

Substance Drug Checking

Preliminary Results for August 2025

Substance Drug Checking on Vancouver Island offers free and confidential drug checking services in Victoria, Port Alberni, Comox Valley, Campbell River, Duncan, Port Hardy, and at local events. This report presents data about the drug supply on Vancouver Island for August 2025.

Highlighted findings:

- The median fentanyl concentration found across all drug categories was 10.8%
- The median fluorofentanyl concentration found across all drug categories was 4.4%
- The median ortho-methyl fentanyl concentration found across all drug categories was 0.8%
- Benzodiazepines were found in 47.2% (85/180) of expected Opioid - Down samples
- Bromazolam was found in 43 Opioid - Down samples with a median concentration of 3.6% and maximum concentration of 11.0%
- Xylazine was found in 1 expected Opioid - Down samples with a median concentration of 8.1% and a maximum concentration of 8.1%
- Medetomidine was found in 16 expected Opioid - Down samples with a median concentration of 1.1% and a maximum concentration of 8.7%

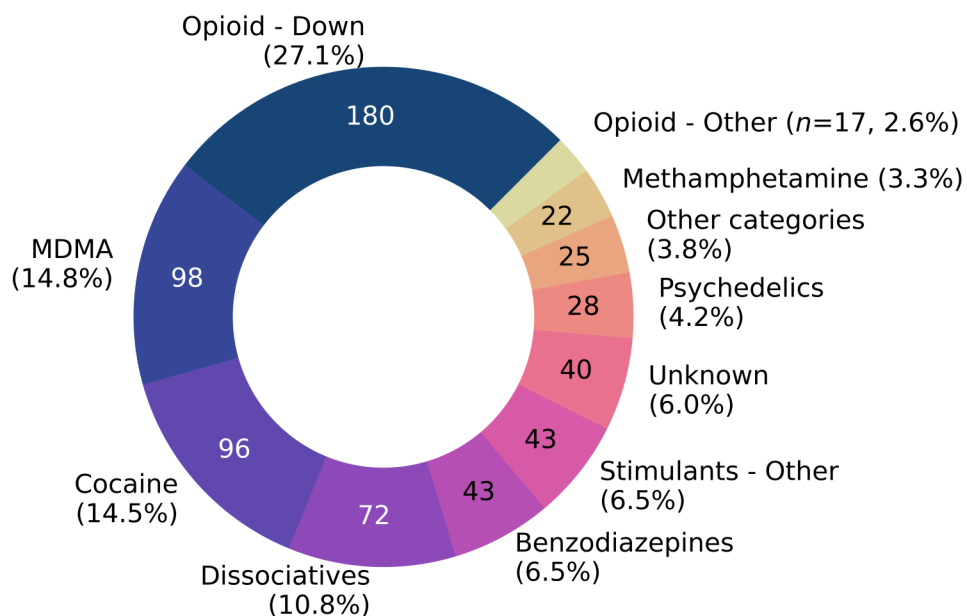
[Read our blog](#) for further interpretations of our August data.

664

Samples Tested
1 - 31 August 2025

What were people bringing to be checked?

Service users bring us a wide variety of substances that can be grouped into different drug classes. This pie chart aggregates the samples we checked by their “expected” substance (i.e. the drug category reported by the service user). The number of samples checked in each class is included inside each slice and the relative proportion of all samples checked is given in parentheses. These data are separated by collection location/method on the following page.

