill and the team at Vancouver Island University and Island Health Authority. This free and confidential service provides information on composition of substances and harm reduction information.

## Highlighted findings:

- Novel finding of the synthetic opioid isotonitazene in an expected oxycodone sample
- Carfentanil found in 8 samples, half of which were expected opioid-down samples
- 43% of fentanyl-containing substances found to have concentrations greater than 10% fentanyl
- Benzodiazepines and/or etizolam found in 50% of expected opioid-down samples
- The maximum concentration of etizolam found was 15% in an expected Xanax sample

# 117

Samples Tested  
1 - 31 January 2021

[Read our blog](#) for further interpretations of our January data.

## What were people bringing to be tested?

Expected substance	n
Opioid Down: Fentanyl and/or Heroin	38
Stimulant: Cocaine HCl or Base, Methamphetamine	34
Psychedelic	10
Dissociative	4
Benzodiazepine	3
Other (CBD, Caffeine)	2
Polysubstance (Opioid down with benzodiazepine)	2
Other Opioid (Oxycodone)	1
Other Stimulant	1
Unknown/Missing	13

*Data are preliminary. There were missing data for some samples. Instruments may not be able to detect all ingredients and certainty of interpretations may vary. Multiple substances may be present in one sample and substances may be present in trace concentrations. \*Notable components: Includes all expected actives as well as unexpected components of note, such as those with the potential for unexpected effects or that impact the effectiveness of naloxone.*

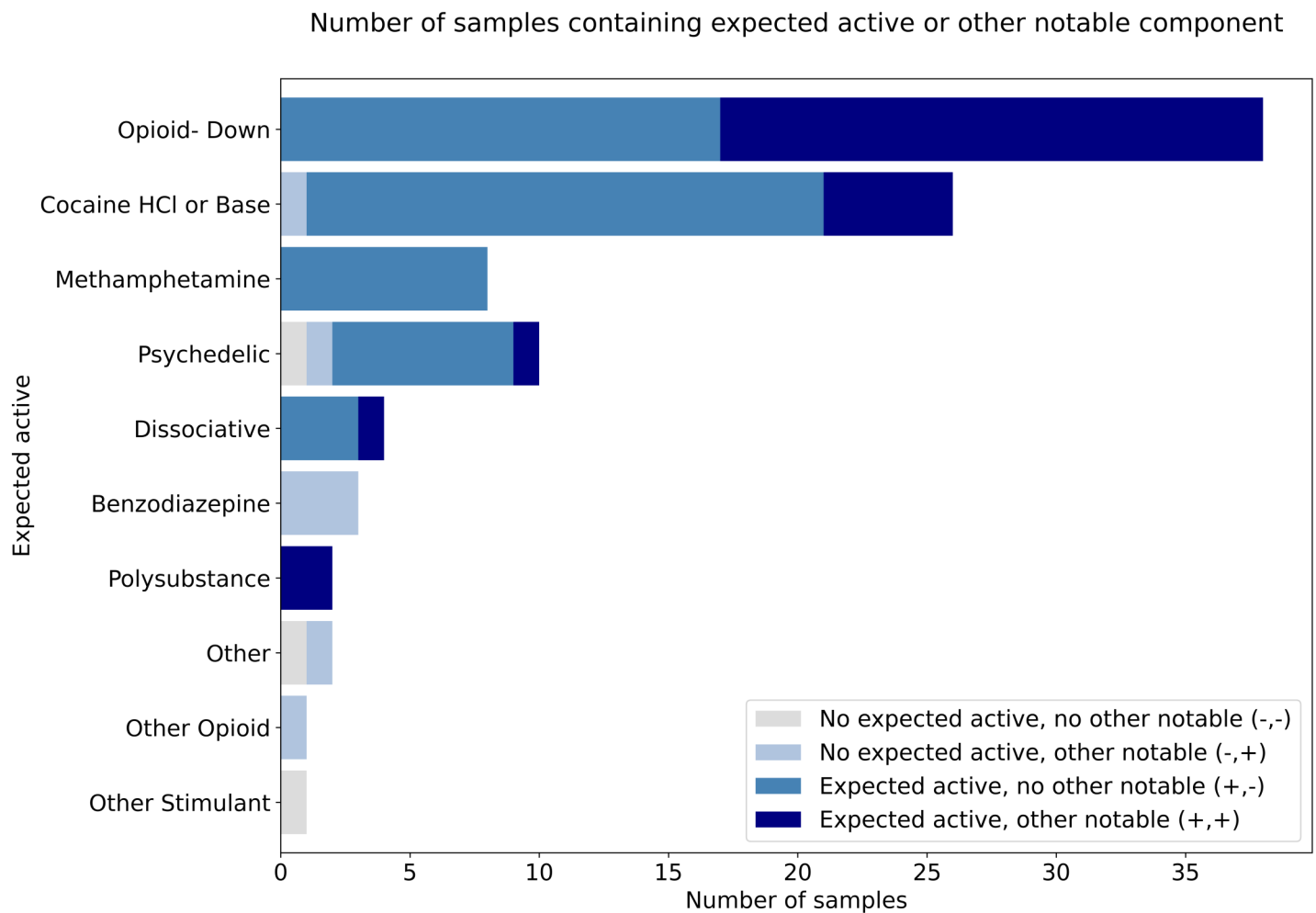
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### What did we find?