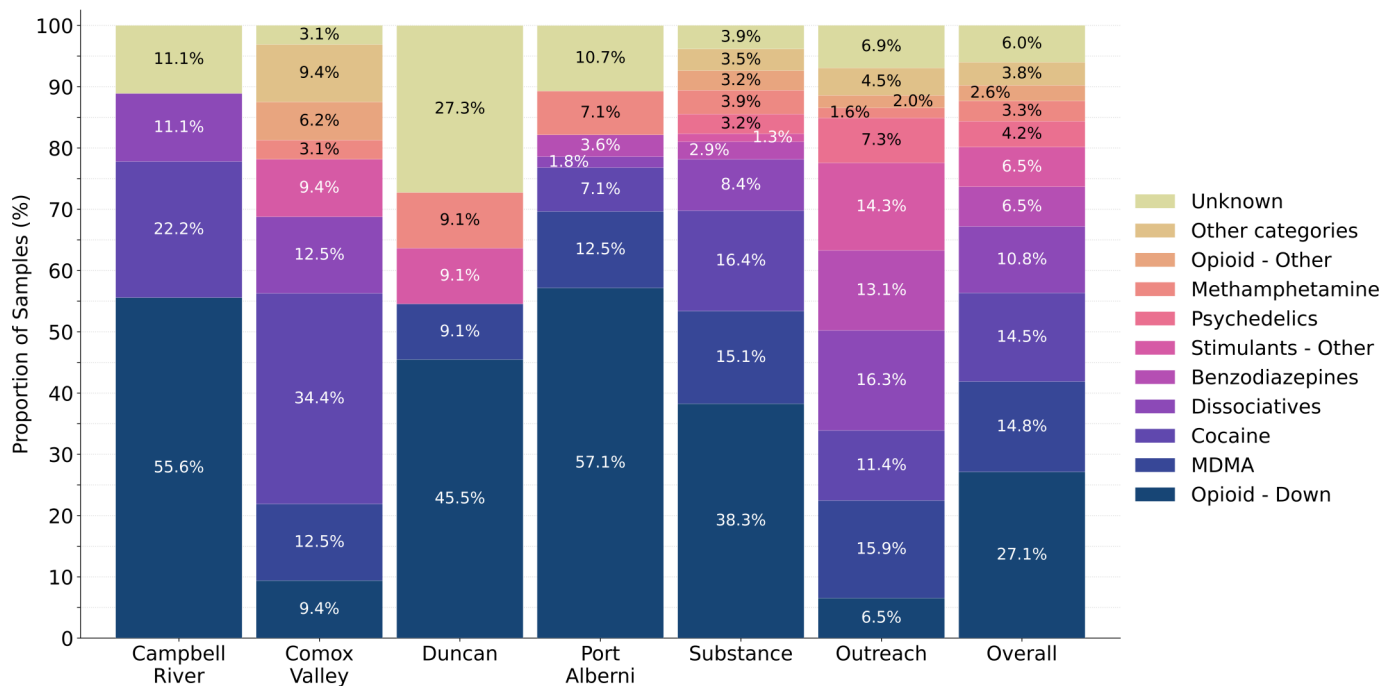


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What were people bringing to be checked by service model?

The “expected substance” data presented on the previous page can be separated by sample collection location/method, where “Substance” samples are those brought directly to our Victoria storefront, “Campbell River”, “Comox Valley”, “Duncan”, “Port Alberni”, and “Port Hardy” are samples received through our distributed drug checking model, and “Outreach” samples are those collected at supported housing sites, at overdose prevention and supervised consumption locations, and through drop-off envelopes. The relative proportions of samples checked by expected class and location are shown in the figure below; sample counts are listed in the table at the bottom of this page.



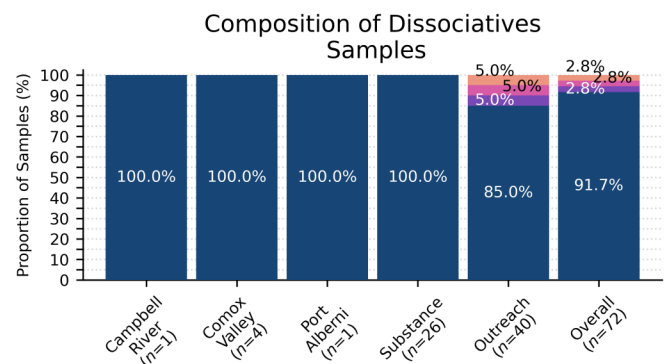
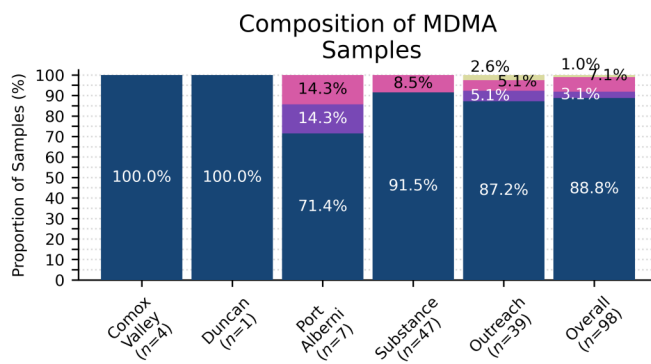
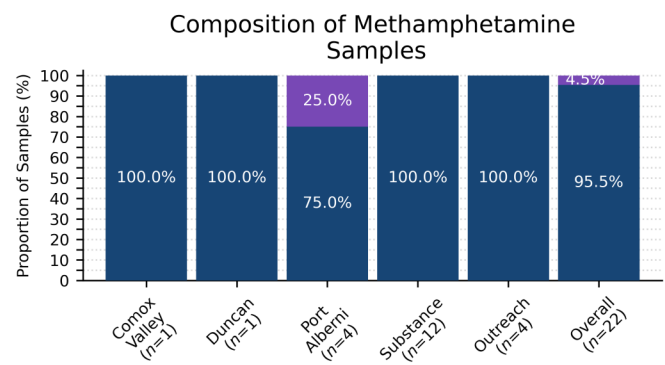
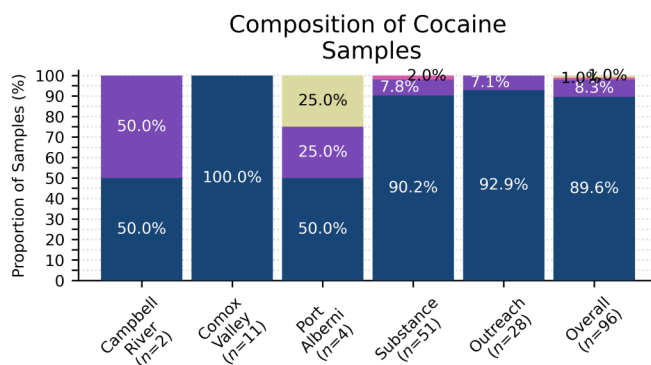
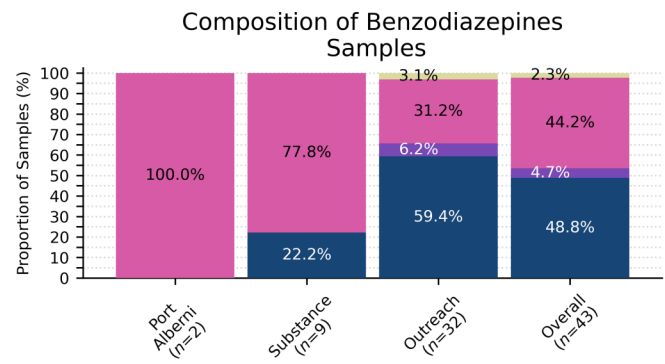
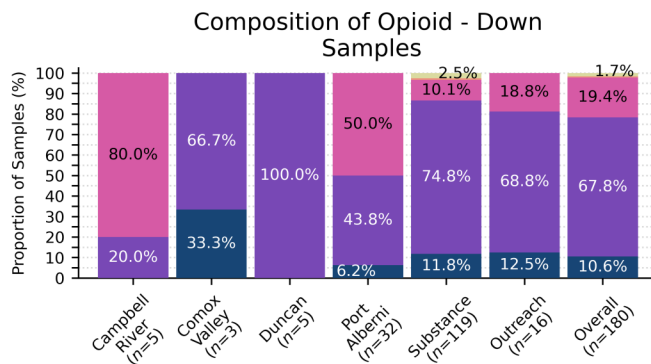
Expected Substance Class	Campbell River	Comox Valley	Duncan	Port Alberni	Port Hardy	Substance	Outreach	Overall
Opioid - Down	5	3	5	32	0	119	16	180
MDMA	0	4	1	7	0	47	39	98
Cocaine	2	11	0	4	0	51	28	96
Dissociatives	1	4	0	1	0	26	40	72
Benzodiazepines	0	0	0	2	0	9	32	43
Stimulants - Other	0	3	1	0	0	4	35	43
Psychedelics	0	0	0	0	0	10	18	28
Methamphetamine	0	1	1	4	0	12	4	22
Opioid - Other	0	2	0	0	0	10	5	17
Other categories	0	3	0	0	0	11	11	25
Unknown	1	1	3	6	0	12	17	40
Total	9	32	11	56	0	311	245	664