We tested each sample to determine what active ingredients, adulterants, and cutting agents were present. The majority of samples did contain an active that fit into each expected category. However, we also detected a number of other notable components that may cause unexpected effects or impact the effectiveness of naloxone.



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## What did we find?

For each expected category we list the number of samples that contained the expected active or other notable components according to the following categorizations:

(-,-) no expected active, no other notable component	(-,+) no expected active, other notable component
(+,-) expected active, no other notable component	(+,+) expected active, other notable component

Opioid Down	38
<b>(+,-) Expected active, no other notable</b>	<b>17</b>
Fentanyl	16
Heroin	3
<b>(+,+) Expected active, other notable</b>	<b>21</b>
Fentanyl	20
Etizolam	14
Benzodiazepine (undifferentiated)	7
Carfentanil	4
Heroin	4
Cocaine HCl	3
Acetyl Fentanyl	1
Flualprazolam	1

Methamphetamine	8
<b>(+,-) Expected active, no other notable</b>	<b>8</b>
Methamphetamine	8

Cocaine HCl or Base	26
<b>(-,+) No expected active, other notable</b>	<b>1</b>
Methamphetamine	1
<b>(+,-) Expected active, no other notable</b>	<b>20</b>
Cocaine HCl	18
Cocaine Base	2
<b>(+,+) Expected active, other notable</b>	<b>5</b>
Cocaine HCl	5
Phenacetin	2
Benzocaine	2
Procaine	1

Dissociative	4
<b>(+,-) Expected active, no other notable</b>	<b>3</b>
Ketamine	3
<b>(+,+) Expected active, other notable</b>	<b>1</b>
Ketamine	1
MDMA	1

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Psychedelic		10
(-,-)	No expected active, no other notable <sup>1</sup>	1
(-,+)	No expected active, other notable	1
	MDA	1
(+,-)	Expected active, no other notable	7
	MDMA	5
	MDA	1
	DMT	1
(+,+)	Expected active, other notable	1
	MDMA	1
	Cocaine HCl	1

Benzodiazepine		3
(-,+)	No expected active, other notable	3
	Etizolam	2
	Flualprazolam	1
	Fentanyl or analogue	1

Other		2
(-,-)	No expected active, no other notable <sup>1</sup>	1
(-,+)	No expected active, other notable	1
	Fentanyl	1

Other Stimulant		1
(-,-)	No expected active, no other notable <sup>1</sup>	1

Polysubstance		2
(+,+)	Expected active, other notable	2
	Fentanyl	2
	Carfentanil	2
	Etizolam	2
	Cocaine HCl	1

Other Opioid		1
(-,+)	No expected active, other notable	1
	Isotonitazene	1

Unknown / Missing		22
	Fentanyl	12
	Etizolam	7
	Cocaine HCl	4
	Methamphetamine	2
	Carfentanil	2
	Cannabidiol	1
	Cephalexin	1
	Doxycycline	1
	Ephedrine	1
	Heroin	1
	MDMA	1
	Morphine	1
	Tadalafil	1