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What did we find?

We checked each sample to determine what active compounds and cutting agents were present. While a majority of samples contained the expected active drug, we also detected a number of other notable compounds that August cause unexpected effects. The figures below illustrate the proportions and numbers of samples checked in each drug category, separated by collection location/method, colour coded by their composition. **Dark Blue** groups samples that were “as expected” with no other notable compounds *detected*, **Purple** groups samples that contained the expected drug *and* other unexpected active(s), **Magenta** groups samples that only contained unexpected active(s) (the expected drug was not found), **Salmon** groups samples where we were unable to determine the composition, and **Lime** displays samples where no active compounds were detected.



Expected Active Only Unexpected Active(s) Only Inactive(s) Only
Expected + Unexpected Actives Unknown composition

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What did we find?

Expanding on the figures shown on the previous page, for each drug category and collection location/model, we list the number of samples that contained the expected active and/or other notable components. Samples where no detected actives have been excluded for brevity.

Opioid - Down	Campbell River	Comox Valley	Duncan	Port Alberni	Substance	Outreach
Expected Active Only		1	1	2	14	2
Fentanyl		1	1	2	14	1
Fluorofentanyl						1
Expected* + Unexpected Active(s)	1	2	4	14	89	11
Acetylcodeine					1	2
Acetylmorphine (MAM, 6-MAM)					1	2
Benzodiazepine (unknown type) ¹			1	2	7	1
Bromazolam	1		3	2	31	3
Carfentanil					4	1
Cocaine HCl (powder)						1
Desalkylgidazepam		2			13	
Ethylbromazolam				3	1	
Fentanyl	1	2	4	14	88	9
Flubromazolam					2	
Fluorofentanyl	1		2	4	54	6
Heroin					1	2
Lidocaine						1
Medetomidine				9		1
Methamphetamine				1	3	
Morphine					1	1
Phenacetin		1				
ortho-Methyl fentanyl					14	4

Expected Opioid - Down data continued on next page

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. *Expected active component. ¹ "Benzodiazepine (unknown type)" results are based on a positive strip test and are unconfirmed by paper spray.

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Opioid - Down (Continued)	Campbell River	Port Alberni	Substance	Outreach
Unexpected Active(s) Only	4	16	12	3
Acetylcodeine				1
Acetylmorphine (MAM, 6-MAM)				1
Benzodiazepine (unknown type) ¹		6	4	
Bromazolam		4		
Desalkylgidazepam	1	1		1
Fentanyl or analogue ¹			1	
Fluorofentanyl	4	15	10	3
Fluorofentanyl Base		1		
Gabapentin			1	
Heroin				1
Lidocaine			1	
Medetomidine	3		1	2
Unknown			1	
Xylazine			1	
ortho-Methyl fentanyl			4	
Unknown Composition			1	
Unknown			1	

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MDMA/MDA	Comox Valley	Duncan	Port Alberni	Substance	Outreach
Expected Active Only	4	1	5	43	34
MDA				1	4
MDMA	4	1	5	42	31
Expected* + Unexpected Active(s)			1		2
MDMA* + MDA					1
MDMA* + Ketamine					1
MDMA* + Fentanyl or analogue ¹			1		
Unexpected Active(s) Only	4	1	5	42	31
Ketamine			1		
MDA (MDMA expected)				1	
MDMA (MDA expected)				1	1
MMDA (MDMA expected)					1
Methamphetamine				1	
O-PCE (Deschloro-N-ethyl-ketamine)				1	

Cocaine	Campbell River	Comox Valley	Port Alberni	Substance	Outreach
Expected Active Only	1	11	2	46	26
Cocaine Base (crack, rock, hard)		2	2	6	4
Cocaine HCl (powder)	1	9		40	22
Expected* + Unexpected Active(s)	1		1	4	2
Cocaine HCl (powder)* + Benzocaine					1
Cocaine HCl (powder)* + Levamisole				2	
Cocaine HCl (powder)* + Phenacetin				2	1
Cocaine Base (crack, rock, hard)* + Phenacetin	1				
Cocaine Base (crack, rock, hard)* + Fentanyl or analogue ¹			1		
Unexpected Active(s) Only				1	
Fentanyl				1	
Fluorofentanyl				1	

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Dissociatives	Campbell River	Comox Valley	Port Alberni	Substance	Outreach
Expected Active Only	1	4	1	26	34
Ketamine	1	4	1	26	30
3-HO-PCE					2
Fluorodeschloroketamine					2
Expected* + Unexpected Active(s)					2
Ketamine* + Fluorodeschloroketamine					1
MXPR (Methoxpropamine)* + 3-HO-PCE					1
Unexpected Active(s) Only					
3-HO-PCE					1
Arylcyclohexylamine (unknown type)					1
Unknown Composition					2
Unknown					2

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. *Expected active component. ¹“Benzodiazepine (unknown type)” results are based on a positive strip test and are unconfirmed by paper spray.

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Benzodiazepines	Port Alberni	Substance	Outreach
Expected Active Only		2	19
Alprazolam (Xanax)		1	4
Bretazenil			4
Bromazolam		1	2
Clonazepam (Klonopin)			2
Ethylbromazolam			1
Etizolam			3
Flualprazolam			1
Flubromazepam			1
Lorazepam (Ativan)			1
Expected* + Unexpected Active(s)			2
Ethylbromazolam* + Isotonitazene			1
Fluclozepam* + Ibuprofen			1
Unexpected Active(s) Only		2	7
Acetylmorphine (MAM, 6-MAM)		2	
Benzodiazepine (unknown type)	1		5
Bromazolam		5	4
Desalkylgidazepam	1		1
Etizolam		1	
Fentanyl	1	2	
Flualprazolam		1	
Fluorofentanyl	1	2	
Heroin		2	

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Opioid - Other	Comox Valley	Substance	Outreach
Expected Active Only	2	5	4
Acetaminophen (Paracetamol, Tylenol)	2	2	
Hydromorphone (Dilaudid, Dillies)		1	1
Morphine		1	1
Oxycodone (Oxycontin)	2	3	2
Unexpected Active(s) Only		5	
Bromazolam		1	
Desalkylgizapam		1	
Fentanyl		1	
Fluorofentanyl		2	
Nitazene (unknown type)		1	
Unknown Composition			1
Unknown			1

Methamphetamine	Comox Valley	Duncan	Port Alberni	Substance	Outreach
Expected Active Only	1	1	3	12	4
Methamphetamine	1	1	3	12	4
Unexpected Active(s) Only			1		
Methamphetamine* + Fentanyl or analogue ¹			1		

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. *Expected active component. ¹"Fentanyl analogue (unknown type)" results are based on a positive strip test and are unconfirmed by paper spray.