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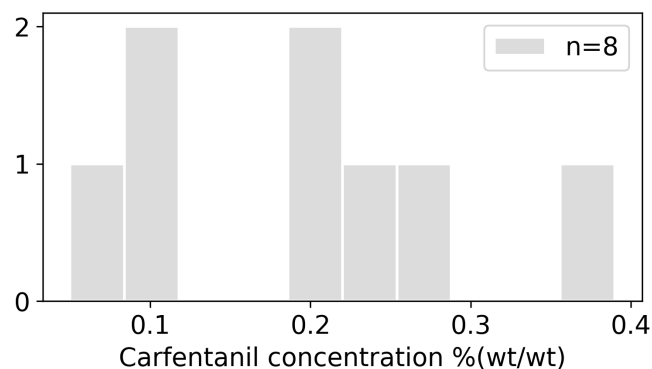
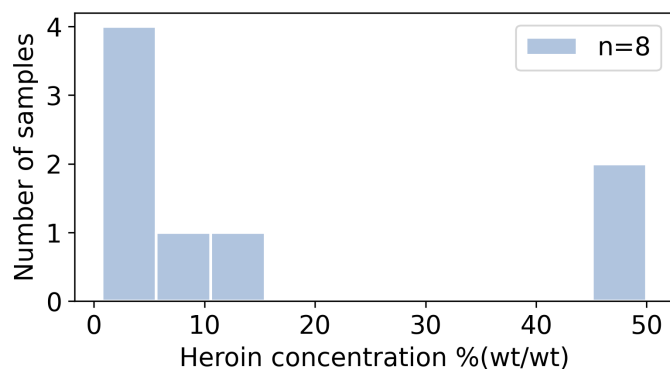
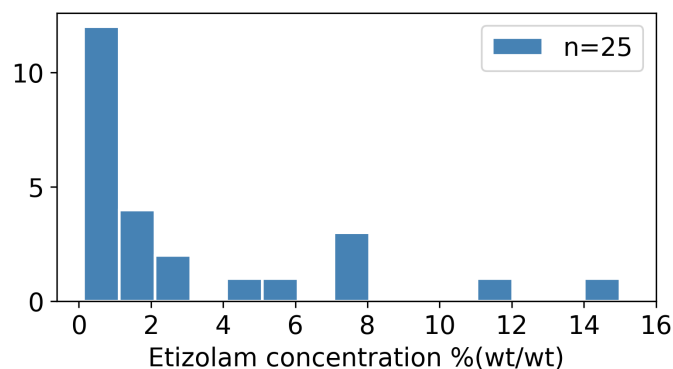
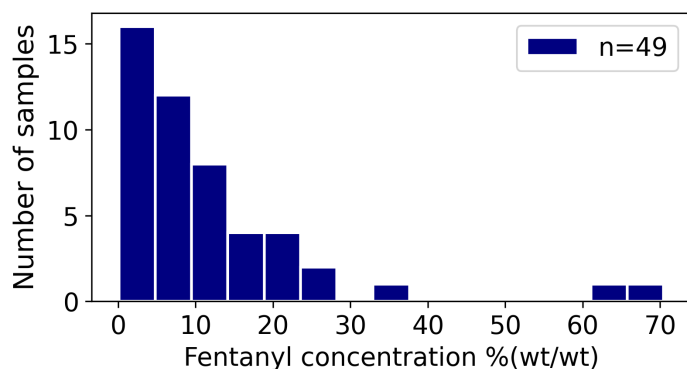
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## Quantification

Using paper spray mass spectrometry data included by our collaborators at Vancouver Island University we were able to quantify low level actives. These values are aggregate, inclusive to all expected drug categories in which they are found.

Substance	# quant	median	min	max
Fentanyl	49	8.2 %	0.1 %	70.5 %
Etizolam	25	1.2 %	0.1 %	15.0 %
Heroin	8	5.2 %	0.7 %	50.0 %
Carfentanil	8	0.2 %	0.1 %	0.4 %

Distribution of concentrations.



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The Vancouver Island Drug Checking Project is based out of the University of Victoria and operates community-wide drug checking services within Victoria, BC. We are continuing to offer drug checking services in response to the dual public health emergencies, and exploring new ways to better reach those who may benefit from this service. We have now partnered with Dr. Chris Gill and the team at Vancouver Island University to improve detection and reporting using their paper spray - mass spectrometer. See the blog portion of our website to view our more detailed interpretations of our reports.

*Our project respectfully acknowledges that we work as visitors on the traditional territory of the Lkwungen (Songhees), Wyomilth (Esquimalt), and WSÁNEĆ (Saanich) peoples of the Coast Salish Nation. We also acknowledge the inextricable links between research, colonization and racism against Indigenous peoples, which continue to this day. Ending the violence faced by people who use substances and the overdose crisis cannot be achieved without facing the legacy through which we have come to be in this territory.*

For more information please visit: [substance.uvic.ca](https://substance.uvic.ca)

### We gratefully acknowledge our partners and funders on this project

#### Our Partners

Agilent Technologies	Compute Canada	SOLID Outreach
AVI Health and Community Services	IBM Canada	STS Pharmacy
BC Ministry of Health	Island Health Authority	University of Victoria
BC Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions	Lantern Services	Vancouver Island University
BC Support Vancouver Island Centre	PerkinElmer Inc	Westgrid
Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research	ProSpect Scientific	

#### Our Funders

Health Canada Substance Use and Addictions Program	Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council
Vancouver Foundation	Canadian Institutes of Health Research
Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research	