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Psychedelics	Substance	Outreach
<i>Expected Active Only</i>	10	16
2C-B	3	9
2C-I		1
4-HO-MET (Metocin, Colour)		1
5-MeO-DMT	1	
DMT (Dimethyltryptamine)	1	1
Ketamine		1
LSD (acid)	5	2
MDMA		1
Methylethyltryptamine (MET)		1
<i>Expected* + Unexpected Active(s)</i>		1
2C-B* + Unknown		1

*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. *Expected active component.*

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Other	Comox Valley	Substance	Outreach
Expected Active Only	3	8	36
2-FMA			1
2-MMC	1		2
3-MMC (Metaphedrone)	1	1	4
4-Fluoroethylphenidate (4F-EPH)			1
4-MMC (Mephedrone)	1	1	5
4F-MPH			2
5-APB			1
6-APB		1	1
Amphetamine		1	5
Cocaine HCl (powder)			1
Dicloqualone			1
Eutylone			1
GHB		3	1
Methaqualone (Quaaludes)			1
Methylmethylphenidate (4-MeTMP)			1
Modafinil			2
N-Ethylhexedrone (Hexen)			1
Sildenafil (Viagra)		1	1
Tadalafil (Cialis)			2
alpha-PHP			1
alpha-PHiP			2
Expected* + Unexpected Active(s)			1
GHB* + 1,4 Butanediol			1

Expected Other data continued on next page

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Other (Continued)	Comox Valley	Duncan	Substance	Outreach
Unexpected Active(s) Only		1	3	5
5-MAPB				1
Methamphetamine		1		
Methandrostenolone			1	
Sildenafil (Viagra)				1
Steroid (unknown type)			1	
Trenbolone enanthate			1	
Unknown Composition	1		1	1
Unknown	1		1	1

Unknown	Campbell River	Duncan	Port Alberni	Substance	Outreach
Unexpected Active(s) Only	1	3	5	8	13
2C-B			1		2
Acetylcodeine					1
Acetylmorphine (MAM, 6-MAM)					1
Benzodiazepine (unknown type) ¹				1	
Bromazolam	1		1	1	
Cocaine HCl (powder)		2	1	1	3
Desalkylgidazepam				2	
Fentanyl				4	
Fluorofentanyl	1		1	2	
Heroin					1
Ketamine			1		2
Levamisole				1	
Lidocaine			1		
MDA				1	2
MDMA		1	3	3	5
Methamphetamine				2	

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. ¹“Benzodiazepine (unknown type)” results are based on a positive strip test and are unconfirmed by paper spray. Multiple substances may be present in one sample and substances may be present in trace concentrations. *Expected active component.

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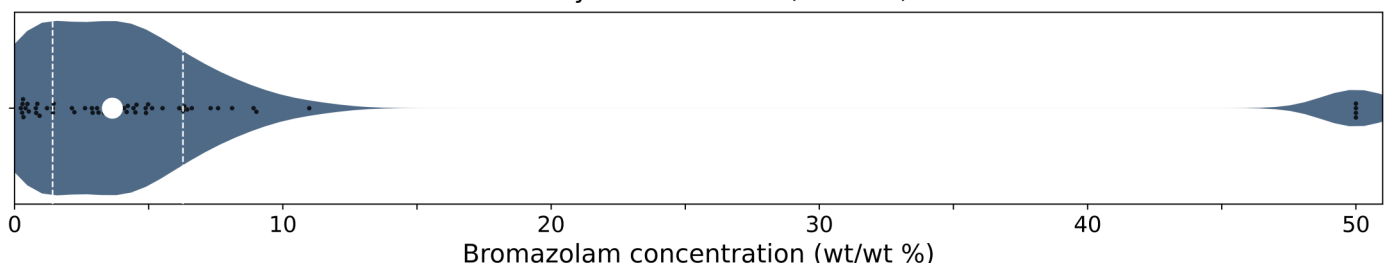
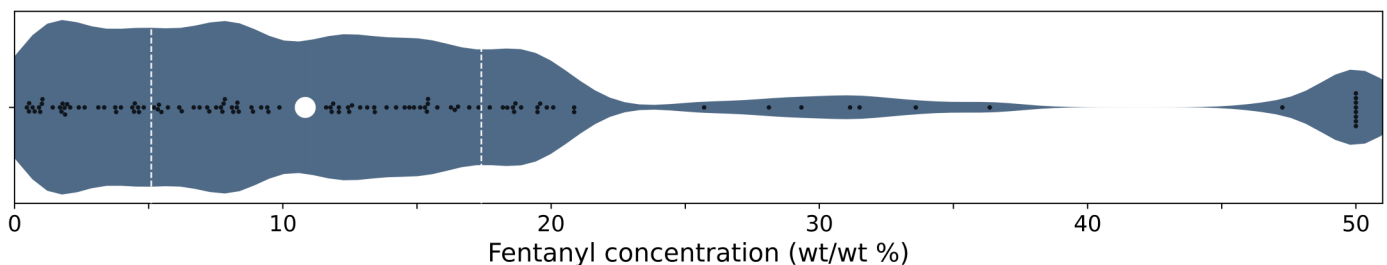
Quantification

Using paper spray mass spectrometry (PS-MS) data, we were able to quantify low concentration compounds. These aggregate values are *inclusive to all expected drug categories* in which the active drugs are found. Weight percentage is reported below. "IQR" is the interquartile range: the concentration range that contains half of the quantified samples.

Compound	# Quant.	Median	Min	Max	IQR
Fentanyl	120	10.8%	0.5%	50.0%	5.1% - 17.4%
Fluorofentanyl	88	4.3%	0.2%	50.0%	1.2% - 12.4%
Bromazolam	53	3.6%	0.2%	50.0%	1.4% - 6.3%
ortho-Methyl fentanyl	22	0.8%	0.5%	2.6%	0.6% - 1.3%
Desalkylgidazepam	18	2.9%	0.3%	38.1%	0.4% - 4.3%
Medetomidine	16	1.1%	0.7%	8.7%	0.8% - 1.5%
Oxycodone (Oxycontin)	7	2.6%	1.3%	32.7%	2.0% - 4.9%
Acetylmorphine (MAM, 6-MAM)	7	1.3%	0.2%	14.2%	0.5% - 4.2%
Heroin	6	17.9%	0.7%	>50.0%*	1.0% - 37.7%
Alprazolam (Xanax)	5	1.6%	0.6%	2.2%	1.2% - 1.9%
Acetylcodeine	5	1.4%	0.3%	4.7%	1.1% - 1.8%
Carfentanil	5	0.2%	0.1%	1.9%	0.2% - 0.3%
Isotonitazene	1		0.9%		

Distribution of Fentanyl and Bromazolam Concentrations

The concentrations of fentanyl and bromazolam for every sample quantified across *all expected drug categories and service models* are illustrated below to highlight the variability in the unregulated drug market. **Black Dots** are individual samples, the large **white dot** marks the median concentration, the **dashed white lines** bound half of the quantified samples (IQR), and the **width** of the coloured region is proportional to the number of samples in a concentration range.



*There is a maximum concentration limit that the PS-MS can quantify for each compound of interest. If a sample contains a higher percentage of a compound than the PS-MS's limits, then only the upper limit will be reported. Not all samples can be quantified.

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Opioid - Down Quantification by Service Model

Here we examine the regional variability in the unregulated market. The table below expands on the data presented on the previous page (*inclusive to all expected drug categories*) and focuses only on fentanyl, fluorofentanyl, carfentanil, bromazolam, and xylazine within *expected opioid-down samples*, separated by collection location/model. Weight percentage is reported; "IQR" is the interquartile range: the range that contains half of the quantified samples.

Service Model	Compound	# Quant.	Median	Min	Max	IQR
Campbell River 5 total down samples 40% (2/5) benzo-positive	Bromazolam	1		6.1%	6.4%	
	Fentanyl	1		19.8%	19.8%	
	Fluorofentanyl	5	15.7%	0.3%	41.0%	11.3% - 21.2%
Comox Valley 3 total down samples 67% (2/3) benzo-positive	Fentanyl	3	36.3%	31.5%	47.3%	
Duncan 5 total down samples 100% (5/5) benzo-positive	Bromazolam	3	4.9%	2.6%	9.0%	
	Fentanyl	5	14.9%	4.0%	18.4%	7.7% - 17.7%
	Fluorofentanyl	2		2.1%	2.7%	
Port Alberni 32 total down samples 56% (18/32) benzo-positive	Bromazolam	6	0.9%	0.2%	7.6%	0.4% - 1.3%
	Fentanyl	12	15.9%	1.0%	31.1%	14.2% - 19.1%
	Fluorofentanyl	13	15.3%	1.0%	28.2%	13.0% - 17.7%
Port Hardy 0 total down samples No down samples were submitted during the month of August						
Substance 119 total down samples 45% (53/119) benzo-positive	Bromazolam	27	4.1%	0.3%	11.0%	2.2% - 5.9%
	Carfentanil	4	0.3%	0.1%	1.9%	0.2% - 0.7%
	Fentanyl	83	8.3%	0.5%	>50.0%*	4.6% - 15.2%
	Fluorofentanyl	51	3.6%	0.2%	>50.0%*	0.8% - 7.2%
	Xylazine	1		8.1%		
	ortho-Methyl fentanyl	18	0.9%	0.5%	2.6%	0.6% - 1.3%
	Bromazolam	3	3.1%	2.9%	5.1%	
Outreach 16 total down samples 31% (5/16) benzo-positive	Carfentanil	1		0.2%		
	Fentanyl	10	11.4%	0.8%	>50.0%*	9.7% - 18.4%
	Fluorofentanyl	10	3.4%	0.3%	>50.0%*	2.1% - 6.2%
	ortho-Methyl fentanyl	4	0.7%	0.6%	1.8%	0.6% - 1.0%

*There is a maximum concentration limit that the PS-MS can quantify for each compound of interest. If a sample contains a higher percentage of a compound than the PS-MS's limits, then only the upper limit will be reported. Not all samples can be quantified.

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Additional Services

At Substance we provide access to other services in addition to drug checking. These include but are not limited to access to harm reduction supplies (bubble pipes, naloxone, test strip kits, etc.), general support, referrals to substance use programs and to other agencies. During the month of August, our staff handled 681 of these interactions, in addition to, checking 664 samples.

Substance Drug Checking is based out of the University of Victoria and operates community-wide drug checking services within Campbell River, the Comox Valley, Duncan, Port Alberni, Port Hardy, and 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 August benefit from this service. We have partnered with Dr. Chris Gill and the team at Vancouver Island University to improve detection and reporting using their methods for the paper spray - mass spectrometer.

See the [blog portion](#) of our website to view our more detailed interpretations of our reports.

Our project works on Indigenous land. We provide drug checking, harm reduction education and support across many territories on what is colonially known as 'Vancouver Island.' We also act as a resource for these services across the province colonially known as 'British Columbia.' We honour and offer respect to many nations for their stewardship, care and leadership on these lands.

Our project originated on the territories of the lək̓ʷəŋən speaking peoples, including the Songhees and Xwsepsum (Esquimalt) Nations, and the W̱SÁNEĆ (Saanich) Nations on whose land the University of Victoria is located. Some of the territories we are honoured to work across specifically include: Halalt, Lyackson, Meluxulh (Malahat), Punelux-utth', Quw'utsun, Stz-uminus, and Ts'uubaa-asatx; Hupačasath and Tsessaht; K'ómoks; and Laich-kwil-tach.

We acknowledge the inextricable links between research, colonization and racism against Indigenous peoples, which continue to this date. Ending the violence faced by people who use drugs cannot be achieved without actively working on decolonization.

For more information please visit: substance.uvic.ca

We gratefully acknowledge our partners on this project



Agilent Technologies



AVI Health and Community Services



BC Ministry of Health



BC Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions



BC SUPPORT Unit Vancouver Island Centre



Canadian Institute for Health Research



Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research



Digital Research Alliance of Canada



Island Health Authority



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SOLID Outreach



University of Victoria



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Victoria Hospitals Foundation



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